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**A Comparative Analysis of Education Reform  
and its Impact on Socio-economic Deprivation  
in the Twentieth Century**

**Deborah Ann Sabric**

**Saint Edmund's College  
2018**

**This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

## **Abstract**

# **A Comparative Analysis of Education Reform in England and United States and its Impact on Socio-economic Deprivation in the Twentieth Century**

**Deborah Ann Sabric**

The research project, conceptualized through a comparative historical framework, focuses on an analysis of American and English education policy from 1964 to 2000 with particular emphasis on the inter-relationships between education policy and socio-economic disadvantage. Although the focus of the project is primarily the last four decades of the twentieth century, there is an initial consideration of immediate post-war discourses on poverty and education focusing on the impact that these had upon educational structures and curricula. Critical theory, particularly as conceptualized by Jürgen Habermas, and the Culture of Poverty thesis advanced by Oscar Lewis, form the methodological frameworks that underpin the research project. The research, which was conducted in two post-industrial communities with significant rates of socio-economic deprivation and records of poor educational attainment within secondary education, considers the impact of national policy upon the communities, particularly in relationship to socio-economic deprivation, access to education, equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes. The research design utilises the case study method to scrutinise two secondary schools within these communities as a means of analysing how teachers negotiated the implementation of education policies for their respective student populations. Documentary evidence and oral histories provide the methods to delve into this interconnection between education and socio-economic deprivation while modified Skinnerian and Eastonian frameworks provide the foundations upon which to analyse the data. The dissertation is not meant to trace the history of two schools and two communities but to see the schools and communities as a microcosm of American and English secondary education. The intention, therefore, is to employ the research findings to prescribe potential and future policy directions. Essentially, tracing educational history to understand it while utilising educational history as a tool to inform new and innovative policy where education can ameliorate socio-economic deprivation in each nation.

## **Preface**

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University of similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit as set forth by the Degree Committee of the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

## Acknowledgements

As the end of my dissertation nears, it is fitting to acknowledge and thank those people who have contributed to all facets of this research project.

First, and foremost, I must express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Philip W. Gardner, who has acted as my dissertation supervisor over the course of this research project. His wisdom, expertise, good humour and guidance have been invaluable in completing this project and without his determination to see this through I am not sure that it would have come to fruition. My skills as a historian of education, researcher, lecturer and writer have been honed over the course of innumerable supervisions, cups of tea, laughter and more than a few tears. I cannot thank him enough and I can only hope that this dissertation does justice to the time he has dedicated to it.

I need to convey my thanks to the many teachers whose voices, insights and narratives form the backbone of this research. Inviting me into their classrooms, homes and ultimately into their professional lives provided an intimate portrait of their careers, their teaching, their beliefs and the histories of the schools and communities where they served. Their contribution to this research was an invaluable counterbalance to the existing body of research literature and will add to the ongoing debate surrounding education reform.

Furthermore, the support of the head teachers and the approbation of the two local education authorities provided the necessary access to the schools so that a dialogue between researcher and researched could begin. Their hospitality and support were extraordinary and without which this research simply would not have been possible.

My road in writing this dissertation has been labyrinthine yet has been supported by many friends and colleagues whose contributions to this work are inestimable. Members of Saint Edmund's College – Dr. Amy Brereton, Commander Peter Brereton, PhD., USN, Dr. Bernadette O'Keefe and Dr. Michael Robson – provided moral support, encouragement and friendship throughout the years. Members of the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge - Dr. Peter Cunningham, the Reverend Dr. Philip Raymont and Professor Lani Florian – encouraged my historical thinking, discussed education over endless cups of tea and applauded the completion of this dissertation. To friends and family whose guidance and love have been unending over the years – Mariann Buesing, Vincent Buesing, Sandra and Robert Stivale, Col. Gina Sabric, USAF, Karen Yusko, Dr. Brian Yusko, the Reverend Dr. Dennis Holtschneider, C.M., Dr. John B. Greg, Dr. Frank P. LeVeness, Michael Timothy Taylor, Christopher D. Reeves. Dr. Andrew Townsend, Anne Denise McInnis, Catherine Grabowski, Jeanette Perry, Anne Cox and Mark Snow – thank you. Furthermore, the inspiration and support of the Daughters of Charity and the Vincentian Communities in New York City who helped to shape my understanding of educational disadvantage and the disenfranchisement of the poor, I owe a debt of gratitude.

While much joy comes with the submission of this dissertation, it is also tinged with sadness for three people cannot share this work with me.

To my father, Michael Sabric, thank you for being who you are and sharing your life with me. I can only hope this makes you smile.

To Joseph James Tauraso, whose vision of the poor, whose joy for life and whose unyielding friendship, provided the strongest of foundations for my research. You will never know how much you have given to this work and to my life. My gratitude to you is unending.

To my mother, Eileen G. Buesing, a mere thank you will never be enough and it is with profound sadness that you will not be able to read this work. It was your belief in education as the great hope, in its capacity to improve lives and your enduring belief in my possibilities that encouraged me to dream. Your strength and courage through much adversity in your life particularly as a single mother who sacrificed much to ensure my own education, continues to shape me today. It is for you and the gift of your life that this dissertation is written.

In closing, when asked the other day, if my godson wished to be acknowledged for his contributions, Peter P said in the clear tones of a 15 month-old, 'yeah.' While there is some doubt as to whether or not he was saying 'yeah' to this or to his lunch, his smiles, hugs and infectious grins have acted as my impetus this year. For Peter Laurence Brereton and Isabelle Ryleigh Brereton who I am convinced will do great things in their lives and, no matter what they choose to do, will do so with gusto.

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## **List of Abbreviations and Acronyms**

AMA	Association of Assistant Masters
APS	Assisted Places Scheme
ATTE	Association for Teachers in Technical Education
BERA	British Education Research Association
CACE	Central Advisory Council for Education
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CSE	Certificate of Secondary Education
CTC	City Technology College
DES	Department for Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ELA	English Language Arts (Regents)
EPA	Educational Priority Area
ERA	Education Reform Act
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
FSM	Free School Meals
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education

GED	General Educational Development
ILEA	Inner London Education Authority
LAPP	Lower Attaining Pupils Programme
LEA	Local Education Authority
MORI	Market and Opinion Research International
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
NEA	National Education Association
NEGP	National Education Goals Panel
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NYS	New York State
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
ROSLA	Raising of the School Leaving Age
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
SURR	School Under Registration Review
TES	<i>Times Education Supplement</i>
TIMMS	Trends International Mathematics and Science Study
TIMMS-R	Trends International Mathematics and Science Study – Repeat

TVEI	Technical and Vocational Education Initiative
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Commonly referred to as the United Nations Children's Fund)
US	United States of America

# **Introduction**

## **Considerations and Rationale**

The prelude to any piece of academic writing provides an embarkation point for engagement with the research community who will ultimately read and assess the significance of the research project undertaken and the results and claims arising from the research process. It therefore becomes crucial for the researcher to involve the readers in the process that led to the formulation and development of the research questions that ultimately steered her on the research journey chosen. Using reflexivity, the researcher explicates the very personal reasons for electing to set out on the particular path she did, rather than embarking upon a different topic, involving a different set of research questions or methodologies.

The dissertation scrutinises the relationship between poverty and educational outcomes in England and the United States (US) with particular emphasis on the ameliorative effects of educational policy within socio-economically deprived communities. In many ways, this is not a new topic for exploration whether one is looking at the constituent components of poverty or the powerful combination of its elements. While evidence of the existence of poverty can be traced to the birth of the historical record, it has not always been at the forefront of the political agenda. Poverty policy, like many national and international policy initiatives, suffers from the ebb and flow of social and political interest. As a social phenomenon, poverty appeared on both the American and English socio-political agendas in the late nineteenth century as a result of the process of industrialisation: the rapid expansion of industrial production, the growth of cities and the creation of urban ghettos. Despite concerted effort, poverty proved to be resistant to the social welfare programmes adopted in the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, poverty was ‘rediscovered’ once more in the early 1960s and became the lynchpin of social policy only to quietly return to the shadows in the 1970s.

Similarly, in both nations, there has been a consistent pattern of interest and indifference in education and educational outcomes throughout the twentieth century. Although sharing common socio-cultural roots, the education systems in both nations diverged. Systemically, their evolution can be traced to the ideas of Horace Mann and the common school movement

and the *Education Act 1870*. While these educational cornerstones, and subsequent pieces of legislation, led to increased access to and participation in education, concerns over the capacity of the educational structures to ensure equality of opportunity emerged. Both nations introduced incremental educational interventions to achieve equality of opportunity for students from socio-economically deprived or racial minority backgrounds to address the critics. The English comprehensive school movement prompted the structural reorganisation of education whilst American Civil Rights legislation crafted a legal resolution for inherent systemic inequalities to address equality of opportunity. However, globalisation alongside a crisis of confidence in the education systems and their ability to compete within the international community crystallised a vociferous debate on educational outcomes and, ultimately, educational standards. A corpus of research detailing disappointing national educational attainment levels and the factors responsible for this decline in educational standards subsequently emerged and sparked the standards movement that has prevailed since the 1980s. Furthermore, research also demonstrated a relationship between socio-economic deprivation, successful attainment in secondary education and progression into further or higher education.

I was acutely aware of both poverty and substandard educational outcomes in urban communities when I began teaching in Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York in 1990. The neighbourhood, an amalgam of African-American and Latino communities, was renowned for its glorious brownstones reminiscent of a more prosperous era, high rise social housing projects heralding the decline of the neighbourhood, a formidable gang and gun culture, high incidence of drug use and intractable poverty. It could be inferred then that schools in Bedford-Stuyvesant did not achieve. Eighth grade proms and graduations were immense celebrations, much more so than my own had been, leading me to wonder why so much emphasis was placed upon the transition from primary to secondary education. A colleague provided the best explanation when he posited that this was likely to be the sole graduation for these children as most, particularly the boys, were likely to drop out of high school. In many ways, my experience confirmed the academic research findings and demonstrated that this community and these children were in peril and contributed all too evidently to the debate sparked by the publication of *A Nation at Risk*.

When I moved to an urban secondary school, the focus shifted to educational outcomes, specifically attainment linked to high-stakes examinations known as the New York State Regents Examinations. Working with both high and low ability groups within two different secondary schools, it was apparent that students with less support at home, with fewer socio-economic advantages or with parents from immigrant backgrounds regularly underachieved on high-stakes examinations, often resulting in countless retakes to ensure they passed the examinations to gain their high school diplomas. Moreover, American high school students were frequently encouraged to pursue an academic curriculum and a university education although many lower ability students would not be ready for such programmes at the end of traditional secondary education. Vocational education provided an alternate route, yet it was relegated to the worst technical schools with reputations as the dumping ground for underachieving and behaviourally challenging students. I looked toward English education and its more established vocational qualifications as a path to explore for my students and, ultimately, as a potential model for American education.

The continual top down promulgation of education policy derived from educational research, national and state policy agendas, public opinion and ostensible consultation became the constant feature of my eleven years in the classroom. Yet, my experience was that no one ever asked me, and I doubt any of my colleagues, our views on policy initiatives or research evidence. We were told that children in economically deprived schools or from poor socio-economic backgrounds were less likely to attain and were at risk. We were informed about new curriculum initiatives and the toughening of standards, a movement that frequently led to a 'teaching for the test' mentality among the profession and one, which I believed, did a disservice to all children irrespective of socio-economic background. We were advised that standards were falling and that examinations would provide the best means to secure positive and sustained educational outcomes. However, no one ever consulted me on my perspectives on the purpose of education, poverty, attainment, curricula or standards. Policy-makers did not ask my opinion, or those of my colleagues in three different schools, what we thought would be possible in our schools and with our students. We were given the policy agenda and asked to implement it even though, at times, the programme ran counter to professional practice. This hierarchical dissemination of research and policy raises an abiding question:

did the received wisdom represent educational reality or did teachers come to believe this because policy-makers authoritatively posited it to be so?

This policy dichotomy, and my positional stance, shaped the research questions that act as the foundation of the inquiry presented in this dissertation. The first research question targets the realm of policy in a specific historical context:

***In the post-World War II period, defined for this study as 1964 through 2000, what were the major trends and policy initiatives implemented in the education systems of England and the United States that targeted the amelioration of poverty in urban communities?***

In order to comprehend present day policy, it is paramount to understand its origins both within a historical context and a policy framework. Yet, history rarely offers a definitive point upon which to commence an examination. While 1964 is the stated beginning point, an initial exploration of the immediate post-war period provided background on the formative legislation and policy initiatives that impacted upon the two eras studied in-depth.

My goal for this research project, however, was not to add specifically to the rich historical knowledge already available for critique. Brian Simon, Gary McCulloch, Lawrence Cremin and Diane Ravitch amongst many others, provided influential and definitive accounts of the eras in which my research is situated, although they focus either on specific issues or write with a particular bias. My objective was to create a historical-political study that referenced not only education policy documents but drew upon the experiences and voices of the professional community in schools, the teachers. The study is based on the presumption that, like me, their perspectives on educational policy had not been sought either. With this aim firmly established, the second research question emerged:

***Within this time frame, how would teachers who taught in the neighbourhood secondary schools, evaluate programs and initiatives particularly in terms of their potential to reform education and to break the cycle of poverty in which many of their students lived?***

My final goal in conducting this piece of research was not only to tell a historical narrative through policy documents and teachers' oral history accounts of education policy in action but to offer possible guidance for future policy initiatives that would be responsive to community needs while also realising that education is increasingly a national as well as a local community issue. Emerging from the historical narrative and the teachers' oral histories, these policy recommendations will be explored in the capstone of the dissertation, the conclusions chapter.

The research questions created the foundation for the project as well as the choice of inquiry framework ultimately chosen as the most appropriate for the design. The dissertation is set out in six chapters, which address different aspects of the research while ultimately drawing all of the different components together. The first chapter acts as the substantive literature review converging upon the issue of poverty. Thus, it is germane to consider both the quantitative poverty definitions as well as the socio-cultural understandings of poverty and the debates surrounding these conceptual frameworks. Additionally, it was relevant to contemplate the education and poverty linkages and the impact this relationship has upon lower socio-economic groups. Finally, the chapter explores the theoretical paradigm that frames the discussion throughout the dissertation. Conscious of my American roots and the historical rejection of Marxism, I chose to adopt a critical theory approach inspired by Jürgen Habermas, believing that dialogue between community and policy-makers will address the needs of both and lead to emancipation of the former.

With the theoretical scaffolding in place, the second chapter focuses on the methodological framework used to structure the research. Since American and English education has long enjoyed a reciprocal learning relationship, this chapter explores the appropriateness, viability and caveats of conducting qualitative research within a comparative context. One of the primary apprehensions in historical enquiry is not only where to begin the account but how to structure the story. The rationale for choosing periodisation lies in the incompatibility of using decades or election cycles as the principal organisational concepts. Periodisation fostered an understanding of the philosophical and political transitions that ensued as a result of internal and external pressures applied to education. Finally, the collection of data necessitates the analysis of the information to create a framework for understanding. I chose

to utilise a modified Skinnerian-Eastonian approach as the most appropriate analytical tool for a historical and political study of education policy.

The data analysis chapters reflect the duality of the research with a distinction between documentary evidence and oral history testimonies. The third, fourth and fifth chapters trace the historical narrative through documentary evidence. Both primary and secondary source material constitute the main data sources for the historical policy contexts explored. As previously stated, the study calls for significant consideration of the immediate post-war period and the policies generated in the US and England although the era technically is beyond the boundaries of the study. The logic for its inclusion as a distinct chapter centres upon it as a potent precursor to the debates generated in the 1960s and 1980s and without it there would be insufficient context within which to frame the substantive debates explored in the two focus eras. The fourth and fifth chapters trace the historical development of English and American education history between 1964 and 2000. The Skinnerian-inspired approach draws upon context as well as illocutionary meaning as the primary tools for analysis of the documentary evidence while the Eastonian systems analysis affords the opportunity of considering the external as well as the internal factors affecting education in both nations and the ways in which structures responded to the stresses upon the systems.

The sixth chapter moves beyond documentary evidence and the historians' accounts to the oral history testimonies of teachers. The comparison of English and American education structures can be problematic if one looks at the entirety of the system. Specifically, the different organisational structures make a direct comparison difficult. Bowing to this consideration, the comparison is situated in two specific political units, two communities and two schools to create a viable comparison. Within this framework, I chose two comparable Local Education Authorities (LEAs), one in each national setting, and specifically not situated within the political or economic capitals. The LEAs exhibited several key characteristics including high poverty rates and shifting economic fortunes resulting from factors external to the communities. They were not the largest cities but they represented significantly populous urban communities within their regions. Finally, I chose two representative schools in each community whose history transcended the scope of the time periods and whose teachers had strong ties to their schools as evidenced by the length of their

tenure either in the particular school or the LEA. These teachers, who willingly participated in lengthy oral history interviews, contribute the data for the chapter. Their experiences within school, their assessment and understanding of poverty both within the nation and the community, and their assessment of national poverty issues provide the complement to the documentary evidence.

The aim of the final chapter is to generate conclusions from the research framework and the data, both documentary and interview-based. While, the primary aim of the study is not to provide an historical narrative of English and American education, it seeks to contextualise this narrative and the experience of the classroom teachers to suggest possible ways forward. Emerging from the historical narrative and the teachers' oral histories, the development of future policy recommendations will be explored in the capstone of the dissertation. This is the significant contribution to knowledge that I claim in this process and one that I believe is the most important for education in the twenty-first century.

As a concluding thought to this introduction, I should say that in style, tone and voice it represents a departure from the chapters that follow. It is highly personal but it is the only place where I believe I have made an overt attempt to detail my rationale and my bias in choosing the topic, the research methodology and the research framework. I did not annotate or substantiate my claims here in the way that they will be done in the following chapters. Rather, I have endeavoured to explain why I am investing in this research.

# Chapter One

## Poverty, Education, and Critical Theory: A Literature Review of Reform

### Introduction

The methodological framework that underpins this analysis of English and American education policy is rooted in a comparative-historical approach. In her consideration of the characteristics of this approach, Evans contends that there are four principal reasons for conducting comparative studies: borrowing and evaluating policy with the option for transplantation; advisory capacity especially for developing nations; descriptive studies which foster more in-depth research and; studies to advance cross-national understanding.<sup>1</sup> While all of these have merits, the latter approach, which focuses on “comparison motivated by the need to understand more deeply the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of policies, practices and systems...” is the most appropriate for this study.<sup>2</sup> The comparativist strategy is beneficial for it offers innovative policy solutions while recognising the potential limitations posed by cross-cultural solutions.<sup>3</sup> The adoption of this approach necessitates that the literature review begin with a brief discussion of key factors that have the potential to impact the comparative analysis of American and English education policy.<sup>4</sup>

Chitty, espousing an historical approach to policy analysis, suggests, “that policy-making is always influenced by what has happened in past decades and that the historical account must always be presented within a coherent explanatory framework

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<sup>1</sup> Karen Evans, ‘Comparative successes or failures? Some methodological issues in conducting international comparative research in post-secondary comparative education,’ available from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001309.htm>, 1999, p. 17. (Please note: the Coalition government undertook a process of archiving many official government publications available on the Internet that no longer reflected current government policy. Additionally, the passage of time has meant that some original hyperlinks are no longer available. Wherever possible, the original links cited here have been updated. However, there are some links that cannot be updated and remain broken despite every effort to address this issue.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp.1-2.

<sup>4</sup> A distinction is necessary in the usage of the terms England, English, Great Britain, British and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Text references to Great Britain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, British and the UK refer to the nation in its entirety whereas references to England or English pertain solely to this region within the UK.

stressing the key themes underpinning political and social change.”<sup>5</sup> Adopting Chitty’s approach as a postulate for exploring policy differences, it is possible to review common factors affecting policy-making while exploring divergences over time.

Geographic and demographic factors are key areas of difference; a review of these factors and their impact upon the development of the two nations is essential as these potentially act as determinants in policy-making. Geographically, the United Kingdom (UK) occupies 244,820 square kilometres of land divided into four political entities: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.<sup>6</sup> The Office of Population and Surveys reported that the estimated population of the UK in 1950 was 48,854,303 while the 2001 census reported growth to 58,789,194 representing a 20.3% increase over five decades.<sup>7</sup> The United States (US) occupies 9,631,418 square kilometres of land divided into fifty states and one capital district.<sup>8</sup> In contrast to the UK, the US population demonstrated more robust growth in the same half century: the population increased from 151,325,798 in 1950 to 281,421,906 by the 2000 census representing an 85% increase.<sup>9</sup> The US is approximately thirty-nine times the size in land area, the population in 2000 was approximately 4.7 times the population of the UK and its population grew 13 times faster over a similar period. The impact of demographic and geographic factors for the development, implementation and administration of policy is evident.

While geographic and demographic factors are important, governmental organisation and political power structures contribute significantly to the policy-making process. In Britain, the Prime Minister and Parliament construct national policy, which is then

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<sup>5</sup> Clyde Chitty, *Education Policy in Britain*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004, p. xiv.

<sup>6</sup> United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, available from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/>.

*(While every effort will be made to provide dating references for websites, this may not always be possible depending upon the content or structure of the website. Accession dates for each website, however, will be included within the bibliography.)*

<sup>7</sup> Great Britain, Office of Population, *Census and Surveys*. London: HMSO, 1961 and Great Britain, Office for National Statistics, *Census 2001: First Results on Population for England and Wales*. London: TSO, 2002, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> United States, Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, available from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/>.

<sup>9</sup> United States, Census Bureau, *Decennial Census: Factsheet*, available from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kprof00-us.pdf>.

administered by local authorities essentially creating a national system locally administered. Although policy making is centralised, local authorities are accorded some autonomy over local policy leading to crucial differences in implementation.<sup>10</sup> Conversely, the American model of federalism divides power between the central government and state governments, resulting in considerable constitutional restrictions on the power of both. While the US Constitution reserves many political powers to the states, they are constitutionally restricted from constructing anything other than state or local policy initiatives.<sup>11</sup> As a result of the organisational structures, local governments have varying levels of autonomy in both nations, which can impact upon education policy construction.

While an understanding of policy-making and organisational structures is important, it is equally relevant to note that education policy-making needs to be viewed with a caveat. English and Welsh education structures and policies demonstrated cohesiveness historically, while Northern Ireland and Scotland maintained separate education systems.<sup>12</sup> Although devolution and history affected education policy-making in the UK, the long-standing tension between federal power and states' rights tested American education policy. State governments formulate and administer education policy therein creating 50 autonomous education systems with divergent curricula, examinations, graduation requirements and licensure prerequisites for education professionals. Whilst not maintaining a significant presence in education policy prior to World War II, the federal government used its authority and financial resources to fund education policy initiatives in the post-war era, which subsequently increased its influence.<sup>13</sup> The dichotomous nature of American education policy can position the federal government and its capital resources to fund reform programmes

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<sup>10</sup> Great Britain, Northern Ireland Office, *Key Issues*, available from <https://web.archive.org/web/20060210094613/http://www.nio.gov.uk/index/key-issues.htm>. Devolution ceded limited authority and autonomy to the Scottish and Welsh executives; the movement for greater self-government in Northern Ireland was suspended in 2002 after power sharing between the political parties broke down and direct government from London was restored.

<sup>11</sup> United States, *United States Constitution*, available from <http://www.usconstitution.net/const.html#Am1>, 1787. Historical documents contained in the text and accessed via the Internet may contain a dual dating reference. The initial date indicates the date of origin or publication while the second date indicates its accession date.

<sup>12</sup> Chitty, 2004 p. xiv.

<sup>13</sup> Christopher T. Cross, *Political Education: National Policy Comes of Age*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2004, pp. 1-14.

against individual state governments, which must comply with federal guidelines if they are to benefit from federal education grants.

Despite these divergences, both nations focused on widening educational opportunities through the passage of significant pieces of education reform legislation post-1944. Preparing for a post-war victory, Winston Churchill's Conservative government acknowledged the negative economic impact of an under-educated populace and recognised that the existing educational structures needed to be reconfigured to provide educational opportunity.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, the *Education Act 1944* attempted to reshape the existing education system to provide an appropriate education for all adolescents, who to this point in time were not guaranteed access to secondary education. In 1964, Lyndon Johnson noted the consequences of under-education thereby situating education reform at the centre of the War on Poverty, the cornerstone of his domestic policy agenda. Johnson, speaking at the University of Michigan, stated:

“...Today, 8 million adult Americans...have not finished 5 years of school. Nearly 20 million have not finished 8 years of school. Nearly 54 million more than one-quarter of all America – have not finished high school... In many places, classrooms are overcrowded and curricula are outdated. Most of our qualified teachers are underpaid, and many of our paid teachers are unqualified. So we must give every child a place to sit and a teacher to learn from. Poverty must not be a bar to learning, and learning must offer an escape from poverty...The solution to these problems does not rest on a massive programme in Washington, nor can it rely solely on the strained resources of local authority. They require us to create new concepts of cooperation, a creative federalism, between the National Capital and the leaders of local communities”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Gary McCulloch, *Failing the Ordinary Child? The Theory and Practice of Working-class Secondary Education*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998, pp. 13-56; Janet McKenzie, *Changing Education: A Sociology of Education Since 1944*. London: Prentice Hall, 2001, pp. 172-174; and Brian Simon, *Education and the Social Order: British Education Since 1944*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1999, pp. 15-87.

<sup>15</sup> Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, National Archives and Records Administration, *Remarks at the University of Michigan, May 22, 1964*, available from <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/640522.asp>.

The speech, which was untitled when delivered at the University of Michigan, is commonly referred to as Johnson's *Great Society Speech*. Johnson's speech became the *raison d'être* for the passage of federal legislation including the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)*, which marked the largest federal initiative into American education policy since the passage of the *GI Bill*.

Although Churchill and Johnson's initiatives can be seen as historically compelling examples of national commitment to education, it cannot be presumed that the pre-eminence of education as a keystone of domestic policy is past. In 1998, Tony Blair positioned education reform as the major policy focus of his New Labour government declaring:

“...education is our number one domestic priority. That is the key to economic success and to social justice. We have launched a huge programme of reform. Nursery education. Raising of literacy and numeracy standards in primary schools. Education Authorities that fail schools taken over and changed. Teacher training reform and new qualifications and grading for teachers and head teachers. Class sizes to be cut. New technology to link up every classroom to the benefits of the Internet. A 12 billion pound schools building repair programme. Extra investment.”<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, the passage of George W. Bush's *No Child Left Behind Act* in 2002 reauthorised key federal policies rooted in Johnson's original *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)* legislation while implementing more stringent accountability structures. Education reform coupled with the standards and accountability agendas became hallmarks of education policy in both nations at the start of the twenty-first century.

Working within the context of the welfare state, which posited the interconnection of education as a driving factor in the reduction of poverty, the perception that education failed children from lower socio-economic communities proved problematic. Supplementing this conception is a substantial corpus of research that demonstrates a correlation between education and underachievement among lower socio-economic groups and minority groups.<sup>17</sup> If the negative linkages between poverty and education

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<sup>16</sup> Great Britain, 10 Downing Street, *Speech by the Prime Minister at the US State Department, Friday 6 February 1998*, available from <http://collections.europarchive.org/tna/20060403085217/http://pm.gov.uk/output/Page1155.asp>.

<sup>17</sup> For a formative discussion on the interconnection of educational underachievement and poverty, please see the following: Emma Smith, 'Understanding underachievement: an investigation into the differential attainment of secondary school pupils.' *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 24/5, 2003, pp. 575-586; Alma Harris and Stewart Ranson, 'The contradictions of education policy: disadvantage and achievement.' *British Educational Research Journal* 31/5, 2005, pp. 571-587; Ruth Lupton, 'Social justice and school improvement: improving the quality of schooling in the poorest neighbourhoods.' *British Educational Research Journal* 31/5, 2005, pp. 589-604; Chris Mann, 'The impact of working-class mothers on the educational success of their adolescent daughters at a time of

could be surmounted through reform, then the potentiality for addressing education underachievement and the persistence of poverty existed. Policy-makers converged upon the transformative nature of education embracing it as a measure of increasing social opportunity as well as a proactive strategy to improve the long-term employment prospects of those from lower socio-economic groups.

While it is difficult to draw comparisons between two nations that have such stark differences in physical size, political organisation, and educational structures, a number of valid observations may be made. Utilising Evans' comparative framework and Lawrence's present otherness as guiding principles, it is possible to venture into a comparison to analyse approaches to a common dilemma.<sup>18</sup> More specifically, the evaluative quality of comparativist approaches allows for an analysis of problems and the responses constructed over four decades commencing in the 1960s. Demographics and governmental organisation cannot be overcome in the comparison but must be embraced as factors in assessing policy approaches undertaken in the post-war era. Despite these areas of divergence, education reform became a demonstrable policy trajectory. Accepting that the systems of education do differ considerably in their organisation and in the construction of specific policy initiatives, it is possible to analyse overall trends and goals with two trends coming to the fore. One focused upon the egalitarian potential of education to extend equality of opportunity and

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social change.' *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 19/2, 1998, pp. 211-226; Nafsika Alexiadou, 'Social inclusion and social exclusion in England: tensions in education policy.' *Journal of Education Policy* 17/1, 2002, pp. 71-86; Teresa Smith and Michael Noble, *Education Divides: Poverty and Schooling in the 1990s*. London: CPAG, 1995; Bruce J. Biddle, 'Poverty, ethnicity and achievement in American schools.' in B. Biddle (ed) *Social Class, Poverty and Education: Policy and Practice*. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2001, pp. 1-29; Greg J. Duncan and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, 'Poverty, welfare reform and children's achievement.' in B. Biddle (ed) *Social Class, Poverty and Education: Policy and Practice*. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2001, pp. 49-76; David L. Dubois, 'Family disadvantage, the self and academic achievement.' in B. Biddle (ed) *Social Class, Poverty and Education: Policy and Practice*. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2001, pp. 133-174; Peter M. Hall, 'Social class, poverty and schooling: social contexts, educational practices and policy options.' in B. Biddle (ed) *Social Class, Poverty and Education: Policy and Practice*. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2001, pp. 213-242; Arthur Levine and Jana Nidiffer, *Beating the Odds: How the Poor Get to College*. New Jersey: Jossey Bass, 1996; Vivyan Adair, 'Poverty and the (broken) promise of higher education.' *Harvard Educational Review* 71/2, 2001, pp. 217-239; Vivyan Adair, 'US working-class/poverty-class divides.' *Sociology* 39/5, 2005, pp. 817-834; Harold Silver, *Education and the Social Condition*. London: Methuen, 1980, pp. 17-32; and Harold Silver and Pamela Silver, *Educational War on Poverty: American and British Policy-making, 1960-1980*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 13-143.

<sup>18</sup> Evans, 1999 and David Herbert Lawrence, 'Democracy.' in E. McDonald (ed) *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D.H. Lawrence*. London: Viking Press, 1936, p. 715.

broaden provision for those previously excluded from education. The second trend centred upon reform to promote educational accountability as a means of tackling persistent problems within education often linked to the failure to achieve both at the personal and national level. In recognising the link between education and poverty and the potential positive impact of education in the amelioration of persistent poverty, education became a key facet of domestic policy agendas in both nations.

## **Poverty in the United Kingdom and the United States: Definition and Scope**

The complexity of the policy-making milieu in the post-war era proved to be challenging for both nations. The advent of war after a period of prolonged economic depression necessitated a transformation to wartime production. Conversely, the immediate post-war era focused on the shift back to a consumer economy, the repatriation and reintegration of service personnel into the workforce and the process of rebuilding economic strength and competitiveness. Whilst waging war and planning for peace, both nations re-examined social policy with an eye toward reform. The emergence of the welfare state with its potential to create critical change within society attracted significant interest from policy-makers intent on reducing poverty.

Whilst there are differences in the models advocated by both nations, the preeminent one centres on the philosophical underpinning of the welfare state. The Beveridge Report, *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, became the bedrock upon which the British welfare state rests. Beveridge clearly advocated that “social insurance fully developed may provide income security; it is an attack upon Want. But Want is one of only five giants on the road of reconstruction and in some ways the easiest to attack. The others are Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness.”<sup>19</sup> Beveridge rejected the means test in favour of levying a weekly national insurance contribution as a method

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<sup>19</sup> Great Britain, *Social Insurance and Allied Services. Report by Sir William Beveridge.* (Beveridge Report) London: HMS, 1942, p. 6.

of paying for a cradle to grave social security.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, the American social welfare model did not provide such comprehensive protection for its citizens but could be viewed as a stopgap measure in times of economic distress. Social Security provided a guaranteed pension plan for workers linked to the contributions made during their employment but relied heavily on means testing in the payment of benefits. Franklin Roosevelt summarised the philosophical rationale for Social Security as:

“We can never insure one hundred percent of the population against one hundred percent of the hazards and vicissitudes of life, but we have tried to frame a law which will give some measure of protection to the average citizen and to his family against the loss of a job and against poverty-ridden old age.”<sup>21</sup>

The extensive programmes of the modern welfare state were designed to combat social problems through government intervention. Poverty, particularly the amelioration of systemic poverty, became one of the key target areas. A common presumption was that the welfare state would begin to even out the worst features of economic stratification within English society.<sup>22</sup> Yet, this posed a policy predicament for legislators. Prevailing public opinion in England disavowed the existence of poverty, relying heavily on the pre-war notion of poverty to draw this conclusion. The redistribution of economic resources and increasing levels of affluence appeared to demonstrate the reduction of poverty, however, quantifiable evidence of poverty's existence could be seen in specific English populations including the elderly, disabled, unemployed and single-parent families.<sup>23</sup> In his seminal cross-sectional study on poverty in the UK, Townsend reported on research that demonstrated the belief that significant increases in taxation to support post-war reform programmes coupled with post-war decreased unemployment levels were meant to alleviate

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 12. The welfare state conceptualised by Beveridge paid benefits to those citizens who were ill, elderly, unemployed or widowed so that no one within society would fall below an acceptable standard of living. Socialised medical care became a component part of the welfare state with the creation of the National Health Service in 1948.

<sup>21</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, National Archives and Records Administration, *Franklin Roosevelt's Statement on Signing the Social Security Act, August 14, 1935*, available from <http://fdrlibrary.wordpress.com/tag/social-security/>.

<sup>22</sup> Silver and Silver, 1991, pp. 147-157.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 148.

poverty.<sup>24</sup> Conversely, Harry Truman's administration shaped the American understanding of poverty as a phenomena existing externally to the US. While initially the Truman administration's notional understanding of poverty was linked primarily to international poverty, by 1948 Truman repositioned poverty within the domestic agenda suggesting:

“...But we can increase our annual output by at least one-third above the present level. We can lift our standard of living to nearly double what it was ten years ago. If we distribute these gains properly, we can go far toward stamping out poverty in our generation.”<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, speaking at Howard University in 1952, Truman connected poverty to the denial of opportunity in the segregated cities of America.<sup>26</sup> In the relatively short span of the Truman presidency, poverty transitioned from an international phenomenon to one of national significance where it denied opportunity to American minorities. Hence, the conceptualisation of poverty as defined by the public or the government, proved an obstacle for policy-makers to overcome in the initial implementation of the social welfare programmes.

While both the English and the American governments worked within their respective national conceptualisations and constraints that defined poverty to develop cohesive policies to address it, the development of capitalism within the Cold War context provided additional complexity to policy development. Gordon, Edwards and Reich in describing the stages of capitalism suggest that the global structures of capitalism cannot be wholly divorced from the local understanding and implementation of capitalist structures within a society.<sup>27</sup> Viewing economic history as a history

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<sup>24</sup> Peter Townsend, *Poverty in the United Kingdom: A Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living*. London: Allen Lane, 1979, pp. 32-60. The study conducted by Townsend and sponsored by the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust provided a comprehensive analysis of poverty from the theoretical conceptualisations of poverty and the poor to the notional understanding of poverty and the poor as expressed by the respondents in the survey.

<sup>25</sup> Harry S Truman Presidential Library and Museum, National Archives and Records Administration, *Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union, January 7, 1948*, available from <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/tap/1748.htm>, 1948.

<sup>26</sup> Harry S Truman Presidential Library and Museum, National Archives and Records Administration, *Public Papers of the President: Harry S. Truman, 1945-1953. Commencement Address at Howard University*, available from <http://trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/index.php?pid=2402>, 1952.

<sup>27</sup> David M. Gordon, Richard Edwards and Michael Reich, 'Long swings and stages of capitalism.' in D. Kotcz, D. McDonough and M. Reich (eds) *Social Structures of Accumulation: The Political Economy of Growth and Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 11-28.

punctuated by growth and crisis, they posit that the stage of capitalism that a nation is in at the point of crisis generates a particular response, one meant to facilitate the development of prolonged economic growth and prosperity. Subsequently, the response to the Great Depression necessitated greater intervention by the state into the economy and the provision of social welfare programmes, which was a different response than the one generated to meet a phase of stagnation in the late 1900s.<sup>28</sup> Although post-war social welfare programmes were designed to mitigate the impact of poverty, the Soviet Union frequently criticised western nations and their capitalist economies for the exploitation of the poor and working classes. This critique, within the general setting of the Cold War, posed an additional tension in policy-making at the time.

### **Definitions of Poverty**

Although English public opinion and American government policy raised doubt as to the extent of poverty, existing research indicates that poverty was not a new phenomenon in the post-war era.<sup>29</sup> Patterson contends that a “Columbus complex” existed in relation to poverty where deprivation was constantly rediscovered by new generations of researchers and politicians.<sup>30</sup> The problematic issue of rediscovery lay in conceptualizing a framework to define poverty, which is complex because there are a number of constituent components that need consideration. First, there are diverse and often competing definitions of poverty so it is imperative that the definitions agreed are reflective of the social milieu. Secondly, the cultural experiences and characterisations of poverty, including myths and perceptions, need to be recognised

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 19-20.

<sup>29</sup> For a discussion on poverty within a historical context, please see the following literature: Robert H. Bremner, *From the Depths: The Discovery of Poverty in the United States*. New York: New York University Press, 1956; James T. Patterson, *America's Struggle Against Poverty, 1900-1994*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994; James T. Patterson, *America's Struggles Against Poverty in the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000; Norman J. Smith, *Poverty in England, 1601-1936*. Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1972; B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty: A Study of Town Life*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2000; George Davey Smith, Daniel Darling and Mary Shaw, *Poverty, Inequality and Health in Britain, 1800-2000: A Reader*. Bristol: Policy Press, 2001; Giovanni Andrea Cornia and Sheldon Danziger, *Child Poverty and Deprivation in Industrialised Countries, 1945-1995*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997; and David Hulme, Karen Moore and Andrew Shepherd, *Chronic Poverty: Meanings and Analytical Frameworks*. Manchester: Chronic Poverty Research Centre, 2001.

<sup>30</sup> Patterson, 1994, pp. 99-114.

in the construction of such a definition. Finally, policy-makers must also understand the current conception and public opinion revolving around poverty issues.

Poverty definitions can be deceptively simplistic making it difficult to construct a definitive description. The simplest available definition of poverty is “being poor; want; scarcity or lack; inferiority or poorness.”<sup>31</sup> This explanation proposes inadequacy or scarcity of resources as the predicament that underpins poverty. Furthermore, Beveridge tied the necessity of social insurance to the condition of want in the UK during the Great Depression. To combat want or scarcity, nations could compensate by producing or procuring more of the resources desired by the population. While Beveridge defined the problem as want, Truman suggested that the redistribution of goods throughout society could substantially alleviate poverty.<sup>32</sup> A fundamental drawback to operationalising this definition along lines of consumption is that it applies solely to tangible goods, which can be purchased, and does not include such intangibles as education or social services. Moreover, this definition reiterates the links between poverty and inferiority thereby potentially reinforcing negative cultural stereotypes and cultural myths.

Accepting that the previous definition is oversimplified and potentially inappropriate for this analysis, it is necessary to consider other conceptualisations of poverty. Rein argues that the impediment to establishing a poverty rubric lies in the philosophical foundations espoused by academics and governments.<sup>33</sup> He offered three broad concepts of poverty:

“Poverty may be regarded as subsistence, inequality or externality. Subsistence is concerned with the minimum of provision needed to maintain health and working capacity...Inequality is concerned with the relative position of income groups to each other. Poverty cannot be understood by isolating the poor and treating them as a special group. Society is seen as a series of stratified income layers and poverty is concerned with how the bottom layers fare relative to the rest of society. Hence, the concept of poverty must be seen in the context of society as a whole...Externality is concerned

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<sup>31</sup> Poverty, *Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*. Revised 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 699.

<sup>32</sup> Great Britain, 1942 (Beveridge Report), p.6 and Harry S Truman, 1948.

<sup>33</sup> Marin Rein, ‘Problems in the definition and measurement of poverty.’ in P. Townsend (ed) *Concept of Poverty: Working Papers on Methods of Investigation and Life-styles of the Poor in Different Countries*. London: Heinemann, 1970, pp. 46-63.

with the social consequences of poverty for the rest of society rather than in terms of the needs of the poor.<sup>34</sup>

Rein dissects poverty and its implications from the micro to the macro arguing that it impacts the individual in addition to the whole of society.<sup>35</sup> If there is acceptance of the subsistence definition alone, then there is tacit approval of an economic demarcation line between the poor and the remainder of society. Conversely, if there is the acknowledgment that poverty is relational, then Rein's definition raises social justice issues. Finally, if poverty is viewed in terms of the financial repercussions to society, then this characterises the poor as depleting social resources and raises social equity issues.

Moving away from the simplistic definition of poverty as want or the more complex conceptualisation offered by Rein, Ferman, Kornbluh and Haber suggest a further model that favours a multivariate explanation.<sup>36</sup> The four criteria include limited financial assets, lack of community resources, the reduced capacity to participate economically and the culture of poverty.<sup>37</sup> The first criterion echoes the previous definitions thereby demonstrating the strong preference for an economic definition of poverty. However, the second and third criteria are significantly dissimilar because they address social deficiencies. The authors posit that poverty lines cannot conceptualise the inability to participate economically so do not fully explain key characteristics of poverty. For example, impoverished communities or those in economic transition are unlikely to attract significant investment from business to stimulate regeneration. An individual's lack of specific skills and appropriate training can impede participation within the economy, making underemployment almost inevitable. Therefore, communities with high levels of unskilled workers or in economic transition will find it difficult to transcend poverty, thereby increasing the likelihood of cyclical poverty. Finally, the authors allude to a culture of poverty linking their position to Oscar Lewis's influential ideas, which will be discussed in-depth later in the chapter. The conceptualisation of poverty accepted will impact the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.46.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 46-48.

<sup>36</sup> Louis A. Ferman, Joyce L. Kornbluh and Alan Haber, 'Introduction.' in L. Ferman, J.L. Kornbluh and A. Haber (eds) *Poverty in America: A Book of Readings*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1965a, pp. 1-6.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp.1-2.

poverty frameworks adopted and the programmes targeted at the poor. However, no matter which framework is adopted, the implicit connotation is that the poor are somehow different and potentially problematic members of society.

While the previous definitions suggest considerable debate over how to characterise poverty, conceptualisations of relative poverty or absolute poverty and the appropriateness of either standard to measure poverty augments this complexity. The corpus of research espousing the relative definition of poverty is significant.<sup>38</sup> Townsend clearly favoured the relative poverty conceptualisation explaining:

“...needs which are unmet can be defined satisfactorily only in terms relative to the society in which they are found or expressed. Distinctions hitherto made between ‘absolute’ and ‘relative’ poverty, or between ‘basic’ and ‘cultural’ needs are argued to be unreal upon analysis. Needs which are believed to be absolute or basic can be shown to be relative. Poverty must be regarded as a general form of deprivation which is the effect of the maldistribution of resources.”<sup>39</sup>

This definition turns upon the ineffective, inefficient or inequitable division of resources within society as the crucial component of poverty and does not, unlike the previous designations, equate poverty with inferiority or difference. Additionally, there is a cautionary note regarding this distinction between relative and absolute needs and the ability to maintain this distinction upon scrutiny. Townsend refines his definition in his seminal work, *Poverty in the United Kingdom: a Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living*. The latter definition exhibits greater precision while not compromising on the relative nature of poverty:

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<sup>38</sup> For a discussion on definitions of poverty including the arguments advocating the adoption of a relative definition of poverty, please see the following: Robert H. Haveman, *Poverty Policy and Poverty Research: The Great Society and the Social Sciences*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987, pp.53-79; Sheldon H. Danziger and Daniel H. Weinberg, ‘The historical record: trends in family income, inequality and poverty.’ in S. Danziger, G. Sandefur and D. Weinberg (eds) *Confronting Poverty: Prescriptions for Change*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994, pp. 18-50; Peter Townsend, David Gordon, Jonathan Bradshaw and Brian Gosschalk, *Absolute and Overall Poverty in Britain in 1997: What the Populations Themselves Say*. Bristol: Bristol Statistical Monitoring Unit, University of Bristol, 1997; S.M. Miller and Martin Rein, ‘Poverty and social change.’ in L. Ferman, J.L. Kornbluh and A. Haber (eds) *Poverty in America: A Book of Readings*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1965, pp. 497-503; Peter Marris and Martin Rein, *Dilemmas of Social Reform: Poverty and Community Action in the United States*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967; and Townsend, 1979, pp. 31-60.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Townsend, ‘Measures and explanations of poverty in high income and low income countries: the problems of operationalising the concepts of development, class and poverty.’ in P. Townsend (ed) *The Concept of Poverty: Working Papers on Methods of Investigation and Life-styles of the Poor in Different Countries*. London: Heinemann, 1970, p.2.

“Poverty can be defined objectively and applied consistently only in terms of the concept of relative deprivation...Individuals, families and groups in the population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved, in the societies to which they belong. Their resources are so seriously below those commanded by the average individual or family that they are, in effect, excluded from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities.”<sup>40</sup>

The efficacy of the relative definition of poverty is its employability in constructing cross-cultural, cross-national and historical comparisons.<sup>41</sup> The utility of the absolute poverty line to provide viable comparisons is limited because it measures poverty based solely on an economic demarcation that does not account for other factors, including cost of living, skills, training and community factors. Miller and Rein reiterate the disadvantage of an absolute poverty line suggesting that the relationship between poverty and a fixed basket of goods and services is inadequate. This rejection of absolute in favour of relative is noted in the insistence that poverty is not only equated with what is needed for survival but an individual’s economic position within the community.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, exploring poverty through a relative lens would make comparison more meaningful through the explanation of external economic factors within society. It would also enable the comparison between disparate nations or economies through the equalising of factors within the relative conceptualisation of poverty.

If subjectivity is an intrinsic characteristic of relative poverty and therefore weakens the argument for its adoption, then the objective measure of absolute poverty warrants exploration. The United Nations (UN) advocates for an absolute poverty line that highlights the clear differences between developed and developing nations conceptualising poverty as:

“...a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter,

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.31.

<sup>41</sup> Townsend, 1970, pp. 1-45 and Gesemia Nelson, ‘Measuring poverty: the official US measure and material hardship.’ *Poverty and Public Policy* 3/3, 2011, pp.1-35.

<sup>42</sup> Miller and Rein, 1965, p. 499.

education and access to information. It depends not only on income but also on access to services.”<sup>43</sup>

The World Bank proffers a further clarification of poverty, including intangible factors:

“Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.”<sup>44</sup>

The World Bank’s absolute poverty line definition provides for a minimum level of income or purchasing power that can be applied globally. This subsistence income was set at \$1.00 or \$2.00 a day in 2001. Consequently, there were 1.1 billion people who subsisted on less than \$1.00 per day while 2.7 billion people lived on less than \$2.00 per day in 2001. The World Bank also maintains that cross-cultural analysis requires an absolute poverty threshold to facilitate comparisons that must be made in the same monetary unit as well as with an agreed conceptualisation of poverty.<sup>45</sup>

If absolute poverty definitions provide an objective picture of poverty, then the difficulty arising from such descriptions is their applicability to developed nations, and indeed, the appropriateness of employing such definitions within this research. The prevalence of severe deprivation inherent within both the UN and World Bank’s definitions is problematic. This is not the poverty experienced by the majority of Britons or Americans whose governments provide such fundamental needs, although the equitable distribution of these goods is unlikely. While the equity discourse must be a central tenet in any debate on poverty, the goal here is to consider the merits of the definitions and its applicability to this research. The equity discourse, in this instance, must be considered separately. Adoption of the World Bank’s absolute poverty threshold would significantly reduce poverty rates within both nations because their corresponding poverty thresholds are significantly higher. However, the

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<sup>43</sup> United Nations, *The Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action: World Summit for Social Development, 6-12 March 1995*. New York: United Nations Department of Publications, 1995, p. 57.

<sup>44</sup> World Bank, *PovertyNet*, available from <http://web.archive.org/web/20040830074152/http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/mission/up1.htm>.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

reduction of rates of poverty in this manner does not mean that poverty no longer exists but that it has been redefined out of existence without actually addressing the systemic issues embedded within poverty.

The definition might be appropriate if the focus switched from the monetary value to equity of distribution among differing communities. The definitions become more relevant if the absolute lack of education, health, shelter and access to information is eschewed in favour of a discussion on the lack of opportunities for communities that experience a denial of access to these goods. Miller and Rein, who advocate a relative definition of poverty, recommend that the quantity and quality of goods and services be included within a poverty definition. Furthermore, they indicate that housing, medical care and education need to be redistributed with an emphasis on quality positing, “the broadened concept of poverty antiquates the rigid *ideology of the minimum* in public welfare services which permeated nineteenth century economic liberalism.”<sup>46</sup> The latter proposal is supported by the UK National Statistics Office that links low income to disadvantage while acknowledging that disadvantage is measured by paucity of income coupled with the lack of an education, access to training and poor health care among other factors.<sup>47</sup>

The challenge for both governments lay in the selection of a definition to underpin frameworks for quantifying poverty. Once again, divergences emerged. British poverty definitions are historically linked to “guaranteeing the minimum income for needed subsistence.”<sup>48</sup> Townsend establishes a link between the public’s perception of poverty and objectively drawn poverty statistics arguing that perception and reality tend to be remarkably similar in their estimation of the problem.<sup>49</sup> A Market and Opinion Research International (MORI) survey reported that 20% of a national sample of 12 million people “said they had less income than the level they identified

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<sup>46</sup> Miller and Rein, 1965, p. 501.

<sup>47</sup> Great Britain, Office for National Statistics, *Percentage of People Whose Income Is Below Various Fractions of Median Income, 1961 to 1997-98: Social Trends 30*. London: The Stationary Office, 2000, pp. 92-96 and Great Britain, Office for National Statistics, *Social Trends No 36*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp.34-48.

<sup>48</sup> Great Britain, 1942 (Beveridge Report), p.14. Beveridge acknowledged that the amounts provided for subsistence needed careful consideration. Previously, the calculation of benefits did not include the number of children or the size of the family, which Beveridge believed to be an error. He argued that children must be included in the allowances so as not to negatively impact lower paid workers.

<sup>49</sup> Townsend et al., 1997, p.17.

as being enough to keep a household like theirs out of absolute poverty.”<sup>50</sup> The poll demonstrates the potential difficulty when public perception and governmental definitions diverge: 2.4 million people perceived that they lived in poverty although official government indicators differed with this perception.

Despite the link between poverty and public perception, there is an official definition based on economic indicators. In 1997, the British government estimated that households required a weekly post-tax income of £239.00 to escape overall poverty. This is £64.00 greater than the income needed to elude absolute poverty.<sup>51</sup> Linking poverty to median income means that the UK has the most unequal distribution of wealth in Europe with one third of British children living in poverty.<sup>52</sup> Conversely, the American government adopted the poverty line, an absolute definition of poverty.<sup>53</sup> Corresponding to Johnson’s War on Poverty and the need to create a quantifiable measure of poverty for programme evaluation, the poverty thresholds included allowances for food, clothing, shelter and a small amount of discretionary expenses.<sup>54</sup> Fisher theorises that it is impossible to evaluate how much income is too much but it is conceivable to quantify deficiency, therefore, the thresholds reflect income inadequacy.<sup>55</sup> However, several authors discount the arbitrariness of poverty thresholds based largely on their rigidity and inability to account for variations in the cost of living across a nation.<sup>56</sup> This is a particular challenge where regions or states have widely divergent costs of living; therefore, a family in one locale may be relatively less poor than a family in another.

Whichever working definition is chosen, the unquestionable fact is that poverty resiliently resists eradication. British and American poverty levels followed a

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>52</sup> Polly Toynbee, ‘Waging war on poverty,’ available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2001/dec/14/Whitehall.politicalcolumnists>, 14 December 2001.

<sup>53</sup> Danziger and Weinberg, 1994, pp. 18-50.

<sup>54</sup> United States, Department of Health and Human Services, 2000.

<sup>55</sup> Gordon Fisher, ‘Enough for a family to live on? Questions from members of the American public and new perspectives of British social scientists,’ available from <https://www.census.gov/hhes/povmeas/publications/other/ndqppr1c.nnt.pdf>, 2001 and Kathleen S. Short, ‘Material and financial hardship and income based poverty measures in the USA.’ *Journal of Social Policy* 34/1, 2005, pp. 21-38.

<sup>56</sup> Haveman, 1987, pp. 53-79; Danziger and Weinberg, 1994, pp. 18-49; and Louis A. Ferman, Joyce L. Kornbluh and Alan Haber, ‘How much is enough? A note on poverty budgets.’ in L.A. Ferman, J. L. Kornbluh and A. Haber (eds) *Poverty in America: A Book of Readings*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1965b, pp. 39-42.

consistent pattern in the last half-century. British poverty statistics clustered in the mid to low teens reaching a low point of 13.70% in 1979 and a peak of 25.30% in 1997.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, the number of Americans living below the poverty line has ranged between 11.10% and 15.20% from 1966 through 2004.<sup>58</sup> Prior to 1966, the US Census Bureau estimated the poverty rate at 22.00% yet, by 1966, poverty decreased to 14.70%. The drastic decline needs to be carefully probed for an explanation. While poverty did decline, it is not reflective of a “real” drop in poverty but indicates policy shift in the poverty line assessment from 50.10% of the median income in 1965 to 37.70% of the median income. The US government effectively “reduced” poverty by changing the measurement used to calculate the number of people living in poverty.<sup>59</sup> Subsequently, the War on Poverty appeared to be both efficient and successful.

Despite a half of a century of social welfare programmes, both nations reported double-digit poverty rates at the turn of the millennium. The US Census Bureau reported that 11.30% of Americans lived in poverty in 2000, while 18.00% of Britons subsisted on an income that fell below 60% of the median income in 1997-1998.<sup>60</sup> These percentages are low relative to developing nations yet they are reflective of poverty in two highly developed nations and exist despite the development of the modern welfare state and a profusion of national initiatives to counteract poverty.

In relationship to the previous discussion, if the focal point is narrowed to converge solely upon child poverty, then formidable statistics emerge for both nations. United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) reported in 2000 that child poverty rates in economically developed nations rose in 17 of the 24 Organisations for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations in the last decade of the twentieth century.<sup>61</sup> UNICEF subsequently reported that 19.80% of British children and 22.40% of American children lived in relative poverty, which

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<sup>57</sup> Poverty.org. *United Kingdom: Numbers in Low Income*, available from <http://www.poverty.org.uk/01/index.shtml#g1>, 2011.

<sup>58</sup> United States, Census Bureau, *Number in Poverty and Poverty Rate: 1959 to 2009*, available from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b7/US\\_poverty\\_rate\\_timeline.gif](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b7/US_poverty_rate_timeline.gif), 2011 and University of Michigan, National Poverty Centre, *Poverty in the United States*, available from <http://npc.umich.edu/poverty/#3>

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> United States, Census Bureau, United States Department of Commerce, *Poverty in the United States: 2000*, available from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/p60-214.pdf>, 2001 and Great Britain, 2000, pp. 92-96

<sup>61</sup> It should be noted that UNICEF is more commonly known as the United Nations Children’s Fund

was defined as living below 50% of the national median income.<sup>62</sup> Accepting that a relative poverty framework can be contentious, UNICEF explored the phenomena through an absolute poverty framework too. This framework suggested that 29.10% of British children and 13.90% of American children lived in absolute poverty, which painted a statistically different picture than the one above. Moreover, the absolute poverty framework challenged the official US poverty figure of 19.00% because the UNICEF framework included different variables in the calculation of poverty. Although the prevalence of child poverty cannot be denied, a confused picture of severity emerges through the application of different definitions and frameworks.<sup>63</sup>

Governments might suggest that the imposition of different definitions of poverty other than the one espoused or, indeed, the reconfiguration of their parameters of measurement by international organisations is not appropriate and could produce a skewed understanding of the prevalence of child poverty within their nation. However, research supports the conclusions drawn by UNICEF thereby demonstrating the significance of child poverty in both nations. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation reported a threefold increase in child poverty from 1979 onwards resulting in over one third of children in the UK living in households whose income fell below 50% of the national median income in 1998.<sup>64</sup> Similarly, the US government reported a child poverty rate of 16.20% in 2000, which is broadly in line with the statistical evidence presented by UNICEF.<sup>65</sup> As UNICEF duly noted, the UK and the US are categorised as economically developed nations, yet both poverty and, more alarmingly child poverty, remained persistent and resistant to eradication despite national initiatives.

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<sup>62</sup> The United Nations Children Fund, Innocenti Research Centre, *A League Table of Child Poverty in Rich Nations*, available from <http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/repcard1e.pdf>, 2000.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. This calculation of absolute poverty relied upon the utilisation of the US poverty line as the currency baseline, however, while the currencies were converted, the social construct of poverty could not be, which meant that the American construct and not the individual national poverty definition prevailed. It should also be noted that organisations frequently adopt particular frameworks for reporting child poverty with overall rates being subdivided into single parent or two parent families, which further complicates the reporting of poverty statistics.

<sup>64</sup> Joseph Rowntree Foundation, *Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain*, available from <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/185935128x.pdf>, 2000.

<sup>65</sup> United States, Department of Health and Human Services, *Information on Poverty and Income Statistics: A Survey of 2012 Current Population Survey Data*, available from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/12/povertyandincomeest/ib.shtml>, 2012.

Clearly, poverty in the post-war era remains both an intractable and problematic social phenomenon for policy-makers. First, there is a plethora of definitions ranging from economic subsistence to a hierarchy of needs that societies or governments fail adequately to provide. Secondly, poverty frameworks promote contention. The debate between relative poverty and absolute poverty definitions is one of national preference although only one third of the world's nations have adopted the more rigid absolute model favoured by the US. Additionally, the demarcation line that a nation establishes as its poverty line is also contestable. While both governments utilise median income as a key determinant of poverty, there is a difference in the poverty threshold with the American poverty line pegged considerably lower than the British threshold. The lower poverty line significantly decreases the percentage of people living in poverty, thereby providing a more positive picture for international comparisons. Finally, despite significant policy interventions, poverty has remained an issue of considerable import for both nations over the course of the last 50 years. Neither nation achieved the total elimination of poverty although it could be argued that this is an impossible goal to attain.

### **Poverty and Societies**

There can be little doubt that poverty is a real and continuing social phenomenon that affects a significant percentage of the British and American populations and, in turn, impacts on the genesis of policy. The evolution of the welfare state, including concerted efforts in poverty reduction, recognises both its existence and the subsequent impact poverty has upon society. This relationship between poverty and society is echoed by Rein who depicts poverty as impossible to manage in isolation but requiring analysis in relation to the society in which it exists.<sup>66</sup> While not denying the effects upon individuals, Rein asserts that poverty manifests characteristics that are detrimental to society and it is these that need to be focused upon.<sup>67</sup> The acceptance of this hypothesis effectively redirects the discussion away from the poor

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<sup>66</sup> Rein, 1970, pp. 46-48.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46-63.

as individual victims of poverty to a community that poses a risk to society. This shift manifests itself in the notional ideas of an underclass or a culture of poverty existing within society.

While Rein considers poverty and its implications on a macro level, it is the work of Lewis that changed the discourse on poverty with his seminal work, *The Children of Sanchez*.<sup>68</sup> Lewis, whose work was anthropological rather than historical, proposes a paradigmatic shift in poverty theory through his assertion that poverty is not rooted solely in economics but in the cultural norms inherent within persistently poor communities:

“In anthropological usage, the term culture implies, essentially a design for living which is passed down from generation to generation...poverty in modern nations is not only a state of economic deprivation, of disorganization or the absence of something. It is also something positive in the sense that it has structure, a rationale, and defence mechanisms without which the poor could hardly carry on. In short, it is a way of life, remarkably stable and persistent, passed down from generation to generation along family lines.”<sup>69</sup>

Furthermore, Lewis characterises the poor living within these structured communities as fundamentally different from the rest of society. They do not share common social values, they participate minimally in society, they are psychologically immature and, while they are family centred, their familial structures are unstable and chaotic.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Oscar Lewis, *The Children of Sanchez*. London: Penguin Books, 1965. Lewis' anthropological study focused on a family living in the barrios of Mexico City. Lewis, an American academic, developed the culture of poverty thesis largely through anthropological work in developing nations and cultures. The concept of a culture of poverty strongly influenced American policy-makers in the 1960s, for example Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and impacted upon the development of the War on Poverty. However, Lewis' thesis also met with considerable critique. For a discussion on Oscar Lewis's impact on poverty research, please see the following: Louis A. Ferman, Joyce L. Kornbluh and Alan Haber, 1965a and 1965b; James T. Patterson, 1994; Danziger and Weinberg, 1994, pp.18-49; Eleanor B. Leacock, 'Introduction.' in E. Leacock (ed) *The Culture of Poverty: A Critique*. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1971, pp. 9-37; Charles A. Valentine, 'The culture of poverty: its scientific significance and its implication for action.' in E. Leacock (ed) *The Culture of Poverty: A Critique*. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1971, pp. 193-225; J. Alan Winter, 'Introduction: the culture of poverty hypotheses and their import for social science and social policy,' in J. Winter (ed) *The Poor: A Culture of Poverty or a Poverty of Culture?* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1971, pp. 17-28; and David L. Harvey and Michael R. Reed, 'The culture of poverty: an ideological analysis.' *Sociological Perspectives* 39/4, 1996, pp.465-495.

<sup>69</sup> Lewis, 1965, pp. xxiv.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, xxv-xxxii.

Lewis's culture of poverty theory attracted widespread discussion in the 1960s, including robust critiques of the premise. Patterson argues that there are three key facets of Lewis' proposition that are not tenable, thereby weakening the culture of poverty thesis.<sup>71</sup> First, there is no evidence that the poor are psychologically different from others in society with their need for immediate gratification. Patterson suggests that the middle classes are equally affected by self-gratification and consumerism. Secondly, there is no evidence that all poverty is persistent and intergenerational in nature. Thirdly, Patterson objects to the use of culture in Lewis' discourse insisting that culture is an anthropological term with specific features which are not present in Lewis' conceptualisation.<sup>72</sup> In addition to these challenges, Leacock objects to the culture of poverty largely because it reiterates the nineteenth century belief that the poor are poor because they lack ability and initiative.<sup>73</sup> Valentine, conversely, does not repudiate Lewis's notion of subculture positing that the poor, who exist within this subculture as well as within the larger context of society, deem it all beyond their control. Their values are not dissimilar to the existing social mores but their lived experiences are thus making it appear that their lives are a disavowal of socio-cultural norms.<sup>74</sup>

Whether or not the culture of poverty argument is accepted, it does appear as an important and inescapable subtext within poverty discourse in the post-war era. The concept of a permanent underclass aids in perpetuating the stigma associated with poverty. A common representation of the underclass is one experiencing:

“...widespread alienation from society and its institutions, estrangement, social isolation and hopelessness, the sense that a better life is simply not attainable through legitimate means. Society itself comes to be seen as an alien and hostile institution; conventional norms of civility, reciprocity and respect come to hold no sway.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Patterson, 1994, pp. 115-125.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp.115-125.

<sup>73</sup> Leacock, 1971, p.11.

<sup>74</sup> Valentine, 1971, pp. 205-206.

<sup>75</sup> Joel A. Devine and James D. Wright, *The Greatest of Evils: Urban Poverty and the American Underclass*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1993, p. 84.

The underclass hypothesis not only demonises poverty but also heralds the collapse of the traditional social fabric, a situation that is an anathema to the middle and upper classes. Devine and Wright, as well as Murray, envisaged neighbourhoods that had lost all respect for traditional social norms and were overrun by poverty, illegitimacy, crime and dysfunctional behaviours.<sup>76</sup> In essence, the culture of poverty and the underclass theses corroborate Rein's conceptualisation of the externality of poverty and the subsequent impacts poverty has upon society. Whether the existence of a culture of poverty is accepted or the notional understanding of an underclass is acknowledged, it is evident that the recognition of either poses a dilemma for policy-makers who seek either to ameliorate or eradicate poverty. The intractable nature of poverty renders policy initiatives impotent.

This discussion inevitably raises the question of who are the poor within society. The acceptance of the economic definition with its connotations of subsistence or lack of material goods implies that poverty can be remedied by transcending those two realities. If an individual, a family or a nation can attain the minimum standard necessary for economic stability then poverty is conquerable. This also suggests that poverty can be temporary with unemployment or economic instability accounting for transitory poverty. Once stabilised economically, the person or family transitions out of poverty. However, the assumption that poverty is responsible for a permanent underclass or culture that is counter to espoused social values creates a different framework. While the economic definition acts to reaffirm cultural stereotypes of the poor, the conception of poverty as a culture appears to validate that the poor are substantially different from other social groups and will remain so because they are part of another competing culture. Lewis's use of psychological characterisations of the poor further reinforces this stereotype by linking poverty to mental illness; both poverty and mental illness are encircled by powerful cultural myths and misunderstanding.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Devine and Wright, 1993, pp. 77-94 and Charles A. Murray, *Underclass: The Crisis Deepens*. London: IEA Health and Welfare Unit in association with The Sunday Times, 1994, pp. 2-39.

<sup>77</sup> Lewis, 1965, pp. xxvi-xxvii and Patterson, 1994, p. 119.

