A list of titles in this series can be found at the end of this volume.
International Handbook of Urban Education

Part One

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Springer
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Urban education, as a field of study, has been plagued by a social problems orientation. Urban areas are often seen as collections of problems and urban schools are as well. The sad reality is that urban areas are full of both poverty and wealth and the educational system reflects both of these. In practice, urban schools are often segregated by class, caste, and race. Such schools are also segregated because public policy allows this to be true. Policy creates the schools that serve young people who are marginalized and for whom life is difficult and unforgiving. Such schools make it difficult for students to use education to alter their life chances.

The field of urban education emerged precisely to highlight the above and to argue that such students and families, and the schools that serve them, deserve better. The field itself has led to many new understandings about how to improve schools and how to better serve such students and their families. These are great accomplishments but they are also always limited by the asymmetry of possibilities created by social stratification, segmentation, and segregation. Urban schools that are created to reflect divided societies cannot significantly improve without the dismantling of the schools that serve those that derive considerable benefits from the stratified society. In turn, this would seem to require dismantling the wider societal stratification systems. The field of urban education then exists both as an amelioration in such societies and as a moral conscience – calling attention to effects of racialization, class formation and maintenance, and patriarchy. This moral conscience is never far from the research in urban education whether it be in service of improving schools or critiquing policy and practice.

Across the globe we have been experiencing a steady process of urbanization. Yet urbanization takes on different forms given different social and cultural histories. In many parts of the world, the poor are not in the central cities but in rings around the city. The schools that serve them (if there are schools that serve them) share the challenges of all schools that serve the urbanized poor. This Handbook enables the reader to compare the different forms of urbanization and urban education and to make some fundamental comparisons about what is different and what is the same about urban education.
across the globe. We encourage a critical reading of these works. Readers should delve deeply into the chapters and into the myriad issues evident. In doing so, the editors and authors of these works invite you to reconsider the lenses you use to understand urban education. If these chapters do nothing else, they should make it clear that context is almost everything in urban education. Urban schools contain a society’s hopes and limitations. In declaring the schools to be problems, we blame the victims for what others have done to them. The charges should be leveled not at the victims but at the perpetrators. Who set in motion rural destabilization such that migration to the cities becomes the only option for the displaced? Who created an economy that leaves so many impoverished, unemployed and/or underemployed? Who created residential segregation? Who promotes stratification and segmentation of a society’s people? Who set up educational systems that cannot meet the needs of people who must rely on them? Who is culpable for the draining of resources from urban schools? Who is responsible for not addressing these and other issues? We have emphatically stressed who because social science along with those with power have created a language that suggests processes and factors that are beyond the control of people. This creates an image of inevitability and, of course, leaves the poor to exist as an unfortunate fact of life.

Globalization is a phenomenon that some portray as a process or force that has an independent existence. It permeates the chapters in this volume. Every local scene is interpenetrated with an economy that spans national borders. Every urban area, every urban school, finds itself subject to economic shifts connected to the global economy. This said, it is also true that the global economy was and is being created and recreated every day by the actions of business leaders and policymakers. It is inevitable only because these leaders see benefit in it for themselves and for global trade, which in the end benefits the dominant classes worldwide. If this is who, then the question becomes how do we hold them accountable for increasing poverty? For a centralization of wealth that has all but destroyed the middle classes? For displaced populations that are now urbanized and marginalized? The only mechanisms that have some history are governmental or involve the universal politics of protest and insurrection? The former seems all too compromised to act definitively, while the latter has an unfortunate history of demagoguery and antidemocratic effects. Thus globally, this could be a turning point in governmentality – one where potentially both the economy and the population exceed the reach of the state. In this, it seems clear that urban areas will be the terrain of struggle. Hope must be possible for the alternative is devastation. We offer this volume in service of hope.

This project began over 7 years ago as it became apparent that globally urbanization was proceeding at a remarkable rate, and that, in both policy and popular imagination, urban education was the locus of the action. As we thought through the volume’s orientation, this became increasingly true. Riots in Paris immigrant suburbs, the bulldozing of squatters villages in Africa, and the exportation of school reform ideas from the West to the world all increasingly signaled the centrality of urban education in the new world order.

We began the substance of the work by engaging lead scholars from across the globe in discussions about the way the world was organized and divided, especially in regards to urban education. From these emerged, the sections of this book and the invitations to section editors. We wish to be clear that the sections of this book are not meant to be
some definitive statement about the way the world is partitioned. Rather our discussions yielded this organization as a heuristic to begin to understand urban education as a global phenomenon. It was more a way to come to understand than the sense that this is the way to understand urban education globally. We are convinced that now, after we have assembled some semblance of what is known about urban education around the world, we would want to reconsider the sections and potentially change them in fundamental ways. For example, we were unable to organize a section on what used to be called Eastern Europe but this is clearly an arena that needs to be investigated. We wonder about the wisdom of going with continents like Latin American and Africa. There is much variety as well as similarity across these continents. They deserve additional consideration. We have the US, the UK and Europe as sections. We were all aware from the beginning that these sections reflect Western dominance in global affairs (and not inconsequentially the major book markets). This deserves even more interrogation. The Asia-Pacific reflects a more recent understanding of how the old “East” is now a set of emerging economic and political relations. This heuristic seems to be productive here but is it the best way to organize our understanding of urban education or, as importantly, will it be as useful in the near future? In future volumes, we will take on these and other tasks, but for now we revel in what has been revealed by the heuristic we did employ. The sections and chapters create a knowledge base that has never before existed. It will be studied as the state of the art in the field of urban education and serve as the starting point for a new research agenda for this century, this world.

This accomplishment should be credited, not to us, but to the entire team who made it possible. The section editors conceptualized their sections, sought out who they thought to be the best thinkers and scholars in the regions to write chapters, diligently and doggedly worked with the authors to produce high quality pieces, and wrote the section introductions. The authors had the major responsibility for conducting the necessary primary and secondary research, for conceptualization and writing, and finally for the quality of the chapters themselves. We have been fortunate to work with some of the best scholars in the world and this volume demonstrates how impressive their collective work can be. It is important for the reader to be aware that just as urban education varies so do the practices of scholars. You will note variations in research and writing practices across the sections and even between nations or regions within sections. Some of this is really about the limits of translating into English, but less than might be presumed. We have learned much about scholarship internationally by working through this volume, and in particular learned to acknowledge the differences in practices but even more so to respect what the practices yield.

A number of the section editors were able to meet together at the American Educational Research Association conference in San Francisco, California in April of 2006. The others were consulted with via email and in-person meetings in other venues. In these discussions, we worked on pulling the volume together. One key item was how to end the volume. It seemed to all involved that there was no sensible way to write a conclusion to the volume. Yet the section editors thought that there was value in some novel way of pulling the work together. In the end, Allan Luke offered to write a dystopia that would allow the section editors to envision the future from where they were now in each region. This became our way to push the volume beyond what was
known to what could be. Time and events will tell, of course. But we think this ending has both practical and pedagogical merit. It allows readers to move outside the box of current understanding and to think broadly about the forces that will affect urban education in the future. It also provides a teaching tool for those who teach courses in urban education. Moving from what is known to what is not is always the challenge of teaching. We hope these brief excursions will help students think their own way free of current assumptions.

As the overall editors of this volume, we have spent several years thinking, reading, discussing and arguing with each other, the section editors and contributors. We have been exceedingly fortunate in all this. We hope that all scholars have the opportunity we have had, largely made possible by the smaller world created by internet technology. All the work for all these years has been worth it in so many ways. We think this work obligates us and, we hope, all readers, to seek to change the world in which we live to benefit all its peoples. This is not an issue of simple will. It requires all of us to think more deeply about how we are quick to judge and slow to understand. It pushes all of us act more inclusively and less selfishly. It demands courage and diligence. It takes both knowledge and moral conscience. We hope we are up to the challenge and that you are as well.

