

SOWING THE SEEDS OF EMPIRE
EDUCATION & IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION
IN ENGLAND AND FRANCE, 1870-1914


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ABSTRACT

Within International Relations, education has received little attention as factor that shapes identities. Where education is mentioned, the treatment is often casual and not very systematic. This dissertation seeks to address these shortcomings. The author argues that education influences what we think and do by imparting understandings of the world and our place within it, and by cultivating skills that enable us to assume social, economic and political roles.

To observe the mechanism by which education plays a role, the author executes a process trace of education in England and France from 1870 until 1914. At the time, education was an active concern to policymakers in both countries, and it was consciously deployed for the purposes of identity construction. Britain and France were also Great Powers with colonial interests abroad. This offers the opportunity to assess education against a backdrop of imperial expansion.

The trace occurs in three stages. The first stage considers larger curricular and pedagogical trends in order to determine the content of education in England and France. The second narrows the focus to consider how empire was taught through history and geography textbooks. Finally, the third stage explores the linkages between education and the training of the élite, emphasizing roles associated with imperial administration and governance.

The results indicate that education influenced identity in important ways. In England, the cognitive and functional processes worked to frame the British Empire as closely intertwined with a sense of Englishness. In contrast, French education tended to subordinate

the Empire to purely nationalist concerns which, the author argues, served to reinforce a prevailing culture of ambivalence, if not antagonism, to the French Empire.

This dissertation offers a novel, replicable approach to international politics and contributes to a burgeoning literature on identity. At the same time, it answers a call within the constructivist paradigm for greater insight into internal processes behind identity. This approach not only sheds light on the cases treated, but also provides a means to strengthen the constructivist contribution to the explanation of phenomena of interest to the field.

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I dedicate this dissertation to my family. We have made this journey together, and I will be forever grateful for your unending encouragement and support.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my wife and children. Jennifer, you have been patient beyond measure. You are my steadfast companion, sharing in my struggles and, now, my success. Graeme and Rhys, you are beacons of light, bringing endless joy while inspiring me to leave no dream unfulfilled. You are constant reminders of what is truly important.

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In memory of Sue Owens Updike.

CHAPTER ONE

A CASE FOR EDUCATION

“Of all political questions that of education is perhaps the most important...” - Napoleon

As the *Grande Armée* swept across Europe at the turn of the 19th century, Jean Francois Champollion languished in a ‘prison’. But his cell was not as one would imagine it; instead of stone, its walls were lined with 526 books – books hand selected by the Emperor Napoleon himself as part of the national curriculum of French schools. Champollion – best known for his critical contribution to deciphering the Rosetta Stone – regarded his lycée in Grenoble as a prison of the mind. To hear his telling, were it not for his passion for antiquity Jean Francois might never have escaped Napoleon’s struggles to remake Europe into France and the French into, well, the French.¹

Despite Champollion’s characterization of his adolescent education, Napoleon’s policies were not simply self-aggrandizing. Rather, Napoleon merely pressed on with reforms initiated during the height of the revolution in France. Schools were to be the fonts of progress and nationhood, as well as a means to overturn established conventions standing in the way of ideas bound up in the Enlightenment or, as Napoleon would have it, French *grandeur*. “Of all political questions,” Napoleon remarked in 1805, “that [of education] is perhaps the most important. There cannot be a firmly established political state unless there is a teaching body with definitely recognized principles. If the child is not taught from

¹ Drawing from personal letters Daniel Meyerson briefly recounts Champollion’s reaction to and struggles with education in France under Napoleon in an otherwise forgettable book, *The Linguist and the Emperor: Napoleon and Champollion’s Quest to Decipher the Rosetta Stone* (New York: Random House, 2005), 82-91.

infancy that he ought to be a republican or a monarchist, a Catholic or a free-thinker, the state will not constitute a nation; it will rest on uncertain and shifting foundations; and it will be constantly exposed to disorder and change.”² And while Champollion resisted, many of his classmates fell sway to the textbook understanding of French identity which legitimized Napoleon’s efforts to create a universal state (in the image of France, of course).

Napoleon conceived of education as have many societies and governments across time, location, form and ideology: education is a valuable if not indispensable means to instill and replicate certain values and cultural norms, as well as to ensure that segments of the population can fill various roles and perform essential tasks (e.g. bureaucrats, lawyers, merchants). In ancient China, for example, the imperial court employed education to simultaneously ‘enlighten’ the masses and choose civil administrators.³ Closer to home, education in Western Europe was for centuries largely the preserve of the Church; and even as the modern state developed, governments tended to cede oversight of educational institutions to religious authorities who would, it was hoped, instill a sense of morality in the masses – presuming, of course, that they could be enticed into the schoolroom.⁴ In subsequent decades, as nationalism began to sweep through Europe, civic authorities similarly looked to primary education in order to “train individuals to be citizens of nation-states” and “inculcate loyalty to the state.”⁵ And later, the Soviet Union relied upon its education system throughout the Cold War to create a highly-trained, ideologically-

² Quoted in Edward H. Reisner, *Nationalism and Education since 1789: a Social and Political History of Modern Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), 35.

³ Cheng Kai-Ming, Jin Xinhua & Gu Xiaobo, “From Training to Education: Lifelong Learning in China,” *Comparative Education* 35: 2 (June, 1999), 119.

⁴ Robert Gildea, *Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2003), 105-11.

⁵ Ibid, 247-9. Cf., Paul Kennedy, “The Decline of Nationalistic History in the West, 1900-1970,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 8: 1 (Jan., 1973), 77-100; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); and Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990), 91-97.

disciplined workforce through a “purposeful upbringing.”⁶ Meanwhile the United States pursued education reforms in Germany and Japan in order to democratize and demilitarize the general populace after the Second World War.

The common thread that binds these examples together is the belief that education can have a profound effect on the social, economic and political fabric by functioning as a mechanism for identity construction. Furthermore, education can be deployed in order to promote particular identities conducive to certain desired outcomes. These are not simply localized phenomena. Education’s reach extends beyond the domestic order by shaping identities that constitute national interests and equipping governments and administrators with the requisite knowledge and skills to execute policy on an international level.

Regrettably, theoretical and empirical research has tended to leave education’s contribution to international politics unexplored. In some instances, this is a reflection of ontological assumptions that preclude unit-level factors like education from causal explanations. In others, education is likely overlooked because there is no clear sense of its role as a mechanism for identity construction. As a result, its potential effect on outcomes in the international milieu is either taken for granted or the subject of loose formulations which are difficult to generalize and substantiate.

Education needs to be rescued from the doldrums of International Relations theory. If policymakers have in the past relied upon education, at home and abroad, to shore up the people’s will with foreign policy aims in mind, then students of international politics must start taking education more seriously if only to accord with what we think we know as fact.

