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THE PAST AS THE FUTURE OF THE SOCIAL AND EDUCATION SCIENCES

During the Cold War, a prominent American sociologist wrote about the two Marxisms: the intellectual project to understand critically historically the conditions that made the present possible and the political project to plan for the future utopia (Gouldner, 1970). The former has been extremely influential; the other fell apart after its seventieth birthday in the last decade of the twentieth century. This distinction between the study of the present and the planning for the future, however, is not merely a remnant of the Cold War. The dream of the future is a mainstay of the contemporary social science’s offspring in education. Filled with the search for “useful” and practical knowledge and the desire for rigorous methodologies, the education sciences are projects for planning the present in the hope of planning the future.

Like the seventeenth century quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, the present supersedes what it precedes, and the best is to still to come, through the correct mixture of policy and the expertise of science. Contemporary strategies to design the future come in many varieties of science. One futurism comes in the form of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA). The student assessment is about what practical knowledge children will need in science, mathematics, and literacy in some undefined future. That knowledge is to fulfil the dream named the Knowledge Society, which is simultaneously here and as yet to arrive. The technology of fulfilment is the new public management of benchmarks that lays out the boundaries of the anticipated Knowledge Society and its knowledge economy. This side of the Atlantic expresses the dream of the future in reforms to “Race to the Top”.

Whereas the promise of finding the future is daunting and enticing – as Sirens’ singing to beckon the mariners –, my task, ironically, is to look to the past in the present as the possible future of social science – the charge of this book. My argument proceeds in the first section to explore a genealogy of social science as planning the future. The planning to design people is visible in the long nineteenth century. This planning to design the child, the family, and community joins utopian narratives in the planning associated with the social sciences, linking human agency to effect change with spaces of collective belonging given in the names of democracy, the common good, and the nation. The scenario of design in contemporary research is taken up in the second section. Research related to New
Public Management, inequality, and teacher effectiveness are examined as utopian visions whose claim for practicality is a chimera and impractical. The final section turns to a different notion of practice as an alternative practical science, that is, a history of the present.

The future of the social sciences as argued is one that takes the present and asks about the conditions that historically make possible what is seen, acted on, talked about, and felt. This History of the Present, however, is not “to learn from the past” as though the present is merely a continuity of what proceeded it. Excavating the past is to explore the grid of different practices that come together as the “common sense”. Making fragile the causalities that present themselves as natural and given in daily life is to open spaces for possibilities other than those framed by the contemporary principles of “the order of things”. The argument, however, is not against planning but to explore the limits of contemporary orthodoxies.

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY SOCIAL AND EDUCATION SCIENCES: DESIGNING PEOPLE IN PLANNING THE FUTURE

The common sense of the sciences of people is that it should provide useful and practical knowledge. That knowledge has historically been about planning the future by changing people. It is this historical condition that I consider in four parts: first, inscriptions of designing the future and a form of utopianism in the human sciences; then the social sciences as the shepherd in processes of change; next, the epistemological constructions of agency and development in that planning of the present for the future; and last, the trilogy of the child, family, and community as core sites in the making/planning of people. What is designed, I argue, are the dispositions and sensitivities that are to govern the individual’s actions within a calculable flow of irreversible time.

Science, Design, and Utopian Futures

In graduate school I took a course in political science with Alfred de Grazia, a founder of the American behavioural science movement. That movement was the legacy of the Logic Positivists who came to the United States from Vienna in the 1920s and argued for the unity of sciences. Logic Positivists never had a real foothold and disappeared as a formal academic movement. The American behavioural sciences emerged in the 1950s and adopted that mantle of finding the unity of the social sciences. The central unifying theme was the human sciences as administrative in purpose. Science, it was suggested, describes the conditions of the world through its careful measurements and produces generalizations about how that world works. In one sense, the behavioural sciences captured the turn of the twentieth-century American faith in science and technology as the apotheosis of its Enlightenment’s progressive promise.
The faith in social intervention carried different trajectories in the practices of social sciences. One was the designing of the social conditions that would bring forth the hope of the future embodied in the nation. For example, the Swedish social sciences by the early years of the twentieth century embodied the social democratic image of a peaceful nation and people who strived to bring progressive (and Lutheran) moral good to an international context. In contrast, the American social sciences embodied the optimism of the nation as a unique experiment in the development of cosmopolitan values. Early American social scientists spoke of social engineering as changing social conditions by making the poor and immigrants into morally responsible citizens. The domestic sciences at the turn of the twentieth century rationalized the household. The managing of life was through learning accounting measures to control expenditures with wage income and by ordering the interactions in family relations and childrearing. The community sociologists invented theories about social communications, community, and primary and secondary groups that placed physical issues about health and the conditions of the city that overlapped with Calvinist Protestant reformers’ concerns about the moral disorder of the everyday life. The formation of the American school curriculum as well gave attention to the needs for social adjustment and social efficiency in urban, industrial life (Franklin, 1987).