George W. Noblit
and
William T. Pink
Introduction

**URBAN EDUCATION IN THE GLOBALIZING WORLD**

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Urban education has long been viewed as a localizing endeavor, placing education into a specific geographic context. From this perspective, schools belong to the city and usually a specific city. The schools of London are different from those of Chicago, which are different from those of São Paulo, which, in turn, are different from those of Singapore. The generalization that these are all urban is actually not about the nature of the cities, for that would be a foolish abstraction that belies the real differences in region, nation, peoples, culture, and even climate. Urban, rather, is a generalization as much about geography as it is about the idea that urban centers have problems: problems of too many people, too much poverty, too much crime and violence, and ultimately too little hope. Cities, of course, are also about the mirror image and this is signaled by the term “urbane.” In this term, we see the city as the locus of high culture, sophistication, and an area with a population with the means to participate in what was once known as a “cosmopolitan” way of life (Merton, 1957).

Urban-urbane is a problematic that drives this book, an exploration of the state of urban education across the globe. As an *International Handbook*, the goal has been to capture much of the range of perspectives from around the globe. Yet, of course, this can only be a partial accomplishment, for no book can truly hope to capture the full range of perspectives around the world about any topic. Scale defies scope, while extent exceeds range. Nevertheless, the *International Handbook* does achieve more than any other has in this regard and requires us to explore the limits of our traditional understanding. We must push urban beyond a locale and explore its global nature. In doing so, we do not reject the notion of a city as a locale, rather we stress a conjunction as in the popular claim that the local is global – the global is local (Gibson-Graham, 2002). This “glolocal” conjunction points to a meaning for urban that is as expansive as it is significant. Yet, to date, this conjunction only heightens the problematic of urban-urbane by adding an additional dimension. This dimension may be seen in the cosmopolitan idea – one that has changed the world, making a new class that is beyond a locale. This upper class has long moved between cities and nations and
now it is a force in globalization. Their social, economic, symbolic, and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986) spans the globe, making the world smaller, and more interdependent, even as it increases the dependency of working classes that are subject to the economic forces of globalization. In ways never imagined even in the industrial era – when immigration was a vehicle to create both the needed workforce and sufficient surplus labor to suppress wages – global capital now sees labor as almost infinitely mobile, subject to the whims of capital as it seeks the lowest cost production and services. This almost infinite mobility is both real and virtual.

As with industrialism, the real mobility of labor fuels immigration and diaspora. African labor is spread across Europe and North America. Latino immigration is mostly to the United States at this time but that is likely to be temporary. Asian labor (both physical and intellectual) is dispersing across the globe to countries with dominant positions in the international economy and with well-developed educational systems, especially higher and graduate education. The new “creative class” (Florida, 2002) is also moving, but in opposite directions to oversee plants (and design processes and technology) with low labor costs in Costa Rica and China, for example.

Virtual mobility, of course, is made possible by the expansion of computer-based technology and, literally, the world-wide web. Some workers are able to work from home or off-site because their work does not require face-to-face interaction. It is computer mediated at the minimum. While many in the West joke about technical support for their computers being based in India or other nations, this is only the first move. India is outsourcing this work as well, to places with even lower wages. What we once so definitively referred to as the Third World is now an ever-shifting landscape that capital slides through extracting profit before moving on in search of ever more profit. Indeed, this *International Handbook* can be seen as an example of virtual mobility. The book is written in English by many people whose first language is not English. This is because the largest market for books is in English speaking nations and/or educational systems that are based wholly or in part in English. The chapters were written wherever and sent via e-mail to the United States and then once organized and edited sent on to the European publisher, Springer. From here the text was transmitted to India where it was put into production, which resulted in authors receiving page proofs as PDF files. With virtual labor mobility, the worker stays in one place while her/his production travels to where it makes the most profit for global capital and the urbane class.

Education takes place in urban, suburban, and rural areas and, while none of these can escape the forces of globalization, the urban schools are the ones most caught up in the urbane-urban problematic. There are many reasons for this, including that urban educational systems are part of the social problem side of the conjunction. Clearly, urban centers have highly prestigious schools and universities, sometimes private, but the bulk of the population in cities is relegated to schools that are as stigmatized as the people who attend them. It is no wonder then that students escape them by dropping out, but this is usually after the school has already made clear that the institution is so devalued that it cannot deliver on its promises of an education that will enable students to change their life circumstances. Urban schools also fail such students by pushing them out because the institutions cannot survive in their current form by having students who understand how things actually work (Fine, 1991). Put directly, they must be
put out to save the myths that allow the institution to survive: we continue to blame the victim not the school for the large-scale academic failure of urban students.

This means that urban as an adjective to education also is not only about geography. This adjective covers a host of sins, one might say. In economically dominant nations, urban education is about stratification in its most distasteful form. The prevalent myth is that schools stratify either in the name of mobility or meritocracy, but urban schools can promise neither (Anyon, 2005; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Oakes, 1985). They are more closely connected to welfare and criminal justice agencies than they are to institutions of higher education, or even to employing organizations. In dependent economies, urban education is almost the only hope for any education even if this education has little currency beyond the low probability of minimal employment (which is, of course, a step above abject poverty). Urban education adds to the problematic its own contradiction: urban education is all about hope and the thwarting of hope. This is not to say there are not exceptions to this conception of the problematics of urban centers. As we note in this volume, European cities are decidedly urbane and education in urban schools is less problematic than in the United States. In these cities, the immigrants and poor are systematically pushed to the suburbs and the schools there take on both the stigmatization and the learning challenges of the people they serve. Even in the United States, there are moves in this direction as central cities are “gentrified” and public housing demolished in favor of high-end housing and amenities. Nevertheless, the problematic remains because it is not fundamentally about geography but rather about the conjunction of high culture and low classes.

The International Handbook of Urban Education cannot be guided by simplistic definitions of terms that easily demark what is and is not urban education. Indeed, in Mexico, the problem of insufficient teachers for rural areas, for example, is driven by teaching being more attractive in the cities. Sandoval (Latin America Section) in her chapter entitled “Educational Policies and Realities: Initial Education in Mexico,” notes that because the teacher education system in Mexico is large, diversified and uneven in quality this presents problems with respect to the ability of teachers to teach diverse students in an intercultural context. Some argue that urban can be demarked by the size and density of populations, which, while true, misses the mark entirely. If urban is a context, it is a context that is nested, constrained, and constructed. It is nested in that urban must always be relative to suburban and rural. A city is nested in a state, a state in a region, a region in the world. It is constrained in that an urban area is usually bounded by other geopolitical borders. It is also constrained by cultural and economic assumptions about what the city is and how life proceeds therein. It is constructed in that any city is made over time by people and by power. Cities are constructed by the deep-seated beliefs of residents and dominant classes and by multiple and intersecting forces of change. It is nested, constrained, and constructed in and by local interests, public policies, worldviews and ideologies, global capital, and most importantly, by the necessities of everyday survival. The urban context so defined offers little definitiveness – it remains a problematic to be studied, to be interrogated, and hopefully to be transformed.

This is how we recommend the reader approach this volume. It should be read not as a set of facts, although it is full of them, rather it should be read as an intellectual
project. This intellectual project should be as constructive as it is critical, as efferent as it is aesthetic (Rosenblatt, 1978), as scholarly as it is activist. Our primary motivation in conceptualizing this International Handbook was to stimulate and guide transformative thinking that would lead to improved education for all citizens living in urban centers worldwide. To this end, we worked hard to recruit both section editors and contributors who are as committed as we are to constructing a text that both interrogates current thinking about and practice in urban education and problematizes how that thinking and practice might be reformed in the future. In short, we are all committed to the project of the International Handbook leading to new possibilities for the globalizing world. To this end, we invite you, the reader, to read with six concepts or analytic lenses in mind. Each concept or lens tries both to embrace all that is included here and to speak to the urban-urbane problematic. The six concepts are: multiplicity, power, difference, capital, change and intersectionality.