The conceptualisations surrounding poverty and the poor are relevant to the research project for two distinct reasons. First, the researcher must appreciate the frameworks that each government utilises in constructing poverty definitions. If these constructs are not understood then comprehending the saliency of the policy and the impact upon the poor is lost. Secondly, it is critical to understand the public and academic perceptions relating to poverty. The evolution of perceptions of the poor from being inferior and different, to a competing and detrimental culture within the same society reflects a substantial shift in perception. While the researcher does not personally espouse the culture of poverty as viable, it is necessary to understand the conceptualisations of a culture of poverty and how it relates to this research.

In summary, policy-makers must answer two distinct questions regarding poverty. Does persistent poverty exist and, if the answer is affirmative, then how can poverty be ameliorated? The first question is easier to answer than the second. Clearly, it is problematic when developed nations maintain double-digit poverty figures in the twenty-first century despite dedicating significant resources to poverty reduction. One possible solution points to education as a tool to break the cyclical nature of poverty. While the connection between education opportunity and poverty has historic roots, this is an area to revisit in the hopes that the reform of education will improve opportunity and outcomes for all children.

### **Education, Poverty and Reform: Definitions and Objectives**

As previously discussed, education and poverty emerged as key domestic social issues in the post-war era. It is evident that both nations recognised the need for educational change to benefit children as well as the nation and, while this discussion can be opened here, it is more appropriately located in subsequent chapters where it will be deliberated more fully. Educational intervention, therefore, is not the crux of the debate but the rationale underpinning these interventions is the focus. A central question for policy-makers then centres upon not on the reform of education per se

but what are the consequences of such reform? Returning to a fundamental definition as a foundation, reform can be defined as “to make or become better by the removal of faults and errors; to abolish or cure; an improvement made or suggested.”<sup>78</sup> This is a working definition that provides a premise whilst simultaneously allowing for scrutiny from the philosophical and pragmatic perspectives.

Philosophically, both governments understood the need for education reform particularly within secondary education post 1944. The ‘faults and errors’ premise of the previous definition provides the theoretical framework to explore the reforms instituted in English and American education. These reforms pivoted around the philosophical foundation of equality of opportunity and the benefits that access to education provided for all citizens. Within the English education context, several key reports preceding the *Education Act 1944* developed the rationale for the expansion of secondary education provision to include all adolescents.<sup>79</sup> This entailed the reorganisation of educational structures along tripartite lines to provide an appropriate education for the variety of students entering secondary education for the first time. Conversely, the American education context could best be described as a dichotomy that struggled to fulfil the philosophical ideals of equality of opportunity. Similar to the discussions surrounding the suitability of the tripartite system, American educationists debated the appropriateness of the curriculum for the majority of high school students while also engaging in discussions on desegregation and the provision of equal education opportunities for minority groups, particularly African-Americans. Philosophically, both nations recognised the presence of systemic faults within educational structures, although neither seriously debated the efficacy of totally abandoning existing education systems. The reliance on reform rather than renunciation implies that there was an inherent belief that the core philosophies underpinning the systems were strong. Nonetheless, there was an inability to

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<sup>78</sup> Reform, *Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, p.759.

<sup>79</sup> A number of governmental reports contributed to the formative discussion preceding the passage of the *Education Act 1944*. Whilst the reports focused broadly upon secondary education, each individual report also concentrated on different aspects of the pre-war provision for secondary education within England. These reports include: Great Britain, Board of Education, *Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent*. (Hadow Report) London: HMSO, 1926; Great Britain, Board of Education, *Educational Reconstruction*. London: HMSO, 1943b; and Great Britain, Board of Education, *Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools*. (Norwood Report) London: HMSO, 1943a.

amalgamate the philosophical ideals with the practical need for preparing students for university or work in the pre-war era that needed to be rectified in the post-war era. Abandonment of the system proved untenable for the structures were in place but needed to be operationalised to provide maximum educational benefit and opportunity for all.

As a means of tracking reform and quantifying impact, both governments utilise statistical measures to track educational achievement within the nation and across local communities. Educational institutions rely heavily upon statistical data to prove that they are capable of maintaining or surpassing standards in a market driven education economy. A key indicator used by English educationists to demonstrate student achievement is the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination administered at the end of Key Stage Four, which marks the end of compulsory education in England. In 2005, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in England reported that 90.20% of English pupils achieved a level one qualification scoring five or more A\* through G grades on their GCSE examinations. During the same time period, 57.10% of English pupils achieved a level two qualification, which is the preferred standard, scoring five or more A\* through C grades.<sup>80</sup> However, these scores depict the statistical average for England and are not representative of individual local authorities whose attainment varies widely. Using level two GCSE qualification data, achievement ranges from 82.60% in the Isles of Scilly to 36.50% for Bristol; many of the lowest scoring Local Education Authorities (LEAs) represent either London boroughs or post-industrial areas in northern England.<sup>81</sup> There are also regional differentiations in the percentage of students who continue post-compulsory education with Yorkshire and the Humber having the lowest overall percentage in education or training courses.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, research and government reports have explored the linkages between education and social

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<sup>80</sup> Great Britain, Department for Education and Skills, *School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables 2005. GCSE and (Equivalent) Results*, available from <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151655/http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/sfr012007pdf.pdf>.

<sup>81</sup> BBC News, 'How different areas performed,' available from <http://web.archive.org/web/20060218220911/http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4626172.stm>.

<sup>82</sup> BBC News, 'Teenagers drop out of education,' available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4481300.stm>, 2005.

class.<sup>83</sup> There is concurrence that social class directly impacts upon educational attainment although some researchers suggest that the impact transcends education and affects later social status as well. Thus, English education statistics suggest variability in attainment amongst localities, significant differences between students who attain a level one qualification and those who attain the preferred level two qualification and a direct association between education and class.

Similarly, American educationists utilise statistical data, particularly high school graduation rates or drop out rates, as a barometer of education achievement. Using the more positive statistic of graduation rates, Greene calculates that the American high school graduation rate in 1998 was 71%, thereby contradicting the National Centre for Education Statistics' (NCES) estimation of an 86% national graduation rate.<sup>84</sup> However, the difference between the statistics is based on the NCES' inclusion of students who completed a General Equivalency Diploma (GED).<sup>85</sup> In considering the more negative statistic, the dropout rate, the NCES reported two historical trends in high school dropout rates over a 20-year period. The dropout rate for 16–24 year olds declined nationally from 14.60% in 1972 to 11.00% in 1993. Subsequent to this, the NCES reported a 5% dropout rate in 2001, one that is considerably lower than the previous statistics and would seemingly indicate significant improvement in the dropout rate.<sup>86</sup> However, much like the US Census Bureau's recalculation of poverty,

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<sup>83</sup> Terry Nichols Clark and Seymour Martin Lipset, 'Are social classes dying?' *International Sociology* 6/4, 1991, pp. 397-410. Clark and Lipset suggest that social class theory with its roots in the writings of Marx and Weber is marked by the concept of social stratification. While Marx suggested three dominant classes within industrial society and Weber recognized the issue of status related to class, Clark and Lipset explore the further fragmentation of social class while also acknowledging that the concept of social class as understood in the early twentieth century is evolving. There is evidence in government reports of the interconnection between academic achievement and social class although there is also evidence of the further fragmentation when reports list several sub-classes within the lower and middle social classes. This connection between those who are categorized as part of a social class in terms of government reporting and their educational outcomes is key in this work.

<sup>84</sup> Jay P. Greene, *High School Graduation Rates in the United States*, available from [http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr\\_baeo.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_baeo.htm), 2002 and United States, National Centre for Education Statistics, *Student Effort and Educational Progress: Elementary/Secondary Persistence and Progress*, available from <http://web.archive.org/web/20090321044917/http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2004/section3/indicator16.asp>, 2002.

<sup>85</sup> Greene, 2002. The GED is a high school equivalency qualification, which is an alternative route to attain a high school diploma, however, it is not viewed normally as an equivalent qualification to the high school diploma.

<sup>86</sup> United States, National Centre for Education Statistics, *Trends in High School Drop Out and Completion Rates in the United States: 1972-2009*, available from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012006.pdf>, 2012.

the NCES differentiated between distinctive categories of dropouts choosing the lower of the two rates as the guideline and thereby accounting for the decrease.

While the high school graduation rate and the dropout percentage could be challenged, both the US Census Bureau and the NCES government agree that race and ethnicity are integrally connected to high school achievement. Greene maintains that the graduation rates differed between three key groups in American education: the graduation rate for whites was 78%, for African-Americans 56% and for Latinos 54% in 1998.<sup>87</sup> NCES' evidence led to the conclusion that dropout rates are adversely affected by students' racial and economic backgrounds. White students dropped out 7.90% while the dropout rate for African-American students was 13.60% and for Hispanic students it was 27.50%.<sup>88</sup>

Notwithstanding that race and ethnicity are contributory factors, economic status is also an integral component in education achievement. American students from high-income families dropped out 2.70% of the time while students from lower socio-economic backgrounds dropped out at the rate of 23.90% over the same period.<sup>89</sup> It would not be inaccurate to say that African-American and Hispanic students are from families with lower socio-economic backgrounds. The poverty rate for African-Americans and Hispanics far exceeds the national poverty rate. In 2004, the US poverty rate was 12.70%; the poverty rate for whites was 10.80%; for African-Americans 24.70%; and for Hispanics 21.90%.<sup>90</sup> Historically, the trend for both minority groups demonstrates that they are far more likely to be in poverty relative to whites or to American society in general. Thus, it follows that if you are poor and a racial or ethnic minority in the US, then education attainment will be compromised.

It cannot be said that either the UK or the US denies the linkages between educational attainment and socio-economic backgrounds. There are unambiguous indications that

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<sup>87</sup> Greene, 2002.

<sup>88</sup> United States, National Centre for Education Statistics, *Trends in High School Drop Out and Completion Rates in the United States: 1972-2009*, available from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2012/2012006.pdf>.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> University of Michigan, National Poverty Centre, *Poverty Research Insights*, available from [http://web.archive.org/web/20060209235117/http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/newsletter/fall05/NPC\\_fall\\_05\\_final.pdf](http://web.archive.org/web/20060209235117/http://www.npc.umich.edu/publications/newsletter/fall05/NPC_fall_05_final.pdf), 2005.

ethnicity and class affect attainment and deny equality of opportunity in society. Therefore, the adoption of the definition linking reform to the removal of errors exhibits not only philosophical dimensions but practical dimensions as well. If, philosophically, both nations strove for equality of opportunity as the ideal in redressing social ills, then there is a demonstrable need for systemic education reform. On the other hand, utilising this definition of reform creates the dual necessity of focusing on education and poverty. If socio-economic backgrounds impact upon education achievement, then poverty needs to be addressed. If education impacts upon socio-economic status, then education needs to be reformed. However, if both social issues are mutually important to each other, then it is necessary to change the errors to prevent Lewis' culture of poverty and the perpetuation of a permanent underclass or subculture from emerging in either nation.

### **Considering Reform: A Paradigmatic Discussion of Critical Theory**

If there is acceptance that poverty not only exists but it persists and is prevalent in both nations, then the case for the reform, particularly the reform of education within two highly developed nations is clear. However, to engage with and frame the discussion and rationale for reform, there needs to be consideration of a paradigmatic construct that will facilitate this throughout the research project.

Critical social theory is a response to classical Marxism whereby critical theorists such as Habermas had the unenviable job of attempting to rationalise why Marxism essentially failed. Marxists could point to one revolution as proof that their philosophical constructions were correct; however, when the revolutionary fervour expired and the global revolution to overthrow capitalism failed to materialise, the efficacy of Marxism was questioned. Such were the conditions that saw the birth of the Frankfurt school.

Early critical theorists were concerned with the growing influence of science as an ideology, which only dealt in objective facts and which left values unexamined. This philosophical viewpoint concerned Habermas who saw this approach as too rigid and

positivistic. A key tenet of Habermas' hypothesis is the theory of knowledge-constitutive interests. This thesis rejects the production of knowledge as a result of observation by an objective third party. Instead, the production of knowledge is the result of basic human interests that have developed from people's own historical and social realities.<sup>91</sup> For Habermas, knowledge is divided into three categories: technical knowledge which would be reflected in work situations and scientific development; practical knowledge which is rooted in communication and allows for dialogue between interested groups; and emancipatory knowledge which transforms what has been explained and understood in the first two sets of knowledge into power. Habermas concedes that what is needed "is a method that will liberate individuals from the causal efficacy of those social processes that distort communication and understanding and so allow them to engage in the critical reconstruction of suppressed possibilities and desires for emancipation."<sup>92</sup>

Habermas conjoins his ideas to classical Marxism with the adoption of critique as the method for critical social theory. One of the ways to foster critique is through critical self-reflection where individuals contemplate their own histories as well as their own social realities with the goal of understanding what reflects reality and what is imposed upon them by society. It is the latter recognition that mirrors Valentine's contention that the poor cannot control the subculture to which they belong and are therefore victims of the larger social structure.<sup>93</sup> Much of their lived experience is different from the social *status quo* and the inability by the majority to recognise the differences as impediments to change will maintain the poor within the subculture that they effectively have no control over. In a similar vein, self-reflection is unlikely to produce the characteristics inherent in Lewis's thesis. Habermas argued that social groups:

“...are prevented from achieving a correct understanding of their situation because, under the sway of ideological systems of ideas, they have passively accepted an illusory account of reality that prevents them from recognizing and pursuing their common interests and goals...critique is aimed at revealing to individuals how their beliefs and attitudes may be ideological illusions that

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<sup>91</sup> Wilfred Carr and Stephen Kemmis, *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. London: Falmer Press, 1986, pp. 129-154.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>93</sup> Valentine, 1971, pp. 193-225.

help to preserve a social order which is alien to their collective experiences and needs.”<sup>94</sup>

A tool used on the path towards emancipatory knowledge is the analysis of speech and ordinary discourse. Authentic speech, according to Habermas, needs to be true, comprehensible and sincere whilst simultaneously manifesting the speaker’s right to speak. From this ideal speech situation, there emerges a discourse revealing the interests of those engaged in it. Since the conditions for truth telling mimic the conditions for democratic discourse, interests could be discussed and solutions could be reached to perceived problems within a democratic framework.<sup>95</sup> While self-reflection and discourse are difficult tasks to undertake, they lead to a free and open discussion of possible solutions to community problems.

How does Habermas put his critical theory framework into a social science context? If the object of critical theory were a simple critique of historical and social realities for specific social groups, then the object would be achieved through the ideal speech act and discourse with the result simply being the discourse. It would be discourse for discourse’s sake. However, a guiding principle of critical theory is the Greek concept of *praxis* that is interpreted as ‘doing,’ which would make transformation the object of the discourse.<sup>96</sup> Something within society, something that reflects the interests of those involved in the discourse would need to be transfigured in order to make the theory purposeful. To achieve this, critical social theory embodies three key elements:

“...formation and extension of critical theorems – ‘propositions about the character and conduct of life;’ the organisation of processes of enlightenment – ‘it is a systematic learning process aimed at the development of knowledge about the practices of being considered and the conditions under which they take place;’ and the organisation of action – ‘the selection of appropriate strategies, the solution of tactical questions, and the conduct of the practice itself.”<sup>97</sup>

Assuming that the same situation exists as posited under the Marxist paradigm, where there is a large underclass living in poverty in the UK and the US, then how would critical theorists approach the dilemma of ameliorative resistant poverty in

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<sup>94</sup> Carr and Kemmis, 1986, pp. 133-139.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-144.

<sup>96</sup> Derek Layder, *Understanding Social Theory*. London: Sage Publications, 1994.

<sup>97</sup> Carr and Kemmis, 1986, pp. 146-147.

industrialised nations? The beginning would have to be the production of knowledge – Habermas’ knowledge-constitutive interests – by the social groups within the targeted community. Those who are a part of the underclass would need to be able to express their social and historical realities without fear of reprisals, censure or disdain. What is it like to be poor in the inner city? What are the reasons that they believe they are impoverished? What is it like to be part of the lower class or of an ethnic or racial minority in a nation that has traditionally looked down upon the group? What role does education play in their lives? The process of self-reflection allows the group to construct answers to these questions in light of their own reality and with the goal of understanding their particular reality.

If it is assumed that education becomes the critical theorist’s praxis and is the same social good under critical social science as it is under Marxism, then how can education become the transformative element for the underclass? After self-defining their social reality, the community needs to undertake an examination of the three stages of knowledge in order to begin the process of enlightenment. Technical knowledge is the knowledge of work, the skills necessary for employment in society. Traditionally, the poor have received educations that focused upon basic skills thereby significantly retarding their advancement in the world of work. They would always be the group doing menial labour for a substandard wage that would keep them in their place. Therefore, in order to change that reality, the community would need to ask themselves essential questions: Who was education for? What was the purpose of education? Whose needs did the state sponsored curriculum reflect? What is in the best interests of our children? They would need to begin a discourse within the community with the goal of answering these questions based on their own social, political and historical realities. This discourse builds practical knowledge, becoming a starting point from which to work towards mutually agreeable solutions. Since practical knowledge is gained from discourse and group self-reflection, it should be free from the prejudices and limitations placed upon it by the dominant group within society. If it reflects the community’s reality, then it would be free from the racism or class distinctions embedded within society.

Dialogue, however, is not praxis. Those in the underclass need to move toward emancipatory knowledge with the adoption of clear strategies to create solutions as

well as to expand their political power within society. If education is the accepted social good to bring about sustainable change and if the education system as it currently exists does not meet the needs of the community, how can education be transformed to empower children to move beyond technical knowledge and to give them broader opportunities in society? A Marxist would argue that the only way to achieve this would be through an educational revolution whereby so flawed a system could not be repaired and required swift and total change. Carr and Kemmis argue that decision-making to achieve emancipatory knowledge needs to be prudent.<sup>98</sup> Marxists would contend that prudence simply is a way of keeping the poor in their historically inferior position. However, in terms of education, prudence reflects reality in that some constituent elements of education do work and are highly beneficial to children. The process of steady transformation is not revolutionary however, steady and prudent progress reflects the needs of the community. In turn, this would revolutionise the educational system and would result in meaningful reforms that were community driven rather than imposed upon the community by the government.

Critical theory and critical social science as reform agents would be more palatable in both nations than classical Marxism. Both theories accept that there are distinct social groups within society with the poor dominated by those who possess economic or political power. Marx and Habermas would contend that the poor are unaware of their situation because society has conspired to keep them in those circumstances resulting in a desperate need for enlightenment so that they can affect a change in their own circumstances. Yet, Marx believes that enlightenment would be born from the irremediable circumstances intrinsic to poverty and result in a spontaneous revolution to right the social order. Habermas, on the other hand, believes that reflection, knowledge and discourse can prevent violent revolution but are powerful enough to create a democratic process of change. Steady and incremental change is more acceptable to societies that believe in the efficacy of the democratic process, believe that they have the duty to ameliorate poverty and believe that education must be reformed to meet the needs to all children and not just the privileged few.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., pp.144-150.

## Conclusion

Notwithstanding the compelling socio-cultural links between the UK and US, it would be remiss to suggest that there are few divergences between the two nations. Considerable deviation is evident in geography, demographics, governmental organisation and political philosophy. Yet, common factors between the two nations in the post-war era include the desire to reform education and eradicate poverty. Even with these commonalities, there is divergence. The education systems are organisationally different making comparison difficult. However, difference should not be a hindrance to comparison so it is imperative to look for core education issues linking the nations. These are found in the reform debates that do foster comparison.

Poverty is not a new social phenomenon but has been an enduring problem in both nations despite the implementation of policies to ameliorate poverty. Each nation, however, adopted a different methodological approach to poverty reduction. The British approach is entrenched in relativeness and perception, while the American perspective reflects more of an absolutist ideal. Although these methodological approaches to poverty are divergent, there is shared recognition that poverty impacts upon a child's educational opportunities. Official statistics for both nations show a clear connection between social class or racial background and education achievement. Within England, inner-city LEAs and post-industrial LEAs often demonstrate both the highest poverty rates and the lowest percentage of GCSE pass rates. In America, education underachievement and poverty are clearly associated with race with African-American and Hispanic American adolescents often linked to a higher incidence of familial poverty and high school dropout rates.

Nesting within the debates relating to poverty and education reform, competing views emerged on the causes of poverty, views that either debunked cultural poverty myths or gave credence to them. Lewis offers one conceptualisation detailing a culture of poverty where the poor are inherently different because they have divergent values from society and, no matter how much money is invested in poverty eradication programmes, the poor will always remain poor.<sup>99</sup> Lewis may be right in that there is a hard-core underclass of people who will always remain poor and, unfortunately,

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<sup>99</sup> Lewis, 1965.

poverty will never be totally eradicated. This group is the minority though. Nevertheless, in repudiating Lewis' culture of poverty as an overall paradigm to explain the poor, it should be noted that poverty could be situational, often resulting from the loss of job or the breakdown of the family. Poverty of this nature is not cyclical but tends to last for shorter durations until the economic setback is reversed, however, the longer situational poverty endures, the more difficult it becomes to escape and could potentially lead to long-term poverty.

Clearly, both nations understand that the education systems need reform. Historically, education became a cornerstone of the domestic policy agendas since the end of World War II whether it was a response born from the launch of Sputnik, a response to social unrest, a response to failing grades and the perception that both nations were falling behind less developed nations, or a response to teacher shortages. It will continue to be a topic of discussion and debate in the twenty-first century therefore developing strategies to render education more effective and responsive to the needs of the community will remain a key political issue.

Finally, if there is acceptance of a need for educational reform, then perhaps there should also be an acceptance that those people who will be most affected by reform must be included within it. Analysts and legislators, imposing their ideas upon teachers, parents and children, generally without substantial consultation, create reform policies that are often reactionary in nature, can reflect their own positional stance, frequently do not meet the community's needs and are difficult to operationalise effectively. If teachers, parents and children become part of the dialogue on education reform, if there is an understanding of the historical contexts of education reform and if consensus is built between participants, practitioners and policy-makers, then perhaps meaningful reform that is responsive to community needs might occur.

## Chapter Two

### Methodological Prescriptions for a Comparative and Historical Study

#### Introduction

The research questions posed and the literature review developed around the lines of enquiry suggest that there are three specific and inter-linked areas for investigation in this research project. First, the period between 1964 and 2000 is established as the primary focus of the study. Although the choice may appear to be arbitrary, the time frame is marked by significant developments within English and American education, which can be partially contextualised by global events. Within this global context, both the United Kingdom and the United States prioritised domestic policy agendas to address inequity within educational provision.

Having delineated the time frame, the research design adopts a comparative framework to underpin the discussion of English and American education structures and policies in an attempt to understand and learn from these yet not in an attempt to significantly disassemble them. Although comparison would be more readily facilitated if all elements were equivalent across cases, this cannot be said of the two nations, which exhibit as many divergences as they do similarities.

Finally, the research design centres upon the conceptualisations of poverty, the linkages between poverty and education and the emergence of reforms to change the *status quo* for those living within poverty. It is within this context that the Habermasian-inspired notions of discourse and *praxis* are considered as potential tools for community engagement rather than top-down policy implementation. Retrospectively then, the interconnections between period, nations, comparative frameworks and reforming social policy agendas emerge as evident avenues of exploration for this study.

Consideration of methodological approaches that are best suited to underpin research that is historical, comparative and policy driven is therefore necessary at this juncture. Although Walford and Wellington express reservations regarding the use of procedural research manuals, the literature within the field of education research concurs that the selection of the appropriate data collection method is a primary issue for a successful research design.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, it is entirely possible to utilise several methods of data collection to gather information for the research questions posed within the project's framework. The use of quantitative and qualitative methods concurrently, rather than being confined to separate epistemological research realms, is a possibility. At the same time, the deployment of several methods within either the quantitative or the qualitative sphere is also feasible. The key to selection is the method's appropriateness, to understand that one method is intrinsically neither superior nor inferior to another and that no single method is likely to be able to produce all of the data necessary for a research project. Accordingly, in this research enterprise, the design incorporates a number of distinctive methods, although the level of distinction is not expressed in the method *per se* but in its applied relevance to the research questions. It is appropriate to utilise documentary analysis in order to understand the context in which documents were originally written but it would be inappropriate to employ this approach for oral history interviews. The oral histories, which offer another perspective on the historical period, need to be analysed not in the broader context of the world but through the experience of the world as it was lived by each individual.

An important consequence of selecting several methodological approaches is the issue of whether triangulation of the data is achievable. Triangulation relates to the use of two or more methods of data collection that are particularly useful in social science research

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<sup>1</sup> For a summative discussion on data collection methods and education research, please refer to the following: Jerry Wellington, *Educational Research: Contemporary Issues and Practical Approaches*. London: Continuum, 2000, pp. 3-14, 16-33, 41-67 and 71-121; Rob Walker, *Doing Research: A Handbook for Teachers*. London: Methuen, 1985, pp. 45-89 and 90-155; Norman E. Wallen and Jack R. Frankel, *How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2000, pp. 2-25; Anthony G. Picciano, *Educational Research Primer*. London: Continuum, 2004; Judith Bell, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999, pp.8-19 and 106-168; and Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998, pp.6-81 and 83-171.

projects where human behaviour is a key fixture of the research.<sup>2</sup> The use of the multi-method approach increases the amount of data that are produced but it also views the data from several different assumptions or points of view. The adoption of this methodological technique makes data more reliable because it is corroborated standing alongside other data rather than standing as one single strand of evidence.<sup>3</sup> Ideally, a combination of both quantitative methods - surveys and questionnaires - mixed with qualitative methods - document research and interviews - should be sought. Nonetheless, the use of several types of data collection strategies within one methodological sphere – either the quantitative or the qualitative - can make triangulation a possibility. Thus, documentary analysis and oral history interviews might be perceived as the most appropriate methods of data collection for a project, even though they are both rooted in the qualitative sphere, for this makes it possible to triangulate the evidence and thus strengthen the reliability of the research findings.

The third criterion is the validity of the research findings postulated at the end of the project. Although education researchers offer a multiplicity of definitions for validity, they accept it as a fundamental requisite in all research designs.<sup>4</sup> Bell describes validity as a complex concept that demonstrates that an item or research method measures what it claims to measure.<sup>5</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison proceed further in defining the possible tools used to ensure validity while reducing bias and invalidity in the research design.<sup>6</sup> These tools include a suitable time scale, selection of appropriate research methodologies, choice of instrumentation for data gathering, sample size, stability of the research and the systematic avoidance of bias. This can also be protected against at the point of data analysis by guarding against poor coding of qualitative data, using

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<sup>2</sup> For a review of issues surrounding triangulation, please see the following: Picciano, 2004, pp. 35-36; Wellington, 2000, pp.23-25; Wallen and Frankel, 2000, p. 506; Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Routledge Falmer, 2000, pp. 112-116; and Andy Hargreaves, 'The micro-macro problem in the sociology of education.' in R. Burgess (ed) *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*. London: Falmer, 1985, pp. 21-47.

<sup>3</sup> Denscombe, 1998, pp. 83-86.

<sup>4</sup> For a brief discussion on the conceptualisations of validity, please see: Picciano, 2004, pp.28-29 and 131-132; Wellington, 2000, pp. 29-32 and 97-100; Wallen and Frankel, 2000, pp. 168-187 and 188-207; and Maggie MacLure, *Discourse in Educational and Social Research*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2003, p. 123.

<sup>5</sup> Bell, 1999, pp. 103-105.

<sup>6</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, pp. 105-133.

appropriate statistics, avoiding the use of unsupportable generalisations, forestalling subjectivity in the interpretation of data and reducing the “halo effect.”<sup>7</sup> This places a heavy burden on the researcher who must be able to demonstrate that the collection of data was both reliable and consistent while also establishing that the data addressed and answered the research questions as posed. However, this is a necessary burden to ensure that the research design is apposite to the project, that data gathering has been conducted in a rigorous and systematic manner and that the analysis strives to avoid bias and report data accurately despite the outcomes.

## **The Project’s Structural Foundation: A Comparative Historical Foundation**

### **The Historical Foundation**

Two key premises support the structural framework of the research proposal: the study is historical in orientation as well as comparative by design. With the research project focusing upon education policy and reform initiatives from the 1960s, the project is inherently historical. On the other hand, the project also embraces the possibilities in adopting a comparative framework. The project is not simply a history of change and continuity of two nations’ education policies but seeks to compare and contrast the rich and varied education policy histories of the UK and the US so that ultimately knowledge of the philosophical concepts underpinning the planning and process of reform can be understood fully.

The question regarding the selection of a historical framework for education research is not its innovativeness but the appropriateness of the method for attending to the research questions. The answer lies in what one wishes to achieve by conducting historical research. Borg postulates that historical research is the “systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence in order to establish facts and draw

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.116.

conclusions about past events.”<sup>8</sup> This definition clearly roots all historical research in the past without considering history’s implications for the future. Cohen, Manion and Morrison extend Borg’s notion of educational research, positing that the study of educational systems, institutions or ideas provides the foundation for understanding their development. It is only when the development across time is considered that the potential for discussing change emerges.<sup>9</sup> However, while employing historical research to create change or reform in educational settings is conceivable, this is not always seen as an appropriate reason for historical inquiry.

McCulloch and Richardson argue that there is a distinct division among educational historians and the aims of education history.<sup>10</sup> Considering this dichotomy of the academic historians who consider education history as history and therefore written to elucidate past events, and educationists who perceive education history as primarily an agent for social or political change, they posit:

“Moreover, it is also true that since the 1930s at least, in both countries there has been an uneasy tension between those – usually academic historians – who have espoused a liberal arts view of the value of education history for its own sake and others – educationists, in the main – who have wanted to see historical studies in education put to use in addressing contemporary problems and controversies.”<sup>11</sup>

Employing McCulloch and Richardson’s agency archetype, Ozga’s work on policy research and educational settings intertwines the field of education policy with the field of education history. She asserts that policy research must be contextualised within social, political and economic frameworks to fully appreciate the genesis of its development and “the effects of prevailing ideologies on education policy.”<sup>12</sup> Ozga considers the utilisation of education history as one possible approach to scrutinise “the

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<sup>8</sup> Walter R. Borg, *Educational Research: An Introduction*. London: Longmans, 1963, p. 188. Borg’s work was cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, pp. 159-160.

<sup>9</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 159.

<sup>10</sup> Gary McCulloch and William Richardson, *Historical Research in Educational Settings*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000, pp. 41-51.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> Jenny Ozga, *Policy Research in Educational Settings: Contested Terrain*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000, p. 114.

history of education policy making and its accompanying narrative explanation of education policy that is provided by education policy research.”<sup>13</sup> Moreover, she counsels against the tendency to view all education history and policy-making as an endeavour of progress, thus advising researchers who combine both policy and history to be aware of such bias within the literature. Ozga’s exploration of this connection between education history and research leads to a consideration of documents, which are the historian’s primary research tool, and their position within historical research.<sup>14</sup> McCulloch too ponders this connection arguing concisely for the inclusion of documentary research in education.<sup>15</sup> This use of documentary evidence would continue a tradition present in early twentieth century research, one that has been largely replaced by competing qualitative methods.

Whilst accepting Ozga’s cautionary note, the emphasis on agency is most useful for this research proposal. The research is not intended to be a narration of English and American educational history; its purpose is not solely to trace achievements or failures across four decades. The choice of historical methodology is appropriate because it elucidates trends within both education systems, thereby facilitating comparison. Historical research can provide the context for developments in education policy and pedagogy and potentially explain why governments made particular policy decisions at specific times in history.<sup>16</sup> This example not only illuminates policy developments in each nation but also, in laying them side-by-side for analysis, can point out what is similar and what is profoundly different.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 117-121.

<sup>15</sup> Gary McCulloch, *Documentary Research in Education, History and the Social Sciences*. London: Routledge Falmer, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> The launch of Sputnik in 1957 led to divergent policy responses from the American and British governments. In this case, the historical methodology aids in fostering an understanding of the American approach of choosing to advance new curriculum initiatives in response to an external event. Whilst the American government advocated curriculum reform in the sciences, the British government had implemented curricular reforms in the post-war era and so was not compelled to explicitly respond to this particular Cold War threat.

While it is imperative that education history needs to be clearly understood, there is a secondary goal embedded within this particular piece of historical research. The research is designed to investigate the potential trajectory of education in both nations in the twenty-first century with respect to what was achieved or not achieved in the twentieth century. The research project is not a function of prediction, nor a reporting on the relevant past so much as it is an exercise of transformation. The transformative nature of the investigation is inherent in the selection of critical theory as the philosophical paradigm underpinning the research. Marxist methodologies acknowledge the importance of history as a factor in the process of change and reform. On one hand, the Marxist researcher seeks to understand the past, particularly the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in the capitalist phase of economic development, and to use the past to inform the present in facilitating systemic change. On the other hand, the critical theorist, who is influenced by Marxist traditions, seeks not only to understand that struggle but also to directly utilise the community's experience of it to create change. Therefore, the appropriateness of historical enquiry is clear in this research project: it becomes the foundation to inform change.

If history is the analytical tool, then a primary concern is how to engage with it particularly when situated in a comparative framework? One possibility is the use of continuous historical narrative. Yet, it is possible that this might not be the most productive way to understand and compare histories:

“In order to make sense of space and time it is clearly necessary to devise methods to help us with the task of description and to facilitate the ordering and analysis of events and trends. Without attempts to create an ordered framework for description and argument – however inadequate – the sweep of history and the location of the events which constitute it would be barely comprehensible.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> David Phillips, ‘Periodisation in historical approaches to comparative education: some considerations from the examples of Germany and England and Wales.’ *British Journal of Educational Studies* 42/3, 1994, p. 261.

Although the extended narrative does have merits, it might hinder the capacity to identify trends, understand the development of educational ideas or comprehend the context in which the history developed.

Therefore, if the historical narrative is rejected, then there needs to be a consideration of how the history could be organised so that it provides a framework for comparison. Carr makes a strong case for the adoption of periodisation in historical research but warns about the possibility of researcher bias in doing so. The construction of the time periods inherent within periodisation is likely to reflect the needs or opinions of the researcher, thereby leading to the imposition of a narrative structure rather than the uncovering of one.<sup>18</sup> Phillips, citing Farrell, suggests that periodisation can assist the researcher if there is a core sense of unity in the time period that is being examined – a unity that binds all of the elements together in specific ways that allows for description and analysis.<sup>19</sup> One strategy in developing a periodisation framework could position the decade as the accepted unit of time for analysis. Although convenient, this approach can be highly artificial. The interconnection between education policy, governments and election cycles suggests that the decade may be appropriate for the analysis of policy for a limited number of administrations but, more frequently, will not provide the ideal unit of analysis because the decade rarely aligns with the starting or ending points of governments.

While the argument against the use of decades appears clear, perhaps greater clarity is achieved when considering education policy that traversed decades and governments. Within an English context, the Butskellite Compromise that emerged in the post-war period and influenced education policy over three decades is a cogent example of the problems presented by the utilisation of decades.<sup>20</sup> The election of a Labour government in 1964 not only ended the Butskellite Compromise but also the era of tripartism that the

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<sup>18</sup> Edward H. Carr, *What is History? With a New Introduction by Richard J. Evans*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, pp. 54-55.

<sup>19</sup> Phillips, 1994, p. 263.

<sup>20</sup> Ozga, 2000, pp.114-128; McKenzie, 2001, p.173; and Paul Trowler, *Education Policy*. London: Routledge, 2003, p.194. The Butskellite Compromise is the consensus between Conservative interests and moderate socialist ideals, with particular reference to education during the immediate post-war era. The name derives from the names of R.A. Butler, who represented the Conservative interests, and Hugh Gaitskell who voiced Socialist interests.

compromise helped to define. Moreover, an example from American education history highlights a similar issue with the decade. Cross argues that bipartisanship increased in federal education policy, a move that began at the Charlottesville Education Summit in 1989 and continued throughout the presidency of George W. Bush.<sup>21</sup> This cross-party acceptance of education standards and national education goals substantively changed the debate from one of federal inputs into education to the outcomes expected from education by the federal government.<sup>22</sup> These two examples highlight the rigidity imposed by decades, which would limit analysis to policies within a specific time frame rather than consideration of eras defined by policy or specific events. Therefore, the identification of philosophical ideals, policy trajectories or educational trends might be obscured.

The two examples noted above provide cogent reasons for the employment of periodisation. Furthermore, the use of the decade to provide the cohesive unity is compromised in a comparative study. The election cycles of both nations rarely coincide. For example, both nations experienced a political ideological shift from Tory to New Labour and from Republican to Democrat during the 1990s although these came at differing points within the decade. Although this disconnect in dates poses problems for comparison, it leads to a consideration of ideological shift or trend development underpinning eras for it is here that the comparison can achieve greater validity. The argument then moves more strongly toward the abandonment of the decade and the consideration of time periods as the analytical framework.

Phillips' argument for periodisation leads to an acknowledgement of potential weaknesses in his method; it is laden with bias and considers education as a monolithic topic without subdivisions. However, he argues that without periodisation, researchers might be presented with more contrasting data than data usable for comparative purposes.<sup>23</sup> Historically significant events can become the delineator between time-periods signifying the close of one and the advent of another. Phillips posits that the publication of the Rahmenplan in Germany in 1959 was historically significant in

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<sup>21</sup> Cross, 2004, pp. 91-125.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 2004, p. 98.

<sup>23</sup> Phillips, 1994.

heralding the start of a new era in German education through its clear focus on education reform to meet the needs of a modern post-war German society.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, James Callaghan's Ruskin College Speech in 1976 signalled a shift in the debate from the creation of comprehensive secondary education to one focused more on the rationale and appropriateness of the secondary curriculum within English society.<sup>25</sup> Yet, periodisation is a highly subjective methodological tool with the potential for researchers to interpret the information differently and devise time periods that reflect their own construct of the data. It is wholly possible that other researchers might select different events as the demarcation points between periods but it is the rationale for the periodisation that becomes the cornerstone of its success. The differing constructs do not invalidate the method; researchers, however, must be aware of their biases and offer clarification for the rationale of the construct.

While selecting appropriate examples to illustrate Phillips' ideas can be straightforward, these are initially of lesser concern than the process of periodisation itself. The process is multi-dimensional: the researcher first constructs time frames for each nation to facilitate understanding of the inclusion and the trajectories of events within the frame. These must be laid side by side to compare and contrast the events within the specified time frames to see if trends for comparison emerge. Alternatively, if the key events do not line up accordingly, the researcher may consider prevailing ideologies that may have co-existed and which may lend themselves to periodisation. Having considered the events and trends, the researcher utilises these to construct new time frames that are informed by these and which can be employed to facilitate a comparative analysis. Without these newly constructed time-periods, comparison is impossible for there is no common ground to initiate such an analysis. It is this process that underlies the periods constructed for this research project.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 263-267.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 267-270.

Phillips' conceptualisation of periodisation is the most apposite for a comparative history of education and, in this case, facilitates comparative analysis between the two nations.<sup>26</sup> Periodisation will not be framed by discrete events but rather by overarching trends or characteristics inherent in time periods and underpinned by national documents published within the period. These documents provide a written record of education reform policies, an account that can be analysed for the content, context and policy trajectories. Therefore, the selection of documents is drawn from three potential categories: policy promulgated by government, resulted in policy creation by the government or carried the weight of policy without the official imprimatur of the government. Having constructed the rationale for periodisation and reviewed the available documentary evidence and prevailing education histories, the six decades between the end of World War II and the advent of the twenty-first century are conceptualised as three time periods with distinct features that are evident in each nation. These will be discussed more fully in later chapters within the dissertation but it is vital to establish the context for the reader at this juncture.

While periodisation is appropriate, there is an important caveat: there needs to be an acceptance of fluidity and not an adherence to strict construction when analysing the time periods. Returning to the previous example of the Butskellite Compromise and the 1964 Labour election victory, the need for flexibility is demonstrated clearly. Accepting McKenzie's argument that a new era in education emerged from the results of that election, an era defined by the comprehensive movement and equality of educational opportunity, it is important to note that this did not happen with the election alone.<sup>27</sup> The debate on the merits of the tripartite system had escalated during the 1950s and early 1960s. Both the *Crowther Report* and the *Newsom Report* highlighted the disadvantages and inequities in the system and the subsequent impacts that these had upon adolescents and the nation in general.<sup>28</sup> However, both reports are outside of the parameters of the

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 261-272.

<sup>27</sup> McKenzie, 2001, pp. 171-213.

<sup>28</sup> Great Britain, Ministry of Education, *15 to 18: A Report of the Central Advisory Committee for Education (England)*. Vol. 1. (Crowther Report) London: HMSO, 1959 and Great Britain, Ministry of Education, *Half Our Future: A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England)*. (Newsom Report) London: HMSO, 1963.

new time period, thereby raising the question as to whether or not they should be included in the discussion. A researcher cannot ignore such documentary evidence that affected policy decisions but needs to utilise it as contextualisation for the period even if its origin is technically outside of the agreed parameters.

Although the research is focused primarily upon the two later time periods beginning in the mid 1960s, it is necessary to discuss and contextualise these periods as they relate to policy created in the immediate post-war era. This relates to the earlier assertion that three time periods emerged post-1944. Accepting the premise that there will never be a definitive point in which to begin consideration because something will have always preceded such a demarcation point, the immediate post-war era from 1944 until 1964 needs consideration in this analysis because the era frames the discussion and debates emerging in the two subsequent time periods. Yet, this demonstrates an inherent weakness in adopting periodisation - the need for fluidity in interpretation because the rule of achieving unity has already been broken.

The use of periodisation does present risks for the researcher. First, the use of a time-period has the advantage of defining the focus of the research project but can overlook other variables that might be relevant to contextualisation. Secondly, there is an inherent bias in creating time-periods. The time-periods reflect to some degree the opinions and research of this particular author. Another researcher looking at the same topic might readily dispute them. Thirdly, periodisation is not precise. The researcher must understand that it is a rare occurrence when documents or events align precisely by date.

Although there are accepted risks, periodisation does have its strengths. First, it considers periods that are less rigidly defined and therefore less artificial. A decade has a definite beginning and end but the events occurring in that decade may move beyond the end date and may not fit in with the character of the next decade. If there is an attempt to broadly define a time-period, and by delineating it create a unity in both the time-period and in the comparative analysis without creating inaccuracies or artificialities, then the period is stronger than the decade for the purpose of this project. Thus, periodisation allows for

interpretation based on the historical context of an era rather than the unyielding year or decade. Secondly, and most importantly for this research, periodisation facilitates comparison because it obliges the researcher to ponder the developments in each nation in a broader context, an approach that may elaborate that which is alike but also that which is distinctly different.

### **The Comparative Context**

Having defined and justified the parameters of the time periods for the research project, thereby establishing the historical basis upon which the project is built, it is essential to consider a secondary foundation that underpins the research project. The pivotal component focuses upon an examination and comparison of English and American education reform policy. Recognising that this body of policy is considerable, the project converges on education policy intended to make systemic reforms to address the needs of marginalised students within the established education systems. The overall goals of such policies would be the greater inclusion of socio-economically disadvantaged students through increased equality of opportunities.

However, is a comparative framework the most appropriate one for answering the research questions posed in this study? Alexander, quoting King, suggests that there are four possible goals for comparative education:

“...to inform the development of particular institutions (universities, schools and so on); to guide the process of universalizing whole sectors such as elementary education; to place the evaluation of national systems in an international context; and to guide national educational policy.”<sup>29</sup>

The goal of the study is neither to aid in the development of education institutions nor to trace the history of such development. Both nations have functional education systems, and while in need of change, they neither need to be created nor re-established. The

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<sup>29</sup> Robin Alexander, *Culture and Pedagogy: International Comparisons in Primary Education*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p.27.

second goal does have merits for this study because it could lead to greater access to education for children living in poverty. However, access to education is not at the heart of the work although access to higher quality education is always desirable. The third goal is rooted in international comparisons such as *The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)* and *The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study - Repeat (TIMSS-R)*. TIMSS and TIMSS-R compared mathematics and science achievement in 1995 and 1999 respectively and facilitated international comparison through standardised examination results.<sup>30</sup> The final goal of comparative education – to compare educational policy – is at the heart of this research project. This goal, combined with historical research to facilitate reform in education, is the *raison d'être* for conducting the research. The comparative approach provides the opportunity to analyse each nation's education policies in a specific time frame, to evaluate the policies for similarities and differences, to explore the lessons garnered from the different policies or from different implementation strategies and finally, to use them as a tool to inform future national policy endeavours.

With the key to the comparative framework resting upon the guidance of future national education policy, a consideration of the research underpinning this conceptualisation is vital. Greenaway, who studied 16 nations across four continents, utilised comparative research as a means “to enhance our knowledge and understanding of current issues affecting lower secondary education...”<sup>31</sup> Greenaway's cross-national comparative study engendered an understanding of the problems inherent in lower secondary education and

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<sup>30</sup> United States, National Centre for Educational Statistics, *The Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS)*, available from <http://nces.ed.gov/timss/>; and United States, National Centre for Educational Statistics, *Highlights from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study – Repeat (TIMSS-R)*, available from <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001027.pdf>. TIMSS and TIMSS-R were ambitious research studies that compared the performance of US students in Mathematics and Science to the performance of students in these subjects and at the same grade level in nations across seven continents. TIMSS, conducted in 1995, considered performance at five different grade levels in 45 participating nations although 60% of the participating nations were European with only one African nation – South Africa – participating in the project. On the other hand, TIMSS-R, undertaken in 1999, repeated the research in Mathematics and Science but focused solely upon eighth graders rather than across primary and secondary education. Thus, the study considered the progression of mathematical and scientific understanding and skills in the cohort of students who had been in the fourth grade in TIMSS and were now in the eighth grade in TIMSS-R. Once again, European nations, which represented 44% of the nations, dominated the nations participating in the project.

<sup>31</sup> Emma Greenaway, *Lower Secondary Education: An International Comparison. International Review of Curriculum and Assessment Paper 4*. London: Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 1999, p.1.

an analysis of the success in providing universal secondary education. Alexander's comparative work, which focused on primary education in five nations, also warrants consideration.<sup>32</sup> Although his intention was "to be interpretive rather than normative or prescriptive," this does not mean that the work cannot be used to understand the educational practices in different contexts with the aim of informing change or reform.<sup>33</sup> Finally, Howarth evaluated Japanese reforms in the 1980s against Britain's education reforms, particularly after the passage of the *Education Reform Act 1988*.<sup>34</sup> This study utilised comparison as a means of directing education policy particularly in light of the favourable assessment that Japanese education and management practices were receiving in western nations.<sup>35</sup>

Comparative research cannot be undertaken without recognition of the caveats inherent within it. The first consideration is the sample size for the study. Sample size needs to be not only representative of the population but also needs to be large enough to be able to generalise the findings and to draw conclusions from them.<sup>36</sup> The sample size for this research project is two nations, which is the minimum number for a comparative study. However, the research design is nuanced through the selection of one LEA in England and one school district in New York State to consider how localities implemented and operationalized national education policy. A further refinement of the research design incorporates one school from each locality to examine how school communities responded to policy initiatives thereby keeping in spirit of national policy locally

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<sup>32</sup> Alexander, 2000.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.

<sup>34</sup> Mike Howarth, *Britain's Educational Reform: A Comparison with Japan*. London: Routledge, 1991.

<sup>35</sup> The discussion on comparative research centred upon the work of Greenaway, Alexander and Howarth, however, a consideration of the *TIMSS* series can also add to the research literature and needs further discussion. While the *TIMSS* assessments focused on attainment of students in a cross-national context at key educational junctures and helped to develop the trend toward international comparison, these appear to align more with Alexander's third goal more than the focus for this comparison. The influence of these assessments and the corresponding international league tables that their results continue to generate cannot be discounted for they have the potential to inform education policy development.

<sup>36</sup> For a brief discussion on sample size and its effects, please see the following: Wellington, 2000, pp.58-67; Denscombe, 1998, pp. 11-27; Andrew Brown and Paul Dowling, *Doing Research/Reading Research: A Mode of Interrogation for Education*. London: Falmer, 1998, pp.29-35; Pamela Maykut and Richard Morehouse, *Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide*. London: Falmer, 1994, pp. 56-63; and Gajendra K. Verma and Kanka Mallick, *Researching Education: Perspectives and Techniques*. London: Falmer, 1999, pp. 160-165.

administered. The criteria for the selection of the LEA and school district, as well as the individual schools within each, will be explored thoroughly in a later chapter.<sup>37</sup> However, it should be noted that demographics and the schools' histories became key factors for inclusion within the research project.

The second caveat also relates to the size of the research study. Alexander warns against using two nations because of the potential polarising effect where one nation ultimately is portrayed more positively than the other. He also warns against the use of three nations because of the "Goldilocks effect" where one nation is good, the other is better and the third is the best of all three.<sup>38</sup> The inclusion of the US within the project's sample potentially increases such researcher bias. Having resided in the US, educated within the American education system and undertaken her professional education within the US suggests that the cultural norms are well entrenched in the author's background. It can be argued that the relative unfamiliarity with the English education system, including the different organisational structure of secondary education, the professional vocabulary in schools, the power structures and decision making in schools, LEAs and Whitehall, could result in succumbing to the polarising effect that Alexander warned against. Verma and Mallick and Brown and Dowling describe the various implications of both intentional and unintentional bias whereas Bell argues that it is easier to acknowledge bias than to eliminate it totally. Therefore, in acknowledging the potential for bias, the researcher is more aware of the possible pitfalls and of bias subtly creeping into her research.<sup>39</sup>

In terms of comparative analysis, Alexander, Greenaway and Howarth all accept the third caveat in comparative education: the researcher must know the cultures that are compared.<sup>40</sup> Boyd argues that American and English education cultures exhibit

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<sup>37</sup> A number of factors were considered in the development of the research sample. Demographic criteria such as comparable size, ethnic population breakdown, standardised examination scores and family income provided the basis for selection at both the local and school levels. Furthermore, a key selection criterion for schools is their existence throughout the project's time frames so the history of the school and the history of reform policies could be traced and analysed through documentary evidence and oral history interviews.

<sup>38</sup> Alexander, 2000, p.44.

<sup>39</sup> Brown and Dowling, 1998, p. 142; Verma and Mallick, 1999, pp. 38 and 76-77; and Bell, 1999, pp. 139-140.

<sup>40</sup> Alexander, 2000, pp. 9-45; Emma Greenaway, 1999, pp.1-2; and Howarth, 1991, pp. 1-3.

significant similarities especially in relation to reform and the adoption of reform policies.<sup>41</sup> The effect of culture on comparative research is succinctly posited:

“Though there are undoubted cross-cultural continuities and indeed universals in educational thinking and practice, no decision or action which one observes in a particular classroom, and no educational policy, can be properly understood except by reference to the web of inherited ideas and values, habits and customs, institutions and world views which make one country, or one region, or one group, distinct from another.”<sup>42</sup>

It can appear that English and American cultures have a number of strong similarities, thereby making comparison relatively straightforward. Returning to the previous chapter’s discussion on poverty, the conceptualisation of poverty in both societies makes this a naïve assumption to make. Within English culture poverty is embedded within a class context, one that is almost inescapable because class is difficult to transcend in one’s lifetime. American culture, by contrast, portrays poverty within an individual context resulting from a disavowal of hard work or a rejection of the Puritan work ethic. The interconnection of poverty and religious dogma adds another dimension to American poverty discourse. While prosperity was considered a fruit of hard work, the link between prosperity and Puritanical predestination often pointed toward eternal salvation thereby connecting the individual, sin, poverty and religious dogma together. Parkin suggests that the Calvinist/Protestant ethic underpins Weber’s rational economic theory, which is counter to the idea that religious dogmas interfered with the development of “rational economic conduct.”<sup>43</sup> Utilising Weber’s explanation of the Puritan/Protestant work ethic, it is possible to consider the utility of this ethic not only to achieve eternal salvation but also to create an economically viable community.

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<sup>41</sup> William L. Boyd, ‘The politics of choice and market-oriented school reform in Britain and the United States: explaining the differences.’ in J. Chapman, W. Boyd, R. Lander and D. Reynolds (eds) *The Reconstruction of Education: Quality, Equality and Control*. London: Cassell, 1996, pp. 73-87.

<sup>42</sup> Alexander, 2000, p.5.

<sup>43</sup> Frank Parkin, *Max Weber, Revised Edition*. London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 40 - 44. Calvinists and American Puritans adhered to the doctrine of predestination, a canon focused not only upon eternal salvation but also upon the worldly manifestation of one’s status as chosen by God. This demarcation as God’s chosen enthused Puritans to work diligently so as not squander the gifts given by God. Puritans not only followed their divine call but also often reaped the economic benefits of this calling, which was not in contrast to their beliefs, and reaffirmed their position as predestined for salvation. Those within the community who did not succeed suffered the religious implications of damnation since they wasted the gifts and blessings imparted upon them by God.

The education culture diverges as well with organisational structures of primary and secondary education demonstrating differences in transfer points and pedagogical constructs attesting to different learning patterns and teaching approaches. Yet, although there are many differences, there are also commonalities. Both nations accept the notional idea that education can provide a successful future for students as well as a trained work force for industry.<sup>44</sup> Both use a similar organisational model for the physical structure of schools with compartmentalised classrooms continuing to reflect the factory model in many school settings. Both nations embrace high stakes examinations as a means of demonstrating achievement or a lack thereof at the local, regional and national levels. While there are abiding differences, there are also clear similarities that do lend themselves to comparison.

Both Alexander and Phillips note that the final caveat in comparative education is the use of language.<sup>45</sup> The insistence that both nations use English as their “official” language of communication thereby eliminating language difficulties is facile. Phillips insists that language terms need clarification because they pose a barrier to comprehension.<sup>46</sup> The common example in this research is the use of “United Kingdom” and “England,” which are often used interchangeably. The use of UK to refer to either the breadth of education history or when writing of specific government documents or policies thereby implies that this is linked to the nation’s history or government. However, England is used specifically to refer to LEAs and schools where research will be conducted; the empirical data are rooted not in a British context but in an English one because of the significant variations among the school systems in the UK. This may appear as a minor distinction but it reflects important political and educational realities.

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<sup>44</sup> James Callaghan, *A Rational Debate Based on the Facts*, available from <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/speeches/1976ruskin.html>, 1976 and Cross, 2004. Callaghan’s speech is more commonly referred to as his Ruskin College Speech because it was delivered at Ruskin College, University of Oxford on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1976.

<sup>45</sup> Alexander, 2000, p.5 and Phillips, 1994, pp. 261-272.

<sup>46</sup> Phillips, 1994, pp. 261-262.

As a final point, the historical and comparative frameworks are appropriate methodological designs for a research project, the nexus of which lies in transformation facilitated by both the knowledge of history and the experiential knowledge of teachers. History helps to contextualise the trends, the overall themes and the cultural realities embedded within education. Comparison assists in operationalising both the historical policy frameworks and the experiences of the educators: how did schools or LEAs implement policy, how did schools define “comprehensive” and how did poor children achieve in schools? Both approaches aid in pointing a direction for the future by learning from education’s past and by learning from each other.

## **Data Collection: Documentary Sources and Oral Traditions of Evidence**

### **Documentary Evidence and Analysis**

The structural framework provides the foundation that underpins the research design but the data collection methods strengthen it. The research project is a qualitative exploration of history, education reform and the human experience of education, thus making the selection of data collection methods a key issue in order to ensure validity and facilitate triangulation. The historical focus of the project suggests that documentary evidence should be a primary method of data collection but a further qualification lies in the selection of documents and the subsequent analysis of the documentary evidence.

McCulloch argues that modern society, with better communication and resilient governmental institutions, adopted the use of documents readily to leave a lasting record of achievements, policies and practices.<sup>47</sup> However, he further argues that the status of documents needs to be re-evaluated by modern researchers who do not favour their utilisation because they do not enjoy the approbation of the more quantitative and scientific research approaches that gained prominence during the last century. If

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<sup>47</sup> McCulloch, 2004, pp.1-28.

documentary sources are utilised in research, either alone or in conjunction with other sources, then their pre-eminence in the hierarchy of data is assured which runs counterintuitive to current research trends regarding documents.<sup>48</sup> This, however, is not the approach used in this research project; the endeavour is not solely a documentary historical account but seeks to transform the process of education policy-making by utilising data from *both* documents *and* oral testimony. Cunningham and Gardner employed both documents and oral history interviews in their work on teachers.<sup>49</sup> They acknowledge a potential problem in using these two types of evidence: do they compete with each other, can they corroborate each other or do they complement each other? They envisage documentary sources that complement each other as sources that fill the gaps left by the other.<sup>50</sup> The documentary evidence for this project enjoys an equal position with the oral histories in the belief that both types of evidence provide different types of information that need not compete with each other. The documents and the oral histories complement each other and together provide as complete a picture as possible in terms of espoused policies, policy implementation at a local level and the perception of policy effectiveness from grassroots participants. Whilst the national policy documents lay the foundation for policy within the nation, it is the differences in implementation by localities that demonstrate the interconnection between the national ideal and the local realities. Furthermore, differences between schools in a locality would emerge as each sought to address the needs of their pupils in relation to policy. Thus, the documents can attest to the national and local debates on a particular set of issues while the oral histories can detail the debates and implementation of them in a school setting.

This leads to two areas of substantive concern regarding the systematic use of documents in educational research: what are the criteria for selection and what is the process of analysis? The first type of document selected for inclusion is the formal policy statement or legislative report that shaped the thinking or practice of education in the given time-period. A cogent example is *The Education Act 1944*, which reshaped the English

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Peter Cunningham and Phillip Gardner, *Becoming Teachers: Texts and Testimonies: 1907-1950*. London: Woburn Press, 2004, pp.1-20.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-21.

education system and guided education practice and policy in the post-war era. The second category of document is the local level record – the documents produced by LEAs or school districts in response to national or state policy guidelines. What do the local documents reveal about implementation strategies, attitudes towards the policies and factors determining success or failure within the local context? The third class of document is the participant’s document, which the interviewee selects and which is out of the hands of the researcher. If a teacher provides a lesson plan book for perusal, what do the lesson plans reveal about a teacher’s approach to new literacy or numeracy strategies? What do class photographs reveal about the success of district integration policies? While these documents would have provided valuable insight for this research project, none of the participants offered such documentation aside from a copy of the film, *Kes*.<sup>51</sup> This eclectic approach enables the researcher to utilise documentary evidence from a number of historical perspectives. The preference in selecting a variety of documents provides the researcher with distinct primary source materials, which do not compete, but rather complement each other because personal or local government documents detail the local experiences in relationship to national initiatives. This use of a wide variety of documentary evidence makes effective triangulation of the research data more feasible.

The key to the research process is not the selection of the documents *per se* but the analysis of the information contained within them. There are three possible approaches to documentary analysis, each of which has merits as well as limitations. Brown and Dowling, Verma and Mallick and Freebody discuss content analysis as an appropriate method of documentary analysis.<sup>52</sup> Content analysis is “a way of quantifying the contents of that text” and relies on quantifying the number of times a key word or phrase occurred within the text and the subsequent relationships that exist between different concepts within the text.<sup>53</sup> The merit of content analysis is that it can pinpoint new concepts or practices that highlight a shift in policy trends or educational best practice. The use of

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<sup>51</sup> *Kes*, Directed by Ken Loach, London, Woodfall Film Productions, 1969.

<sup>52</sup> For a discussion of content analysis as an approach to documentary analysis, please see the following: Verma and Mallick, 1999, pp. 111-113; Bell, 1999, pp. 111-112; Wallen and Frankel, 2000, pp. 467-498; Denscombe, 1998, pp. 158-170; and Peter Freebody, *Qualitative Research in Education: Interaction and Practice*. London: Sage, 2000, pp.141-142.

<sup>53</sup> Denscombe, 1998, p.168.

“bussing” and “integration” are key terms used by American educationists and policy makers to describe policy initiatives to desegregate schools. Similarly, “social exclusion,” suggested a reawakening of interest by the Blair government in formulating policies to bring people who are excluded because of ethnic, racial or income status into full participation in society. Yet, the drawback of content analysis, as envisaged by Denscombe, is that it relies too heavily on the quantitative to elucidate meaning - how many times does a word or phrase appear - without delving into possible hidden meanings within the text.<sup>54</sup> It is a simplistic way to analyse documentary evidence, and, while relevant in some cases, it is not the most suitable mode of analysis for this research project.

Scott examines the inclusion of documentary sources in both historical and sociological research arguing that they are relevant to both traditions and should be equivalent to other methodological tools.<sup>55</sup> The use of documentary evidence, however, requires four “quality control” criteria: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning.<sup>56</sup> Establishing legitimacy requires authenticating both the document and the author to ascertain that the claims made in reference to origin and authorship are irrefutable. This process is steeped in textual language where a researcher must be attentive to both copying errors as well as for syntactical fluctuations, which could be evidence of several authors rather than the named author. The next step in the quality control process is determining the credibility of the document through the use of sincerity and accuracy. Scott suggests that the researcher must consider the distortion inherent in the document as well as the underlying motive of the author.<sup>57</sup> He gives particular emphasis to official documents cautioning:

“One of the most important considerations in assessing sincerity is the material interest that the author has in the contents of the document, the extent to which he or she seeks some practical advantage which might involve deceiving his or her

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., pp.167-169.

<sup>55</sup> John Scott, *A Matter of Record: Documentary Sources in Social Research*. London: Polity Press, 1990.

<sup>56</sup> Scott, 1990, pp. 19-35 and Brendan Duffy, ‘The analysis of documentary evidence.’ in J. Bell (ed) *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999, pp. 106-117.

<sup>57</sup> Scott, 1990, pp. 22-24.

readers. Many official documents are based on a political interest in presenting one view rather than another, in transforming propaganda into apparently 'sincere' information or in justifying a particular course of action. Individual politicians and officials may also feel it is in their interests to engage in propaganda for their own actions and so may add to the insincerity of the documents."<sup>58</sup>

While it is vital to establish credibility, it is equally important to determine if the documents are representative of the aggregate collection of available documents. The documents either embody the prevalent philosophy, policy or outlook or they act to decontextualise the era because they are atypical. Scott asserts that the use of atypical documents is not problematic, if the researcher knows they are not representative and can account for that within the analysis.<sup>59</sup> Ultimately, Scott ends his discussion with a consideration of both literal and interpretative understanding of documentary sources.<sup>60</sup> The former is central if the researcher is to comprehend the language, writing and dating conventions in place at the document's genesis. Scott argues that the more crucial position is the interpretative analysis of the texts and the impact upon research:

"I wish to argue that we must recognize three aspects of the meaning of a text – three 'moments' in the movement of the text from author to audience. The *intended content* of a text is the meaning, which the author of the text intended to produce, while the *received content* is the meaning constructed by its audience... Intervening between the intended and the received meanings is the transient and ephemeral *internal meaning* that semioticians and content analysts have tried to identify. But this internal meaning cannot be known independently of its reception by an audience. As soon as a researcher approaches a text to interpret its meaning, he or she become part of its audience. The most that can be achieved by a researcher is an analysis which shows how the inferred internal meaning of the text opens up some possibilities for interpretation by its audience and closes off others."<sup>61</sup>

Scott provides a structural framework for documentary evidence that encompasses not only issues surrounding analysis but also questions the genesis, authenticity, credibility and representativeness of the documentary evidence in totality. A researcher who can

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., pp.22-23.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 28-35.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., pp. 34-35.

advance through this framework by establishing all of these quality assurance tools will be better positioned to claim the pre-eminence of the source relevant to other source material. However, the inability to authenticate all of the quality assurance claims in Scott's framework should not preclude the researcher from utilising the source but there must be an acknowledgement of its limitations.

Scott excludes the use of semiotics and content analysis as appropriate methods of interpretation while Bell describes both content analysis and critical analysis as possible methods of scrutiny for historical research employing documents.<sup>62</sup> The merits of critical analysis rest on looking beyond the written word and assessing the genesis of the document, which is an important consideration in policy analysis and which both Scott and Bell address in length.<sup>63</sup> However, Bell's analysis moves beyond the quantitative world envisaged by Denscombe and into the realm of the qualitative, where history is most at home. This progression to qualitative analysis is better suited for this research project although there are two additional techniques that beg consideration.

The above discussion, however, considers issues surrounding documentary analysis within historical research perhaps with some detachment and without developing connections between the academic arguments and the research intentions of this project. The emphasis on the comparative historical framework with a specific emphasis on education policy in three time periods clearly anchors this project in the qualitative realm, with documentary sources playing a key role in the construction of the historical narrative. The focus on language within policy documentary evidence is consonant with discourse analysis, particularly critical discourse analysis, an appropriate analytical tool for the exploration of both written and spoken texts through the context in which these have been produced. The intention of critical discourse analysis is to delve into the 'social and cultural positions of texts, the cumulative nature of conversation and the shared meanings built up within audiences.'<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, discourse analysis examines

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<sup>62</sup> Scott, 1990, pp. 28-35 and Duffy, 1999, pp. 111-117.

<sup>63</sup> Scott, 1990, pp. 19-35 and Duffy, 1999, pp. 112-117.

<sup>64</sup> Jerry Wellington, *Educational Research: Contemporary Issues and Practical Approaches*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. London: Bloomsbury, 2015, p. 218.

not only the contextual relationship but also ‘considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings. It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants as well as the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations.’<sup>65</sup> Adopting discourse analysis as the analytical framework for this research could provide the opportunity to examine discourse within both the written language of the texts and the spoken language of the oral history interviews.

If Habermas’ critical theory framework that paradigmatically underpins the research project is added to the consideration of the choice of analytical approaches, then it would be necessary to move beyond discourse analysis and toward a consideration of critical discourse analysis as the most fitting analytical approach. Wellington describes critical discourse analysis as a means of scrutinising language in terms of the power relationships that are inherent within spoken and written text, as the ideological positions that language can reinforce.<sup>66</sup> Fairclough expands on this conceptualisation by suggesting that language needs to be considered in view of social processes and, while written language is situated at the heart of critical discourse analysis, visual images and body language also need to be included, thereby widening the scope of semiotic meaning-making.<sup>67</sup> Fairclough’s criticality emerges not only in the exploration of the relationships created by language, with particular emphasis on power relationships, ideological constructs and the creation of identities, but also in an emphasis on critical discourse analysis’s commitment to progressive social change.<sup>68</sup> While Fairclough touches upon the emancipatory possibilities of critical discourse analysis and therefore could provide a rationale for its adoption in research underpinned by Habermas’ critical theory, a review of other voices is warranted. Van Dijk does not abandon Fairclough’s conceptualisation of critical discourse analysis, indeed language and the construction of power relationships is situated at the centre of his framework. The focus for van Dijk, however, shifts toward the ‘role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance,’ particularly top-

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<sup>65</sup> Brian Paltridge, *Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*. London: Continuum, 2006, p.2.