The idea of social engineering reappears and is (re)visioned in the contemporary landscape of social and education sciences. Directed to reform, The American National Research Council (2002) report on the education sciences stated that the problem of the social sciences is social engineering. The focus is to identify “what works” in school programs, so it can be “replicated” universally. The gospel of replication is to be able to identify what is good and virtuous through empirical evidence and then universalize for all corners of schooling to adopt and use. The gospel is labelled as “useful” knowledge; that is, knowledge directed to some unspecified desired change that is alternatively useful to the parent raising children, useful to the teacher in the classroom, useful to the policy maker, and useful for making an enlightened, more progressive and equal world that is “in service to the democratic ideal”.

The planning of people, however, is not merely in education. Advertising does this all of the time to create people called “markets”. Less obvious are the new technological weapons of the military that require efforts to re-design individuals. Current military research, for example, related to its use of unmanned air drones that fly for long times, aims to make an individual who is “extracted” from the natural environment and natural elements of control. Crary (2008) explored military studies of the white-crowned sparrow that can fly for seven days without sleep; these are to consider how to create the combatant who can go for a minimum of seven days without sleep as the soldiers work with the Internet and stealth fighter-bomber. The use of neurochemicals, gene therapy, and even transcranial magnetic stimulation is considered “to facilitate the imposition of a mechanistic or robotic model of time, efficiency, and functionality onto the human body” (p. 4).
The planning of people can be historically connected with the problem of design. Contemporary notions of design portray the sensibility of an openness that enables democratic participation and human agency through research projects of planning. Planning is portrayed as the natural expression of a democracy that develops objective knowledge derived from the ‘evidence’ of rigorous data. That knowledge serves the democratic ideal about reason and rationality as the universal principles through which different interests make decisions. The democracy at bay here, however, is not only about participation. It embodies a utopian quality about the proper planning of society as enabling the fulfilment of a utopian future. In the United States, the social sciences embodied the secular promise of the nation through escaping the historical burden of the past by fabricating a future cosmopolitan citizen who would truly be universal and a model to the world (see, Popkewitz, 2008).

The folding of the religious themes of salvation, political theories of the republic, and science are inscribed in the notion of design. Up to the nineteenth century, design proved the existence of God, which was based on evidence of intelligence or purposefulness in nature (Reuben, 1996, p. 31). The Puritans, important in the early colonial settlement prior to the formation of the American republic, attached the status and attributes of personhood to an inner soul in which the ethical techniques of individual self-monitoring and control—consciousness and self-consciousness—were developed to recognize the design given by God. The Puritan personality formed through the applications of techniques of self-watchfulness in the private pursuit of the “signs of grace” represented in the construction of the self. The early colonial travelogues and the church’s ideas of conversion and civilizing “the heathen” embodied this construction of the self (see Hirst, 1994; Todorov, 1984).

The formation of the American republic in the late eighteenth century, for example, incorporated Puritan notions of design into its notions of the common good and the citizen. Design gave a millennial language to the nation that (re)visioned Puritan theology about what God gave to human affairs in the first coming. The narratives leading to the American Revolution, for example, re-assembled a Christian millennial belief that the proper object of study was God into an Enlightenment cosmopolitanism that rejected, at one level, the universality of religious morality as the basis for a common mankind (Schlereth, 1977, p. 56). That rejection, however, did not eliminate religious notions of the soul and salvation but brought elements into the idea of the citizen who performed “good works” and embodied civic virtue (Tröhler, 2011). The republic joined “the health of the soul and the regeneration of the Christian and the virtuous citizen, exultation of the divine and the celebration of design” (Ferguson, 1997, p. 43) with the designing of human improvement to enable “the pursuit of happiness.”
Agency and Development in Designing People

The formation of the new republics of Europe and North America entailed an individuality whose agency and participation was essential to governing practices. That individuality was called the citizen, and it entailed a cultural thesis about the cosmopolitan reason and rationality governing change. Human “reason” as a force for change was a radical shift from what preceded it, but not completely shedding its prior epistemological boundaries. If I use the medieval Christian church’s claim to universality, its use of reason was not to redeem people in their relationship with God (Pocock, 2003) but to disclose the eternal, immemorial ordering and hierarchies of nature and events in which people maintained their place in the cosmic of God. Reason for St. Augustine and Erasmus, for example, was proof that the individual had a soul and thus could be saved through the church. Debates over slavery and colonialization in the Renaissance entailed questions about whether indigenous groups had the faculty to know God’s reason and thus could take part in a civic life that recognized the sovereignty of God and His earthly ministries (see, e.g. Fredrickson, 2002).