⁶ John Dunstan, *Soviet Education Under Perestroika* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 5.

Yet, as will be explained below, it is the link to identity that makes establishing education as a viable construct especially valuable to the field.

The purpose of this chapter is to probe the literature for conventional understandings of education's link to identity. This also involves consideration of whether scholarship has attempted to close the gap between education and international politics. While we begin with a survey of International Relations, we will eventually broaden the lens to include work drawn from outside the field in order to inform the systematic treatment of education as a mechanism for identity construction that follows in the second chapter. I privilege literature that touches upon England and France in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as these countries are subjects of the case studies I will later employ to flesh out the mechanism. During this treatment, I will also introduce the theme of empire, which plays an important part in sharpening the focus of this study while enhancing its relevance to international politics.

EDUCATION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

While established research programs surrounding education and identity have emerged in sociology and, to a lesser extent, comparative politics, education has received limited attention within the field of International Relations. Where education is mentioned, the treatment is often casual and not very systematic. This is a mistake. Framed as a mechanism for identity construction, education is immediately relevant to a burgeoning literature on identity, norms and ideas which has continued to gain ground in the field in recent decades. Constructivism appears especially primed for the study of mechanisms like

education because of a growing demand for stronger consideration of the internal processes that constitute actors' identities. Along these lines, the following section offers an appraisal of education's 'fit' within International Relations by first establishing its relevance to the constructivist project. Immediately following, I will consider literature from the field that involves education and identity in order to assess the state of play among recent theoretical and empirical research.

For some time, the dominant approaches to International Relations did not accept identity as a construct that leverages important questions in the field. Structuralist approaches, for example, tend to label ideas as epiphenomenal or, at best, unit-level phenomena that lose their causal significance when actors confront imperatives derived from situations rather than values and understandings. We are instead directed toward the distribution of power or modes of production to explain outcomes. Since the early 1990s, constructivism has sought to bring identities back in as causally significant factors that shape interests and guide behavior. In this vein, one can no longer derive state preferences simply from the structure of the system; preferences are problematized because motivations reflect the various identities that states and other actors possess. "Anarchy," in the oft-quoted words of Alexander Wendt, "is what states make of it."⁷ The empirical question thus becomes one of understanding "the relationship between what actors *do* and what they *are*."⁸

In its early stages, constructivist literature linked identity to the study of ideas (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993) and culture (Katzenstein, 1996), both of which make moral and causal claims about the world in which we live. The common view holds that claims shape identities and, thereby, constitute the interests that manifest in particular actions and

⁷ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46: 2 (Spring, 1992), 391-425.

⁸ Wendt, 424.

policies. This approach borrows heavily from Max Weber's characterization of ideas as 'switchmen' in that the ideas derived from one's identity "[determine] the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest."⁹ Subsequent scholarship sought to refine constructivism's core theoretical propositions while contesting the dominance of rationalist and structuralist paradigms over International Relations theory. This created a bubble in the literature at the end of the 1990s as constructivists clamored to clarify the paradigm's ontology and epistemology in order to fend off criticism for being conceptually and methodologically fuzzy. Wendt's strike at grand theory in *Social Theory of International Relations* (1999) arguably created the largest wake, though more modest efforts worked to establish that "constructivism can illuminate important features of international politics that were previously enigmatic and have crucial *practical* implications for international theory and empirical research."¹⁰

Fundamentally, identity remained the keystone of constructivist theorizing. Hopf (1998) states simply that a state's identity "implies its preferences and consequent actions."¹¹ Furthermore, identities vary according to the social practices that constitute them. This implies that the currents of international politics reflect these very practices, and the natures of war, peace, cooperation and order are socially constructed. Wendt's *Social Theory* provides an extended treatment of these core theoretical propositions. Anarchy, Wendt explains, has no logic of its own. Its effects are "contingent on the desires and beliefs states have and the

⁹ Max Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, H.H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills, eds. (New York: Oxford University, 1974), 280.

¹⁰ Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics," *European Journal of International Relations* 3: 3 (Sept. 1997), 323. Cf. Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory," *International Security* 23: 1 (Summer, 1998), 186-192.

¹¹ Hopf (1998), 175.

policies they pursue.”¹² Because desires, beliefs and policies are constituted by identity, the processes that construct identity are at the heart of Wendt’s contribution to constructivist theory. The chief process, as the name of the text suggests, is social.¹³ As states interact, they take on role identities which shape their present and future behavior.

Interestingly, it is this final point which has stirred the most controversy among constructivists. Wendt severely discounts the influence of a state’s corporate identity. Instead, he derives but a narrow list of “pre-social” imperatives, qualified as ‘national interests’: physical survival, autonomy, economic well-being, and ‘collective self-esteem’.¹⁴ Otherwise, there is no real consideration of internal processes of identity construction; Wendt’s social constructivism is biased toward the level of state interaction. Even the aforementioned national interests are ultimately filtered through a state’s role identity. According to Friedrich Kratochwil, this approach obscures factors internal to the actor relative to the choice of social roles.¹⁵ Wendt subsequently takes for granted the origins of social systems because he does not problematize how ‘pre-social’ identities come about. “In short, what is at issue is not the existence of the ‘thing in itself’ but its recognition as ‘something’ which can only be established by bringing it under description.”¹⁶

Kratochwil is not alone in his criticism of Wendt’s “ontological priority of the state”. Brubaker and Cooper (2000) also express concern over the study of identity without an eye toward how identities are constructed at *any* level of analysis. ‘Identity’, they explain, is a

¹² Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1999), 146.

¹³ Wendt (1999), 186.

¹⁴ Wendt (1999), 234-5.

¹⁵ Friedrich Kratochwil, “Constructing a New Orthodoxy? Wendt’s ‘Social Theory of International Politics’ and the Constructivist Challenge,” *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 29: 1 (2000), 88-9.

¹⁶ Kratochwil, 96.

contrived concept that takes on a reality of its own once it is 'reified'.¹⁷ Therefore the causal significance of identity rests upon the processes and mechanisms that shape it and bring it into the individual or collective consciousness such that it is perceived as a legitimate basis for action. In their view, the constructivist research program should in turn focus on these processes and mechanisms. Zehfuss (2001) similarly observes that "how either the actors or ideas about self and other are constituted in the first place is not part of the account. This exclusion takes as given what are political constructions."¹⁸ As a result, Wendt turns a blind eye to internal processes, such as discursive mechanisms, which do the work of establishing and subsequently reinterpreting a state's identity even as interaction is well underway.¹⁹ Because overlooking these processes is essential to Wendt's theory, Zehfuss claims his brand of constructivism "does not work."²⁰

Without condemning the *Social Theory* entirely, Cederman and Daase (2003) draw attention to Wendt's treatment of corporate identities as given, 'pre-social entities' while offering an intriguing corrective. Too much is lost in Wendt's approach, they argue, because social roles reflect the internal processes that define corporate identities in addition to the interaction of the self with the other. In advocating greater attention to corporate identity construction, they draw upon Georg Simmel's sociational theory, which defines corporate and social identities as mutually generated and constructed while also prioritizing the processes behind the corporate identity because they 'condition the existence of the

¹⁷ Rogers Brubaker & Frederick Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity'," *Theory and Society* 29 (2000), 5.