<sup>66</sup> Wellington, 2015, pp. 218-219.

<sup>67</sup> Norman Fairclough, ‘The discourse of New Labour: critical discourse analysis.’ in M. Wetherell, S. Taylor and S. Yates (eds.) *Discourse as Data: A Guide for Analysis*. London: Sage, 2001, pp. 229-266.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 2001, pp. 229-230.

down structures of dominance rather than bottom-up structures of resistance, compliance and acceptance.<sup>69</sup> This position is further refined in a consideration of how elites utilise language and discourse to strategically maintain social and political inequality.<sup>70</sup> Wodak, writing from a Bernsteinian perspective, does not reject the underpinning conceptualisations advanced by Fairclough or van Dijk, but utilises these in the development of the discourse-historical approach. This analytical form focuses primarily on interdisciplinary considerations of topics such as sexism, anti-Semitism and racial prejudice, where ‘it attempts to integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text.’<sup>71</sup>

Critical discourse analysis, as noted above, provides a potential analytical framework for the project because of its emphasis upon language within written and spoken documents, its potential for inclusion in interdisciplinarity research and its focus on emancipatory discourse as an outcome of deconstructing power relationships and social inequalities. Undoubtedly, though these features of critical discourse analysis could provide an analytical framework for this research, there are other facets of the approach that do not fit as well within the research. Wodak’s historical discourse approach, for example, focuses on socio-political problems writ large, where large-scale research projects focus an all-encompassing lens on the identified problem through the use of all available textual material. Fairclough and van Dijk’s approaches centre upon power relationships, dominance and the potential for emancipatory discourse. While the research project does focus on the utilisation of language to construct policy – and, it could be argued, on the (re)production of the socio-political relationships of the poor and the governing elites within American and English societies, it focuses more on the strategic construction of knowledge of the historical and the political as a means to foster the transformation of future education policy-making. The inclusion of the teachers’ oral histories may demonstrate the uneven power relationships between teachers, the educational

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<sup>69</sup> Teun A. van Dijk, ‘Principles of critical discourse analysis.’ *Discourse and Society* 42/2, 1993, pp. 249-283.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 1993, p. 250.

<sup>71</sup> Ruth Wodak, ‘Critical discourse analysis.’ in K. Hyland and B. Paltridge (eds) *The Bloomsbury Companion to Discourse Analysis*. London: Bloomsbury, 2011, pp. 43-44.

bureaucracy and educational policy-makers, but this is not the rationale for the inclusion of their voices to the research. Rather, the oral histories provide a commentary on how teachers view education policy as a lived reality in the classroom, the schools and the communities in which they teach. They provide a distinctive alternative set of analyses to the historical and political analysis by which the success or failure of education policy over time may be judged. Finally, the interdisciplinarity and intertextuality that are features of critical discourse analysis are important but need to be employed in a research project that can be supportive of these aims. The research project is rooted in historical, political and educational concerns, and so embraces interdisciplinarity, yet critical discourse analysis focuses more on the socio-political or socio-cultural realms. Finally, the intertextuality embedded within critical discourse analysis is more appropriate for larger-scale research projects, such as those inherent within Wodak's work or for smaller scale research projects that consider the classroom or school as a milieu where talk amongst teacher and students, visual images or artefacts could be analysed for the emergent discourse marking relationships between teacher and student. This project's objectives were not principally to consider the construction of power relationships or the dialogue of dominance, but instead sought to focus on language within documentary texts and its potential to shape policy intentions.

If critical discourse analysis was rejected as not wholly appropriate for the research project, then Skinner's approach to documentary analysis, developed particularly for the purpose of research in the history of ideas, provides a stronger and more suitable analytical approach and one that the researcher seeks to adopt for this project although in a form modified to address its objectives. The method, divided into five constituent parts, combines elements of both content analysis and critical analysis in engaging documentary evidence. The first stage of analysis incorporates language, particularly locutionary meaning.<sup>72</sup> This conforms to the norms of content analysis in that it recognises the power of language both within society and within the documents that society generates; however, the focus is not on quantitative issues but on the meaning

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<sup>72</sup> James Tully, 'The pen is a mighty sword: Quentin Skinner's analysis of politics.' in J. Tully (ed) *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998, pp. 7-25.

attributed to words or phrases. It is important to situate a document within the context from which it emerged as a way of comprehending what the language conventions are and what they mean within a given time-period and within a document from that time-period.<sup>73</sup> To take an example: if one were to analyse the *American Declaration of Independence* for the language and the locutionary meaning of terms without contextualising the document in the late eighteenth century, the resultant analysis would be anachronistic and misleading. Further, Skinner maintains that the elaboration of the meaning of speech acts is not in itself sufficient. There also needs to be an insight into the author's intent in writing the document:

“Thus, to understand fully the ‘historical meaning’ of a text, or parts of it, written in the past and considered as linguistic action performed by its author, it is not sufficient to understand its locutionary meaning. It is also necessary to understand what the author was doing in writing it; the ‘point’ or ‘force’ of the author’s argument.”<sup>74</sup>

Another necessary consideration is placing the document alongside a “collection of texts written or used in the same period, addressed to the same or similar issues and sharing a number of conventions.”<sup>75</sup> Skinner, in his later work, further explores this consideration by suggesting that to write “in a genuinely historical spirit, we need to make it one of our principal tasks to situate the texts we study within such intellectual contexts as enable us to make sense of what their authors were doing writing them.”<sup>76</sup> This enables the researcher to understand the ideology – a contemporary language of politics – that inheres in similar documents from the same time-period, and to investigate the degree to which the author manipulated the language and, subsequently, impacted the ideology. It also allows the researcher to understand the extent to which the text’s author may have accepted or challenged the ideological precepts of the era, a process to which Skinner refers as the manipulation of the available ideology. This initial step of Skinner’s analysis bows to the importance of language, language conventions, authorial intent, social

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<sup>76</sup> Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Volume I: Regarding Method*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p.3.

context and evaluation of documents, but in relationship to other documents of the period, thus providing a more detailed rubric for analysis than those offered by Bell and Denscombe.

The contextualisation of documents is a key apparatus in Bell and Denscombe's approach but in itself cannot be the sole principle upon which to base an investigation. Skinner suggests that the great threat to this approach is the problem of inherent bias and the naïve acceptance of historical interpretations:

“As we analyse and reflect on our normative concepts, it is easy to become bewitched into believing that the ways of thinking about them bequeathed to us by the mainstream of our intellectual traditions must be *the* way of thinking about them. Given this situation, one of the contributions that historians can make is to offer us a kind of exorcism...An understanding of the past can help us to appreciate how far the values embodied in our present way of life, and our present ways of thinking about those values, reflect a series of choices made at different times between different possible worlds.”<sup>77</sup>

In such terms the Skinnerian framework endeavours to challenge conventional historical norms by devising a method to explore them through more diverse lenses rather than simply through the techniques of content analysis or contextualisation.

The first element of the Skinnerian framework concerns authorial intent, described as “what an author may have meant or intended by an utterance.”<sup>78</sup> Tully's explanation of Skinner's analytical framework employs Machiavelli's masterpiece, *The Prince*, as the example for probing authorial intent, which was rendered possible because the author of the political tract was known.<sup>79</sup> However, there are potential cases where authorship might be difficult to determine because it is not always a single individual who is involved but may be a committee of civil servants whose intent might be more difficult to discover. In some cases, it might be possible to use other documents that were known to influence the document under scrutiny; however, there would need to be a clear

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p.111.

<sup>79</sup> Tully, 1998, pp. 7-25.

demonstration by historians that a link between the documents existed. It is likely that the term “author” needs broadening to include not only the single author but collective or “corporate” authorship as well. This raises a particular caveat about authorship and authorial intent when a researcher utilises government documents in data collection. Many Parliamentary White Papers are notionally assigned to the committee chairperson who undertook the responsibility and guided the investigation – the *Plowden Report* and the *Dearing Report* are such examples – although it is more likely that they provided the leadership and oversaw the content rather than the physical authorship of the document. It may be possible, through a thorough investigation of memoirs and personal papers to ascertain the input that committee chairpersons had in the actual writing of the report. However, while authorial intent is important, it must remain problematic when analysing a large body of official documents and therefore cannot be the capstone of the analytical rubric for this research.

The second component of Skinner’s analysis again places the text into the social context from which it is derived but emphasises the practical context by investigating the problem that generated the document.<sup>80</sup> As an example, a researcher engaged in analysis of American civil rights legislation would need to understand the socio-political context of the time-period – the racial tensions caused by *de facto* and *de jure* segregation, the subsequent Supreme Court ruling and the emerging Civil Rights movement – that precipitated the adoption of legislation by the federal government. Skinner discusses the possible manipulation of the “conventional ideology with how it is re-described by the manipulation of these conventions in the given text.”<sup>81</sup> The researcher needs to know the set of dilemmas that generated the document while searching for the author’s bias in setting out the political agenda from his/her perspective.

The third stage of Skinner’s examination is the need to analyse the minor texts of the time-period to understand the prevailing ideologies and to ascertain how the great documents of the time challenged these ideologies. Skinner contends that the great

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-12.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p.11.

documents of an era are great because they challenge the accepted tenets of the age.<sup>82</sup> Skinner recognises that minor texts – the Parliamentary debate, the LEA budget, the teacher’s plan book – all impact upon political thinking and it is from these everyday texts that change can emerge. If an LEA budget dedicates substantial financial resources to literacy initiatives, if teachers’ lessons demonstrate objectives to further literacy, if students’ work expresses emerging literacy traits, an educationist might challenge the accepted literacy ideology by introducing a numeracy programme or a phonics based literacy program into the curriculum and altering the accepted trend. Essentially, Skinner lobbies for the utilisation of many documentary sources to ascertain what the ideologies were, what the problems were and how these fed into research that facilitated a change in the accepted ideology of the era.

The fourth stage of Skinner’s analysis again shifts the focus to language and the speech-act potential inherent within words. There is a profound relationship between language and power broadly conceived: “...We employ our language not merely to communicate information but at the same time to claim authority for our utterances, to arouse the emotions of our interlocutors, to create boundaries of inclusion and exclusion and to engage in many other exercises of social control.”<sup>83</sup> Skinner believes that words are not only descriptive but can also evaluate practices. The speech-act legitimates the practices described and accepted by society; a manipulated speech-act can serve to legitimate the new definition created by the new ideology.<sup>84</sup> In the process of analysis, Skinner contends that an author who seeks to make a political point manipulates the current ideology to reflect his or her own political view and in so doing must use the same language to challenge the norm and legitimate the new truth claims.

The fifth and final stage of analysis concerns “the explanation of how ideological change comes to be woven into ways of acting; how it comes to be conventional.”<sup>85</sup> Skinner believes that innovation is likely to occur if it is compatible with other ideological

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-13.

<sup>83</sup> Skinner, 2002, p.5.

<sup>84</sup> Tully, 1988, pp. 13-15.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.15.

traditions in favour at the time and if there is an ability to control the factors – universities or the media, for example – that create change.<sup>86</sup> The restructuring of English schools initiated by *The Education Act 1944* is a prime example of this final stage. The document was not the first to call for change in the structure of compulsory education but it carried the force of law. It also fits into a category of texts that espoused change within education – including a rise in the school leaving age – and so worked with the goals of social and educational reformers of the era.

The difficulty of Skinner’s powerful analytical rubric is that it was originally designed for studying the history of political thought and not necessarily education or the policy-making process. However, it is possible to adapt such a rubric with specific modifications that render it useful for examining such processes. Skinner’s key components – the comprehension of locutionary meaning, language conventions in light of locutionary meaning, authorial intent and contextual analysis – lead to a comprehensive picture of a series of documents produced by and for education. In an examination of education documents produced in the 1940s and 1950s, the initial impression is that they were produced by and for the academic and bureaucratic communities, whereas documents produced by New Labour exhibit a more populist approach that is conscious of the need to relate to constituents and demonstrate potential impacts upon their constituency.

Education legislation, on either the national or local level, is often written to reflect a specific social agenda; therefore, it is not inconsequential to know authorship so that bias and agendas within the text can be considered. Both nations, the UK and the USA, rely upon localities to implement education policy, but localities and the schools within them construct specific responses to national policy that must align with the national agenda but are also framed within the local context. Therefore, school documents reflect implementation in a microcosm, the school or the classroom, and the school’s priorities vis-à-vis local and national legislation. If the documentary analysis combines national, local and school documents situated within the context of the time-period so that

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16.

language customs and emergent trends are highlighted, then a comprehensive picture of the era may be constructed that is national in scope, local in concern and school centred.

Finally, any documentary analysis must focus on language. Strict content analysis of quantifying terms is attractive because it produces a clear indication of the popularity of language terms within the texts whilst reflecting social language trends. However, the appearance of words or phrases indicates frequency, not meaning – for example, the term “reform,” is constantly utilised by policy makers and educationists alike. The regularity of use indicates that this is a concept at the forefront of education, yet, considered throughout the time-periods, it may not mean the same from one period to the next. Does reform mean curriculum reform, the adoption of a social agenda or institutional change? All are examples of reform and all reflect different trends in the two time-periods of this research study.

Documents and documentary analysis provide one source of primary information but, taken as a whole, are not sufficient for the research aims. The documents provide the historic foundation and a glimpse at policy implementation nationally, locally and within chosen schools. They establish the education priorities of the time-periods. They provide contextualisation of the education agenda both nationally and locally. Nonetheless, do national agendas and local policies translate meaningfully for students in economically deprived schools and from disadvantaged backgrounds? The term “meaningfully” poses the difficulty when answering the question. “Meaningfully,” defined by politicians and administrators, suggests a quantifiable method of describing progress – improved scores on high stakes examinations or lower dropout rates from secondary education. “Meaningfully,” defined by a teacher or student in an inner-city neighbourhood, may denote other things – better understanding of concepts, stronger literacy skills, a curriculum that significantly addresses the needs of the community, concrete skills or the opportunity to pursue higher education. This set of answers provides the voice – a voice of the experienced and a voice for change - and, therefore, needs to be heard. Oral testimonies offer a better way to delve into the voice than documents because oral

histories offer lived experience, which is not necessarily evident within a document, but that can be extensively uncovered by careful probing in interviews.

### **A Modified Skinnerian Framework: An Exploration of the Approach to Documentary Evidence**

By acknowledging the adoption of a modified Skinnerian framework, it becomes necessary to present the specific approach adopted in reading the documentary evidence and to explore why the modification of the Skinnerian framework is germane to the research design. While the exploration of Skinner's framework is detailed within this chapter, the examination of the approach for analysing the documents is best undertaken with specific reference to the documentary evidence as an illustration of the analytical process.

Circular 10/65 played a pivotal role in education reform spearheading the transition from the post-war to the liberal democracy era within education policy. The circular brought to fruition the creation of secondary comprehensive schools, a long-standing Labour policy goal intended to provide equality of opportunity for children from socio-economically deprived familial backgrounds. However, the origin of comprehensive education is to be found in the debates and many documents that preceded Circular 10/65. The first challenge to Skinner's framework is in identifying authorship and authorial intent that underpins the documentary evidence. Skinner, in researching Machiavelli and Renaissance history, utilised the available documentary evidence to establish or verify authorship of the written documents. Therefore, having established who wrote the document, the intentionality of the author could then be explored through social, political, economic or cultural lenses as appropriate, based upon accumulated knowledge of the author's beliefs, influencers and opinions.

Moving into the twentieth century, the authorship of public policy documents becomes far more difficult to ascertain with certainty because of the move toward corporate authorship of policy documents. Sir Anthony Crosland, a noted socialist and proponent of

secondary reorganisation, became the Secretary of State for Education in January 1965, six months prior to the issuance of Circular 10/65 by the Department of Education and Science.<sup>87</sup> Crosland's position on comprehensive reorganisation of secondary education can be traced through two votes cast in the House of Commons on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1965. Crosland voted against a motion put by Quinton Hogg 'to discourage local authorities from adopting schemes of reorganisation at the expense of grammar schools and other existing schools of proved efficiency and value, and would deplore any proposal to impose a comprehensive system upon local authorities,' while supporting the latter motion that 'notes with approval the efforts of local authorities to reorganise secondary education on comprehensive lines.'<sup>88</sup> While Crosland's support of secondary reorganisation is noted in the literature, as well as Parliamentary records, and the publication of Circular 10/65 came under his tenure at the DES, there is little evidence to suggest that he authored the document personally. It is far more likely that authorship lay with civil servants within the DES. Indeed, there is acknowledgement within the document that correspondence should be directed to the Permanent Undersecretary, Sir George Herbert Andrew, the Circular's signatory. This appears to support the argument of corporate authorship rather than ministerial authorship.

The issue of authorship, and to a greater extent authorial intent, poses a challenge. Gosden notes that while Crosland campaigned strenuously to abolish grammar schools and the tripartite system, George Herbert Andrew, the Permanent Undersecretary at the DES from 1963 to 1970, did not adopt an interventionist stance in relationship to the DES's education policy.<sup>89</sup> Since the tripartite education system was *de facto* education policy in 1965, it could be inferred that Andrew's cautious approach and defence of the established system acted as the counterbalance to the Wilson Government's adoption of comprehensive education, a long-standing Labour policy goal, and Crosland's aggressive

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<sup>87</sup> Claudia Sumner, 1945-1965: The Long Road to Circular 10/65. *Reflecting Education* 6/1, 2010, pp. 90-102.

<sup>88</sup> Great Britain, House of Commons, Orders of the Day – Education (Comprehensive System and Grammar Schools) in the House of Commons 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1965 available from <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=1965-01-21a.413.1>

<sup>89</sup> Peter Gosden, 'Sir (George) Herbert Andrew. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004 available from <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-66842?rskey=fvbljN&result=1>

attempts to bring the policy to fruition. This tension may be illustrated in the choice of language within Circular 10/65, which requested rather than demanded or compelled local education authorities to submit plans for ‘reorganising secondary education in their areas on comprehensive lines.’<sup>90</sup> Both Gosden and Gillard indicate that the language agreed in the in the final iteration of the document reflected the influence of Andrews, although this does not imply that Crosland did not engage in the debates surrounding the choice of language or did not approve the text prior to publication.<sup>91</sup>

Circular 10/65 clearly demonstrated the intention to implement the Labour policy of comprehensive secondary education and, therefore echoed the intention of Crosland as Secretary of State for Education and Science, to dismantle the tripartite system and the role of grammar schools in English education. However, the acknowledgement that the choice of language selected by the Permanent Undersecretary of State reflected his policy-making approach rather than the Secretary of State’s approach, which may have subsequently weakened the overall impact of the policy, raises questions of authorship and authorial intent within the document. This presents a challenge to the Skinnerian approach in that intention within a document may be identifiable but authorship and authorial intent in relationship to official publications is harder to establish, and indeed may not be possible to demonstrate, for all documents. The Skinnerian framework in this research project, therefore, will acknowledge authorship and authorial intent where these can be clearly established but, where this is not possible, the focus will centre upon the intentionality of the policy rather than the individuals who may have generated the policy.

The utilisation of the minor texts as a method to illuminate the strategic employment of language, the development of linguistic meaning both within and across the texts and the evolution of ideological change within political discourse as framed by an analysis of the major and minor texts is a cornerstone of Skinnerian analysis. Skinner contends that the

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<sup>90</sup> Great Britain. Department for Education and Science. *Circular 10/65. The Organisation of Secondary Education*. London: HMSO.

<sup>91</sup> Gosden, 2004 and Derek Gillard, *Education in England: a brief history*, 2011, available from <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/chapter06.html>

discourse emerging in the major texts frequently has been rehearsed and honed in the minor texts thereby demonstrating the impact of lesser known authors or texts in shaping the received political discourse of the era. The Skinnerian framework, therefore, requires the location and analysis of the canon of minor texts of the day to discover their subsequent influence and impact upon political discourse. This approach poses challenges, particularly in the identification of the minor texts and the subsequent sourcing required for researchers. Skinner, whose research focuses primarily upon Renaissance and Enlightenment political discourses, acknowledges the difficulties in the sourcing of minor texts, which may no longer exist or be available within the public domain because of the passage of time.

While a researcher working in the twentieth century may not necessarily encounter this challenge, the existence of a plethora of both printed and digital documents provides a unique complication for the researcher. The sheer volume of minor texts available that may have influenced authors, both singular and corporate, of a major text needs careful consideration. Returning to Circular 10/65, the question the researcher must consider is not only which of the contemporary texts to include as part of the canon of minor texts but also, by excluding those that may yet to be discovered or whose influence upon the authors is not definitively known, what is the potential impact on the researcher's understanding of the evolution of the discourse located within the major text? Crosland seemingly addressed this issue when commenting upon the limitations of Ministers and the civil service on policy development: 'I greatly felt the need for independent critical advice. But it wouldn't necessarily come from government committees. I had my own informal group of personal advisors, and of course by now there's a huge volume of critical writing on education...'<sup>92</sup> The researcher, therefore, must endeavour to discover not only which texts influenced the author but which contemporaries did so as well. Such an exercise, even if memoirs and archival materials exist, would not necessarily guarantee a definitive understanding of the influences upon an author and might also indeed result in opacity and spurious research claims.

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<sup>92</sup> Edward Boyle and Anthony Crosland in conversation with Maurice Kogan, *The Politics of Education*. London: Penguin, 1974, pp. 174.

Crosland's assertion noted above, along with the recognition that the volume of available texts in the twentieth century could present a challenge to the integrity of the Skinnerian framework, thereby warrants a final modification of the framework. The analysis of the minor texts, therefore, clearly cannot include all texts but this does not suggest that texts of the generation should not be explored for the contributions made to the discourse within the major text. With language as a key to the development of this discourse, the language within Circular 10/65 in relationship to the research is disconcerting for there is no singular mention of 'poverty,' 'deprivation,' 'class' or 'disadvantage' within the document. However, the focus on 'comprehensive' education suggests a focus on background as a particular catalyst underpinning the reorganisation of schools: 'A comprehensive school aims to establish a school community in which pupils over the whole ability range and with differing interests and backgrounds can be encouraged to mix with each other, gaining stimulus from the contacts and learning tolerance and understanding in the process.'<sup>93</sup> The recognition of background as underpinning the construction of a school community is considered further with the recommendation that school catchment areas should be as 'socially and intellectually comprehensive as practicable.'<sup>94</sup> There is not sufficient evidence within the 10/65 text to suggest the emerging discourse around comprehensive education and its potential to mitigate social disadvantage, yet, the policy shift toward comprehensive education indicates the desire for a more socially inclusive education system. However, the generation of texts that preceded the publication of Circular 10/65 do employ a developing language around 'class,' 'comprehensive,' 'deprivation,' 'disadvantage,' 'manual and skilled workers,' 'poor' and 'social background.'<sup>95</sup> While a detailed discussion of the development of

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<sup>93</sup> Great Britain. Department of Education and Science. *Circular 10/65*.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> The generation of texts that preceded the publication of Circular 10/65 includes: Stewart Mason, *The Leicestershire Experiment and Plan*. London: Councils and Education Press, 1964; Great Britain, Ministry of Education, *Half Our Future: A Report of the Central Advisory Council (England)*. London: HMSO, 1963; Great Britain, Secondary Schools Examination Council, *Secondary School Examinations Other than the GCE*. London: HMSO, 1960; Great Britain, Ministry of Education, *15 to 18: A Report of the Central Advisory Council (England)*. London: HMSO, 1959; Great Britain. Department of Education and Science. *Primary Education: Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned with the Work of Primary Schools*. London: HMSO, 1959; Great Britain, Ministry of Education, *Early Leaving: A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England)*. London: HMSO, 1954; Great Britain, Ministry of

language, linguistic meaning and policy discourse cannot be undertaken here, it is important to note that there is by no means a relegation of the minor texts and the tracing of language *vis-à-vis* meaning making in the emerging discourse within the texts. There is rather an acknowledgement that the scope of the minor texts included within the analysis cannot be all encompassing but will, on the other hand, ensure robustness through the selection of as wide a selection of relevant texts as possible.

Accordingly, Circular 10/65, as the major text, neither makes the argument for the introduction of secondary comprehensive education nor seeks to assert the adverse impacts of the tripartite system upon children from deprived socio-economic backgrounds; the generation of texts preceding the publication of the circular had previously examined these claims and, in tracing the evolution of the discourse within the texts, demonstrated the emerging acceptance of the interconnection between disadvantage and educational opportunity. Circular 10/65, therefore, evidences the shift in ideology and, in so doing, asserts the new ideological stance in the deconstruction of tripartite secondary education and the acceptance of comprehensive secondary education as national education policy.

### **Systems Analysis: Scrutinising Education Policy-making and the Political Process**

The difficulty at this juncture in the project is the realisation that politics, the social science largely responsible for the formulation of public policy, does not dwell within the historical frameworks adopted for documentary analysis. Politics and history are two

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Education, *The Road to Sixth Form: Some Suggestions on the Curriculum of the Grammar School*. London: HMSO, 1951; Great Britain, The Labour Party, *A Policy for Secondary Education*. London: The Labour Party, 1951; Great Britain, Ministry of Education, *The New Secondary Education*. London: HMSO, 1947; Great Britain, Ministry of Education, *Youth's Opportunity: Further Education in County Colleges*. London: HMSO, 1945; Great Britain, Ministry of Education, *The Nation's Schools: Their Plan and Purpose*. London: HMSO, 1945; Great Britain, Ministry of Education, *School and Life: A First Enquiry into the Transition from School to Independent Life. A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education (England)*. London: HMSO, 1947; Great Britain, Board of Education, *Educational Reconstruction*. London: Board of Education, 1943 and Great Britain. Board of Education. *Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools*. London: HMSO, 1938.

distinctly different fields of study, and while they may share common themes, they do not easily share modes of analysis. The documents that are created as an output of the political process can be scrutinised using Skinner's framework but the process that created the documents cannot be investigated by this method, making it necessary to adopt a second layer of analysis. If politics were a static realm and if politics and policy-making were immobile activities that did not respond to external stimuli, then perhaps the Skinnerian analytical approach would suffice. However, British and American politics are inherently dynamic because democratic and representative governments depend upon differing constituent groups for political power. As the axiom suggests, politics does not happen in a vacuum but is influenced by the agendas of competing groups as well as by events external to society. In order to retain power, politicians must respond to these agendas and must work within established organisational and political structures whilst advancing their own political agendas.

Skinner's model, rooted in history, does not speak to the political process and thereby presents limitations as an analytical tool. On the other hand, Easton's systems analysis proposes an analytical framework for politics, one rooted in behaviouralism and specifically conceptualised for the social sciences. Easton's framework offers a holistic approach to policy-making utilising the social environment, the philosophical underpinnings of policy and the organisational structures that frame policy implementation. The fluidity of this system is a useful starting point for the structural analysis appropriate to the needs of the study.

The cornerstone of systems analysis rests on four premises: the system itself, the environment that the system operates within, the responses that the system generates to both internal and external stresses and the feedback given to actors within the system and their subsequent use of that information.<sup>96</sup> For purpose of discussion and analysis, a system constitutes the observable phenomena in a particular setting that a social scientist wishes to examine and postulate theories based upon the surveyed behaviours. Individuals are at the core of every system and it is their interactions within systems that

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<sup>96</sup> David Easton, *A Framework for Political Analysis*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1965.

merit observation.<sup>97</sup> Alternatively, a system can be defined by the set of symbols used to identify the behaviours within the system; these represent a set of ideas or theories related to the system, thereby rendering it a more theoretical or abstract construct.<sup>98</sup> Easton did not conceive the two conceptions of system to be in competition with each other, rather he believed that there was a correspondence between the symbolic system, which posited the theories useful in explaining the behaviour of the extant system. Whilst the symbolic system can elucidate the specific behaviours, the former is the paradigm that will be utilised and discussed within this chapter.

If it is accepted that a system is a set of all observable phenomena then, society is the mega-system in which all other systems are constituent members.<sup>99</sup> Easton, commenting on this notional idea of society, suggests “as a concept, society calls attention to the gross mass of conceptually unorganised social interactions that we might perceive if we were able to take in the whole of society, literally, in one glance.”<sup>100</sup> Each society has a variety of systems existing within it at any given point in time – political, religious, educational, and economic – and the actions taken by each of the constituent systems are not conducted in isolation but are influenced and limited by the other systems within the society as well as by the society itself. Thus, it is often difficult to contemplate analysing one system while trying to divorce it from the influences of the others since they may share characteristics or have competing claims.

Easton categorises political life as a system of behaviour but it is a system that can be interpreted in two divergent manners: membership and analytic systems.<sup>101</sup> He acknowledges that each system is marked by the interactions between members, which are unique to the particular system and reflect its typical behaviours. Political systems are marked by the “set of social interactions on the part of individuals and groups,” the study of “order, power, the state, public policy, decision-making of the monopolisation of the legitimate use of force” or “as a set of interactions abstracted from the totality of social

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p.26.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p.26.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., p.38.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp. 35-37

behaviour, through which values are authoritatively allocated by society.”<sup>102</sup> It is the latter definition that Easton adopts for systems analysis rather than the broad definition of social interaction, which can be applied to every system and therefore not signifying the uniqueness of a political system, or the more restrictive definition with a focus on power and structures, which is a characterisation more commonly utilised only in political circles. Yet, the definition can be problematic if a debate arises over a society’s espoused values at a given time.

The relationship between systems and the environment in which they exist is a symbiotic one; both the system and the environment potentially influence and are influenced by each other. Easton, however, contends that political systems are inherently different from others; all political systems exist in the environment but there is a distinct boundary between the political system and the environment in which it operates, a reality that is not present for all other types of systems.<sup>103</sup> This is a conceptual difficulty because the political system comprises many aspects of society and can be quite fluid, however, it is constrained in its relationship to its environment. Easton negotiates this difficulty by suggesting that a boundary is a construct created by the analyst and represents what is included or excluded from a system.<sup>104</sup> Easton establishes the boundaries of the political system as being delineated by “whether the interactions are more or less directly related to the authoritative allocations of values for a society.”<sup>105</sup>

Each system not only exists within a given environment, it also must deal with the intra-social and extra-social forces that operate in the environment and constrain it. Intra-social forces include the other subsystems that normally exist within the structure of the society and normally influence and compete with one another. Societies might have political systems, economic systems, religious systems or educational systems that exist side by side. They all have structures that are inherent to their particular system, they all have constituencies and they all develop policies and programmes that benefit their particular

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 49 and p. 57.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-34.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., pp. 21-34.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p.66.

groups; they can rarely be divorced from each other. When these begin to influence the political system by applying pressure to create change or to advance programmes that their particular subsystem espouses, then they move to the extra-societal spectrum for they are external to the political system and they are attempting to bridge the boundary between their system and the political system.<sup>106</sup> There is also the possibility that the society in which all of these sub-systems dwell is itself a sub-system of the international community of nations. This enlarges the concept of 'system' substantially.

Easton's third characteristic of systems analysis explores the relationship between system stress and the response that the system generates to the internal and external stress it experiences.<sup>107</sup> Rarely are systems static or achieve homeostasis where outside stress does not become a factor in their existence. Instead, systems must formulate responses to such tensions in order to ensure survival. The internal stress experienced in a political system is within the political system itself and can take the form of scarcity, allocation of power, disorganisation and disorder.<sup>108</sup> To combat this type of systemic stress, those within the political system must develop methods to alleviate it to maintain order and the status quo amongst the human actors within the system or face the possibility that the system will undergo some form of change in response to the stress. Political systems can also experience external stress, particularly the stress generated from forces beyond the boundary between the political system and the remaining sub-systems in a society. Easton points to rapid economic and industrial change as well as significant social change within society as the main causes of external stress.<sup>109</sup> A political system will have to generate a rapid response to factors outside of its control to simply survive. At other times, systems unable to cope with the swift and pressing social forces will be profoundly altered or will cease to exist. The responses formulated by the system to these will determine its ability to persist and survive intact.

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., pp. 73-75.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., pp. 77-101.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 79-82.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., pp. 80-82.

Easton proposes that political systems exist in an environment and have characteristic behaviours carried out by their actors, which meet the needs of both the system and its actors.<sup>110</sup> If perfection could be achieved, then this model would have no other constituent elements and the system could function and maintain homeostasis. However, perfection and homeostasis are rarely achievable in a system whose foundation is interaction between human beings. Competing values and goals either from within the system or external to the system creates stress, which demands that the system act to maintain itself. These stresses are inputs into the system and each system has methods, practices and beliefs to respond to these inputs using the available structures. Easton labels these the intra-system indicators or the within puts.<sup>111</sup> The within-puts carried out by the system in response to the stress or inputs result in outputs. These outputs, according to Easton, will modify the existing conditions in the system, maintain them or demonstrate that there has been significant alteration in the system to meet the needs that created the inputs originally.

The final component in Easton's system analysis is feedback, which is conceptualised as "...the capacity of a system to persist in the face of stress is a function of the presence and nature of the information and other influences that return to its actors and decision makers."<sup>112</sup> The actors within the system will require information to formulate their response to stress, including the environmental factors and the internal support in the system at the time. This feedback can flow back into the system through the environment and may subsequently become future stresses on the system.

## **Oral Histories and Analysis**

Documents provide one distinct category of primary source material for this research project, but are insufficient to secure validity and achieve triangulation. It is therefore necessary to consider another method of data collection, one that enables the researcher

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., pp. 103-117.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 112-117.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., pp. 119-135.

to probe beyond what a document or a set of documents represent in the form of the written word. There are several possibilities open to the researcher here, including questionnaires, case studies, action research or interviews. Each method of data collection has advantages as well as drawbacks for any research design, but the dominating criterion for selecting a method is that the data stand equal in importance to the documents and cannot be considered subordinate.

Documentary sources provide the official dialogue on education reform, but by excluding the teacher-related sources, official documents cannot reveal how a teacher, a department head or school leadership assessed the impact of trends and policies on their students, their professional practice or their schools. Yet, there remains a valid concern, rooted in personal experience that teachers are not always aware of, or read, the documents that formalised policy. However, the underlying ideas encapsulated within the documents are so widely publicised both in education and the mainstream media, that teachers seemingly become aware of these through media exposure and staffroom discussions without having direct contact with them.

If the documentary evidence provides the official policy dialogue on education reform, then how can the teachers' unofficial dialogue be understood to equate with the body of documentary evidence? Methodologically, interviews are not a new form of data gathering but reflect a long-standing tradition within research. However, because of the interactive and dialogic nature of the interview, there are significant concerns regarding the use of interviews as a main source of data. Cohen, Manion and Morrison quoting Kvale, describe an interview as a:

“...move away from seeing human subjects as similarly manipulated and data as somehow external to individuals, and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversations...as an interview, an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasizes the social situated-ness of research data.”<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p.267.

The interviews in this instance are those of a biographical nature where the subjects, in a conversation with a researcher, describe different personal and professional milestones in their lives and the subsequent impact of these upon their lives or over the course of their life.

There are different traditions within biographical research, each with specific goals for the research process. The life history method is rooted in social science where a researcher studies the life in relation to the social context of the person. Popularised by the pre-World War II Chicago School, researchers investigated immigrants' adjustment to the American city with a particular focus upon immigrant community life. The life history interview aims at theorising about the course of a life led and the relationship between the life and the person. This approach utilises several types of documents to begin the process – the diary, letter or novels – but the outcome of the autobiographical process is identity formation. The researcher recognises several factors when choosing the autobiographical approach: it is historical in nature, it gives voice to a named subject and it allows the researcher to analyse the participant's interpretation of their own life.<sup>114</sup> However, the life history tradition fell out of favour largely because of the time commitment necessary for researchers and participants alike; the survey method increasingly replaced it largely because of time constraints and the perception of greater scientific validity.<sup>115</sup>

Although life history interviews declined in favour, the quest began for a qualitative methodology to replicate the rigor of life histories. Historians who utilise oral histories “are usually looking for answers to specific questions about particular subjects.”<sup>116</sup> The primary goal of an oral historian is to analyse the individual's account within the socio-political context that frames it with particular emphasis on the lives of ‘ordinary’ people.<sup>117</sup> Oral history interviews are a series of interviews – topical, biographical and

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid., pp. 165-168.

<sup>115</sup> Brian Roberts, *Biographical Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002.

<sup>116</sup> Barbara Allen, ‘Story in oral history: clues to historical consciousness.’ *The Journal of American History* 79/2, 1992, p. 606.

<sup>117</sup> Roberts, 2002, pp. 94-95 and 99-104.

autobiographical - with an inherently relational or dialogical characteristic in the interview process. The roots of oral history may actually be seen as the roots of history itself as “all history was at first oral.”<sup>118</sup> Both Thompson and Roberts detail the origins of oral history in specific communities; Thompson chronicled its inception in African griots, while Roberts acknowledged the role of ancient Greece in oral history.<sup>119</sup> Both authors admit that, although oral history is a long-standing method, it is seldom given credibility by mainstream historians because of issues of reliability and bias, particularly in relation to faulty memory of respondents and undue influence on the part of the interviewer.<sup>120</sup>

The life history interview and the oral history interview are integral parts of this research project and methodological design. The life history interview provides an avenue for the interviewer to hear the subject’s narrative history – the story of his or her life as created or framed by the participant. The second interview, the oral history interview, allows for a deeper probing not of the person’s entire life, but of a particular time in that narrative identity. The particular time-period does not address all of the events in the person’s life for that particular time; it is designed to delve into experiences, knowledge and opinions about a specific historical issue, in this case, the topic of reform.

Oral history interviews are the chosen method for the research project for several reasons. First, there is flexibility in the oral history approach with three distinct types of interview methods to choose between: the structured interview, the semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview. The structured interview is most rigid in its format with a set interview schedule that discourages deviation from in either question sequence or interviewing technique. The semi-structured interview allows for some flexibility; participants develop detailed answers while the interviewer probes deeper through follow-up questions. The interviewer using the semi-structured interview must patiently listen to the cues given in the respondent’s answers to formulate follow-up questions. The unstructured interview is a free-flowing conversation on a given topic where the

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<sup>118</sup> Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p.34.

<sup>119</sup> Roberts, 2002, pp. 97-99 and Thompson, 2000, pp. 25-81.

<sup>120</sup> Roberts, 2002, pp. 99-104 and Thompson, 2000, pp. 77-81.

interviewer cedes control over interview content to the participant.<sup>121</sup> All three types have particular merits but for this project, the selection of the semi-structured interview is the most appropriate and productive option. The structured interview generates the most easily handled data sets but it unavoidably serves the interviewer's agenda and does not allow the participant to find his or her own voice beyond the schema created by the interviewer. The unstructured interview provides a great opportunity to delve into many areas of the interviewee's life but its inefficiency is notable in that it may yield copious and often inchoate data with little direct utility for the defined research topic. The semi-structured interview creates the greatest opportunity to develop a dialogue between both the interviewee and the researcher. The researcher chooses a path to explore but the interviewee can open up new avenues throughout the interview by divulging information. The researcher, through the choice of follow-up questions, both explores the new path and, if necessary, refocuses the interview. The semi-structured interview also allows the researcher to be silent when needed so that the interviewee feels free to express in depth his or her experiences and attitudes.

Secondly, a primary goal of an interviewing methodology is building a relationship between researchers and participants. Esterberg points to the validity of the interview technique when "two individuals come together to try to create meaning about a particular topic."<sup>122</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison explain the relational aspects of interviewing as more than a mere conversation, and rather a social and interpersonal encounter.<sup>123</sup> Thus, the two interviews in the research project provide distinctive opportunities to build a relationship over time with each participant – to incrementally break down barriers between two people, to enter into a conversation about education in the context of a life, to begin to understand the person's motivation, concerns and passions and to create trust allowing the person's testimony to emerge. This relationship also delineates a responsibility for the researcher: the dynamics of this interpersonal encounter and the ethics in the relationship between the interviewer and the participant

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<sup>121</sup> Denscombe, 1998 pp. 109-138; Bell, 1999, pp. 135-146; Wallen and Frankel, 2000, pp. 509-515 and Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, pp. 267-292.

<sup>122</sup> Kristin G. Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2002, p. 85.

<sup>123</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, pp.268-270.

are considerations that the researcher cannot ignore. The interviewer must strive to construct a relationship that is communicative and relational while also building an atmosphere where a participant feels enough trust to begin to talk candidly about their experiences or opinions. Interview ethics are a paramount consideration in any research project but even more so in oral history interviewing. Participants need assurance that confidentiality, if requested when reporting data, will be scrupulously adhered to because of the acknowledgement that their opinions can have adverse consequences for them.<sup>124</sup> A respondent who is willing to divulge their life story or their professional biography needs assurance that their account will be treated with respect and their identities will be protected if such guarantees are sought by the participant. The researcher must also avoid using information gained where a participant may be vulnerable and may have divulged too much in the interview.<sup>125</sup> Therefore, it is obligatory to explain the rights of the participants, as well as the use of the data, in a written consent form.

Thirdly, oral histories provide the story of the “common man” in history. The modern oral history movement originally recorded the voices of the “great man,” however, the method became popular in the 1970s for the recording of Native American, African-American, folkloric and women’s history.<sup>126</sup> The perception here was that oral history was a more democratic in nature; it enabled the “common man” to tell his story thus making history more accessible to the majority of people. The British oral history movement focused not on the “great man” but on the ordinary person – the coal miner, the farmer, the worker – and, in turn, was able to document the experiences of groups of people within society whose ability to be heard by historians was often muted. In this respect, oral history was a part of a wider movement from the 1960s towards a new social history ‘from below.’ It follows, then, that oral history testimony is appropriate for the context of the study centres upon socioeconomically challenged communities and the common man of education, the classroom teacher and fosters a return from the shadows of marginalisation to develop a voice that speaks of their lives and work.

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>125</sup> David M. Oshinsky, ‘Oral history: playing by the rules.’ *The Journal of American History* 77/2, 1990, pp. 609-614.

<sup>126</sup> Thompson, 2000, pp. 82-117.

Although appropriate for this work, it must be acknowledged that there are notable criticisms of oral history testimony. A primary concern is the positioning of the self within oral histories and the ensuing difficulties that this poses. According to Gardner, narrative identity offers a productive way to approach the self, a key feature of oral histories.<sup>127</sup> Narrative identity bows to the notion that as time progresses the self changes but also remains the same. Drawing on the work of Ricoeur, Gardner notes that the dual nature of the self, a combination of “*idem*” that is the self that remains the same over time and “*ipse*,” the self that is able to adapt and change over the course of time, influences narrative identity.<sup>128</sup> Narrative identity “operates as the connecting bridge by which *idem* and *ipse* are constantly held together to constitute personhood.”<sup>129</sup> The difficulty with narrative identity is not in the construction of identity but in the telling of the narrative life. A narrative identity is trying to make sense of a life lived and not necessarily to assess the impact of history or historical trends and is therefore not strictly told through chronological time. This can lead to gaps in the narrative – fissures caused by historical events not having direct meaning for the respondent.<sup>130</sup> These are valid criticisms of narrative identity but it does not imply that information gleaned from oral history interviews is valueless information. It is important for the researcher to recognise that the self is the focus of both life history and oral history interviews. There is no suggestion that a participant intentionally misleads the interviewer but there remains the possibility of bias, a lack of knowledge on specific topic and issues of memory that cannot be ignored.

The reliability of the interviewee’s memory is a key concern for oral historians – a concern that many historians consider paramount. Both Thompson and Gardner acknowledge the slippery slope that memory issues create.<sup>131</sup> The fuzziness of memory is

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<sup>127</sup> Philip Gardner, ‘Oral history in education: teacher’s memory and teachers’ history.’ *History of Education* 32/2, 2003, pp. 175-188 and Philip Gardner, ‘Oral history, narrative identity and self.’ Unpublished article, 2002, pp. 1-12. Gardner’s unpublished article acted as the first draft of the article later published in the *History of Education* in 2003.

<sup>128</sup> Gardner, 2003, pp. 176-180.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 176-180.

<sup>131</sup> Thompson, 2000, pp. 91-137 and Gardner, 2003, pp. 180-186.

problematic for research data and is often the key reason for disallowing oral history's equivalence to documentary evidence.<sup>132</sup> Life narratives are effective purveyors of information because the lives of the respondents have gone through a "process of narrative organisation."<sup>133</sup> Memories are chosen for the narrative, and because they have been told and retold, the stories have been refined over time. However, since the self is constructed from memories and memories are personal, it might be suggested that personal narratives are constructed without regard to history but, as Gardner affirms, there is "a self that is fashioned from without – from history – as well as from within – from consciousness."<sup>134</sup> The narrative organisation, the self-construction, the selection of key events and the exclusion of others, the lack of detail and factual inconsistencies are problematic for validity. Are the memories omitted from the narrative an indicator that editing has had a consequent impact upon historical accuracy? If a respondent misinterprets a date or people involved in an event, does it mean that their entire account is inaccurate? Both Gardner and Thompson believe that gaps in memory do not necessarily compromise the value of the oral testimony, but simply acknowledge that a researcher must look at the entire account rather than minute detail for its importance.

The next issue with oral testimony is the process of analysis used for the interviews by the researcher. This author believes that there is a distinct problem with conventional analysis techniques imposed upon oral history testimony. Researchers describe oral history as relational in character and conversational by nature but to the extent that this is so, then it must have a ramification for data analysis. Transcribing an interview conducted as an oral interview between two people takes away the essence of oral testimony; it appropriates the conversation and attempts to make it a document. The researcher transcribes the conversation - the spoken into the written – and creates a document that is easier to read, code and analyse but in doing so loses much of the essential characteristics of the testimony, the spoken word given in the specific ostensive context. The elements of the conversation - the give and take between the researcher and interviewee, the inflection of voices, the pregnant pauses - are all lost because they are

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<sup>132</sup> Gardner, 2003, pp. 176-186.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., pp. 176-177.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., p.179.

difficult, if not impossible, to put into words. The resulting document reflects what was articulated in the interview but loses the relational aspects, the personal aspects and its own ostensive characteristics.

Thompson, Gardner, Allen and Oshinsky collectively admit that oral histories are not equal to traditional documentary methodologies because of issues of memory, self and narrative identity.<sup>135</sup> There are doubts as to the validity of an approach that relies on personal, and inevitably biased accounts of history, rather than on the objective claim of the historical documents. Thus, to conform to the methodologies of mainstream historians and in an attempt to gain acceptability for their approach, oral history researchers have often bowed to the conventions and treated interviews as documents rather than as spoken exchanges. Yet, the transcribed interviews are not strictly documents so much as “speech masquerading as text.”<sup>136</sup> While the researcher understands the fundamental arguments for the transcription of interviews, she has chosen an unconventional approach for this research project. The contentions for her approach will be discussed in depth later in the dissertation. Notwithstanding, it is appropriate to note that she subscribes to the theory that a researcher cannot transcribe an interview and maintain the unique characteristics of the interview.

### **The Historical and Political: A Combination of Skinnerian and Eastonian Analytical Frameworks**

The research project encompasses a multi-dimensional examination of education policy, teachers’ engagement with and scrutiny of educational policies and the efficacy of policy initiatives on poverty. It might be appealing to adopt either a Skinnerian or Eastonian framework as an analytical approach for the project. The intermingling of two compatible, albeit distinct, social science traditions – history and politics – provides the lens through which to analyse the data thus making it possible to adopt a single analytical

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<sup>135</sup> Thompson, 2000; Gardner, 2003; Oshinsky, 1990; and Allen, 1992.

<sup>136</sup> Phil Gardner, *Hermeneutics, History and Memory*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2010, p. 72.

framework. However, it is this combination of disciplines that necessitates a mode of analysis that is able to bridge the divide between the historical and the political worlds. This is problematic because of the diversity of data and the different traditions from which the data emerges. Therefore, it is most appropriate to conceptualise an analytical framework that can take advantage of the subtle layers of data, not in a vacuum, but intertwined with each other.

The foundation of the research project is rooted in twentieth century history with an emphasis on the history of education. The research focuses on the historical development of education and education policies created in the US and the UK to address the causal link between equality of educational opportunity and systemic poverty. The data for the research are derived from documents and teachers' oral histories and both can be situated within the domain of documentary evidence. McCulloch contends that documents have been largely eschewed by the social scientist but have become the realm of the historian.<sup>137</sup> This researcher believes that as a historian of education, she is compelled to embrace the use of documents, whether written or spoken, as the most appropriate channel to engage in a discourse on education, policies and practitioners' assessments of policy.

A modified Skinnerian framework, which was developed for historical analysis, is the most appropriate model to adopt for documentary evidence. As previously discussed, there are a number of key elements in the Skinnerian model but not all can be utilised effectively within this research context, so it is necessary to adjust the framework slightly to meet the needs of the researcher and the data. Thus, the positioning of the major and minor texts alongside each other for analysis is an integral part of the Skinnerian model and one that cannot be sacrificed in the analysis. More importantly, if the documents are themselves categorised into major and minor texts and then are analysed in conjunction with oral histories of teachers, it provides a powerful contextualisation of the period using the voices of the official and the layman. The challenge advocated by Skinner of viewing perceived norms through different lenses could well be accomplished by using this

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<sup>137</sup> McCulloch, 2004.

particular analytical convention.<sup>138</sup> The locutionary meaning of speech and speech acts, or the corresponding written word, can provide a method of comprehending the conception of ideas both on an ideological and a practical plane and so needs to be explored as fully as possible, although there may be limitations to the effectiveness of this within the project. If the researcher focused on the locutionary meaning of accepted terms within the community or the policy discourse, then there might be success in analysing the changing conceptions and usage of terms. However, if the researcher is combining the locutionary meaning of the speech act and authorial intent, analytical success might be more problematic to achieve. Authorship is not always evident in policy documents making authorial intent difficult to analyse. Therefore, authorial intent will not be explored in the analysis for it is not possible to examine the lives and intents of all of the authors involved. Conversely, while this is not possible on the policy front because of volume and access, it was possible with the oral history interviews where teachers were asked to clarify meanings and ideas routinely.

The modified Skinnerian approach provides a framework, which can effectively address the historical aspects of the research project, but it does not and cannot address the political policy process, which is a primary research focus. However, the Skinnerian framework does create the contextualisation of the time periods, upon which the Eastonian framework depends. The epistemological construct that history does not occur in a vacuum is one both accepted and utilised by social scientists.<sup>139</sup> Easton's model conceptualises policy-making within the context of society necessitating an understanding of the society's goals and the demands placed upon policy-makers as well as comprehending the society at large. This contextualisation is largely achieved by the historical analysis provided by the Skinnerian model, thus marrying the historical and political traditions. However, the Eastonian model focuses upon not only this contextualisation but also on the ways in which policy-makers responded to the social context in the form of policy formulation. These policy inputs are then operationalised by local agencies in the adaption of policy for the particular needs of the community. This

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<sup>138</sup> Skinner, 2002.

<sup>139</sup> Easton, 1965; Tully, 1988; and Skinner, 2002.

operationalising creates the policy outcomes, either expected or unexpected, which then become future policy inputs regenerating the system with a new set of inputs and recreating the model.

Therefore, the research project is in need of a dual analytical approach to competently focus on both social science traditions. Whilst historical in nature because the project examines past events, it is inherently a policy driven research project. The marriage of the Skinnerian tradition to the Eastonian model creates the disciplinary bridge for this research project.

## **Conclusions**

The nature of a comparative and a historical research study necessitates a cohesive research design. The complexity inherent in a comparative historical project revolves around how the researcher intends to approach the historical character of the project. The linear chronological approach is possible but it is reliant upon both nations having harmonious and, therefore easily comparable, histories. The added dimension of governmental policy-making further stresses the chronological because election cycles rarely coincide between the nations. Thus, the potential for creating comparison based on synchronal events is unlikely. However, if the researcher views the totality of education history not as a linear progression but one that demonstrates cohesive themes, then comparison becomes less problematic. Additionally, periodisation is an effective tool to manage and explore the half-century of education history. These time-periods reflect the emergence of key issues that captured the attention of society in general and educationists in particular.

Comparative studies of nations and policies are notoriously difficult to complete because of the tendency to formulate judgments rather than facilitate discussion on approaches and attitudes. Researchers must first recognise that there will be significant differences between the societies, systems or organisations within the comparison which do not

necessarily represent negative traits but are simply distinct characteristics. It is also vital for the researcher to formulate the goals for undertaking a comparative study: institutional development, international comparison or creation of policy.<sup>140</sup> Finally, the researcher needs to concentrate on language conventions used in the comparison with the caveat that each nation may employ similar terms but may also assign substantially different meanings to them.

Historical research projects are generally dependent upon documentary sources for their data with official publications providing invaluable written evidence of different education initiatives. While official documents are important, they convey only one reality, which is not always representative of local experience. However, documents combined with oral history interviews are appropriate data collection strategies for this research project. Oral histories are testimonies from the “common man” in education – the teacher in the classroom of inner-city schools – and attest to their experiences of education during each time-period. Thus, the combination of the official voice with the experiential voice compliments the research design. Additionally, oral histories can create a bridge between data and paradigm with the ability to give the common man the voice needed for transformation.

Finally, all data are subject to analysis and the researcher must be assiduous in selecting the analytical method most appropriate to the design. The challenge for this project is its dual conceptualisations. This makes it impossible to solely utilise a modified Skinnerian analytical framework because it is rooted in historical and not political processes. Thus, it would be possible to explore the documents in their contextual frame but not explain the advance and transformation of policy from one era to the other. Easton’s systems analysis provides the structure to analyse the political component of policy-making within the context of the larger society. Essentially, the two frameworks complement each other and afford the most fitting analytical tools for the engagement of a historical-political question.

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<sup>140</sup> Alexander, 2000, pp. 26-45.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Policy, Education and the Nation - the Evolution of National Education Agendas**

#### **Introduction**

A Skinnerian-influenced approach to documentary analysis of primary and secondary documentary sources constitutes the chosen research method. The method combines an emphasis on locutionary meaning, contextualisation, authorial intent and analysis of the major texts in conjunction with the minor texts in order to ascertain both the language conventions and the ideological trends of the era. The positioning of major and minor texts alongside each other in the analysis creates an opportunity to assess both language and philosophy within the documents for either cohesion or for the presence of a fissure within the literary canon. A disconnection between texts can signify tensions between espoused policy and constituent groups or may suggest the advent of a new debate or policy initiative; it should not be interpreted as problematic for the analysis. While the Skinnerian method is well suited to historical contexts, it is limited by its inability to address fully the policy process. Therefore, the analysis takes a dualistic stance combining the historical framework of Skinner with the systems model of Easton to examine the historical alongside the political policy process.

Although focusing on two distinct intellectual traditions, Skinner and Easton both acknowledge the primacy of contextualisation when attempting to construct an encyclopaedic understanding of the era or the society. Skinner's methodology incorporates contextualisation of the texts enabling them to be scrutinised within their originating milieu and not as documents divorced from their historical backgrounds. Language conventions and philosophical constructs can be examined within documents from a particular period to distinguish trends in ideology and locutionary meaning or to detect subtle, yet important, shifts in either from one era to another. On the other hand, Easton's systems analysis espouses the notion that the political system cannot and should not be dissociated from the society in which it operates. It is

imperative to understand both the society and the system, including the reciprocal effect they have upon each other.

An on-going challenge presented in an analysis of education policy history within an Eastonian inspired framework is establishing a starting point without subsequently divorcing policy within the time frame from those that have preceded, and potentially, influenced it. Acknowledging this challenge, it is necessary to retrace briefly the influences that led to systemic reform in the 1960s, even though the research project primarily focuses upon the last four decades of the twentieth century. In both nations, the post-war education debates reflected the social and political environments, often emphasising policy construction to address social problems. However, one key disadvantage of policy generation is the inability to design panaceas acceptable to every constituency. Once policy is created and becomes the *status quo*, it cannot be presumed that the solutions will be universally accepted or that it will address policy goals adequately. This can foster continuing debates over efficacy and efficiency. In turn, new and innovative solutions may be generated necessitating the development of original policy. The new policy *status quo* is not immune to debate and the process begins again, demonstrating the cyclical nature of the responsive policy process. In light of this, it would be inherently difficult to undertake an analysis of education policy in the 1960s without considering the seminal post-war policies and their impact upon education policy formation.

This chapter is the first of three data analysis chapters incorporated within the dissertation; through historical and political analysis it concentrates exclusively on the examination of documentary sources that shaped post-war education policy. The complication with this analytical approach is the fluid nature of the historical continuum and the complexity of contextualising documents that are often situated in corresponding time periods. It often becomes necessary to revisit time periods to discuss the genesis of a text in order to comprehend the philosophical, historical or political constructs that influence it. Acknowledging this potential issue, the first data analysis chapter comprises a brief narrative on the development of English and American national education policy in the immediate post-war era, one that is not specified in the research design but which exerted significant influence over

successive time-periods. Essentially, the chapter is a brief exploration of the factors and policies that shaped the two eras that emerged from it.

## Prologue

As noted above and in the discussion on periodisation in the previous chapter, the selection of a starting point for historical narratives is challenging. Both starting and ending points will inevitably lead to a narrative that may be perceived as never quite finished or never quite fully developed. In this instance the question that may arise is: how long is a piece of string? The answer in this context is to briefly explore the inter-war years in terms of the emerging dialogues surrounding education and poverty and to consider the impact that these had in the shaping of the post-war education policy trajectories in both nations. Concern may arise that an exploration of the inter-war years could move the starting frame back to the turn of the century, to the passage of the *Education Act of 1870* or the origins of the free school movement in Massachusetts. There will always be the argument for the inclusion of other time periods or movements and, while it is appropriate to delve into the inter-war years as a precursor to this study, further expansion is beyond the scope and remit of this research project.

Poverty existed prior to the inter-war years in both the United States and the United Kingdom however, the depth of the Great Depression demonstrated the extent of the problem and the emergence of new dialogues to address poverty and to improve the overall lives of people living in poverty. Tyack, Lowe and Hansot's detailed analysis of American education during the Great Depression suggests the continued growth of progressive education reform while noting the unique difficulties posed by the economic convulsion.<sup>1</sup> American government policy, particularly in the early stages of the Great Depression, continued to reflect a strong preference for non-intervention, particularly non-intervention by the federal and state governments, thereby moving the burden of relief to charitable agencies. The rise of social reconstruction, a progressive education reform movement, challenged the belief in capitalism and the

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<sup>1</sup> David Tyack, Robert Lowe and Elisabeth Hansot, *Public Schools in Hard Times: The Great Depression and Recent Years*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984.

mythology of rugged individualism in America and advocated for collectivism rooted in scientific planning. The movement empowered educators to construct a new social order through collective action and while the movement's ideals appealed to many teachers, it was interpreted as a move too far to the political left.<sup>2</sup> Progressive reforms within American classrooms and schools during the 1930s focused increasingly on student centred pedagogy, self-direction, the development of critical thinking and evaluation skills and the creation of school settings that would foster the growth of these ideas. While many schools adopted progressive pedagogy, many other schools embraced the more traditional academic curricula that focused on testing, tracking and academic promotion. Although the tension between progressive and traditional approaches cannot be measured accurately, it is likely that traditional pedagogical approaches remained the norm.<sup>3</sup> At the heart of progressive education was the core belief that American public schools served children from all social classes underpinned by the understanding that teachers espoused an ideology of treating all children in their classrooms fairly. However, Tyack et al. suggest that progressive reforms such as those noted above thrived in more prosperous states, tended to benefit children from the favoured social classes and were not immune from subtle forms of discrimination. Public schools, therefore, replicated the socio-economic divisions within society and social class division became a key dividing line in schools. This division was exacerbated in the American south where social class division was further complicated by racial segregation and the implications that segregationist policies had upon African-American education.<sup>4</sup>

On the other side of the Atlantic, the inter-war years in England led to a consideration of the educational structures and their ability to meet the educational needs of all children within society. Furthermore, the acceptance of secondary education for all children, which was linked to a social justice agenda and rooted in socialist politics, underpinned policy discourses during this time period. Tawney, in *Secondary Education for All: A Policy for Labour*, outlined the rationale for widening access to education, which included a growing acceptance of secondary education by working-class parents, greater public demand for secondary education and the improved

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 139-186.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

economic prosperity of the population.<sup>5</sup> Tracing the roots of secondary education and the educational structures available to different social classes, Tawney argued for the democratisation of secondary education along with its rapid expansion as a means to right the social injustices inherent within the education system.<sup>6</sup> The impediment to universal and free secondary education lay in the costs associated with the adoption of this reform, which Tawney succinctly argued for and accepted that the shift would need to be completed over time to accommodate the costs.<sup>7</sup> The arguments developed within *Secondary Education for All* and emerging sociological research that centred upon social class and opportunity, particularly the need for alternative structures for secondary education to secure achievement across the populace, gained acceptance in the inter-war years. This acceptance can be seen in several reports emerging in the inter-war period including the *Hadow Report* in 1926, the *Spens Report* in 1938 and the *Norwood Report* in 1943. Each of these reports to varying degrees addressed the history of education as an exploration of the current education system, the exclusion of or lack of achievement of poor children within the system and the call for reform of the system to widen opportunities to all children.

The emerging discourses surrounding education and reform during the inter-war years focused on the broadening of educational opportunity through increased access to secondary education. Both nations accepted the need for differentiated curricula to meet the needs of children and business and both moved overtly away from the development of vocational education as the most appropriate education solely for working-class children. This leads to the question of the transnational impulse, particularly to what extent did American and English educationists know of the ideas emerging in each nation and to what extent were they influenced by these ideas. Lawn argues that the interplay of local, national and international narratives can be difficult to construct for historians because it is often difficult to locate the international narrative within the local or national narratives that they may be more familiar with in their work. Moreover, there is difficulty in chronicling the exchanges of researchers, the ideas that emerge from these exchanges and the impact of ideas when working

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Henry Tawney, *Secondary Education for All: A Policy for Labour*. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1922, pp. 35-42.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33 and p. 54.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124-141.

across borders than there may be within the locality or the nation.<sup>8</sup> Even if the international narrative can be constructed and the transnational impulse captured, the question remaining is one of impact. English government reports during this time period such as those noted above provide a narrative snapshot of English education history, a history that both informs and underpins the arguments constructed. There is an interplay of the past informing the present. There is clear evidence that English educationists knew of the American experience within education, understood the reform movements and in some ways attempted to learn from their American counterparts. For example, Tawney acknowledged American developments in secondary education, a system that extended primary education to almost all children rather than only making it accessible to children of superior intellect or economic good fortune, which made the English and American systems inherently different. While universal secondary education had not been fully realised at the time, the drive toward universal secondary education and the egalitarian nature of publicly funded free secondary education helped to inform his arguments for a level of transplantation of these ideas. Tawney, however, noted that the accessibility of secondary education did not mean that all American children successfully completed high school drawing parallels between the US and the UK in terms of the wastage of talent as children progressed through the course.<sup>9</sup> Tawney, interestingly, remained silent on the issues of race and educational inequality and segregation in the American context.

The transnational impulse capturing ideas moving in a westward trajectory is far more difficult to capture. Silver documents the impact of British progressive education and infant schools upon post-war American classrooms although he suggests that this was not always a realistic portrayal of the infant school.<sup>10</sup> However, the American experience of education unlike the English experience at this time is not rooted in the national but in the local. The careful tracing of education history narratives, a hallmark of English government reports at the time, is more piecemeal and more likely to emerge in the local narrative of a state's education history. When major reports emerged, such as the *Conant Report*, the focus centred upon the American

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Lawn, 'Introduction.' in M. Lawn (ed) *An Atlantic Crossing: The Work of the International Examination Inquiry, Its Researchers, Methods and Influence*. Oxford: Symposium Books, 2008, pp. 7-38.

<sup>9</sup> Tawney, 1922.

<sup>10</sup> Harold Silver, *Education as History*, London, Methuen, 1983, pp, 267-269.

experience at the time. They rarely made reference to or incorporated English or European ideas, however, it cannot be concluded that they were ignorant of these developments and it may be interpreted that the reports reflect the writer's knowledge of audience.

## **Precursor to the Debate: Formulating Policies and Fermenting Debate on Education Both Pre-War and Post War**

### **The English Context**

While the research project concentrates on education policies two decades after the passage of the *Education Act 1944*, it is necessary to revisit the influences leading to the creation of comprehensive secondary education throughout England and Wales.<sup>11</sup> The Second World War, and the inter-war years generally, provided a backdrop for collective national reflection on England's aspirations and the necessary reforms to attain these national goals.<sup>12</sup> Education, particularly the nature of provision and equality of opportunity, emerged from this period of introspection as a major topic of debate for English politicians, educationists and citizens.<sup>13</sup> The roots of this debate, however, lay in three government reports that assessed the condition of secondary education prior to the *Education Act 1944*. Published in 1926, the *Hadow Report* underlined two arguments in the education debate: the necessary expansion of secondary education for the general good of English society; and, the problematic structure of secondary education and its inability to meet the needs of all pupils.<sup>14</sup> The

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<sup>11</sup> The government documents selected to frame the debate leading to the passage of *The Education Act 1944* include three prominent reports preceding the landmark legislation: Great Britain, 1926 (Hadow Report); Great Britain, 1943a (Norwood Report); and Great Britain, 1943b.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion on post-war education goals and reforms, please see the following authors: Ken Jones, *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present*. Cambridge: Polity, 2003, pp. 12-38; Gary McCulloch, *Educational Reconstruction: The 1944 Education Act and the Twenty-First Century*. Ilford, Essex: Woburn Press, 1994, pp. 24-33; Gary McCulloch (2002a) 'Local education authorities and the organisation of secondary education.' *Oxford Review of Education* 18/2-3, pp. 235-246; Gary McCulloch, 'Secondary education.' in R. Aldrich (ed) *A Century of Education*. London: Routledge Falmer, 2002b, pp. 31-53; Simon, 1999, pp. 23-87; and McKenzie, 2001, pp. 172-184.