A useful analogy here is the visit to the optometrist for a periodic vision check. Once you are seated in the chair and a vision chart is projected onto the screen, the optometrist proceeds to slide different lenses into the frame covering your eyes. The question posed each time is, “Is this better or worse?” Your task is to tell the optometrist if the symbols on the vision chart are made clearer as each lens is inserted. This process is repeated, “Is this better or worse?” until the best clarity is achieved. Using this analogy, we suggest that the following six concepts or analytic lenses can be used to help bring urban education into sharper focus. The last concept or lens, intersectionally, lays out the necessity for looking through multiple lenses at the same time in order to bring urban education in the sharpest focus possible: it is this multiple “causality” argument, of course, which suggests that the reform of urban education, independent of context, must rest on multiple rather than single interventions.

**Multiplicity**

As we read the draft chapters, we were drawn all too naturally into seeking patterns across chapters, nations, and regions. There was so much richness that capturing such patterns would have required a strategy to make all the complexity manageable. Reducing it all to themes that could stretch across the chapters revealing similarities and differences is a common process for researchers and one that seemed productive when we started out. Yet we ultimately found this to be a poor plan for understanding the complexity that these chapters present to us. This process also has a tendency to strip the context from the individual themes, leaving the themes to largely stand on their own. As scholars, we know that there are ways to deal with this when engaging in a qualitative research project. Even attempts to synthesize studies have techniques to counter the context stripping of thematic analysis (Noblit & Hare, 1988; Patterson, Toren, Canam, & Jillings, 2001; Thorne, Jenson, Kearney, Noblit, & Sandelowski, 2004). Yet as we read deeper it was apparent that our natural inclinations were leading us astray. A text such as this has such range and diversity in topics as well as locales that the thematic approach ultimately fails. We suggest that context (culture, nation, and region) is so central to understanding urban education that a better approach is to read each chapter
so that themes are embedded in the specific context and subsequently to work hard to understand how the linkages between themes can be clearly understood.

We understand that the typical approach for a reader to make sense of a book of this size is to develop a way to think about the mass of pieces as a whole: to construct, if you will, normative patterns or statements. But we argue that a better way to approach this is not to summarize and construct generalizations, but rather to recognize and embrace multiplicity. The differences between nation and region, and even within nation and region, deserve to be respected. This, in turn, means that instead of seeking some unifying process, we suggest that the reader is better served by embracing the formulation that the nature of urban education in a global sense is multiple. Urban education really is different in different places and thus understanding the many meanings of urban education is the educative goal. Importantly, we think this approach is also more likely to lead to ideas about change in any one part of the world. Through comparison, it is possible to reconsider the meanings, social practices, and policies of urban education in your own nation or locale. Indeed, we hope that embracing multiplicity will lead to transformative efforts based on the idea that there are many ways to conceive of and enact urban education that can provide alternatives to the prevailing and frequently restrictive local conceptions and enactments.

Thus we recommend that you, the reader, begin this *International Handbook of Urban Education* accepting multiplicity as a key concept which must be both understood and embraced. Many questions arise from such a fresh perspective, including (1) “How is it that there are multiple forms of urban education, multiple interpretations, multiple arenas and multiple actors?” (2) “What can we learn about our own setting from seeing a wide variety of settings?” and (3) “What strategies enable us to consider multiplicity as an asset for change and for empowerment?”

We do not wish to predetermine the answers for these questions and would also note that it is indeed a mistake to attempt to anticipate either the questions or answers for parts of the world we have not inhabited. Yet we can offer an example of the kind of thinking that we recommend. As two scholars with a long-held interest in school improvement and who reside in the United States, we naturally read the chapters that follow asking in what ways they can inform our own conception of reform for urban schools in the U.S. Using a chapter from this Handbook should suffice to illustrate the approach we recommend for the reader with respect to the concept of multiplicity.

In the Europe Section, Francesca Gobbo offers an intriguing chapter on Italian circus people entitled “Between the Road and the Town: The Education of Traveling Attractionists.” Gobbo offers considerable insight into the lives of circus folk who carry both their education and their homes with them as they move around from work site to work site. Clearly, there are circuses that travel the United States and who educate the children of circus employees. Gobbo’s chapter from Italy, we suggest, while clearly situated in a particular social and cultural context, can help us understand the education of circus children in the U.S. Since there is little educational literature in the United States on the education of circus children, there are good reasons to use this study from Italy to open up that line of study here. However, in suggesting this we also want to remind the reader that we want to push this work beyond merely noting the similarity and difference to be found in the two contexts. This chapter, for example, has real
power because it forces us to consider how education tends to be fixed to a site, a school, and a community. Pushing this further, we wonder how education the United States might be different if schools were not tied to fixed geographies. That is, if education was mobile would it also be possible to escape the stigmatization attached to education in cities? This also makes us rethink Castells’ (1979) key argument about the urban crisis in the United States. He argues that there is, in fact, no crisis because what is defined as a crisis is long-standing and because it is better understood as a crisis of a specific form of capitalist accumulation, consumption, and reproduction of the social order. Moreover, he argues that instead of understanding urban areas as having problems based on what is there (e.g., poverty, underemployment, crime, deteriorating buildings), it is more useful to understand these problems as products of what has left (e.g., capital, the upper and middle classes, political control of the city). This leads us to ask if education is not already mobile for people of privilege? The upper and middle classes, for example, have long had the resources to relocate to areas with the most desirable schools. While school desegregation efforts that transported African-American students to White schools certainly had elements of mobility, what was missing, of course, was the option for the African-American families to also move their residence and place of employment. As a consequence, they could never belong to the new school in the same ways as White families did. Gobbo’s chapter on the education of circus children also leads us to consider how education might be different when the community itself provided it, rather than the state (see Shuja, 1994). This raises profound questions about the future of education in cities. One central question we must ask is, “Is it possible to remove the blight associated with urban schooling by moving outside the governmental system that created and sustains the inner city schools as we know them today, by reconstituting them using a self-help logic?”

The point we are making is that reading this volume through the analytic lens of multiplicity of conceptions and forms will enable us to reconsider the assumptions we have about urban education in our home countries. We suggest that multiplicity both invites and enables us to develop a key insight essential for us to gain communicative competence (Bowers, 1984). Here, we are better able to surface and name our taken-for-granted assumptions, understand how these assumptions constructed via primary and secondary socialization have both a positive and negative impact on our thinking and action, and how this insight forms a basis for an assessment of which assumptions we should change or modify, as well as which assumptions we should keep (Pink, 2004). Our invitation to read this volume with multiplicity in mind is not, of course, an innocent one. Put directly, we see reading for multiplicity as a key way for the reader to imagine doing otherwise, and potentially to actually do otherwise.

**Power**

While there are clearly many different contexts and dynamics at play in urban education globally, urban education cannot be understood by assuming that it has come about as some sort of natural development. We must now acknowledge that the Hegelian-type histories that show time to be moving away from a primitive state towards an advanced state are not credible accounts of inevitable forces of development. The point here is multiple
as well. History does not march forward. Indeed, this linear notion of time is clearly a Western idea, which was imposed on the wider world as part of colonialism. This linear conception of time did, of course, enable the railroads to be built in the U.S. and to run on a timetable. This was a rather different conception, however, from other notions of time as spiraling or repeating in fundamental ways. It was also clearly different from notions of time being embedded in activity, such as the farm cycle, instead of being a measure to control activity. The point is that time simply has no meaning outside of the interpretations constructed by humans. Interpreting history as the march of progress, therefore, says less about history than about our cosmology and cultural beliefs. Progress has become a problematic for a world in the face of so much destruction of human life such as in Darfur, or Iraq, or in the face of the unfortunate fate of all too many nations that escaped the control of the USSR and moved towards democracy only to fall victim to despotism and criminals. Francis Fukuyama’s (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man*, for example, turned out to be less prescient than he had wished.