The radicalism of the new republics was to make the individual as an actor and agent of change and reason as a historical problem. Kant’s (1784) “What is Enlightenment?”, for example, embodied this new relation of individuality as a part of the processes of change and as an agent that can initiate what becomes constituted as the subjects and subjectivities of a European modernity (Foucault, 2008/2010, pp. 12, 19). Philosophy was knowledge to think about the possibilities of the present and future rather than as being about fulfilment, origins, finality, and teleology. For example, it becomes possible for Kant to ask about the philosophical meaning of the present reality of which the philosopher belongs and in which he can situate himself. Philosophy, the highest knowledge, was to “see” thought as having the power and the task of shaping life in French and English Enlightenment philosophy in the nineteenth century: “Thought consists not only in analyzing and dissecting, but in actually bringing about that order of things which it conceives as necessary, so that by this act of fulfilment it may demonstrate its own reality and truth” (Cassirer, 1932/1951, p. viii). Thought and logic became a reflective practice to understand human development and establish autonomy and authority to knowledge in processes of change.

The nineteenth century produced wholesale awareness of change, the future, and history, with the Faustian notion of becoming rather than being. John Stuart Mills pointed out that “the idea of comparing one’s own age with former ages, or with our notion of those which are yet to come, had occurred to philosophers; but it never before was itself the dominant idea of any age” (Eksteins, 1985, p. 3). Darwin introduced indeterminacy of time into the closed system of the Newtonian universe. Evolution is “the emergence in time of biological innovation and surprise” (Grosz, 2004, p. 19). The sociologies, psychologies, and education sciences defined their subject by functions-in-time through concepts such as socialization, learning, and development.
Progress entailed political calculations as a humanist project (Koselleck, 1985; also see Grosz, 2004). Change became amenable to human intervention and the altering of the future for the betterment of humanity. The autonomy of knowledge and the possibility of design were signified as the idea of progress. Progress entailed human intervention through the authority and autonomy given to knowledge. Kant, for example, talks about philosophical prophecy as something to desire if not obtainable. The knowledge of philosophy serves humanity through providing prediction and a prophetic text whose universality enables the continuity of a movement of all humanity towards progress. By the turn of the twentieth century, social science replaced philosophy as the arbiter of the processes that moved humanity towards progress. G. Stanley Hall, a founder of child studies, argued that the new psychological sciences were to provide the guidance to social and individual development that was previously provided by the Bible. It may be a matter of historical coincidence, but the political and social movements of American reforms at the turn of the twentieth century took Progressivism as their name to focus on the problems of intervention through the insertion of enlightenment notions of reason into the institutionalization of the social sciences.

The paradox of progress is that the movement of irreversible time stabilized social life by giving life a never ending sequence and regularity. Humanity is inserted in a vertical relationship to its own present temporal and irrevocable sequence to find its “place and to express its meaning, and finally, to designate and specify the mode of action, the mode of effectuation that it realizes within this present reality” (Foucault, 2008/2010, p. 14). Time became ordered and irreversible, as agency was regulated in the flow of time. The design of the agency of the citizen, for example, was assembled and connected to secular time. Different narratives of civilizations, individuality, and societies are told about their development, growth, and evolution.

The ordering of the self-in-time memorializes the cosmopolitanism of the present as a break from traditions that prevent reason and rationality to prevail in designing the future. That future should enable the cultivation of things not burdened with past. This theme is central to modern social sciences and the idea of designing. Yet at the same time, the past is to be re-memorialized to “write for a future that the present cannot recognize: to develop, to cultivate the untimely, the out-of-place and the out-of-step” (Grosz, 2004, p. 117).

The embeddedness of individuality in time embodied a new consciousness about the place of experience and the future as a horizon of expectation (Koselleck, 1979/2004). Prior Christian doctrines of Biblical revelation and Church administration were directed to the Hereafter, apocalyptic in terms of the general end of the World. Modernity gave expression to the idea of improvement on earth that made possible an open future whose fulfilment can be made through the planning of people themselves. The horizon of future gained a historical quality that was subject to utopian conceptions that brought salvation themes into the possibilities of designing the present. The ideas of progress embodied principles of individual experiences and everyday life as “facts” brought into view and shaped as part of ethical programs that had not existed before. Further, the autonomy of
knowledge simultaneously sought to tame change through projects of social intervention and to calculate the processes and rules of reason that would shepherd change. Progress also entailed making visible the processes of social life and the interior “mind”, so as to design the rules and standards that ordered change itself. Notions of childhood joined a Darwinism related to cell biology, philology, and developmental linguistics to make possible investigations of the interior of “mind”. The interiority of the individual was given a sequence of past, present and future, the later inscribed in notions of growth and development. The mind, for example, was discovered as having consciousness and unconsciousness, personality, attitudes, behaviours. The different classifications of individuality were ordered as processes of learning that can be studied and calculated to understand how and why the child comes into being and develops (Steedman, 1995). That development embodied images of the future that fulfils the hopes of the present.