<sup>13</sup> Simon, 1999, pp. 23-87.

<sup>14</sup> Great Britain, 1926 (Hadow Report), pp. xix-69. While this footnote refers to the *Hadow Report* published in 1926, a series of six *Hadow Reports* were published between 1923 and 1933. These six reports covered various topics within education including infant and nursery education, the primary

report also criticised the narrow academic scope of secondary education whilst suggesting the need for a structural redefinition of the system.<sup>15</sup> Localities, which were largely responsible for education provision, often favoured the establishment of grammar schools with an academic curriculum. However, the narrowness of this singular approach could impact national education outcomes so, for this reason, localities were encouraged to consider the inclusion of the secondary modern school within their areas. While the former approach met the needs of the most able pupils, the latter provided the majority of adolescents with discrete skills for their futures.<sup>16</sup> This dual approach sanctioned the continuance of the existing grammar schools while simultaneously establishing an alternative system with a tailored curriculum to meet the needs of the majority of adolescents, many of whom, it was thought, would not benefit from an academic curriculum.

While the *Hadow Report* underpinned the debate, two subsequent documents furthered the discussion that shaped the tripartite structure of secondary education. Simon argues that the roots of tripartism are evident in *Educational Reconstruction, a White Paper published in 1943*, while Simon and McCulloch argue that the *Norwood Report, also published in 1943*, consolidated the idea of educational tripartism.<sup>17</sup> The former document conceded that the majority of children would not thrive in a traditional grammar school and therefore tacitly accepted tripartism as a policy solution.<sup>18</sup> The latter espoused a child centred curriculum suggesting that tripartism was designed to “match the nature of the child,” thereby appealing to educationists.<sup>19</sup>

If the reconfiguration of the education system was predicated on the provision of equality of opportunity through the provision of universal secondary education, then the debate structured by *Hadow, Norwood, and Educational Reconstruction* was skewed through an emphasis on the skills divide among pupils. This is evident in the emergence of educational tripartism, which proposed a secondary education system that catered for specific educational needs through three different types of schools: the

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school, the use of psychological testing as determinants in education, the education of the adolescent, curriculum differentiation and books within schools.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>16</sup> McCulloch, 2002b, pp. 36-44.

<sup>17</sup> Simon, 1999, pp.60-65 and 73-74; and McCulloch, 2002b, pp. 36-44.

<sup>18</sup> Simon, 1999, pp. 73-74.

<sup>19</sup> Simon, 1999, p. 61.

grammar school for academically able pupils, the secondary technical school for pupils with aptitudes in the sciences and the secondary modern school for the majority of pupils who were better suited to concrete concepts rather than esoteric ideas.<sup>20</sup> Consequently, the *Norwood Report* in proposing tripartism revisited both the *Hadow Report* and *Educational Reconstruction* as a basis for structuring a child-centred system with the specific goals of achieving equality of opportunity among the population and parity of esteem between educational institutions.

Although influential, the *Hadow* and *Norwood* reports provided policy recommendations; however, the passage of the *Education Act 1944* marked a significant development in education policy in England and Wales.<sup>21</sup> First, the text defined the new organisational structure of the English education system, largely reflecting the vision of the *Hadow Report* when it described the organisation of public education: "...in three progressive stages to be known as primary education, secondary education, and further education."<sup>22</sup> Dent, a prominent apologist of the legislation, remarked that this provision alone reshaped the entire education system as it previously had been organised solely into elementary and higher education.<sup>23</sup> Although there were maintained secondary schools existing prior to the legislation, they served only 20% of the nation's children, thereby denying access to secondary education to a significant proportion of the population.<sup>24</sup> The legislation addressed the issue of equality of opportunity by broadening secondary education provision to include all children.

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<sup>20</sup> For a consideration of the division of secondary education into three distinct types of schools, please see: Great Britain, 1943a (*Norwood Report*), pp. 15-22; McCulloch, 2002b, pp. 36-44; McCulloch, 1994, pp.72-92; Simon, 1999, pp. 73-77; and Jones, 2003, pp. 21-23. The use of the phrase, 'secondary modern school,' appears in *The Norwood Report* although it is possible to argue that its genesis lies in *The Hadow Report*. The latter report suggests the renaming of the post-primary phase of education, irrespective of school classifications. Thus, secondary education would apply to all post-primary institutions and not solely to those with academic curricula. Additionally, the authors of *The Hadow Report* suggest the renaming of the existing central schools to modern schools and, while it does not include the exact phrase, it can be seen as laying the linguistic foundation.

<sup>21</sup> The significance of the *Education Act 1944* is well documented within the literature. Authors giving particular consideration to the legislation include: Simon, 1999, pp. 73-79 and 95-143; McKenzie, 2001, pp. 171-184; McCulloch, 1994, pp. 6-115; McCulloch, 2002b, pp. 36-44; Jones, 2003, pp.12-38; H.C. Dent, *Education in England and Wales*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977, pp. 1-23 and 75-88; H.C. Dent, *1870-1970: Century of Growth in English Education*. London: Longman, 1970, pp. 115-122; H.C. Dent, *The Education Act 1944: Provisions, Regulations, Circulars and Later Acts*. 12<sup>th</sup> ed. London: University of London Press, 1968; and Michael Barber, *The Making of the 1944 Education Act*. London: Cassell, 1994.

<sup>22</sup> Great Britain, *Education Act 1944*. London: HMSO, 1944, p. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Dent, 1968, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

In mandating universal secondary education, the *Education Act 1944* created a national education system, locally administered. The legislation stipulated this as the “duty of the local education authority for every area, so far as their powers extend to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient education throughout those stages shall be available to meet the needs of the population of their area.”<sup>25</sup> Dent described the implications of the now “statutory duty” imposed upon local authorities regarding the provision of elementary and secondary education, a duty that previously only extended to the provision of elementary education.<sup>26</sup> Local authorities faced an expansion of their education provision, while simultaneously considering the appropriateness and efficacy of the existing educational structures within their locality.

Thirdly, the *Education Act 1944* addressed two other issues related to secondary education: access and parental involvement. Through the abolition of fees for maintained secondary schools, the legislation further extended equality of opportunity.<sup>27</sup> This eliminated one of the remaining barriers to secondary education for families from lower socio-economic backgrounds. With the widening of provision, the act also tried to engage parents more directly in the education process stating, “...that, so far as is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure, pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents.”<sup>28</sup>

Ostensibly, it appears that the *Education Act 1944* achieved the goals set out by reformers. It clearly delineated education provision into three stages; it increased access to secondary education through the abolition of fees for maintained schools; it concretized the idea of a national education system, locally administered; it demanded that the creation of schools reflect the numbers of students in attendance as well as

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<sup>25</sup> Great Britain, 1944, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Dent, 1968, pp. 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> Great Britain, 1944, p. 48 and Dent, 1968, p.44; While the *Education Act 1944* ended the payment of fees for some forms of secondary education provision, it did not end all fees. Schools maintained by the local authorities could not levy fees but direct grant schools that received funding from the Ministry of Education were permitted to continue the practice.

<sup>28</sup> Great Britain, 1944, p. 56.

their abilities and aptitudes; it brought parents into the decision-making process in education; and it situated the child at the centre of education.

However, on educational tripartism, the one issue that defined both post-war secondary education and the debate surrounding the efficacy of the system to achieve equality of opportunity, the *Education Act 1944* remained notably silent. The legislation defined the distinctions between voluntary schools, county schools and special schools but made no direct reference to grammar schools, secondary modern schools or technical schools. The broad conceptualization of schools is contained in the passage:

“For providing secondary education, that is to say full-time education, suitable to the requirements of senior pupils...schools available for an area shall not be deemed to be sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to afford for all pupils opportunities for education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages, abilities and aptitudes...”<sup>29</sup>

A Skinnerian analysis indicates no direct linguistic link to tripartism although the passage does reflect the philosophical constructs within the three reports directly preceding the act. Moreover, *Spens, which was published in 1938, Hadow, Educational Reconstruction and Norwood* proposed different visions of education reform that collectively manifested themselves in the *Education Act 1944*, particularly the expansion of secondary education, parity of esteem between educational institutions and tripartism.<sup>30</sup> While the ideas of tripartism are explicitly described in the previous documents, the precise linguistic term is notably absent in the legislation.

Whether the *Education Act 1944* was meant to support the new social welfare system envisaged by the *Beveridge Report, which was published in 1942*, or if it was intended to create additional educational structures to meet the needs of the lower socio-economic classes, it became law on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 1944. Since most citizens lacked easy access to official reports or legal texts, the government relied on a multidimensional approach to disseminate information about the legislation. The

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<sup>29</sup> Great Britain, 1944, p. 5.

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion on the government reports with direct influence on the *Education Act 1944*, see: McCulloch, 1994, pp. 43-92; McCulloch, 2002b, pp. 36-44; Barber, 1994, pp. 1-56; and Simon, 1999, pp. 23-87.

newsreel, *The Children's Charter*, which was released in 1945, painted a portrait of the new secondary school system that was optimistic and favourable.<sup>31</sup> The brief film set out to achieve three objectives: first, it etched a picture of educational differentiation among children and the types of curriculum required to address the needs and abilities of diverse students; secondly, it reiterated the idea that parity of esteem among secondary schools should be considered the norm rather than the exception and; thirdly, schools, while addressing different educational needs, should be perceived and funded equally and not within a hierarchical model dominated by the grammar schools.

Similarly, the pamphlet, *The New Secondary Education*, which was published in 1947, provided detailed descriptions of the three types of secondary schools with rationalizations for the new organisational structure.<sup>32</sup> However, an analysis of the pamphlet indicates an overt attempt by the Ministry of Education to market the educational plan and justify the entrenched notions behind the tripartite system. Chapter Five of the pamphlet, which summarized the types of schools and the children most likely to attend them, led with a description of the secondary modern school:

“Experience has shown that the majority of children learn most easily by dealing with concrete things and following a course rooted in their own day-to-day experiences. At the age of 11 few of them will have disclosed particular interests and aptitudes well enough marked for them to require any other course. The majority will do best in a school which provides a good all-round education in an atmosphere which enables them to develop freely along their own lines. Such a school will give them a chance to sample a variety of ‘subjects’ and skills to pursue those which will attract them most. It is for this majority that the secondary *modern* will cater.”<sup>33</sup>

The pamphlet then considered the secondary technical school describing the child most suitable for technical education as:

“Some children, on the other hand, will have decided at quite an early stage to make their careers in the branches of industry or agriculture requiring a special

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<sup>31</sup> *Children's Charter*, Directed by Gerry Bryant, London, Crown Film Unit, 1945.

<sup>32</sup> Great Britain, Ministry of Education, *The New Secondary Education Pamphlet Number Nine*. London: HMSO, 1947.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

kind of aptitude in science or mathematics. Others may need a course, longer and more specialized than that provided in the modern school, with a particular emphases (sic) on commercial subjects or art. All these boys and girls will find their best outlet in the secondary *technical* school.”<sup>34</sup>

Lastly, the authors portrayed the child whose most appropriate education would be in the grammar school in the following manner:

“Finally, there will be a proportion whose ability and aptitude require the kind of course with the emphasis on books and ideas that is provided at a secondary *grammar* school. They are attracted by the abstract approach to learning and should normally be prepared to stay at school long enough to benefit from the ‘sixth form’ work which is the most characteristic feature of the grammar school.”<sup>35</sup>

*The New Secondary Education* presented an interesting set of arguments for tripartism but, in doing so, also contributed to the debate on the topic. The authors conceded that citizens were unlikely to perceive parity of esteem between schools because of the close association between secondary education and the grammar school; and, while they quoted the passage from *the Education Act 1944* relating to schools being sufficient in number, they cautioned:

“At present most parents believe the grammar school to be in some sense a superior place; this is particularly due to the advantages that it has undoubtedly had in such ways as buildings, staffing, equipment, and size of classes... As the modern schools develop, parents will see that they are good; it will become increasingly common for them to keep their children at school beyond the compulsory age, and to select a modern school as the one best suited to their children’s requirements on grounds unhampered by considerations of ‘prestige’.”<sup>36</sup>

The authors attempted to overcome their audience’s inherent bias through two specific rationalizations. First, they inverted the education hierarchy in their explanation, consciously placing the description of grammar school education at the bottom of the pyramid. Secondly, they provided quantitative descriptions matching the student population to the corresponding secondary school: the phrase “the majority of children” describes the secondary modern student, “some children” fit

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 47.

into the secondary technical category and “a proportion” will be grammar school students.<sup>37</sup> Thus, they effectively built an argument for a differentiated secondary education system whilst also seeking to embed the concept of parity of esteem.

Both *The Children’s Charter* and *The New Secondary Education* demonstrate the government’s coordinated attempts to justify the establishment of the new secondary education system through the use of propaganda. McCulloch concurs, describing a “determined attempt to develop the tripartite system” by the government and ascribes considerable importance to *The New Secondary Education*, noting that it was “probably the most significant policy statement in this area in the late 1940s and 1950s...”<sup>38</sup> The government, however, still had not convinced a key constituency necessary for the success of any education legislation: the teachers. H.C. Dent, editor of the *Times Education Supplement (TES)*, played a pivotal role in disseminating information to educationists through England’s leading education newspaper and securing their approbation for the legislation.<sup>39</sup>

Although the *Education Act 1944* underpinned education provision, the hallmark of education policy in the post-war era lay in the Butskellite compromise, in which both the Labour and Conservative parties gave implicit approbation for tripartism. At a time when neither political party held distinctive views relating to education, tripartism and its historical links to English education alleviated the need for new policy agendas.<sup>40</sup> However, without specific language within the legislation mandating tripartism and with many LEAs seeking to develop education agendas reflective of local rather than national needs, policy experimentation occurred within the framework of a national system, locally administered.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>38</sup> McCulloch, 2002b, p. 41.

<sup>39</sup> The leading professional newspaper among educationists, the *Times Education Supplement (TES)*, reported upon the passage of the landmark legislation. It is during such occasions that the role of editor becomes crucial and H.C. Dent proved to be a key proponent of the act. However, education historians have interpreted his role and views differently. Brian Simon in *Education and the Social Order* portrays Dent as a reformer while Gary McCulloch in *Educational Reconstruction: The 1944 Act* depicts him as more of an apologist than a reformer.

<sup>40</sup> Tripartism, as a structural and philosophical principle, pre-dated the *Education Act 1944* although the commonly held misperception was that the legislation created the tripartite system of education. For a discussion on the historical roots of tripartism, please see the following: McKenzie, 2001, pp. 80-85 and 171-184; McCulloch, 1994, pp. 6-42; McCulloch, 1998, pp. 11-56; McCulloch, 2002b pp. 31-44; Simon, 1999, pp. 23-87; and Trowler, 2003, pp. 1-5.

Local experimentation suggested the emergence of a new direction in education policy despite the Butskellite compromise and the pre-eminence of tripartism. While local experimentation challenged the efficacy of the tripartite, or bipartite system, a further challenge emerged in two government reports that raised serious concerns over the education of both the late adolescent and the average ability or less than average ability child and the potential impact this could have for England. The *Crowther Report*, which was published in 1959 and addressed the first concern, posited that:

“It was becoming increasingly clear that the period between fifteen and eighteen was of crucial importance. It was another watershed that could determine a child’s chance in life - for good or ill. By the mid-fifties, a growing number of educationalists and politicians were coming to realise that, for a child’s own personal development and for the long-term economic good of the nation, more thought and more resources had to go into providing for academically-minded *and* practically-minded children. In short, more children had to be persuaded to stay on in full-time or part-time education after the age of fifteen.”<sup>41</sup>

This recognition reawakened the discussion surrounding the school leaving age. The Labour Government had raised the school leaving age to 15 in accord with *The Education Act 1944* but refused a further increase to 16. In 1959, the *Crowther Report* disclosed that the majority of children between 15 and 18 did not participate in education beyond the statutory requirement.<sup>42</sup> The committee asserted that students chose to leave education for two reasons: they were either drawn by the high wages paid in industry or their local secondary modern school provided no opportunity for continuing education. However, if the latter is correct, then questions needed to be raised about secondary education provision in these localities and whether the *Education Act 1944* was being effectively implemented.

Additionally, the *Crowther Report* suggested a link between socio-economic class and students’ commitment to post-compulsory education.<sup>43</sup> The committee recommended that secondary modern schools offer courses suited to students’ needs and abilities,

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<sup>41</sup> Rick Rogers, *Crowther to Warnock: How Fourteen Reports Tried to Change Children’s Lives*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980, p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Great Britain, 1959 (Crowther Report), pp. 3-15.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-15.

capping their formal education with at least a local leaving certificate to detail their progress and qualifications. The committee also advocated for the extension of secondary education to the age of 16.<sup>44</sup> This realised two objectives: first, a lengthier tenure in school might lead to the acquisition of more workplace skills and; secondly, equality of opportunity in secondary education could be broadened by encouraging all secondary modern schools to extend education provision.

It cannot be questioned that in the post-war era universal secondary education was achieved. However, the prevailing bias for tripartism and the historical social links to the tripartite system raised two very cogent issues at the time: could parity of esteem be achieved in a tripartite, or largely bipartite system and, if it could not be achieved, did the working-class child suffer from such an education? Both Simon and McCulloch certainly raised doubts about the first issue while the *Crowther Report* confirmed the latter.

The *Robbins Report*, which was published in 1963 and was the second of the three major government reports produced between 1959 and 1963, acknowledged three core ideas facing the UK as it transitioned out of the immediate post-war era.<sup>45</sup> First, an educated populace was necessary for success within the global community. Secondly, in order to create an educated workforce capable of meeting the nation's economic demands higher education opportunities needed to be expanded. Thirdly, despite increased educational opportunity and a greater demand for higher education, the authors questioned the ability of the education system to prepare students for the demands of the workplace.<sup>46</sup> If the education system could not sufficiently tap into talent across socio-economic classes, then serious implications emerged for England's economic potential. The *Robbins Report*, using paternal occupation as an indicator of socio-economic background, demonstrated a relationship between parental profession and student achievement *vis-à-vis* examination results and post-compulsory education attainment. The children of skilled, semi-skilled or unskilled manual labourers exhibited a clear pattern within post-compulsory education: an average of 97% of the total did not proceed into full-time higher education at either a training college or

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 108-134 and 147-159.

<sup>45</sup> Great Britain, Committee on Higher Education, *Higher Education*. (Robbins Report) London: HMSO, 1963.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

university while 1.50% earned university degrees and another 1.50% earned other qualifications. On the other hand, the pattern for children of non-manual workers demonstrated a markedly different result: an average of 75% did not enrol in full-time higher education while 16% earned university degrees and 8% received other qualifications. In the latter group, a pronounced difference existed between children from families with higher professional backgrounds and students from families employed in other professions, management or clerical positions.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, the committee established linkages between attainment at A-level and socio-economic status as well as the underachievement of girls within education.<sup>48</sup> The existence of significant attainment gaps within and between socio-economic groups at A-level and in enrolment in higher education indicated that the system, as conceived, could not provide equality of opportunity and, in many cases, could be responsible for the entrenchment of inequality of opportunity.

While the *Crowther* and *Robbins* reports considered the implications of socio-economic class on educational outcomes, the publication of *Half Our Future* in 1963, capped the education discussions of the post-war era by focusing on the education of the average or lower ability child.<sup>49</sup> Rogers suggests that the *Newsom Report*, which it is commonly known as, emerged from a dual concern for the well being of the nation's economy and children.<sup>50</sup> While the report engaged with the previous education debates, it also raised concerns of a widening gap between educational provision in the tripartite system and the subsequent impacts upon student populations served by these institutions. The committee formulated several recommendations including: revising teacher training programmes to focus on the educational needs of under-achieving children; encouraging a building programme to allow for new types of organisational patterns in schools; increasing monetary provision to enable schools to purchase modern equipment and offer wider subject selections; considering the difficulties created by streaming students; and engaging the implications of a transient teaching population.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., pp. 52 and 268.

<sup>49</sup> Great Britain, 1963 (Newsom Report).

<sup>50</sup> Rogers, 1980, p. 66.

<sup>51</sup> Great Britain, 1963 (Newsom Report), pp. xvi-xviii The *Newsom Report* revisited the previous policy discussions including: raising the school leaving age; creating a diverse child-centred curriculum; exploring the utilitarian functions of education; creating linkages between secondary

Both the *Crowther Report* and the *Newsom Report* underscore the dichotomy within English education after the passage of the *Education Act 1944*. McCulloch clearly develops the historical link to tripartism rooted in education culture and the ensuing systemic entrenchment.<sup>52</sup> This relationship transcends the *Education Act 1944*, with the bulk of professional educational opinion reluctant to consider alternatives to tripartism, despite an increasing recognition of the system's inherent problems. Clearly, historical precedent favoured tripartism, yet tripartism presented difficulties within the philosophical framework in which it operated. Although the reports focus on different age cohorts, they point to the weaknesses in English secondary and further education, particularly related to working-class students or students in secondary modern schools. In spite of this, neither recommended dismantling tripartism to embrace the emerging comprehensive schools movement.

### **The American Context**

While the *Education Act 1944* and the impacts of the legislation dominated the education debates in England, American policy-makers and educationists engaged in similar discussions regarding the growth of federalism and the relevance of the secondary school curriculum within American education. Federalism grew incrementally in the post-war era, and while providing the funds necessary for the expansion of education programmes, the growth of federalism revisited long-standing tensions over the constitutional powers of the federal government and the many state governments. Simultaneously, university and corporate interests both expressed concerns regarding the effectiveness of the American secondary school curriculum.

*The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944*, more commonly referred to as the *GI Bill*, created an opportunity for the federal government to take advantage of established precedent and undertake its first significant foray into post-war education

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schools and business; and the provision of an internal assessment and certificate of achievement upon leaving school. While linking to previous policy and White Papers, the focus on a widening educational gap became a prominent feature of the work.

<sup>52</sup> McCulloch, 1998, pp. 11-76.

policy.<sup>53</sup> The passage of the *GI Bill* confirmed the federal government's commitment to education by authorising the payment of \$14.5 billion for education and training of veterans, including university programmes, vocational training, job training and agricultural programmes.<sup>54</sup> Ravitch argues that the *GI Bill* initially broke the link between income and educational opportunity because the education benefits were available to all men and women who met the lenient eligibility criteria, which afforded them the opportunity to pursue higher education when many might not have been able to do so without the fiscal support. However, this was an unintended consequence of the legislation with federal policy-makers more interested in preventing economic stress during demobilisation.<sup>55</sup> Although the federal government had previously participated in American education policy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in a limited way, the significant fiscal input into education through the *GI Bill*, and the subsequent policies connected to this infusion of funds, provided a new benchmark for federal education policy.

Although previous legislation had established the precedent of a limited federal role in education, these interventions related largely to the provision of funds for the expansion of educational opportunities. The United States Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* in 1954 sought to expand educational opportunity, redress the wrongs of *de jure* segregation and subsequently widened federal intervention into education.<sup>56</sup> The class action suit filed against the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas challenged long-standing racial segregation

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<sup>53</sup> United States, *Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944*, 22 June 1944, Chap. 268, 58 Stat. 284. Cross, 2004, pp. 1-3. Cross asserts that the federal government's participation in education began with the passage of the *Northwest Ordinance of 1787*, which required townships within the new territory to consign land for educational purposes. Additional legislation post-1787 began to incrementally increase the federal role within education. Expansion continued with the passage of the *Morrill Land-Grant Acts* and the *Smith-Hughes Act*; the former created land-grant universities whilst the latter supported vocational education through direct monetary investment for schools although this was negligible in comparison to local expenditures.

<sup>54</sup> 'GI Bill turns 62 today,' available from <http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,102383,00.html>, 22 June 2006.

<sup>55</sup> Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980*. New York: Basic Books, 1983, pp. 12-15 and Cross, 2004, pp. 1-3.

<sup>56</sup> United States, *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 US 483, available from <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supremecourt/text/347/483>, 1954. While there were many facets to the *Brown* case, a primary rationale of the lawsuit challenged and sought to overturn the legal doctrine of separate but equal established in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, a Supreme Court decision that legitimized both *de jure* and *de facto* segregation thereby institutionalising segregation within the United States.

policies within education that permitted separate primary schools for White and African-American children.<sup>57</sup>

In *Brown v. the Board of Education*, the opinion of the court focused on the question: “Does segregation of children in public schools solely on the basis of race, even though the physical facilities and other ‘tangible’ factors may be equal, deprive the children of the minority group of equal educational opportunity?”<sup>58</sup> The Court’s decision pivoted around:

“The history of the Fourteenth Amendment is inconclusive as to its intended effect on public education. The question presented in these cases must be determined not on the basis of conditions existing when the Fourteenth Amendment was adopted, but in the light of the full development of public education and its present place in American life throughout the nation. Where a state has undertaken to provide an opportunity for an education in its public schools, such an opportunity is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.”<sup>59</sup>

The Supreme Court’s decision reversed the 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision concluding that “in the field of public education, the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”<sup>60</sup>

There is a substantial corpus of research literature, utilising both historical and sociological frameworks, that considers the impact of *Brown* upon the integration of schools, the impact upon the American Civil Rights movement and the subsequent broadening of federal power into the social fabric of American society.<sup>61</sup> Tyack,

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid. The named plaintiff for the class action lawsuit was Oliver L. Brown, an African-American local pastor who with other parents had tried to enrol their children at the local primary school closest to their homes. However, the schools refused to enrol the children and directed each parent to the nearest school that enrolled African-American children. Linda Brown, who was a third grade student at the time, could either walk seven blocks from her home to an all White school or walk six blocks to the nearest bus stop where she was then transported a mile to the nearest school for African-American children. While the school for African-American children in this case was not deemed to be inferior in standard to the school provided for White children, the primary argument focused on the belief that the acceptance of a segregated system in any form inherently implied that African-Americans, or any race subjected to segregation laws, were unequal within society.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> For a consideration of the issues surrounding *Brown*, the following authors offer detailed discussions: Lawrence A. Cremin, *American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980*. New York: Harper and Row, 1988, pp. 196-204 and 259-263; David Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974, pp. 269-291;

writing in the midst of the desegregation mandates, briefly chronicles the post-Brown desegregation of schools, maintaining that this often led to disappointing results. For example, localities with dual education systems appeared to find desegregation easier than northern cities whose segregation patterns were based on residential configurations.<sup>62</sup> The author also observed that the reversal of *Plessy* not only corrected a long-standing abuse but, within northern cities, African-Americans interpreted the decision in light of its ability to achieve both quality of and equality in education.<sup>63</sup>

On the other hand, Walters challenges Tyack's assertions by linking *de jure* segregation in the South and *de facto* segregation in the North to explicit local policies affecting education funding.<sup>64</sup> *Brown* could not rectify the institutionalisation of segregation and educational inequity because the "federal government lacked the effective policy tool to enforce compliance with the *Brown* decision or at least one it was prepared to use."<sup>65</sup> Litigation afforded the only recourse, however because of time and fiscal constraints, this became difficult to pursue enabling segregation to continue. Since American education is dominated by locally elected school boards, local politics continued to maintain the *status quo* in the South despite *Brown* while white flight from cities concretised *de facto* segregation and created urban ghettos in many northern cities. Southern states relied upon school board politics to continue unequal funding of education while white flight destroyed the tax base in northern cities thereby compromising fiscal resources to fund education.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, local politics and white flight contributed to the creation of institutionalised education inequity, an unintended consequence of *Brown*.

While Tyack and Walters focused on the immediate consequences of the decision, Willie and Willie postulate that *Brown* achieved considerable movement toward

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Pamela Walters, 'Educational access and the state: historical continuities and discontinuities in racial inequality in American education.' *Sociology of Education* 74/Extra Issue, 2001, pp. 35-49; Charles Willie and Sarah Willie, 'Black, white and Brown: the transformation of public education in America.' *Teachers College Record* 107/3, 2005, pp. 475-495; and Cross, 2004, pp. 5-40.

<sup>62</sup> Tyack, 1974, pp. 279-281.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 279-281. Tyack wrote in the mid-1970s when it was common to use the terms Negro, black and coloured interchangeably. However, the term African-American is considered more appropriate today.

<sup>64</sup> Walters, 2001, pp. 40-42.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40-46.

equality but at a remarkably inefficient pace.<sup>67</sup> They argue that the Supreme Court's decision failed to create an appropriate plan for desegregation and assigned responsibility for implementation to state and local governments – the institutions that were largely culpable for segregation policy in the first instance. Local remedies for segregation elicited a variety of responses from the federal government, including inaction, nationalising the National Guard and court ordered bussing.<sup>68</sup> However, while the authors contend that the missing roadmap and ineffective responses retarded progress, they credit the ruling with helping to make significant strides in bridging the achievement gap between African-American and White students.<sup>69</sup>

Both the *GI Bill* and the *Brown* decision contributed to an increased federal presence in education policy in the post-war era. While the *GI Bill* primarily impacted post-compulsory education and training programmes, *Brown* redressed a social injustice that was a remnant of the Reconstruction era in American history. As previously noted, the decision had unintended consequences, including resistance, noncompliance, the failure to remedy *de facto* segregation and the passage of additional legislation to enforce the legal remedies emanating from *Brown*. Neither initiative carried immediate repercussions for the secondary school curriculum; rather they intended to provide benefits or relief for specific populations through direct federal intervention.

The themes of access and opportunity, the hallmarks of federal policy initiatives in the era, were replicated in the extensive dialogue on the American high school curriculum. Criticism of the curriculum flourished with calls for reform emanating from various groups.<sup>70</sup> Kliebard begins his discussion of curriculum reform by creating a framework postulating that reforms meet divergent criteria: grand reforms,

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<sup>67</sup> Willie and Willie, 2005, pp. 475-479.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 479-481.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 481-492.

<sup>70</sup> Censure of the American secondary school curriculum reflected the concerns of diverse groups, many of whom viewed the curriculum as diluted, unable to meet the nation's needs and inefficient. The following authors offer a discussion reflective of a variety of viewpoints: Arthur Bestor, *Educational Wastelands: The Retreat from Learning in Our Public Schools*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1985; Hyman G. Rickover, *American Education, A National Failure: The Problems of Our Schools and What We Can Learn from England*. New York: Dutton, 1963; Herbert Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum: 1893-1958*. New York, Routledge, 1995, pp. 205-230; Cremin, 1988, pp. 212 – 242; and Ravitch, 1983, pp. 43-80.

specific reform movements and research driven change.<sup>71</sup> American high schools faced many uncertainties in the post-war era including competition from industry, declining student populations and debate over the traditional academic nature of the curriculum. Kliebard contends that educationists espoused curriculum change as the method for improving secondary education while rejecting both the grand reform and research reform as inappropriate.<sup>72</sup>

The curriculum reform movement, however, revisited and questioned the foundations of American education with particular emphasis on the philosophical influences of Mann and Dewey.<sup>73</sup> Kliebard, whose work emphasises the struggle between constituencies to dominate the curriculum, traces curriculum reform to earlier decades when reform debates centred on social efficiency, social meliorism and eclecticism. However, preparation for declining enrolments and discussions on the direction of the American secondary curriculum led to new calls for reform.<sup>74</sup> In 1944 the National Education Association (NEA) detailed their position in “*Education for All American Youth*,” which conceptualized a functional, non-hierarchical curriculum organized to meet students’ needs.<sup>75</sup> Resistance to this progressive reform was predicated on two concerns: it equalized academic and vocational subjects, while questioning the ability of American education to meet the needs of the majority of students.<sup>76</sup> Academic traditionalists, who feared the further erosion of the academic curriculum, were discomfited by the NEA’s progressive agenda. However, academic traditionalism raised issues of class and elitism within education, which was counter to the egalitarian principles of the common school and progressive education. Charles Prosser, an educationist and proponent of vocational education, encapsulated the struggle and suggested the life adjustment curriculum as a way forward in 1945, which would become known as the *Prosser Resolution*:

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<sup>71</sup> Kliebard, 1995, pp. 231-252.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., pp. 178-230.

<sup>73</sup> For a discussion on the impact of American educational philosophers upon the curriculum reform debate, please see: Carl Kaestle, ‘The public schools and the public mood.’ *American Heritage* 41, 1990, pp. 66-81; Kliebard, 1995; Cremin, 1988, pp. 157-211; and Ravitch, 1983, pp. 43-80.

<sup>74</sup> Kliebard, 1995, pp.77-105 and 155-207.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., pp. 209-210.

<sup>76</sup> United States, Department of Education, *From There to Here: The Road to Reform of American High Schools*, available from [www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/hsinit/papers/history.doc](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/hsinit/papers/history.doc) Please note that no publication date was provided by either the authors or within the website.

“It is the belief of this conference that...the vocational school of a community will be able better to prepare 20 percent of its youth of secondary school age for entrance upon desirable skilled occupations; and that the high school will continue to prepare 20 percent of its students for entrance to college. We do not believe that the remaining 60 percent of our youth of secondary school age will receive the life adjustment training they need and to which they are entitled as American citizens – unless and until the administrators of public education with the assistance of the vocational education leaders formulate a similar program for this group.”<sup>77</sup>

The literature demonstrates that the life adjustment curriculum enjoyed considerable support from educationists while raising significant criticisms from external stakeholders.<sup>78</sup> Ravitch and Kliebard propose that the curriculum’s objective was evident in Prosser’s defence of vocational education and support for a more functional curriculum to prepare students for everyday life.<sup>79</sup> The curriculum, which was criticised for a lack of clear definition, evolved to include practical subjects and skills over the more rigorous academic subjects. Furthermore, if the top 20% of students benefited from an academic curriculum and the bottom 20% of students from vocational training, then educationists needed to define the student population to benefit from life adjustment. School districts utilised life adjustment to target the majority of students, often portraying them as members of lower socio-economic classes who scored poorly on intelligence tests, achieved lower grades in school, and were more likely to be disaffected by an academic curriculum.<sup>80</sup> The portrayal demonstrates the bias entrenched within American education regarding ability and socio-economic background. This linking of ability and background appeared to be counter to the ideal of democratic education for it essentially treated 60% of the student population as a monolithic whole without recognizing the diversity and needs within the group.

The controversy over life adjustment education reflected a larger national debate on the curriculum and the effectiveness of the American education system. Angus,

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<sup>77</sup> Kliebard, 1995, p. 212 and Ravitch, 1983, pp. 64-65. While the text of the Prosser Resolution is quoted by both authors, the original text is taken from: United States, Office of Education, *Life Adjustment for Every American Youth*, Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1948, p. 15.

<sup>78</sup> Several authors consider the criticisms surrounding the life adjustment curriculum adopted in the post-war era including: David Angus and Jeffrey Mirel, *The Failed Promise of the American High School, 1890-1995*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1999, pp. 102-121; Kaestle, 1990, pp. 66-80; Kliebard, 1995, pp. 205-230; and Ravitch, 1983, pp. 64-79.

<sup>79</sup> Ravitch, 1983, p. 65 and Kliebard, 1995, p. 213.

<sup>80</sup> Ravitch, 1983, p. 65.

Ravitch and Kaestle propose that the debate stemmed largely from the social influences and long-standing controversies within education:<sup>81</sup>

“First, in many ways, these debates revived the earlier conflicts between professors of academic disciplines and their colleagues in schools and colleges of education (and to a lesser extent the conflict between educators and lay boards of education) over who should control the high school curriculum. Second, the progressive concept of equal educational opportunity (particularly as it related to the high school curriculum) was central to these conflicts. Third, despite the widening criticism directed at educationists and their new high school program, the education establishment and the differentiated high school emerged from these debates stronger than ever.”<sup>82</sup>

External stakeholders also added to the curriculum debate at this time with Bestor and Rickover emerging as key figures.<sup>83</sup> Bestor, an academic historian, wrote a stinging criticism of the American education system in general and life adjustment education. He countered that life adjustment was an undemocratic, anti-intellectual and unscholarly programme of reform that met the needs of neither the student nor the nation, commenting:

“Liberal education and vocational training may exist side by side in a sound school system, provided the role of each is understood and respected. The school should pay attention to certain non-educational needs of youth, provided the effort does not interfere with its fundamental task of intellectual training...An educational program becomes regressive, however, when it loses its sense of comparative values and refuses to subordinate incidental activities to essential ones. In its extreme form, regressive education threatens the destruction of liberal and vocational education alike.”<sup>84</sup>

Furthermore, Bestor argued that the denial of access to an intellectually rigorous curriculum signalled a regression to elite education, a notional concept that is anathema within the liberal American education tradition.<sup>85</sup>

Censure also came from Rickover, a vice-admiral in the U.S. Navy, who condemned American education as bureaucratic, entrenched, inefficient and utilising poorly trained teachers who concentrate on aims and methods rather than the educational

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<sup>81</sup> Angus and Mirel, 1999, pp. 102-105; Kaestle, 1990, pp. 66-80; and Ravitch, 1983, pp. 43-80.

<sup>82</sup> Angus and Mirel, 1999, pp. 104-105.

<sup>83</sup> Kaestle, 1990, pp. 66-80 and Angus and Mirel, 1999, pp. 108-112.

<sup>84</sup> Bestor, 1985, p. 81.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-39.

outcomes. The reliance on method hindered personal development by keeping students locked into a world of their own experiences.<sup>86</sup> While Angus describes Rickover's concerns as paralleling those of Bestor, he also argues that Rickover's main concern was the impact of life adjustment education on a particular student cohort:

“Rickover seemed more concerned about how the deterioration of the high school curriculum had affected education for the talented rather than how it affected schooling for the majority of students. In the 1950s, this emphasis on elite education was inspired by Rickover's fear that inadequate education for gifted students endangered national security.”<sup>87</sup>

Rickover, who embraced both traditionalism and European education models, accepted the need for a diverse yet rigorous curriculum:

“I urge that we not use our schools to teach children how to make telephone calls, put on fingernail polish, catch fish and the like. I deplore the practice in American education of giving up too soon on those of our children who are poor and not too intelligent and steering them into the dead end of vocationalism. They need more basic education in the subjects that make a liberal arts curriculum, and if these are hard for them to acquire, I still say it's worth the trouble.”<sup>88</sup>

Finally, Rickover protested against American education's focus on the educational process rather than on educational outcomes.<sup>89</sup> His focus upon quantifiable results based on examinations, report cards and diplomas foreshadows education reforms a generation removed from his work.

Bestor and Rickover explicitly criticised elements of American education, encapsulating both the academic and military concerns over the status of the curriculum. Their position as education outsiders may have limited the impact of their criticism of American education. However, Conant's research is notable for its influence upon secondary education and his position as president of Harvard University made him the consummate education insider. Conant, whose work was funded by the Carnegie Corporation, produced two notable volumes on secondary

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<sup>86</sup> Rickover, 1963, pp. 3-95.

<sup>87</sup> Angus and Mirel, 1999, p. 110.

<sup>88</sup> Rickover, 1963, p. 27.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-31.

education, published in 1959 and 1967 respectively, that counter many of the criticisms levelled by Bestor and Rickover, reaffirm the fundamental tenets of American educational philosophy and suggest future education policy directions.<sup>90</sup> Conant championed the mid-size comprehensive high school proposing that they reflect the values of American education and possess the potential to become excellent educational institutions if adequately funded. His conceptualisation of a comprehensive school included three criteria: that it “provide a good general education for *all* pupils...to offer the non-college-bound majority good elective non-academic courses...to provide the academically talented students with advanced courses in fields such as mathematics, science, and foreign languages.”<sup>91</sup> This differentiated curriculum attends to the diverse academic abilities of gifted, average, and lower ability pupils - a process referred to as streaming or ability grouping - but rejects differentiation by curricula:

“The comprehensive high school today, in contrast, offers a wide variety of courses for a variety of youth with differing interests, desires and ambitions. It is characterized by opportunities for those who wish to step from high school right into a job, on the one hand, and for those who propose to start the long academic road that starts freshman year of a college and terminates in the graduate school of a university.”<sup>92</sup>

Clearly, American post-war education debates centred upon curriculum change; however, Conant also considered the wider implications of the funding patterns of public education and the efficacy of reform.<sup>93</sup> In general, American primary and secondary state education is financed through a combination of local, state, and federal subsidies with local and state governments providing the majority of funds.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> James B. Conant, *The American High School Today: A First Report to Interested Citizens*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959 and James B. Conant, *The Comprehensive High School: A Second Report to Interested Citizens*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967. The Carnegie Corporation, founded as a philanthropic endeavour in 1911, has historic links to American education including the funding of educational research. The Carnegie Corporation’s main criterion for research funding is that the grant benefits the American people. Conant’s influential studies of American secondary education were funded through the Carnegie Corporation.

<sup>91</sup> Conant, 1959, pp. 37-38.

<sup>92</sup> Conant, 1967, pp. 40.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-39.

<sup>94</sup> Typically, a collaboration of federal, state and local funding initiatives provide the funding for American public education, a system that has been criticised for the inequitable distribution of educational resources. The federal government’s contribution is the smallest while the localities make the greatest contribution through the collection of property taxes to support municipal services, including education. Socio-economically deprived communities, often existing beside richer communities, have lower property tax bases and therefore have significantly lower education budgets

Conant disparaged the inherent inequity in the system of intra-state and inter-state funding of education and suggested that a state funded education system was a more appropriate funding model. However, a shift in reliance on local funding to state funding would only counter intra-state inequity and would not counter inter-state disparities.<sup>95</sup> For example, a state with higher poverty rates and lower property tax bases in certain localities could redress inequalities within state boundaries by eliminating local property tax as the funding mechanism. As a result, education funding would not be rooted in the locality but by applying state tax money equally across all school districts to insure equity. Irrespective of this, they would not be comparable to states with lower poverty rates and higher property tax bases, which could provide higher levels of education funding. Conant continued his criticism of education inequity by raising concerns over the under-funding of inner-city schools and the repercussions of differential funding between slum and suburban schools in respect to equality of opportunity.<sup>96</sup> These issues continue to attract attention today. However, it is notable that while reaffirming many institutional components of American education, Conant raised the issue of educational equity in America in an era when equity was not the focal point of education debates.

Conant's research drew attention, praise and criticism from educationists and other constituencies. First, Passow discredits the common myth of the reactionary nature of "*The American High School Today*", acknowledging that Conant had concluded his research prior to the launch of Sputnik and that it could not therefore be seen as a response to the Soviet accomplishment.<sup>97</sup> Secondly, Conant engages in self-criticism,

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despite demonstrating considerable need for programmes targeted at at-risk youth. The establishment of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity in 1993 centred upon the reforming of New York State's school finance system. The campaign has filed lawsuits challenging the constitutionality of New York's funding system based upon the denial of a sound and basic education to all pupils. Dr. Thomas Sobol, the former New York State Commissioner of Education, testified on behalf of the Decent Schools Campaign, a parallel equity project in California, regarding the definition for the elements necessary for a sound basic education. Additionally, Teachers College, Columbia University established a national education equity campaign targeting minority students and students from lower socio-economic backgrounds whose achievement gaps are considerable in relation to the overall school population.

<sup>95</sup> Conant, 1967, pp. 13-22.

<sup>96</sup> Conant and other authors writing in this era frequently used slum and ghetto to denote areas of economic deprivation. Conant, in *The American High School Today*, specifically refers to slum schools. This term, unless used specifically in the context of a quote has been replaced by the phrase inner-city.

<sup>97</sup> A. Harry Passow, *American Secondary Education - The Conant Influence: A Look at Conant's Recommendations for Senior and Junior High Schools*. Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1977.

admitting to employing an unscientific methodological approach in the selection of his sample of secondary schools. Yet, the sample size is noteworthy: 103 schools from 26 states participated in the 1959 report, while 2000 schools contributed to the 1967 report. Though hoping to attain a representative sample of secondary schools, his samples did not include many schools classed as distinctly urban, or rural, or suburban or even reflect widely disparate socio-economic populations.<sup>98</sup> Thirdly, Passow suggests that Conant's influences on American education are evident in: the reaffirmation of the positive nature of American ideals and comprehensive schools within education; his argument for equality of opportunity within education; his insistence on increased federal spending; the remaking of the curriculum to meet a diversity of needs; the confidence to remake public schools to reflect a diverse society; and the need for greater public interest into education.<sup>99</sup> Finally, Ravitch highlights the post-Brown era as contextualising the body of Conant's research findings, particularly the disparities encountered in urban education and, more particularly in poor enclaves and urban ghettos.<sup>100</sup>

A Skinnerian analysis of both language and illocutionary meaning embedded within American education debates identifies several trends that developed during the post-war era. First, the hallmark of increased federal presence in education is opportunity. Both the *GI Bill* and *Brown* assert that opportunity or the failure to acquire access to opportunity is the defining concept underpinning both pieces of legislation. The *GI Bill* not only aspires to "restore lost educational opportunities" to members of the armed forces but seeks to provide for those "who cannot afford a higher education the chance to get one." On the other hand, the Supreme Court seeking to redress the systematic and pervasive denial of opportunity within American education, traces the importance of education within modern society declaring:

"Today, education is perhaps the most important function of state and local governments...In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity, where a State has undertaken to provide an opportunity

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<sup>98</sup> Conant, 1967, pp. 1-12 and Conant, 1957, pp.11-40.

<sup>99</sup> Passow, 1977.

<sup>100</sup> Ravitch, 1983, pp. 145-150.

for an education in its public schools, is a right which must be made available to all on equal terms.”<sup>101</sup>

The Court clearly linked the obligation of the States to provide education according to the concept of equality of opportunity. The denial of equality of educational opportunity was judged to be detrimental to individual citizens and the citizenry in general, requiring the state to remedy the inequity. Hence, the concept of opportunity evolved rapidly from provision of education either for those who could afford it or as a benefit of military service to the statutory right of all citizens to acquire equitable access to education. Accordingly, opportunity becomes part of the lexicon of education; however, the federal definition formulated in *Brown* establishes opportunity as a right that must be applied equally as it is beneficial to society as a whole.

Secondly, a Skinnerian analysis of the language of curriculum reform debates focuses primarily on the rhetoric of failure, particularly the inability of the American education system to provide an appropriate secondary school curriculum. The titles of volumes alone betray their critical analysis of American education: *Educational Wastelands*, *American Education: a National Failure*, *Quackery in the Public Schools* and *The Miseducation of American Teachers*, all published between 1953 and 1963, are a few cogent examples of this line of rhetoric.<sup>102</sup> This criticism, combined with the near obsessive concern with national security in the post-Sputnik era, is evident in the comment: “the schools are letting us down at a time when the nation is in great peril.”<sup>103</sup> It is not to suggest that these critics ignored the widening debate on educational opportunity; in many cases they did comment on opportunity and curriculum, but more often their attention pinpointed the divergence away from traditional academic curricula to the detriment of both the child and the nation. This theme is also evident in the text of the *National Defence Education Act (1958)*, which amalgamates opportunity, inadequacy and security:

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<sup>101</sup> United States, 1954, p.494.

<sup>102</sup> A survey of the literature centring upon American education during this time period included: Bestor, 1985; Rickover, 1963; Albert Lynd, *Quackery in the Public Schools*. New York: Little Brown, 1953; and James D. Koerner, *The Miseducation of American Teachers*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1963.

<sup>103</sup> Rickover, 1963, p. 36.

“The Congress hereby finds and declares that the security of the Nation requires the fullest development of the mental and technical skills of its young men and women. The present emergency demands that additional and more adequate opportunities be made available.”<sup>104</sup>

This document reflects a vocabulary of derision accompanied by a palpable insistence for change, not for the sake of change, but because change was necessary for national survival in an unsure and seemingly dangerous world.

### **Transitioning the Debate from Post-war Reform to the Ideals of Access and Opportunity: An Eastonian Analysis**

At this juncture it is apposite to scrutinise the input of post-war education debates into the creation of new education policy proposals that emerged in the 1960s. While the modified Skinnerian analysis provides insights into the rhetoric deployed within the documents and the historical context in which they reside, it does not specifically address the complexities inherent in policy analysis. As previously discussed, Easton’s systems analysis provides a vehicle for understanding policy, not through a diachronic lens but in the context of change within social and political institutions.

Easton’s model conceptualises systems organically; they exist within a given environment and are both affected and constrained by their milieu.<sup>105</sup> Education systems cannot be examined independently but must be seen within the larger contexts in which they operate - otherwise an appreciation of the complexities that define the genesis of education policy would be lost. Within the English and American contexts, it is evident that both intra-social and extra-social forces played prominent roles in shaping education policy. The extra-social forces emerged from the experiences of World War II and the subsequent costs of victory. Both nations had to confront the implications of the political power shift in the Cold War. In line with this, the British government concentrated on domestic rebuilding while the American government spearheaded the rebuilding process in Europe and Asia. The extra-social forces exemplified in Cold War international competition also filtered into education. Accordingly, the dialogue over curricula in secondary education, which led to an

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<sup>104</sup> United States, *The National Defence Education Act of 1958*, 2 September 1958, Public Law 85-864.

<sup>105</sup> Easton, 1965.

increased emphasis on science and mathematics, is indicative of these extra-social forces, particularly Cold War international competition in the post-Sputnik era.

The intra-social forces influencing English and American education reflect domestic interests, and while these diverged, they hinged upon social reform. England conceptualized this transformation in Beveridge's *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, which created the notional framework for the country's post-war social security system. The financing of pensions and a national health service through national insurance contributions provided social security within English society and could be seen as an internal prompt to reform education as well.<sup>106</sup> The ideas underpinning *Hadow, Norwood and Educational Reconstruction* advanced discussion on reforming education and extended Beveridge's social security to include access to secondary education. On the other hand, the intra-social forces within America focused more on racial equality and opportunity. Truman's commitment to social welfare and civil rights manifested itself in *Executive Orders 9980 and 9981* both issued in 1948, which created the Fair Employment Board and the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services.<sup>107</sup> Whereas the former highlighted the need to terminate discrimination within federal employment, the latter acted as the catalyst to integrate the Armed Forces, a process which took six years to complete. These early attempts to combat institutional racism combined with the *Brown* decision brought discussions on integrating society to the forefront of American politics.

Easton's model proposes that both intra-social and extra-social forces act as stresses upon the existing system forcing it to adjust in order to ensure its survival.<sup>108</sup> Essentially, both national governments responded to the external and internal forces by formulating new policy. The passage of the *Education Act 1944* attempted to provide equality of opportunity as well as a competitive secondary school education. Prior discussions posit that the wartime dialogues centred on defining post-war

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<sup>106</sup> Great Britain, 1942 (Beveridge Report).

<sup>107</sup> Harry S Truman, *Regulations Governing Fair Employment Practices Within the Federal Establishment. Executive Order 9980*, available from <http://trumanlibrary.org/executiveorders/index.php?pid=29>, 1948b and Harry S Truman, *Establishing the President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services. Executive Order 9981*, available from <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/9981a.htm>, 1948c.

<sup>108</sup> Easton, 1965, pp. 59-75.

national goals and developing strategies to achieve them. The extension of universal free secondary education and equality of opportunity broadened Beveridge's social reforms to include another facet of English society, while the tripartite system created secondary education to meet the needs of all adolescents and, more importantly, the nation. Similarly, the American system responded to these forces by creating dual inputs: a governmental and a professional contribution. The federal response, with roots in the *GI Bill* and *Brown*, targeted criticism over educational opportunity and equality of opportunity although this marked the beginning of an on-going discussion on these ideals and the federal role in American education. Moreover, professional educationists countered declining attendance and the criticism of curricular relevance by embracing life adjustment as the high school curriculum of choice for the majority of American students.

Easton further suggests that the recognition that neither perfection nor homeostasis is achievable impels systems to create integrated mechanisms to ensure their continued survival.<sup>109</sup> Fundamentally, both the English and American systems possess the organisational apparatus to facilitate the introduction of new education policy, which is achieved largely through local initiatives. The introduction of the *Education Act 1944*, the *GI Bill* and *Brown* each generated positive pressure upon the existing education systems in their attempts to initiate systemic reform. Although these are representative of national policy initiatives, local government became the administrator and interpreter of the policy. These responses are typically labelled within-puts in Easton's systems model.

In the English context, the passage of the *Education Act 1944* created a locally administered, national education system. However, whilst the national government coordinated the education campaign through publication of *The Children's Charter* and *The New Secondary Education*, local government began translating tripartism, equality of opportunity and parity of esteem to meet local needs. The majority of LEAs did adhere to the conceptualisation of tripartism as envisaged in the legislation, while others developed plans for comprehensive education, most notably London,

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., pp. 77-78.

Manchester and Leicestershire. In the English example both the national government and local governments developed within-puts in response to policy inputs.

On the other hand, the American experience reflects a multi-dimensional reality. Funds provided by the federal government through the *GI Bill* indicated the willingness of the national government to invest in education, a trend that continued throughout the post-war era, largely through a variety of block grant programmes. The *Brown* decision mandated desegregation nationally, although the federal government relied on state governments to abide by the philosophical ideals underpinning the decision as well as to enforce it. However, when state and local governments interpreted the decision, inaction or resistance to Brown's mandates often resulted, particularly in Southern states. In this respect, the within-puts created in the American context often challenged the policies rather than support them.

In Easton's model, the within-puts carried out by the system in response to the stress or inputs result in outputs. The outputs modify the existing systemic conditions, maintain them or demonstrate that there has been significant alteration in the system to meet the needs that originally created the inputs.<sup>110</sup> If the legislation and judicial decisions are representative of the inputs of the system and the national-local government negotiations correspond to the within-puts of Easton's system, then the documents and government processes resulting from these decisions and debates are representative of Easton's outputs. In the English context, local government policies that consciously departed from tripartism as a means of responding to community preferences are cogent examples of these outputs. Additionally, government reports such as the *Newsom Report* and the *Crowther Report*, indicate the divergence of opinion over tripartism resulting in the push for the adoption of comprehensive education. The American context reveals a willingness to continue the comprehensive tradition, although there was increasing concern over the ability of all students in every locality to receive such an education coupled with apprehension over the rigour of the secondary school curriculum.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., pp. 77-101.

Outputs effectively become the system's feedback mechanism in Easton's model.<sup>111</sup> With each system under considerable stress, the individual governments generated policy inputs to address these pressures and maintain the system. Utilising the established division of power within governmental frameworks, local governments then undertook administration of national policy directives, although often adapting them to reflect their own needs. While this fine-tuning could remain ideologically in line with national policy, it could also diverge considerably in its interpretation. The original policies and the subsequent interpretations generate stress from constituencies seeking to amend policies to reflect either differing interpretations of policy or wholly different policy options. Moreover, governments themselves can produce systemic stress through the commissioning of research, which might challenge the *status quo*. At the end of the immediate post-war era, the outputs resulting from the inputs of tripartism and educational opportunity were characterized by increased awareness of the gap between economic status and achievement, an extension of equality of opportunity to all social and racial groups and the provision of curricula representative of national needs.

In conclusion, Easton's systems analysis offers a viable framework for policy analysis of both the national and the comparative contexts. Considering solely the comparative aspect of the analysis, it is evident that the US and the UK shared key issues that factored into education policy-making in the immediate post-war era. Both nations pursued reform policies that attempted to redress social ills including the denial of universal educational opportunity. These policy inputs were specific to each nation and reflective of their particular policy processes; however, they demonstrate a common desire to deploy education to create equality of opportunity within society. However, the within-puts demonstrate the delicate negotiation between policy formulation and administration particularly when national governments yield administrative power to local governments. In both nations, local governments interpreted education policy in light of their own objectives and local needs, thereby creating tension among the different constituencies within the system. Thus, the decision by the London Local Authority to reject tripartism did not signal the end of the policy but it did suggest other policy options, thereby testing established national

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 119-135.

education policy. In the same vein, the refusal of Southern states to integrate education in defiance of a federal court order revisited the frictions within American federalism. Unlike the action in London, these did not suggest new policy options *per se* but resulted in federal intervention to preserve the supremacy of federal law. The within-puts in each nation fostered discussion on equality of opportunity as well as the character, organisation and curricula of secondary education, viewed as a conduit to promote opportunity. The discussions that emerged focused on socio-economic factors and the achievement gap between social classes and races, the academic and vocational curricula and the ability to create an egalitarian secondary education system. These outputs create the theme for a new era in policy as both England and the US transition from the immediate post-war era to an era dominated by liberalism and social justice debates.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Liberalism and Equality of Educational Opportunity: An Exploration of Dialogues in Liberal Education Reform**

#### **Introduction**

Dialogues and debates centring on the equality of educational opportunity for all children within English and American societies emerged as post-war austerity subsided and greater prosperity developed. Educational opportunity was not the sole focus of these debates; however, a body of evidence questioned the systemic *status quo* and its ability to address this issue adequately. While it cannot be argued that liberalism arose concurrently within English and American education policy debates, liberalism began to underpin many of the approaches developed to redress social problems including inequality of educational opportunity. The elections of 1964 in the UK and US demonstrated the shift toward liberal education policy agendas with policy focused to a lesser extent on curricula and parity of institutional esteem and to a greater extent on social justice issues, particularly the equality of educational opportunity for all children. The liberal era of educational reform, which was marked by initial experimentation both pedagogically and politically, could not be shielded from critique that liberal education fostered a loss of educational standing and standards in both nations. This critique of liberal experimentation acted as a catalyst for accountability agendas in education a mere decade after liberal approaches took root. The juxtaposition of liberalism and equality of opportunity with accountability and equality of outcome is the theme of this chapter.

#### **Prologue**

Liberal policy agendas did not coalesce around education although education policy and the utilisation of education to address social problems, particularly poverty, came to the fore in this era. Both nations, however, conceptualised poverty, the ameliorative impact of education upon poverty and national responses to poverty through uniquely different

frameworks linked to the different national contexts. Silver and Silver, in *An Educational War on Poverty*, construct the historical narrative that emerged in the English and American contexts during this era. A primary contention within the work was the rediscovery of poverty during the 1950s and early 1960s and the subsequent links that policy-makers made between education and poverty. While acknowledging the rediscovery of poverty and the linkages between poverty and education policy-making, Silver and Silver also suggest that these came to the fore at different times for both nations.<sup>1</sup>

The emergence of the modern welfare state, as previously noted, was viewed as the policy mechanism to address poverty; however, its re-emergence within policy-making suggested that the welfare state had been unable to accomplish this goal within its short lifespan. Within an English context, the belief in the welfare state prevailed with welfare planning and signs of stronger economic growth throughout the 1950s as hallmarks of its ability to eradicate poverty.<sup>2</sup> Living standards had risen for many within the population, yet the perception remained that only a small minority of Britons remained poor. Abel-Smith and Townsend questioned the claim that poverty had been securely eradicated in the post-war era and further disagreed with the assumption that through the abolition of poverty, Britain was a more equal society.<sup>3</sup> The government response to this was policy driven and reflected the belief that the state held responsibility for planning and provision. The American experience, on the other hand, believed strongly in economic prosperity as a panacea for the social and political issues of the day. Prosperity would end the need for socialised policy solutions for poverty and social class divisions in the nation. Harrington, in *The Other America*, echoes Silver and Silver's assertion that the belief in sustained economic prosperity underpinned the false assumption that the economic challenges had been met thereby shifting the focus from a question of want in previous decades to a question of lives lived in abundance.<sup>4</sup> Harrington's seminal work detailed American poverty, a condition that not only was pervasive but which was different from the poverty

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<sup>1</sup> Silver and Silver, 1991, pp. 147-157.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.151. Brian Abel-Smith and Peter Townsend, *The Poor and The Poorest*. London: G. Bell and Sons, 1965 as cited in Silver and Silver.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Harrington, *The Other America*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965.

of previous decades.<sup>5</sup> This poverty did not exhibit the extremes of the Great Depression nor its transitory nature; however, Harrington argued that those in poverty were largely invisible within American society and while the poverty of previous generations offered a hope of escape, the intractable nature of the newer poverty, one that provided no access to social goods, offered little hope of escape. Moreover, Harrington contended that the political power of the poor decreased as society became generally more affluent and the protection afforded by the welfare state often proved discriminatory thereby deepening the poverty they lived in.<sup>6</sup> Harrington's work, along with Conant's *Slums and Suburbs*, Hersey's *Our Romance with Poverty* and Caudill's *Night Comes to the Cumberland*s, explored American poverty through different lenses, detailed the experience of poverty in different communities, began to influence the dialogue surrounding poverty and impacted policy-making at the time of rediscovery.<sup>7</sup>

The re-emergence of poverty as a social concern suggested the necessity for new policy directions if poverty were to be successfully addressed. Education, and the education system, became one of the foci in this policy shift although this developed differently in both nations. As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the primary goals of post-war education policy was the expansion of compulsory secondary education and equality of opportunity across the populace. The denial of this opportunity to the African-American community as well as the entrenchment of poverty in both urban and rural communities became cornerstones of the War on Poverty declared by the Johnson Administration in 1964. While it was accepted that education could not solve all of the problems posed by poverty, education needed to sit at the heart of Johnson's crusade if it were to be successful.<sup>8</sup> The embrace of education legislation such as the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, the development of key programme initiatives such as Head Start and the Teacher Corps and the adoption of compensatory education to underpin much of the rhetoric of the era demonstrated the policy links made between poverty and education. However, the English experience diverged from its American counterpart and, it could be

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Silver and Silver, 1991, pp. 13-29.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-29 and 257-286.

argued, learned from the early mistakes made in policy development in the War on Poverty. Early English education narratives during the inter-war period, including Tawney's *Secondary Education for All*, made the connection between social class and the lack of educational opportunity. However, Silver and Silver contend that the connection between poverty and educational policy was not established in a sustained manner until the publication of the *Plowden Report* in 1967.<sup>9</sup> The creation of Educational Priority Area programmes in the post-Plowden era focused on raising educational performance, improving teacher morale, increasing parental involvement and strengthening the role of the school in the community. These emerged from the *Plowden Report* and with an understanding of the American experience of compensatory education. By 1969, the evaluation of American poverty programmes, including those linked to education, demonstrated issues of implementation and impact so, while many of the core ideas of American programmes were adopted, the employment of these were done to avoid a replication of American mistakes.<sup>10</sup>

The re-discovery of poverty and the development of education policy as an initiative to ameliorate poverty raise the question of the transatlantic knowledge, understanding and adoption of ideas – a transnational impulse – that emerged in this era. There is evidence that both nations were aware of debates and initiatives within the field and utilised these in the formulation of policy, however, this is manifested differently in the US and the UK. English researchers and policy-makers often framed this dialogue in terms of social class and disadvantage whereas their American counterparts did not expressly utilise social class although its acceptance within the research literature is evident.<sup>11</sup> Although social class played a role in the emerging literature, Halsey suggested that the greatest difference between the American and English dialogues lay in the terminology employed. American dialogue centred upon poverty and the English dialogue focusing on disadvantage.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, American dialogues were often grounded in race, which did not emerge as strongly within British dialogues at the time. Furthermore, members of the

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 147-157.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 287-317.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-29 and 70-92.

<sup>12</sup> Albert Henry Halsey, *Educational Priority Areas*. London: HMSO, 1972.

*Plowden Report* committee visited American schools, met with American policy-makers and expressly referenced this as part of their research into primary education.<sup>13</sup> Programme experimentation through the Educational Priority Areas indicated the willingness of English education reform projects to adopt American language development programmes and utilise knowledge of the American experience in programme development.<sup>14</sup> While there is evidence of English absorption, adoption and negotiation of American experience with poverty and education in the early 1960s, there is far less evidence of American engaging in this level of adoption. However, British sociological theorists including Basil Bernstein's research on language codes and the achievement of lower class children gained acceptance within American research literature.<sup>15</sup> Since the American experience of compensatory education programmes began earlier, it is more likely that, in this instance, transnational impulses reflected more in the English adoption and refinement of the American education initiatives.

### **The English Context**

The Butskellite Compromise, which represented little more than a gentleman's agreement, facilitated the entrenchment of the tripartite, and increasingly bipartite, secondary education system within England throughout the 1950s. McCulloch notes the Conservative governments' opposition to the principles underpinning comprehensive education, however, not all LEAs adopted the tripartite model.<sup>16</sup> Considerable tensions surrounded tripartism leading to the Labour party's adoption of comprehensive education as policy in 1951. McKenzie argues that this became the foundation of Labour education

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<sup>13</sup> Great Britain, Central Advisory Council for Education, *Children and Their Primary Schools: A Report of the Central Advisory Council for Education*. (Plowden Report) London: HMSO, 1967, p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Silver and Silver, 1991, pp. 287-317.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.260 and Silver, 1983, pp. 257-278.

<sup>16</sup> McCulloch, 2002a, pp. 235-246. For an in-depth discussion on tripartism and the development of comprehensive initiatives, please see the following: David Rubinstein and Brian Simon, *The Evolution of the Comprehensive School, 1926-1972*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1973, pp. 63-87; Peter Gordon, Richard Aldrich and Dennis Dean, *Education and Policy in England in the Twentieth Century*. London: Woburn Press, 1991, pp. 181-185; and Ken Fogelman, 'A brief history of education in England and Wales,' in M. Hewlett, R. Pring and M. Tulloch (eds) *Comprehensive Education: Evolution, Achievement and New Directions*. Northampton: University of Northampton, 2006, pp. 29-41.

policy, which could not be enacted until the 1964 election victory.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, while the philosophical debate occurred on the national level, numerous factors impacted upon the local provision of secondary education including organisational convenience, demographics and philosophical ideals.<sup>18</sup> These factors, along with an antagonism toward the tripartite system, generated competing conceptualisations of comprehensive education that afforded a small number of Labour councils, including the London County Council, Manchester and Leicestershire, the opportunity to experiment with comprehensive reorganisation to meet the needs of their constituencies. While a detailed discussion of the plans cannot be undertaken here, each model attempted to meet the educational needs of children within their constituencies but they could not entirely negotiate solutions to selection, parity of esteem and equality of educational opportunity.<sup>19</sup> The shifting of Labour policy, the experimentation with comprehensive education and the publication of a series of governmental reports critical of the tripartite system's ability to achieve educational opportunity demonstrated the growing strength of the movement. However, with 130 comprehensive schools, they remained the minority when compared to the total number of secondary modern schools in England and Wales.<sup>20</sup>

The Labour victory in the 1964 election provided an opportunity for the pivotal shift in national education policy embracing comprehensive education.<sup>21</sup> The Department of Education and Science (DES) issued Circular 10/65 utilising the text of the motion adopted in the House of Commons to provide the policy rationale:

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<sup>17</sup> McKenzie, 2001, pp. 187-189 and Gordon, Aldrich and Dean, 1991, pp. 61-75.