Nevertheless, urbanization is a worldwide phenomenon. The question becomes, “If we reject the notion of history moving naturally towards life being characteristically urban, then how are we to account for this?” Again the answer will be multiple. Urbanization has different histories in Europe than in the United States, for example, and certainly different from Asia or Latin America or Africa. In Europe, many urban centers have their origins as fortifications, castles, redoubts, and the like. The centuries of war over who was to be the dominant king, the expansion of realms in terms of empires, and/or which was to be the dominant religion structured settlements as defensive sites. With so much conflict and conquest, many farmers came to live in or near the fledgling urban center and to leave the center for the day (or longer) to work the fields before returning home to the security of the defended settlement. While this pattern was replicated in the early settlements in the U.S., western expansion and the systematic decimation of the Native Americans who contested control over the land meant that farmers were more widely dispersed geographically.

The Industrial Revolution changed patterns of urban life in both Europe and the United States. In the former, factories were often set up near cities to take advantage of labor but in the latter farmers had to be converted to urban dwellers to create a potential labor force. As factories grew in the United States, the immigration of Europeans came to be a policy of creating surplus labor to restrain wages, making the cities the multiethnic enclaves that led to the phenomena of ethnically hyphenated identities such Italian-American and African-American. In parts of Africa, by contrast, urbanization has been fueled by both failed agricultural policies and the push to westernize the economy. The chapter entitled “Urbanization and Schooling in Africa: Trends, Issues and Challenges from Ghana During the Colonial Era” by Kwabena Dei Ofori-Attah (Africa Section), for example, details the power of both missionary and British colonial interventions in Ghana to shape schooling using a materialistic European model, which showed an arrogant disregard for local practices, traditions and customs. In the chapter by Rui Yang (Asia Pacific Section) entitled “Urban-Rural Disparities in Educational Equality: China’s Pressing Challenge in a Context of Economic Growth and Political Change,” the problematics of the concentration of wealth in the urban centers of China is explored: Yang notes how these policies must be revisited, especially in light of rapid urbanization and the growing market economy,
while arguing for the urgent need to develop the idea of social justice in education both in the urban and rural regions of the country.

Yet the point is that the development of urban settlements is not natural but rather can be understood as the result of contests over power. It not necessary to accept Foucault’s (1977) notion of power being everywhere to understand how cities are the result of struggles over who shall control the different arenas of life. Foucault offers an interesting explanation of power though that helps us understand the link between power and the apparent inevitability of urbanization. Power and knowledge are inextricably linked in what he calls regimes of truth. Put more simply, power is based in forms of knowledge and the exercise of knowledge legitimates and makes political arrangements seem natural. Power also makes subjects of people because those without it can be negatively characterized and treated as less deserving: women, for example, are enslaved for sex trafficking in cities across the world, while both genders are forced to work in factories and those who are not physically coerced may have no other option than a sweat shop to earn even an insufficient wage for family survival. We remain unsure about Foucault’s argument while insisting that even the enslaved have, as Scott (1990) has argued, “arts of resistance.”

Whatever perspective the reader takes on the nature of power, it is clear that cities come to exist and change through the exercising of various kinds of power. Similarly, we suggest, urban education is fully imbued with power and struggle. Education itself is always political, and when the state sponsors it or denies it to some, education is clearly being used as a currency of power. People can be denied access to knowledge and/or to jobs through such knowledge, or less robustly through credentialing: work in the sociology of knowledge, for example, has argued how access is managed by the powerful elites as a mechanism for retaining high status knowledge for those selectively chosen (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Education systems are also large employment systems themselves, meaning that the system can be used to benefit some over others simply in terms of jobs being provided, through direct patronage or more subtly through structuring who gets access and who can be credentialed. Education, of course, is also a system that creates stratification both in terms of identifying who lacks “academic ability” and ultimately who can claim credentials as professionals (Oakes, 1985; Ogbu, 1978). Thus, education is not only structured by power, but also acts so as to create who has access to the existing power and status structures. The educated, and here we must include all of those who have contributed to this Handbook (and those of you reading this Handbook), enjoy the privilege of positing the reality of things and thus creating both ideology and, through professing ideology as true belief, hegemony. We, the educated, can create ideas that can be claimed to be facts and in doing so make the history we noted above that, over time, comes to be viewed by others and ourselves as both natural and inevitable. In many ways, the chapters in The International Handbook of Urban Education serve as a corrective to such notions of power hidden behind knowledge. Thus, we see in Latin America, for example, a conscious effort to identify the social movements that challenge the education being used to primarily serve the dominant classes and the state. Several chapters in the Latin American Section (e.g., chapters on Brazil by Luciano Mendes de Faria Filho and Diana Goncalves Vidal, and Denise Trento R. de Souza and Marilene Proenca R. de Souza, and
the chapter on Chile by Dagmar Raczyski and Gonzalo Munoz-Stuardo), for example, interrogate how both the changing form of education in different countries, together with a reassessment of the hegemonic power of the traditional curriculums that worked to reify the power and status of elites and the state, is surfacing opportunities for significant reform of urban education. In the United Kingdom, the chapter by Martin Johnson entitled “Reforming Urban Education Systems,” creates an interesting inversion by demonstrating that even efforts to improve schools have such a political dimension that they are reserved for London with its political might rather than expended, we might say, in the provinces where the impact might escape notice. He argues that the most important force for school reform in the United Kingdom namely, national level policy, has been focused on urban schools with the singular intent of raising student achievement: it is the political, economic and social capital, London, that has enjoyed most of the attention with respect to both the reform initiatives and the available funding.

Adkins (1997) has argued that educational reform is in many ways a form of colonialism, albeit a form of internal colonialism (Blauner, 1972). Her argument, when applied to urban education, highlights how cities are seen by many to exist to be exploited for economic and political gain. In noting that cities and city schools exist for reasons that benefit the ruling classes, it is easier to understand how efforts to reform either or both are likely to be used for similar purposes. The irony here is that while corruption scandals signal the possibility of a remedy, the nexus of knowledge and power often constructs inequity as natural and immutable. Thus, even those most exploited may not be able to see how educational systems make them believe they failed, rather than understanding that the system was organized to make them believe this was the case (Fine, 1991). Our point here is to suggest that reading this Handbook through a power lens provides us with insight into a dynamic that is frequently hidden from sight – hidden from sight by the explicit design of those with power to name, control and benefit from the ways things currently work.