Social Science as Redemptive: The Trilogy of the Child, Family, and Community in Ordering the Present and Designing the Future

The autonomy of knowledge was connected to the subject of human agency as an object to be calculated and designed. Design had a double quality in historical change. It brought to bear the possibilities of human “reason” as a force of change. And it made possible the planning of society through interventions to alter and make possible progress. Life was a continuous event of planning through time, shedding the past through the development of the self for the future. Continued calculations organized one’s career to assign identity, self-image, and material prospects in an expanding universe (Bledstein, 1976, p. 159). Dewey’s pragmatism, which was important to American progressive education and today’s reform, entails principles about the agentive individual whose rational actions design life as temporal sequences geared to the future. Life became a planned series of events, for example, through problem solving to calculate and order experience.

The sciences of humanity were, in practice, cultural theses of how the child lives a rational moral life, and thus as a “reasonable person”. The social and education sciences institutionalized by the turn of the twentieth century instantiated particular enlightenment cosmopolitan notions as cultural theses about the modes of living of the citizen. The cultural theses about modes of living were ordered and gave developmental sequences in pedagogical planning to ensure and secure adulthood. The citizen and the child of the nation were particular human kinds inscribed in pedagogy. By human kind, I am concerned with the historical practices through which particular categories of people become possible to think about and act as cultural theses about how one is to live and order life. Such human kinds “act” as determinant objects in ordering the practices of the social sciences, such as studying the adolescent, the learner, the citizen. The making of human kinds functions, at one level, as the autonomous subjects to locate the origins of development and processes of “proper” individual growth (see Hacking, 1986). For
example, the child as a human kind in liberal republican settings, with variations about “the nature” of that subject, was the autonomous subject whose development was to “mirror” enlightenment processes of reason and rationality projected as a “universalized and central force for all thinking subjects, all nations, all epochs, and all cultures to enable the betterment of humanity” (Cassirer, 1932/1951, p. 6).

The designing of the citizen and the child as the future adult was not only about reason and the reasonable person. It embodied a particular comparative method in designing people. The optimism of progress travelled with fears of degeneration and dangers. As Chamberlin and Gilman (1985) suggest, “hope was looked after by progress and seemed as the tenor of the times, but fear was contagious” (p. xiii). Elaborate symbols of corruption, degeneracy, and the fall of the republic were expressed, if, for example, the development of childhood was not controlled (Krug, 1972). The early American disciplines of the social sciences, for example, were concerned with calculating and designing the self-managed and responsible urban family and child whose self-development and growth were linked with standardized public virtues that enabled the conferring of that agency. Literature and science spoke of race as associated not only with the idea of authenticity and national principles (The American Race) but also with the elevation of race to a determining position in theories of history.

The school had a particular place in this governing. The school was to replace the family and the community as the primary influence in socializing children to act as free and self-motivated individuals through the laws of reason. Design brought Puritan religious notions about pedagogy into the curriculum designs about children’s development and growth. Education was the persistent preparation for a conversion experience that gave the individual moral behaviour in the shared cultural world that gave unity to all of humankind (McKnight, 2003, p. 44). Pedagogy was the “converting ordinance”, written with an evangelizing and calculated design on the souls of their readers. The method of reason was to build revelatory, spiritual fulfilment. Community was part of the course of life or one’s curriculum vitae.

The new American sociologies and psychologies instantiated theories and methods to design the child to be an adult in harmony with the envisioned future society. Agency was to be calculated and administered in designing of the interior of the individual. The new social and psychological sciences at the turn of the twentieth century were spoken of as the great panacea for equality. More generally, the sciences would provide the knowledge necessary, for example, to deal with the problems produced by the new conditions related to industrialization and urbanization. And the new sciences would change people through producing the moral dispositions, sensitivities, and skills for participation and inclusion of the poor and particular immigrant and racialized groups.

