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Schooling as Pathogenic: Exploring the Destructive Implications of Globalist Educational Reform

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Abstract

The majority of formal schooling, this article contends, is pathogenic. Globalist educational reforms, such as UNESCO's *Education for All* initiative, create pathological subjectivities through socialization. Drawing on Durkheim and Bourdieu's work, which presents formal education as a conservative institution that sustains privilege and maintain the status quo through socialization, this article explores the implications of schools' socializing function. Globalized education, theorized according to Loomba's work on the colonialist/postcolonialist functions of power and privilege, is a form of colonialism, dictated by neoliberal elites. By implication, this article argues a basic form of systemic violence consists in schools, globally. Drawing on Harber's paradigm of the school as violence, the article contends that education actively fosters institutional and subjective violence on a global level, by engendering self-entitled, consumerist identities in privileged students in the global North, and obedient labourers in the global South.

Introduction

Nothing, they say, is perfect, and if we are to accept 'perfection' as the state of being 'ideal' and 'without fault,' then by definition schools and institutional education are imperfect. Nevertheless, there is a widespread tendency amongst pedagogues and the public alike to view schools idealistically, even idyllically. Flaws and imperfection, we assume, are anomalies in an otherwise sound edifice. We presume formal education to be a fundamental good, and increasingly assert that it is an innate human right. It is, we proclaim, the cornerstone of autonomous, critical citizenship, an institution that reflects (insofar as it is offered without explicit prejudice, or exclusion) core liberal values, and preserves these values in the minds it shapes. Indeed, education's necessity cannot reasonably be contested. Schooling has the potential to serve as an insuperable good, and is requisite to socialization, skill learning, and individual and cultural growth. Yet, a considerable body of scholarship has emerged in recent decades contesting our unmitigated endorsement of institutional education.

Socio-Cultural theorists, like Durkheim (1956) and Bourdieu (1974), emphasized how education preserves the status quo and serves the interests of the privileged socio-economic elite. Colonial

theorists, like Loomba (2005), tied the critique of privilege to a discourse on colonialism and ethnic and geographical forms of inequality that have informed, and become entrenched in, formal education. Policy theorists like Epps & Watkinson (1996, 1997), and Williams (2005), emphasized how systemic violence and hidden curricula can foster prejudice and stereotypes within schools. And educational critic Harber (2004) goes so far as to define the school system itself as a repository of violence, harmful to pupils and societies alike. Distinct, but complementary forms of systemic violence inform institutional education in the global North and South, extending neoliberalism and neocolonialism in indigenous South communities, and fostering a consonant set of materialistic, egocentric attitudes in students in the global North. The author contests the common conception that schooling is broadly constructive, arguing that institutionalized education inflicts violence on students, particularly by inculcating a set of attitudes that are socially, pragmatically, and intrinsically destructive.

In agreement with Harber (2004), this paper takes the position that the "sad truth is that formal, mass education—schooling—cannot automatically be linked with enlightenment, progress and liberty and indeed too often can be linked to pain and suffering" (p. 1). In particular, this article argues that socialization and enculturation in schools, considered globally in light of the North-South divide of development and privilege are, in certain regards, destructive. Drawing on the sociological insight that schools socially condition students into particular identity configurations and value sets, the author argues that institutional education, on a global level, is indoctrinating students into ethical and political identities that perpetuate, and even catalyze, destructive, inequitable and exploitative global economics and politics. As such, the author insists, schools are indictably linked to the ongoing pain and suffering of marginalized and exploited people and peoples.