¹⁸ Maja Zehfuss, "Constructivism and Identity: A Dangerous Liaison," *European Journal of International Relations* 7: 3 (2001), 327.

¹⁹ Zehfuss, 326.

²⁰ Zehfuss, 340.

individual in society’.²¹ Further, these processes are not presented as merely antecedent causes; rather, they develop, sustain and, thereby, influence the society of which the individual actor is a part. This not only adds necessary depth to the constructivist ontology while remaining consistent with the paradigm as it has unfolded, it also addresses perceived shortcomings in International Relations theory relative to “[tracing] the evolution of actors with any precision.”²² According to the authors, the sociational approach provides useful tools to explain stasis and change through its emphasis on internal processes and institutions.

Clearly, the common threads among these early responses involve the need to, on the one hand, loosen the restriction on the influence of a state’s corporate identity and, on the other, assign greater weight to internal processes of identity construction. As an indicator of the staying power of Wendt’s theory, or the broader weaknesses of the paradigm (perhaps, both?), the debate still persists. In a relatively recent contribution, Badredine Arfi (2010) echoes concerns over neglecting internal processes that mediate the internalization of role identities that result in a dominant culture which conditions behavior. Arfi characterizes Wendt’s approach to the internalization of cultures as ‘thin’.²³ Pre-social corporate identities are presented as essential to the development of role identities, yet they play no further part in shaping role identities even as, in the author’s view, a state’s corporate identity can be a force for stasis or change.

Accordingly, the demand for increased attention to internal processes of identity construction thrusts the door wide open to mechanisms like education. As will be explained

²¹ Lars-Erik Cederman & Christopher Daase, “Endogenizing Corporate Identities: the Next Step in Constructivist IR Theory,” *European Journal of International Relations* 9: 1 (2003), 11-12.

²² Cederman & Daase, 15.

²³ Badredine Arfi, “Fantasy in the discourse of ‘Social Theory of International Politics’,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 45: 4 (2010), 435.

in the following chapter, education would appear to be a particularly strong candidate for empirical research due to its capacity to influence both elites as well as the populace at large across cognitive and functional dimensions. Furthermore, education can be framed as a mediating process with the capacity to either sustain or alter identities. Taken together, I argue that education is a worthwhile, if not essential, complement to the paradigm because a ‘thicker’ version of constructivism would result.

To date, however, education has received limited attention among constructivists in part because they have struggled to assemble a research program driven by a coherent, commonly-accepted theory of identity. The resulting empirical work has suffered from a sort of “definitional anarchy”.²⁴ Those conscious of this criticism remain predominantly concerned with identity as a concept. In fact, there is a vibrant literature seeking to define identity in an operationally meaningful way. This, too, is a subject of criticism. Dessler and Owen (2005) observe that too often description drives constructivist research which, they claim, is unsatisfying because one is left to question whether anything is ever explained.²⁵ While Dessler and Owen appear willing to accept constructivist research that does not rely upon positivistic, if-then reasoning, they nevertheless plead for ideational explanation to be brought into constructivism’s search for understandings of world politics.

Meanwhile others have attempted to invest identity studies with greater positivistic rigor while orienting their efforts toward causation (Hopf, 2002; 2009; Checkel, 2001; 2006; 2009; Zehfuss, 2002). Though promising in their own right, these developments have nonetheless closed off other avenues of research through benign myopia. At worst, the

²⁴ Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, & Rose McDermott, “Identity as a Variable,” in *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*, Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston & McDermott, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2009), 18.

²⁵ David Dessler & John Owen, “Constructivism and the Problem of Explanation: a Review Article,” *Perspectives on Politics* 3: 3 (Sept. 2005), 598-9.

constitutive mechanisms behind identities, including the seeming relevance of education to identity construction, are relegated to the background; at best, they suffer from conceptual fuzziness. Consider the following.

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* is instructive in that it conceives of identities as organic and at times the product of willful design. He does touch upon education as a means toward identity construction, though consideration is limited to colonial policy and it lacks a clear place in the overarching narrative which focuses intently on language and print-capitalism. Nonetheless he explains how policymakers at the center conceived of education as a means to break down local identities in the periphery, substituting norms and ideas meant to strengthen ties to the metropole, while also providing colonial administrators with a structure for the proper training of local officials.²⁶

Peter Katzenstein's work is also informative. He has written extensively on German identity, drawing lines between changes in identity and changes in behavior in order to explain Germany's conciliatory stance toward Europe. In particular, Katzenstein considers the impact of European institutions upon German identity with a brief mention of education, though the mechanisms through which education affects identity remain unspecified and the footprint of education unmeasured.²⁷

Other authors have picked up on the linkage between identity and behavioral change but look instead to 'complex learning' and discursive processes to explain shifts in identity. Robert G. Herman, for example, argues that Soviet New Thinking, which contributed significantly to the end of the Cold War, was the result of a cognitive evolution whereby new

²⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 2006). See in particular Chapter 7, "The Last Wave," 113-140.

²⁷ Peter J. Katzenstein, "United Germany in an Integrating Europe," in *Tamed Power: Germany in Europe*, Peter J. Katzenstein, ed. (Ithaca: Cornell, 1997), 1-48.

ideas about Soviet priorities and preferences gradually emerged.²⁸ But his ‘crisis-to-contestation’ mechanism does not appear to fully appreciate the institutions constraining key actors as well as how institutions can play an important constitutive role. Similarly, Thomas U. Berger attributes identity change to new ideas and norms formed in the wake of historical experience which in turn leads to a shift in political culture and, therefore, behavior. Berger does afford a role to institutions, but this role is not constitutive. Institutions serve to reinforce identities and thus explain consistency in the face of changing conditions.²⁹ Taken together Herman and Berger offer valuable insight into identity formation and/or change, though they do short-shrift institutional structures like education which can be important and far-reaching.

More recent scholarship has acknowledged the impact of education on norms and identities, even if education is not a significant study variable in their respective work. To explain the ‘legalized’ approach to military intervention at The Hague (1907), Martha Finnemore partly ascribes normative change to a shift in the educational backgrounds of participants. More generally, she writes, “professional training does more than disseminate expertise and technical skill; it disseminates norms and values...Professional training socializes people to value certain courses of action and certain social goods over others.”³⁰ This view resonates with much of the literature on education and identity even though she does not systematically unpack education as a causal factor. Ted Hopf comes a bit closer in his study of identity and Soviet foreign policy. His treatment of the theoretical impact of

²⁸ Robert G. Herman, “Identity, Norms and National Security,” in *The Culture of National Security*, Peter J. Katzenstein, ed. (New York: Columbia University, 1996), 271-316.