**Difference**

Power, of course, creates all kinds of difference. Put all too simply, those with power can decide who is with them and who is against them. This two class set-up is easily elaborated into a wider stratification process that controls who gains access to the spoils of the system. Typically, these stratification systems employ sycophants, individuals not included among the powerful but who benefit by virtue of being aligned with those in power. These individuals are used by the powerful to serve their own interests. These “lesser” individuals can be kept subordinated by assumed differences in class. A good example is the role lower class Whites played in suppressing African-Americans in the American South. Here, African-Americans were constructed by the dominant White classes as threats to the economic position of lower class Whites. The “Lost Cause,” for example, where Whites during Reconstruction (the period post-slavery) suppressed, among many other things the voting rights of Blacks, ultimately led to “Jim Crow” segregation of Blacks from Whites (Tyson, 2004). Here we see the former plantation owners trying to impose the share-cropping system on Southern Blacks and Whites, alike.
They tried to carefully articulate the system so that Whites saw it in their interest to intimidate Blacks, thereby reducing the demands of both “races” on the landowners to share their profits in ways that would enable those working the land to change their economic and social status. This, of course, is a rural example but the urban cases are no less heinous. The guest worker program in Germany is a good urban example. In this case, while workers from the Middle East were given access to work in the burgeoning German economy in the 1970s, they were systematically denied voting and other rights. Rist (1978) documents that as a response to a worker shortage, German cities filled with Turkish workers who did the unskilled work in factories. Ironically, we must note that at the same time as their labor was important to the expansion of the German economy, these same workers were denied citizenship. The result of this officially sanctioned second-class status is that Middle Eastern nationalities became a racial formation – a distinction that made a significant difference in their life chances in Germany. This ambivalence about the “other” is not an anomaly. Rather, it is the typical pattern: cities often are full of people from different places, but this difference is stratified, so that in practice some benefit from their relocation, while most do not.

Urban life has a long history of being attached to two phenomena: gesellschaft relations and difference. Toennies (1955) proposed that one key difference between gemeinschaft (community) and gesellschaft (association) patterns of living was that gesellschaft settings lacked the tight bonds of kinship and history in urban living. Thus, there was a sense that in escaping these bonds the individual had the opportunity to redefine both their belief and action. This conceptualization does seem to promise a new sense of freedom. People move to the city to make something new of themselves. Tönnies formulation did not directly address who would find this an attractive exchange or whether this exchange was equally available to everyone who was drawn into the city: the attraction being less personal relations for more possibility of redefinition. We must also recognize that while gemeinschaft societies built on personal relations are not only more binding, they also worked to exclude some people and groups. As we better understand now, community works to both include and exclude. Thus, as we saw with the rural South in the United States, African-Americans escaped the rural and small towns and moved to the cities in the hopes that they would be “freer” there. In this way, relative freedom becomes an attractor for those who by caste or class are disadvantaged by gemeinschaft life. It is essential to recognize how factors such as class, race, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation, are all coterminous with the impersonality of social relations in the city.

Yet Tönnies’ distinction is also replicated in the city, but again differentially. The wealthy can create enclaves in which gemeinschaft relations may be developed and through their politics and economics of exclusion residential segregation can be imposed on others. It is important to note, however, that in these barrios, ghettos and/or neighborhoods, the gemeinschaft relations can be reconstructed. Gemeinschaft can exist within gesellschaft or, more specifically, gesellschaft relations exist between groups and gemeinschaft can exist within groups. In short, group identity can be constructed within cities and within the racial, gender, class, and sexuality divisions imposed by the dominant groups. As noted above, these relations of difference can be geographically marked in the U.S. In some cities, for example, poor, racial minorities
are encapsulated in the inner city. In France, by contrast, they may be relegated to the suburbs. In Latin America and Africa, they may be ensconced in “squatter” settlements that encircle the urban areas. In cities that are predominately raced, class becomes geographically marked. Yet there remain neighborhoods or sections of cities that are less exclusive and many consider these sites of possibility. Here, race and/or class, for example, vary but efforts may be made to stabilize these proportionately. The term for this in the United States when referring to race is “stably integrated neighborhoods.” In these neighborhoods, difference is accepted, if not embraced: difference in these settings is seen as a desired quality by the residents, rather than as a liability. At the same time, however, we also see a growing pattern of gentrification where the wealthy buy up property, forcing out the less affluent, in order to transform the neighborhood into residential properties that only the rich can afford.

Our argument is that difference is a key attribute of urban areas and urban education and that these patterns of difference make themselves a difference in the way that urban education plays out. We suggest that it is productive for you, the reader, to keep difference in the forefront of your minds as you read this volume: difference, in multiple forms, we argue, is a key factor for an understanding of urban education in the past, present, and future. Looking through this difference lens raises a number of critical questions: for example, “What patterns of difference are in play in the cities, nations, regions and educational systems discussed in this Handbook?” “How is urban education implicated in the reproduction of difference?” “What possibilities are suggested for how difference can make less of a difference, or better yet, no difference?” “In what ways does difference intersect with context and with what result across the various locations in the Handbook?” “How can schools be less reproductive of existing patterns of dominance and become the center of counter-hegemonic interrogation and change?” and finally, “What is the role of education in situations of extreme deprivation and how could that role be recast to reduce or even eliminate such deprivation?”

The chapter by Thabisile Buthelezi (Africa Section) entitled “Dimension of Diversity: Educating Urban Township Learners, a Case of Umlazi Township School in Durban, South Africa,” on the ways students construct their own sense of safety in and around their school in South Africa is a powerful illustration of taking up the last question that we posed above. Using student drawings and diaries depicting their characterization of self within what are seen as dangerous and often violent situations, Buthelezi explores how teachers and administrators can both understand themselves in these depictions and how they might reconceptualize their role in changing the perceptions students’ have about their school and their community. In short, we can see here how understanding difference, by using a difference lens when reading these chapters, can help us develop a set of personal strategies that can contribute to change, rather than the maintenance of the status quo.

**Capital**

Historically, capital referred to accumulated wealth that could be mobilized for investment. As such, capital is a force in much of history. In colonialism, capital was accumulated by extracting raw materials from colonized lands and selling them in other markets.
In industrialism, these materials were transformed often in the colonizing nations and sold at a profit, enabling even more capital accumulation. In post-colonialism, raw materials and industry can be distributed globally in service of capital accumulation. All this was made possible by the development of finance. Currently, the captains of industry are no longer the owners of industry. Instead, the owners are financial corporations which buy and sell corporations to maximize profit. While these may be publicly held corporations “owned” by shareholders, the new financial elite work by owning significant quantities of stock which, in turn, are used as sources of pressure to maximize their return on investment. Capital accumulation has become the dominant industry itself. Even technology firms, which seem to be a driving force of the new knowledge-based economy, are evidence of this change. The term “venture capital” signals that knowledge and technology are the products of capital in fundamental ways. Clearly, venture capitalists are hoping that the new developments they are funding will enable even more capital accumulation to be once again ventured. Yet in this process, the production of goods and services is not the basis of capital accumulation but rather the reverse. Capital, through marketing and manufactured consumption, becomes the basis of production, and industries are but temporary vehicles for capital to expand upon itself. The global economy is characterized by a shifting geography of industry, not simply because the goods can be produced more cheaply, but because the profit margins can be maximized through such diversification. One of the ironies in this shift to a global economy is that many living in urban areas are made destitute, while at the same time the city remains the only hope for earning a living wage. The maximization of profit margins within globalization appears to be insensitive to the geographic destruction of cities and the lives that it can leave in its wake. In the global economy, there are but two classes: the creative class (Florida, 2002) and a dependent class that serves the creative class. In a twist of economic logic, the creative class is both the generator of wealth and the primary consumer. The dependent working class is to consume as well, of course, but the distribution of wealth is such that they are very much the secondary market. It is becoming clearer now that the targeted market of this new economy is not a middle class that has disposable income enabling it to be a consumer class: this class is quickly disappearing as technology is enabling the replacement of the managerial class’s control of work and workers with information systems. Rather, the new market, the growth market, has become public services themselves (Murphy, 1999). In this view, education is seen as a new market: this new market can be characterized as public services for private gain. This logic is not new, of course. Governments require the purchase of goods and services. One key turning point though was the development of what came to be called the “military industrial complex” after World War II. What is new now, however, is the concept that capital can deliver governmental services better than the government itself. The irony that must not be lost here is that these services were originally designed to protect citizenries from the excesses of capital (Murphy, 1999).