First, this article introduces the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) *Education for All* (EFA) initiative, arguing that it is a vehicle for neocolonialism, according to a critical perspective on colonialism that draws on Loomba's work on coloniality and the colonialist/postcolonialist implications of power and privilege for education throughout the world. It is argued that neocolonialist, neoliberal elites dictate the form and content of institutional education on an increasingly global scale; their interests, predictably, include the preservation and extension of 'free' market economic principles. By implication, these groups, and the policies they mandate, are largely exploitative. Second, the article describes a well-established critical socio-cultural perspective on education-as-socialization, as represented in works by Bourdieu and Durkheim. In this paradigm, schools function to define many of the conditions of students' subjectivity, socializing them into cultural norms and behaviours (rather than simply instilling productive skill sets). Third, the conceptual meaning of "systemic violence," will be explored, with reference to the works of educational policy theorists, Kaplan (2007), Williams (2005), and Epp and Watkinson (1996, 1997). A most basic form of violence, it is proposed, consists in schools' broad tendency to enculture/socialize students into fundamentally unhealthy, anti-egalitarian neoliberal identities. Finally, this piece draws upon Harber's (2004) work on 'schooling as violence,' asserting that schools do not merely permit violence (although this is certainly the case in many instances), they actively *foster* violence, institutionally, on a global level. This violence is perpetrated against pupils, whose identities are co-opted into a consistently violent, exploitative global economic schema, and perpetuated through the actions of these students, whose social autonomies are compromised

by the hegemonic force of neoliberal educational globalization. Many schools, collapsing 'democracy' within a discourse of consumer rights, are pathogenic.

Discussion

UNESCO and the Neocolonial Implications of Universalist Educational Reform

In its most basic terms, Loomba (2005) wrote, "colonialism can be defined as the conquest and control of other people's land and goods" (p. 8). By implication, colonialism is at least as old as socio-political regionalism. Modern European colonialism, however, differs qualitatively and quantitatively from earlier forms of colonialism. Principally, modern colonialism "was established alongside capitalism" and hence "did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered" (p. 9). Modern colonialism restructured the social configurations in colonized regions, indenturing aboriginal populations so as to maximize exploitation. By implication, reformation of indigenous education was essential for colonizers to effectively control indigenous peoples[1]. Inasmuch as European countries have 'decolonized' their former 'third world' holdings, educational reform has, if anything, increased in importance for 'Western' interests who intend to retain "economic (and social) relations of dependency and control [to] ensure both captive labour as well as markets for [Western] industry as well as goods" (p. 11). In a neocolonialist era the "point that educational systems are important means for the dissemination of dominant ideologies" assumes an even more significant dimension (p. 77). With limited opportunities for direct control, global social elites resort to surreptitious measures, infusing the hegemonic educational schemas with pervasively neoliberal knowledge structures and values.

Insofar as neocolonialism is an extensive social, political and economic system by which privileged communities in the North ensure control over communities in the global South, it is inextricable from neoliberalism. Further, understood as a politico-economic ideology, neoliberalism exerts tremendous, concerted control over institutional education, on an increasingly global scale. As is widely understood, neoliberalism is profit-driven, privileging the 'free market,' emphasizing production and consumption, and envisioning 'development' in purely economic terms. Within the neoliberal socio-political configuration, power inevitably consolidates in the hands of socio-economic elites (often represented in corporate entities), who use their political, economic and social influence to preserve their privilege in multifarious ways, many of which present themselves under the disingenuous guise of helping. Neoliberalism and neocolonialism must be understood in relation to neoconservatism, which legitimates Western privilege and power on a paternalistic basis. Neoliberalism, neocolonialism and neoconservatism alike mobilize an ostensively humanistic language of compassion, charity and development, which often conceals the underlying inequalities and inequities of global educational reform.

UNESCO's *Education for All* (EFA) initiative clearly instantiates the incongruity between the North's rhetoric of humanitarianism and the undergirding reality of inequality and exploitation. Although it presents, as this paper examines, a laudable set of ideals and objectives, when considered in context, EFA relies on untenable epistemological and consequentialist assumptions about educational reform. As Goldstein (2004) has written, the education EFA sanctions is questionably relevant for many indigenous peoples, as it generally prioritizes socio-economic

development, rather than cultural preservation, and integrates many poor populations into an economic system with drastically limited opportunities. Effectively, EFA ends up serving the interests of some, but tends to preserve the status quo by concealing the reality of social privilege and entrenchment of inequalities behind a rhetoric of opportunity and emancipation.