<sup>18</sup> McCulloch, 2002a, p. 236.

<sup>19</sup> *Times Education Supplement*, 'Secondary reorganisation: conservative party line,' 2 July 1965, p. 27. The plans presented a way forward for the introduction and development of comprehensive education within each locality thereby challenging the foundation of tripartism. However, none of the plans could overcome the criticisms of tripartism and therefore became open to critique. On one hand the Leicestershire Plan eliminated selection at 11, created all ability schools for early secondary education and continued the academic traditions of the grammar schools while significantly reducing their elite status. On the other hand, the Leicestershire Plan still maintained selection although in the guise of student choice to pursue an academic curriculum. Parity of esteem, which could not be achieved under tripartism, could not be secured under this proposal either because it utilised the same schools with the elite academic curriculum therefore maintaining its status in the public's perception. In terms of the Manchester plan, Sir Edward Boyle, who was the parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education between 1957-1959, criticised it as the mere amalgamation of two types of schools and renaming them comprehensive.

<sup>20</sup> Simon, 1999, p. 214 and Fogelman, 2006 and Great Britain, Department of Education and Science, *Statistics of Education. 1966 Schools. Volume 1*. London: HMSO, 1967.

<sup>21</sup> Simon, 1999, pp.276-282; McCulloch, 1998, pp. 141-146; and John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A Social History of Education in England*. London: Methuen, 1973, pp. 438-447.

“That this House, conscious of the need to raise educational standards at all levels, and regretting the realisation of this objective is impeded by the separation of children into different types of secondary schools, notes with approval the efforts of local authorities to reorganise secondary education on comprehensive lines which will preserve all that is valuable in grammar school education for those children who now receive it and make it available to more children; recognises that the method and timing of such reorganisation should vary to meet local needs; and believe that the time is now ripe for a declaration of national policy.”<sup>22</sup>

Circular 10/65 provided an ambitious forward direction yet the language employed undermined these aspirations and posed a series of threats to the policy. One fundamental concern related to a marred conceptual understanding of comprehensive education.<sup>23</sup> A key difficulty lay in neglecting to provide a concrete working definition of comprehensive education suggesting that:

“A comprehensive school aims to establish a school community in which pupils over the whole ability range and with, differing interests and backgrounds can be encouraged to mix with each other, gaining stimulus from the contacts and learning tolerance and understanding in the process.”<sup>24</sup>

An exploration of the literature at this time suggests broadly synonymous definitions of comprehensive education. One interpretation ascribing its origins in 1947, defined it as

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<sup>22</sup> Great Britain, Department of Education and Science, *Circular 10/65*. London: HMSO, 1965, p. 1. The quotation cited in *Circular 10/65* is the text of the motion passed by the House of Commons on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1965. Hansard, House of Commons Debate, 21 January 1965, volume 705, cc 413-541.

<sup>23</sup>Rubinstein and Simon, 1973, pp. 93-97; Simon, 1999, pp. 276-282; Gordon, Aldrich and Dean, 1991, p. 190; Fogelman, 2006, pp. 29-41; Brian Simon, *The State and Educational Change. Essays in the History of Education and Pedagogy*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1994, p. 54; and David Reynolds and Michael Sullivan with Stephen Murgatroyd, *The Comprehensive Experiment: A Comparison of Selective and Non-Selective Systems of School Organisation*. London: Falmer Press, 1987, pp. 1-28.

<sup>24</sup> Great Britain, 1965, pp. 1-2. Experimentation with comprehensive reorganisation had taken root in some localities prior to the publication of Circular 10/65 despite considerable opposition to the policy. The language utilised within Circular 10/65 suggested tentativeness in the development of the policy or perhaps in the expression of the policy within the document. While there was broad agreement within the literature as to the definition of comprehensive education, the document focused largely upon organisational structures with in-depth discussion of the different organisational plans that local authorities could adopt in the restructuring of secondary education rather than clearly defining what comprehensive education entailed or the impact of moving to a comprehensive education system might mean for different constituencies. It presumed that all constituents understood the goals of comprehensive reorganisation and were in agreement with the government’s strategic goal. Without defining the concept, it allowed for interpretation of the concept; by requesting reorganisation rather than requiring it, local authorities could choose the least restrictive approach to achieving comprehensive reorganisation or choose to ignore the request.

schools that “intended to provide all of the secondary education of all the children in a given area without an organisation in three sides.”<sup>25</sup> An editorial in *Forum* described comprehensive secondary education as a system where “all doors are kept open to all the children for as long as possible.”<sup>26</sup> These provided aspirational goals for comprehensive education but did not explore the structures or curricula to be developed within the comprehensive model, therefore, leaving it open to interpretation.

The adoption of the comprehensive education model afforded the opportunity for national reorganisation in line with local needs. The DES maintained historical precedent in the recognition of the primacy of localities suggesting:

“While the essential needs of the children do not vary greatly from one area to another, the views of individual authorities, the distribution of population and the nature of existing schools will inevitably dictate different solutions in different areas. It is important that new schemes build on the foundation of present achievements and preserve what is best in existing schools.”<sup>27</sup>

The acknowledgement of local needs and locally generated solutions demonstrated an inherent strength yet the structural blueprints for comprehensive reorganisation suggested a level of indecision. While noting its preference for the 11-18 orthodox comprehensive schools, the DES offered six alternative structures for comprehensive education, which ranged from the orthodox comprehensive, to the creation of a two-tier system of junior and senior comprehensives to the middle school model.<sup>28</sup> This organisational fluidity

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<sup>25</sup> Conservative Research Department, *Old Queen Street Paper 1: Secondary Education for All*. London: Conservative Central Office, 1967, p. 7. The pamphlet published by the Conservative Research Department, an entity of the Conservative Central Office, suggests that the origin of the definition lies in 1947 but does not indicate authorship.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Official policy and the concept of comprehensive education.’ *Forum for the Discussion of New Trends in Education* 8/2, 1966, p. 39. The editorial utilises the definition as the fundamental conceptualization of comprehensive education but, while suggesting that it came from a previous issue of the journal, it gives no authorial information for the quotation.

<sup>27</sup> Great Britain, 1965, pp. 1-2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* pp.1-8. The six plans share few characteristics. The ‘orthodox comprehensive’ provided 11-18 education for all pupils while another plan offered comprehensive schools from 11-16 and sixth form colleges for post-compulsory education. The three two-tier models shared a common starting transfer point of age 11 where all pupils moved from primary education into a junior comprehensive school and transferred again at the age of 13 or 14. However, the destination of pupils in the second transfer provided the primary differences between the plans. In one of these plans, all children would then transfer to a senior comprehensive school; in the second plan, some children transferred to a senior comprehensive school

might be construed as responsiveness to local needs but it also provided the potential to weaken comprehensive reorganisation. Two of the plans clearly differentiated education in the senior comprehensives through the creation of separate trajectories: one for students rooted in aptitude as well as propensity to attend higher education and a separate stream for all other students.<sup>29</sup> The intention to meet the educational needs of all children could lead to selection and potential inequality of educational experiences, which was not at the heart of comprehensive education and posed a second potential threat.

The Circular addressed the proposed organisation of schools within an authority but did not consider the catchment areas of schools, which posed the third potential threat. Acknowledging that variability in the diversity of neighbourhoods, and therefore catchment areas, the DES suggested that the schools:

“...reflect the characteristics of the neighbourhood in which they are situated; if their community is less varied and fewer of the pupils come from homes which encourage educational interests, schools may lack the stimulus and vitality which schools in other areas enjoy. The Secretary of State therefore urges authorities to ensure, when determining catchment areas, that schools are as socially and intellectually comprehensive as is practicable.”<sup>30</sup>

Although Circular 10/65 attempted to insure socially and intellectually inclusive catchment areas, the achievement of the goal might prove elusive in a locally administered system with few accountability mechanisms at the time. Moreover, localities were ‘urged’ rather than ‘requested’ or ‘demanded’ to comply with the policy direction.

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while others remained within the junior comprehensive school; and the third plan mandated transfer to one of two different senior comprehensive schools where one school prepared children for higher education and the other school terminated at the end of the compulsory education. The sixth plan was a more radical departure from the previous models and appeared to acknowledge the influence of the Leicestershire model. Children transferred from primary school to middle school at the ages of 8 or 9 and then from the middle schools to a comprehensive school at either 12 or 13. The comprehensive school would terminate at 18 rather than 16, which is a departure from the other plans.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. p.6.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p.12.

The fourth and final threat arose both from language and intentionality. Although Labour affirmed its commitment to comprehensive education, internal party politics affected the choice of language within the document. Instead of submitting legislation compelling LEAs to comply with the policy, the Labour government requested LEAs to submit plans for comprehensive reorganisation; the DES, in selecting this linguistic phrasing, could not compel reorganisation in the absence of the force of law.<sup>31</sup> Conservative councils unsurprisingly represented the majority of councils that refused to comply with the policy request.<sup>32</sup> Crook suggests Labour's "softly, softly" approach to reorganisation was largely successful with only 20 councils failing to submit proposals thereby signalling a definite shift in the locally administered notion of education to the primacy of national education policy, a shift that was not always well received by local governments.<sup>33</sup>

The tentativeness in the language, as well as the concerns raised by political and educational constituencies, highlighted key issues that had not been fully resolved by the adoption of new education policy. The National Union of Teachers (NUT) objected to the proposed two-tier reorganisation plans that delayed selection rather than eliminated it, thereby perpetuating a contentious practice embedded within tripartism.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the Comprehensive Schools Committee affirmed its support for Circular 10/65 yet sought the development of five criteria for good comprehensive schools, one of which advocated the development of a broad and encompassing curriculum to provide the greatest amount of opportunity.<sup>35</sup> While the threats and critiques of Circular 10/65 did not consign the policy to failure, it could be argued that it did not lay a secure foundation for it to enjoy lasting success either.

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<sup>31</sup> David Crook, 'Local authorities and comprehensivisation in England and Wales.' *Oxford Review of Education* 18/2-3, 2002, pp. 251-252.

<sup>32</sup> Crook, 2002, p. 253; Simon, 1999, p. 284 and Fogelman, 2006, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> Crook, 2002, pp. 251-254.

<sup>34</sup> National Union of Teachers, *An N.U.T. Discussion Document. Secondary Reorganisation: Sixth Form Colleges.* c.1965.

<sup>35</sup> Comprehensive Schools Committee, *Comprehensive Education. Secondary Reorganisation in England and Wales. Survey No.1, 1966/7.* London: Comprehensive Schools Committee, c.1967, p. 2. The criteria included the development of reorganisation plans in line with local needs, the end of selection, the immediate movement towards comprehensive reorganisation and the conversion of all state supported schools into comprehensive schools.

While the struggle to reorganise secondary education continued throughout this period, the publication in 1967 of *Children and their Primary Schools* further focused the debates surrounding equality of opportunity and social exclusion with specific reference to the primary experience.<sup>36</sup> The Tory government, under the auspices of Edward Boyle, had commissioned the report in 1963 when the debate over the 11-plus examination, the transition age between primary and secondary schools and the structure of secondary education as impediments to social inclusion gained political significance.<sup>37</sup> The opening paragraph of the Plowden Report defined the rationale underpinning the extensive review of primary education as:

“...What a wise and good parent will desire for his own children, a nation must desire for all children.’ Of course, equality of opportunity, even when it means weighting the scales to reduce inequalities, still results in unequal achievements. But, coupled with a commitment to the highest educational standards, it is the touchstone to apply.”<sup>38</sup>

While the focus of this dissertation has been on secondary education, an exploration of the impact of *The Plowden Report* upon education, socio-economic deprivation and social exclusion is warranted at this juncture. The report acknowledged the improving fortunes of British children since the Great Depression while also recognising the existence, and in some locales prevalence, of socio-economic deprivation.<sup>39</sup> The narrative developed within the report described the cyclical nature of educational deprivation: one marked by a social disdain for education, aged and neglected schools, the inability to

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<sup>36</sup> Great Britain, 1967 (Plowden Report). Bridget Plowden, who acted as chairwoman, attempted to link the educational present to the educational past with a direct reference to Henry Hadow’s significance in laying the foundation for the English education system. There is wide agreement within the literature that the *Plowden Report* made a significant impact and had far reaching implications for education in England and Wales. For a discussion on the topic please see: Rogers, 1980, p. 94; Gordon, Aldrich and Dean, 1991, pp. 165-166; Jones, 2003, pp. 291-314; McKenzie, 2001, p. 203; Keith Banting, ‘Poverty and educational priority.’ in *Policy-Making in Education: The Breakdown of Consensus*. in I. McNay and J. Ozga (eds) Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1985, pp. 291-314; and ‘Plowden perspectives.’ *Forum for the Discussion of New Trends in Education* 9/3, 1967, pp. 75-76.

<sup>37</sup> Edward Boyle, ‘The politics of secondary school reorganisation: some reflections,’ *Journal of Education Administration and History* 4/2, 1972, pp. 28-38.

<sup>38</sup> Great Britain, 1967 (Plowden Report), p. 1. The first sentence is attributed to Sir Henry Hadow and is taken from Great Britain, Board of Education. Report of the Consultative Committee on the Primary School, London: HMSO, 1931, p. xviii.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29 and pp. 50-68.

recruit highly qualified teachers and the poor retention rates of headteachers, which repeat generationally in some disadvantaged communities.<sup>40</sup> This recognition was accompanied by an analysis of government policy in the 1960s suggesting that the need for a redistribution of resources, particularly within education, needed consideration:

“If the fruits of growth are left to accumulate within the framework of present policies and provisions, there is no assurance that the living conditions which handicap educationally deprived children will automatically improve - still less that the gap between these conditions and those of more fortunate children will be narrowed.”<sup>41</sup>

The authors argued for redressing such inadequacies through the development of compensatory education, positive discrimination and Educational Priority Areas (EPAs) to insure equality of opportunity for all children. Compensatory education, it was argued, could overcome the disadvantages of a deprived social and intellectual background thus:

“The proposition that good schools should make up for a poor environment is far from new. It derives from the notion that there should be equality of opportunity for all, but recognises that children in some districts will only get the same opportunity as those who live elsewhere if they have unequally generous treatment.”<sup>42</sup>

Smith, in tracing the genesis of EPAs to the *Newsom Report* and in detailing the rise and fall of EPAs by 1977, suggests that while the report successfully argued for positive discrimination, it did not offer highly innovative recommendations for EPAs.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., pp. 50-51.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.54.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p.57.

<sup>43</sup> George Smith, ‘Whatever happened to educational priority areas?’ *Oxford Review of Education* 13/1, 1987, pp. 23-38. The recommendations for EPAs included: additional fiscal resources for the most deprived schools, lower teacher-pupil ratios, supplementary educational resources, priority for new building programmes, short-term targeted intervention for the most socio-economically deprived students and the commitment to sustained funding to insure that disadvantage could be overcome. Smith contended that many of the recommendations made by the Plowden Committee reflected received common sense pedagogy at the time including a more favourable teacher-pupil ratio, more funding for resources, expansion of nursery education and dedicated teaching assistants for the most socio-economically deprived children, classes or schools. However, the development of links between socio-economically disadvantaged schools and teacher training colleges as well as programmes between home-schools and communities were viewed as highly innovative.

Moreover, in embracing compensatory education, the *Plowden Report* did not propose differences in curricula between deprived and affluent areas but argued for the same type of educational approaches to be employed in all schools notwithstanding levels of deprivation. Plowden's recommendations, therefore, diverged from the American compensatory education philosophy, which advocated for curricula tailored to meet the needs of children within deprived communities.<sup>44</sup> Smith points to the policy of positive discrimination as a key factor in the ultimate demise of EPAs for political parties did not fully commit to the policy although one side would raise 'concern about the continued existence of poverty and inequality, but it is easily translated into the other side's concern for 'selectivity' - giving help to the most needy.'<sup>45</sup> Each political side could commit to the rhetoric of positive discrimination without providing substantial funding. Lukewarm support without appropriate levels of funding rarely secures policy success.

*The Plowden Report*, in many ways, embraced the key dialogues in English education in the period, including child-centred curricula, equality of opportunity and compensatory education. However, the language of the report suggests an acceptance of the cyclical nature of poverty and the cultural distinction between communities of affluence and deprivation advanced by Lewis.<sup>46</sup> One cogent example of this is the detailed consideration of the differences between children of contrasting parental backgrounds, particularly professional, skilled manual workers, semi-skilled manual workers and unskilled workers summed up in this query:

“It was no surprise that the children of manual workers did less well academically than other children and more often left school at the minimum age. Surely they failed because they were less clever? The surprise, at the time, was that this was far from being the only reason.”<sup>47</sup>

The acknowledgment of the complexity behind poor academic performance is not substantiated by any rationale other than children from professional families were better

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp.28-29 and George Smith, 'Positive discrimination by area in education; the EPA idea re-examined.' *Oxford Review of Education* 3/3, 1977, pp. 274.

<sup>46</sup> Lewis, 1965.

<sup>47</sup> Great Britain, 1967 (Plowden Report), p. 30.

equipped to meet the academic demands of the grammar school.<sup>48</sup> Smith contends that the cycle of poverty theory is embedded within the *Plowden Report* although intertwined with the links between deprivation and education as well as the 'wider opportunity structure of society.'<sup>49</sup> Indeed, there is a willingness to accept both parental background and family size as indicators of socio-economic deprivation and, by extension, academic 'handicap.' This linguistic phrasing, including the use of 'handicap' within the dialogue, reinforces the stereotypes of the poor communities depicted in Lewis' work.<sup>50</sup>

While a detailed consideration of *The Plowden Report* is not appropriate here, it must be noted that its impact upon education, particularly primary education, cannot be challenged. However, its significance upon secondary education is not as evident. *Circular 10/65* and the reorganisation of secondary education superseded a principal remit of the Committee: to give advice regarding the age of transfer between primary and secondary education.

The Plowden Committee did not specifically comment upon the statutory end of compulsory education, however, the debate over school leaving age re-emerged for consideration during this era. Although 15 had been the compulsory age of school attendance since 1947, the intention was to raise the age to 16 when feasible.<sup>51</sup> As the

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid. The *Plowden Report* made clear connections between the Committee's work and previous Central Advisory Committee Reports, particularly the *Newsom Report* and *Crowther Report*. Both earlier reports detailed the wastage of student talent in key groups within society, however, the *Plowden Report* appeared to go one step further in not only recognising the wastage of talents but in suggesting that specific groups might not be able to achieve what others could based on parental employment categories or the size of families.

<sup>49</sup> Smith, 1987, p.30.

<sup>50</sup> As in earlier discussions regarding race and the term Negro rather than African-American, it is accepted that handicap in the 1960s was politically correct terminology when discussing someone who was physically, emotionally or developmentally challenged by different medical conditions. Many 'handicapped' individuals faced discrimination because of their condition as well as being classed as handicapped by society. The choice of 'handicapped' in describing the situation of socio-economically disadvantaged children reinforces the concept of difference between children from diverse backgrounds, suggests impairment in some way, suggests that they cannot overcome the handicap because of the difference and reinforces the stigmatization of socio-economically deprived communities.

<sup>51</sup> The Raising of the School Leaving Age (ROSLA) debate traced its origins to the *Education Act, 1936*, which raised the compulsory age of school attendance to 15 unless parents could provide a reason for their child to leave school at an earlier age. World War II delayed ROSLA, however, the *Education Act, 1944* reiterated compulsory school attendance to 15 with a move to 16 when practical. Subsequent Central

English economy recovered during the post-war period and economic prosperity returned to Britain, questions over the appropriateness of staying in school to 16 along with the economic costs and benefits of Raising of the School Leaving Age (ROSLA) warranted reconsideration by policy-makers. A primary argument for ROSLA centred upon the need for a better-educated workforce in a shifting global economy, one in which English students might not be able to compete with students from the US and many western European nations because of a lower age of compulsory education. However, this largely economic argument for ROSLA was also met with an equally strong economic argument to delay its implementation further. A shortage of teachers and available building space in existing secondary schools coupled with the economic costs in the extension of compulsory education for an additional year meant that the Treasury Department did not favour its adoption.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, Sir Edward Boyle, the Minister for Education, suggested that any further delay in ROSLA might be interpreted ‘as showing insufficient concern for the education of the majority of the country’s children.’<sup>53</sup> While the economic arguments warranted consideration, Woodin, McCulloch and Cowan argue that the social argument presented the greatest challenge to the Conservative government if it failed to raise the compulsory age of school attendance. Although approved in 1964, ROSLA was finally implemented in 1972 after the Wilson government opted to delay its implementation for two additional years because of the investment in infrastructure needed within schools.

In many ways, the equality of opportunity debates within *Crowther*, *Newsom* and *Plowden* and the reorganisation of secondary education were embedded within the debate over ROSLA. ROSLA not only challenged the long-held beliefs on ability and social class but was also seen as a ‘wider story of social change in British society, which in the 1960s, became engulfed in tensions over modernity and tradition.’<sup>54</sup> While economic and pedagogical arguments both for and against ROSLA could be sustained, Boyle’s social

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Advisory Committee Reports, including the *Newsom Report* and *Crowther Report*, recommended the school leaving age be moved to 16.

<sup>52</sup> Tom Woodin, Gary McCulloch and Steven Cowan, *Secondary Education and the Raising of the School Leaving Age: Coming of Age?* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, pp. 77-97.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

argument suggested that equality of opportunity had moved to the forefront of education policy-making in the 1960s. O’Keefe, while considering the economic benefits of ROSLA, argues that increased educational opportunity for all children through universal secondary education was achieved in 1947, however, a further expansion of educational opportunity arose when more students were given the possibility of earning formal qualifications prior to leaving school.<sup>55</sup> Woodin, McCulloch and Cowan acknowledge the potential opportunity but counter that ‘ROSLA exposed an education system in transformation and challenged the assumption that different types of pupils required varying forms of education.’<sup>56</sup> Programmes developed for the less able student did not always demonstrate academic rigour and many were abandoned, however, the increase in examination pass rates post-ROSLA suggests that the opportunity to achieve credentials added value to an additional year in secondary education.<sup>57</sup>

It cannot be inferred from the narrative presented in this chapter that the liberal era and the equality of opportunity dialogues inherent to it met little or no opposition. However, in a time of relative fiscal prosperity coupled with mounting evidence-based recommendations from the Central Advisory Committee reports and political will, it became increasingly difficult to suppress policy innovation that would secure equality of opportunity for the greatest number of English students. However, resistance to these measures could be seen in some Conservative councils’ responses to *Circular 10/65* and in the debates within the government regarding ROSLA. Increasing anxiety over the child-centred and progressive pedagogical approaches advocated within *The Plowden Report* also arose at this time although Simon contends that it was less an unease with the approaches and more that this signified a turning away from the grammar school tradition and a social shift underpinned by the recent education developments.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Dennis O’Keefe, ‘Some economic aspects of raising the school leaving age in England and Wales in 1947.’ *The Economic History Review* 28/3, 1975, pp. 500.

<sup>56</sup> Woodin, McCulloch and Cowan, 2013, p. 144.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>58</sup> Simon, 1999, pp. 379-382. Simon argues that progressive education detailed in media accounts was somewhat disingenuous and often focused on the more extreme examples of the movement. Many of the schools that featured in the media reports of progressive schools did indeed have their roots in the 1960s, however, A.S. Neill’s Summerhill School, which was often cited as an extreme example of progressive or democratic education began in 1923.

The Conservative election victory in 1970 coupled with the advent of the global recession beginning in 1973 led to a re-consideration of the liberal reforms of the 1960s. The first reconsideration came with the withdrawal of *Circular 10/65* and the publication of *Circular 10/70* by Margaret Thatcher, the new Secretary of State for Education and Science. *Circular 10/70* neither ended the comprehensive movement nor fostered its growth:

“The circular was not directly confrontational, in the sense that it neither demanded a return to selective systems nor prohibited the development of comprehensive schemes. It was, however, a clear indication to local authorities to retain existing selective systems and to draw back from comprehensive reorganisation...”<sup>59</sup>

*Circular 10/70* prohibited local authorities from submitting plans for the comprehensive reorganisation but allowed individual schools to submit requests for reorganisation. Opposition to the plan came from the NUT, which expressed concern over the lack of consultation in rescinding *Circular 10/65* and suggested that local authorities were encouraged to oppose comprehensivisation by the government.<sup>60</sup> While LEAs could no longer submit proposals, the number of individual requests submitted and approved by Thatcher meant that not only did she approve the most comprehensive reorganisation plans of any education minister but the majority of English students now attended comprehensive rather than selective schools.<sup>61</sup>

Education, like all public services, cannot be divorced from the wider economic fortunes of the society it is situated in. The economic recession of the 1970s led not only to a Labour victory in the 1974 general election but to the beginning of ‘The Great Debate’ on education, a dialogue which began with James Callaghan’s Ruskin College Speech and

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.408.

<sup>60</sup> Margaret Thatcher, ‘Written statement on meeting with NUT delegation,’ 13 July 1970, available from <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/101773>. Margaret Thatcher assured the NUT delegation that the withdrawal of *Circular 10/65* fulfilled a Conservative party election pledge so did not necessitate a formal consultation process and would welcome consultations in the future on other appropriate matters.

<sup>61</sup> Derek Gillard, ‘*Education in England: A Brief History*, available from <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/chapter07.html#07>, 2014 and Great Britain, Secretary of State for Education and Science, *School Education in England: Problems and Initiatives*. London: HMSO, 1976.

led to a reconsideration of the aspirational values of state-sponsored education.<sup>62</sup> Callaghan's speech developed several key themes on the state of education including a critique of the purposes and outcomes of education in 1976. While it might be argued that the speech heralded a new education era and therefore should be considered later, the positioning of the aims of education, as well as the critique, suggest that the document should be positioned within the liberal era of reform.

A primary theme in the Ruskin College speech focuses upon developing Labour's education credentials and the legitimacy of the debate sparked by the speech. Callaghan not only traced Labour's connection to education but also circumvented his critics about the appropriateness of such dialogue:

"It is almost as though some people would wish that the subject matter and purpose of education should not have public attention focused on it: nor that profane hands should be allowed to touch it. I cannot believe that this is a considered reaction. The Labour movement has always cherished education: free education, comprehensive education, adult education. Education for life. There is nothing wrong with non-educationalists, even a prime minister, talking about it again."

Having established that the debate was both necessary and appropriate, Callaghan focused upon the question "what do we want from the education of our young people"<sup>63</sup> The answer to the question, which Callaghan linked to R.H. Tawney, reiterated Labour's championing of the equality of opportunity for all children and its commitment to

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<sup>62</sup> James Callaghan delivered the Ruskin College Speech at Ruskin College, University of Oxford on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 1976. For a consideration of the literature on the economic links to and the impact of the Great Debate, please see the following: Clyde Chitty, 'Central control of the school curriculum, 1944 – 1987.' *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society* 17/4, 1988, pp. 321-334; Mark B. Ginsburg, Mark J. Meyenn and Henry D.R. Miller, 'Teachers, the 'Great Debate' and education cuts.' *Westminster Studies in Education* 2/1, 1979, pp. 5-33; J.J. Wellington, 'The rise of pre-vocational education and the needs of employers.' *The Vocational Aspect of Education* 38/99, 1986, pp. 17-22; Andrew Adonis, '30 years on Callaghan's words resonate,' available from <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2006/oct/17/education.schools>, 17 October 2006.

<sup>63</sup> Callaghan, 1976. Interestingly, both Callaghan and Plowden used the following quotation within their texts in exploring the rationale for education: 'What a wise parent would wish for their children, so the state must wish for all its children.' However, Plowden attributes the quote to Henry Hadow suggesting that it was included in *The Primary School* published in 1931 while Callaghan attributes the quotation to R.H. Tawney, the noted socialist historian. The correct attribution is: R.H. Tawney, *Equality*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. London: Allen and Unwin, 1952, p. 159.

education. However, by 1976, significant concerns about the education provided within primary and secondary schools had arisen and needed consideration:

“On another aspect, there is the unease felt by parents and others about the new informal methods of teaching which seem to produce excellent results when they are in well-qualified hands but are much more dubious when they are not...There is little wrong with the range and diversity of our courses. But is there sufficient thoroughness and depth in those required in after life to make a living?”<sup>64</sup>

Callaghan acknowledged the range of good practice observed in a series of visits to schools but he also echoed popular opinion on the more progressive aspects of education. The publication of *Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress* and *The Black Papers* as well as negative media attention on progressive schools such as Summerhill and William Tyndale Primary School suggested that progressive education methods and outcomes were key factors in a larger education crisis.<sup>65</sup>

Callaghan considered the implications of education upon industry while also addressing a core issue: what are the goals of education? At a time of economic crisis, the voice of industry suggested “that new recruits from the schools sometimes do not have the basic tools to do the job that is required.”<sup>66</sup> The goals of education were therefore “...to equip children to the best of their ability for a lively, constructive, place in society, and also to fit them to do a job of work. Not one or the other but both.” However, Callaghan admonished those who might interpret this as “fitting a so-called inferior group of children with just enough learning to earn their living in the factory.”<sup>67</sup> He deftly argued that all children required a balanced education where they acquired key skills while also

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Derek Gillard, *Education in England: A Brief History. Recession and Disenchantment*, available from <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history/chapter07.html>, 2014; Wellington, 1986, p. 17; Ginsburg, Meyenn and Miller, 1979, pp. 5-6 and Chitty, 1988, p.328. Both Gillard and Ginsburg, Meyenn and Mille-Neville contend that Neville Bennett’s report, *Teaching Styles and Pupil Progress*, was widely represented in the press as equivalent value to government reports therefore its criticism of progressive education could be viewed as official policy rather than a flawed research project. Moreover, the five *Black Papers*, written between 1969 and 1977, formed a critique against comprehensive education and progressive teaching methods whilst implying that these strategies impacted upon the educational outcomes of the more academically able students. The most influential of the *Black Papers* remained the first three, Charles Brian Cox and Anthony E. Dyson (eds) *Black Papers on Education*. London: Harper Collins, 1971.

<sup>66</sup> Callaghan, 1976.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

becoming “well-adjusted members of society.”<sup>68</sup> Trowler posits that Callaghan, with an emphasis on a balanced education, a national curriculum and educational standards, moved education policy into a new era, one captured by the Conservative governments of both Margaret Thatcher and John Major.<sup>69</sup> Chitty concurs while also suggesting that Callaghan promoted greater centralisation of education and attempted to broker a new educational consensus where education became subordinate to the economic needs of the nation.<sup>70</sup> Wellington dwells more on the links between the goals of education and industry positing that vocational education became embedded within the curriculum from this point onwards.<sup>71</sup> However, Adonis suggests that Callaghan encroached upon the education establishment’s territory by questioning the roles, purposes and structures of the educational system of the day while simultaneously placing education for all at the centre of Labour education policy.<sup>72</sup>

Whichever claim is accepted, Callaghan’s Ruskin College marked a turning point in English education. The post-war consensus expired in the turbulent political and social milieu of the Liberal Era. With the child placed firmly at the centre of education and the recognition that equality of opportunity was a social good, the momentum of education began to shift toward equality and quality of educational outcomes, which would define the final era of education reform considered in this research project.

### **The American Context**

While the expansion of educational opportunity as a primary discourse in the era of Liberal Education Reform provided the unifying link between English and American education policy-making, it cannot be said that the experiences in both nations followed the same trajectory. While the English experience focused upon social class and tripartism as underlying factors in the denial of equality of opportunity, the struggle for civil rights, the fight for desegregation and the burgeoning power of the American Civil

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Trowler, 1998, pp. 4-5.

<sup>70</sup> Chitty, 1988, p. 330 quoting Dan Finn, *Training without Jobs: New Deals and Broken Promises*. London: Macmillan, 1987, p. 105.

<sup>71</sup> Wellington, 1986, pp. 17-18.

<sup>72</sup> Adonis, 2006.

Rights movement underpinned the course of federal education reforms. The turmoil of desegregation in the post-Brown era where states actively delayed, circumvented or withheld compliance demonstrated the growing tensions between state and federal governments over the denial of equality of opportunity.<sup>73</sup> Although the Liberal Education Reform era began in both nations in 1964, the groundwork underpinning equality of opportunity as a policy goal had dominated policy discussions prior to the election cycle and, in the case of the US, federal intervention proved necessary at times to secure this goal.<sup>74</sup>

The election of Lyndon Johnson in 1964, a year after John Kennedy's assassination, provided the opportunity to finalise the work begun during the Kennedy Administration in the securing of educational opportunity and civil rights, while simultaneously allowing for the development of Johnson's own domestic policy agenda. The War on Poverty, declared in January 1964 and part of the larger Great Society programmes, became the cornerstone of this policy agenda:

“Unfortunately, many Americans live on the outskirts of hope - some because of their poverty, and some because of their color, and all too many because of both... This administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America...It will not be a short or easy struggle, no single weapon or strategy will suffice, but we shall not rest until that war is won. The richest Nation on earth can afford to win it. We cannot afford to lose it.”<sup>75</sup>

Johnson, who was born into a socio-economically deprived family and who later became a teacher, believed strongly in education to ameliorate inequity within society.<sup>76</sup> However,

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<sup>73</sup> The history of the American Civil Rights movement, particularly the impact of *Brown v. Board of Education* upon desegregation of education nationally, is well documented in the literature. While it is important to note the events of the era and the impact that this had upon federal education policy, the complexity of the history and the impact of race upon educational politics need to be acknowledged but do not allow for a considered discussion within this dissertation.

<sup>74</sup> The struggle for African-American civil rights often occurred in schools or universities in the 1950s and 1960s. The struggle to integrate Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas, the University of Alabama and the University of Mississippi are key examples, but not the only examples, of local defiance and federal intervention largely through the commitment of US Marshalls or the federalising of the National Guard to enact federal law within individual states that refused to comply with court orders or legislative action.

<sup>75</sup> Lyndon Baines Johnson, *Annual Message to the Congress on the State of the Union*, available from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=26787>, 8 January 1964.

<sup>76</sup> Cross, 2004, pp. 26-31.

Urban and Wagoner suggest that while personal belief may have been influential, the publication in 1962 of *The Other America*, which detailed systemic poverty and a culture of poverty amongst the new poor, proved significant in the development of the legislative programme of anti-poverty initiatives.<sup>77</sup> However, Cross argues that the language employed in the *Report on the President's Task Force on Education*, published in 1964, which centred upon “the opportunity to learn” and access to education, shaped Title I of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*, which was passed in 1964, as well as forming a basis for the Great Society programmes.<sup>78</sup>

The language and intentionality of *ESEA* merits consideration then for it structured educational policy, reshaped the federal role and laid the foundation for compensatory education programmes. The opening statement of the legislation perhaps gives the overall intentionality: “to strengthen and improve the educational quality and educational opportunities in the Nation’s elementary and secondary schools.”<sup>79</sup> Clearly, as a policy goal this could not be argued against for it discriminates neither for or against any sector of society but views educational opportunity and quality as the right of every American. The policy statement also suggests legislative intention and clarity:

“In recognition of the special educational needs of children of low-income families and the impact that concentrations of low-income families have on the ability of local educational agencies to support adequate educational programs, the Congress hereby declares it to be the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance...to local educational agencies...with concentrations of children from low-income families to expand and improve their educational programs...which contribute particularly to meeting the special educational needs of educationally deprived children.”<sup>80</sup>

It might be argued that the linguistic phrasing within *ESEA* not only shaped compensatory education policy but also reinforced the negative stereotypes surrounding

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<sup>77</sup> Wayne Urban and Jennings Wagoner, Jr., *American Education: A History*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2000, pp. 324-328.

<sup>78</sup> Cross, 2004, pp. 22-26.

<sup>79</sup> United States, *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, Public Law 89-10, 79 Stat. 27, 11 April 1965, p.27.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, p. 27.

poverty that emerged during the era. If the latter position is considered, then the phrasing becomes problematic. Why do children from low-income families have special educational needs? If it is argued that socio-economic background has led to educational deprivation that requires intervention to overcome it, then the argument does not portray the community negatively. However, if the argument takes a more evolutionary approach whereby the special needs exist not because of deprivation but because they are poor and are therefore different from the larger community, then the language upholds cultural stereotypes. Furthermore, if the cultural stereotype is reinforced and accepted, then the poor become a hindrance to local education authorities for the cost they bear in educating the poor requires additional funds to meet their needs. A far more negative connotation is the link to children who were considered to be physically, mentally or educationally handicapped. Such children were routinely placed in special education classes in American schools where a watered down curriculum could prevent access to wider educational opportunities and deny the opportunity to reach their educational potential.

Whether the alternative argument of linguistic impact is accepted or if it reflected the language conventions of the day, the Great Society focused federal education policy on the disadvantaged within American society.<sup>81</sup> *ESEA* became law in 1965 and radically altered the federal government's role in education.<sup>82</sup> Cremin argues that the passage of *ESEA* along with the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and federal court decisions on desegregation cases created a "carrot and stick mechanism" that shaped federal education policy and hastened desegregation.<sup>83</sup> Increased federal education expenditure, which did not require state level matching funds, became the incentive in the adoption of compensatory education policies. Cremin traces the rise of education funding from \$4.5 billion in 1966 to \$8.8 billion in 1970, which represented a significant increase in federal

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<sup>81</sup> United States, *The Civil Rights Act of 1964*, 2 July 1964, Public Law 85-352, 78 Stat. 241. The *Civil Rights Act of 1964* preceded the Great Society legislation and acted as the foundation upon which it was constructed. In conjunction with the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, the *Economic Opportunity Act of 1964*, *The Social Security Act of 1965* and the *Higher Education Act of 1965* as well as programmes such as VISTA, Job Corps and Head Start formed the Great Society legislative agenda.

<sup>82</sup> Cross, 2004, pp. 26-31; Cremin, 1988, pp. 260-272; Urban and Wagoner, Jr., pp. 328 and L. Webb, *The History of American Education: A Great American Experiment*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2006, pp. 282-289. As an explanatory note, *ESEA* is reauthorized every five years by the US federal government; each new iteration of the law focuses upon different programme initiatives and funding priorities of the current presidential administration.

<sup>83</sup> Cremin, 1988, p. 263-264.

funding commitment.<sup>84</sup> While the federal government incentivised the adoption of education policies, it also insured against the insubordination of the states through federal court decisions. Delays in the implementation of segregation plans or the misappropriation of language as a ruse to prevent desegregation faced less tolerant federal courts.<sup>85</sup> While increased federal funding for education was welcomed by some groups, it cannot be said that it was universally heralded by all, many of whom interpreted this as the further encroachment of the federal government into the powers accorded to individual states.

One of the concerns emanating from the passage of *ESEA* lay in the overall management and administration of the extensive programmes contained within the legislation and whether or not the goals of compensatory education could be achieved effectively. Similarly, the desegregation of schools under the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* posed a similar quandary for the government because of previous attempts to circumvent federal statutes pertaining to integration, particularly in southern states. Title IV of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* proposed assistance for states and localities seeking to submit desegregation plans while also commissioning research “...into the lack of availability of equal educational opportunities for individuals by reason of race, colour, religion or national origin...”<sup>86</sup> The publication of *Equality of Educational Opportunity* in 1966 by James Coleman provided a built-in accountability mechanism for the legislation as well as acting as the foundation for the development of educational sociology and policy on the relationship between school and opportunity within American society.<sup>87</sup>

The *Coleman Report* focused upon four fundamental questions:

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> United States, *Civil Rights Act of 1964*.

<sup>87</sup> James Coleman, *On Equality of Educational Opportunity*, Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium of Political and Social Research, 1966. Coleman, a noted educational sociologist was the main author although he did work with six other researchers in the development of the research report. The document is more commonly referred to as the *Coleman Report* in the literature and commentary upon the findings, as well as the research approaches, has been extensive.

“...the extent to which racial and ethnic groups are segregated, from one another in the public schools...whether the schools offer equal educational opportunities in terms of a number of criteria which are regarded as good indicators of educational quality...how much the students learn as measured by their performance on standardised achievement tests...and to discern possible relationships between students’ achievements, on the one hand, and the kind of schools they attend on the other.”<sup>88</sup>

The report concluded that segregation between both majority and minority ethnic groups as well as between different ethnic groups was endemic within American education. White pupils attended schools whose populations were primarily white while African-American students tended to be the most segregated of the ethnic minority groups. While segregation was often linked to the South, the data suggested that African-Americans experienced segregation in communities across the nation. Additionally, the teachers within the schools reflected the ethnic composition of the school population.<sup>89</sup> Coming twelve years after the Brown decision, which had concluded that separate was inherently unequal, the data suggest that desegregation efforts had been ineffective. Coleman concluded that if the Brown decision was the sole determinant in evaluating equality of educational opportunity, then “separate schools for Negro and white children are inherently unequal.”<sup>90</sup>

The report, however, accepted the crude nature of the Brown rubric so examined other factors with the potential to impact upon educational opportunity including: facilities, programmes and educational professionals. Generally, there were differences between Whites and minorities, and particularly African-American groups, when considering if schools holistically impinged upon opportunity.<sup>91</sup> For example, African-American students often attended schools that did not have advanced science laboratories, language

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., pp. iii-iv. While the literature often speaks solely to the African-American community in the denial of educational opportunity, the report focused on six ethnic groups, including majority whites or Caucasians. The survey, which included 4,000 schools, responses from district superintendents and principals, 20,000 teachers and a total of 645,000 responses from students, was considered to be one of the most extensive in American education.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p.3.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., pp.3-34. Coleman noted that differences in regions as well as between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas emerged and needed consideration. Often regional differences had a significant impact upon particular ethnic minority groups, for example, African-Americans in the South.

laboratories and sufficient textbooks for study.<sup>92</sup> Moreover, if advanced facilities were missing, then the opportunity to engage with an academic curriculum and extracurricular activities was also absent.<sup>93</sup> In terms of the quality of teachers, “the average Negro pupil attends a school where a greater percentage of the teachers appears to be somewhat less able...than those in schools attended by the average white student.”<sup>94</sup> Minority pupils, particularly African-American pupils, attended schools that did not advance their educational opportunities because of the limitations of the schools’ inputs. Such limitations could dampen aspirations for higher education thereby impacting upon future economic earning potential, which did not necessarily have a corresponding effect the majority of white students.

Having acknowledged the existence of inequalities inherent within the educational experience between groups of pupils, Coleman analysed student achievement as a barometer of educational opportunity. Standardised test data with an emphasis on skills needed for employment in a technical world, “provide a good measure of the range of opportunities open to him as he finishes school – a wide range of choice of jobs or colleges if the skills are very high; a very narrow range that includes only the most menial jobs if the skills are very low.”<sup>95</sup> Again, minority students tended to score “distinctly lower” than the average white pupil when analysed across both elementary and secondary education with minority children falling further behind their white counterparts as they progressed up the educational ladder.<sup>96</sup> Coleman drew the following conclusion:

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., pp. 9-12.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p.20.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 21. Coleman acknowledged that the scores between whites and minority groups diverged but suggested that the largest difference could be found between whites and African-American pupils. This divergence became greater the longer an African-American child was in school. Again, regional differences were acute with African-American and white children in the South scoring significantly below African-American and white children in the North. African-American children in the South scored much further below Southern whites than African-American children in the North did against Northern whites. Differences in achievement between Asian-American students and white students did not emerge in the study although he did not use data to infer why this might be the case.

“For most minority groups then, and most particularly the Negro, schools provide little opportunity for them to overcome this initial deficiency...Whatever may be the combination of nonschool factors - poverty, community attitudes, low educational level of parents - which put minority children at a disadvantage in verbal and nonverbal skills when they enter the first grade, the fact is the schools have not overcome it.”<sup>97</sup>

Ravitch suggests the third question effectively changed the argument in the *Coleman Report* from one of equality of opportunity to equality of outcome where policy-makers needed to consider how school resources impacted upon students’ achievement.<sup>98</sup> While this switch resonates more in the following era, Coleman’s focus upon educational outcomes did have an immediate impact on policy planning to afford equality of educational opportunity.

Finally, the *Coleman Report* considered the interrelationship between these factors and the impact this had upon students’ overall educational outcomes. The achievement of minority pupils “...depends more on the schools that they attend than does the achievement of majority pupils,” is impacted by the quality of the teachers in the school and “...achievement is strongly related to the educational backgrounds and aspirations of the other students in the school.”<sup>99</sup> The report’s conclusions did not paint a halcyon picture of American education and exposed the significant systemic defects for minority children; however, the language of the report is measured and does not further disparage the communities affected by inequality of opportunity. Poverty is replaced by disadvantage, special educational need is not a recurring theme, African-Americans are considered alongside other ethnic minority groups and, while written when the culture of poverty was gaining credence, there is little reference to cyclical or inescapable poverty.

The legacy of the *Coleman Report* warrants scrutiny for its conclusions contributed to the debates on compensatory education and the integration of American schools by providing research informed evidence to focus policy discussions. A negative impact came from the misinterpretation of the conclusion that schools could not compensate for non-school

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ravitch, 1983, pp. 168-170.

<sup>99</sup> Coleman, 1966, pp. 21-23.

factors for minority students, which Ravitch contends weakened the argument for federal aid to schools within disadvantaged communities in *ESEA*.<sup>100</sup> Cremin concurs noting that the recognition of an achievement gap suggested that "...the disparity not only went uncorrected by schools, it actually increased with schooling."<sup>101</sup> This is perhaps one legacy of the *Coleman Report*: uneasiness with the depth of impact that schools have upon children's achievement divorced from the extraneous factors such as family background and school facilities that most teachers cannot overcome easily. On one hand, this conclusion debunked the premise that education could compensate for socio-economic deprivation. On the other hand, the *Coleman Report* suggested the advantages of students attending schools alongside peers with higher educational aspirations had demonstrable benefits. This conclusion became the argument for the further integration of American schools and supported bussing as a means to achieve integration across school districts or cities where little racial integration had been achieved heretofore.<sup>102</sup> While the *Coleman Report* helped to further refine federal education policy, it should be noted that the research design was subject to critique that prompted criticism of the conclusions drawn from the data and called into question the validity policy arising from it.<sup>103</sup>

Running parallel to the discourses on equality of educational opportunity embedded within the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, *ESEA* and the *Coleman Report* were the debates over the efficacy of compensatory education and desegregation programmes set within a fractious milieu of protest. While the Johnson administration did not back away from the goals of compensatory education, the toll of Vietnam War protests, race riots and social unrest meant that education policy had less priority as the era matured. The election of Richard Nixon in 1968 did not see a retreat from the equality of opportunity debates; it

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<sup>100</sup> Ravitch, 1983, pp. 168-170; Cross, 2004, p. 35 and Barbara Beatty, 'Rethinking compensatory education: historical perspectives on race, class, culture, language and the discourse of the disadvantaged child.' *Teachers College Record* 114/6, 2012, pp. 1-3.

<sup>101</sup> Cremin, 1988, p. 265.

<sup>102</sup> Webb, 2006, pp. 284-287; Cross, 2004, pp. 34-35; Ravitch, 1983, pp. 168-170; Cremin, 1988, p.264-265 and Urban and Wagoner, Jr., 2000, p. 316.

<sup>103</sup> For a review of the criticisms of the *Coleman Report*, please see the following: Glen Cain and Harold Watts, 'Problems in making policy inferences from the Coleman Report.' *American Sociological Review* 35/2, 1970, pp. 228-242; Thomas Pettigrew and Robert Green, 'School desegregation in large cities: a critique of the Coleman 'white flight' thesis.' *Harvard Educational Review* 46/1, 1976, pp., 1-53.

saw a redirection in policy focus where expansion in federal funding was equalled by extension of regulation and litigation to insure effectiveness and compliance.

Desegregation, and the programmes developed to integrate American schools, became a key issue for the newly elected Nixon Administration. In order to combat both *de jure* and *de facto* segregation of schools, the federal government offered fiscal support to states to promote integration. Simultaneously, the Supreme Court showed judicial impatience with states' delays in developing viable desegregation programmes and took a proactive stance in achieving integration. Desegregation in the form of mandatory bussing programmes in several cities, including Boston, Cleveland, Detroit and Richmond, met with resistance from local communities who did not agree with the integration of schools by this means. A series of Supreme Court decisions defined bussing as a legitimate means to insure the desegregation of the schools and compliance with Brown. *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, which was the first of these decisions, upheld the use of bussing to integrate the racially imbalanced schools and became a guiding post for future decisions on the integration of American schools.<sup>104</sup> However, Cremin argues that the *Milliken v. Bradley* decision, which placed restrictions on bussing and favoured compensatory education programmes if possible, marked an end to the large-scale litigation efforts to achieve desegregation by the Nixon Administration.<sup>105</sup>

The Nixon Administration focused initially upon compensatory education programmes to secure equality of opportunity, however, reports of the misappropriation of *ESEA Title I* funds alongside of a call for assessing the effectiveness of federal compensatory education programmes raised concerns. *Title I of ESEA: Is It Helping Poor Children?* criticised federal oversight of Title I funds within the states. The report found that the

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<sup>104</sup> United States, *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, 402 US 1, 1971. The case resulted from the consolidation of two school districts in North Carolina; the city of Charlotte, which had a largely African-American population, merged with Mecklenburg, a district with a largely white population. Pupils had normally been assigned to schools nearest to their homes so reflected the make-up of the communities in which they lived. However, the merger of the two school districts meant that the schools were now segregated and the new district was seen to be in need of integration. The decision led to additional court cases including *Keyes v. School District No.1, Denver, Colorado* and *Milliken v. Bradley*.

<sup>105</sup> Cremin, 1988, p. 268.

funding of compensatory education programmes should have been utilised for disadvantaged students but instead was employed for whole school improvement projects to benefit all students.<sup>106</sup> While the debates and litigation over bussing dominated federal education policy at this time, the Nixon Administration responded to criticism that federal aid “was not being wasted on ineffective programmes.”<sup>107</sup> The *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)* became the tool to measure the effectiveness of federal education programmes, including compensatory education projects, by tracking the achievement of students across the nation on nationally administered tests. This allowed for variations and fluctuations to be tracked both nationally and by individual state, which could be utilised in determining effectiveness or identifying areas of ineffectiveness.<sup>108</sup> The emerging language of effectiveness in relationship to federal education legislation alongside the introduction of testing to gauge performance of federal programmes indicated a subtle shift toward the demonstration of educational outcomes. While the *Coleman Report* utilised educational outcomes and educational equity, the Nixon Administration tentatively made broad linkages between outcomes, effectiveness and achievement, which suggests the preliminary emergence of a new reform era.

While equality of educational opportunity remained the foremost goal of education policy-making in the Liberal Reform era, the impact of external events upon education policy cannot be denied. Protests over the Vietnam War and political protests from a variety of groups alongside the global recession of 1973-1974 and the Watergate scandal contributed to a growing conservatism in America. Urban suggests that Nixon’s approach to 1960s liberal reforms neither reversed nor slowed them but demonstrated a

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<sup>106</sup> Washington Research Project and National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People Legal Defence and Educational Fund, *Title I of ESEA: Is It Helping Poor Children?* available from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED036600>, 1969.

<sup>107</sup> New York State, New York State Archives, States’ Impact on Federal Education Policy Project, *Federal Education Policy and The States: A Brief Synopsis*, available from <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/edpolicy/research/index.shtml>.

<sup>108</sup> The Carnegie Corporation provided the original impetus and funding for *NAEP*, which was originally designed in 1964. Through the auspices of James Allen, the Commissioner of Education in the Nixon Administration, and Congressional mandate, *NAEP* became a nationally administered programme in 1969. While the programme initially allowed for voluntary participation amongst the states, participation was mandated in 1990 and continues today.

conservative policy mindset, an approach that continued to dominate the remainder of the decade.<sup>109</sup> The Carter Presidency, although a Democratic Administration, faced dual pressures in education policy delivery: a continuing recession marked by stagflation and the expanding number of federal programmes mandated to secure equality of educational opportunity. Congress felt increasing pressure to demonstrate how financial inputs from the federal government generated positive educational outputs. However, concerns over academic achievement levels, coupled with the economic climate, shifted the policy dialogue towards the testing, achievement, evaluation, efficiency and effectiveness agendas. This did not repudiate equality of educational opportunity as a policy goal yet, the acceptance of educational outcomes as the primary dialogue in federal education policy became increasingly evident.

In summarising the Carter years, Cross argues that it was the educational best of times because of increased education appropriations as well as the creation of the Department of Education as a Cabinet level post. Conversely, Urban posits “the 1970s constituted a period of rhetorical retreat from the excesses of the preceding decade, although there was never a blanket repudiation of the policies of the 1960s.”<sup>110</sup> It is perhaps fitting to conclude a discussion of the era with such a polarised summation.

### **Transitioning the Debate from Equality of Educational Opportunity to Equality of Educational Outcome: An Eastonian Analysis**

Having explored the Liberal Reform era through a modified Skinnerian Analysis, it is appropriate to move from the historical lens to the Eastonian framework explored previously to analyse the development and transition of education policy agendas in England and the US during this era.

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<sup>109</sup> Urban, 2000, pp. 314-315.

<sup>110</sup> Cross, 2004, p. 70 and Urban, 2000, pp. 314-315.

Easton's conceptualisation of organic systems posits that both intra-social and extra-social pressures directly influence the development of the policy process.<sup>111</sup> During the Liberal Reform Era, intra-social forces are most evident in the policy platforms of the key political parties: Labour and the Democrats. Both parties exploited their return to power through the development of legislative agendas to secure equality of educational opportunity within their respective nations although each party employed different policy solutions to achieve the goal. Labour's promulgation of *Circular 10/65* actualised comprehensive education reform that many Labour councils had experimented with during the 1950s while the passage of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and the *ESEA* fulfilled the liberal policy agendas of the Kennedy and Johnson eras in redressing the long-standing ills of segregation. Moreover, the personal beliefs of politicians, particularly Johnson and Callaghan both of whom strongly believed in education and drew upon their experiences of the common or working class man, contributed intra-social pressure to achieve policy goals. In short, the intra-social pressures appear to be a manifestation of long-held political beliefs that came of age.

Easton's model suggests that intra-social and extra-social forces act as stressors on the existing political system, which responds to the stress through the formulation of new policy to insure its survival. As noted in the previous chapter, the emergence of research in a series of government reports outlined the lost educational opportunities and underachievement of children from lower socio-economic backgrounds in England as a result of the tripartite system of education, which was viewed as untenable by many educationists and policy-makers. *Circular 10/65* and ROSLA represented clear policy choices to extend the equality of educational opportunity to all children through a restructuring of the education system. Similarly, the American Civil Rights movement and the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling presented a strong incentive for American policy-makers to develop policy to redress segregation and poverty for African-Americans but also to consider the depth of poverty and its impact within American society. Johnson's War on Poverty and Great Society initiatives achieved largely through legislative solutions to achieve equality of educational opportunity for all American

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<sup>111</sup> Easton, 1965.

children. In both nations, therefore, the conceptualisation of compensatory education to right the social wrongs of poverty became policy choice to ameliorate systemic poverty.

However, each nation had to accept limitations to compensatory education programmes when debates over the appropriateness of programme expenditures, criticism of educational approaches and effectiveness of the programmes in securing equality of educational opportunity flared. Easton conceptualised this as the within-puts of the system, a phase which seeks to achieve homeostasis to insure the system's survival. While the *Plowden Report* called for compensatory education and more progressive education pedagogies to mitigate the impact of poverty, the potential misappropriation of the ideals of progressive education in some schools, the resulting media attention and the concern that this impacted upon the overall achievement of children meant that policy shifted away from progressive education and sought to redefine the overall goals of education. While American education in this era did not return to the philosophical arguments related to the goals of education, the system struggled with the most effective means of achieving equality of educational opportunity. Since many school districts could not integrate the schools in compliance with *Brown* as quickly as mandated by the Supreme Court or resisted doing so because of opposition to the decision, policy-makers needed to negotiate policy adjustments to insure the overall goal could still be achieved. Bussing programmes provided one means of integrating school systems, yet met with considerable resistance, while increased funding to develop viable integration plans for school districts often achieved the goal in a more expeditious manner. In short, neither nation retreated from the policy goal but each nation negotiated the scope of the legislative agenda as the debates emerged over the efficacy of compensatory education.

A question arises then as to whether transnational impulses or to what extent transnational impulses impacted upon the development of ideas expressed in the key reports published in the 1960s. Did the Conant Report or the Coleman Report influence the Plowden Report or had Conant's and Coleman's ideas been influenced by the findings in the Crowther, Newsom or Robbins Reports? There is more concrete evidence within the English reports that the authors had a working knowledge of different facets of

American education and cited American education examples in their works when exploring key issues such as educational structures, the school leaving age and the purposes of education. There is also explicit reference by the authors of the Crowther, Robbins and Plowden Reports to educational visits to the US to meet with federal and state education officials.<sup>112</sup> The Robbins Report departed from the form of these reports and placed considerable emphasis on international comparisons of higher education, particularly the United States and the Soviet Union. While the reports show evidence of a nuanced understanding of American education structures, these examples are often developed to argue for the implementation of strategies or as an expression of the differences of the systems. For example, the Crowther Report specifically rejects the idea that the English comprehensive school was modelled after its American counterpart while acknowledging that English secondary education was linked historically to the education of the elites, which American secondary education commonly rejected.<sup>113</sup> However, the Crowther and Newsom Reports make specific reference to the American school leaving age, which was higher at the time, as a means of arguing for an increased time in compulsory education.<sup>114</sup>

While the English reports acknowledged American trends within education although not always subscribing to these, there is far less acknowledgment of English education's contributions to American educational thought. A review of the Conant Report and the Coleman Report show no references to education in England or the United Kingdom within the text. Conant, writing on educational policy in 1964, briefly considers the emergence of a worldwide education revolution and admits that this means different things in different contexts such as Great Britain, France and West Germany. Conant also suggests that the long-term planning evident in the Robbins Report as well as the introduction of the General Education Certificate must become part of the dialogue between the state governments and the federal government to foster the development of a

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<sup>112</sup> Great Britain, 1959 (Crowther Report), pp. 24, 50, 107, 138, 259, 261, 409, 418 and 474; Great Britain, 1963 (Newsom Report), pp. 5 and 7; Great Britain, 1967 (Plowden Report), pp. 39, 45, 60, 62, 87, 171, 185, 192, 211, 238, 282, 285, 306, 307 and 432; and Great Britain, Committee on Higher Education, *Higher Education*. (Robbins Report) London: HMSO, 1963.

<sup>113</sup> Great Britain, 1959 (Crowther Report), pp. 24 and 259.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 107 and 138 and Great Britain, 1963 (Newsom Report), p.7.

flexible and strategic national education policy.<sup>115</sup> Coleman writing in 1985, acknowledged that the mathematical models utilised within the Coleman Report and by Gilbert Peaker in the Plowden Report provided the methodological framework that enabled both reports to draw similar conclusions about achievement and family educational background.<sup>116</sup> While both Conant and Coleman were at the top of their fields and would have had knowledge of international systems of education, there is scant evidence to suggest that transnational impulses impacted their research by flowing westward across the Atlantic. There is more evidence of these transnational impulses in Conant's writings although this is not evident in the major policy reports that he authored.

In returning to the intra-social pressures as mitigating forces within the system, the conceptualisation of socio-economic deprivation necessitates consideration. Noting previously that Lewis' culture of poverty thesis emerged as the Liberal Education Reform era began, it is important to review the language and dialogue embedded within policy debates on socio-economic deprivation. While it cannot be said that every legislative policy or government report accepted the culture of poverty thesis, the language employed within some documents suggest that people from socio-economically deprived backgrounds were different; they were handicapped by their surroundings or possessed special educational needs that required substantial additional funding to equalise the deficits between them and children from other social classes or ethnic groups. The language employed often confirmed cultural stereotypes and, it could be argued, continued to insure that the groups could not overcome the disadvantage even with compensatory education programmes.

While intra-social pressures acted to galvanise political action to achieve equality of opportunity, extra-social pressures mitigated the impact that liberal reform policies could achieve. Although the era began in the early 1960s, a time of economic prosperity for both nations, the global economic recession of the 1970s and the slow recovery meant that policy was increasingly created in a time of fiscal constraint. Considerations of

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<sup>115</sup> James B. Conant. *Shaping Educational Policy*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1964, pp. 2, 110 and 119.

<sup>116</sup> James S. Coleman, 'International comparisons of cognitive achievement.' *Phi Delta Kappan* 66/6, 1985, pp. 403-406.

impact and effectiveness emerged with policy-makers pressured to demonstrate the value of compensatory education programmes in terms of their impact on the targeted communities to redress poverty and ensure equality of educational opportunity. Eventually, these external pressures would become the impetus to transition from Liberal Reform era to the Market Reform era in education.

## **Chapter Five**

### **From Opportunity to Outcome: Socio-economic Deprivation, Education Policy and the Emergence of the Market Reform Era**

#### **Introduction**

The progression from the Liberal Education Reform Era with equality of educational opportunity for all children as the touchstone of education policy to the Market Era of Education Reform with its focus on equality of educational outcomes demonstrated the shifting conceptualisations on the goals and aspirations for education within both the United Kingdom and the United States. Expanding economic prosperity during the early 1960s marked the transition to the Liberal Era of Education Reform where the benefits of economic expansion positioned each nation to address systemic inequality of opportunities through the development of education policy appropriate to meet its unique needs. While achieving equality of educational opportunities remained aspirational goals, the economic prosperity was not sustained throughout the era, which was marked by steep economic recessions and periods of slow economic recovery. The economic instability and questions over pedagogical choices and national education policies, coupled with emerging dialogues on the efficiency and efficacy of education in relationship to students' preparation for employment, focused education debates upon the conceptualisation of equality of educational outcomes. This, in turn, led to a dual focus on outcomes and the adoption of greater accountability measures as a means of securing educational rigour in systems that many perceived to lack the excellence of earlier eras. This combination of outcome and accountability denotes the beginning of the Market Era of Educational Reform, which provides the focus of this chapter.

## The English Context

A series of national strikes during the winter of 1978-1979 and the loss of a no confidence vote in 1979 by the Callaghan government positioned the Conservative party, led by Margaret Thatcher, for election victory. The Conservative Party's election manifesto not only demonstrated the deepening concern over the economic well being of the nation but the rejection of the welfare state in favour of market driven economic policies.<sup>1</sup> Education did not play a significant role in the manifesto but would become a major policy initiative. Jones argues that Conservative education rhetoric focused upon a "betrayal of the past" where "schools were no longer able authoritatively to pass on a body of knowledge and standards of behaviour. Those who...implemented curriculum policy were to blame for an accelerating loss of cultural cohesion."<sup>2</sup> This language evoked fears of a loss of British power globally, acted as a critique of the emerging social and racial tensions and suggested that the reformation of education was necessary to maintain social order, which could only be achieved by a Conservative government.

The Thatcher Government developed education policy largely around market economic principles, which was rooted in a critique of schools and local authorities that suggested students had not been prepared for the world of work.<sup>3</sup> Aldrich and Gillard suggest that Thatcher considered the lack of central government control over local education authorities to be problematic because councils, particularly Labour

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<sup>1</sup> Conservative Party, *Conservative General Election Manifesto 1979*, available from <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/110858>, 11 April 1979. The manifesto centred upon five key tasks including the restoration of economic and social health, the creation of new jobs, the rewarding of hard work, the concentration of welfare services on those in need within the community and the strengthening of British defences in an increasingly aggressive world. Education is mentioned within the third task where "raising the standards of their children's education" is prioritised although it should be noted that this also linked to the accountability agendas rapidly emerging in the era.

<sup>2</sup> Ken Jones. *Right Turn: The Conservative Revolution in Education*. London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989, pp. 7-9.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Thatcher's embrace of market reform in education is also evident in other policy areas of her Conservative Government where the goal was to decrease the role of the state and to move away from the post-war welfare consensus. The work of the Institute of Economic Affairs, a right of centre think-tank, fellow Conservative Keith Joseph and the Centre for Policy Studies all played an influential role in Thatcher's policy development of the marketization of social services. For a discussion of this please see the following: Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, *The Commanding Heights: The Battle Between Government and the Marketplace that Is Remaking the Modern World*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998, pp. 92-124; Ken Jones. *Education in Britain: 1944 to the Present*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016, pp. 91-110.

councils, could resist the implementation of neo-liberal reforms.<sup>4</sup> Thatcher's education policy focused on three tenets: reform of the curriculum to redress progressive pedagogy and with the goal of educating children for the world of work, the deskilling of teachers through dialogues of professional derision and the centralisation of education to embed market reforms nationally.<sup>5</sup> This required shifting power away from local education authorities toward the national government while simultaneously increasing parental choice in education decisions.

A series of legislative acts slowly eroded the power of local authorities while simultaneously centralising education.<sup>6</sup> While a detailed consideration of each act is not possible at this juncture, there are three key pieces of legislation that warrant review. The *Education Act 1979* repealed the comprehensive principle established in the *Education Act 1976* and allowed local education authorities to reinstate selection at 11.<sup>7</sup> The act mitigated the equality of opportunity agenda underpinning comprehensive education while restoring the long-held Conservative preference for selective education. The legislation did not request or compel compliance but it returned selection to the fore in English education while simultaneously beginning the centralisation of power within education. The *Education Act 1980* enshrined additional parental rights, including representation on school governing bodies, school choice and the right to appeal, as well as establishing the Assisted Places Scheme (APS).<sup>8</sup> APS provided central government funds for the payment of fees '...for the purpose of enabling pupils who might otherwise not be able to do so to benefit from education at independent schools...'<sup>9</sup> Tapper and Salter argue that APS essentially extended the Direct Grant Grammar Schools, which previously provided places to

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Aldrich, *Education for the Nation*. London: Cassell, 1996, pp. 90-93. Aldrich suggests that Thatcher's view on local authority control stemmed from her tenure as Secretary of State for Education who, although opposed to comprehensive reorganisation, did not have the power to stop this within local councils.