²⁹ Thomas U. Berger, “Norms, Identity and National Security in Germany in Japan,” in *The Culture of National Security*, Peter J. Katzenstein, ed. (New York: Columbia University, 1996), 317-356.

³⁰ Martha Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs about the Use of Force* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2003), 42.

education is largely implicit; however, he does include textbooks as a measure of the ideational environment conditioning the Soviet identity. In light of a claim made at the outset such that “understandings of Self are constructed domestically out of the many identities that constitute the discursive formations that, in turn, make up the social cognitive structure of that society”, Hopf appears to group education among ‘discursive formations’ thereby assigning education a constitutive role.³¹ Education’s place in his theoretical framework is not terribly precise, but at least there is a limited attempt to operationalize education.

It is encouraging that the field is taking education more seriously. Early work on epistemic communities is important in that it invested value in, among other professional associations, education-based communities, but this scholarship tended to overlook the mechanisms that produced shared identities beyond interaction within professional circles.³² And while there is a body of analytical and theoretical literature on education and identity, the crossover from sociology and education studies to International Relations has been limited. A 2007 article in *International Organization* by Jens Hainmueller and Michael J. Hiscox makes some headway in filling the gap. Their findings indicate that individual attitudes toward immigration in Europe reflect one’s level of education, positing a transformative relationship between education and values.³³ While this supports the view that education can have a constitutive effect on identity (including norms, ideas and values), their data are

³¹ Ted Hopf, *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities & Foreign Policies, 1955 & 1999* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2002), 37.

³² Cf. Ernst B. Haas, *When Knowledge Is Power* (Berkeley: University of California, 1990), as well as Emanuel Adler & Peter M. Haas, “Conclusion: Epistemic Communities, World Order, and the Creation of a Reflective Research Program,” *International Organization*, Knowledge, Power and International Policy Coordination 46: 1 (Winter, 1992), 367-390.

³³ Jens Hainmueller & Michael J. Hiscox, “Educated Preferences: Explaining Attitudes Toward Immigration in Europe,” *International Organization* 61 (Spring 2007), 399-442.

largely correlative and they offer no insight into education as a mechanism for identity construction.³⁴ Given the nascent quality of these contributions there is certainly room in International Relations to expand upon education as a factor conditioning identity, especially considering the overt use of education by policymakers to construct identities – identities, for that matter, that seem designed to enable particular foreign policy agendas.

BEYOND IR: LEARNING FROM OTHER PARADIGMS

While education may be relatively unexplored in International Relations literature, other fields have developed a vibrant scholarship around questions pertaining to education and its role in constructing identities. This literature offers useful insights into education as well as other mechanisms, which informs our understanding of how education works, in addition to the relative significance of education under certain historical and political conditions. In this respect, the following review lays an important foundation for the detailed treatment of education reserved for the next chapter.

Max Weber casts a long shadow over contemporary sociology and is often the starting point for analyses of a broad spectrum of social phenomena, including education. He offers perhaps his most potent, if not his most frequently cited, commentary on the socio-political significance of education in the “Chinese Literati”. Here, Weber establishes a rather basic causal link between the social elite and education in China. Social rank depended upon qualification, which itself followed from education.³⁵ The ‘literati’ stood in the vanguard of social progress and the rational administration upon which progress depended.

³⁴ The same can be said about their 2006 article, “Learning to Love Globalization: Education and Individual Attitudes Toward International Trade,” *International Organization* 60 (Spring 2006), 469-498.

³⁵ Max Weber, “Chinese Literati,” in *Essays in Sociology* (New York: Books LLC, 2009), 416.

The literati were also promoters of cultural unity. Their legitimacy rested upon their education, which imparted mastery of language as conveyed through writing and literature. As a process, education relied upon the examination, and this opened up social rank to those of particular merit rather than ensuring a ‘closed estate’ of a fixed, noble class.³⁶ In this respect, education directed individuals to their social roles and conferred elite status.

Weber’s remarks on the Junkers reveal parallel themes. Education was a means to transmit a particular set of values; but it also served as a process of certification – a gate-keeping mechanism to differentiate among the classes.³⁷ Without a certain sort of education, one could not hope to lay claim to a position of power in the state. In this sense, education was also a force for continuity in German society, designed to ensure the continued prevalence of a particular leadership class. Weber also notes how the past (read: history) is interpreted for the sake of the ‘nation’, which is in itself a reflection of the interests of the elite. History is therefore communicated through education and literature, while validating the prevalence of the elite and locating the individual within the broader national-historical tapestry.³⁸

Weber identifies a typology of educational ends that transcends both cases.³⁹ First, education ‘awakens charisma’. It draws out the special abilities already within us. Second, education “impart[s] expert training.” Both ends, he continues, undergird respective ‘structures of domination’ (*herrschaft*).⁴⁰ The first corresponds to charismatic domination; the second to “rational and bureaucratic” domination, which he also characterizes as “modern”.

³⁶ M. Weber, 423.

³⁷ M. Weber, “National Character and the Junkers,” in *Essays in Sociology* (New York: Books LLC, 2009), 387-9.

³⁸ M. Weber, “National Character and the Junkers,” 393.

³⁹ M. Weber, “Chinese Literati,” 426.

⁴⁰ There is some disagreement about the proper translation of the term, *herrschaft*, as there is no true equivalent in English. ‘Structures of authority’ is another commonly found alternative. Cf. Vatro Murvar, “Some Reflections Weber’s Typology of Herrschaft,” *The Sociological Quarterly* 5: 4 (Autumn, 1964), 375.

Between these ends we find types which promote ethics (or, “conducts of life”) that correspond with one’s particular education. This ‘pedagogy of cultivation’ sees education as a means to civilize – “to educate a man for a certain internal and external deportment in life.”⁴¹ Ultimately, Weber frames education as a mechanism of social differentiation as well as a source of social and political power. The holder of a degree was believed to possess special, almost magical abilities, including a mastery of language and literature – the vessels of culture and the assets of a ‘cultivated man’. Perhaps more importantly, one gained access to the ruling and administrative classes through education. Schooling ensured that, on the one hand, those without means but possessing talent would ascend into the élite with the necessary cognitive and functional training; meanwhile, on the other, those of means and culture would find their interest in politics awoken in the classroom.