In this light, a great deal of formal education can be viewed as pathogenic. Rather than fostering equality, or even egalitarian ideals, formal education routinely posits the notion that late-stage capitalism is meritocratic. Thereby, it psycho-socially naturalizes inequality, intimating that the privileged few are deserving, whereas the underprivileged have failed to earn privilege and are effectively the executors of their own destiny. Students qua consumers in the global North, and students qua wage-labour in the global South are effectively damaged through this misconstruction. They are, generally, socialized into a fundamentally unhealthy acceptance of exploitation and social inequality.

The Violence of Educational Socialization

Durkheim's (1956) insight that schools function as institutions of socialization, articulated in *Education and Sociology*, has become a truism. There is now a broad consensus that 'the school' is one of the primary pillars of socialization, powerfully shaping individuals' very identities by enculturing them into the behaviours, values, norms, and epistemological convictions of their culture. Additionally, it is understood that these forceful processes serve a collective benefit and a preservative function, allowing society to perpetuate itself by teaching new generations the behaviours required for functional social participation. As such, we may affirm Durkheim's (1956) foundational insight that "in sum, education, far from having as its unique or principle object the individual and his interests, is above all the means by which society perpetually recreates the conditions of its very existence" (p. 123).

Through both explicit and hidden curricula, education "consists, then…of a systematic socialization of the young generation" (Durkheim, 1956, p. 124). This assertion must be extended to include adults in light of universalist educational initiatives and our increasing emphasis on adult education and lifelong learning. Consequent to universalist educational reform (as embodied, in particular by UNESCO's *Education for All* initiative) this systematic socialization is being applied, at least theoretically, to everyone, irrespective of age, sex, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics. Yet, formal education's socializing force does not serve the best interests of all who participate. In fact, schooling tends to be socially conservative, sustaining the status quo, as Bourdieu (1974) argued. To the extent, then, that this status quo is harmful, schooling serves a harmful end.

Contrary to the reality of unequal participation and injustice, schools' rhetoric is emancipationist and self-justificatory. Schooling is broadly construed as a fundamental good for both the individuals within it, and the societies they comprise. Rather than accurate insight, Bourdieu (1974) wrote,

> it is probably cultural inertia which still makes us see education in terms of the ideology of the school as a liberating force…and as a means of increasing social mobility, even when the indications tend to be that it is in fact one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for

> social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a *social* gift treated as a *natural* one. (p. 32)

We, in Western society, live under a myth of cultural meritocracy, in which individuals are imputed to have fundamentally equal opportunities within a basically just system.[2] Hard work and educational development, it is alleged, can pay essentially equal dividends for individuals from different backgrounds. Thus, if one experiences social failure, it is deemed to be her/his fault for working insufficiently or ineffectively. By contrast, if one enjoys social success, it is deemed a natural and deserved outcome of her/his admirable work ethic. This specious system of justification, Bourdieu (1974) believed, conceals the truth of social privilege. Extending Durkheim's (1956) logic that education serves to recreate the conditions of a society, Bourdieu emphasized that formal education serves to entrench the inequalities present in any society. If "one takes socially conditioned inequalities with regard to schools and education seriously," Bourdieu wrote, "one is obliged to conclude that the *formal* equity, which the whole education system is subject to, is in reality unjust" (p. 37).

Formally egalitarian policies are merely part of a discourse of concealment that obscures pervasive underlying inequalities in the education system. Certain students—localizable by socio-economic class, geographical region, or both—are better equipped to perform maximally within the formal education system by virtue of their socio-economic status and the resources that higher status confers. "In other words," Bourdieu (1974) stated,

> by treating all pupils, however unequal they may be in reality, as equal in rights and duties, the educational system is led to give its *de facto* sanction to initial cultural inequalities. The formal equality which governs pedagogical practice is in fact a cloak for and a justification of indifference to the real inequalities with regard to the body of knowledge taught or rather demanded. (p. 38)

Thus, within any society, equal educational access and resources serve to sustain, and can even increase, unequal results; consequently, privilege begets privilege. More pernicious, however, is the mentality of entitlement often fostered in privileged groups. Because the system represents itself as just and meritocratic, it is broadly assumed, both by those favoured and by those marginalized by inequality, that privilege is earned. It is likely that in many instances individuals in higher socio-economic groups view themselves as deserving, and individuals in lower socio-economic groups view themselves as undeserving (on the basis that they have failed to earn a 'higher' socio-economic standing).