<sup>5</sup> Gill Helsby and Gary McCulloch, 'Introduction: teachers and the National Curriculum.' in G. Helsby and G. McCulloch (eds) *Teachers and the National Curriculum*. London: Cassell, 1997, pp. 1-18; McKenzie, 2001, pp. 238-241; Aldrich, 1996, pp. 77-79 and Gillard, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Helsby and McCulloch, 1997, pp. 1-18.

<sup>7</sup> Great Britain. *Education Act 1976*. London: HMSO and Great Britain, 1979. The *Education Act 1976*, passed by the Labour government, required LEAs to complete reorganisation plans along comprehensive lines.

<sup>8</sup> Great Britain, *Education Act 1980*. London: HMSO.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

academically elite children and which had achieved considerable success in securing children's educational achievement before ending in 1976.<sup>10</sup>

While centralisation of education policy continued to erode the power of local authorities, the focus shifted toward the curriculum. *The School Curriculum*, published in 1981, provided an early indication of the emphasis that curriculum policy would take within the Thatcher government. The report reiterated Callaghan's earlier assertion that the debate over education belonged within the public domain and was not the sole purview of educationists. Moreover, it developed clear links between schooling, employment and the national interest: "It helps neither the children, nor the nation, if the schools do not prepare them for the realities of the adult world."<sup>11</sup> The report also acknowledged the dual pressures of the expanding global economy and the evolution of a technologically dominated world that required a curriculum to meet the shifting demands of the workplace. This was connected to the desire for and need to secure the "quality of education" within the schools, a sentiment noted several times throughout the document.<sup>12</sup> However, despite the drive for centralisation and the introduction of market forces into education, the focus on curriculum development remained with the schools: "It is the individual schools that shape the curriculum for each pupil. Neither the government nor the local authorities should specify in detail what the schools should teach. This is for the schools themselves to determine."<sup>13</sup> While *The School Curriculum* began the curriculum debate, it in no means suggested a national curriculum. This debate would emerge later.

Under the auspices of Keith Joseph, the Secretary of State for Education, the *Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI)*, the *Lower Attaining Pupils Programme (LAPP)* and the abolition of the Schools Council further centralised power and began the encroachment upon the curriculum taught in schools. TVEI, which provided vocational education for select fourth year students, had two clear

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<sup>10</sup> Ted Tapper and Brian Salter, 'The assisted places scheme: a policy evaluation.' *Journal of Education Policy* 1/4, 1996, pp. 315-317.

<sup>11</sup> Great Britain. Department of Education and Science. *The School Curriculum*. London: HMSO, 1981, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. The phrase, quality of education, is not a new phrase per se and indeed it could be argued is a benign phrase in itself. However, the inclusion of the phrase alongside the debates over the general purposes of education, the concern over the curriculum and purposes of education and the questioning of teachers' professionalism suggest that this is less benign than it may appear.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.3.

objectives: the provision of vocational training for students who might benefit from it and the linking of schools to the world of work. The LAPP initiative focused upon the bottom 40% of students who Joseph hoped would benefit from a less rigorous academic curriculum.<sup>14</sup> The impact of APS, TVEI and LAPP, when considered together, can suggest a surreptitious attempt to re-establish the tripartite system within a comprehensive context, an argument deftly made by Simon. While Jones initially concurred with that assessment, he argues that TVEI became an integrated curriculum initiative that was largely student centred and which promoted the equality of access for young women to curriculum areas and jobs traditionally held by men.<sup>15</sup>

Teachers, an integral part of the education establishment and whom some policy-makers and parents perceived as being too progressive in their pedagogical stances, became the third focus of the education reform policy agenda. The school curriculum had been conceptualised frequently as a secret garden, where the specialist knowledge and expertise of teachers delimited the boundaries and invited few into its domain.<sup>16</sup> However, while this may have been the view of the education establishment, it was not the view of Keith Joseph who saw the need for “more effective deployment and management of school teachers” while also reflecting:

“There is now no serious dispute that the school curriculum is a proper concern not only of the teachers but also of parents, governing bodies, LEAs, and the Government, each performing their proper role in response to the needs of the pupils and of the country as a whole.”<sup>17</sup>

The encroachment upon teachers’ expertise continued to gain momentum during the Thatcher Government. Central government departments ran the TVEI and LAPP initiatives, which not only limited the power of LEAs but also marginalised teachers by not involving them in an initial consultation of curriculum matters. The restructuring and alignment of examinations, which Joseph believed needed to “reflect absolute levels of attainment” of students, also demonstrated the sublimation

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<sup>14</sup> Chitty, 2004, pp. 140-141 and Simon, 1999, pp. 493-496.

<sup>15</sup> Simon, 1999, p. 496 and Jones, 1989, pp. 105-114.

<sup>16</sup> Gillard, 2014 and Gary Eason, ‘Callaghan’s great education debate,’ available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/4386373.stm>, 27 March 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Sir Keith Joseph, ‘Speech by the Rt Honourable Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education and Science, at the North of England Education Conference, Sheffield, on Friday 6 January 1984.’ *Oxford Review of Education* 10/2, 1984, p. 142.

of teachers' expertise of the curriculum and examination bodies of the assessment process to ministerial power with personal approval needed from him.<sup>18</sup> The Schools Councils, where teachers' input on curriculum matters was particularly strong, was abolished in 1984. Finally, Joseph, who had a disdain for weak or incompetent teachers, also recommended the link between teacher performance and remuneration although this proposal was not implemented and remains contentious policy initiative today.<sup>19</sup>

Argument could be made that education policy between 1979 and 1987 tinkered at the reform of the education establishment with modest results when compared to the *Education Reform Act 1988*, which implemented significant and pervasive reforms across the three sectors targeted by the Thatcher government. The appointment of Kenneth Baker as Secretary of State for Education became a notable demarcation point in the education policy during the Thatcher era. Baker did not repudiate the policies of his predecessor, however, with a national election forthcoming, he took a notably different approach to the Conservative education policy.<sup>20</sup> Crawford argues that Baker's positional stance reflected a neo-conservative perspective, one that extended to the introduction of a national curriculum.<sup>21</sup> *Better Schools*, the Government's White Paper published in 1985, reflected a policy shift toward the adoption of a national curriculum and the emerging standards agenda while simultaneously reiterating the market principles underpinning education policy. The White Paper sought "to raise standards at all levels of ability" and "to secure the best possible return from the resources which are invested in education."<sup>22</sup> For a national

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<sup>18</sup> Sir Keith Joseph, 'Postscript.' *Oxford Review of Education* 10/2, 1984, pp. 147-148.

<sup>19</sup> Simon, 1999, pp. 490-496, Jones, 1989, p.91 and Gillard, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Simon, 1999, pp. 526-534. Sir Keith Joseph employed austerity policies in the financing of education in general during his tenure, which Simon contends led to a crisis in 1986. Political attacks on schools and education generally, including a focus on the falling standards of education in Britain, provided additional fuel to the crisis. Moreover, the centralisation policies that targeted teachers and local authorities impacted upon the general relationship between the national government and different constituencies. Kenneth Baker recognised this tension and worked within a framework of developing a national education policy for the election in 1987 while simultaneously taking measures to mitigate the crisis.

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth Crawford, 'A history of the right: the battle for control of National Curriculum History 1989-1994.' *British Journal of Educational Studies* 43/4, 1995, p. 438. Joseph had not supported the introduction of a national curriculum and expressed doubts as to whether the legislation would gain passage in Parliament.

<sup>22</sup> Great Britain, Department of Education and Science, *Better Schools: A Summary*. London: HMSO, 1985, p. 1. The White Paper detailed ten action points to develop as a means of securing the two aims. These included 'promoting national agreement about the purposes and the content of the curriculum,'

curriculum to address these aims, a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum was necessary to “encourage the qualities, attitudes, knowledge, understanding and competences which are necessary to equip pupils for working life” while also developing achievement criteria to demonstrate its effectiveness.<sup>23</sup> The curriculum needed to be defined and implemented for educational standards to improve, an argument woven throughout the document. *Better Schools* established the argument for a national curriculum, thereby allowing Baker to develop a policy dialogue that supported the shift. This dialogue underpinned the education initiatives within the Conservative Party Manifesto of 1987, which pledged to establish a national curriculum, cede budgetary control to secondary schools and larger primary schools, increase parental choice and allow state schools to opt out of LEA control.<sup>24</sup> These four strands of intended policy and the *Education Reform Act 1988* that flowed from the election victory validated the radical reforms to English education within the era:

“As the national curriculum was implemented during the early 1990s, it would ensure the conformity of teaching objectives to a centrally-established criteria; it would to a very large extent limit local curricular autonomy, and would inevitably affect both the content and the method of education. As such it was the single most powerful measure of centralisation in half a century...It used the central power of legislation to undermine the system of local authority-controlled education, and to create in its place a framework that...would give greater autonomy to individual schools, and that in so doing would strengthen the selective principle.”<sup>25</sup>

The journey from policy initiative to Parliamentary legislation was not an easy road for the *Education Reform Act 1988 (ERA)*, however, despite opposition, the bill became law in the summer of 1988.<sup>26</sup> With 237 clauses and 13 schedules, an exhaustive discussion of *ERA* is not possible here, however, it is apposite to consider the provisions that are germane to this discussion. While *ERA* created the statutory framework for a National Curriculum, the legislation focused on broad requirements to be embedded within the new curriculum but could not develop the curriculum maps

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the preparation of students for employment, the reform of the public examinations system ‘in the interest of curriculum and standards’ and a national system of records of achievement amongst others.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Conservative Party, *Conservative Party General Election Manifesto 1987*, available from <http://politicsresources.net/area/uk/man/con87.htm>, 1987.

<sup>25</sup> Jones, 1989, pp. 23-24.

<sup>26</sup> Simon, 1999, pp. 537-549. Simon provides a detailed account of the challenges faced by Kenneth Baker and the Thatcher Government in developing the legislation and steering it through the legislative process.

associated with curriculum planning. Development of the National Curriculum became the remit of the National Curriculum Council and the Schools Examination and Assessment Council. There were several premises that needed consideration in the construction of the curriculum including the conceptualisation of “a balanced and broadly based curriculum,” that promoted the holistic development of children, which reflected the characteristics and values of society and prepared children for “the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.” Additionally, assessment provisions for each key stage “for the purpose of assessing what they have achieved in relation to the attainment targets for that stage” needed development and clarity<sup>27</sup> The link between knowledge and assessment of knowledge, teaching and achievement, the education establishment and accountability, which had been a dialogic thread within the education policy of the Thatcher government, became enshrined in law.

The introduction or the revision of a curriculum not only affected communities, schools and teachers, but also impacted children’s educational development and overall learning. It cannot be said that the National Curriculum failed to gain support from the education establishment. Lawton posits that, while a national curriculum had not been education policy heretofore, the concept of a common curriculum had been part of education policy rhetoric. Moreover, the implementation of the curriculum was an opportunity missed yet gained. The disenfranchisement of teachers from the decision-making process prevented professional expertise from underpinning the construction of a cohesive curriculum, a view shared by Hickox and Moore. However, the inclusion of assessment to demonstrate efficiency and accountability secured the inclusion of expert knowledge in the development of this area of the curriculum.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Great Britain, *Education Reform Act 1988*, London: HMSO, pp. 1-2. The broadly balanced curriculum proposed within the *ERA* also included provisions for the a distinction between age ranges within primary and secondary education, notably called the key stages of education, as well as a demarcation between core subjects (English, mathematics and science) and foundation subjects (history, geography, technology, music, art and physical education as well as a foreign language in secondary education). The provision of religious education remained statutory. The content, skills, and processes to be taught in each key stage and for each subject as well as the attainment targets and methods of assessment would be developed as a result of the legislation and were not directly stated within it.

<sup>28</sup> Dennis Lawton, ‘Is there coherence and purpose in the National Curriculum?’ in B. Simon and C. Chitty (eds) *Education Answers Back: Critical Responses to Government Policy*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993, pp. 61-69 and Mike Hickox and Rob Moore, ‘TVEI, vocationalism and the crisis of liberal education.’ in M. Flude and M. Hammer (eds) *The Education Reform Act 1988: Its Origins and Implications*, London: Falmer Press, 1990, p. 133.

Watkins, speaking from a teacher's perspective, contends that not only was the curriculum welcome, it had demonstrated clear effects including cohesiveness and rising standards.<sup>29</sup> The National Curriculum, unlike the *Education Reform Act 1944* or *Circular 10/65* did not specifically seek to widen educational opportunities or educational outcomes of children as an underlying principle. It might be argued that the legislation presented an egalitarian policy opportunity for all children in all maintained schools who would now have equal access to the curriculum. The argument is facile and will be explored later in the chapter.

The City Technology Colleges (CTCs), introduced as an education policy initiative in 1986 and codified in *ERA*, provided a potential opportunity to develop an education initiative for students from socio-economically deprived backgrounds. However, CTCs, while planned for the inner cities where education opportunities were acknowledged to be less robust, were simultaneously connected to the Government's policy of the minimisation of local authority power and the injection of market forces into education. The national government provided the funding for CTCs but shared the capital costs with sponsors across the business sector. The curriculum with CTCs emphasised science, mathematics and technology, which became the foundation upon which to develop students' knowledge and skills, while business sponsorship extended links between schools and employers. CTCs remained outside of the control of LEAs and were overseen directly by the DES, which showed the continued move toward centralisation.<sup>30</sup> Flude and Hammer support the centralisation argument while also suggesting that the financial arrangements for the CTCs blurred "the boundaries between public and private schooling and widen the scope of the process of privatisation occurring in public schooling."<sup>31</sup> Simon, on the other hand, not only supports the view of encroaching centralisation and privatisation but also argues "that a single section in the Act relating to CTCs legitimised this initiative in the sense of

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<sup>29</sup> Peter R. Watkins, 'The National Curriculum: an agenda for the nineties.' in B. Simon and C. Chitty (eds) *Education Answers Back: Critical Responses to Government Policy*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1993, pp. 70-72.

<sup>30</sup> Simon, 1999, pp. 526-558. The CTC pilot programme proposed the development of 20 colleges although this was anticipated to expand into the hundreds in the post-election education policy. However, LEAs generally opposed the educational initiative because it necessitated the building of new schools rather than the conversion of existing school premises. Even with the sharing of the financial burden between the national government and business, the cost of CTCs soon became prohibitively expensive. Although the initiative proposed a significant number of CTCs, only 20 were funded.

<sup>31</sup> Flude and Hammer, 1990, p.51.

providing a legal basis for public money to be spent on both capital and recurring expenditure.”<sup>32</sup> CTCs impact within lower socio-economic communities did not emerge because of escalating costs and local authority resistance.<sup>33</sup>

Over the course of this discussion, mounting evidence suggested that the focus of education policy had indeed switched from equality of educational opportunity to equality of educational outcomes, which was largely facilitated by the introduction of market forces into education. If the reforms of the Liberal Era focused on securing opportunity for all children, what then is the legacy of Thatcher’s education reforms? Chitty and Simon contend that Joseph advocated choice and diversity in his conceptualisation of an education marketplace, however, could not restore the principle of selection to the education agenda so opted for differentiated pathways within comprehensive schools, which effectively created a three-tier system of secondary education.<sup>34</sup> Whitty, in an appraisal of the market forces argument, suggests that the reforms lacked a consistent approach often blending centralisation and government control on one hand alongside of market forces on the other.<sup>35</sup> Aldrich largely shared this view although he argued that the curriculum should be subject to market forces whereby it responded to market needs rather than be controlled by government frameworks.<sup>36</sup> Simon takes the argument one step further in his analysis of the impact of market forces embedded within the reforms. He hypothesised that open entry and formula funding, two key provisions within the implementation of *ERA*, would lead to over-subscription while hastening a decline in enrolments and the eventual closure of the least popular schools, commenting:

“The probable social effect of these measures will be to reinforce existing local hierarchies of schools and intensify their differentiated structure. The net result...may be to develop a school system in the image of the French sociologist Bourdieu’s critique of existing systems - that is systems precisely reflecting social gradations and patterned to ensure their reproduction (and so perpetuation).”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Simon, 1999, p. 552.

<sup>33</sup> Clyde Chitty, *The Education System Transformed*. Manchester: Baseline, 1992, pp. 64-65.

<sup>34</sup> Chitty, 1992, pp. 61-70 and Simon, 1999, p.500.

<sup>35</sup> Whitty, 1990, pp. 21-24.

<sup>36</sup> Aldrich, 1996, p.78.

<sup>37</sup> Simon, 1999, p.554.

The reforms wrought upon the education system during the eleven-year tenure of the Thatcher government from the National Curriculum, to the structural organisation of education and to the emergence of the market economy of education demonstrated the breadth and depth of education reform undertaken. The Major government chose not to refocus policy trajectories but aimed for the consolidation of the neo-Conservative reforms across three main themes: structure, decentralisation and accountability. Gillard argues that the Major government continued a similar policy trajectory to its predecessor despite mounting evidence attesting to a socio-economic polarity within education.

The structure of the education system, particularly the steadfast existence of comprehensive schools, became a cornerstone of education policy debates. The 1992 White Paper, *Choice and Diversity: A New Framework for Schools*, addressed all three themes, as did the *Education Act 1993*. The government argued not for selection within education but the specialisation of education, which would allow for schools to develop curricula to meet the needs of their pupils and of the local communities while simultaneously offering parents greater choice in the *selection* of schools, which were often linked to external sponsors.<sup>38</sup> Parental choice would be secured further through the promotion of grant maintained schools thereby strengthening consumer choice, an initiative that simultaneously advocated the distributive financing of education between the government and the private sector and continued the erosion of local control of education. While the National Curriculum, school autonomy and parental choice would be the driving force underpinning higher standards in all schools, the government argued that the inspection of schools and the publication of school league tables would demonstrate local variability, accountability of schools and efficiency within the structures and financing of education.<sup>39</sup> However, league tables can have a polarising effect on local education markets and can result in schools ranked lower on

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<sup>38</sup> Great Britain, Department for Education, *Choice and Diversity: A New Framework for Schools*. London: HMSO, 1992, pp. 9-10 and Great Britain. *Education Act 1993*. London: HMSO, 1993.

<sup>39</sup> Great Britain, 1992, pp. 15-16. It should be noted that the *Citizen's Charter* focused upon the standards and accountability mechanisms needed within all public services and not specifically for education. For an in depth explanation of the above, please see: Gillard, 2014, Mike Baker, League Tables: Only Half the Story, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/6257063.stm>, 13 January 2007 and John Major, Mr. Major's Commons Statement on the Citizens Charter, available from <http://www.johnmajor.co.uk/page2097.html>, 22 July 1991.

the table experiencing difficulty in the recruitment and retention of children and staff, which was noted by Simon above.

The securing of education standards and the demonstration of accountability in education are clear policy debates threaded through both the Thatcher and Major governments. The *Education (Schools) Act 1992* crystalized the debate on standards and accountability subsequently mandating the appointment of a Chief Inspector for England to inform the Secretary of State for Education on the quality of education, the educational standards achieved, the efficiency of allocated resources utilised by the schools and the overall development of pupils within these schools.<sup>40</sup> The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), the non-ministerial department, became the mechanism by which to demand accountability whilst securing policy goals of higher standards within education. The power and reach of Ofsted, alongside the marketization of education, perhaps provides the enduring legacy of the Market Reform era within English education today. The focus upon standards of teaching, the spotlight on attainment, targets and assessment, the learning outcomes of pupils, the learning outcomes of schools through examination results and Ofsted inspection reports and the public reporting of a wealth of data to guide parental choice and drive school reform demonstrates the depth that standards and accountability became embedded into education debates.

## **The American Context**

The legacy of the Watergate Scandal, continuing economic challenges facing the nation and the Iranian Hostage Crisis proved to be insurmountable for Jimmy Carter and contributed to Ronald Reagan's decisive victory in the 1980 presidential election. With the pressing international issues at the start of the Regan presidency, it is unsurprising that education, as a policy initiative, did not feature highly in Reagan's

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<sup>40</sup> Great Britain, *Education (Schools) Act 1992*, London: HMSO, p.2. It should be noted that the overall development related to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children within the schools inspected. The general educational development of children appears to be defined in terms of the quality of education received and the attainments achieved. As a historical note, an existing inspectorate within England dated to the 1830s and had evolved over time from an inspectorate along denominational lines to one focused on local education. The Major government was concerned over the variability of the local education inspectorates and so chose to centralise the inspection function into the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

early domestic legislative agenda. With no formal mention of schools or education in either his nomination acceptance speech or inaugural address, a return to the Republican Party platform is necessary for a consideration of education policy goals. The rhetoric within the platform echoed a view that American education had lost its way during the Liberal Reform Era:

“But today, parents are losing control of their children's schooling. The Democratic Congress...launched one fad after another, building huge new bureaucracies to mispend our taxes. The result has been a shocking drop in student performance, lack of basics in the classroom, forced bussing...”<sup>41</sup>

The platform promised to restore educational decision-making to the states and localities through the creation of block grants, the restoration of “quality education for all of America's children, with a special commitment to those who must overcome handicap, deprivation, or discrimination,” the end of forced bussing to achieve racial integration, parental rights within education supported through tax credits and the support of prayer in schools. Moreover, the platform recognised the need to maintain the high standards of American education, which would be achieved through the unfettering of teachers to teach and the “deregulation of education by the federal government.”<sup>42</sup> If centralisation had been a guidepost of Thatcher education policy, the devolution of federal power back to the states became the hallmark of the Reagan administration.

Reagan robustly embraced new federalism and applied the philosophical model across his domestic policy agenda upon taking office in 1981. This new conceptualisation of federalism devolved political autonomy back to the states at a time when federal power appeared to increasingly encroach upon the states’ power and authority in policy areas that were traditionally or legally reserved to them. Education, which had seen an increase in federal intervention over the course of the twentieth century, became a logical focus of Reagan’s new federalism. Cross suggests that the states and

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<sup>41</sup> Republican National Committee. *Republican Party Platform of 1980*. Adopted by the Republican National Convention, 15 July 1980. <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25844>; Ronald Reagan, Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Library, *Inaugural Address*, available from [http://www.reaganfoundation.org/pdf/Inaugural\\_Address\\_012081.pdf](http://www.reaganfoundation.org/pdf/Inaugural_Address_012081.pdf), 20 January 1981, and Ronald Reagan, *Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention in Detroit*, available from <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25970>, 17 July 1980.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

school districts found the numerous federal education programmes to be cumbersome to administer and the categorical grants that funded these programmes often had too many requirements to qualify for funding.<sup>43</sup> The devolution of power back to the states in education policy occurred alongside decreased federal spending on education, which was part of a larger initiative to decrease overall spending, decrease the federal budget deficit and the deregulation of federal social programmes.<sup>44</sup> However, federal block grants replaced the onerous categorical grants as the main income stream for localities thereby giving them more control over spending on programmes and fewer federal requirements to meet but resulted in a significant reduction of federal spending on education over the course of the Reagan presidency.

The cyclical reauthorisation of *ESEA* legislation provided the opportunity for the Reagan Administration to develop its education policy agenda through the framework of new federalism. The *Education Consolidation and Improvement Act (ECIA)*, a Congressional legislative initiative supported by the administration, repealed many of the categorical grant programmes funded by the federal government or restructured these under a single authorisation structure financed with block grants. The shift in funding structure from categorical to block grants demonstrated the loosening strictures placed upon the states under the new legislation. The funding formula for Chapter Two of *ECIA* recognised the inherent costs of some federal intervention programmes so included a weighting formula for the number of pupils enrolled in federal programmes that supported children with disabilities, children with English language deficits or children from socio-economically deprived backgrounds. However, the states received their federal funds in a single block grant with no requirement that the funds be used to support the children in the greatest need of additional intervention.

The design of the original *ESEA* had focused upon securing equality of educational opportunity, yet, while the *ECIA* did not repudiate this as an aspirational goal, it removed it as a goal for national education policy and situated it as a local issue to be resolved within the boundaries of the individual states. The text of the original

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<sup>43</sup> Cross, 2004, pp. 71-90.

<sup>44</sup> New York State, New York State Archives, States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project.

legislation suggests that the new federalism and equality of educational opportunity could be placed alongside each other:

“...the policy of the United States to continue to provide financial assistance to State and local educational agencies to meet the special needs of educationally deprived children, on the basis of entitlements calculated under title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), in a manner which will eliminate burdensome and unproductive paperwork and free the schools of Federal supervision.”<sup>45</sup>

However, many states had historically demonstrated an opposition to the equality of educational opportunity agenda so returning power and funding to these same entities appeared to be somewhat ill advised if the achievement of equality of opportunity was to be preserved. Darling-Hammond and Marks and Verstegen contend that an inherent weakness of the *ECIA* legislation was the repudiation of historic understandings of educational funding or programmes thereby hindering the effectiveness of the legislation.<sup>46</sup> While the block grant funding formula allowed for scope and flexibility for states to address the now local issues of inequality and lost educational opportunity, there is evidence that suggests the groups of students who helped states to win additional funding allocations were often disenfranchised and did not benefit from this funding approach.<sup>47</sup>

With an emphasis on devolution of power, decreased yet more efficient spending on education and the intention to abolish the federal Department of Education, the Reagan education policy agenda appeared to be on firmly in place. However, the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education suggested that significant issues weakened American education and promoted the perception of an education system on the brink of failure. The commission considered the quality of teaching and learning within American schools, compared American schools and colleges to “other

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<sup>45</sup> United States, *Education Consolidation and Improvement Act*, Public Law 95-35, 20 Stat. 3801, 17 June 1981.

<sup>46</sup> Linda Darling-Hammond and Ellen Marks, *State Responses to the 1981 Education Consolidation and Improvement Act*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation and Deborah Verstegen, ‘Redistributing federal aid to education: chapter two of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981.’ *Journal of Education Finance* 10/4, 1985, pp. 517-583.

<sup>47</sup> New York State, New York State Archives, States’ Impact on Federal Education Policy Project and Milbrey McLaughlin, ‘States and the new federalism.’ *Harvard Educational Review* 52/4, 1982, pp. 564-583.

advanced nations...assessed the degree to which major social and educational changes in the last quarter century have affected student achievement and defined problems which must be faced and overcome if we are successfully to pursue the course of excellence in education.”<sup>48</sup>

The language utilised within the report as well as a links to contemporary history suggests the intention to clearly raise the issue of crisis within American education:

“Our Nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged pre-eminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world....We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished...the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur--others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments. If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war.”<sup>49</sup>

In many ways, *A Nation at Risk* considered a number of issues facing America as a nation in the 1980s. There is reference to the Japanese and German economic powerhouses that challenged American innovation and economic success. There is an acknowledgement of the shifting global marketplace where knowledge will underpin technological success. There is the reference to the shared ideas and values needed for a cohesive American society. However, there is also reference to equality of educational opportunity although this opportunity is linked to both the needs of the workplace and society generally:

“Part of what is at risk is the promise first made on this continent: All, regardless of race or class or economic status, are entitled to a fair chance and to the tools for developing their individual powers of mind and spirit to the utmost. This promise means that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, can hope to attain the mature and informed judgment

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<sup>48</sup> United States, National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983, pp. 1-2. The Commission’s remit included six areas including a review of the relationship between high school achievement and college admission requirement and the identification of education programmes that yielded student success in college.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests but also the progress of society itself.”<sup>50</sup>

Having clearly defined the risk to the nation, the report made several recommendations to overcome the deficits within American education. The five recommendations focused upon the content of the school curriculum with the embedding of academic rigour within the curriculum; the adoption of rigorous and measureable standards within education; increased instruction time for the New Basics within education; improved teacher training programmes alongside the development of greater respect for the profession; and greater accountability of educational leaders and policy-makers in the development and implementation of the proposed reforms.<sup>51</sup> Cross posits that the publication of *A Nation at Risk* shifted the education debate within the Reagan era and elevated education to a national issue with particularly high stakes.<sup>52</sup> States seeking federal aid would be required to demonstrate achievement through test scores and stronger accountability mechanisms to qualify for federal funding.<sup>53</sup> On one hand, education became a vehicle to improve the quality and outcomes of education where American students would be better prepared for an evolving global marketplace. This seemingly continued the equality of opportunity agenda within education. On the other hand, the call to raise standards and demonstrate educational outcomes relied heavily upon high stakes examinations at key points within compulsory education thereby anchoring the accountability agenda firmly within education.

If *A Nation at Risk* underpinned the standards and accountability movement within American education, then the question arises as to the wider implications of the report. Cross argues that the report aided in the development of the minimum-

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp. 23-34. Each of the recommendations within *A Nation at Risk* contained several sub-points to insure clarity of purpose and implementation to achieve the recommendations. The recommendation on the curriculum was linked to five New Basics to be embedded within the high school curriculum. The New Basics essentially developed a strong academic curriculum that required high school students to take four years of English, three years of Science, three years of Mathematics, three years of Social Studies and a half-year of Computer Science. In addition to these requirements, high school students intending to attend university were required to take an additional language. The emphasis focused upon rigour within the curriculum to build understanding and depth of knowledge within the four year of high school. While there is acknowledgement that the preceding eight years of primary school required an equally rigorous curriculum, there is no attempt to define this within the report.

<sup>52</sup> Cross, 2004, p.78.

<sup>53</sup> New York State, New York State Archives, States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project.

competency movement within the curriculum and assessment rubrics, a movement that led to calls for stronger educational standards in the 1990s.<sup>54</sup> Ravitch, on the other hand, traces the evolution of alternative responses to *A Nation at Risk* with the argument that American public schools had “lost their focus as educating institutions responsible for the development of young minds.”<sup>55</sup> Theodor Sizer, a leading educationist and influential proponent of contemporary progressive education, advocated for mastery learning where students demonstrated not only knowledge of facts but a clear and deep understanding of the material within the curriculum, which could not be readily measured by standardised examinations. Sizer also rejected the bureaucracy of federal education policy, the arbitrariness of local education structures that assigned children to schools based on location rather than educational need and supported educationists regaining control of American schools.<sup>56</sup> While other voices emerged contesting the new trajectory of American education, Sizer’s became the most influential of the group.<sup>57</sup>

George H.W. Bush’s presidency, in contrast to his predecessor, positioned education as a clear policy priority with a focus on education standards and educational outcomes demonstrated through “a new accountability based on standardised performance outcomes for all students.”<sup>58</sup> While this may appear to be an extension of Reagan education policy, the engagement of the business community to support American education reform and the bipartisan approach to reforming education became keystones of the Bush education policy. This approach responded to the critique voiced by American business that American graduates did not have the skills

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<sup>54</sup> Cross, 2004, p.80. The minimum-competency movement advocated for minimum standards to be achieved by students in high stakes examinations as a qualification for high school graduation. New York State developed a two-tier assessment system where students of higher ability would be encouraged to take the rigorous New York State Regents examinations across the range of the five New Basics subjects whereas students with lower attainment would be required to demonstrate competency in the five subjects in a far less demanding examination. However, the competency examinations would not lead to the granting of a New York State Regents High School diploma, which was considered the gold standard in education at the time.

<sup>55</sup> Diane Ravitch, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*. New York: Simon and Shuster, 2000 pp. 418-452.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 418-419 and Theodore Sizer, *Horace’s Compromise: Dilemma of the American High School*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1984.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 418-420.

<sup>58</sup> New York State, New York State Archives, States’ Impact on Federal Education Policy Project.

necessary to enter the workplace and required costly early investment to insure these skills were in place.<sup>59</sup>

The Charlottesville Education Summit, convened in 1989, demonstrated the Bush approach to building consensus in the shaping of education policy. Forty-nine governors and business leaders attended the summit that focused on the partnership with the federal government to redress the educational issues of the day. This bipartisan approach, however, did not include educators whose voices did not contribute to the formulation of six policy goals to be achieved by the advent of the new millennium. The goals may have been viewed as highly aspirational for a nation in educational crisis. They included children starting school with a readiness to learn, an increase in the high school graduation rate to 90%, demonstrated competency measure by high stakes examinations at key transition points in primary and secondary education, positioning American students as the first in mathematics and science globally, preparation for the workplace as well as being an educated citizen and schools will offer safe learning environments free of drugs and violence.<sup>60</sup> Ravitch contends that these aspirational goals “implied a major shift in priorities for American education, which had long been accustomed to keeping all children in school as long as possible without setting any real standards of achievement.”<sup>61</sup> The National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) provided the guidance in the implementation of the goals and the Department of Education offered funding to organisations and scholars to work on the development of voluntary national education standards. However, there was a lack of clarity on how the development of the national standards would be aligned with the content knowledge and skills within the curriculum and how the proposed standards would be evaluated prior to implementation. Additionally, the education standards were not meant to supplant the states’ education standards but to provide a framework for them to work towards.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Ravitch, 2000, pp. 429-431.

<sup>60</sup> United States, National Education Goals Panel, *Building a Nation of Learners*, available from <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/page1-5.htm>, 2002. The six goals were supplemented with two more goals as part of a Congressional mandate: teachers will have the skills and knowledge needed to teach within American schools and parental involvement and participation will be promoted by schools.

<sup>61</sup> Ravitch, 2000, p. 432.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

With the standards and accountability agendas underpinning American education policy, Bill Clinton's victory in the presidential election of 1992 positioned education again at the forefront of the domestic policy agenda. Clinton provided key leadership at the Charlottesville Summit and was an influential member of the NEGP group. The *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* focused not only on the individual goals developed at Charlottesville but also on the systemic reform of American education. The preamble to the legislation acknowledged the opportunity and achievement gap between groups of American students, particularly students from low-income families stating: "educational needs are particularly great for low-achieving children in our Nation's highest-poverty schools, children with limited English proficiency, children of migrant workers, children with disabilities, Indian children, children who are neglected or delinquent..."<sup>63</sup> Federal legislation frequently included such policy rationale with the recognition that educational opportunities needed to be afforded and educational outcomes needed to be achieved for all American children. Clinton challenged the assertion that less rigorous achievement standards should be applied to disadvantaged students, which had been allowed in the previous twenty-five years of federal policy intervention. However, he simultaneously recognised that the education structures and the relationships between federal government and state governments often precluded policy innovation to achieve the aspirations Goals 2000. Therefore, Title I funds could be granted to schools with a poverty threshold of 50% rather than the previously required 75%, which enabled the funds to reach a greater number of students impacted by socio-economic deprivation. Schools, school districts and individual states could qualify for increased Title I funding if they utilised the funds to promote systemic reforms within educational structures as a means of securing positive and pronounced educational outcomes. Flexibility and innovation became the benchmarks of Clinton's education policy with a reliance on a standards aligned curriculum, rigorous education standards, high-stakes assessment protocols, stronger accountability measures and improved teacher training frameworks.<sup>64</sup> While systemic reform tied to Title I funding encouraged states and localities to innovate, it could not mandate innovation across the fifty states, could not command that teachers understanding and implementation of the new standards would be seamless and could

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<sup>63</sup> United States, *Goals 2000: Improving America's Schools Act of 1994*, Public Law 103-382, 108 Stat. 3518, 20 October 1994.

<sup>64</sup> New York State, New York State Archives, States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project.

not secure uniformity of outcomes. States and districts with high levels of poverty often found embedding systemic reform and education innovation difficult because of the lack of capacity, expertise and funding. Therefore, as America approached the new millennium, standards, outcomes and accountability became enshrined in the lexicon of education.

### **The Market Era of Education Reform: An Eastonian Analysis**

Having explored the Market Reform era through a modified Skinnerian Analysis, it is appropriate to move from the historical lens to the Eastonian framework previously explored to analyse the development and transition of education policy agendas in both nations during two turbulent political eras.

Easton's conceptualisation of organic systems posits that both intra-social and extra-social pressures directly influence the development of the policy process.<sup>65</sup> While previous eras suggested the impact of political parties as intra-social forces shaping the policy process, two politicians dominated the dialogue and the shape of education policy. The political beliefs and political vision of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan, alongside the emergence of a powerful conservative political movement in both nations, underpinned the development of national education policy. Interestingly, neither Thatcher nor Reagan placed education high in the development of their respective domestic policy agendas. However, education as a social good funded by the state quickly became dominant in the discourses centring on the sharing of political power between the national and local governments. While Thatcher sought greater centralisation of power, Reagan appeared willing to cede as much power back to the individual states as possible. Although they took different approaches, they agreed on key Market Place ideals including affordability, effectiveness, outcomes and accountability to demonstrate organisational efficiency.

The extra-social pressures placed upon both nations in the late 1970s and 1980s impacted upon the political and social milieu of both Thatcher and Reagan. The

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<sup>65</sup> Easton, 1965.

lengthy and often deep recessions of the 1970s increased national budget deficits, stretched the available funding for social programmes and questioned the economic prowess of both nations. Both Reagan and Thatcher sought to reduce spending upon education as a means to trim budget deficits or sought evidence of impact and accountability as a means to secure additional funding for new education initiatives. Moreover, both nations saw their economic and political standing in the global community threatened and both pointed towards schools in general and education in particular as a cause for such a decline.

Easton's model suggests that intra-social and extra-social forces act as stressors on the existing political system, which responds to the stress through the formulation of new policy to insure its survival, the within puts of the Eastonian system.<sup>66</sup> Key dialogues in both nations centred upon the appropriateness of the curriculum to prepare children for the world of work including the concerns raised by business about the skills base of employees, the accountability of schools in demonstrating that curricula was rigorous, the call for standards to measure both effectiveness of education and the achievement of students and the derision of teachers as being ill prepared for the classroom. The development of the National Curriculum in England provided the policy response to these dialogues for it nationalised learning across the nation with a centralised curriculum so that regional variations and the personal preferences of teachers were minimised. The focus would be on strong foundational educational principles in subject knowledge to be mastered and the retreat from progressive educational ideas. While a National Curriculum could not be legislated in the American context because of the constitutional division of power that ceded control over education to the individual states, the Reagan, Bush and Clinton administrations clearly focused upon the development of rigorous curricula within the schools as a touchstone upon which to base education reforms. However, since the federal government could not mandate curricular reform, it could influence the debate through the funding of education with the insistence that accountability and achievement be robustly demonstrated as a qualification for Title I funds.

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

While intra-social and extra-social forces apply pressure to the political system and the within-puts seek homeostasis to insure systemic survival, the outputs of the system need consideration at this point.<sup>67</sup> In previous chapters, this often focused on the transition from one era to another; however, the consideration at this stage is not the transition to another era but a consideration of the outcomes at this stage of the Market Era of Reform. If the systemic drivers were improved educational outcomes through the adoption of the accountability and standards agenda, then the question focuses on whether or not this can be demonstrated and linked back to the educational policies developed in the Market Era of reform. A clear casualty of the Market Reform era was equality of educational opportunity. While there was acknowledgement that education needed to provide opportunities for all children, and it cannot be argued that there was a positional backtracking from the policy, the focus clearly was less on the opportunity to learn and more on the demonstration of learning. If the opportunity to learn is not strong, then how can the outcomes be robust for those lacking in opportunity? If the focus is on educational standards as a means to demonstrate educational rigour, then how can the silencing or derision of the education profession achieve this? If the equality of outcome is determined by high stakes examinations, then can all pupils across, all localities and irrespective of socio-economic background have an equal opportunity to meet the demands of the examination? The shift away from equality of educational opportunity to educational outcome and efficiency makes it far more likely that those gaps between groups of children will remain persistent because the focus is on the examination and the placement in league tables and not on the causes of systemic poverty.

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

## **Chapter Six**

### **The school context: policy and education within two communities – teachers' analysis and commentary on the interrelationship of national education agendas, their communities and their schools**

#### **Introduction**

The third of three data analysis chapters is a departure from the previous ones in many respects. First, the subject of this chapter is considerably narrower in scope; it examines the breadth of national policy discussed and analysed in the preceding chapters but within the context of one local community in each nation. Essentially, the reference point focuses not on national policy but on national policy as interpreted by, engaged with and implemented within the locality. The localities, one in New York State and one in South Yorkshire, are designed to be representative communities. They are not the largest of cities nor are they the smallest of towns but they exemplify localities challenged by significant issues related to socio-economic stress including economic viability, poverty and low levels of educational attainment. Secondly, the scope of the study is narrowed by shifting the focus from the national to the local and then further delimited to a specific school. The primary aim of creating a very narrow research lens pivots on the concept of an educational microcosm whereby the selection of the two localities and the two schools hinged upon their ability to represent broad social issues faced not only by their communities but, in many respects, the region and nation as well. Finally, the emphasis, thus far, has centred on academic discussions and analysis of policy and education history. By contrast, after a brief consideration of hermeneutics and data analysis, this chapter moves from the academics' conceptual frameworks of policy creation and implementation to the practitioners' appreciation of these same issues.

## **Spoken Word and Written Word A Brief Discussion of Ricoeur and Hermeneutics**

The movement away from the documentary evidence to the oral testimonies that dominate this chapter compels recognition of the contrast between the two types of evidentiary traditions informing this research project. The documents collected and analysed in the previous chapters comprised a variety of primary and secondary source records, including national policy documents, newspaper articles, academic treatises, transcribed public speeches and position papers. Their cohesiveness is linked not only to the historical periods that they illuminate but that they are all, by nature, written texts. Thus, the modified Skinnerian analytical approach proved to be appropriate because the documents provided a broad spectrum of texts for analysis where language and intentionality could be considered when they were examined side-by-side.

The defining characteristic of the compilation of documentary sources is that they all comprised written texts within the public domain, thereby allowing for accessibility and scrutiny. However, the research project encompasses not only written documentary evidence but also oral interviews whose essential characteristic is the spoken word. While not suggesting that these are incompatible research methods, each exhibits strikingly different traits that require careful consideration for data analysis.

The abiding question then becomes would the modified Skinnerian analytical approach be the most apposite when considering the spoken word? Although it would be tempting to use the modified Skinnerian approach as the analytical framework for all texts whether written or spoken, hermeneutics might provide a stronger analytical scaffold when considering the meaning of texts. Ricoeur's perspective on this tradition envisaged hermeneutics as a:

“...theory of interpreting discourse as a whole, including, but not confined to the symbols which any discourse contain. Essentially hermeneutics becomes a theory of text, which takes text as its starting point, but ultimately comes to see the world

as textual, insofar as human existence is expressed through discourse, and discourse is the invitation humans make to one another to be interpreted.”<sup>1</sup>

This notional understanding advanced by Ricoeur embodies both evidentiary traditions in the research project. As a theory focused on text, it hinges upon the analysis of texts not in isolation but as contained within the corpus of the debate. This inclusiveness of both major and minor texts in the historical analysis embraces an evolution of the discourse from inception through its development and subsequent acceptance or rejection by the society in which it occurs. On the other hand, since Ricoeur’s position expressly denotes discourse, which may be interpreted as speech, it then suggests that speech acts, including interviews, could be analysed through hermeneutics.

The primary obstacle encountered in adopting a hermeneutical stance for analysis is its embrace of written texts and the notional understanding of discourse. Hermeneutics is principally a textual tradition that views and understands the world through the written word.<sup>2</sup> It also recognises the overarching discourse within which these texts are situated and it is through the discourse in its totality that meaning can be discovered. The predicament for historians is unearthing and comprehending the different strands of evidence that contribute to the discourse so that they can then advance claims of meaning derived from it. This is a potentially problematic situation laden with the necessity to make judgments based upon what has been discovered through discourse. Ricoeur notes the difficulty historians face in this endeavour:

“For historians, the explanatory form is made autonomous; it becomes the distinct object of a process of authentication and justification. In this respect, historians are in the situation of a judge: placed in the real or potential situation of a dispute, they attempt to prove that one given explanation is better than another. They therefore seek ‘warrants,’ the most important of which is documentary proof.”<sup>3</sup>

The argument constructed by hermeneutics is complementary to that of the historian in its stated preference for documentary evidence, texts and the written word. The standpoint

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Simms, *Paul Ricoeur*. London: Routledge, 2003, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume 1*. Translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984, p.175.

seemingly presupposes that the discourse assumes the form of the written word solely and therefore rejects other historical evidence, including oral history testimonies, because it is not in the form of the written word. However, such a positional stance could eliminate significant pieces of historical evidence that could contribute and shape the discourse studied, potentially altering the meaning sought as part of the hermeneutical process. Acknowledging that this could be a precarious practice to adopt in the quest to discover meaning, Ricoeur did not exclude the inclusion of the spoken record into the discourse but viewed the spoken word as a written text rather than as oral communication. Therefore, transcription would be imperative so that it could assume the form of a written text to be studied, assessed and situated within the discourse.

The hermeneutical stance on texts and discourse both augments and detracts from the data analysis for this research project. The *raison d'être* of the project has not been to write a history of education policy. These have been written before. Rather, the goal has been to analyse teachers' assessments of policy initiatives and policy effectiveness in relation to their schools and communities and in conjunction with contemporary national policy debates as a way of suggesting future policy directions. The integration of teachers and their oral history testimonies suggests that the discourse in its totality must include both the documentary texts – the written word of hermeneutics – and the oral testimonies – the spoken word of hermeneutics. To exclude oral testimony would destroy the foundation upon which the project is constructed and alter the meaning of the discourse. However, to transform the conversations of oral histories into a text so that they can take the form of a document, be assessed as a document and take their place beside other documents within the discourse is questionable and not within the best interest of either the participants or the historian. Clearly, speech masquerading as text needs to be avoided but should not preclude the inclusion of speech into the discourse. Therefore, it is incumbent to historical discourse to discover a method of including the spoken word into the world of texts without fundamentally altering speech or the discourse in the process.

## **Spoken Word into Written Word An Argument In Opposition to Interview Transcription**

Ricoeur's hermeneutical stance on texts and textual meanings underpinned the previous discussion on the spoken word and the written word, the tensions between these two and the implications for this research project. Although a largely philosophical endeavour, the discussion raised concerns for the researcher whose primary methodological tool is oral history. It is essential, therefore, to explore the stance that the researcher took in the unorthodox approach to the analysis of the oral history research data.

Having discussed previously the characteristics of oral history interviews, the benefits of the method and the rationale for selection, the focus needs to shift to data analysis strategies. In a review of the literature of qualitative research methods, there is an abiding belief in transcription as the precursor to analysis.<sup>4</sup> The predominant argument suggests that for the sake of research rigour, interviews need to be analysed from the written rather than the spoken record although there is scope in the type of transcription deployed. Verbatim transcription of the interview creates an exhaustive written record of the verbal exchange between the participant and the researcher yet this presents drawbacks, one of which is copious footage. Once completed, the verbatim transcripts can be evaluated to assess the themes emerging from the collective interviews. However, a preliminary scrutiny of the tapes may suggest emerging themes that are believed to be more relevant for the research. Utilising these themes as a framework, the researcher can proceed with selective transcription, a process whereby portions of the interview are recaptured and re-recorded for analysis. Whilst the analysis of transcripts under either method can be biased, the potential is far greater in selective transcription where fragments are chosen while considerable data is discarded.

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<sup>4</sup> W. Newton Suter, *Introduction to Educational Research: A Critical Thinking Approach*. London: Sage, 2006, p. 325-328; Lorraine R. Gay, *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill, 1995, pp. 220-230; Judith Bell, *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Science*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987, pp. 70-79; J. Amos Hatch, *Doing Qualitative Research in Education Settings*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2002, pp. 71-146; Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 110-133; Thad Sitton, George L. Mehaffy and O.L. Davis, Jr., *Oral History: A Guide for Teachers (and Others)*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983, pp. 69-82.

Despite apprehensions over the appropriateness of transcription, verbatim transcription was employed initially. However, the process was inefficient and yielded a very small percentage of usable data and so it was rejected as a potential analytical tool. Having pinpointed emerging themes, selective transcription replaced the verbatim process in the hopes that it would yield richer data. Yet, the selective transcriptions were remnants of interviews that lacked a logical flow, often eliminated small bits of text destroying cohesiveness and were merely words on a page rather than vibrant conversations. Both methods manifested significant flaws, particularly centring on language and intimacy. In the process of transcription, judgments were rendered regarding the reporting of the participants' speech including how to represent emphasis, emotion and syntax. Only one participant, an English teacher, consistently spoke in grammatically correct sentences. The other participants reverted to conversational English, which is rarely grammatically correct, necessitating the imposition of grammatical structures upon their spoken testimony. Whilst this produced obvious benefits, including overall cohesiveness, the potential to alter the meaning of respondents' testimony arose. Moreover, transcriptions could not record the ostensive reference, could not record the interplay between participant and interviewer, could not record the emotions generated by the testimony and could not record the unique speech characteristics of a Yorkshireman or a western New Yorker.

The transcription process and the texts arising from it created tension and apprehension over not only their appropriateness but over the reporting of data in a research project of this character. It is evident from the literature that there are three concerns for qualitative researchers: transcription, efficiency and rigour. Efficiency needs to be considered but should not become the decisive factor in a research project. Oral historians accept that their type of data is notoriously inefficient to handle but its richness countermands the inefficiency of the data reporting. Having removed efficiency as a factor, transcription and rigour remain as the two dominant concerns for qualitative researchers. Is research rigour defined by the transcription of all interviews and does the transcription of interviews suggest that there will be rigour in the research process?

This researcher adamantly argues that rigour and transcription are not directly related and, therefore, transcription cannot ensure rigour, no more than rigour can be demonstrated through the production of interview transcripts. Interview transcription is employed to quell the concerns of the scientific research community, which rely heavily on documented experiments and statistical data rather than personal interviews. Since social scientists work in the realm of texts, it became common practice to create a protocol for the reporting of data that the research community could access, peruse and assess on its merits of reliability and possible triangulation of claims. The dominance of scientific research methods handicaps qualitative researchers with the burden of proving their rigour through the production of transcripts. Whilst transcripts can demonstrate the depth and content of an interview, they cannot verify research rigour, so the claim that they must be done is more custom than necessity.

Despite the assertion that custom rather than necessity drives transcription, oral historians do need to address how to document and create access opportunities for their research, if they wish to demonstrate rigour. There is a proud tradition of oral history within the history community; one whose lineage is traced by Thompson and that transcends the printing press and written word.<sup>5</sup> Both technological developments and research expectations have shaped the reporting of oral histories and have played a pivotal role in the development of the modern oral history movement. The accuracy of oral history has been debated largely because it is reliant on personal memory and not on documentary evidence. However, the ability to record oral history testimonies enabled historians to capture stories in a format that would allow for repeated access and scrutiny whilst preserving their participants' memories for posterity. At the same time, this newfound ability to record data imposed demands upon the oral historian who might feel compelled to transcribe the interviews to work within the established research conventions.

Despite the dominance of transcription, there are noted exceptions to this practice. Stephen Spielberg established the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History project to capture the oral histories of World War II Shoah survivors solely through videotape and

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<sup>5</sup> Thompson, 2000.

audiotape testimony.<sup>6</sup> The project utilised technology to capture not only the conversations but also a visual record of its intimacy including location, emotions evoked and the rapport between participant and interviewer.<sup>7</sup> Yet, within the research literature Wiersma provided the lone dissent with his contention that oral histories are distinctly different types of interviews requiring analysis not through transcription but through the listening of the audiotape recordings.<sup>8</sup> Gardner has discussed his belief that the transcription of oral testimonies is problematic and cannot capture the interview experience sufficiently.<sup>9</sup> Beckman also rejects transcription in favour of developing a listening guide to facilitate analysis.<sup>10</sup> In his considered discussion on the distinction between the historical documents commonly located in archives and the interview, Beckman concludes:

“Because of the singularity of the experience of interviewing, this same authority to interpret and to describe remains situated in the hands and understanding of the interviewer...the transcribed interview itself being a highly contextualized event which privileges the recorder/interviewer... The interviewer initiates the event, asks the questions and experiences the ostensive references to which the later reader or listener has no access. As the researcher listens to the tape or reads the transcription, mental pictures of the respondent, the location, the furniture and pictures upon the wall, the emotional tone and the personal interaction are re-situated in his/her mind. It is axiomatic that other historians reading the transcription are incapable of capturing or comprehending the privileged data in the same depth or manner as the interviewer.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> University of Southern California, Shoah Foundation Institute, The Institute for Visual History and Education, available from <http://dornsife.usc.edu/vhi/>.

Stephen Spielberg founded the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation in 1994, shortly after the release of his film, *Schindler's List*. The testimonies gathered included not only Jewish survivors of the Holocaust but also homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Roma, liberators and war crimes trial participants to name but a few. Researchers videotaped the interviews, which provide both an audio and a visual record, and these videotapes remain as the sole key to the testimony. There are no verbatim transcriptions of the interviews available to date.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> William Wiersma, *Research Methods in Education: An Introduction*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995, p.216.

<sup>9</sup> The conversations with Philip Gardner occurred over a period of supervisions as we explored different methods of documenting and analysing data for the project. Although he has utilised transcription for his own oral history projects, he is sympathetic to the claim that it was never the intention for these particular types of interviews to be recorded as text. These conversations, as well as the researcher's views regarding transcription and the impact that it has on data, have shaped the analytical framework for these testimonies.

<sup>10</sup> Jack Beckman, *Lessons to Learn - Charlotte Mason's House of Education and Resistance to Taxonomic Drift (1892 – 1960)*, PhD dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Beckman, 2003, pp. 74-75.

Finally, having asserted the claim that there are substantial differences between documents and oral testimonies, Beckman advances his ideas against transcription of oral testimonies claiming:

“Ideally the documents of the archive are of a nature primary and thus ratify themselves as credible, authentic and viable if they are reliable and original. However, the same may not be said of oral testimony given over to transcription; the recording itself is the primary source and becomes derivative and secondary when transcribed...In the act of transcribing, the researcher removes oral testimony from its position as a primary source by changing it into another mode, that of writing...Oral testimony, on the other hand, is reshaped and recast into writing and then read, sifted and quoted *from the transcript*...Orality is thus overcome by literacy, and the spoken mode with its unique structure and epistemological framework is lost – no longer spoken nor in reality ‘written’ but a shadow document.”<sup>12</sup>

The researcher’s predicament lay then in the choice between accepted best practice in the research field and the belief that transcription ought to be rejected because it fundamentally and irreparably alters the nature of the research with the concomitant result that the testimonies would reflect the researcher’s bias rather than the participants’ memories. The first difficulty lay not in justifying the position but creating a workable framework that would ensure rigour while preserving the integrity of the data. Like Beckman, the researcher believes that multiple listenings of the testimonies are necessary to understand what was being expressed, to hear the language used in the articulation of memories, to tease out the subtle similarities and differences amongst the testimonies and to search for the prevailing themes emerging from them. Unlike Beckman, the researcher chose not to develop a rigid listening guide but a listening protocol emerged. The initial analysis focused on the clarification of testimony and the emergence of follow-up questions. This was crucial especially for the interviews in South Yorkshire where months rather than days intervened between the different stages of the interviews. The penultimate listening attempted the identification of themes in an interview or a set of interviews. It was critical at this juncture to isolate subtexts and concerns in each community as well as pinpointing themes for comparison. This led to the development of an analytical chart used to record key pieces of testimony to support or countermand

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<sup>12</sup> Beckman, 2003, p. 81.

these themes The final listening reviewed the tapes for conflicting and corroborating testimony as well as clarifying any concerns about what had been said or how it had been said. With each review of the audiotapes, with each recollection of where the interview took place, with the demeanour of the participant refreshed in the researcher's own memory, with the person's choice of linguistic phrasing or intonation and with each conversational exchange between researcher and participants, it became apparent that this was the most appropriate method to record and present the data for the project.

While confidence in the convictions regarding the analysis is firm, the researcher must acknowledge that there will be reservations to the adopted approach. Having demonstrated that there is precedence for such a method, it is vital to secure a means of reporting the research data that would not burden those who chose to scrutinise both the data and the claims emanating from the testimonies. Although the analytical protocol is largely auditory in nature, specific responses from participants had to be catalogued for inclusion within the dissertation, this challenged and essentially contradicted the original rationale against transcription thereby potentially attracting criticism for the perceived duality employed. Yet, there is no accepted method of not including testimony within the dissertation and still demonstrate the research claims. Although it is evident that technology has surpassed that which was available to previous generations of oral historians, the community does not utilise it effectively to potentially defend their work as essentially oral in nature and therefore not bound by previous research protocols related to transcription. The detriments to using audiotape technology mean that oral historians must secure archive space for their work, must negotiate access to the tapes and must guard against the corrosive effects of time upon them. This virtually mandates that oral historians transcribe their work to ensure both access and preservation whilst subsequently demonstrating research rigour. However, today's technology allows the inclusion of a compact disc with a written report and in archives enabling researchers to hear testimonies, analyse both the data and the assertions made and debate the rigour of the research claims. This remains unorthodox and beyond the scope of current practice in academia, so whilst recognising that this is a battle that needs to be waged, it is not one that can be undertaken for this project.

## **Situating the Project: Profiles of Two Communities and Two Schools**

While it is infinitely preferable to evaluate two political systems, educational structures, communities or schools that are the equivalent in all aspects, social science and education research is predicated upon and seeks to explore the human condition thereby making it impossible to achieve such a duality. Accepting this caveat, an exploration of sampling and sampling methods adopted requires scrutiny because of the potential impact upon the quality of the research. Key factors to consider include sample size, representativeness, access, sampling strategy and the qualitative nature of the research.<sup>13</sup> While it is vital to address all of these, the issues of sample size and the representativeness of the sample warrant discussion at this juncture. The nature of the research, which was constructed in a comparative framework, delimited the initial boundaries while time and access further constricted the sample size.<sup>14</sup> Representativeness is achieved when a sufficient number of cases are selected to suggest that research findings can be generalised across the population.<sup>15</sup> Although achieving a representative sample is a goal for many research projects, it is not the intention to claim representativeness but to situate the documentary evidence alongside the oral testimony to discover the areas of agreement and areas of divergence between education policy and education practice. This enables the researcher to consider other factors in the construction of the research sample.

If it is accepted that duality is both unfeasible and unattainable, then the researcher must construct a hierarchical ordering of factors to facilitate the comparison while maintaining the integrity of the research. In creating this scale, the implications for the selection of criteria must be clearly understood whilst also making these as transparent as possible.

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<sup>13</sup> Louis Cohen, Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison, *Research Methods in Education*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 143-164.

<sup>14</sup> The initial conceptualisation of the research project proposed the selection of two different communities in New York State and England, one in the economic capital region and one in a northern community. However, issues of access emerged within New York City that compromised the viability of this framework so the decision to limit the project to two northern communities was accepted as both expeditious and within the spirit of the original project design.

<sup>15</sup> The following provide a detailed discussion on sampling and representativeness within research: Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Research Projects*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2007, pp. 6-28; Bell, 1999, pp. 126-127; and Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp. 143-184.

For example, examination results or the percentage of Free School Meals (FSM) might have equal merit as a delimiting factor. The latter may be considered more important in the hierarchy if the researcher focused on a concrete indicator of economic deprivation rather than the former which relies upon a body of research evidence to link examination under performance with ethnic, racial and socio-economic groups.

Four key characteristics emerged in the hierarchy when considering the inclusion of localities and schools within the research project. The first characteristic restricted the geographical boundaries while maintaining the focus upon national education policy. This concession resulted in a narrowing of the geographical scope to England and New York State.<sup>16</sup> While England and New York State are not comparable either as political units or by population, the argument to focus on one discrete political unit within each nation can be made. If this compromise had not been accepted, the comparison would have been cumbersome, formidable and perhaps yielding little relevant or appropriate data upon which to draw comparisons.

With poverty a primary focus of the research project, the selection of localities with significant and sustained poverty levels became the next crucial factor in the hierarchy. Poverty is not confined to urban areas so a decision on the inclusion of rural poverty needed consideration before selection of localities and school began. In the end, the researcher's interests in urban poverty and the link between poverty and educational outcomes resulted in the exclusion of rural locales. The third factor focused on economic viability, or more importantly, the deterioration of viability emerged as a linked factor to the poverty rates within the community. The fourth factor centred upon comparable

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<sup>16</sup> Predicating the comparison on the notional idea that England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were similar to each of the individual states within the United States, it would have been possible to choose any state for the research project. New York State was chosen because of its large urban population as well as the researcher's familiarity with the educational structures and policies within the state. Furthermore, it might be argued that a comparison between the four nations within the UK and states organised by region would have provided a stronger comparative framework because of two significant factors. First, the number of geographical regions in the US could be arranged to roughly parallel the four nations in the UK and secondly, regionalisation would create comparable population sizes. This approach was subsequently rejected because the US Constitution specifically grants reserved powers to the individual states, thereby allowing each state to create, fund and operate its individual education system. While regionalism would enhance a population comparison, it would significantly muddle the policy issues because it would entail the interpretation of federal education policy across several state governments.

population sizes between the two communities. Employing these four factors as key selection criteria, a number of possibilities emerged for inclusion.<sup>17</sup> The communities of Blakely, England and Braddock, New York became the focus of the research project after due consideration of the factors noted above and the history that follows.<sup>18</sup>

The 2000 Census measured the population of Braddock, a city in western New York State, at 292,648 making it the second most populous in the state but lagging considerably behind New York City's estimated population of eight million inhabitants.<sup>19</sup> More importantly, the 2000 Census confirmed a disheartening trend for a city once called the 'City of Light,' that once boasted the second largest rail terminus in the US and that once laid claim to a vast manufacturing and transportation network. Braddock, whose population at the turn of the twentieth century was 352,387 and which grew to half a million in the 1950s, suffered a serious and prolonged population decline.<sup>20</sup> In fact, the 2000 Census figures demonstrated a 10.8% decline in population in the past decade alone.

The precipitous decline in population raises questions as to why a city with much promise was facing such challenging circumstances. First, it should be noted that while Braddock's population dwindled, the populace of the surrounding counties demonstrated

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<sup>17</sup> While there were several localities within New York State that fit the criteria established in the hierarchy of factors, education funding became the determining factor. The project, as originally conceptualised, proposed a comparison of four communities within England and New York State along a north-south divide. The original project design focused on the two economic capital cities, both of which are located in the south, and two northern urban areas with the idea that much research, media attention and funding was directed towards education systems in the capitals, which was often perceived as unfair by northern communities. However, New York State's education funding framework is somewhat unique for the five most populous cities in the state including New York City. These cities rely on direct state funding for education rather than local property taxes as their major source of revenue. Since New York City was to be included in the original project, the corresponding city in New York State would need to be funded using the same method. A change in New York City's administrative structure prior to data collection meant that it was doubtful that the necessary permission and access could be granted in time, therefore, it was decided that both southern cities would be dropped from the project and the focus would centre only upon the northern cities.

<sup>18</sup> The names of the communities have been changed as per accepted research protocols with the renaming of localities, institutions and individuals undertaken to insure anonymity.

<sup>19</sup> United States, Census Bureau, 'State and County Quick Facts' <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/3651000.html>, 2007.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

robust growth.<sup>21</sup> Secondly, Braddock's economic infrastructure undoubtedly contributed to the decline in population and economic viability of the city. While geographic location, investment capital, industry and cheap immigrant labour made Braddock economically strong in the early twentieth century; these no longer provided economic stability. Indeed, external events that Braddock could not control changed its economic outlook dramatically in the late 1950s. The opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway in 1957 redirected shipping away from western New York thereby impacting upon Braddock's transportation relevance. In the 1970s and 1980s, the decline in manufacturing within the region precipitated the relocation of more factories and jobs, a particular feature of communities within the Rust Belt.<sup>22</sup> The downsizing and eventual closure of Bethlehem Steel, a major employer in the region since 1922, was a prime example of Rust Belt decline.<sup>23</sup>

The economic decline of Braddock leads directly to a discussion of the third criteria for the comparison: the level of poverty within the community. *Per capita* income statistics, as a measure of economic viability, suggest a grim picture for the community especially in comparison to state and national income statistics. In 1999, the *per capita* income for Braddock was \$14,991.00, while the per capita income for New York State was at \$23,389.00 and the national *per capita* income was at \$21,557.00.<sup>24</sup> Braddock's residents

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<sup>21</sup> White flight, the movement of the middle class from the inner-city to the suburbs is not an unknown phenomenon, and the growth of the suburbs surrounding Braddock suggests that this is the trend in western New York State. From the mid-twentieth century, Braddock's suburbs grew by 300,000 people while the city's population declined by 200,000

<sup>22</sup> The Rust Belt was noted for its downturn in economic production, population decline and loss of political power through a recalculation of electoral votes. The term became synonymous with once thriving industrial communities in the American Midwest and Northeast that had lost economic relevance because of shifting production outside of the region or nation or whose industry and goods were no longer in demand.

<sup>23</sup> Bethlehem Steel employed over 20,000 workers within the region in the mid 1960s and, while it produced record levels of raw and finished steel until the early 1970s, the impact of foreign competition was evident. By 1977, the company had reduced its workforce in the Braddock area to 8,500, closed most of its steel mills by 1983, had filed for bankruptcy in 2001 and was sold in 2003. In its wake, the company left employees who needed to be retrained for jobs outside of manufacturing, a poorly managed pension scheme and ceased the payment of health care and insurance premiums for former employees. Workers who had faced the uncertainties of unemployment were now dealing with even greater financial stresses with the reduction or withdrawal of benefits

<sup>24</sup> United States, Census Bureau, 'Factfinder' available from [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?\\_event=&geo\\_id=16000US3611000&geoContext=01000US%7C04000US36%7C16000US3611000&street=&county=buffalo&cityTown=buffalo&state=0400](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?_event=&geo_id=16000US3611000&geoContext=01000US%7C04000US36%7C16000US3611000&street=&county=buffalo&cityTown=buffalo&state=0400)

earned approximately 36% less than other New Yorkers and 30% less than Americans in general. However, *per capita* income does not provide a complete economic picture and, for the purposes of this research project, poverty statistics need consideration. According to the 2000 US Census, Braddock's poverty rate was 26.60%, while poverty rates in New York State and the US were listed as 14.60% and 12.40% respectively.<sup>25</sup> Comparatively, poverty was 45% higher in Braddock than in New York State and it was 53% higher than the nation.<sup>26</sup> It is evident that Braddock, in contrast to county, state and nation, was and continues to be a city with significant economic issues that mimic the population decline and economic stagnation characteristic of the Rust Belt.