The linkage between power and education has endured in the sociology of education, which will be discussed in the following chapter, and has likewise animated a wave of social criticism, including Antonio Gramsci, C. Wright Mills, and Michel Foucault. Gramsci, for example, questions the democratizing function of education, arguing instead that education is, at best, a force for socio-economic replication.⁴² Similarly, C. Wright Mills explains how education serves to pass along important social values, forge associations, and generally bar entry to those deemed unworthy. In his words, “the private school is a unifying influence, a force for the nationalization of the upper class...The school is – rather than the upper-class family – is the most important agency for transmitting the traditions of the upper social classes, and regulating the admission of new wealth and talent.”⁴³ Meanwhile, Foucault traces

⁴¹ M. Weber, 427.

⁴² Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Quintin Hoare & Geoffrey Nowel Smith, eds. and transl. (New York: International Publishers, 2003), 40. See in particular, Chapter 2, “On Education,” 24-43.

⁴³ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), 64-65.

the modern role of the school to the demands of the industrial economy and social pressures related to it. The shift from negative to positive disciplinary techniques as a means to manage socio-economic change invests the school with the capacity to augment the individual and, through training, correct for socio-economic dislocation.⁴⁴ The school fits within a broader network of power systems designed to make the individual a productive contributor to society. This role, he explains, is fundamentally economic, as is much of the basis of knowledge and representation upon which school curricula rests.⁴⁵ Taken together, these authors lend force to Weber's conclusions and help to demonstrate the relevance of his arguments about education to other thinkers, namely Karl Marx. And despite their nuances, Gramsci, C. Wright Mills and Foucault agree that schools shape identities mainly with an eye toward the function of the individual within society. Furthermore, this function entails significant economic repercussions and reflects the interests of powerful socio-economic actors.

Weber's contemporary, Emile Durkheim, produced a longitudinal survey of education in France notable for its breadth but also instructive for his conclusions about the functional and cognitive role of education in shaping the citizenry according to the broader aims of the state. Durkheim charts the broad movements in the content and structure of French education alongside its part in shaping French society through the promotion of certain habits and beliefs. Of particular note are observations regarding the secularization of French education during the Revolution of 1789, and the use of education as a mechanism for the inculcation of patriotic values and the rationalization of society. To the

⁴⁴ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995), Part 3.2. Cf. Roger Deacon (2006), "Michel Foucault on education: a preliminary theoretical overview," *South African Journal of Education* 26: 2, 177-187.

⁴⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage, 1994). See, in particular, Part 1.5 and Part 2.9 and 2.10.

revolutionaries, education was a means to promote a national consciousness and an ethic of obligation vis-à-vis the state. Durkheim observes that education ‘worked’ through the study of language (including grammar), history, and law (which helped the student conceive of humanity in the abstract in addition to one’s place in humanity’s evolution).⁴⁶ Similarly, with the well-being of the state and society in mind, education served a functional role by, to paraphrase Tallyrand, ‘placing people in their rightful situation’.⁴⁷ By professionalizing education, French authorities could train the student to be socially useful and perform his or her social function.⁴⁸ In this way, education became a means to overturn old, useless socio-economic stratifications.

Eugen Weber’s *Peasants into Frenchmen* carries Durkheim’s study forward while widening the lens to capture the array of factors impacting the rural citizenry in 19th century France. And though he seems primarily interested in *why* school became important, he does offer a somewhat muted consideration of *how* education made its mark. Broadly speaking, Weber identifies two pathways: ideational (or, cognitive), and functional. The cognitive dimension involves the endeavor to reshape the mind of the peasant and, effectively, elevate them from their perceived savagery so that they would behave in ways conducive to mid-to-late 19th century realities.⁴⁹ French authorities charged the expansion of village schools with the “ultimate acculturation process that made the French people French.”⁵⁰ The chief function of school was to civilize; and the goal of education was to eradicate ‘provincialism’

⁴⁶ Emile Durkheim, *Selected Writings on Education*, Vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 2006), 298-299.

⁴⁷ Durkheim, 290.

⁴⁸ Durkheim, 295.

⁴⁹ The tension between the cultured, Parisian elite and the rural peasant has deep roots. French morality and politeness were the marks of civilization and progress; without them, one was little more than a savage. This condescension is the same that inspired Rousseau to rail against French society most vitriolically in his *Discourse on the Moral Effects of the Arts and Sciences* (1750).

⁵⁰ Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Palo Alto: Stanford University, 1976), 303.

while preaching an ethic of patriotic unity.⁵¹ Schools became vessels of a sort of ‘national pedagogy’ centered on language, history and geography. The former was particularly significant because of the dominance of local and regional dialects such that Parisian French was all too frequently unknown to the rural peasantry – adults and children, alike.⁵² History and geography were significant for their part in constructing an idea of France as an historical and physical entity. Classroom maps provided visual representations of *la patrie*; and stories of past glories were to inspire a sense of civic duty and a desire to defend France. Victor Hugo, Paul Déroulède and Giordano Bruno (née Augustine Fouillée) were staples of the curriculum. According to Weber, “School was a great socializing agent...it had to teach children national and patriotic sentiments, explain what the state did for them and why it extracted taxes and military service, and show them their true interest in the fatherland.”⁵³

The functional pathway touches on the impact of schools on the largely economic roles people played in French society. Ideally speaking, in rural communities, schools served to open up new opportunities to children who would have otherwise spent their lives doing the same things as their parents and grandparents. In practice, this worked differently in that children were frequently held out in order to maintain their contribution to the household income.⁵⁴ Nevertheless the notion that schools could alter one’s functional value was held by policymakers spearheading reforms to make schooling compulsory and free in rural villages. Weber notes a greater impact on the urban poor, who faced different incentives relative to attendance. The skills acquired through schooling were more easily translated into real gains

⁵¹ E. Weber, 332-336.

⁵² E. Weber, 310.

⁵³ E. Weber, 332.

⁵⁴ E. Weber, 321-326.

in the city setting, which, during the most fervent era of education reform in France, had already become the epicenter of the industrial revolution.

It is also worth observing that Weber hints at linkages between the increasing demands of empire, particularly from the administrative side, and the push to open up functional opportunities to the lower working and peasant classes. Managing the French empire increased the strain on personnel manning state offices and bureaucracies. Heretofore, functionaries were in the main drawn from the upper classes; education could in turn serve as a mechanism to funnel deserving members of the lower classes into these roles. In this way the expansion of the French empire and the heightened economic and strategic competitiveness of the late 19th century made education all the more valuable as a means to generate human capital.⁵⁵

Across these authors, important themes stand out. Namely, education works along two primary pathways. The first is functional; the second is cognitive. Education as a mode of training helps guide people into functional roles – roles that entail certain standards of appropriateness. In assuming these roles, individuals take on a way of being that also defines their relationship with society. The cognitive pathway involves ideas about the world and one's place within it. This includes understandings, for example, of what it means to be French or a good citizen. While the two pathways certainly overlap, the functional pathway mainly involves cultivating what we do while the cognitive pathway pertains to shaping what we think. In this frame, the cognitive can actually cut across the functional pathway.