Expanding Durkheim (1956) and Bourdieu's (1974) theories from their intra-societal focus, we may account for the globalist trends in contemporary education, and the pernicious forces of contemporary neocolonialism. Global economic, social and political patterns exacerbate the divide between the 'haves' and the 'have nots,' defining a spatial and geographical parameter for these inequities. The general differentiation between privilege and marginality is globally evinced: the haves consolidate in the developed regions of the global North, while the 'undeveloped'/'developing' regions of the global South are predominantly populated by 'have nots'. In light of this inexorable trend, we must amend the classic sociological interpretation of education as preservative with respect to the status quo and privilege. Rather than merely protecting a global socio-economic status quo, formal education, under the auspices of

emancipatory and democratic *Education For All*, for example, is aggressively promoting an anti-egalitarian social order by universally co-opting global populations into neoliberal values (couched in terms of 'democracy' and human rights). Thus, the ostensive ideology of the school as a 'liberating force' is actually an ideology of the school as a neocolonial, neoliberal assimilationist force.

Education for All: The Violence of Pedagogical Neocolonialism

The United Nation's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) *Education for All* (EFA) initiative declares six educational goals, which indicate the education reform's global and universalist aspirations. These goals are:

1) Expand early childhood care and education.
2) Provide free and compulsory primary education for all.
3) Promote learning and life skills for young people and adults.
4) Increase adult literacy by fifty percent.
5) Achieve gender parity by 2005, gender equality by 2015.
6) Improve the quality of education.[3]

Entrenched within the rhetorical ideology of school as a liberating force, the initiative targets, in particular, communities in the global South, which are perceived as being more urgently in need of educational reform. As has been noted, however, the epistemological and educational standards upheld in EFA are broadly Western, and privilege the types of knowledge, subjectivity and expertise endorsed in the global North (Goldstein, 2004). These standards extend the logic of efficiency, productivity and meritocracy throughout the developing world, clearly delivering the hegemonic message that productive output through wage-labour is a sine qua non of meaningful social participation. These values are conspicuously neoliberal in their emphasis on productivity, and their presumption of capitalist economic structures; the very structure of EFA interventions imposes an economistic schema in which individuals are forced "to adapt their behaviour in order to maximize perceived rewards" (Goldstein, 2004, p. 8). The particular knowledge structures that comprise this neoliberal pedagogical approach are market-driven and market serving. Students, it is assumed, will inevitably participate in the capitalist system. The EFA's educational objectives must be analyzed vis-à-vis the North/Western hegemony of capitalism/consumerism. Through the *Education for All* initiative, capitalist values wield tremendous influence over global education discourse; these values clearly privilege socio-economic elites and dominant corporate interests, I argue.

1) Early Childhood Care and Education

Childhood care must be emphasized, since traditional indigenous childcare arrangements are often precluded by the introduction of neoliberal economic schemas. As Black (2002) has emphasized, the neoliberal emphasis on 'development' often enforces mandatory wage labour on indigenous populations, and the extremely low wages paid to most indigenous workers, force men, women, and often children into labour positions. These imposed labour conditions may prevent many parents from administering childcare directly as they are forced into subsistence in the capitalist economy. The scarcity of reliable childcare that EFA seeks to address is not an

inherent shortcoming of communities in the global South, but likely an artifact of the social structures imposed by neocolonialism and neoliberalism.

Likewise, emphasis on early childhood education may be an attempt to restitute the gap created by capitalism itself. Childhood education was traditionally administered by the family and community in many indigenous communities, and was directly suited to the social and economic traditions and observances of the community itself. With the displacement of customary social and economic structures by neoliberal economics, traditional communal education often becomes untenable.