The new psychologies of the child envisioned the empirical building blocks of selfhood as the tasks of deliberate design rather than as something related to a static, metaphysical soul (Sklansky, 2002, pp. 148-149). For the progressives, such as Dewey, the problem of design embodied the triumph of cooperation over competition as the natural destiny of human progress (Sklansky, 2002, p. 161).
William James’s notion of a pragmatic psychology placed a premium on habit formation as the main means of acting in accord with one’s designs (Sklansky, 2002, p. 146). Progress in government, said Frank Lester Ward (1883), a founding figure in American sociology, was not simply an education to accommodate society. Education “must be in the direction of acquainting every member of society more thoroughly with the special nature of the institution, and awakening him to a more vivid conception of his personal interest in its management” (Ward, 1883, p. 243). Science, Ward continued, orders and modifies the contemplative “man” by allowing for the artificial construction of evolution. The sciences directed to education were to open knowledge to all members of society, and such knowledge was to be directed towards social ends that embodied cosmopolitan hopes of agency, freedom, and progress. The psychology of Edward L. Thorndike was to shape and fashion ‘the mind and the spirit of man [sic]’ so individuals could be responsible for their progress or entrusted with their future. Science, Thorndike argued, enables education to achieve its purposes of bringing happiness to people. To fulfil “the ultimate purposes of education, we have to measure each study’s service in making man’s wants better and in making him able to satisfy them” (Thorndike, 1912/1962, p. 143).

American progressive education reforms placed their sciences in the service of creating a democratic society that enunciated principles of agency and freedom related to the nation’s exceptionalism. The new social sciences embodied the universal history of cosmopolitanism as the inevitable developmental process of a prosperous and equalitarian society. Science carried the optimism of American exceptionalism about opening up a more progressive and democratic society that brought Calvinist reform notions of salvation into the vision of the nation and its chosen people. Action was designed as temporal sequences geared to the future. Life became a planned series of events, for example, through problem solving to calculate and order experience. Participation in community and problem solving were particular strategies that would produce enlightened reason for the common good shaped in the narratives of the exceptionalism of the nation.

THE ELIXIR OF SCIENCE AS DESIGN AND IMPRACTICABILITY IN CONTEMPORARY PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

Contemporary salvation themes of science are connected to the future called the Knowledge Society. That future is inhabited by a particular human kind that contemporary policy and research is given as the lifelong learner. The autonomy of knowledge that Kant spoke of 225 years earlier is now explicitly linked to everyday life. That link is expressed as the search for useful and “practical knowledge”, notions of knowledge that assume a consensus about what the future will be. The sciences, as earlier, are to tame the uncertainty of the present by providing the paths to fulfil the desires of the future. The utopianism and the certainty of science link everyday experiences with a horizon of expectations that are called benchmarks. The planning to design people is given a certainty that once
was occupied in the space held by the alchemists’ philosopher’s stone that was to exemplify the achievement of perfection, immortality, and heavenly bliss. The certainty of today’s bliss is the “Knowledge Society” and its perfection is the designing of the lifelong learner who ushers in the perfection of progress that only the enlightenment philosophers could dream about. The modern philosopher’s stone is not in the alchemic transformation but in the prophecy given by an empiricism whose utopianism has no empirical basis and is not practical for understanding the conditions of the present and the complexities of change.

The European Commission’s 7th Framework, a call for social science grants, embodies the historical logic of the philosopher’s stone that is (re)transcribed into the interventions of science to design society and the person of the utopian future. The utopian view embodies a notion of Europe’s social model that is contrasted to the American liberal and individualism. The notion of collective common good inscribes liberal narratives of Europe’s historical extension of universal rights and democracy (Wagner, 2005). The European exceptionalism circulates in the Framework as “the challenge of moving Europe” to new paths related to economic growth and social development. That development and prosperity entails a particular individuality called the lifelong learner. The lifelong learner is someone whose mode of living is to problem-solve, innovate, and be flexible in a continuous process of making choices. In the Work Programme 2012 Draft Annex, research in the field of education is identified as “to unleash the potential of its young people and to give them the means to develop and define their future in Europe” (European Commission C, 2010, p. 13). Science becomes a mixture of sport and war games metaphors to combat poverty, criminal behaviour, drug use; and a sport of winning by tackling poverty.

The utopian certainty given to science is bound to the empirical evidence that is provided by the cognitive sciences. Pedagogical models are to provide the operational know-how for effective teaching of curriculum knowledge. That operational know-how is talked about as instructional processes of teaching. Mathematical education, for example, is to provide children with the mathematics that enables them to model real-world relations. Research identifies how children can learn to generalize through mathematical modelling through the social psychology of “situated learning”. Research provides the interpretive frame to describe how students think about the “real world” through mathematical modelling (Jurow, 2004).