Blakely, a city in northern England, emerged as the counterpart to Braddock in the identified key demographic factors. The 2001 UK Census reported its' population to be 218,063.<sup>27</sup> Approximately, 33% of Blakely's population was concentrated in the city centre while the remainder inhabited the surrounding borough. Unlike Braddock whose population declined over the course of the last half-century, Blakely's population demonstrated sustained growth until the 2001 Census when there was a slight decrease.<sup>28</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, Blakely's population was 145,232 and had grown to 221,342 by 1951, representing a 34.50% increase in five decades. The population grew considerably more slowly in the latter half of the century where, by 1991, the population

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[0US36& zip=& lang=en& sse=on&ActiveGeoDiv=geoSelect& useEV=&pctxt=fph&pgsl=160& subme nuId=factsheet\\_1&ds\\_name=ACS\\_2005\\_SAFF& ci\\_nbr=null&qf\\_name=null&reg=null%3Anull& keyw ord=& industry=](http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/3611000.html), 2007 and United States, Census Bureau, 'Quick Facts' available from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/3611000.html>, 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> United States, Census Bureau, 'State and County Quick Facts,' available from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36029.html>, 2007. While comparison to the state and nation are important, it is also vital to look at Braddock's economic picture compared to the surrounding county, which had benefited from the regional population shifts. The population of the surrounding county was 950,265, the *per capita* income for the county was \$20,357.00 and its poverty rate was measured at 13.40%. Making a comparison again between city and county to show the economic disparity between the two, Braddock's *per capita* income was 26.50% less than the county's and its poverty rate was 49% higher

<sup>27</sup> Great Britain, UK Statistics Online, available from <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pop2001/barnsley.asp>, 2007.

<sup>28</sup> A Vision of Britain Through Time, available from [http://vision.edina.ac.uk/data\\_cube\\_chart\\_page.jsp?data theme=T POP&data cube=N TPop&u id=10211980&c\\_id=10001043&add=N](http://vision.edina.ac.uk/data_cube_chart_page.jsp?data_theme=T_POP&data_cube=N_TPop&u_id=10211980&c_id=10001043&add=N), 2007.

was 224,449.<sup>29</sup> The question then is not what led to a significant population shift, as was the case in Braddock, but what led to the retardation in population growth.

Key factors in Blakely's economic history mimic the experiences in Braddock, while also explaining the constriction of growth experienced in the 1990s. Geographically well positioned in northern England, the prevalence of a market and the development of the coal industry necessitated strong transport links to export coal and other goods to the surrounding region. Blakely's economic fortunes were tied to linen manufacturing, glass making and coal mining. By the turn of the century, the pits employed the greatest number of workers within the community and this trend continued into the 1930s, where the number working in the pits around Blakely numbered 38,969, a number that far out paced employment in the service industry.<sup>30</sup> However, despite robust employment, two dominant issues emerged for Blakely's coal industry as the twentieth century progressed: the finite capacity of the pits and the cheap coal imports from Eastern Europe. Although the primary coal seam in the borough was mined into extinction by 1941, the 24 ancillary seams were part of a proposal to keep the 15,000 remaining jobs in Blakely in situ into the twenty-first century.<sup>31</sup> The Miner's Strike in 1984-1985 prompted the death of coal mining in Blakely and most of northern England. Blakely's two remaining pits were closed in 1992.<sup>32</sup> The pit closures meant that blue-collar workers faced not only intermittent unemployment but also required retraining to secure jobs in Blakely's growing service economy. While this was available many of the pitmen were part of a generations-long mining tradition and staunch Labour supporters who often found the Thatcher Government's policies toward miners and mining unpalatable. It has been remarked that a long tradition of being on the dole replaced the proud tradition of mining within the community.

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> A Vision of Britain Through Time, available from, [http://vision.edina.ac.uk/data\\_cube\\_table\\_page.jsp?data\\_theme=T\\_IND&data\\_cube=N\\_IND\\_redist&u\\_id=10211980&c\\_id=10001043&add=Y](http://vision.edina.ac.uk/data_cube_table_page.jsp?data_theme=T_IND&data_cube=N_IND_redist&u_id=10211980&c_id=10001043&add=Y), 2007.

<sup>31</sup> History of Barnsley, available from [http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/bguk/Council\\_Democracy/About%20Barnsley/History\\_of\\_Barnsley\\_PID999](http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/bguk/Council_Democracy/About%20Barnsley/History_of_Barnsley_PID999), 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

Having identified the communities in which to situate the research project, further consideration needed to be undertaken in the selection of one secondary school in each community. The abiding issue in narrowing the focus to one community and one school was the focus on an educational microcosm where the schools were broadly representative of the social issues facing the localities. Whilst delimiting the study to reflect social issues, the school's historical links to the community needed consideration. To span the scope of the project, the schools needed to exist prior to 1964 with the notional understanding that schools, in many ways, reflect the community's successes and challenges. Since the project's lens was narrow, it was necessary that the school and, more importantly, its teachers could trace a community narrative, one that detailed the school and community's responses to educational reform.

With the focus of the project converging upon educational disadvantage and poverty, additional factors for selection needed to be carefully established so that they provided the relevant data to narrow the choice of schools. Since the project focused on educational disadvantage, the eligibility for FSM became a key selection criterion. Schools, which draw students from the community external to them, are often linked to the socio-economic fortunes of the families within the community. A high FSM eligibility rate may correlate to higher rates of community poverty. Although there is a corpus of literature that suggests the interconnection between socio-economic status and educational disadvantage, would this statistic provide enough data to narrow the selection of schools or would it present a skewed picture?<sup>33</sup> While the criteria for eligibility for

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<sup>33</sup> For a consideration of the interconnection between socio-economic class and educational disadvantage, please see the following: Stephen Ball, 'Education markets, choice and social class: the market as a class strategy in the UK and the USA.' *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 14/1, 1993, pp. 3-19; Vincent Roscigno, 'Race and the reproduction of educational disadvantage.' *Social Forces* 76/3, 1998, pp. 1033-1061; Louise Archer, Merryn Hutchings and Alistair Ross, *Higher Education and Social Class: Issues of Exclusion and Inclusion*. London: Routledge Falmer, 2003; Geoff Whitty, 'Education, social class and social exclusion.' *Journal of Education Policy* 16/4, 2001, pp.287-295; Richard Breen, Ruud Luijkx, Walter Müller and Reinhard Pollak, 'Long-term trends in educational inequality in Europe: class inequalities and gender differences.' *European Sociological Review* 26/1, 2010, pp.31-48; Grace Kao and Jennifer Thompson, 'Racial and ethnic stratification in educational achievement and attainment.' *Annual Review of Sociology* 29/2003, 2003, pp. 417-442; Steve Strand, 'The limits of social class in explaining ethnic gaps in educational attainment.' *British Educational Research Journal* 37/2, 2011, pp. 197-229; Steve Strand, 'School effects and ethnic, gender and socio-economic gaps in educational achievement at age 11.' *Oxford Review of Education* 40/2, 2014, pp. 223-245 and Steve Strand, 'Ethnic group, sex and

FSM may differ between the two communities, this was a socio-economic constant used within education and one that can give a picture of the level of deprivation within a school.<sup>34</sup> For example, in Braddock, 68.40%, 66.50% and 63.70% of students were eligible for the federal FSM programme between 1998 and 2001 across the school district.<sup>35</sup> At Elbert Hubbard High School, one of sixteen secondary schools within Braddock and the school eventually selected for participation, 90.50%, 90.20% and 94.70% of students were eligible for FSM in the same time period.<sup>36</sup> While the data suggesting the existence of deprivation in NYS at the district and school level was robust, locating data with similar scope proved difficult in England.<sup>37</sup> Between 1998 and 2000, 20.30% and 14.80% of students were eligible for FSM in Blakely although it was estimated that a further 5% to 10% of families did not apply for assistance.<sup>38</sup> However, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) only reported statistical data for regions rather than localities in 1999-2000, thereby limiting the ability to analyse deprivation. Moreover, this raised questions relating to the utilisation of FSM statistics as the sole characteristic for the inclusion of a school for only local level data could be employed and which might, in the case of English schools, provide very limited information upon which to make decisions.

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economic disadvantage: associations with pupils' educational progress from baseline to the end of key stage 1.' *British Educational Research Journal* 25/2, 1999, pp.-179-202.

<sup>34</sup> While free school meal programmes are embedded within educational institutions on the primary and secondary levels in both nations, they are not without controversy. A primary concern is the link between public assistance or public benefits and social stigma, which can potentially lead to a reduced uptake of these programmes by parents. A secondary concern relates to the awareness that families from lower socio-economic backgrounds have of these programmes as well as their ability to access and apply for funding.

<sup>35</sup> New York State, The State Education Department, *New York State School District Report Card for Buffalo City School District. An Overview of Academic Performance*, available from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/reprcd2000/140600010000.pdf>, 2002.

<sup>36</sup> New York State, The State Education Department, *The New York State School Report Card for Grover Cleveland High School in Buffalo City School District. An Overview of Academic Performance*, available from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/reprcd2000/140600010103.pdf>, 2000 and New York State, The State Education Department, *New York State School Report Card. Comprehensive Information Report*, available from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/reprcd2003/cir/140600010103.pdf>, 2003.

<sup>37</sup> In consultation with the Department for Education, it was explained that statistics for free school meals were published historically on the national and local authority levels but not at the school level where it was argued that the data might be too small and might lead to unwitting disclosure of sensitive information for families. However, from 2011, there will be publication of free school meals at the school level although editing will be employed should the sample size be too small. [Phone conversation with DfE policy coordinator on 3 April 2012.]

<sup>38</sup> Great Britain, Department for Education and Employment, *Statistics of Education. Schools in England. 1998*, available from <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000130/1045x.pdf>, 1998 and Great Britain, Department for Education and Employment, *Statistics of Education, Schools in England, 2000*, available from <http://www.education.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000192/index.shtml>, 2000.

In response to this concern, a second factor was adopted, one that converged upon educational outputs: high stakes examination results. The most frequently cited accountability measure within US education is high school graduation rates, with high school diplomas awarded after students have passed several high stakes examinations. Therefore, it would be apposite to utilise high school graduation rates as a selection criteria, even though a direct correlation could not be made to GCSE results in England. However, this posed the second problem. While graduation rates are widely reported by states to comply with federal programme guidelines, questions have been raised as to the reliability of these statistics.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, the scores for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Regents examinations, which were required for graduation in NYS and which were published in all district and school report cards from 1998, became the selection criterion. Between 1998 and 2002, the average percentage on the ELA Regents in Braddock was 74%, 60% and 85% while the average percentage on the Mathematics Regents was 57%, 30% and 82% respectively.<sup>40</sup> When Braddock's scores were compared to those for New York State, they were 4% to 8% lower on the ELA Regents and 9% to 38% lower on the Mathematics Regents examinations.<sup>41</sup> This, however, did not provide a clear picture of attainment across the 16 secondary schools within the school district. In 1998-1999, the schools' performance on the ELA Regents ranged from 23% to 100%

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<sup>39</sup> Sam Dillon, 'States' data obscure how few finish high school.' *The New York Times*, available from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/20/education/20graduation.html?scp=27&sq=%27high+school+graduation+rates%27&st=nyt>, 20 March 2008. Although the New York State Education Department requires the reporting of graduation data for individual schools as a means of compliance with the federal *No Child Left Behind* policy, this data was not readily reported in the annual school district or individual school report cards prior to 2005. While data was provided on the number of graduates and the number enrolled within a specific year group, there were also 'ungraded' students and SEN students included within the school report card with no indication if they were included within the final tabulation for graduation. When calculating the actual graduation rate from the data, the percentage far exceeded the rates reported in the local press. Dillon suggests that a considerable discrepancy exists between graduation rates as reported by the states and those estimated by the federal government. Using New York State as one example, he estimated an 11.70% difference between the rates, with the state reporting the higher figure of 77%.

<sup>40</sup> New York State, Department of Education, *The New York State School Report Cards. Buffalo City School District*, available from <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/>, 1998-2002. It should be noted that New York State did not make the 1999-2000 report cards readily available so 2001-2002 was included to demonstrate results over time. Additionally, the inclusion of an additional year provided further data upon which to draw particularly when data collection in NYS commenced later than in England. Utilising the statistics provided by the state, underperformance in Mathematics when compared to ELA is demonstrated across state and local levels, yet there is no clear explanation within the literature as to why there was a significant dip in attainment in 2001-2002.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

while the percentages on the Mathematics Regents ranged from 0% to 100%. This pattern continued for 2000-2001, where there was a 97% range on both ELA and Mathematics Regents scores, and in 2001-2002 where ELA percentages ranged from 6% to 99% and Mathematics percentages ranged from 6% to 98%.<sup>42</sup> Not only was there was a considerable variation between individual schools within Braddock in terms of achievement on but this extended when comparing the schools against the district and state achievement.

In contrast to the American model, English compulsory education culminates with the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), which may lead to further training, including vocational or university preparation. Between 1998 and 2001, the average percentage of students in Blakely achieving at least five A\*- C grades on their GCSEs was 29.80%, 32.40%, 34.90% and 35% respectively. When compared to the average percentage for England over the same period, Blakely underperformed by approximately 15%.<sup>43</sup> Whereas the school level data could not be ascertained for FSM, it was readily available for GCSE attainment, which provided a more fulsome portrait of the 15 schools within the local authority. In 1998, the average percentage reported by schools ranged from 13% to 64% five A\*- C grades and demonstrated a small overall increase in 1999 where the average percentage ranged from 15% to 67%. The results for 2000 were less robust with a range of 18% to 53% but these were redressed in 2001 with percentages ranging from 11% to 88% five A\*- C grades.<sup>44</sup>

Having scrutinised the available FSM data and high stakes examinations, whilst considering the research questions and the research design, decisions needed to be made

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. It should be noted that within the school district there was an alternative secondary school, which scored the lowest set of scores on both Regents examinations across the three years, and a selective secondary school, which achieved the highest scores. There are also a number of vocational and technical schools within the district whose scores are particularly low in Mathematics.

<sup>43</sup> Great Britain, Department for Education, *Performance Tables 1994-2010. Secondary School Performance Tables*, available from <http://www.education.gov.uk/performance-tables>, 1998-2001.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. It should be noted that one school within the local authority was an independent school with a faith ethos and a considerably smaller intake than its counterparts. This school's GCSE average represented the uppermost score within the local authority for 1998, 1999 and 2001. If these scores were disregarded, then the next highest average score ranged from 51% to 53% in these years and was achieved by the only 11-18 comprehensive schools within the local authority. This school also had a strong grammar school tradition before converting to a comprehensive in 1957.

regarding which schools would be included within the research project. With each locality having approximately 15 schools for consideration, there was an initial narrowing based upon levels of deprivation and achievement. In terms of high stakes examination achievement, this eliminated the upper 50% of schools for each locality because these schools drew their student cohorts predominately from communities and families where economic disadvantage was not significant. Additionally, schools that provided alternative curriculum provision or were designated for children with special educational needs were also disregarded as they were not truly the focus of the research questions.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the remaining schools were substantially a purposive sample, where a small group of potential research subjects with specific criteria are approached until participation was agreed and the requisite number of respondents granted permission, which, in this case, was one school from each locality.<sup>46</sup>

A two-tier process was utilised to approach the schools in Braddock with permission initially sought from the Board of Education, which acted as a potential gatekeeper to the schools and it was anticipated that its approbation would facilitate any school's decision on participation. Therefore, a description of the research project and goals was sent to the Board of Education, which also included a request to contact the schools and carry out the research defined within the letter. Permission to make initial contact was granted although with the caveat that it would be the school's principal who would decide ultimately if the research project could be accommodated within the school. Conversely, the Blakely LEA was not approached for permission to conduct the research project within the locality prior to disseminating letters to the schools identified as potential participants for the research project.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> In New York State, school districts may establish secondary schools that provide alternative pathways to high school graduation. These schools generally admit students who are at risk of dropping out of high school or who have dropped out but have been persuaded to return to formal education. Many of the students are academically behind their peers so the schools may focus on vocational training and life-skills as opposed to the academic curriculum that is mandated for a high school diploma. Should students complete the alternative programme, they are generally awarded a local diploma, which does not include the mandatory Regents examinations needed for the traditional NYS Regents diploma.

<sup>46</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp. 156-157.

<sup>47</sup> While it is acknowledged that both the school district and the local education authority would assume the potential role of gatekeeper, the approach in NYS was rooted in the previous experience with the New York City Public Schools and the requirement to gain the approval of the New York City Board of

It would be have been ideal to say that 50% of the sample had responded affirmatively to the request for their participation, thereby requiring a further narrowing of the criteria or widening the scope of the project. However, only one school in both communities agreed to consider the research proposal. Meetings were then arranged between the headteachers and researcher to further discuss the scope of the research project, including the project's rationale, access requirements, ethical considerations, timescales and potential benefits to the school. Since the focus of the project was on tracing policy history through teachers' engagement with and assessment of educational policies in relation to the ability of policy to potentially ameliorate poverty, permission to work with students was unnecessary. Agreement was reached on the timescales involved and on the granting of access to teachers within the school although with the caveat that teachers would need to decide individually if they wanted to participate.<sup>48</sup>

As has been previously explored within the literature review, the inherent nature of comparative education is predicated on comparisons that can juxtaposed but can never truly be identical. While both John Locke School in Blakely and Elbert Hubbard High School in Braddock shared key characteristics, they were not replicas of each other, a factor that needs acknowledgement. While their histories spanned the parameters defined in the project, their histories differ, which will be explored later in this chapter. Secondly, while the schools enrolled approximately the same number of students, there were demographic differences that can neither be circumvented nor can they fully explored in this dissertation. Approximately 95% of students enrolled at Elbert Hubbard High School came from ethnic minority groups with African-American and Latino-American groups most frequently represented in the student population. On the other hand, the student cohort enrolled at John Locke School was almost entirely White British.<sup>49</sup> Notwithstanding the potential effect that this could have upon a school's overall

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Education for any research project within its boundaries. It was this requirement, including the anticipated time delay in being granted permission to do research in the schools that effectively eliminated the locality from consideration.

<sup>48</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp. 143-144.

<sup>49</sup> New York State, Department of Education, *The New York State School Report Card for Grover Cleveland High School. Accountability and Overview Report, 2005-2006*, available from <https://reportcards.nysed.gov/files/2005-06/AOR-2006-140600010031.pdf>, 2005.

achievement, this impacted the school's historical narratives, which will be considered later.

Admitting that there are anomalies then allows for an exploration of the similarities between the two schools. First, at Elbert Hubbard High School, 90.50%, 90.20% and 94.70% of students were eligible for FSM in the three-year time period prior to the start of data collection.<sup>50</sup> Although specific school data could not be reliably ascertained for an analysis of eligibility for FSM across time at Joseph Locke School, the school was located in and drew its cohort of students largely from two housing estates with relatively high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Secondly, both schools demonstrated achievement that indicated under-performance when compared to other schools within the locality. Although neither school was at the bottom of their respective league tables, they rarely moved above the middle. Between 1998 and 2001, the ELA scores for Elbert Hubbard High School were pegged at 61%, 31% and 75%, thereby demonstrating a pattern of under-achievement when compared to the average percentage for the City of Braddock or NYS. On the Mathematics Regents, the school recorded 86%, 15% and 70% respectively. Ironically, the school achieved robust Mathematics results in 1998-1999, however, the attainment dip in the following years, which was demonstrably below the New York State average, arguably led to further scrutiny of the school's performance and would ultimately lead to its closure.<sup>51</sup> Equally, a pattern of underachievement emerged at Joseph Locke School between 1998 and 2001. The percentage of students earning at least five A\*- C grades at GCSE was 26%, 18%, 26% and 25% respectively. When the school's performance was measured against achievement across Blakely, the range of under performance was between 3.80% and 15.40%. Furthermore, when comparing the school's GCSE results to national data, Joseph Locke School's performance ranged between 20.30% and 30.90% below the national average.

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<sup>50</sup> New York State, The State Education Department, *The New York State School Report Card for Grover Cleveland High School in Buffalo City School District. An Overview of Academic Performance*, available from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/repcrd2000/140600010103.pdf>, 2000 and New York State, The State Education Department, *New York State School Report Card. Comprehensive Information Report*, available from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/repcrd2003/cir/140600010103.pdf>, 2003.

<sup>51</sup> It should be noted that the school had a high percentage of students with English as an Additional Language (EAL) needs, which would have impacted on achievement on both examinations but, more particularly, on the ELA examination.

Although there were more extreme examples of underachievement in both Braddock and Blakely in the four years prior to the start of data collection, both schools met the sampling criteria and considerations that potentially could address the research questions posed. First, the research design was centred upon a comparative analysis between two nations, two localities and two secondary schools with no intention to claim representativeness. Rather, by focusing upon two schools, the research design created a microcosm where educational policy history and the schools' responses to them might be able to be extrapolated across local, regional and national policy levels to consider how the microcosm could be representative of wider social and educational issues. Therefore, the small sample size was justified, as it would allow for a manageable research project to be developed that would address the research questions posed. Secondly, while many approaches could have been taken to gain access to teachers, including not situating the project in specific schools, it was believed that the most expeditious manner to secure access would be through using the network of teachers within each school. Therefore, the granting of access to schools was paramount for it would allow for an engagement with potential participants in the research project. Finally, the research project was qualitative by nature so purposive sampling and convenience sampling were the appropriate approaches to adopt.<sup>52</sup>

### **Ethical Considerations Implications for the Research Project**

Having identified the communities and schools in which to situate the research project, it was essential to consider the ethical frameworks and constraints that would govern the research process. Whilst the research project was rooted in the narratives of educational history, the development of these narratives would be advanced through documentary evidence and oral histories. At the outset of any research project, the researcher needs to consider the nature of the ethical dilemma, one which "...requires researchers to strike a

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<sup>52</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp. 143-164.

balance between the demands placed upon them as professional scientists in pursuit of truth and their subjects' rights and values potentially threatened by the research."<sup>53</sup> It is this ability to strike a clear compromise between the research agenda of the researcher and the responsibility towards research participants that defines good practice in research ethics. This must be the foundation that frames the research project for research that moves into questionable ethical terrain may not be accepted as rigorous and valid research.

At the project's inception, it was important to establish the ethical guidelines that would underpin a project where its' cross-cultural nature meant that data collection would occur in two nations. Since the researcher was situated in the United Kingdom and was a doctoral student at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge, the decision was made to utilise the ethical guidelines established by the British Educational Research Association (BERA). Rather than adhere to different ethical guidelines in the contrasting research contexts and risk potentially competing guidance, it was believed that the spirit of the BERA guidelines would be appropriate in a cross-cultural research context:

“The underpinning aim of the guidelines is to enable educational researchers to weigh up all aspects of the process of conducting educational research within any given context (from student research projects to large-scale funded projects) and to reach an ethically acceptable position in which their actions are considered justifiable and sound.”<sup>54</sup>

The researcher's primary responsibility is to the participants who contribute to the project.<sup>55</sup> If the teachers and administrators who agreed to participate in oral history interviews were to be active participants, then they needed a clear understanding of the rationale underpinning the project, the parameters defining the project and who would have access to the research. Initially, this was discussed with the headteacher of each school so that they had a comprehensive description of the project, the potential outcomes and the audience for whom the research was intended. This was discussed subsequently

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<sup>53</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp. 75.

<sup>54</sup> British Educational Research Association, *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004)*, available from <https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/ethica1.pdf?noredirect=1>, 2004.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 5-6.

with each participant who expressed an interest in the project so that they could weigh the potential advantages and disadvantages prior to making an informed decision about their participation. Participants were verbally reacquainted with the aims of the research project, their rights as participants and their right to withdraw without prejudice from the project at any point in time. They were encouraged to seek clarifications on their rights within the research process, on any aspect of the project and on the researcher's responsibility to ensure that all participants were duly protected. All participants, whether at an institutional or personal level, were given the opportunity to agree to engage in the research process and therefore provided verbal informed consent, which is a fundamental tenet in research that is ethically sound.<sup>56</sup>

During the oral history interviews where the participants may discuss professional issues or memories that may be of a sensitive nature, it is vital that the potential for distress be taken into account and ameliorated where possible.<sup>57</sup> Teachers were interviewed in venues where they felt comfortable and were convenient for them to ease potential discomfort. By doing so, they were in familiar surroundings and could determine the length of the interview, if they so desired. Most interviews took place in the two schools, although the participants determined if they wished to be interviewed in the office allocated for the interviews or in their classroom. While most teachers chose to be interviewed in the office environment, there were a few who chose their classroom. Those in the latter group often used artefacts in their classroom, including pictures or bulletin boards, as props to spur remembrance. There were two interviews that took place in teachers' homes because both participants were retired and wished not to travel to the school for the interviews. With the participants in surroundings where they were in control, the interviews proceeded but teachers were free to not answer questions, if they believed that they could not comment on an issue or if they simply did not want to do so. They were also allowed to stop the tape recording of the interview at any time, to come off the record or to simply seek clarification before beginning the tape again.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p.6

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. pp. 7-8.

A potential area for distress for any participant would be the intended audience of the research and the potential impact that this could have upon the participants. Therefore, “researchers must make known to participants...any predictable detriment arising from the process or findings of the research.”<sup>58</sup> While the nature of the research project centred upon education policy within a national and local context, the interviews did touch upon recent education policy as a means of drawing comparisons or highlighting issues that transcended historical policy debates. The most notable example of this would be discussions of their experience of leadership within the schools and the impact that this may have had on the school’s overall achievement. The researcher made potential participants aware that there was agreement with each head teacher that a copy of the dissertation would be shared with the schools, but there were no existing agreements to share this with the respective local education authorities. While it was not anticipated that this would cause detriment to individuals, potential participants were made aware of this and could then make a determination about what they chose to share or not share within the interview.

Whilst seeking to avoid or ameliorate participants’ distress in the research process, it is simultaneously important to accord to them the protection of their right to privacy.<sup>59</sup> In order to protect the privacy of the individuals, they were guaranteed that their testimonies would be treated confidentially. To facilitate this, all identifying data for the schools and the participants were anonymised. While the gender of the participants was reported, all names and background information were changed to insure that remarks could not be easily linked to specific individuals. Furthermore, none of the participants was asked to waive the right to confidentiality and none volunteered to do so. It was anticipated that these safeguards would further act as a means of alleviating distress over confidentiality, privacy or readership.

Notwithstanding the above elements of good practice in educational research, the process of debriefing participants at the end of the research process is also seen as fundamental

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p.8.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p.8.

within the processes of ethically sound research.<sup>60</sup> As detailed earlier in the chapter, the conceptualisation of oral history as a conversation between researcher and participant led to the decision that interviews would not be transcribed. Admittedly, fragments of the conversations have been transcribed to assist in the development of the historical narrative and argumentation but complete transcriptions were not available for participants to review, comment upon or revise their testimony. However, participants were given the assurance that they could contact me at any time to discuss their testimony or to ask that the testimony not be included in the final dissertation. Full contact details were given to each participant and the respective headteachers to facilitate the process.

It is anticipated that the conventions employed from inception to completion of the research project demonstrated a conscious aspiration to conform to the ethical conduct that is considered good practice within educational research<sup>61</sup>. The protection of participants' rights has been paramount with safeguards built into the research process to insure this. Furthermore, the researcher possesses a clear understanding of the responsibilities required of those engaged in education research and has endeavoured to comply with these not only in working with participants but in the development of methodological tools, the analysis of data and the reporting of the research findings.

### **Teachers' Narratives: Tracing School and Policy Histories through Oral History**

Having considered the implications in the choice of oral history as one of the key methodological tools for the research project, having contemplated the rationale for the selection of the communities and schools in which to situate the research project and having explored the ethical guidelines inherent in educational research, it is apropos to explore the data that emerged from the oral history interviews.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

An exploration of the process in which the interviews were secured also warrants scrutiny as the headteachers chose different tactics in which to promote the research project. In Blakely, the headteacher initially scheduled a number of interviews with people who she believed met the research parameters and who had at least an hour of free time to meet with me in her office. While this was an extraordinarily generous gesture from her, this led to a very formal atmosphere, which was difficult to overcome. In addition to this, the teachers selected represented a very narrow group of faculty members with many of them being drawn only from Joseph Locke School.<sup>62</sup> At the end of the first day, the Acting Deputy Headteacher asked if the interviews went well and while they had, the researcher expressed that it was a somewhat limited group. By the next day, she had arranged for the researcher to meet with a number of faculty members who were drawn from different subject backgrounds, different responsibility groups within the school and different stages of their teaching careers. Additionally, she felt that a dedicated office was more appropriate and provided access to one, which did not have the psychological association that headteacher's office can have within school communities. She also encouraged the researcher to ask the teachers to suggest others who might be able to contribute further to the historical narratives that were emerging. Therefore, convenience sampling, which involves the selection of the participants who are geographically close to the interviewer yet meet the criteria, became the primary method of securing the research sample.<sup>63</sup>

Conversely, the selection process in Braddock initially drew on volunteer sampling, where teachers responded to the headteacher's request that they speak to me.<sup>64</sup> Whereas the headteacher in Blakely made the initial approach to her faculty members, the headteacher in Braddock simply turned on the public address system and announced to the entire school that a "very important researcher from Cambridge wanted to speak to any and all teachers who might have a free moment or two. She is located in the faculty

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<sup>62</sup> While this will be explored further later in this section, Joseph Locke School merged with St. Vincent's School in 1992. Declining enrolment at St. Vincent's as well as lack of available space to expand at the Joseph Locke site necessitated the merger. The amalgamation resulted in the new school being situated on the site of St. Vincent's School but with the retention of the Joseph Locke name. Although this had occurred a decade prior to the start of the research project, it was evident that some lasting scars within the faculty remained.

<sup>63</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, pp. 155-156.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p.160.

lounge on the first floor so please go and speak to her.”<sup>65</sup> Although the headteacher enjoyed remarkable support from his faculty, this approach did not initially garner many respondents. Having sat alone for two days in the faculty lounge, which was not well used, the researcher struck up a conversation with the security guard who used the lounge. She made initial suggestions about whom to approach and, because she was friendly with a number of the staff, she facilitated early introductions. Having secured a small number of initial interviews, the researcher asked each interviewee if they could identify another faculty member whom they believed would be someone who could speak to the areas explored in the interviews. This generally led to a number of names being proffered and most teachers who were suggested were willing to be interviewed when approached directly. While the faculty lounge remained a potential place to meet interviewees, this proved to be too open a space for people to speak. Therefore, most interviews were conducted in faculty offices, the under utilised school library or vacant classrooms.

The sample size for the oral history research was 35 including both headteachers and a significant number of the senior management teams in both schools. Overall, there were 22 males and 13 females interviewed where males constituted 63% and females 37% of the research population. While parity in the size of the research sample was not a conscious driver, 18 and 17 interviews were conducted at Joseph Locke and Elbert Hubbard respectively. However, differences in the schools’ samples did emerge. At Joseph Locke, males dominated the research sample with 72% of the interviewees being male. There were no ethnic minorities in the sample and the vast majority of the respondents were advanced in their teaching careers. The average teaching career in Blakely was 25.8 years. On the other hand, there were an almost equal number of male and female teachers at Elbert Hubbard who volunteered to participate in the research project. At Elbert Hubbard, 53% of the interviewees were male while 47% were female; two participants identified themselves as ethnic or racial minorities, which was 11.80% of

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<sup>65</sup> The head teacher at Elbert Hubbard, Mr. Ronnie Wilson, had a very informal style in his management of the school. The researcher was very surprised by the school-wide announcement over the public address system and slightly wary of just how many respondents might wish to speak to her.

the sample. In terms of career longevity, the group had considerably fewer years in the classroom with the average tenure being 16.4 years.

While the demographics tell a story, it is a limited one. The personal narratives that were drawn by each of the respondents not only provided a glimpse into what shaped their lives and careers but also traced a palpable history of school and community, which was often corroborated in other interviews. While interviews were conducted initially using a semi-structured interview schedule, this was often abandoned to allow the conversation to move into unforeseen directions as the conversation between the respondent and interviewer unfolded. When laid side-by-side, recurrent themes emerged that addressed the research topic in general or the research questions specifically. These themes form the basis of the remainder of this chapter.

### **Tracing Education Pathways: The Role of Education in Respondents' Lives**

One of the earliest areas explored in the interviews focused upon where the respondents grew up and their education. Most provided detailed accounts of where they went to school from primary through teacher training.<sup>66</sup> Since many had grown up within the communities where they taught, this provided another layer in understanding the historical narratives of each community as well as facilitating the development of the relationship between the interviewer and the respondent.

Although questions focusing on the teachers' experience did provide an insight into the shape of the communities over time, what emerged was in many ways far more important for they talked about the impact that education, and more particularly secondary education, had upon their lives. Whilst almost all of the male teachers in Blakely had attended the local grammar schools after passing their 11+ examinations, the majority of

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<sup>66</sup> As an explanatory note, teacher-training programmes have historically taken different paths in both nations and this was evident when speaking to teachers who had longer careers. Many of the older teachers in Blakely trained to teach at a local teacher training college and did not initially attend university although many returned to gain university degrees later in their career. On the other hand, the teachers in Braddock would have been required to earn a university degree prior to beginning any teacher-training programme.

female teachers had not passed this pivotal examination so attended their local comprehensive schools instead.

One teacher, Brian Donaghey, in detailing the realignment of secondary education in the borough, was clear to point out that he was a product of the local grammar school:

“In ...there was another type, right? The first schools that I went to were called central schools and they were somewhere between secondary modern and grammar. There was a 3-tier system where it was secondary modern schools, central schools and grammar schools. Now they were in the process of closing down the central school, which is the reason why my year happened to be the final year for the first school, then the final year for the second school, then I went up to the grammar school.”<sup>67</sup>

Corroborating Brian’s testimony, Peter Laurence detailed the educational divisions within secondary education in the borough whilst also commenting upon his own place in the hierarchy and the impact that grammar schools had in general:

“We had a 3-tier, a tripartite system of education with secondary modern, central schools and grammar schools. We had a system of 11+ of which I am a product, going to the local grammar school. And there were 3. There was a girls’ high school, a boys’ grammar school and...they created a co-ed grammar school...It was the opportunity for middle, not middle class, working-class people to ...buy into this grammar school ethos that they tried to create because we didn’t have the tradition...and obviously the catchment area was authority wide. A lot were from the housing estates that were created after the slum clearance in the 30s where the centre of ...was sort of ripped out for lots of good reasons and the council estates, of which around here and the other sides of ...were built... In a way, it broke down the village barriers, the coal mining village where the mine would be at the centre of the community and it was obviously very insular. Whereas kids then had to travel...so it tended to break down these barriers that still existed for a long time.”<sup>68</sup>

Whilst not focusing upon the dichotomy between the worlds of the coal miner and the grammar school, another teacher talked about coming from a family of miners and then going to a grammar school steeped in history:

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<sup>67</sup> Brian Donaghey, 2004.

<sup>68</sup> Peter Laurence, 2004.

“...But all my relatives virtually had been or still were miners as I was growing up they were still going down the pits...I was educated at Normanton Grammar School, which meant we had a half hour train journey to get from Royston to Normanton. In those days Royston...it was part of the old West Riding and Normanton Grammar School was the nearest grammar school...that was a traditional grammar school with 400 years of history behind it back to Tudor times. Not, sort of, one of the high flying grammar schools but it still had the history there.”<sup>69</sup>

While the men clearly identified the benefits of a grammar school education and made it clear that they had passed the 11+, the female teachers often had a different experience of secondary education. One teacher, who did not attend a grammar school, commented on her experiences:

“My own feelings of my own education is that I was very badly let down. I feel that greatly. I feel that strongly looking back...and I’ve actually struggled with maths and I had this maths teacher who again was super...we had an exam and I came fourth...I remember vividly this head of department coming into this maths class with this teacher and him saying, ‘right, I want GCE and CSE children’...and he chose all his favourites. He has to choose 8 and I come fourth and, what I knew as a child, were his favourites. Looking back I can see that I did nothing for two years so basically failed my GCE maths because of that...”<sup>70</sup>

Although the 11+ examination and grammar schools did not exist in the US, the preponderance of the Braddock respondents attended secondary schools that might be considered educationally elite. These teachers either attended a public secondary school, which admitted students through a rigorous competitive examination, or the local Catholic high schools. Selective public schools are not the norm in most American cities, however, when such schools exist they provide for the most able students through gifted and talented curricula. Religious schools, in this case Catholic schools, charge tuition fees although at a lower rate than private schools, so the ability to attend these schools demonstrated a degree of socio-economic success for immigrant or working-class families.

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<sup>69</sup> Robert Coles, 2004.

<sup>70</sup> Sheila Weller, 2004.

When asked to consider his education and the community in which the school was located, one teacher commented:

“...I went to a private Catholic school...My first real experience of the public schools was the first time I taught...Most of the kids in the primary school were from the neighbourhood. It’s a neighbourhood school and I grew up in south...which is predominately Irish, especially when I was at school so kids from a certain, like a couple of blocks, there is like six Catholic schools in a five mile square radius so its pretty much all Catholic schools...middle class, working-middle class...”<sup>71</sup>

As previously stated, the intentionality of this line of questioning was to establish a rapport between the interviewer and respondent; however, the identification with their school experience and the impact that this would have in respondents’ perceptions of their experience of school, community and teaching was remarkable. This will not be explored further here but will be addressed later in this chapter and in the conclusions.

While the school experience and educational background of each respondent was viewed as an integral part of their biographical sketch, the interviewer also sought to explore their conceptualisations of the communities where they taught. The researcher considered this to be paramount because it provided another lens upon which to view and understand these two communities and act as a counterbalance to the limited archival material that detailed the localities’ histories.<sup>72</sup> Both communities had experienced significant economic decline, resulting in an increased incidence of poverty, and while questioning on socio-economic impacts was overt, frank portrayals emerged of poverty within each community.

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<sup>71</sup> Stuart Abbott, 2004.

<sup>72</sup> While the libraries of both Blakely and Braddock have local history sections that should have been a rich resource of archival material, the librarians in both communities strongly suggested that the fiscal conditions and a lack of sustained interest in education meant that the libraries did not retain much of the archival material. As a result, there is little specific material relating to either school or the history of the communities in which the schools were located. The teachers provided additional insight into community and school history although not with the specificity that documentary sources or official publications could provide.

Peter Laurence, who was born in Blakely in 1949 and who has lived in the community throughout his life, painted a dismal portrait of the town:

“Fractured at the moment, in terms of the industrial turmoil, over the past 15-20 years with the demise of the coal field communities.”<sup>73</sup>

When asked to compare Blakely of today to when he was growing up, particularly the economic picture of the community, he commented:

“No, employment opportunities were there in the factories and, obviously, the mining industry, particularly as would have been then 14-15 year old boys.”<sup>74</sup>

Arthur Reeves, who grew up in a middle class enclave near the Wirral and moved to Blakely as a young man in the 1960s, contemplated his memories of the community and described it as:

“Initially, when I came to...it was like a cultural shock area because it was so different. It was very much a mining community. Everyone had a different attitude to life...it was mining and heavy industry with a closed environment in fashion and attitudes but it was a warm environment.”<sup>75</sup>

When asked to consider his experience of poverty, both in schools and in the communities where he lived, he struggled to link this to his own familial background but had a distinct impression of poverty in Blakely:

“Also, when I first came round here, in this particular area, I got a job as a student...the summer before I started work...for people who bought clothes or credit stuff and I began to see the poverty in this area. Plus, I had a Christmas post job as well and as I was going around there handing out giros, as I got a car, I was going around handing out giros. I was driving all over this area, knocking on doors...and there I saw real poverty and I’d never seen it before that’s why I said it was cultural shock...Well, social poverty to me was like an 18 month old child smoking, carpets that had no fibre on them, they were just grease, places that smelled, other places where you couldn’t see out the windows, the windows were

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<sup>73</sup> Peter Laurence, 2004.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Arthur Reeves, 2004.

so filthy, kitchens where you just had to hold your breath when you went to collect money from them. I'd never come across it before."<sup>76</sup>

When asked to describe Blakely, a town that he grew up in and where he has taught throughout his career, Brian Donaghey considered this:

"I would say quite poor. Not very much diversity at all. Still isn't to a great extent...It still is a white working-class mining town. There were some pockets of middle classness in it but I'd say the vast majority of it were working class. Have you seen the film, *Kes*?...The film is set in...in 1968...it's very close to what ...was like at that time. The big change came when the mines closed down and obviously had then got to look a bit more outward...it's quite an inward community."<sup>77</sup>

While Brian focused upon the insularity of Blakely, both then and now, including the attendant poverty within the community, Michael Winston considered the tragic aspects of socio-economic deprivation, particularly for boys today. The long-term consequences of the miners' strikes could be felt almost two decades after the pivotal event, in Michael's assessment of socio-economic prospects within the community:

"I think we're working in the face of adversity in terms of the economic backgrounds that the pupils come from and the historical background of them are in terms of the ex-mining community because many of the pupils we've come across, certainly the boys, would have automatically gone down that direction and now there's no parallel; there's nothing for those pupils to work towards in many senses, at least in their eyes or their families' eyes. They were expecting manual jobs that simply don't exist anymore..."<sup>78</sup>

On the other hand, Philip McLaughlin considered the ethos of the pit community and reflected upon the closure of the pits and the impact that this had upon Blakely, particularly the young men of the community:

"...when the pits closed. That was the major upheaval. It was dreadful. All the jobs. I mean the children, the lads that used to come to this school; they went nowhere else but down the pit. That was it. And that's gone now so it's the case

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Brian Donaghey, 2004.

<sup>78</sup> Michael Winston, 2004.

of trying to find, to educate them for other careers. But this still, this still, this pit mentality in this area...where they expect something to come along and be handed to them.”<sup>79</sup>

While the teachers spoke of their personal experiences of Blakely as a community, their remembrances largely reflected the community’s recent history, with particular emphasis on the impact of the mining industry and the miners’ strike. However, while historical narratives and statistical evidence can provide a glimpse into Blakely, it is their testimonies that not only corroborate these but provide a glimpse into the lived reality of the recent past. Young men, who could leave school at 15 and find secure employment in the pits dotted in and around Blakely, no longer had the economic security of their fathers once the pits closed. Their employment prospects diminished and the community struggled to respond because the fortunes were built largely on mining. Although the closure of the mines had a negative impact, all of the respondents commented upon the working-class roots of the community, its insularity and the levels of poverty experienced by families. Although all of the respondents highlighted poverty as a key issue within the community, there were some respondents that conceptualised their experience growing up in Blakely and the experiences of their students as fundamentally different, which is most notably seen in the description of the entitlement culture after the miners’ strike.

Notwithstanding the similarities in their economic histories, the teachers’ discussions surrounding the history of Braddock diverged substantially and focused either on the ethnic enclaves in the neighbourhoods where they grew up or on the school where they taught. The American urban experience, which was often tied closely to immigration and migration patterns, could be seen in Braddock with its patchwork of neighbourhoods that were often populated by one ethnic community such as the Irish, Poles or Italians. For example, one teacher talked about south Braddock, a neighbourhood cut off from the city centre but connected by bridges, where the Irish immigrants went because they were simply not wanted anywhere else in the city.

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<sup>79</sup> Philip McLaughlin, 2004.

Andrew Williams, who was one of the vocational teachers at Elbert Hubbard, spoke about growing up as his neighbourhood changed and the impact it had upon him:

“Well, growing up here...I lived in an all white neighbourhood and, after a few years of growing up, was about nine or ten years old, the Blacks were moving in and it took a change you know. And the neighbourhood changed and the way I looked at things changed...It made me get along I think with others, with other ethnic groups more.”<sup>80</sup>

When asked if the city had changed over the years and how, he replied:

“Yes, by far. Jobs, people moving in and out, leaving the city for the suburbs.”<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, Joseph Giusto talked about the change in the school’s population in the 1960s, particularly focusing on how different groups were brought into the school and the immediate consequence upon the school:

“Well, my first day...there was a race riot. Back in, I think it was maybe September of ‘69 or something like that, we used to have community schools then and...boundary was pretty much the lower west side. That year, they went across Main Street and took what they called was the Fruit Belt, Cold Spring neighbourhood and they brought those kids into... So you had a school that was probably 95% white at the time, suddenly they bring this whole pile of black kids in here and between the gangs and the fraternities that were going at that time, it was just a real problem.”<sup>82</sup>

Echoing previous sentiments, Emyr Townsend traced the decline of the ethnic neighbourhoods and education within Braddock to the 1970s and, more particularly to the mayoralty of James Griffin, which began in 1974. As industry moved away from Braddock at the start of the Rust Belt decline, municipal services including education and emergency services were impacted with Emyr concluding:

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<sup>80</sup> Andrew Williams, 2004.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Joseph Giusto, 2004.

“There is no reason for anyone in their twenties with small children to want to live in...”<sup>83</sup>

The Rust Belt, and its impact on Braddock, also emerged in Walter Kucinsky’s interview, when he talked about the derelict and abandoned factories along the highways surrounding the city and bankrupt businesses in the city centre. However, he contended that the Rust Belt portrayal was not wholly accurate for many businesses had tried to transition to the service economy sector but a lack of infrastructure made this difficult to achieve. When asked to explore how things had changed in the city, he focused on political changes and failures:

“They’ve gone actually downhill. I was very optimistic on the new mayor but I’ve quickly become disillusioned with him...Masiello has not done as much as he promised. Some of its not his fault but his leadership skills are not the best. And it’s showing in a couple of glaring areas so, you know, we now have the Control Board in the city. He doesn’t really take a stand.”<sup>84</sup>

In comparing the respondents’ comments made regarding the economic shifts within their respective communities, Braddock’s teachers cited political issues far more frequently than their English counterparts. In many ways, this could be seen as a predictable response to the worsening economic climate. New York State placed the city under the direction of a fiscal control board in July 2003, when missing tax revenue and budget shortfalls mandated the action to correct a substantial budget deficit.<sup>85</sup> The remit of the control board encompassed management of all budgetary matters, including oversight of the city’s public schools, which resulted in significant expenditure reductions and contractual conflicts with unions.<sup>86</sup> Almost concurrently, the New York State Board of Regents placed Elbert Hubbard School on the Schools Under Registration Review (SURR) list for failing to achieve the baseline attainment for the Mathematics Regents examination mandated by New York State. This accountability measure, which is a

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<sup>83</sup> Emyr Townsend, 2004.

<sup>84</sup> Walter Kucinsky, 2004.

<sup>85</sup> City of Buffalo, *Buffalo Comprehensive Plan. Financial Capacity and Control*, available from [http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1\\_2\\_1/Mayor/COB\\_Comprehensive\\_Plan/section\\_2459226765.html](http://www.ci.buffalo.ny.us/files/1_2_1/Mayor/COB_Comprehensive_Plan/section_2459226765.html), 2010.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

formal step toward closure of a school should it fail to demonstrate improvement, was viewed by many of the staff as unfair and a demonstration that Richard Mills, New York State Education Commissioner, was acting punitively and without understanding their teaching reality.<sup>87</sup>

The direct comparison of the substantive histories of Braddock and Blakely is impossible, however, one parallel can be drawn in the existence of a contentious historical event that helped to shape each community. For Blakely, the residual effects of the miners' strike in 1984-1985 could be traced through the teachers' testimonies. While they did not suggest that the strike impoverished the town, they clearly spoke of the impact of the strike. Some teachers detailed the role reversal that came with the strike where women moved into the workforce to financially provide for their families, which posed difficulties for the patriarchal Yorkshire communities. On the other hand, some teachers described the impact of the loss of mining jobs in a community that did not place a high value on education because jobs in the pits were readily available for young men. There were a few teachers who talked about the long-term impact to the community, which was angry at the loss of a generational life style, and essentially turned to the dole queue as retribution for the loss of the pits. Whatever positional stance was taken, the point was that the teachers talked about the miners' strike. It scarred the community and they saw the effects two decades later.

Conversely, the teachers in Braddock remained almost completely silent about the issues surrounding racial segregation and the desegregation of the city's schools. The impact of the US Supreme Court decision in *Arthur v. Nyquist* in 1976, where the city was found to

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<sup>87</sup> Ronnie Wilson, 2004 and Joseph Giusto, 2004. In an explanatory note, these sentiments were echoed by almost all of the teachers at Elbert Hubbard School although some were more passionate than others about the situation. New York State's fiscal takeover of the city was seen as extraordinary, although not unprecedented, especially in the post 9/11 era when localities and states were struggling against mounting budget deficits. Hiring and wage freezes followed the takeover, which meant that many schools had inadequate staff levels, increased class sizes, stagnant remuneration and mounting accountability pressures. This, in turn, called into question existing contractual agreements and increased union activity within the city. While the fiscal takeover was unpopular, the school's designation as a SURR school was seen as wholly unfair and indicative of an accountability agenda that was inappropriate for inner-city schools with disadvantaged student populations. While the teachers agreed that student performance could improve across the board, the designation was based on the scores of one Mathematics Regents examination, the scores of which were discounted for graduation purposes but were counted in the accountability matrix designed by New York State.

have intentionally segregated the school system along racial lines and was subsequently ordered to redress this through the Controlled Choice Plan, never emerged in the teachers' narratives.<sup>88</sup> Rossell contends that the Controlled Choice Plan was largely successful in achieving integration; yet, it did result in school closures, the broadening of attendance zones for secondary schools and the creation of magnet schools.<sup>89</sup> The need for the plan was indicative of the changing demographics within the city and the white flight phenomena that had occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, where working-class families from largely European ethnic groups moved to the outlying suburban districts. The Controlled Choice Plan redrew the structural foundations of the public school system within Braddock, yet it was simply not part of the dialogue in the collective oral histories. This did not appear to be an issue of memory often associated with oral history research and might be ascribed to political correctness endemic within American society but it is very interesting that this was not part of the collective historical narrative.

### **Defining Reform: Teachers' Conceptualisations of Reform in Education**

Although exploring personal and community history provided vital background narratives for the researcher, at this juncture, an exploration of the substantive areas of education reform and the impact of education policy within these communities became germane. The teachers' conceptualisation of education reform needed to be investigated to ensure that there was common ground in which to build discussions on education policy, reform in education and the potential impact that policy shifts can have upon educational outcomes in economically impoverished communities.

Perhaps the most simple of the definitions offered and one that encapsulates much of the thinking on educational reform, constructed meaning as:

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<sup>88</sup> Christine Rossell, 'The Buffalo controlled choice plan.' *Urban Education* 22/3, 1987, pp. 328-354.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

“Reform means changing for the better. That’s what I hope reform means anyway, to change for the better.”<sup>90</sup>

This definition, however, is deceptively simple for what does better mean? When Walter Kucinsky was asked to describe reform and whether reform could be positive or negative, he replied:

“I would have to say some wholesale changes to the education system. Maybe funding. Maybe standards. You know education reform and funding, how its funded...even the kids in the school setting, the calendar would be a part of that maybe...I think change can be good when its tempered with people looking at the bigger picture...”<sup>91</sup>

Echoing the sentiments of wholesale reform, Michael Matthews posited the following definition:

“Education reform takes a system that is inefficient and does not work to make it cohesive and adaptable to constant change of the needs of society.”<sup>92</sup>

With the prior two definitions offering systemic change at the core, and presumed that reform would be for the better, another teacher took a more pragmatic approach to his definition and in doing so focused on the children he taught:

“Well education to me has to change because time’s changing, technology’s changing, kids are changing. We have to do something differently to make them more well-rounded human beings...they should be exposed to a lot more things, a lot more to find out what they want to do in life. You can’t do that through tests...”<sup>93</sup>

In considering change and the need to change to secure the improved outcomes of her students, another teacher identified educational reform as:

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<sup>90</sup> Shelia Weller, 2004.

<sup>91</sup> Walter Kucinsky, 2004.

<sup>92</sup> Michael Matthews, 2004.

<sup>93</sup> Andrew Williams, 2004.

“Pressure. Excitement. Progress. Because every time there’s a reform, there’s change. And every time there’s change, there’s more work...a lot of checking up, responsibility, more responsibility in the pressure. Excitement because usually the reform that has come through has been good...”<sup>94</sup>

While the previous conceptualisations represented largely positive definitions of educational reform, some teachers raised specific issues centring on the negative impacts of reform. One teacher carefully considered the phrase and suggested the following as educational reform:

“Jumping from one extreme to the next without planning, without thinking and without consolidating and with no proper funding.”<sup>95</sup>

The perception of the negative impact of educational reform cannot be dismissed although it can be weighed against personal experience or tempered by it. There were some teachers who took a more personal view of educational reform and the impact that it had upon their career. Phillip McLaughlin considered educational reform and defined it as a partial illustration of his career:

“Never ending...My teaching career has been constant, constant change. I came into the teaching career and started with ROSLA...when kids could leave at 14 then were kept on for an extra year so a lot of teachers were taken on. I started then and from then on its been constant, constant change, one thing after another.”<sup>96</sup>

The collection of oral history interviews demonstrated three clear conceptual trajectories: reform of existing educational structures to improve education, reform to promote progression and growth for students and reform that is perceived to be designed poorly and therefore fails to achieve the stated goals. While the corpus of interviews reflected the more positive interpretations of reform, doubts about the generation of reform, the targets of reform and the subsequent outcomes of reform emerged. Teachers with longer careers voiced these apprehensions more often than their younger counterparts; relying upon their professional narrative and experience as teachers, they could trace the history

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Mariann Ficken, 2004.

<sup>96</sup> Phillip McLaughlin, 2004.

of educational reform as it related to their careers and more frequently constructed a reform narrative with more negative connotations. In defining the three conceptualisations, it is apposite to return to the initial definition of reform constructed to underpin the research rationale to see if there are areas of agreement or fissure. Initially, reform was defined as “to make or become better by the removal of faults and errors; to abolish or cure; an improvement made or suggested.”<sup>97</sup> This definition is broadly synchronous with the teachers’ conceptualisations of educational reform although linkages to perceived negative outcomes, whether personal or systemic, are clearly not articulated within it.

The establishment of the conceptual understanding of educational reform clearly became important to the research for without a broad consensus on reform amongst the respondents, it would have been difficult to engage in dialogue around reform. Nevertheless another difficulty emerged, one that was unexpected and impacted upon the lines of questioning. Teachers from Blakely not only defined reform but they clearly linked the conceptual definition to experiential knowledge of reform within their careers. They named key reform documents or ideas such as tripartism, Raising of the School Leaving Age (ROSLA), the National Curriculum, Excellence in Cities, Every Child Matters and Baker days. On the other hand, their counterparts in Braddock struggled to articulate connections between the conceptual and the experiential. They needed prompting on the primary federal education documents such as *A Nation at Risk* or *No Child Left Behind* and often resorted to generic responses such as “there are loads of programmes out there...”<sup>98</sup> However, they demonstrated particular knowledge on local initiatives, which may have more of a tangible impact on their daily professional lives and which should reflect national policy initiatives as negotiated by the locality.

A conundrum presented itself in that respondents possessed a conceptual framework of educational reform but often could not articulate an experiential background upon which to frame it or to draw comparisons. Therefore, the researcher negotiated a compromise:

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<sup>97</sup> Reform, *Pocket Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, p.759

<sup>98</sup> Emyr Townsend, 2004.

where possible reliance upon named policies would take precedence but where specific educational policy vocabulary was deficient, then overarching reform trends would dominate the dialogue.

### **Tracing Educational Reform: An Exploration and Analysis of Teachers' Experiences of the Liberal Reform Era**

While the agreement of a working definition of educational reform was necessary to insure that the teachers' conceptualisation of reform did not run counter to the literature, it was germane to move beyond the definitions of reform and into a consideration of the lived experience of educational reform. More importantly than the lived experience, it was vital to delve into the teachers' analytical judgments of educational reform as they engaged with reform either in their classrooms or through whole school initiatives.

As discussed previously, one of the primary reforms of English education was the transition from the tripartite model to the comprehensive model of secondary education. Although many of the teachers commented upon their education within the tripartite system or secondary modern schools, the preponderance of the respondents began their teaching careers after Blakely reconfigured secondary education along comprehensive lines. There were two notable exceptions to this who could address the transition from the professional perspective of a teacher rather than that of a student.

Mariann Ficken, who began teaching at Joseph Locke Secondary School in 1969, experienced the structural shift within secondary education as a new teacher within the borough. Her conceptualisation of a comprehensive school formed the basis of the discussion with her defining a comprehensive school as:

“A true comprehensive school should offer the widest range of subjects to the widest range of abilities and it should have within its boundaries children of all levels of competence.”<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Mariann Ficken, 2004.

She did, however, offer one caveat in that she believed children with profound special needs should not be included in comprehensive education because staff and the institution would not normally meet the greater needs of the students. This pedagogical approach was not outside the norm for the borough, which ran a school for special needs students until the turn of the twenty-first century. It might also reflect the positional stance of a teacher trained prior to the release of the *Warnock Report*.

Although the conceptual framework offered of comprehensive schools did not explicitly address the inclusion of all socio-economic groups within the community, it does suggest that children of all abilities should have equality of opportunity to attend a school that could meet their pedagogical needs. Mariann considered the ‘old’ Joseph Locke School prior to its amalgamation with St Vincent’s School describing it thus:

“No, no, no the old...was a secondary modern school. There were two grammar schools at the time: a girls grammar school and a boys grammar school in the town. And of course that then moved into the terms of political correctness and we got all this change. You mustn’t have grammar schools, you mustn’t have children having privileged treatment and, of course, that was then when the so-called quote comprehensive schools came into being. But they don’t really exist as true comprehensive schools; they are what I call for better or worse, a horrible expression, a bastardization of the grammar schools and the secondary modern schools together. We don’t have in ... true comprehensive schools.”<sup>100</sup>

In many ways, John Frederick Norton, a retired geography teacher at Joseph Locke, developed a definition of comprehensive education that is aligned with the conceptual framework of Mariann Ficken. He defined comprehensive education as:

“Well, in theory, the theory was that it encompassed all ages from 11 to 16 and all abilities, children of all ability, so the children who would’ve gone to grammar school originally would now go to comprehensive school. So really it was in a sense social engineering.”<sup>101</sup>

When viewed together, Mariann and John’s conceptual definitions of comprehensive education are closely linked. However, his definition surpasses hers by suggesting that

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> John Frederick Norton, 2004.

comprehensive education was driven by factors of social engineering in the attempt to bring together groups that had been previously segregated from each other. There are no overt references to socio-economic groups within either definition, yet, it could be argued that both teachers knew implicitly that the restructuring would not only bring together children of all abilities in one school but would also create equality of opportunity by affording all children equal access to all educational opportunities provided within the borough.

However, John Frederick Norton's memories of secondary education within the borough are slightly different from those of his colleague. Beginning his career at Joseph Locke in 1956, he traced a clear path of transition from secondary modern to comprehensive anchoring the success of this to the leadership of the school's headteacher at the time. John described Joseph Locke School in the 1950s as:

“Well, to begin with, it was just like every other secondary modern school except for one important fact, the headmaster was a gentleman called Mr...who was one of the old school...tough as nails...absolute ruthless in a way but absolute determined that his school was going to be the best in ... So with two or three years, it might have been 4 years, I can't quite remember the year, we started doing external exams and offering the children the options to stay on for another year for a fifth year because they left at the end of the fourth year then and the exam they studied was Royal Society of Arts...and quite a few children stayed so there was a demand for it.”<sup>102</sup>

The headteacher's innovative approach to secure the best possible outcomes for the school suggests that leadership played a pivotal role in the transition process. Although he might not have conceptualised himself as an educational visionary, his ability to create opportunities for children who failed the 11+ examination was an important step in the process of securing educational parity. Furthermore, these external examinations validated educational achievements, thereby potentially creating better employment options for children within the borough. In addition to these benefits, when the transition to comprehensive schools occurred within the borough, the planning for change and the implementation of a new curriculum were already complete.

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<sup>102</sup> John Frederick Norton, 2004.

The transition from the tripartite system of education to the comprehensive model necessitated a shift in the structural framework of English education to achieve equality of opportunity. The transformative nature of this request to reorganise education along comprehensive lines cannot be doubted, however, it came as the recurring debate over the school leaving age re-emerged. Finally coming into effect in 1972, ROSLA pegged the upper age of compulsory education at 16 and gave local authorities and schools approximately eight years to prepare for its implementation. For those respondents who were in post at the time, ROSLA appeared to be a defining moment of reform but not necessarily one that met the needs of the Blakely community.

The teachers' views varied on the implications of ROSLA although, in many ways, their analysis of the long anticipated reform echoed many of the concerns detailed by the Schools Council in 1965.<sup>103</sup> A primary concern centred on increasing the school's physical capacity to accommodate another year group when the legislation came into effect in 1972. Philip McLaughlin enumerated the positive attributes of the reform, including the financial resources that the school received, the construction of new facilities to house the students and the hiring of new teachers. However, in the attempt to bring English education in line with other education systems through the raising of the leaving age, he also saw definite drawbacks. He postulated that it did not positively impact the students in the school, although it did have a positive impact on the community by keeping students from competing for jobs in the pits.<sup>104</sup>

The Schools Council also noted concerns about the developmental progression of students from 15 to 16 and the need for schools to address this in an effective manner.<sup>105</sup> Mariann Ficken focused on the detrimental impacts that ROSLA could have had on students with particular emphasis on the delaying of their maturity, where students could not begin full-time employment until 16 whereas earlier generations had been working

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<sup>103</sup> Great Britain, The Schools Council, *Raising the School Leaving Age: A Cooperative Programme of Research and Development. Working Paper 2*. London: HMSO, 1965. The working paper and the subsequent institution of 16 as the new school leaving age is known as ROSLA by educators.

<sup>104</sup> Philip McLaughlin, 2004.

<sup>105</sup> Great Britain, 1965.

from 14. She postulated that this essentially extended childhood to 18 and was not in the best interest of either the child or the school, particularly when the school did not address the needs of the pupils in their additional year.<sup>106</sup>

Arthur Reeves echoed the doubts raised by his colleagues whilst simultaneously addressing the issue of scholastic ability, which was also raised by the Schools Council.<sup>107</sup> As previously discussed, Joseph Locke School had made provision for examination courses at a time when these were not common for most children in secondary modern schools. Yet, most of the children who would have taken advantage of these would have been the more able students. Arthur pointed to the positive impact of ROSLA, including the funding of courses for the less able pupils, which included going out into industry, mechanics or cooking. However, he highlighted a key negative impact on the children who were forced to stay an additional year and whose needs the school could not address. They did not gain from the additional year of education; they lost a year of experience and wages and aided the community by ‘helping to cook the unemployment books for the government.’<sup>108</sup>

In one sense, the close alignment between the document and the teachers’ perceptions of ROSLA suggests that they are intimately aware of the concerns raised by the Schools Council Report. While the report noted these concerns, the authors were also exploring avenues to address the issues that schools would face as the implementation of ROSLA came to fruition. On the other hand, the teachers presented the lived experience of ROSLA from their perspective as classroom practitioners with a clear focus on the detrimental impacts that this had upon children. They did not perceive that value could be added to an education when a school did not meet the students’ academic or vocational needs and, in fact, that value could be lost through the loss of skills or wages.

In Braddock, the liberal era of reform simultaneously emerged with a corresponding agenda of promoting equality of opportunity within education; yet, the debates that

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<sup>106</sup> Mariann Ficken, 2004.

<sup>107</sup> Great Britain, 1965.

<sup>108</sup> Arthur Reeves, 2004.

dominated the Braddock agenda pivoted around education as a panacea for poverty and the *de facto* segregation that crept into northern American cities and, consequently, schools over the course of the twentieth century. While discussions arose over the composition of secondary education with particular emphasis on the benefits of homogeneous or heterogeneous grouping of students to promote educational achievement, the issues of educational opportunity and equity largely related to race and the desegregation of American schools surpassed these.

As noted in the discussion on sampling, the Braddock respondents were younger in their careers than their counterparts in Blakely so there were far fewer teachers to draw into a conversation where there were clear experience of and references to the era. Furthermore, those teachers that could draw upon their memory from the early stages of their career often could not verbalise these where they either supported or refuted the documentary evidence. It appeared that they either could not talk about the experiences or had been sensitised not to speak of experiences that focused on race. This may well stem from their acclimatisation to a politically correct culture within education or they might not have seen the court ordered desegregation of Braddock's schools as a reform.

Ronnie Wilson, the long-standing headteacher of Elbert Hubbard School, traced the historical devolution of educational reform in New York State in the most depth but initially focused upon curriculum and high-stakes examinations rather than the social contexts in which education was embedded. Ronnie spoke of two specific curriculum routes that students could follow in the 1960s and 1970s: a general curriculum that provided a well-rounded and academic secondary education or a vocational curriculum that would have focused on the development of specific skills to improve employability. He noted that the general curriculum, which required one course in mathematics and one in science to graduate, often encouraged students to follow a less challenging curriculum and believed that this trend 'really polluted education.'<sup>109</sup> Over time and, in response to nationwide social turmoil, the curriculum evolved to become more rigorous and to meet the needs of many students so that a number of options emerged: a general curriculum, a

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<sup>109</sup> Ronnie Wilson, 2004.

local diploma, a New York State Regents diploma and an Honours Track Regents diploma. The first two options represented the less robust curricula that would have been offered to children who had not previously demonstrated academic abilities or achievement. This direction in education, led to the Regents Action in 1986 and the arrival of greater accountability measures in secondary education, which will be explored in the next section.<sup>110</sup>

However, Ronnie could provide some insight into the judicial case that challenged the *de facto* segregation of Braddock's schools, but this emerged in the discussion of his career rather than in the discussion on reform. He analysed the data that would be used in the court case to argue that the district's plan would desegregate the schools and provide more opportunities for children.<sup>111</sup> Asked to assess the impact that the decision had upon the school district, he commented:

“Oh, well, it had a major impact, the district was found, the city and the district were found as basically in need of desegregation. There was some culpability the district lines had been changed to gerrymander and segregate schools. So...that group of his leadership team came up with a magnificent idea called the magnet schools programme...We had basically, with the desegregation order we had no problems in implementing it at all. We had no protests, there were no negative incidents, there were no kids who were threatened or intimidated because all the kids wanted to be where they were...”<sup>112</sup>

His analysis of the situation in Braddock, both before and after the implementation of the court order, is in line with the assessment offered by Taylor, including the suggestion that local leaders in Braddock played pivotal roles in the success of the plan.<sup>113</sup> As an extension to this discussion, he considered the impact of the development of magnet schools in the district describing these as cutting-edge and utilised by other school districts as a model for reform.<sup>114</sup> Ronnie's analysis of how the magnet school

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Steven J.L. Taylor, *Desegregation in Boston and Buffalo: The Influence of Local Leaders*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998.