Simply put, urban education is a key market because of the scale of the operations. Millions of children need breakfast and lunch, books, paper, transportation, etc. In the United States, the No Child Left Behind legislation took the move to privatization to a new level requiring, for example, that schools purchase tutoring and so on if schools...
are unable to raise test scores to a sufficient level: in Chicago, the schools were prevented from offering such remedial after school tutoring themselves and were forced to spend millions of dollars to hire for-profit vendors. This effort and many others like it might well be characterized as a back door into voucher systems of private education that have enjoyed repeated support from the present federal government, but have received little support from the majority of parents and public school teachers and administrators. These fiscal systems are intended to fund proprietary schools: the danger here, of course, is that such a shift in funding priorities might ultimately reduce if not eliminate public schooling. The goal is not actually to reduce the cost of education but to transform it into a profit center for capital accumulation. This “reform agenda” now spans the globe. This makes education and urban education in particular, one of the newest markets of the new economy.

Bourdieu dramatically expanded the concept of capital in his work on the forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986). He argued there are several forms of capital including symbolic, social, cultural, as well as the better known economic capital. Yet the logic of capital seems to work for each of these. His point is that each of us accumulates each of these forms of capital and that these different forms have a particular value in the various marketplaces of social life: each form of capital, he notes, can be exchanged in the appropriate marketplace. His conceptions have been used singly in very productive ways. Social capital has found a following among sociologists as network relations and obligations that can be used to signal levels of access and advantage (Coleman, 1961). Cultural capital similarly has found a home in anthropology and especially in analyses of education (Levinson et al., 2000). Symbolic capital, to date, (Bourdieu talks about both recognition and misrecognition) is but a footnote to this work and has been less popular in the social sciences. In any case, Bourdieu was never as interested in these types of capital singly, than he was in their transformations into economic capital. That is to say, he was less interested in the discrete conceptions themselves, than he was in developing a conceptual framework that could explain how people made something else of them.

Focusing on transformation has a particular significance in urban education. Cities offer both peril and promise, as we have argued above, and this can be true for each type of capital that Bourdieu has theorized. Social capital often brings people to cities. Individuals often follow another family member in migration, or they realize that it will only be through patronage and/or sponsorship that they can change their status in life. Historically, cities have offered more possibilities for such transformations than the village. Social capital is also often imperative to survival in cities. Patronage is often required for protection and thus gangs can be seen as reasonable options for urban dwellers. Gaining access to work may be so organized that social capital is essential for job and housing consideration (Schmidt, Scott, Lande, & Guasti, 1977). Similarly, family or gang membership can be used to compete for and take over some economies. Even getting access to schooling, certainly what is typically considered “good schooling,” depends on social capital. Admissions decisions to selective high schools and colleges, for example, must be made on some basis and being “connected” often lends an advantage to the applicant. Tribes, families, networks, patrons, and friends all are essential to urban survival. Access to K-12 schools may require such capital, while success in schools often
depends on being assigned to the high status classes and on being associated with the right student groups (Coleman, 1961; Foley, 1990; Oakes, 1985; Ogbu, 1978).

While cultural capital acts in a more subtle way, it has great authority. With social capital, the individual needs an affiliation, which is not always an easy accomplishment. With cultural capital, by contrast, the individual signals that they belong by speaking and acting as if they belong to a group. Every group has a cultural capital, but some groups command a higher status in a society. Being a “natural” member of such a group or passing as a member of a group means holding and projecting a complex set of assumptions, beliefs and ways of acting that signal group membership (Goffman, 1959). It is important to know which fork to use at a formal dinner not because eating is impossible with the wrong fork or no fork, but because the use of the correct fork signals the affiliation of the individuals with the class that displays such “correct”/high status table manners. Cultural capital is often difficult to achieve because, in many ways, it is the small things that trip up pretenders. This is all complicated globally by colonialism, of course. Being British, for example, may require a certain way of acting at home, but with a foreign War Lord a different way of acting may give more status and more possibility of reward. Schools are often regarded as mechanisms of social mobility but cultural capital is a currency of such mobility. Access to a higher class is typically problematic for those not born into that class: this difficulty points to the difference between analysis using designations of social class versus those using socio-economic status (the former are built around notions of class as cultural difference, while the latter are built around notions of class as an economic factor). Schools can teach elements of this but most public schools are culturally middle-brow, at best. Access to schools for the elite, by contrast, usually takes having social capital, together with the knowledge that your beliefs and social practices are appropriate for that status. Being successful in such schools, or say merely attending a Public school in England, converts into more social capital for the elites and into economic capital via subsequent entry to high status occupations.

Symbolic capital refers to the recognition of status: dressing “well,” for example, does not mean the same thing for all classes. The key here is that how the individual dresses signals that they belongs to the status group. Like culture, symbols are subtle yet definitive. The individual may dress “down” but how that is done signals to others that the individual belongs, when others dressed the same do not. Symbolic capital can come with credentials as well. Graduating from the “right” schools and having the “right” family are signs for certain classes. The key, of course, is that the symbol has worth as a marker of belonging to the group in question. Clearly, having a set of appropriate symbols is more convincing that a lone symbol. Urban areas allow a considerable range of symbols to be available to all participants, but not all have currency in the labor force, or even in schooling. Teachers are key actors in adjudicating who can have access to and use which symbols in schools and thus who can potentially transform such symbols into economic capital (Bowers, 1984; Bowles & Gintis, 1976).

Education is arguably the major arena where social, economic and symbolic capital may be parlayed into economic capital. That schools function as an arena for the transformation of capital does not deny that they are also institutions of social reproduction. Indeed, social reproduction is made possible by allowing some individuals and groups
to transform, while denying that transformation to others. This makes educational institutions much more complex and dynamic than we have been led to believe by correspondence theories (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). This understanding also problematizes the usual notion of transformation as being part of liberatory or emancipatory work. Rather, the argument is that only some have currency that can be tendered in exchange for economic gains, and what is denied is not access to education but rather the ability of the individual to transform social, economic and symbolic capital into economic capital. By slipping on the capital lens, we encourage you, the reader, to examine how urban areas and urban education work together to both enable and deny the transformation of capital for individuals and groups, as well as examining how education itself has become a market that transforms public funds into private capital.

Two chapters in the United Kingdom Section will illustrate the kinds of insights that can be discerned about urban education when examining it through this lens. In her chapter entitled, “Urban School Improvement,” Barbara MacGilchrist (United Kingdom Section) argues that while both research and reforms have become progressively more sophisticated over time, they have failed to fully explicate how school effects and background effects can be conjoined to close the gap in student academic achievement between white students and students of color. In short, her position is that the most important issue still confronting urban schools is how they might function more effectively to raise the social, symbolic, cultural and economic capital of students who are other than white and middle- and upper class. While arguing that schools must be seen as capable making a difference in disrupting the movement of students from social class origins to social class destinations, she notes how they certainly cannot do it alone.

In taking up a set of emerging and problematic issues with respect to the privatization of urban schools, Carol Campbell and Geoff Whitty (United Kingdom Section) in their chapter entitled, “The Governance of Urban Education in the UK: A Public, Private or Partnership Future,” ask if the use of private sector strategies to address public sector problems is viable, especially when the persistent and long-standing difficulties with differential student learning (connected to factors such as race, class, gender, and school organization, etc.) are at play. In particular, their analysis details a variety of reform strategies that that are built on either rebuilding the local capacity to offer key services, or outsourcing for these same services. Here, of course, they highlight the distinction between believing that individuals in the local urban school community have the ability to improve their own education, versus the view that not only are these individuals unable to do this but that the required expertise is commanded only by experts that typically do not have their own children in the schools to be reformed. Again, our suggestion here is that to bring urban education into better focus the International Handbook should be read through the lens of capital, in each of its types.