⁵⁵ E. Weber, 328. By the 1880s, education was tied closely to one's role as both a citizen and a soldier. Education and military service were enjoined: good students make good soldiers. In this important respect, when we note the linkage between education and human capital, we must enlarge the concept to include military service in addition to possible employment in the state administrative units at home or abroad.

A body of recent scholarship elaborates upon this conceptual foundation. Though in each instance, as I will discuss, they are somewhat limited in the treatment of education as a mechanism, this work is useful nevertheless for its added insights and the positivist application of core understandings of the linkages between education and identity. Stephen Harp's focused study of primary schooling in Alsace-Lorraine from 1850-1940, is quite interesting in this regard. He draws heavily upon Benedict Anderson's notion of 'imagined community' while elaborating on *how* these communities are constructed through schooling. Harp rightly qualifies the case as "unique" because of the varying control over the region during the time period, which in turn created competing influences and demands for loyalty.⁵⁶

The book has two aims. First, Harp seeks to reveal the taken-for-granted similarities between French and German education policies in the region. Second, he hopes to demonstrate that education policies themselves indicate dominant, shared perceptions that those living in the region actually required either Francisation or Germanification *and* that education could do the work. His evidence of a causal link between education and a national identity is mixed. While he successfully establishes that policymakers in France and Germany looked to education as a means to construct a national consciousness in the conquered and re-conquered territory, he does not wholly credit schools with achieving regionally-defined identities.⁵⁷ Furthermore, he concludes that the efficacy of education is confounded by an array of factors, including demographic changes, economic contact, transportation, emerging mass communication, and geographical mobility.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Stephen L. Harp, *Learning To Be Loyal: Primary Schooling as Nation Building in Alsace and Lorraine, 1850-1940* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, 1998), 4.

⁵⁷ Harp, 17.

⁵⁸ Harp, 154.

Though Harp is unable to proffer conclusive causal evidence, a tall order by his own admission, he does provide important insights into how policymakers sought to deploy education and the sort of tools at their disposal. Education was perceived to be an ideal mechanism by which one could secure loyalty particularly in a region where hearts and minds were contested. According to Harp, “the primary school was the only state-sponsored institution that could touch the daily lives of virtually all future citizens, female as well as male.”⁵⁹ Through instruction in language, culture, history and geography, policymakers sought to cultivate national allegiance. Of these, history and geography were particularly important “content vessels” relative to the transmission of ideas about national identity.⁶⁰ This corresponds with Eugen Weber’s observations about French education during this era in that both a curriculum’s content as well as the mode of conveyance mattered to the construction of identities. We will certainly refer back to this at a later point.

David McLean’s *Education and Empire: Naval Tradition and England’s Elite Schooling* would appear particularly germane, and McLean does identify important socio-economic factors behind the transformation of schooling in England in the early-to-mid 19th century. At the time, according to McLean, social attitudes toward education changed alongside a greater appreciation for the role of legislation in the improvement of society, which subsequently afforded the opportunity for the state to play a larger role in the provision of education.⁶¹ Education became a nearly universal concern – a public good in high demand – because it was increasingly viewed as a mechanism for shaping the behavior of citizens

⁵⁹ Harp, 8.

⁶⁰ Harp, 155.

⁶¹ David McLean, *Education and Empire: Naval Traditions and England’s Elite Schooling* (London: British Academic Press, 1999), 19.

(children-into-adults) rather than simply as an end in itself. This mindset, for example, valued learning to read because it facilitates noble character.

McLean attempts to trace the impact of broader changes in social attitudes on educational practice in England through a case study involving the Greenwich school, a charitable institution run by the Royal Navy founded in part due to concerns over the recruitment of its officers. Regrettably, his efforts seem to best reveal the petty disputes and machinations of competing, cartoonish personalities over the history of the Greenwich school during a haphazard period of transition. While McLean does provide occasional insight into the struggle for supremacy among larger educational philosophies, the melodrama moves forward due to the private concerns of headmasters and inspectors. It is, however, worth recording the tensions between secular and religious authorities which appear to ebb in England at mid-century. Similarly, we may observe the crisis, mild as it may have been, of liberal educational philosophy which promises the moral elevation of society through an enlightened education without regard to the particular interests of the state that oversees its provision.

Lurking in the background of his analysis are socio-economic tensions brought on by the industrial revolution as well as competitive pressures associated with imperialism. Eventually McLean describes how, nestled amongst reforms at Greenwich, lesson plans included instruction, in the words of one of the newly-installed masters, of the “causes which render us a great maritime and commercial nation” in addition to “the invincible courage which has raised us to the rank of *first* in the scale of nations.”⁶² McLean, however, does not provide insight into the motivation behind this curricular objective, and this is

⁶² McLean, 141.

emblematic of a shortcoming that pervades his study. The depth of analysis linking education to empire is simply not there, aside from a single reference and the broader assertion – largely implicit – that the reforms at the Greenwich school would somehow benefit the Navy in its greater imperial mission. In truth, one could also simply associate reforms with the school’s charitable mission such that the linkage to empire falls out entirely for the sake of the well-being of society in general. It is evident that McLean presents education as a mechanism of identity construction, but the objectives guiding its use and the tools that constitute it remain ambiguous.

Peter Utgaard’s treatment of postwar Austria is a fine example of literature that unpacks the linkages between education and national identity. His is a very interesting case. As the author describes, Austria lacked a distinct identity after the Second World War, which made identity construction particularly acute. He writes, “a new Austria had to be invented, and a sense of identity had to be built out of whatever remains of the past were still useful in combination with new ideas.”⁶³ In turn, the provisional government propagated the ‘victim myth’ in order to make sense of Austria’s recent history as well as to bolster the legitimacy of the Second Republic. Schools figured prominently into their strategy: “the school is where the impressionable young – the future of the nation – learn the national history, the national literature, and civic values.”⁶⁴

In the course of the book, Utgaard considers history textbooks and readers in order to lay bare dominant themes pertaining to Austria’s postwar identity. The interludes of song, verse and narrative are informative, but ultimately little attention is paid to the political genesis of those themes, and the educational structures are not problematized as in Harp’s

⁶³ Peter Utgaard, *Remembering and Forgetting Nazism: Education, National Identity and the Victim Myth in Postwar Austria* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003), 25.

⁶⁴ Utgaard, 4.

study of Alsace-Lorraine. The extraction and survey of identity themes in textbooks and readers appears instead to be his sole objective. This is certainly worthwhile because of how textbooks may frame historical events, great works of literature, or cultural values of a more general sort. People and events may be elevated from mere footnotes and asterisks to iconic symbols through the textbook. In this way textbooks become interpreters of memories.