2) Free and Compulsory Primary Education for All

The desire to provide "free and compulsory primary education for all," (UNESCO website) threatens to undermine traditional indigenous ways of knowing and subsisting; to the extent that 'primary education' is 'compulsory,' it effectively forces children into classrooms, often precluding traditional social arrangements in which children 'learn through doing'. Moreover, this objective presupposes a particular notion of 'education,' which conforms to the conventional Western paradigm of classroom-based learning and formal institutional pedagogy. 'Education' is conflated with formal schooling; thus 'compulsory' education involves the enforcement of an educational system that may be counter-productive to indigenous communities' goals and cherished traditions. Although attempts are sometimes made to consider local issues within the curriculum, most state-sanctioned curricula originate in Western epistemologies. While these curricula self-evidently endorse Western social and economic values, they are of questionable relevance to indigenous traditions. This type of institutionalization will surely accommodate the interests of, largely Northern, socio-economic elites who understand 'education' as a tool in the service of capitalist economic objectives.

3) Promote Learning and Life Skills for Young People and Adults

Presumably, then, the 'learning and life skills' envisioned for young people and adults are skills conducive to participation in the capitalist system. To learn within the paradigm is to discover how to gainfully participate in the economic sphere, an occupational realm drastically limited by the economic conditions in many geographical regions, particularly within the global South. Even within non-traditional spheres (i.e. wage labour in new industries), the relevance of formal schooling is highly questionable: global economic flows require an immense labour force in the realm of production. This demand is generally met by low-paid wage labourers in the global South.

It may be counter-argued that education in the global South is intended to eliminate poverty, likely by fostering economic development. The actual function of globalist education, however, is drastically discordant with this ideal. As Millet and Toussaint (2004) have compellingly argued, economic development in the global South is significantly obstructed by national-level poverty and debt; consequently, local economic development is significantly curtailed. The economics are simple: the demand for cheaply made goods in the affluent North requires low production costs in the South. By implication, international economic and social arrangements obstruct economic development in the global South, and serve to secure affordable labour. Given

the drastic limitations on occupational opportunities in these regions, it is implausible to think that improved 'quality of education' will translate into improved occupational and social opportunities. Simply, educational reform without broader social reform is effectively meaningless.

4) Increase Adult Literacy by Fifty-Percent

First and foremost, the promotion of 'literacy' presupposes that literacy is itself a self-evidently meaningful concept. The notion of literacy, however, must be problematized; what is generally envisioned is formal linguistic literacy, and no attempt is made in UNESCO's measurement system to account for what Goldstein called "problems of translation" and broad cultural disparities in the very meanings and implications of literacy (2004, p. 9).[4] Formal literacy in any language, after all, is of questionable relevance to people who can not afford to purchase books. Limited access to written resources is only one problematic aspect of this objective. The utility of literacy skills is also undermined by the economic impositions often faced by people in the South. Long, exhausting hours of wage labour leave little time for reading. Thus, the intrinsic personal rewards of reading are only viable *if* one can afford books, and has the time available to read them. Further, written literacy is often irrelevant, and sometimes even threatening, to oral cultures that value traditions of storytelling and spoken narrative.

5) Achieve Gender Parity by 2005, Gender Equality by 2015

In addition to being untenable (it is retrospectively apparent that global gender parity was not reached in 2005, and prospectively unlikely that complete gender equality will be obtained by 2015), it is possible that Western notions of gender equality are incongruous with traditional social arrangements. Thus, as self-evidently desirable as gender parity and equality may seem from a Western perspective, these aspects are not universally desired, and cannot be attained without significant cultural imposition in certain regions. In North-run businesses, gendered division of labour still persists, and it is unlikely that this inequality will be rectified solely by educational reform.

6) Improve the Quality of Education

The type of formal education being implemented, which generally takes the capitalist system for granted and presupposes the possibility of 'development,' conceals the socio-structural limitations imposed on the world's poorest countries (Black, 2004). The 'quality of education' is contingent on broader social conditions, and to the extent that institutional education presents social opportunity as inextricable from economic success within capitalism, it is integrating indigenous peoples into a capitalist economic system that disadvantages them. High quality education, according to standards of verbal literacy and Anglo-centric epistemological structures, is inutile to students who are structurally forced into low-paying wage labour positions and profound poverty. The promise of meritocratic reward may motivate these marginalized labourers, but it is fundamentally illusory: for most of the workforce in the global South, hard work will never attain job security, or advancement.