The modelling is about providing the child with styles of thought by which to design life through processes of reflection and action. The modelling presupposes a certainty through defining mathematics as providing the mode of thought that accesses the “real world” problems. The problems confronted are not things natural to the world. It is a world given through the translation tools of pedagogy that provide the processes to order and classify what constitutes the knowledge of “the real world”. “The real world” in the mathematics lesson is about the utopian view of a rationally ordered world whose maps can be assessed by children to design how life is and should be lived. The child becomes the agent and actor that finds
the keys to the world through internalizing the rules and standards inscribed in the modelling.

The constructivism of instruction takes an element of the enlightenment that makes the mind (reason) as an equal agent with nature. Human agency is to consider nature and reason as independent yet connected through the mind accessing principles of the structure of the cosmos and enunciating them systematically through mathematics (Cassirer, 1932/1951). That is what mathematics modelling of “real world” in pedagogical reforms is to accomplish. The modelling is to connect the mind and nature and enunciate the cosmos that is and should be. But the modelling to accomplish this connection has a particularity that is linked to earthly salvation themes of Calvinist notions of community and liberal theories of participation. The salvation themes are generated through the pedagogy of “situated learning”.

A different utopianism in designing people is through research about community, culture, and communication to correct social wrongs. Research is to enable the social commitments of equity and justice in education. The empirical warrant is to calculate and design the path to equality. In the United States, for example, such research is “to mobilize the social, cultural, and linguistic processes of diverse communities that allow for positive change” in the schooling of marginalized groups such as Hispanic and African American students (Moll, 2010, p. 451). The commitment is “to see that schools treat all children with dignity and respect, and that schools accommodate to the children’s realities” (p. 457). The outcome is to be agency, participation, and equality.

It is argued that research has identified the social and cultural resources that can be used as a hermeneutic model to order children’s everyday life. From government policies and research programs, the claim is that ‘what works’ can be specified and replicated to create an equal and successful school. That success is deemed to produce equal access and participation, and thus agency. One version of this research claims to have identified the knowledge that enables teachers to be sensitive and responsible to the cultural differences of children. The research enables teachers to learn how human beings “use social processes and cultural resources of all kinds” (Scribner, cited in Moll, 2010, p. 455) “in mediating learning and the development of thinking” (Moll, 2010, p. 455), “identifying and mobilizing knowledge and other resources found in households and other settings that result from families lived experiences and practices: what we refer to as “funds of knowledge” (p. 455).

The research embodies the utopian vision of equality without difference. Research provides the tools so the teacher “lays out ideas for pedagogical action based on a particular resource-based conceptualization of differences” (Moll, 2010, p. 455). Whereas the social commitments are important, the question is about the principles of research as planning and designing that translates questions of social wrongs into a particular mode of reflection and action. These principles, at one level, project utopian qualities yet work in a space that conserves rather than
challenges the very frameworks that produce divisions and differentiations in question.

How does this occur? First, paying attention to the everyday lives of families and children derives its empiricism from a structural notion of culture. That notion defines a universal set of values and norms as the dominant culture of schooling, and from that unity understands difference. Difference, then, results from notions of sameness. The sameness is signified in the achievement tests that become the gauge of equality and from which a continuum of value to understand difference is constructed. Difference from that unity serves as a hermeneutic strategy to study different “communities” and to plan for its making of “successful” human kinds whose social, cultural, and linguistic qualities are assigned as having cultural differences. The language is democratic; teachers reach into different communities to respect and honour difference. However, the research naturalizes and seeks to harmonize “community” experiences with the norms and values that order the universalized culture embodied in the achievement tests. The inscriptions of how to know and what to know in epistemological construction of the achievement tests are paths through which the utopian vision is invested, but those paths are not bound by claims of empirical evidence.

Another salvation theme about science, planning, and empiricism is New Public Management. The fantasia of the future is science that identifies the particular processes, variables, and forces that lead to the envisioned utopic “Knowledge Society” and the knowledge economy. Educational standards and benchmarks design the future for research to measure empirically. PISA, mentioned above, defines this utopianism in relation to the future practical knowledge that children should have in science, mathematics, and literacy. The irony of PISA is that it creates this measure without any empirical evidence about the practical knowledge of the future (Tröhler, 2011).

The new common sense to identify the utopian future through empirical data is research about the Effective Teacher. The research aims to empirically specify the attributes, capabilities, and qualities of the teacher that lead to successful achievement and equal outcomes for all children. Once identified, research can then design classrooms, teachers, and children through “effective teaching”. The cultural thesis of that effectiveness is spoken about in an econometric language of “value-added modelling” (Dillon, 2010; Day, Sammons, & Gu, 2008). As earlier, modelling is the language to assert that reality (certainty) that can be approximated through adequate research.