Change

We are socialized to think that change is ubiquitous. We take our aging to be natural so that as we experience the passage of time we identify it with change itself. Yet, since all lives follow this process it could be as easily argued that this is not change at all, but
rather a steady state. We also apply a similar interpretation to the passage of time and
to events. We link events and create sequences of them: we then proceed to objectify
what we have subjectively created. To these patterns we can also assign broader mean-
ings, putting them in wider contexts. It is in this way that we wrap assumptions around
the passage of time to create such things as trends, causality, eras, and epochs. As
Berger and Luckmann (1967) argue in their discussion of the social construction of
reality, the language that we use to communicate and think is learned through both pri-
mary and secondary socialization: the problematic, of course, is that within this
received language that we uncritically internalize and use to engage in the process of
communicating with others, are encoded the values, beliefs and taken-for-granted
assumptions of our significant others. Consequently, as we live our lives we are expe-
riencing history in the making. More pointedly, it can be argued that we make history
by the assumptions we wrap around the passage of time in human life. That is to say,
we are both implicated in history and historicity. History is typically defined as the
narration of events, sequences, and meanings of these sequences of events in such a
way that generates an interpretation of the past as having some order amidst the docu-
mented changes. Most history narrates how one thing leads to another, even if the
claim to causality is over-wrought. History then normalizes change in a particular
manner. Change is narratively created as normal, leaving pace to be one of the few
things that may vary. Thus, when we say that things are moving faster now than they
were before, we are also normalizing change as ubiquitous.

History, however, is also lived and experienced by humans. This historicity can have
a rather different character than history itself. In some parts of the world, the lived his-
tory is chaotic and filled with chance rather than being a sequence of events that con-
nect and/or unfold. Change understood in this way is less a grand narrative and more a
lived life, comprising all its mundainities and drama. We can think of life on the streets
of the city in this same way. Life on the streets is both struggle and boredom. Life on
the streets is both dangerous and tedious. Life on the streets is both outside the experi-
ence of other urban dwellers and fully in interaction with these dwellers, as with pan
handling and hustling. Change in this way is close to experience and rather distinct
from the narrative of change as normal. Pace may be less salient than demarcations of
drama which concentrate and explicate both the everyday routines and their disrupture.

We argue that much of what follows in this International Handbook is constructed
as history that explicates change and stasis. Yet the chapters that focus on close study
of cases may invite us into how lives are spent over time. Change, then, for us is not an
assertion of how the world is but rather an interrogation of how history and historicity
both characterize urban life and urban education. To illustrate this point it would be
useful to cite several chapters from the text. A chapter by Peele-Eady, Nasir, and Pang
(North American Section) entitled “Success Stories in Urban Education,” details the
importance of care in classrooms purposefully designed to be both personally and cul-
turally relevant for urban students: we see here how powerful is the impact of trusting
student-teacher relationships to students’ developing a perception of themselves as
capable and valuable members of a learning community. In the chapter by Priscilla
Qolisaya Puanau and G. Robert Teasdal (Asia Pacific Section) entitled “The Urban and
the Peripheral: New Challenges for Education in the Pacific,” they focus on detailing
the historical shifts in education in 15 independent and self-governing nations in the Pacific region. Noting how the education on these islands remains a legacy of varied colonial interventions, they argue that these old-world practices and ideologies are highly resistant to change. Puanau and Teasdal detail the potential impact of the PRIDE (Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education) program for guiding curriculum reform and new pedagogical practices, especially for urban students: their focus on the impact of urbanization on the various indigenous cultural systems and vernacular languages is particularly insightful with respect to the ways histories are constructed. This theme of constructing a different history is also taken up by Ove Sernhede (Europe Section) in his chapter entitled “Urbanization of Injustice, Immigrant Youth and Informal Schooling.” His focus is on a group of marginalized youth from immigrant families, segregated in a Swedish suburb, who develop a positive identity for themselves which is very different from the identity projected on to them from a history of colonialism and the prevailing cultural perceptions concerning both discrimination and inequality in the society: the catalyst for building this alternative history is the development of a hip-hop subculture that enables these youth to project themselves as the leaders of the marginalized under-class. A final example is the chapter by Kinuthia Macharia (Africa Section) entitled “Urban Education Differentials and Marginalization: The Case of Educating the Youth in Nairobi’s Informal Settlements,” that explores the marginalization of Kenya’s urban population, with a particular focus on the limited access to schools afforded the children in Nairobi’s “informal settlements.” He documents the efforts underway to provide schooling for the street children in Nairobi, as well the successes of the Olympic Primary School opened to provide an education for students living in the Kibera “slum” outside Nairobi. Again, this is an illustration of the ways in which schooling can both disrupt and rewrite the conventional history.

It is clear that one of the ubiquitous in urban education is migration. Here again, migration seems to have contradictory meanings. For the people moving, change is evident. Yet history is replete with exodus and entrance, suggesting that migration is less a novel change than a common process of urbanization, for example. Urban centers are formed by war, by failed agriculture and by opportunities for work and a way of life. Cities have an existence because of changes and even the desire for changes, but over time migration becomes less a change than a stabilizing force. As above, Castells (1977) argues that the urban is stabilized by the exodus of particular social classes, capital, and political control. The contradiction of stasis and change may explain more about urban education than the simple presumptions of change, and often change for the worse, that is rhetorically invoked as part of calls for action to reform cities or city schools. Reading what follows for how migration defines the issues, but in the end is not easily understood as change, will offer insights into how processes of change may, in fact, change little while simultaneously allowing a claim of “crisis” that justifies extreme actions that inevitably benefit some over others (Castells, 1977).

Change can be understood quite differently as well. In our epoch, change is a trope that is used to explain the emergence of urban problems, while conveniently ignoring the fact that these problems are perennial, rather than new. The issue here, of course, is determinism: to what extent can it be said that a prior event determines the emergence
of a subsequent event? Giddens (1979) argues that this cannot be stated definitively because intention is always in play. Intention or will, of course, brings with it a set of unacknowledged conditions. Intention will arguably lead to some of what is intended but just as importantly, will create unanticipated consequences. For Giddens, the point is that intention is based in unacknowledged conditions and as a result denies the possibility of a deterministic world. Instead of will creating a specific outcome, it creates a set of outcomes, many of which are unanticipated. The narrative of history is challenged here as a retrospective reconstruction of lineages and linkages, rather than an objective account of what happened. What happened is that intention created so much more than intended and less of what was intended than a history captures. We can see this outcome played out in teacher education in Mexico in the chapter by Etelvina Sandoval (Latin America Section) entitled “Educational Policies and Realities: Teachers’ Initial Education in Mexico.” Here she argues that policies were promulgated but did not consider the policy context of multiple institutions and multiple stakeholders. Thus, again and again, policies are attempted only to misspecify the issue and ultimately to lead to unanticipated changes: we simply must acknowledge that things infrequently work out in practice in the same ways as they appear in a written proposal or policy statement. The chapter by Eva Arnold, Johannes Bastian, and Wilfried Kossen (Europe Section) entitled “Urban Regions and their Potential for Teacher Education: The Example of Hamburg,” illustrates this problematic. In noting how urban regions are well placed to coordinate a new program for the preparation of teachers, if only because there is a concentration of teacher preparation institutions in urban regions, they detail a series of unintended outcomes from policy decisions designed to coordinate factors such as a standardized curriculum and student teaching experiences: many of these problems centered on the resistance of both faculty and administration to change in historical practices and the perceived shifts in power that might follow as a result of collaborative projects. This same problematic is also explored in a different context by Lyn Tett (United Kingdom Section) in her chapter entitled “Multi-agency Working in Urban Education and Social Justice.” In exploring the efficacy of multi-agency collaborative efforts designed to promote social justice and reduce social exclusion, Tett notes how what happens in practice is frequently very different from what is written from the perspective of overly idealistic policy language concerning multi-agency partnerships: in particular, Tett illustrates the power of organizational histories, internal role practices and power differences between agencies as the reasons for such a distortion in moving from idea to practice.