In short, the values and epistemology inculcated through globalist education reform are conspicuously accommodative of neoliberalism. International educational reform, critically examined within a context of economic and political globalization, reveals itself to be a form of neocolonialism through which neoliberal power elites are attempting to 'colonize the mind space' of indigenous populations. Such reformist policies can readily be construed as instances of epistemological and socio-political violence. This violence is a manifest extension of colonialism, I argue.

In conjunction with an array of direct socio-political and economic conditionalities[5], the neoliberal neocolonialist educational agenda serves to instill knowledge systems and values in which the peoples of the global South are at a tremendous disadvantage. Participation in the capitalist economy, for most indigenous people in the global south, entails low-level wage-labour with subsistence remuneration (at best) and negligible opportunities for advancement. For them, the declaration that hard work will be rewarded by improved material and social conditions is basically untrue. Thus, to the extent that they accept the lessons inscribed powerfully on schooling through contemporary globalist educational reforms, they will believe that there is no viable, ameliorated alternative to their exploited conditions. I argue that this form of subjective violence is quintessentially colonialist; through the systemic violence of educational socialization, neocolonialist and neoliberal values serve to naturalize the disadvantages, and exploited labour, of indigenous populations.

Educational Policy as Systemic Violence

Freire's (2000) work insisted that when people are prevented from learning, this obstruction is a form of violence. Amongst the most celebrated pedagogical works of the contemporary era, Freire's magnum opus, *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, highlights the fundamental inequalities of 'third world' social systems, and the educational architectures that preserve these inequalities. We may, functionally, define "systemic violence," according to Epp and Watkinson (1997) as "any institutionalized practice or procedure that adversely impacts on disadvantaged individuals or groups. The adverse effects can be seen in psychological, mental, cultural, spiritual, economic or physical burdens" (p. xiv). This definition, however, must be expanded, since systemic violence can, and surely does, occur against individuals who would not customarily be understood as 'disadvantaged'. In fact, the systemic violence envisioned here includes violence perpetrated by schools against individuals with considerable social, cultural and economic advantages, in addition to those who are 'disadvantaged'. Systemic violence, as we understand it, is not only a situation in which people are prevented from learning, nor is it fully encompassed by practices/procedures 'that adversely impact on disadvantaged individuals or groups'. The type of subjective, systemic violence with which we are concerned consists in actively teaching, to both privileged and underprivileged students, a set of values, beliefs, epistemic standards, and identity contents that perpetuate and extend destructive economic, social and political participation.

"Systemic violence," Epp and Watkinson (1996) wrote, "is so much a part of the fabric of our society, and therefore our educational system, that the exclusionary and biased aspects of our educational processes [are] not…immediately obvious" (p. 192). Yet, we must not condone or disregard systemic violence in schools simply because it is symptomatic of broader social ills. In particular, we must be critically vigilant in assessing the discourses and emphases that conceal

systemic school violence. Inequality and post facto defenses of inequality are amongst the hallmarks of contemporary education. For most students, throughout the world, "the most important thing they learn from school is their station in life" (p. 192). It is easy to see how this lesson naturalizes and legitimates an inequitable world, in which a privileged few come to view themselves as entitled, while a subordinate majority begin to perceive their station in life as inevitable and appropriate. Schools, in this regard, are not discrete from the broader, globalized society in which they operate. By implication, the reality of schools' systemic violence is often obscured by its integration within broader systems of violence and inequality.

If we are to take seriously Bourdieu (1974) and Durkheim's (1956) insights on the socializing function of schools, then we must acknowledge that schools are vehicles of social change, good or bad. It is tragic that global politics are arranged in a corrupt, unjust fashion. It is, however, much more severe that schools mirror these faults, since schools are designed to perpetuate the social system. Even more frightening is the fact that schools' increasingly homogeneous curricula[6] are powerfully shaped by neoliberalism and neocolonialism. Although it is widely accepted that schools generally fail to counteract the hegemonic influence of neoliberalism, we must reorient our perspective. Schools are, actually, actively complicit in reinforcing, and extending the value systems and knowledge structures of neoliberalism. Apposite to the negative definition of schools as 'not helping' this unsettling neocolonialist trend, we must view schools as 'actively promoting' neoliberalism's expansion.