The “reality” of the Effective Teacher is an abstraction designed to respond to things of the school through inventions that conceptualize and search for data. As with the prior discussion of correcting social wrongs, the value-added model measures effective teaching in terms of outcomes of achievement. Research is to find out what elements of teaching makes a difference beyond what would be expected based on the social-economic background factors that children bring to school. The value-added modelling in the United States is used in relation to state policy to reform schools. The measures students’ scores on state tests administered
at the end of one grade are to predict how they are likely to score on state tests at the end of a later grade.

With a great deal of faith in the certainty of the modelling in bringing the desired but unstated future, “value added” research claims that it identifies the qualities and characteristics of “the effective teacher” who enables the successful achievement of “all children” (Day, Sammons, & Gu, 2008). The qualities of the teacher that increase achievement are described as an integrated “holistic, nuanced understanding of teachers’ work and lives” (Day, Sammons, & Gu, 2008, p. 330). Dillion (2010, p. 1) wrote: “If you use rigorous, robust methods and surround them with safeguards, you can reliably distinguish highly effective teachers from average teachers and from ineffective teachers”.

Sounds simple enough. But that simplicity hides the empirical complexities that make the notion of “value-added” a utopian desire that has no empirical basis except through fabricating that empiricism. The research is in fact a thought experiment that is made into an empirical ‘fact’ through the mechanisms of making it a fact of study. That is, the model is “sent out” to collect data about and to “see” if there are correlations about the elements through which the concept is filled in.

The categories that order “the value added” research embody a cultural thesis about a mode of life given as magnitudes through numbers and correlations that are charted as Teacher Profession Life Trajectories. The variables are teachers’ commitment (motivation), agency, life-work management, and well-being. The language appears as objectively provided through scientific rigour. The effective teacher is an abstraction, given its empirical value through the methodological devices of the research. The effective teacher is the “contextual value added” using multilevel models (Day, Sammons, & Gu, 2008, p. 334) that identify differential qualities that relate to teachers’ “sustaining commitment”, (n = 189, 61%) or teachers’ “sustaining commitment despite challenging circumstances” (n = 39, 13%)” (p. 335). The facts that are modelled are projected abstract qualities of the common sense of classroom theories that are studied and given numbers to shape and fashion a cultural thesis about who the teacher is and should be.

The economic language of “value added” is linked to cultural and social practices that have little, if any, empirical relation to the economy and any future skills and knowledge of the world of work. The emphasis on psychological categories about “motivation” and commitment of the teacher are concerned with issues of collective belonging and common virtues rather than individual achievement. Participation in community and problem solving are historically particular strategies to produce the principles of the “reasoned person” whose actions worked in the name of the common good. These principles were shaped by the narratives of the exceptionalism of the nation.

The inscription of psychological categories such as motivation is historically related to designing the interior of the child’s desire (Danziger, 1997). Early psychology did not provide explanations of everyday conduct. It was not until the emergence of mass schooling that an interest emerged in removing children’s “fatigue” in learning through calculating and influencing the children’s will,
motives, interests, needs, and desire. This treatment of inner “thought”, daily life, and experience were objects of administration. Motivation became a key player in this administration: It is not disinterested and impartial, nor does it exist as objectively outside of the historical grid through which it is given intelligibility. Today, motivation is articulated and given nuance through notions of self-esteem and efficacy in social and educational planning and through educational assessment about the person as agent shaped through metaphors of the mind as mechanism (see, e.g. Tunstall, 2003).

I realize that this ironic conclusion about the utopian anti-empirical empiricism will probably produce a lot of head shaking among those nursed on the chimera of the sciences of planning. The sciences actualize the alchemists’ philosopher’s stone of 400 years earlier. The alchemist’s science and contemporary sciences of planning people serve as the elixir of life that is to find the right mixtures for immortality. That immortality is transmogrified into the particular contemporary doxa drawn from an enlightenment’s salvation theme about reason, rationality, and progress through the proper use of science.

That research strives to be practical but is impractical. Impractical, as its certainty is illusory, as it denies the very complexities and uncertainties that the planning is to tame. To draw on November, Comacho-Hübner, & Latour (2010), the planning is the fixing of Galilean objects through such notions of modelling in a Euclidian space. The notion of Galilean objects entails displacements that do not imply any transformation as they move as immutable objects that keep their properties as they go. That is how it is possible to speak about value-added knowledge: “To be sure, the emergence and stability of a virtual image is a fascinating phenomenon (witness Narcissus!), but it is not a phenomenon of correspondence between two different worlds that would mysteriously “resemble” one another” (November, Comacho-Hübner, & Latour, 2010, p. 13).

The research becomes a spurious reference that has no practical counterpart: “It leads you nowhere except in the equally spurious question of its ‘resemblance’ with the original model- that is created by the representation itself” (November, Comacho-Hübner, & Latour, 2010, p. 9).