Utgaard's mention of the sole authored textbook on WWII is a terrific example, where the *Anschluss* is characterized as an "occupation" and Austria's involvement in the war as "forced participation".⁶⁵ The authors of the textbook chose not to abscond with history but rather to dress it up in finer clothes appropriate to the postwar goals of the Second Republic. This lesson is felt in three respects. First, textbooks are an important mode of conveyance for ideas, norms and beliefs integral to a particular identity. Second, textbooks can be a valuable window to thematic priorities, both of the author and of policymakers. Third, any study on education as a mechanism of identity construction must not only look to particular subjects – e.g. history, geography – but the textbooks pertaining to these subjects.

Ting-Hong Wong and Michael Apple advance the question further with their study of education and state formation in post-WWII Singapore. They criticize existing literature for treating education strictly as a dependent variable and failing to problematize the pedagogical dimension.⁶⁶ Their approach instead characterizes schools as "mediating"

⁶⁵ Utgaard, 53.

⁶⁶ Ting-Hong Wong & Michael Apple, "Rethinking the Education/State Formation Connection: Pedagogic Reform in Singapore, 1945-1965," *Comparative Education Review* 46: 2 (2002), 182-184. For example, see James van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1988). Van Horn Melton does present compelling cases: the expansion of education by absolutist regimes appears on its face to be counter-intuitive. His claim, therefore, involves explaining how compulsory schooling evolved in ostensibly hostile conditions, locating schooling squarely as the dependent variable. For the sake of argument, Van Horn Melton explains, "Although standing armies provided eighteenth-century rulers with an important coercive weapon, however, more positive instruments of control became increasingly necessary. As the scope of state authority steadily expanded in the eighteenth century, and as changes in social, economic, and cultural life eroded existing relationships of authority,

influences on state formation.⁶⁷ Furthermore, they assume that schools are used to advance the ideological agendas of dominant groups.⁶⁸ Their contribution involves how the interests of the dominant group are translated into pedagogy and whether this pedagogy is effective. Drawing from Basil Bernstein, Wong and Apple argue that there are two layers to consider.⁶⁹ First is the ‘official recontextualizing field’ (ORF) which, for example, captures a textbook prior to being taught – simply, the words on the page. Second, there is the ‘pedagogic recontextualizing field’ (PRF), which involves a nonofficial discourse, such as how the textbooks are taught in practice. The two should not be collapsed into a single process as the PRF may distort what was intended by the ORF. Using an ideal type case where pedagogy is contested, the authors describe how social and ethnic groups may disrupt the transfer by, for example, refusing to teach the text because of disputes over its content. They also explore instances where authorities tried to ‘limit the autonomy of the PRF’, such as an instance where British authorities contractually obligated a publisher to follow the government’s instructions to the letter when compiling textbooks.⁷⁰

absolutist reformers and officials became more convinced that the efficacious exercise of authority depended on freely rendered rather than coerced obedience” (xxi). We should be careful not to completely condemn Van Horn Melton’s work as uninteresting. He appears less concerned in explaining how education works than he is in explaining why it was even relied upon in the first place. Considering the nature of his cases, the puzzle alone is worthwhile. As Wong and Apple would have us better appreciate how education functions in a mediating role, Van Horn Melton is understandably unsatisfying; but we should nevertheless appreciate that this question is outside the scope of Van Horn Melton’s thesis.

⁶⁷ State formation, as they define it, relates closely to my interests in identity construction. They rely upon Andy Green’s formulation, which they paraphrase: “state formation is the historical trajectory through which the ruling power struggles to build a local identity, amend or preempt social fragmentation, and win support from the ruled” (Wong & Apple, 184). See also, Andy Green, *Education and State Formation* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1990).

⁶⁸ Wong & Apple, 185. This is in itself is not terribly controversial considering its pedigree: cf. Weber’s “Chinese Literati”, cf. footnote 27; John W. Meyer, David H. Kamens, and Aaron Benavot, eds., *School Knowledge for the Masses* (London: Falmer, 1992); and Jerrome Karabel and A.H. Halsey, *Power and Ideology in Education* (New York: Oxford University, 1977). The assumption, however, is not essential to the claim that the school is a mediating institution unless one is trying to actually test for the influence of dominant groups on the popular identity, or state formation as it were.

⁶⁹ Wong & Apple, 184-187.

⁷⁰ Wong & Apple, 192.

Wong and Apple nicely apply Bernstein's argument about pedagogy: 'pedagogic discourse' matters because it takes 'primary contexts' and then 'relocates' and 'refocuses' them with a secondary context, which creates a pedagogic text. Essentially, schools take ideas and information and infuse them with particular meanings. This highlights the cognitive role that education can play in identity construction. The authors do not evaluate or measure state formation in Singapore. Instead, they appear to implicitly argue that if pedagogic devices are corrupted along the way, then schooling's impact on state formation cannot be as intended. State formation cannot be inferred from the intentions of the policymakers alone. Their primary argument involves how we understand the role of schools as policy tools. We should care about how curricula are actually translated into the classroom or even in the publishing stages of textbooks. Extra-classroom actors are also influential, such as the parents of a student or a larger ethnic group to which the student belongs. At a minimum, we should not simply assume that what is decreed by the state will be absolutely and without difference translated into the minds of the students. According to their conclusions, "schooling and the struggles over it lose their dependent character and take their place as an active site and as a distinctive moment of determination within the social formation. Recognition of this is central to the development of critically oriented approaches to the role that education has played and can play in societies structured around relations of differential power."⁷¹ Where identities are contested, pedagogies cannot be oversimplified.

Thus far, we have considered scholarship tightly framed around education. Literature involving identity construction is likewise valuable for its insights into constitutive mechanisms. It is worthwhile to observe how other paradigms regard education, even if

⁷¹ Wong & Apple, 210.

education itself is not the central focus, because we may discover opportunities to add to their research or push forward with acknowledged concepts that have yet to be explored. Of perhaps equal importance, we may better understand education's place within a complex array of social mechanisms, informing our expectations about education's influence upon identity and empire.

Krishan Kumar's *The Making of English National Identity* is primarily concerned with understanding the origins and particular character of English national identity. He claims that English national identity emerged in association with an imperialist, messianic mission as early as the construction of the first 'English empire' through the subjugation of the Welsh, Irish, and, episodically, the Scots.⁷² His method involves tracing the use of the word 'English' through the lexicon and to employ the meaning of its use as an indicator of reflexive understandings of what it is to actually be English. Through its use, meaning is conveyed and contested, at times achieving a taken-for-grantedness and, at others, raising serious questions about what the word means in its current or historical contexts. In this respect, Kumar spans historical-cultural scholarship – which traces identities and ideas as populating the popular cultural milieu – and linguistic-social constructivists (e.g. Searle), who observe if not criticize the power of language over the reflexive understandings of its users.