The Harms of Education: School as Universalist Violence

Harber (2004) identified a logically complete set of three possibilities: either education "improves society", maintains "society exactly as is", or it "makes society worse and harms individuals" (foreword to *Schooling as Violence*). Critical appraisal shows that education is profoundly (though not exclusively) harmful to individuals, and deeply damaging to society. Privileged students, particularly in the global North, are socialized into a system of justification that allows them to behave in an irresponsible and damaging way within the framework of neoliberal consumption. This is a perpetuation of violence (through exploitative and damaging economic structures) against many underprivileged wage-labourers, particularly those in the global South. In turn, through universalist education initiatives, underprivileged students, especially those in the global South, are harmed by institutionalized curricula that present market economics as inevitable, and impose limitations on personal choice (constraining underprivileged populations into exploited labour positions).

In these regards, formal schooling is pathogenic. Complacent and irresponsible social participation by many privileged communities in the global North, and abject acceptance of subordinacy by many underprivileged communities in the global South, are taken to be 'pathological'.[7] To the extent that schools foster such attitudes, schools are inherently damaging; and it is very clear that the fundamental epistemological and value presumptions of institutional education do cultivate these very attitudes. This is apparent in the everyday lifestyles and consumption patterns of affluent communities in the global North. Despite increasingly rigorous attempts to bring these issues to light, late-stage capitalism continues unabated. Yet, it could not do so without cheap labour in the global South. This labour is secured by educational initiatives, such as EFA, which serve to integrate indigenous populations throughout the global South, into the values, ideals, and epistemological substructures of contemporary capitalism.

Surely, there are exceptions to these principles. Non-governmental organizations, grassroots movements, and innumerable educators are attempting to generate critical debate about these issues and raise awareness of the scope and scale of social injustice within the global economy. These efforts are born of the best of intentions; yet, ultimately the assumption that awareness fosters empathy, or lifestyle change, within the affluent communities of the global North is proving increasingly naïve. In reality, the educational efforts of critical educators are being trumped by privileged peoples' refusal to relinquish their luxurious lifestyles. We simply cannot assume that awareness naturally or immediately motivates change. Moreover, schools' socially preservative function undermines the possibility of radical, or revolutionary change, presenting social reform as an inevitably gradual process, to be subsumed under the highly questionable concepts of 'development' and 'progress'.

Likewise, the current education system can be defended by appeal to the fact that it fosters a relatively stable social order. Our system, after all, is much better than chaos and EFA's goals are intended to ensure social order and relative peace. We must not, however, overlook the magnitude of conflict generated by poverty. Excessive competition for scarce material resources perpetuates unrest and open conflict in many regions in the global South. Conflict in these areas de-stabilizes local labour forces, and prevents social unification and organized revolt. Insofar as formal education portrays capitalism and wage-labour as inevitable, it serves as an effective complement to the social and economic de-stabilization of exploited communities. More importantly, the idea that things 'could be worse,' only serves to justify a destructive social and economic configuration (the exploitative system of education currently seen, which serves neoliberalism) to a *more* destructive social and economic configuration (the rhetorical notion of social chaos and radical conflict). This either-or proposition is based on a false dichotomy: there is no inevitable choice between the current system and chaos. Instead, the possible educational configurations are literally limitless; educational theorists must affirm the possibility of myriad possible educational paradigms and reform prospects, since this is prerequisite for change.

Perhaps the most viable, and troubling, counter-argument is to be offered on the basis of apathy: a purely rational, neoconservative economic paradigm might argue that human factors are irrelevant to the simple mathematical equation of profit. And, to be sure, from the point of view of profit, the current system is entirely intelligible and highly effective. This paper, however, affirms the importance of human rights, in particular the right to security, subsistence, and the provision of basic necessities. At a basic ideological and moral level, this paper disagrees with the reductive capitalist valorization of profit-above-all-else.