HISTORY OF THE PRESENT AS THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE?

I have argued that the sciences are not merely an explanation of events and the realization of human existence. The history of social science and social theory continually point to the social sciences as embedded in national cultural traditions (Levine, 1995) and show how theory loops into social life that creates the very phenomena that it seeks to describe (Isaac, 2009). Research embodies rules and standards about how judgments are made, conclusions drawn, rectification proposed, and the fields of existence made manageable and predictable. Its practices are interventions in the world that simultaneously describe, interpret, and modify that world.
My excursion about the future of social science in light of these considerations was to explore the limits of its contemporary orthodoxy. That orthodoxy in science is to develop knowledge that can change the conditions of society that also changes people. I explored that notion of change historically and in contemporary research through the notion of design that circulates along the surface through its notions of problem solving, motivation, “value-added” teaching, and equality. The planning to design people, I argued, brought a utopianism into its empirical sciences that was, at the same time, anti-empirical. The sciences ignored the evidence that they do not have a hold on the future or even the complexities of contemporary life.

The practices of finding “useful” and practical knowledge are impractical at one layer. Economists, often signalled today as the high priests of social science because of their sophisticated modelling statistics, have continually failed in forecasting much of anything useful (Krugman, 2009; Harris, 2010). The insertion of certainty – that research can identify what is needed and what works – has never been practical in providing the knowledge to plan what is necessary to prevent the crises that emerge.

At a different layer, the planning and designing of people enters into and is part of the political. The designing of people inscribes the expertise of social science as the shepherd in a hierarchy. That hierarchy is between those in the know and those who are to learn the expert knowledge as a cultural thesis about modes of living, as exemplified in the mathematics education of “modelling” described above. The complaint about ‘the ivory tower’ that differentiates “theory” from “practical knowledge” is fashionable but unrealistic. The distinction creates divisions that make ideological points about which shepherd is the most in favour of the people at the bottom and who or what knowledge is best for planning and designs. The separation of “texts” and “contexts” does not make visible the principles that shape and fashion the boundaries about what is (im)possible to think, act, and hope for. Further, the illusion of knowing the future in planning the present is conservative. The future engaged through planning preserved the contemporaneity of the rules and standards of reason. The common sense of research to confront social wrongs re-inscribes the very frameworks of thought and action but with different rhetorical and ideological notions in organizing research. The paths to that future are interned and enclosed by the possibilities of the present.

Perhaps, as Toulmin (1990) argued in his book *Cosmopolis*, we have given certainty its headway for over 400 years, and maybe it is time to think about alternatives. The strategy engaged in this chapter was to trouble the common sense of planning and design through a History of the Present. The question asked was about the conditions and limits of the orthodoxy of planning and designing people. This focus was not a question of the analytics of the technologies for telling the truth; that is, the focus on methodological rigour that assumes the subject of the practical knowledge needed in the future or the value-added qualities of teaching. The question asked is how it becomes possible to account for the constitution of the subject of the social and education sciences through a weaving of different historical trajectories. The idea of social science as planning was treated as an
event, as a monument from which thought and action pay homage in accounting for the world and its possibilities.

If this account and approach is appropriate, the irony of the future of the social sciences is historicizing the present and treating its monuments as events rather than ‘data’. It is to dispense with the shepherds that inscribe the utopic spaces in the governing of who “we” are and should be. It does not mean that notions of salvation and utopian desires are purged from social life but that the project of social science is, as Walter Benjamin suggests of history, mediating the work of creation and not its prophet.
THE PAST AS THE FUTURE OF THE SOCIAL AND EDUCATION SCIENCES

NOTES

1 I use long nineteenth century to recognize that there were uneven different historical trajectories that move between the eighteenth and early twentieth centuries that made possible the epistemological conditions for the idea of social science and social planning.

2 I capitalize Enlightenment to signal particular intellectual and social movements that moves across Northern European and North America during the long nineteenth century, recognizing that it was not a single movement but with a plurality. Like Cassirer (1932/1951), my use of the word is to signal particular systems of reason through which the subject was constructed and which makes possible the knowledge of the social and education sciences. See Popkewitz (2008).

3 At this point one might object to the insert of the notion of "gospel". I have used it intentionally to articulate the overlapping of cultural issues with religious salvation themes discussed later.

4 This notion of the citizen of modern republics has different cultural theses of the relation of the political authority and individuality than, for example, Greek city-states. This relation is bound to notions of agency and time, discussed earlier. See, e.g. Foucault (2008/2010) and Rancière (2007).

5 For discussion of community as a particular religious cultural narrative in education, see Tröhler (2011).

REFERENCES


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