<sup>114</sup> Magnet schools developed in the 1960s as part of the Open Schools movement, an educational reform to remedy segregation in school districts. These public schools offered a specialised or specific curriculum

programme worked at reforming education and their success within Braddock demonstrated an objective view of its impact:

“Very much so...it really went very smoothly and the majority of the schools were pretty darn close as far as representing the overall complexion of the city itself and....some functioned of course better than others...perhaps the greatest achievements at the high school level would have been at City Honours and... Academy for Visual and Performing Arts...”<sup>115</sup>

In reviewing the era of liberal reform where access and opportunity became key foci of the English education agenda, the small number of teachers in Blakely whose careers encompassed the era testified that two major reforms of English education impacted on their experience of education and conformed to their notional understanding of reform: the transition to comprehensive education and ROSLA. These reforms radically altered the structural framework of English education to improve the educational opportunities and outcomes for all students. In its most simplest form, schools had to cope with the physical realities of reorganising schools along comprehensive lines as well as adding additional space to accommodate a fifth year of students within their buildings. On the other hand, the complexity of these reforms on children, communities and their perceptions of education cannot be denied. Whether the respondents believed that the reforms met the intention or spirit of the reforms, however, is debatable. This is particularly true for ROSLA where they viewed this as something to benefit the government and authority rather than the children in schools.

Similarly, across the Atlantic, the agenda of the liberal era of reform converged upon the same foci but the few teachers who were teaching during the era made little reference to the era, let alone substantive educational reforms. While one respondent did focus upon the strengths of the desegregation plan and the subsequent emergence of magnet schools within Braddock, the omission of this within the larger community of teachers is

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focus and enrolled students from across the district as opposed to the more rigid neighbourhood boundary zones, which had limited students to enrolment in their neighbourhood school. Thus, parental and student choice were the drivers for magnet schools. It was hoped that the cross boundary enrolments would end *de facto* segregation in schools, particularly those schools with strong academic reputations and where middle class white children dominated the schools' enrolments.

<sup>115</sup> Ronnie Wilson, 2004.

somewhat problematic. Even if they were not teaching at the time, the preponderance of the respondents grew up in the community and would have been impacted by the decision, yet this is lost from the collective historical narrative. In the same vein, there was no discussion of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* enacted by the US Congress in 1965 by the group, although Title I and Title II, which are linked to this legislation, are terms commonly known amongst educators. This cannot be explained readily for this does not appear to be an issue of memory but also cannot be further explored in this work.

**Tracing Educational Reform:  
An Exploration and Analysis of Teachers'  
Experiences of the Educational Accountability Reform Era**

The transition from the liberal reform era to one of educational accountability occurred gradually as debates emerged about the effectiveness of schools and the school curriculum to achieve both equality of opportunity and equality of outcome. The drive for improved educational standards with a concomitant link to high-stakes testing and the impact that this had on each school dominated the collective memories of teachers. While teachers could not engage in great detail with specific reforms linked to educational opportunity, they had vibrant memories of accountability reforms and analysed their experiences of these in a strikingly similar fashion.

Whilst not negating the impact that the transition to comprehensive education or ROSLA brought to Blakely during the liberal reform era, most of the respondents identified the National Curriculum as one of the significant reforms within their teaching careers and within the accountability era. This curriculum reform altered significantly the pedagogical processes within secondary schools and, at the time of interview, was in its third inception.

Philip McLaughlin, a technology teacher at Joseph Locke, commented at length on the genesis of the National Curriculum, education reform and the impact that such reforms could potentially have upon the children that he taught. First, he considered the changing nature of education reform initiatives where City and Guilds moved into prominence one year only to be surpassed by GCSE examinations the following year. This cyclical reform pattern created significant stress on teachers who were expected to implement changes despite not necessarily understanding or agreeing with the rationale for change. Secondly, he suggested that the scope of the original National Curriculum proved problematic:

“It was an impossible document to work with. It was flawed throughout. There was just so much in it that it was impossible to deliver... You just couldn’t physically do it... It was a telephone directory and its now been cut down because it was yet another mistake that was made. They made that, gave it to everybody, then realized that it was too much. You couldn’t read it, let alone apply it and now it’s been cut down and it’s a brochure about that thick. And that’s our National Curriculum now. Far more practical, far more handy and you can apply it to the situation that you’re in, in school.”<sup>116</sup>

Recognising that the reduction of the National Curriculum over time was positive, there remained the abiding sense that the original implementation process was flawed. Philip clearly articulated disdain for the process particularly expressing concern that the teachers and the school management made the LEA advisors aware of the errors within the document and its unwieldy nature, which made implementation difficult. He contended that the LEA advisors, for their part, did not acknowledge these concerns nor did they disclose that changes to the National Curriculum were imminent. This exacerbated the feeling of change for the sake of change and led to reform weariness.<sup>117</sup>

Notwithstanding his criticisms of the National Curriculum, Philip could see the potential that educational reform could have upon his students, if the reform could engage with them and the realities of their communities. Recognising the working-class roots of the community, he praised the City and Guilds initiatives for their potential to develop life-long skills that would allow students to open their own businesses within their

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<sup>116</sup> Philip McLaughlin, 2004.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

communities.<sup>118</sup> It should be noted that as a technology teacher, it is possible that Philip was biased for a programme like City and Guilds would place vocational education at the forefront of the curriculum. Whilst acknowledging this potential bias, it might also be argued that such a movement might meet the needs of a community that did not wholly embrace formal education and, therefore, was unlikely to encourage its children to move into further or higher education.

Faye Ingram, who taught mathematics at Joseph Locke, moved away from the issues surrounding implementation and embraced both the National Curriculum and its potential for affecting educational transformation, particularly in mathematics. Her definitive praise for it lay not in the original document but in the development of the National Numeracy Strategy, a reform that reconfigured mathematics education and which she assessed accordingly:

“It’s been a good thing. It’s given departments a greater focus, a greater expectation, a greater reach on standards and I think it’s given us a focus, something that we can say ‘This is our Holy Bible and here we are; this is what we have to do.’...And the update was fantastic in the sense that it modernised the whole mathematical structure.”<sup>119</sup>

Whilst positing that some of the early criticism of the National Curriculum might have been linked to the failure to appropriately trial and pilot the reform prior to national implementation, she focused on the potential for the Key Stage 3 Strategy to effectively improve mathematical teaching and learning because it was focused upon students’ progression of conceptual knowledge whilst also linking to real world maths.<sup>120</sup> Clearly in favour of these reforms, she believed that additional reform could further the outcomes, and by consequence, the employment opportunities of her students. Explaining that local industry was often reluctant to take a student who had achieved less than a ‘C’ grade in mathematics, she suggested a reconfiguring of the GCSE qualification whereby a two-tier system would allow a student within Foundation classes to achieve a “C’

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Faye Ingram, 2004.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

grade, which under present examination structures was impossible. Any students entered on the Foundation pathways, and most of her students were on this trajectory, might struggle to attain employment without such a reconfiguration even though the ‘C’ grade was the perceived baseline passing rate and not the actual one.<sup>121</sup> In her support of the National Curriculum, Faye clearly linked the reform to better teaching and, most importantly, to the potential to create stronger real-life links for her students, to generate progress in their mathematical thinking and to further their employment capabilities.

While Faye Ingram noted the positive impact that the National Curriculum had upon her subject, Mariann Ficken saw the drawbacks that it posed for English. She evidenced the erosion of teaching English literature, where teaching of whole novels or plays became difficult because of the content and skills embedded within the English literature curriculum. In providing a flavour of all literary genres rather than an in-depth consideration of particular ones, Mariann argued that an appreciation for the entirety of the work was lost, an understanding of what the author wanted to achieve was marginalised and in trying to achieve too much, the National Curriculum failed the students.<sup>122</sup>

Jean Carlton, a member of the senior management team at Joseph Locke, provided a third assessment of the National Curriculum, one that considered its potential effectiveness in light of both the student and local context. Moving a step beyond Faye’s argument that the National Curriculum should have been piloted, Jean introduced the conceptual framework of a national policy locally administered, an idea with clear links to the *Education Reform Act, 1944*.<sup>123</sup> Using the example of the Industrial Revolution to illustrate her point, she explained that she had not learned the topic at school because it lacked historical relevance in the area where she grew up. However, the topic had considerable significance for the children of Blakely whose ancestors would have directly contributed to the success of the Industrial Revolution through coal mining.<sup>124</sup> Extending

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Mariann Ficken, 2004.

<sup>123</sup> Jean Carlton, 2004.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

this line of argumentation, Jean contended that students should be allowed to pursue subjects that were directly relevant to them to enhance their career opportunities:

“Why do French or history if they are not interested in the subjects and will not use them in their careers?”<sup>125</sup>

Jean acknowledged that the community still felt the impact of the mine closures and did not have a strong tradition of attending post-compulsory education. Therefore, it was likely that the academic nature of the National Curriculum could neither provide the necessary skills to develop the economic infrastructure of the locality nor improve the economic stability of her students. If Blakely had been able to adapt the National Curriculum to meet the needs of the students and the community, then vocational courses or portfolio-based assessment might have been introduced to insure relevance and responsiveness. It might be argued also that the drive for relevance and responsiveness could irreparably damage the students and community through limiting educational opportunity by not encouraging them to pursue qualifications that could lead to higher education and entry into the professions. This is a line of enquiry that will be further pursued within the concluding chapter.

Large-scale curriculum reform, as evidenced by the introduction of the National Curriculum in England, did not emerge as the key feature of the accountability era in New York State. This is not to suggest that curriculum reform did not occur but did so as modifications to the existing curricula. In both nations, the evolution of an equality of outcome agenda, one marked by improved educational standards, high-stakes examinations and educational league tables, raised considerable concern from the respondents for a number of reasons. Whilst the previous discussions on reform have been marked by a dichotomous approach, this section will consider their memories and analysis of policy through a single lens.

Although the primary discussion of high-stakes examinations was largely negative, it would be disingenuous to suggest that respondents thought that all testing had a negative

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

impact on education. Sheila Weller, who had specific responsibility for the transition programme for primary school children into John Locke School, believed the primary school testing programme to be highly beneficial for the school in determining the education needs of the students:

“...I was happy to see the testing at Year 6 because I think, I felt that the primaries were getting away with a lot. Certainly in this school, because we knew, we said for a long time because we did reading ages, before SATs we did reading ages when they came in and we were looking at reading ages of six, seven, eight and then we were expected to get them through GCSE five years later...We used to give them a test because we stream so we needed a base...”<sup>126</sup>

Two opposing rationales emerged: testing to provide appropriate educational choices linked to students’ needs and testing as an overall system accountability measure required of all schools. While it was evident that students’ needs were paramount throughout Sheila’s discussion on educational reform, it became clear that anxiety and anger were clearly associated with accountability. The utilisation of GCSE scores to rank schools within the local authority and to make a judgement on the school’s overall effectiveness seemed wholly unfair if primary schools were not held to similar accountability standards. If secondary schools had to provide a remedial programme of instruction in recompense for a sub-standard primary education, then either the tenure within secondary education had to be lengthened to accommodate this or accountability mechanisms needed adjustment to account for the transition of underachieving student cohorts.

A number of the Braddock teachers held similar views regarding educational accountability and the impact that this had upon the entire school community, particularly when social, economic or pedagogical obstacles, which were not within their control, meant achieving mandated targets became unrealistic. The headteacher of Elbert Hubbard summarised the frustration felt by colleagues and his own particular disdain for the NYS Commissioner of Education, Richard Mills:

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<sup>126</sup> Sheila Weller, 2004.

“Where does it deal with the child? If you take a child, if you take our cohort 2002, out of 284 new freshmen, four passed the Math A exam, seven passed the English A exam...now I’m taking kids who’ve been here...that are reading and been doing mathematics at a level between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade and this school is going to be held accountable for graduating those kids in four years and all passed the high stakes tests. That guy is nuts. He is without a doubt the most arrogant ass, I think I’ve ever had to deal with.”<sup>127</sup>

The later transition point at age 14 and the shorter tenure of secondary education in New York State made the task of improving students’ outcomes more difficult if a strong foundation had not been established in the first eight years of primary education. However, local and state authorities rarely accepted such argumentation and secondary schools were held accountable for their cohorts’ attainments against educational standards without accounting for past academic performance. In the case of Joseph Locke and Elbert Hubbard schools, where students from educationally disadvantaged and socio-economically deprived backgrounds formed the basis of the cohorts, this presented almost insurmountable pedagogical obstacles for teachers.

While providing remedial education programmes to augment skills and knowledge proved challenging, a secondary impact of high stakes examinations related to changes within the curriculum or instructional choices for schools and teachers. Sue Price, the headteacher at Joseph Locke School, explained the consequence of testing programmes:

“Well, it does influence the decisions that you make at management level because looking at league tables, well it is important because that’s how schools are judged, you know by those in education, by parents and the local communities. Certainly, its been a factor in the choice of subjects that we’ve been able to offer or been willing to offer to children at Key Stage Four. And I must, if I am honest, that is the main reason or one of the main reasons that we introduced GNVQ IT because that particular course was worth four GCSEs and was responsible for moving our own percentage of pupils achieving five A\* - C grades at GCSE from 25% three years ago to last year’s 39% mark so it has been a good move for the school but its also been very good for the children in that it is a more practical course that, again, leads into a sort of career path beyond school.”<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Ronnie Wilson, 2004.

<sup>128</sup> Sue Price, 2004.

In Braddock, where New York State mandated the curriculum for secondary education and allowed for little discretion in curriculum choice because of mandatory high stakes examinations, teachers frequently found that they altered teaching styles to insure outcomes, with particular impact:

“I don’t, no, I don’t think the state realizes that what they’re doing is just creating a bunch of really good test takers, you know, kids who can, you know, who know maybe, who can be taught how to pass an exam somewhere down the line. As far as being able to use critical thinking and really interpret data. I don’t know if that’s the case. I read the Math A exam last year, I was not the greatest math student but even so I have pretty good skills and I could not understand what they were asking in some of these questions. If you want to test for knowledge, then just test. Don’t make it so difficult that a kid cannot pass the exam.”<sup>129</sup>

Setting aside the above argument momentarily, the teachers expressed a clear recognition of league tables and the role they played although they queried the rationale upon which these were predicated. One teacher, commenting upon league tables and mathematics, suggested:

‘Our percentages, our league tables, our everything is done based on our performance of A\*- C and we’re the one subject where Foundation candidates can’t get a C and that gives us an unfair battle.’<sup>130</sup>

While the above suggests the constraints felt from a subject teacher’s micro perspective, senior management frequently viewed league tables from a macro context:

“...I have quite strong feelings about that really...there should be accountability. I’ve always felt that there should be some accountability, but I felt they went a bit too far, in the league tables, without really explaining to parents or the outside world, what it mean...this is the best school, this is the worst school. That’s great for the best school, it’s terrible for the worst school, so where are you going to choose your kids not to go? The worst school, so that just gets worse...”<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Joseph Giusto, 2004.

<sup>130</sup> Faye Ingram, 2004.

<sup>131</sup> Shelia Weller, 2004.

Although league tables do not formally exist in New York State, informal versions have appeared within the local press and have raised concerns:

“...Another problem is when one of our local business papers, for some unknown reason decided that they would be able to rate public schools. And every year now for probably the past 8 to 10 years, they have come out with a rating system where they have rated the public schools in western New York. And of course, when they rated the high schools, out of a hundred high schools, Buffalo’s schools were all last. When they rated the districts, Buffalo was last, ok.”<sup>132</sup>

While the argument could be made that league tables kept the local community informed of educational attainment and underperformance within the schools, both senior managers pointed to a ranking system that they perceived as arbitrary and had the potential to negatively impact their schools. Both noted what could happen to schools whose attainment left them at or near the bottom of the league table and both knew at the time that their schools were in danger of achieving this distinction. While placement on a league table was indicative of attainment against high stakes examinations and could impact the public’s perception of the school, this alone would not place the school into special measures or under registration review. Both management teams, however, also recognised that recovery would be slow to achieve, if at all.

While the move towards specific qualifications and the altering of pedagogical style to meet targets may be viewed as necessary adjustments by senior management teams, the underlying issue strikes at the heart of the equality of outcome. Add to this, the question becomes what lays at the heart of accountability – improved school outcomes as evidenced by higher attainment rates by schools or improved student knowledge and skills? If school administrators are willing to amend curricula and encourage pedagogical approaches that focus on test taking skills over the development of thinking and content knowledge, then accountability would appear to be results oriented and not specifically student centred. If a school encourages students to subscribe to a less than rigorous curriculum or believes that the students are incapable of achieving targeted grades, then the fortunes of the school takes precedence over the outcomes of children. If the pressure

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<sup>132</sup> Joseph Giusto, 2004.

to achieve against targets means the abandonment of a consideration of student potential, students' needs and long-range goals, then accountability serves the needs of the school over students. This willingness to subjugate the needs of the student to the needs of the institution upends the arguments underpinning equality of outcome and indeed equality of opportunity.

**Communities, Schools and Educational Reform:  
Teachers' Conceptualisation of Educational Success  
and the Impact on the Children in the Schools and Communities**

The previous discussions centred upon teachers' memories, perceptions and analysis of educational change in both the liberal reform and the accountability reform eras. Although these are vital to this work to see the points of alignment and disjuncture, it is far more important to consider the final question that the teachers contemplated in their interviews. Can education, and particularly reforms to education to improve educational opportunity and educational outcomes, make a difference to children and communities in poverty?

The answer to the question proved to be far more complex than at first anticipated. Some teachers answered quite quickly with what appeared to be pre-rehearsed rationales for their answers whilst other teachers seemed to struggle with the answer that they were formulating. It is not to suggest that the former were glib in answering or that their answers lacked analysis but it appeared that they had been asked the question before, had long since arrived at the answer and that the answer, while unsettling, was matter of fact. The teachers in the latter group seemed to consider the question but, in thinking through their answers, there was almost a palatable sadness or unease in the answers that they constructed.

When considering if reforms made a difference to the children and communities, a number of teachers pointed to present reforms and, while assessing them as positive steps

forward, they voiced concern that these were short-term panaceas rather than long-term systemic changes. One respondent noted:

“...I find one of the more difficult things that these initiatives are three year initiatives and what happens at the stage where that’s pulled. We’re in a position probably now where the Learning Support Unit funded from Excellence in Cities is just about stopping, which means that the Learning Support Unit doesn’t carry on...Can we maintain the same quality because of that? So there’s no point in running initiatives on a three year rolling basis if you can’t maintain the things that you’ve set out...”<sup>133</sup>

For this respondent, who worked with students with special educational needs whose behaviour often led to periods of exclusion, the Learning Support Unit (LSU) became the cornerstone upon which to construct programmes to address social, behavioural and learning issues faced by students. His estimation of the impact of the LSU suggested that the programme had begun to meet the needs of the students but faced uncertainty because of the anticipated termination of funding and the inability of schools to maintain these programmes out of their normal operating budgets. This frustration can also be seen in the American experience of reform where *ESEA* is subject to renewal every five years, often resulting in politically led initiatives whose funding erodes when political change occurs. This raises the question as to whether or not education reform can be effective at addressing the needs of socio-economically disadvantaged communities if the longevity needed to develop and embed programmes is missing. With programmes designed to counter long established socio-economic deprivation and its effects, transience is likely to lead to educational instability and reduce the overall effectiveness of the short-term programmes.

Moving away from the transitory nature of education reform, there were many teachers who did not believe that educational reforms in either era were responsive to the needs of their students or, ultimately, to the needs of the larger communities where they taught. Teachers who responded in this manner often saw the process and content of reform divorced from their lives as educational professionals. In essence, the government

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<sup>133</sup> Michael Robinson, 2004.

constructed reform programmes and these were done to them without apparent rationale, consultation or an understanding of the context in which they worked and in which their students lived.

As a counter to the argument that education reform could not reap change in communities and improve students' outcomes, a large proportion of teachers did believe in the ameliorative effects of education and the potential to improve the opportunities of students from socio-economically deprived communities. However, a number of conceptualisations arose in this positive affirmation of education. One teacher reflected that education could impact the lives of children from socio-economically deprived areas:

“Well, one it introduces a discipline into their lives which I believe and a lot of children these days don't have. I also think it encourages them to aim higher which is important because there are too many people now who have no higher horizons to reach for and in this country its worse because we have a welfare state that supports idleness.”<sup>134</sup>

Another teacher conceptualised her argument of the ameliorative potential of education and education reform in terms of the different aspects of poverty and whether or not she has witnessed these over the course of her career:

“Right...both emotionally and materialistically, yes I did. Again, probably not consciously, but yes, with the reforms that we've seen and we've used in school, yes I think we have, in that children are leaving, there are more jobs available out there anyway than there were ten years ago. It was more difficult 10 years ago and also now because its learning for life. So yeah, children I think realise that they can go on to learn and that learning doesn't finish at sixteen, that they are going to go on, the majority are going to go on to ... college. There may be a few who are going to go with their uncle, being a glazier, or a roofer, or a tiler, but yeah, the majority will go on to do a course.”<sup>135</sup>

A third teacher considered the difference between her definition of educational success and the ability of her school to meet this conceptualisation against New York State's

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<sup>134</sup> Mariann Ficken, 2004.

<sup>135</sup> Sheila Weller, 2004.

agreed representation of educational success. She concluded that a fundamental difference existed between the two:

“Success in education is when you are able to help a student realize that all that we give them here are the building blocks for the future. That, in today’s society, things are changing so quickly out there that we just provide for the basics. The courses that we give them, some of them they may never need but they never know what they’re going to need because kids don’t take and work the same job for 40 years like our parents did...”

Finally, another teacher postulated that success in education should be measured from the dual perspective of the educator and the child since, together, they formed the cohesive and integral part of the relationship that underpinned education success:

“What is success in education? That is hard to measure. Educators don’t have immediate gratification. They don’t see the output of their efforts right away and they don’t see it very frequently but for an educator to really understand that he or she has made a difference, its that rare occasion when a person comes back whether its for a class reunion or just comes back and comes up to you and says, *You know, Miss Smith, Mr Jones, I wouldn’t be where I am today if it hadn’t been for you ...*That’s immeasurable. You cannot put dollars and cents on that feeling...Success in education is when the individual that has been the recipient of that education can lead a successful and happy life as equivalent to what you have given him because you have given that person a strong solid foundation on which to build. You created in that person the zest and desire for learning, in other words you’ve created a lifelong learner somebody that’s really enthused about learning something new each and every day. Its one of the things I like best about this school...I learn personally something in my job and about people and about culture and about the world...and for me that’s exciting, its thrilling...That’s success from the educator’s point of view and from the person being measured.”<sup>136</sup>

Although there are differences in their conceptualisations of success, the primary criteria amongst the teachers who believed in the ameliorative possibilities of education was that their schools provided the opportunity to overcome personal and educational circumstances and move beyond these. Whilst life-long learning appeared to be a precursor for success, the teachers left this as rather ambiguously defined. Some suggested that further education through skills-based courses and vocational routes might

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<sup>136</sup> Ronnie Wilson, 2004.

address socio-economic deprivation. On the other hand, no one specifically centred upon university education as particularly important to overcome poverty. In fact, it appeared that many of the teachers did not embrace the more academic routes as a means of improving long-term educational outcomes and breaking the cycle of poverty that they dealt with on a daily basis.

### **Constructing Meaning from Dialogue: Easton's Systems Analysis and Teachers' Perceptions of Education Reform**

The Eastonian Model of Systems Analysis, although predominantly utilised as an analytical framework for the construction of policy, can provide the structure in which to anchor a discussion on teachers' perceptions of education and education reform. In doing so, systems analysis unites the oral histories and aids in creating a macro picture of education reform from the teachers' perspectives with particular emphasis on the drivers and consequences of reform.

In Easton's conceptualisation of an organic and ever evolving system, systems do not exist alone but abide in relationship to other systems and within the context of an overall social milieu. Whilst the education system reflects the social values of the society in which it exists, it does not lie adjacent to the society but is an integral part of that society and is impacted by the decision made by society, largely through the governmental construction of policy. In this vein, the majority of the respondents conceptualised the external factors that impacted upon education as the constraints upon the system and upon the system's success. In essence, someone within the system, whether it was the Blakely local education authority, the Braddock school district, the New York State Commissioner for Education or the respective national governments, promulgated education reform policy. However, this nebulous force behind reform policy did not and could not perceive what the students' needs or realities were, what the teachers' experiences were or what was pedagogically possible within the confines of secondary

education. For example, few policy-makers understood the pit mentality as evidenced by teachers in Blakely, the immigrant communities in Braddock or the familial indifference and lack of value for education and the impact that these had upon the children in both schools. This division between policy-maker and educationalist proved problematic because teachers perceived themselves as being pressured to respond to external factors and implement policy despite not having been consulted on policy change, not agreeing with policy outcomes and not playing an essential role in the development of policy despite their having clear expertise in the field.

While teachers frequently assailed the imposition of education policy without consultation or, in their estimation, merit, they had to learn to negotiate these as policy inputs within the education system. Many teachers believed that the reforms or policies did have merit and could be used in a constructive manner to improve educational opportunity and outcomes. However, the rigidity of reforms or policy changes often stymied them in their attempts to cohesively deploy these in their classrooms and with the children they taught. While there was some scepticism over ROSLA and whether or not an additional year of education would be appropriate within a mining community where jobs were plentiful, it was the structural changes that needed to be embedded into that year to make the outcomes successful that the teachers could not influence yet had to implement that appeared troubling. In Braddock, none of the teachers advocated for the lessening of educational standards *per se* but they wanted to be able to use high stakes examinations to improve knowledge and skills rather than simply learning to regurgitate content that would be used solely for the examination. In both schools, teachers wanted to have the capacity to tailor the school experience to meet the needs of students and not feel pressured to meet standards and attainment goals that would not help students. Essentially, they recognised that the academic curricula were not wholly appropriate for most of their students but, without the ability to negotiate this, it was unlikely that their students' outcomes would meet expectations.

With the negotiation of the inputs a continuing struggle for many of the teachers, they pointed to the throughputs phase as key to the success of the schools and the

implementation of cohesive reforms. Effective and often visionary leadership made the articulation of policy possible within the school, made teachers believe in the necessary adaptations to accommodate the reforms in their classroom and brought stability to the schools in what was perceived as an ever changing educational environment. All of the Blakely teachers traced the leadership history of the school and the patterns of leadership and concluded that leaders who anticipated change and worked with the local education authority to ensure that education policy reforms were funded and supported had created a strong education community. The Braddock teachers also held this estimation, particularly of the current head teacher, who they viewed as knowledgeable, visionary and with clear solutions to the problems faced by the school although they admitted Braddock school district policies and New York State education legislation often reduced the effectiveness of this within the school and community.

Having conceptualised leadership and effective planning as the underpinning factors to the throughput phase, the output phase became the crucial link to determine the system's overall effectiveness. Both schools worked within educational systems that delineated clear targets for schools and school districts. By this estimation of outputs, the schools failed to achieve. Neither school met the targets prescribed by their governments and teachers from both schools knew that there was increasing pressure to do so or face closure. Instead of using the systemic definition, did the schools achieve educational outputs that would be in line with the notional understanding of the two reform eras? This is more debatable. It could be argued that teachers who do not believe that an academic curriculum is appropriate for their students or who believe that education exists solely to advance employment opportunities are actually limiting the opportunities or outcomes of their students. If they conceptualise the educational outputs as appropriate for the community, yet they see themselves as being different from the community because they were once part of the community but their core values enabled their transcendence from the community, then does this not limit equality of opportunity? If they do not believe that education can effectively break the cycle of poverty or lessen socio-economic deprivation then are the outputs achieved simply perpetuating poverty? If the latter is the case, then has not the cycle of educational poverty been effectively replicated within the

system for yet another generation of policy-makers and educationalists to attempt to ameliorate?

## **Conclusions and Implications for the Future**

At this juncture it is appropriate to consider the principal conclusions, which may be drawn from this historical analysis of English and American education reforms and their subsequent efficacy in ameliorating poverty and the knowledge claims that can be made. However, it is also apposite to acknowledge a number of important injunctions. First, researchers are cautioned against formulating conclusions before an analysis of the research data is complete. Yet, once the disquisitive exercise is accomplished, it becomes the researcher who ultimately derives conclusions from her work. Therefore, the conclusions drawn reflect the researcher's interpretation of the data and what she believes flows logically from the documentary and oral history evidence presented. Secondly, historians are admonished not to examine contemporary problems through a historical lens without recognising the possibility for historical distortion.<sup>1</sup> The brisk pace of history, which is perhaps eased and intensified by the proliferation of available information that is both reliable and uncertain in equal measures, poses a conundrum for historians today. Without the space of time and a reflexive stance, distortion of the historical narrative can readily occur. Finally, there is a cautionary note to researchers not to divorce the educational system from the wider social structure; to do so, would be to create a **research** vacuum where the **research** questions cannot be appropriately or validly answered.<sup>2</sup> Albeit these are important issues for any researcher, they are of paramount importance for an education historian whose research relies on the past to illuminate a contemporary dilemma, while seeking simultaneously to generate policy recommendations for the future. Anticipating these concerns, both the structure of the research design and the exercise of systematic reflexivity on the part of the researcher respond to these issues in the generation of research conclusions and new knowledge claims.

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<sup>1</sup> Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, pp. 158-164.

<sup>2</sup> McCulloch and Richardson, 2000, pp. 52-78.

With these caveats in place, there are both substantive and methodological conclusions to be drawn from this research. The primary substantive conclusions are anchored in the composite analytical framework of the work, and suggest a necessity to refine the terms of the contemporary debates in the history of education and poverty. While the substantive conclusions are vital to answering the research questions posed at the project's inception, the methodological conclusion plays a lesser but notable role because of the historical-political nature of the research. The substantive comparative analysis of American and English education policy fosters the methodological conclusion that a researcher can make a direct comparison of two nations and specific policy initiatives confidently as long as the context and distinctive differences are fully explored, discussed and analysed.

Conclusions are essential to the research process but the author contends the generation of conclusions without consideration of the future implications for education policy-making is undesirable. It is not uncommon for poverty to be rediscovered by education policy-makers; indeed, this rediscovery is detailed throughout this research. Current policy debates not only rediscover educational poverty but policy-makers frequently reapply previous solutions. This cycle of rediscovery and re-emergence of previous solutions is both exhausting and calamitous for those within the system and for those served by the system. It has always been the intention that this dissertation should not be a historical consideration alone but that it might also provide a basis for discussion of future policy initiatives in both nations. The implications for future policy-makers derive directly from the conclusions and offer possible ways forward with the acknowledgement that this is the author's positional stance and other researchers might make different policy recommendations.

## **Substantive and Methodological Conclusions**

The dissertation explored the history of national education policy initiatives pertaining to both the reform of education and poverty, while working within the context of an identified and representative community within each nation. The structure of the work, aided by periodisation, traced the development of education debates, priorities and policies in three distinct eras, although the first acted as the cornerstone upon which to develop these in the subsequent eras. If these had remained compartmentalised, then a historical narrative of the three distinct eras would have emerged. Whereas this approach might have contributed to the academic discussion of education history, it would have overlooked the subtle, yet powerful, philosophical shifts that occurred in the transition from one era to the next. These transitions not only demonstrate the repositioning of attitudes but also authenticate the paradigmatic shifts that played a crucial role in comprehending education policy development and the education-poverty links in the post-war era. The two research questions posed warrant consideration in light of this:

*In the post-World War II period, defined for this study as 1964 through 2000, what were the major trends and policy initiatives implemented in the education systems of England and the US that targeted the amelioration of poverty in urban communities?*

*Within this time frame, how would education practitioners who taught in the neighbourhood schools, secondary schools, evaluate programs and initiatives particularly in terms of their potential to reform education and to break the cycle of poverty in which many of their students lived?*

The first substantive conclusion, and subsequent knowledge claim, is the historical narrative and the contribution to education history broadly. The research project traces the narrative of American and English education history and, in doing so, identifies three strands woven throughout these histories that trace not only the development of education policy but also the interconnection between education and poverty within policy history. Equality of access, particularly access to secondary education, is the cornerstone of post-war education policy history yet both national education systems did not emerge with a tabula rasa. While the war may have interrupted education, it did not destroy the

institutional structures within each education system. Parity of esteem between institutions encouraged acceptance not only of the existing schools but also of the implementation of the education policy vis-à-vis these schools. This initial thread of education history was challenged, however, by the emerging social, cultural and economic changes within England and America that repositioned educational priorities within both nations. Equality of educational opportunity supplanted educational access as the nations transitioned into the 1960s. Universal access to primary and secondary education had been secured but, for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, the inequality of opportunity provided between and within educational institutions and the impact this had upon post-compulsory education choices became a dominant thread within education and poverty history discourses. These emerged within periods of general economic prosperity, however, periods of prolonged economic contraction during the 1970s and 1980s shifted policy-making toward a market model with an increasing focus on accountability structures to secure equality of educational outcomes. It cannot be argued that equality of educational outcomes for all children should not be the norm within educational institutions. It is perhaps the definition and the measurement of educational outcomes that is more problematic for it reflects national accountability agendas and the abandonment of locally innovative education initiatives.

This focus upon accountability and outcomes rather than access and opportunity stripped away the professional autonomy of teachers and school systems in both nations. This led to a rejection of the more experimental pedagogical approaches within education and held educational structures - schools, local authorities, school districts – accountable for the educational outcomes achieved largely through high stakes examinations and inspections. The nation and education became more interconnected so that the locally administered education systems or the primacy of state educational bureaucracies bowed more toward centralisation and the needs of the nation as outlined by policy-makers. This transition from a social democracy to an educational market place fostered substantial revisions within the philosophical foundations underpinning education systems and programmes. This did not result in the abandonment of the interconnection between education and the amelioration of poverty; it made the ability of educational structures to compensate for

poverty more difficult because the micro level of education – the locality – had been subsumed by education at the macro level – the nation.

The second substantive conclusion, and knowledge claim, is the interconnection between education and poverty not on the macro level but as operationalized at the local level by teachers and educational leaders in two schools and in two communities in the post-industrial age. Many of the teachers and educational leaders who provided oral testimonies for the research project had grown up either in the locality, many had family roots in the local industries and many had moved away for their teacher training programmes but made the conscious decision to return home to teach. They understood what it meant to teach in schools where a high percentage of the student population came from socio-economically deprived families. Many of the teachers also understood what it meant to come from socio-economically deprived backgrounds; they spoke often of how their parents insured that they had an education so that they would never work in mines, mills or factories. However, an empathy deficit emerged in the oral testimonies when considering their personal histories and lived experiences of the children they taught. They drew a clear demarcation between the experience of their families – demonstrated work ethic, value of education and the drive to escape poverty – with their understanding of the children’s families who they believed did not hold these same cultural values highly. While making no explicit reference to Lewis’ culture of poverty thesis, a thesis that is contentious in its depiction of poverty and has been challenged within the literature, the teachers clearly embraced the conceptual framework postulated in Lewis’ writings. They spoke of the children and families being different to their own families where hard work was not the norm, where buying on credit became the norm to purchase possessions and fuel lifestyles that they could not afford, where living on the dole became routine and where generations of the same family replicated this process over and over again. While it is possible that some of the teachers may have read Lewis’ work in their teacher training programmes, not all of the teachers would have trained during Lewis’ ascendancy in poverty debates. The teachers who conceptualised poverty within this framework simultaneously embraced the values underpinning comprehensive education, a design meant to broaden opportunities for the children. They believed in comprehensive

education, however, they also believed that the children they taught came from a culture that was so different from their own that it was unlikely that comprehensive education would provide opportunities as it had in their own lives.

Although the research project explored three distinct historical periods, the research occurred in the final era, which influenced discussions of national policy broadly and demonstrated the prevalence of the market model of education. Schools within this model needed reform, however, national policy-makers regarded teachers and education professionals to be either unable or unwilling to make the necessary adjustments thereby necessitating the national government to act in the national education interest. The introduction of national standards and accountability structures provided a framework for teachers, schools and localities to work toward while providing consistency across the many localities. Persistent school failures were largely clustered in urban areas marked by high levels of socio-economic deprivation. These schools became the problem that confirmed failure of the system rather than addressed it as a problem to be remedied. Consequently, the poor within these communities and attending those schools also became part of the conundrum for policy-makers. While not overtly echoing Lewis's hypothesis but demonstrating their acceptance of its theoretical premises, policy-makers questioned the ability of compensatory programmes to change the lives of the poor, if poor communities transmitted cultural ideals which were resistant to education and change.

The acceptance of Lewis' culture of poverty as positional stance without a clear indication of how the knowledge underpinning such a stance emerged might be considered unique, however, it is the further operationalization of the culture of poverty thesis within their professional lives needs further exploration. The teachers in both localities taught in schools with higher than average socio-economic deprivation indices. The students in both schools performed poorly in high stakes examinations so academic progression was stagnant, which impacted upon the schools' overall performance rating and in comparison to other schools within the locality. The teachers did not see these as two separate issues to be addressed but instead saw these as interconnected events that

they could do little to improve. Since the students came from socio-economically deprived backgrounds whose families did not value education, the motivation to achieve in school, to study for high stakes examinations and to use education as a career springboard was minimal for the majority of their students. Additionally, the teachers expressed disdain for the national standards and high stakes examinations imposed upon them by policy-makers who neither understood the students they worked with nor the professional demands of teaching. The teachers recognised that they their impact upon national policy was minimal but saw the impact of national policy on the school to be particularly onerous. With the schools situated in socio-economically deprived communities, with failing examination results and with poor performance in league tables, the teachers conceptualised the situation as an educational culture of poverty from which they themselves, let alone their students, could not escape. As the schools sank lower through the league tables, the pressure from local and national governments became more intense for the schools and the teachers to improve. Teacher attrition rates became problematic; school leadership could not attract subject specialists with experience or interest in teaching in socio-economically deprived areas while teachers who performed inadequately often could not secure another teaching post so they tended to stagnate in their pedagogical approaches. Many of the teachers, particularly in the English context, expressed additional concerns about the strength of the leadership to drive reform and improvement although the American teachers viewed their leadership team as capable but stymied by local and state bureaucracies. Local authority interventions mandated as the schools sank lower focused on changing teaching and learning, which the teachers did not view see as the problem, while not addressing the issues of deprivation that the teachers could not control. Moreover, both schools were in need of repair yet structural investment in the schools or investment in additional programmes by the locality appeared to be unwelcome with the long-term sustainability of each school in question. The educational culture of poverty that emerged demonstrated decreasing professional self-efficacy and autonomy amongst the teachers, increasing control by centralised agencies whose policies often ran counter to the teachers' professional philosophies and the development of school cultures that could not counter the students' entrenchment or lack of achievement. Each performance failure concretised

the educational culture of poverty making it increasingly more difficult to escape the cycles of poor achievement, teaching and inspection results.

The third substantive conclusion, and knowledge claim, is the impact of transnationalism upon the comparative framework of the research project. The narrative of the educational histories that unfolded through the documentary and oral history evidence remained compartmentalised and therefore somewhat divorced from each other as the history of English and American education history unfolded in the narrative. The Eastonian analysis of each time period considered the intersection and impact of political issues upon the development of education policy within each nation as a means of unifying the narratives. It is in this analysis and in the overall periodisation where lines of alignment and divergence are most visible within the research. Historically, the movement of pedagogical theories and institutional frameworks between the US and England has been documented although it is also important to acknowledge the impact of other western European nations upon American educational thought and practices. The assimilation of these ideas within the education system became the norm; this demonstrated the impact of educational theory external to both systems but also the need to develop a local understanding of these ideas that could work within the educational culture of the nation. Transnationalism further widens the opportunities to share knowledge and conceptual frameworks, to embed these within the educational culture and to utilise these ideas and frameworks as alternatives to existing structures. The movement of people and ideas, alongside the challenge to and weakening of the nation-state, in an age of increasing interconnectedness through digital communication, would inevitably impact education systems in each nation.

While the global movement and adoption of ideas cannot be denied, it is important to consider the impact that these ideas have upon educational discourses and how these discourses are operationalized nationally and locally. PISA scores, and a nation's subsequent position on international league tables for education, are a primary driver in education accountability structures in the American and English education systems. These scores are reported by the press and are often utilised by politicians to highlight the

poor performance of the nation educationally, to sound the alarm of national educational decline and as a call to reform the education system to foster competition in an increasingly globalised marketplace. Much like the poverty figures discussed in previous chapters, the PISA standings for both the US and the UK have remained constant across reading, mathematics and science over the last decade. South Korea, Singapore, Finland and various Chinese cities, on the other hand, have dominated the top positions of the league tables although not necessarily enjoying the same economic and political resources of either America or Britain. The questions emerging from such discussions focused on how these nations achieved scores in the top tier of results, how did teaching and learning in these nations differ and what could be adopted and transplanted to improve the American and English educational outcomes. Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Education from 2010 to 2014, routinely referenced the education systems of Singapore, Finland and the US, particularly American charter schools initiatives, as potential systems upon which to draw inspiration from when reforming English compulsory education. Arnie Duncan, the US Secretary of Education from 2009 to 2015, engaged in discussions with English policy-makers about charter school design, signed a memorandum of understanding with Singapore to develop mathematics and science teaching initiatives and created a task force to study the strong performing nations in the PISA OECD results. There is further evidence that Finnish education, particularly the later entry point into education and the more relaxed high stakes examination regime, has become part of the discourse within American education. Clearly, through the lead of national education policy-makers, the impact of transnationalism emerged within discourses surrounding education reform and its potential significance for policy-making proved robust.

The emergence and impact of transnationalism, however, needs to be considered not at the national level but at the local level, particularly when education policy-making is at the fore of the discussion. While there is distinction in the relationship between the national and the local governments in the making of education policy, and while this relationship moved toward more centralised power in the market model of education history, there is a strong reverence of the local within education policy and education

history in both nations. Moreover, the growth in popularity of populist movements and the subsequent collective inward looking of national policy-makers may impact upon education policy-making rooted in the initiatives of other nations. Prior to this emergence of populism and the victory of the Leave campaign in the Brexit referendum, the teachers in Blakely traced the strength of local education initiatives in their schools, the impact that local education did have upon the community and the rejection of national policy that could not meet the needs of their students. They also spoke of the town's insularity with many children choosing not to move beyond the boundaries even to go to further education colleges or universities in the surrounding region. This insularity clearly contributed to the town's overwhelming support to leave the European Union by a two-thirds majority in the 2016 referendum. The picture in Braddock differed slightly in that it did not support the populist movement engendered by the Trump campaign although this was in line with major New York cities. All of the major cities in New York State voted for the Clinton campaign; it should also be noted that New York State has not voted for a Republican candidate since 1984. The teachers in Braddock expressed more anger with state and local politicians when discussing education policy; they often could not point to specific federal policies that impacted their day-to-day classroom teaching. The populist Trump presidency that aims to 'Make America Great Again' targets education structures while promoting local autonomy, which is likely to mean less engagement with the wider discourses of education policy including Singaporean mathematics pedagogy or the philosophical underpinnings of Finnish teaching and learning. Populism cannot impede the dissemination of ideas and the evolution of discourses through transnationalism but it can prevent these discourses and ideas from taking root within the locality and the nation.

The potential tensions between transnationalism and populism, however, are a distraction when considering the overall argument for the primacy of the locality. The selection of Habermas's critical theory is an appropriate paradigmatic framework to underpin the research because American and English education traditions have traditionally been rooted in the local rather than the national. Arising from Habermas's critical theory framework, both communities need to be engaged in the policy-making process in order

to create meaningful reforms pertinent to their communities and, in so doing, would be invested in the reforms and potentially benefit from them. If these reforms emerge from transnational discourses, if they are informed by academics and teachers working together in classrooms to develop ideas that are meaningful across cultures, if they encourage the engagement of the community in these discourses and debates, then they have the potential for praxis that is meaningful to individual schools and communities. If, on the other hand, these reforms are imposed in a top down manner without meaningful engagement with discourses at the local level, they run the risk of being viewed as enforced solutions that may not be responsive to local needs.

The three substantive conclusions, and subsequent knowledge claims, emerge from the analysis of the documentary evidence and the oral history testimonies. The development of the historical narrative across three time periods while considering convergence and divergence in the transition phases of American and English education provides unique insight into these histories. However, the contribution to knowledge in the development of these narratives in relationship to the respective local communities and schools cannot be disputed especially in light of the failure of these communities to preserve much of the educational history that this work covers. The emergence of the educational culture of poverty narrative also contributes to knowledge, particularly in the development of the discourse surrounding teachers' conceptualisations of poverty largely and the impact of institutional poverty upon their schools and their profession. It is vitally important that policy-makers understand this conceptualisation and the potential impact that this could have upon the teaching and learning within schools where socio-economic deprivation and imposed standards could have upon educational structures. Finally, transnationalism and its subsequent impact upon education discourses can be readily traced within the literature. However, the impact upon the community and schools, communities that referenced the local over the national or international would place transnationalism and populism at odds to each other within educational discourses.

While the substantive conclusions and knowledge claims contribute to the narratives of American and English history of education and the development of new knowledge

within these narratives, one methodological conclusion also emerged from the research that needs to be considered. The focus of this work was not to develop another historical narrative of the time periods within the research project; indeed, it was acknowledged early in the research that narratives covering different aspects of these eras existed. However, while the addition of another narrative does not detract from the overall canon and adds another perspective to the literature, the intention of this work was to consider what policy-makers could garner from historical narratives to move forward in the amelioration of poverty. Clear reference to poverty statistics in the research demonstrate stagnation throughout the history of educational reforms discussed in this research project. Moreover, the historical narrative of reform had begun to come full circle and new initiatives tended to borrow or copy from previous initiatives that did not end this entrenchment of poverty.

The development of policy, however, is not rooted in the methodologies typically within the historian's realm but needed to consider the different factors – the pushes and pulls of politics – that impacted upon the development of policy by policy-makers. While the political process can be viewed historically, it is a different process so a different framework needed to be introduced so that the research project could address the demands of the research questions posed. The modified Skinnerian framework adopted for the analysis of the documentary evidence provided the historical framework that would allow for a dissection of the documents through the linguistic conventions threaded through them. However, the policy process is dynamically different to the reading of documentary evidence and needed to be analysed through a framework that would consider all of the factors influencing policy, the mediation of policy by the various actors in the policy process and the emerging policy outputs in the slightly messier world of lived politics. The Eastonian framework of policy analysis provides the appropriate tool to bring together the historical threads that feed into the policy process and the impact of the policy process upon history through the generation of policy responses. The Eastonian framework also fosters the comparative analysis in the work for the emerging trends identified through periodisation could then be investigated across the two nations.

The modified Skinnerian and Eastonian frameworks provide the unique underpinning lens to focus upon the historical-political analysis that is developed within this research project. The dependence upon the modified Skinnerian framework solely would have hampered the emergence of the political analysis of education and poverty amelioration because of the historian's reliance upon documentary evidence and the linguistic meanings contained therein. Likewise, the Eastonian framework would not have provided an adequate framework to analyse documentary sources and the oral testimonies for the framework is not designed as a means to analyse at the micro level of documentary evidence but at the macro level of the intersection of history, policy and policy-making. The marriage of the modified Skinnerian framework to the Eastonian framework brings together the historical and the political and affords the opportunity to answer the research questions, which this marriage accomplishes. While there are a number of works that employ each framework singularly, this work is the sole instance of this combined framework.

## Implications for Education Policy in the Twenty-First Century

As previously stated, the crux of the dissertation rests not only on its ability to trace the history of education policy in both nations but also on the capacity to utilise the documentary and oral history evidence to lay the foundation for future directions for education policy in the twenty-first century. While it would be tempting to recommend the creation of specific, dedicated and innovative policies, these must come not from academics or researchers but must be generated from the individual communities themselves. On the other hand, the researcher can draw attention to explicit over-arching themes that policy-makers must consider when developing programmes for education in this century.

First, education policy in the latter half of the twentieth century demonstrated a clear trajectory towards increasing centralisation thereby disavowing the rich educational histories of both nations. While both nations have unique policy-making structures and education systems, the elemental feature of both was the pre-eminence of the locality in education policy.<sup>3</sup> The locally administered nature of the English national education system and the *laissez faire* arrangements of the American federal government allowed for a rich tradition of local education initiatives to emerge which have been seriously threatened by the increasing politicisation over education policy agendas. The education standards movement is a prime example of greater national intrusion into the once sacrosanct arena of education policy. Within the English context, the development of the National Curriculum incrementally consigned the teachers, schools and LEAs to the role of purveyors rather than innovators of curricula. Educators on the other side of the Atlantic struggled with the implementation of high stakes examinations and stringent

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<sup>3</sup> The English system, reformulated by the *Education Act 1944*, clearly designed a national education system that was locally administered. The US Constitution grants specific legislative powers to the federal government under Article I. If powers are neither specifically granted to the federal government nor does the US Constitution specifically prohibit the federal government from exercising certain powers, then the power rests with the various state governments. The Tenth Amendment specifically grants these reserved powers to the states. The federal system of governance in the US ceded responsibility for education to the several states, effectively creating 52 different education systems, which in turn relied upon the even smaller school district for the implementation of state policies. The 52 separate education systems phrase refers to the 50 state education systems as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

graduation requirements imposed by state governments keen to demonstrate exemplary high school graduation rates, thereby qualifying for increased federal education funding.

While it would be facile to suggest a return to the historical norm solely for the sake of reverting to the rich historical past, and the possibilities it once held, it is important that policy-makers comprehend the consequences of policy changes on this particular scale. Admittedly, within the last century technological and political change simultaneously created both immense opportunities and challenges for both nations, thereby making it difficult to remove education from the national policy agenda. Education policy is made in the context of an increasingly global climate, one in which each nation must compete and must be seen to be on par with its allies and adversaries. However, education has historically always reflected the duality of national values and local traditions. Religious education included within English schools is indicative of the Judaeo-Christian heritage and the predominance of the Anglican Church. The *Pledge of Allegiance* and *Star Spangled Banner* recited in American schools are demonstrative of the patriotic values Americans wish to instil in their children. While these values remain intact today, they are supplemented by the notional understanding of education for the sake of employment rather than for the edification of the individual. These core education values were not absent within the local community but were interpreted by the community to meet their particular needs in the context of the national values. It was the local communities that could prepare children for the world of work by teaching skills that would be needed within the community, and each community working within that framework complemented each other, thereby creating the skills necessary for an educated nation. In many ways, it was a collaborative effort to educate children rather than one reflecting national ascendancy. Policy-makers, therefore, need to consider the role of both nation and local community, as well as the historical position of both, when devising education policy for the twenty-first century.

Secondly, the ascendancy of a national education agenda impacts upon the transformative power of education as a tool to ameliorate systemic poverty. The era of social democracy consistently linked education and poverty, highlighting the capacity of education to

reduce the persistence of poverty, particularly through increased and dedicated national funding specifically designated for the eradication of poverty. However, an increased national role within education limits the role of the locality within the policy-making and implementation process. This, in turn, affects the community's ability to engage with itself to determine what it is needed for *that* particular community. This is contrary to Habermasian critical theory in its support for engagement and dialogue in order to transform communities and to move them out of poverty.

The resulting consequences of refusing to engage with communities are evident in two policy decisions. In the English context, New Labour's adoption of education policies to increase participation levels in higher education while simultaneously increasing university fees is one that reflects both national values and economic necessity. To compete in a global economy, the Blair government argued for promoting university attendance as a key means of decreasing the perceived skills gap between English students and their peers in other societies. However, necessity also dictated that university fees be increased to compensate for the funding gap at the larger research universities. While the former can be seen as a policy with merits, there were considerable downsides. Educators in Blakely clearly suggested that the community had relied on the coalmines and textile mills to provide employment, and although most were now closed, there was not a substantial history of further education or university attendance. This, coupled with the increased fees and fear of personal debt, made the policy highly unattractive to students and their families within the community. On the other hand, the educators in Braddock lamented the adoption of standards legislation and the passage of the *No Child Left Behind Act*, believing that the preoccupation with national standards forced states into imposing rigid examination guidelines with considerable consequences. Using one mathematics examination as a guideline, the NYS Department of Education declared the school in Braddock to be a SURR school with the threat of imminent closure, if the school could not quickly raise educational standards, which is interpreted to mean raising attainment on high stakes examinations. Although many of the students had not been adequately prepared for the secondary curriculum, it was the high schools that had to provide remedial work while also advancing a rigorous

curriculum. The Braddock teachers believed that the pressure to achieve meant that disaffected students were more likely to dropout because they could not move beyond the elementary requirements, making it impossible to actually graduate from high school. In both cases, the policies were imposed by national directives and did not consider the consequences to communities faced with systemic poverty, poor primary school attainment and little previous history of post-compulsory education.

Thirdly, while Habermas counselled for the engagement of communities, it cannot be presumed that only students and families need to be engaged in a debate on the future of education policy. The paucity of teachers' voices in education policy debates is not a new phenomenon, but one that has been increasingly evident since the end of the social democracy era. This, combined with an assault on teachers' professionalism and their perceived inability to produce quantifiable education results, has seriously damaged the profession and led to demoralisation. The denial of voice for the profession is detrimental to the reform debate because it moves the debate from the arena of classroom practice to the theoretical constructs of reform. While the teachers in both communities were critical of the local education authorities, they were even more censorious of national governments that were willing to implement policy without broad consultation with teachers. The majority of teachers interviewed believed that their governments did not understand the communities where they taught, did not comprehend pedagogical practices as they related to new policy initiatives and had not consulted with themselves or with any other colleague about proposed changes.

The argument that this researcher makes for the future of education policy is to accept that, while the increased presence of national education policy agendas cannot be reversed, historical frameworks can be drawn upon to supplant centralisation with local control over education policy. Local governments are in a prime position to convert national education policy agendas into successful local strategies through dialogue and debate with community members – including teachers – to reach a consensus about what is appropriate for their particular community. This is not a rejection of national policy

agendas or core educational values; rather, it is a strategy of negotiating policy for successful outcomes.

## Conclusion

The previous discussion details the primary substantive conclusion of the research, principally the need to refine the debates on education and poverty within a historical context to comprehend how shifts in policy subsequently created a policy culture that assailed rather than empowered schools and communities in poverty. However, this research need not have focused on international comparisons but could have explored the use of a comparative framework within a single nation. The germane question then, is what is the relevance of conducting comparative educational research to address the research questions posed? Both Evans and Alexander suggest that comparative research broadens understanding of a researcher's own educational system and the context in which it operates while also facilitating an appreciation for other systems.<sup>4</sup> It is the latter that can provide alternative solutions to common educational dilemmas however; this must be accomplished with an understanding of the educational systems and the historical values and structures imbedded within them.

Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the trans-Atlantic adoption of educational ideas was commonplace. Education concepts and policies flowed between both nations, although each was keen to appropriate these notional ideas in light of their current educational structures. While English and American educationists and policy-makers were seeking alternative solutions, it was often at the price of making the solutions conform to the system rather than making modifications in the system. This trend of adoption without full comprehension of systems is risky and potentially damaging, but it is one that continues today. Pring, who undertook the *Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training, England and Wales*, in an address at the University of

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Cambridge, advocated the adoption of Dewey's educational philosophies for English schools, believing that experiential learning would be beneficial to students. However, while Dewey's ideas are an inherent element of American education, American education follows a different structural design to the English education model. With an emphasis on liberal arts education in secondary school and specialisation only at university level, there is more of an opportunity for experiential learning although even this has been curtailed by the increase of high stakes examinations within American education. The English emphasis upon a prescribed national curriculum and specialisation at the age of 16 makes Dewey's ideals harder to implement within the current system without a radical rethink of the structures of English education. While a reconsideration of structures could provide the alternative solutions suggested by both Evans and Alexander, Professor Pring was not suggesting such a rethink but a positioning of Dewey's philosophical ideals onto the current system. It is an example that generally needs to be avoided within comparative education studies.

In summation, the research for this dissertation concentrated on two lower socio-economic communities with histories of significant educational underachievement amongst their secondary school cohorts. These communities are neither representative of the largest urban districts, which may have significant problems associated with inner-city communities, nor the small rural communities whose problems are of a different scale and nature to urban communities. Rather, Blakely and Braddock are representative of two mid-size districts whose economic fortunes have declined in the recent past and whose communities struggle to attain education success as defined by national education policy. Furthermore, the research focused on teachers in two of the lowest attaining schools in these communities who were given the opportunity to evaluate and comment on policy from their perspective as teacher within the community. They frequently pointed to the failure of policy-makers to understand the realities of the communities and the depth of the problems inherent in severely economically deprived communities. This failure subsequently contributed, in their view, to poorly educated adolescents who did not meet the attainment targets set by the government, who would not attend university in large numbers, who would not have the skills necessary to attract employers, who would

work in low-earning jobs and who would most likely fail to escape the poverty of their parents. Essentially, education policy had managed in 60 years to create an education culture of poverty and to extend the cycle of poverty to another generation. This situation clearly needs to change.

## Biographical Sketches

<b>Name of Interviewee</b>	<b>School Name School District Local Education Authority</b>	<b>Biographical Sketch</b>
Vincent Norton	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher Born and bred in Blakely although in a small pit village outside of the town. He began teaching at 24 in East Anglia then moved back to Blakely where he taught in one secondary comprehensive school prior to Joseph Locke. He has taught history at Joseph Locke since 1998 making this his 11 <sup>th</sup> year in teaching.
Brian Donaghey	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher Born and educated in Blakely
Anna Schmidt	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Female teacher Born and raised in Ohio but moved to Braddock when she married. She has held various teaching positions in Ohio, Minnesota and New York with much of her work being in special education. She has been at Elbert Hubbard for 4 years.
James Keane	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher Born and educated in Blakely in one of the town's grammar schools. Began teaching science in 1973 after a year of working in industry. He originally taught St Vincent's School where he was a head of year until the amalgamation with Joseph Locke School. After the amalgamation, he was promoted to the head of upper school.
Stuart Abbott	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Male teacher Born and educated in the Braddock city Catholic schools. He began teaching history in 2001 after finishing his degree programme in history and not finding a job other than in teaching. Elbert Hubbard was his second teaching post in Braddock.
John Frederick Norton	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher Born and raised in Blakely where he attended the local grammar school after passing his 11+ exam. After completing his national service, he trained to teach geography in London. He returned to Blakely where he taught for one year in a secondary comprehensive school before moving to Joseph Locke in 1956. He has since retired after a career teaching PE, English and geography.
Karin Lynch	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Female teacher Born and raised in Braddock where she went to a local Catholic primary school and then to a vocational high

		school. She has taught mathematics throughout her career, which has been within Braddock and the suburbs of the city. She has been at Elbert Hubbard for 6 years and is currently a member of the school's senior management team.
Arthur Reeves	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher Originally from the Wirral and moved to Blakely in the late 1960s. He has taught art throughout his career
Emyr Townsend	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Male teacher Born and educated in New York City at an elite public school where entrance was through competitive examination. Both his undergraduate and graduate degrees are in Special Education. He created an alternative, community based classroom approach that was implemented in Braddock and still exists. He began teaching at Elbert Hubbard in 1986 and works primarily within the special education department.
Michael Robinson	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher Born and raised in Liverpool where he attended a grammar school in an affluent section of the city. He began teaching biology in 1996 but has moved schools quite a bit in his career. He works largely with special needs children. He began teaching at Joseph Locke in 2001.
Faye Ingram	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Female teacher Born and raised in Scotland, primarily in Glasgow and largely in deprived areas of the city. Began teaching mathematics in 1992 at Joseph Locke.
Sue Price	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Female teacher Born and raised in Blakely where she attended the local girls' grammar school after passing her 11+ exam. She began teaching geography in 1976 in Blakely although moved to Joseph Locke in 1981 to seek career advancement. She was a member of the senior management team when the school amalgamated with St Vincent's and continues to serve at the school and on this team.
Sheila Weller	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Female teacher Born and raised in Bradford where she went to the local comprehensive school. She began her teaching career in London and arrived at Joseph Locke in 1980 where she taught PE. She is now a member of the senior management team at the school.
Jean Ann Lynch	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Female teacher Born and raised in Braddock where she also went to university. She began teaching in 1983 with experience primarily in special educational needs. She has spent 19 years

		teaching at Elbert Hubbard with 2 years experience in primary education as well.
Andrew Williams	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Male teacher Born and raised in Braddock where he went to Catholic primary school and a vocational high school. Although he went into a skilled craft, he made the decision to go into teaching. He began his career in 1982 as a substitute teacher in schools throughout the city. He has been at Elbert Hubbard for 14 years although his tenure has not been continuous.
Colin Wearn	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher He was born and raised in a large town similar to Blakely. He passed his 11+ exam and went to the local grammar school before taking a geography degree. He began teaching in 1971 in his hometown but moved to Joseph Locke in 1971 to teach geography. He is currently a pastoral lead in the school.
Marilyn Barnes	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Female teacher Born and raised in an old fishing community in the City of Hull. She attended the local comprehensive school after failing her 11+ exam. She began working in Blakely in 1977 with her first post being in RE. She moved to Joseph Locke in 1984 where she currently holds a senior pastoral role and coordinates SEN provision.
Robert Coles	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher He was born and raised in a small mining community outside of Blakely. He passed the 11+ examination and attended a traditional grammar school in the West Riding. He began teaching in 1966; he spent one year at an experimental school in the borough before moving to Joseph Locke in the following year. He has taught history, RE and PE throughout his career. He is responsible for vocational guidance and the Citizenship curricula at the school.
Jennifer Williams	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Female teacher Emigrated from Latin America and raised in New York City. She began teaching in 1999 with her career focusing on special education and gifted and talented provision. Her tenure at Elbert Hubbard was for 6 months at the time of interview.
Mark Smith	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Male teacher Born in Braddock and raised in the suburbs of the city where he went to a suburban high school. He began teaching music in 1999 in Braddock and has worked in several middle school and high school programmes. He has been at Elbert Hubbard for several years.
Walter Kucinsky	Elbert Hubbard	Male teacher

	High School Braddock	Born and raised in Braddock where he went to one of the technical high schools, which runs a largely selective programme. He began teaching in 1999 although he did work in schools during his undergraduate degree and during his time with the civil service. He teaches history although also works in mathematics.
Ronnie Wilson	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Male teacher Born and raised in Braddock where he went to both public and Catholic schools before serving in the Marine Corps. He began teaching in 1969 and has held several administrative roles since 1977 including the superintendency of a small rural school district. He has been at Elbert Hubbard since 1989 and is currently on the school's senior management team.
Jean Carlton	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Female teacher Born and raised in various southern communities; he family relocated often because of her father's job. She passed her 11+ exam and went to grammar schools. She began teaching in 1981 with her first post at Joseph Locke. She has taught history and has coordinated the alternative curriculum project. She is now a member of the senior management team at the school.
Peter Laurence	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher Born in 1949 and raised in Barnsley. He passed his 11+ and attended the local boys' grammar school. He trained as a PE teacher and has taught since 1970. He has taught at 3 schools in his career, one of them being St Vincent's School, which was amalgamated with Joseph Locke.
Michael Matthews	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Male teacher Born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico until the family moved to Miami, Florida. He was educated largely in private or Catholic schools in the south. He began teaching in New Orleans, moved to Braddock in 1990 and has taught in several schools within the city. He has been at Elbert Hubbard for 8 years as a Spanish teacher and bilingual coordinator.
Marilyn Kennedy	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Female teacher Born and raised in a suburb of Braddock. She attended Catholic primary and secondary schools in the suburbs. She has been at Elbert Hubbard for 3 years and has taught for 5 and ½ years in 3 other schools within the city.
Kirsty Graves	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Female teacher Born and raised in Braddock where she attended the local public schools, including high school. She began teaching science in 1988 at a vocational school in the city and has had several positions in both

		primary and secondary schools before arriving at Elbert Hubbard.
Mariann Ficken	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Female teacher Born and raised in Buckinghamshire until she moved to Blakely at age 11, where she earned a scholarship to the local girls' grammar school. She worked as an artisan for many years before training to teach in 1961. She taught in Birmingham and Dewsbury before returning to Blakely. She began teaching at Joseph Locke in 1969 and retired in 1996 after a long career in English teaching.
Terence O'Neil	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher He was born and raised in a community similar to Blakely where he attended the local grammar school. He began teaching in 1970 as a primary school teacher and moved into secondary education in 1974. He began teaching music at St Vincent's School in 1975 until its merger with Joseph Locke in 1992.
Philip McLaughlin	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher Born and raised in Sheffield where he went to the local grammar school as well as teacher training college. He began teaching at a local secondary school where he worked for 17 years before accepting a post as the Head of Technology at St Vincent's. He has been at Joseph Locke for 11 years.
Joseph Giusto	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Male teacher Born and raised in Braddock where he went to Catholic primary and secondary schools before attending college where he majored in accounting. He began teaching in 1970 as a substitute teacher at a local secondary school before moving to Elbert Hubbard in 1971. While he still teaches an occasional class, he is a member of the senior management team at the school/
Amy McKenna	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Female teacher Born and raised in the city of Braddock. She originally trained to be a medical assistant but never took up a post. She trained to teach English and worked at a local university where she taught business writing for 23 years. She has worked at Elbert Hubbard for 3 years as an English Teacher although part of that time her post was split between two schools.
M. Timothy Taylor	Joseph Locke School Blakely	Male teacher Born and raised in a large mining town similar to Blakely. He went to the local grammar school on a music scholarship. Began teaching at Joseph Locke in 1998 where he taught music and PE. He currently divides time between the school and work for the borough as an AST.
Tom Penman	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Male teacher Born and raised in a suburb of Braddock. He began teaching in 1987 after a career change. He

		has taught mathematics in both primary and secondary schools in the city. He has taught at Elbert Hubbard for 8 years.
Sabrina Goode	Elbert Hubbard High School Braddock	Female teacher She was born and raised in Braddock. She began her career as a teacher but after an illness, she became a school librarian first in a suburban school district and then in Braddock. She has worked at Elbert Hubbard for 4-5 years.

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## **Dissertations**

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