Education for All, which treats institutional schooling as an innate human right, emerges under the banner of democratic citizenship. Yet, 'democracy' cannot be treated as a self-evidently meaningful concept, since the term itself is routinely expropriated by deeply opposing political interests. With respect to schools, there is a widespread "paradox that schools in many countries with democratic political institutions educate for control via authoritarian school structures and curricula" evident in "the lack of real power and participation afforded to learners" (Harber, 2004, p. 66). In the hegemonic knowledge discourse that dictates the educational curricula's form and content, on an increasingly global scale, the very concept of democracy is treated as coextensive with consumerist rights within the economic system. That is, 'democracy' is

collapsed into neoliberalism. Democratic participation, in this schema, is fundamentally reducible to one's rights to work productively, and consume freely, within the capitalist economic system. This is a pathological vision of democratic citizenship, and it is being instated aggressively, with intentionally global reach.

Schooling's epistemological force within this pathological framework derives from their neocolonialist form. English is, arguably, the dominant and increasingly universal language of global commerce, politics, and privileged communication. By integrating indigenous communities into the English language, and into technological literacy, economic and cultural elites can influence (if not dictate) the configurations of citizenship and social participation throughout the world. This influence pervades over the knowledge structures, cultural values, and material conditions of people's lives.

Conclusion

School's Violence in the Global North and the Global South

Institutional education, although producing very different results for privileged and underprivileged communities, is increasingly cohesive. It delivers a more and more consistent message, in which neoliberalism and market economics are presented as inevitable and legitimate. Yet, the values inscribed in institutional education, and the socialization it provides, as Durkheim (1956) has asserted, serve to replicate society and sustain the status quo. Moreover, as Bourdieu has indicated, education serves to maintain and extend the privilege of socio-cultural and economic elites.

This paper has argued that schools impose increasingly global systemic violence, in the form of neoliberal socialization, on students. In indigenous communities of the global South, this is a form of neocolonialism. In privileged communities of the global North, this systemic violence imposes identity constraints on students, compelling them to be self-entitled, globally insensitive, irresponsible consumers. In both cases, this paper argues, schooling's hegemonic messages are intrinsically pathogenic. Ultimately, this educational configuration is based on the conceptual collapse of 'democracy' and renders it increasingly difficult to distinguish 'educating for democracy' from 'educating for neoliberalism'.

This paper must be considered as a point of departure for future research and thinking in general, rather than a point of conclusion. As society continues to evolve, in a context of globalization, educators and educational theorists must seek ways to reform and improve the structure of systemic education, so as to foster justice, equity and true democracy. In particular, future research must be attentive to the relationship between formal education and the broader social contexts in which it transpires, with a view to critical and emancipatory social change.

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Notes

[1] Additionally, educational reformation was essential for the innumerable European 'missionaries' intent on 'civilizing' the indigenous 'savages' of colonized regions.

[2] Even the defenders of the current system generally do not assert that it is entirely equal. Rather, they propose that 'hard work' is an equalizing force, and will be equally rewarded by a basically just system. It is this idea, of basic educational fairness, that I contest throughout this paper.

[3] Retrieved from http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.phpURL_ID=47044&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

[4] A certain degree of scholarly and professional attention is also accorded to 'functional' literacy, which must be understood in relation to the exigencies of the economic system, and the demands imposed in the sphere of wage labour and productivity. Functional literacy appears to be, in most conceptualizations, reducible to productive (i.e. waged) skill sets.

[5] These include unequal trade agreements, ironically debilitating 'development' loans and Structural Adjustment Programs. Although a comprehensive explanation of these measures is beyond the purview of this paper, it is herein assumed that hegemonic global policies effectively serve to exploit colonized regions and their peoples, and effectively prevent broad economic development.

[6] Many global education initiatives explicitly attempt to institute diverse, and culturally specific curricula. This paper, however, assumes that globalist education initiatives are based on 'Western' epistemology, and culturally relative content is eclipsed by an underlying valuational homogeneity.

[7] We must not overlook the possibility for resistance. This paper does not posit that students in underprivileged indigenous South communities will inevitably be acquiescent to the neocolonialist and neoliberal messages of contemporary education. Rather, it presents these forces as tremendously powerful (though not irresistibly so) and persuasive in socializing students.