Finally, multiplicity sets a different stage for change as well. Many Western thinkers argue that there are optimal ways to reach desired ends. We have previously commented on the limits of this line of thinking, but an important question to ask is “How did we come to assume that there are optimal ways to obtain the desired fix?” As in mathematics, there are likely different ways to reach the desired end. Such equifinality in organizations has policy significant implications for urban education (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Specifically, instead of searching for the best way to improve urban schools, it might be more profitable to consider all the ways that could accomplish this. Such a stance “frees” urban education from the constraints of conformity, while enabling the development of culturally unique programming. It is evident that there are
many ways to achieve educative ends and many ways that urban schools could be organized to realize them. The chapter by Sa’eda Buang (Asia Pacific Section) entitled “Madrasha and Muslim Education: Its interface with Urbanization,” develops this point while examining both the history and contemporary developments in Muslim religious schools. In exploring how these schools attempt to remain faithful to religious beliefs in the face of increasing urbanization and a diversifying economy, Buang notes how the responses have been different in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey: this is a clear example of the different ways in which the same ends can be achieved within the context of different socio-economic and political settings.

A second interesting illustration of the need to explore multiple ways to reach the goal of closing the achievement gap between urban students and others is the chapter by Maria de Ibarrola (Latin America Section) entitled “Learning to Work in an Industrial Mexican City in Transition.” While the learning of trade related skills in the shoe industry in Leon is the focus, rather than the education offered in the traditional schools in the city, what emerges is that this form of hands-on, apprenticeship learning is a highly effective pedagogical strategy. This insight leads to a discussion about the possibilities of linking schools more directly with the work sites, of bringing the participatory style of learning experienced in the work site into the school, and of developing a range of school programs that speak directly to quality, relevance, and equity. In short, the chapter points to the importance of developing a variety of school programs and learning strategies that will vary by context for improving the learning of students attending urban schools.

Equifinality also offers a critique of globalization. Globalization is often seen as a social and economic process to create “one world.” In this view, difference is destroyed as is its correlate, creativity. If there are many ways to achieve a similar end, then the “one world” view is not necessary and may actually have real drawbacks. The new economy, for example, is heavily based in math, science and technology. Yet this economy is driven by a logic that is artistic. Creativity giving way to design is what fuels both technological and scientific advancement. Instrumental logic has its place, but its place is highly dependent on aesthetics. Embracing equifinality brings us back to where we started, arguing that the reader should use the multiplicity lens when reading this International Handbook. Urban education and the world, we argue, are sufficiently diverse for new conceptualizations and new possibilities to emerge.

**Intersectionality**

The sixth and final concept or analytic lens that we want to note is intersectionality. Returning to our analogy of the visit to the optometrist, this is the point where multiple lenses are used at the same time in order for urban education to be brought into the sharpest focus possible. This construct can be seen in the movement away from the idea of linear, cause-effect thinking central to social science grounded in positivism, to thinking in post-positivist social science, the naturalistic or interpretive paradigm, that acknowledges both the social construction of reality and the existence of multiple and simultaneous causality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The thinking in play here, of course,
is that life is experienced differently because individuals are different: the same classroom, for example, is experienced differently by boys and girls, white and students of color, and students located in the top and lowest reading groups, etc. This leads us to question the credibility of statements about life in classrooms that fail to recognize and account for such individual differences. To complicate this idea some more, we must also acknowledge that any analysis must account for the multiple characteristics of individuals: it is not sufficient to think about gender, for example, as the social marker for any individual because each individual also holds other social markers such as their social class or whether they are good at sports. Thus, in conducting research in a classroom we must ask “What is the experience of an individual who is a boy, Black and in the top reading group?” as well as “How is that experience similar and different from an individual who is a boy, Black and in the lowest reading group?” We want to note that this isn’t the same logic as engaging in analysis to control for both gender and race while assessing the impact of reading group location, rather it is a question that asks how do gender, race and reading group location work together to structure the classroom experience for the individual. In short, we would be engaging the analytic lenses of gender, race and reading group at the same time.

This perspective has made the greatest gains in education in the field known as Critical Race Theory (Crenshaw, 1988; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This work has skillfully integrated theorizing from several diverse fields in education, that is, Black and Chicano Studies, critical pedagogy, feminist and multicultural education, while posing questions about the experiences of individuals and groups who are both the same and different with respect to characteristics such as race, gender, class, and sexual orientation, etc. This sensitivity to the ways in which individual and group characteristics both interact simultaneously and play out differently in different contexts has enabled a significant shift in our understanding of the variability of the day-to-day lived experience. The examination of the intersectionality of these characteristics, the recognition that such characteristics are never in play alone but always function in concert with each other, opens up new ways for us both to understand how urban education functions and to conceptualize new ways of attacking the long-standing problems associated with urban education. This means, for example, that it would be a mistake to attempt to remediate the low reading scores of fifth graders in an urban school in Chicago simply by adopting a new reading program. The power of the intersectionality lens reveals that in order to remediate such low reading scores we must also consider factors such as the ways in which teachers relate to children from cultures different from their own, the ways in which the school values student learning over (or vis-à-vis) discipline, and to what degree the students receive adequate food, sleep, and warm clothing, etc.

The chapters in this International Handbook illustrate rather dramatically the importance of recognizing intersectionality as a tool for understanding urban education and for the development of reform strategies. A few examples would be helpful here. In a chapter entitled “Educational Policies, Local Dynamics, and Segregation in the Schools of the Parisian Periphery,” Agnes van Zanten (Europe Section) documents how the organization of schools and instruction, together with the outcomes that they produce, must be seen as the result of government policy, local education authorities,
local political bodies and environmental configurations. In short, she notes how our understanding of these urban schools must remain incomplete if we do not analyze the intersectionality of these key factors: focusing on the complexity of factors shaping the education of students in urban schools, rather than searching for a single cause, also highlights the necessary scope of subsequent reform initiatives. Following a similar line of argumentation, Dagmar Raczyński and Gonzalo Munoz-Stuardo (Latin America Section) in their chapter entitled “Chilean Education Reform: The Intricate Balance Between a Macro and Micro Policy,” argue that while the Chilean educational reforms of the last 25 years have been somewhat successful, the learning gains cannot be considered adequate and the inequality of the system still persists. They suggest that the best way to address these short-comings is to integrate macro with local level micro policies, strengthen the autonomy of schools to fashion their own practices, develop specific intervention projects to address inequitable learning outcomes and prevent schools from choosing their own students and thus promoting forms of stratification. Again, this view acknowledges the intersectionality of a broad range of factors that must be addressed together in order to achieve urban school reforms. A third and final example is the chapter by Gerald Grace (United Kingdom Section) entitled “Urban Education Theory Revisited: From the Urban Question to the End of the Millennium.” Grace notes the importance of siting an analysis of education in an intersectional interrogation of the cultural, economic, historical, political and social relations in a given society. He suggests that future theorizing about urban education reforms must be built on an understanding of their historical and structural difficulties: this new theorizing, he suggests, will benefit from the promise offered by the sophistication of intersectional analysis.

All this said by way of introducing the text, we suggest that this International Handbook of Urban Education is best read as a tool for opening up conversations about the current status and possible futures of urban education: this view posits the importance of six framing concepts or analytic lenses namely, multiplicity, power, difference, capital, change, and intersectionality. We now invite your close reading of the text. Again, we must remind you that the intent here is neither to narrowly define urban education, nor to offer specific solutions to problems. Rather, our goal is to focus attention on urban schools around the world and to stimulate both debate and action that will lead to improved educational opportunities and outcomes for all students attending such schools, independent of their geographic location or specific context.

References