In his treatment, we may identify a few mechanisms which Kumar credits with the development of the English national identity. First, Kumar observes that religious institutions (e.g. the Papacy, the Church of England) played an important part because of an ability to name followers, preach to them, and thereby reinforce their status as a particular group in need of salvation. Through this naming and grouping, identities could coalesce; and

⁷² Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2003), xi.

the content of religious messages served to provide standards of appropriateness. Second, the throne served a similar function as the church in terms of naming and status-creation from ruled-to-ruler. Additionally, the throne was a symbol shared by a group of observers around which they may form and reinforce a sense of ‘we-ness’. Third, the historian imparts labels and even invests – daresay, invents – a set of ideas enjoined to this label which may take on a life of its own in subsequent generations who internalize this historical identity and fold it into their memory such that it shapes behavior. Fourth, and closely related to the task of the historian, are shared memories. Historical events, such as conquest and war, can provide a common, Archimedean point to which groups may fix their reflexive understandings of self and other. Fifth, the consolidation and use of a common language, both in written and spoken form, can play a crucial role in casting ties between people by giving them a means to communicate and form relationships.

These mechanisms are in some instances quite particular to the English case. This does not prevent us, however, from abstracting to identify important characteristics, such as the ‘bonding agency’ shared by the throne and the church. It is also worthwhile to note once again the significance of history, language and literature to the enterprise of identity construction. This helps to elucidate how these objects are conveyed to the people whose identities are shaped by them. The central part that schools play as conduits of historical, lingual and literary consciousness would in theory qualify education as a critical mechanism alongside the throne or the church.⁷³ Expanding our understanding of how education works in such a fashion would nicely complement cultural studies of identity.

⁷³ Kumar does in fact acknowledge a role for schools to shape identity. When discussing the rise of the ‘new history’ in mid-to-late 19th century England – a school of thought that sought to recast England’s history in more patriotic and nationalist tones – he asserts that “the new historical consciousness had to be

There is a similar opportunity amidst the literature on memory which, like Kumar's treatment of English identity, rests heavily on history as the foundation for individual and collective identities. This line of scholarship holds that memories of the past can influence individual and collective behavior by shaping understandings of the world and one's place within it. As Alon Confino asserts, "the notion of collective memory is interesting and useful in that it tells us not only about how the past is represented in a single museum or commemoration but about the role of the past in the life of a social group."⁷⁴ That identities influence behavior is a common claim; the novelty of their project is the pivotal part played by memory as a "sociocultural mode of action."⁷⁵

Our interests in this literature lay in the means by which memories are created and conveyed. Confino's study of the *Heimat* idea in modern Germany reveals a number of sources of memory as well as, in his words, "vehicles" by which memories are communicated and proliferated.⁷⁶ Regarding the former, Confino notes the importance of shared experience to the formation of collective identities. Memories of, for example, the Wars of German Unification were quite important to the post-1871 German identity. He also indicates that changes in governing structures can influence memory selection and not simply as a locus for policymaking but also as a symbol of civic culture.⁷⁷ The growth of the German state in the 1880s served to leverage away control over 'provincial life'; meanwhile, the rise of new social groups (e.g. the middle class) created new political interests. Economic progress was another force behind memory selection because it "elevated a new group of

communicated by a distinct pedagogy in the schools and universities if it were to have its desired effect on national identity" (Kumar, 222).

⁷⁴ Alon Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2006), 31.

⁷⁵ Confino, 32.

⁷⁶ Confino, 36.

⁷⁷ Confino, 33.

merchants, businessmen, and industrialists who had a modern idea, determined by commercial considerations, about the role of the past in the growing public realm.”⁷⁸ Last, new modes of communication increased the visibility of certain images and enhanced the ‘collective’ of the collective experience. “The public representation of the nation, once a territory reserved for the scholarly elite, was now popularized, appropriated, simplified, and packaged for mass consumption.”⁷⁹ This was achieved, in particular, through lectures, newspaper inserts, popular publications, school activities and museums.

There is some need for further specification about the connections between these forces and memory selection. The shift in the locus of civic life from the village to the state coupled with the rise of the middle class (and associated political interests) purportedly increased the audience for the Heimat idea and societies formed around the Heimat. Confino is somewhat vague, however, about *how* these changes are necessarily linked. Similarly, the lines drawn between economic change, new economic actors, and shifting ideas about the past require further elaboration. Nevertheless, Confino’s work emphasizes the transformative effect of big – one might even say world historical or structural – changes on popular identities; he also addresses the need to understand the modes by which these changes are interpreted and transmitted.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Confino, 37.

⁷⁹ Confino, 37.

⁸⁰ Confino admits that memory scholarship is changing by moving away from mere attention to how images, symbols and ideas are represented to how they shape behavior, including the mechanisms that convey these images, symbols and ideas (see Confino & Peter Fritzsche, *The Work of Memory*, 7). Earlier work on memory spent a great deal of time investigating the content of the popular discourse in the hope of better understanding how the past is captured by memory. Paul Fussell’s seminal work, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2000), is a case in point. Fussell goes to great lengths to show how the First World War came to be represented in literature as ironic. Effectively, the experience of the War challenged understandings of national identity, and the memory of the war shaped postwar culture and set about remaking the national identity. While he concedes that education helps to channel literature to young minds (157), there is no real exploration of this role. The focus remains squarely upon the canon of prose and poetry that emerged from the

Among ‘vehicles of memory’, Confino lists a number of associations and societies active in Germany that promoted the Heimat idea. Some involved regional and aesthetic (read: beautification) concerns, and others emerged from shared interests in history. This link between identity construction and associations is seen elsewhere, such as Hugh Trevor-Roper’s emphasis on the Highland Society in his treatment of Highland Scottish culture in the 18th century.⁸¹ It would appear that the prime functions of an association are to provide a focal point for shared interests, consolidate understandings of the past, and coordinate action corresponding with these interests and understandings. We need not imagine these functions as exclusive to associations, however. Schools and universities, for example, could perform similarly.

In a later work, Confino and Peter Fritzsche elaborate on the role of institutions as shapers of collective memory. They write, “Institutions give memory a structure and an organization that is decisive for its reception...Study of the history of how institutions construct memories and narratives can be useful to illuminate how memory is linked to a social order and social relations, and how institutions use memory to attain power.”⁸² While Max Weber clearly resonates in this formulation, the broadening out from associations to institutions invests value in research involving other ‘vehicles of memory’. Though memory studies tend to privilege cultural media, museums and monuments, there is some varying if not muted awareness of the role of education as a mode of conveyance for memory by

pens of Chapman, Graves and Owen, among others. This is not to say that this literature is uninformative, but it does lack a systematic treatment of other mechanisms.

⁸¹ Hugh Trevor-Roper, “The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland,” in *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm & Terence Ranger, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1983), 15-42.

⁸² Alon Confino & Peter Fritzsche, “Introduction: Noises of the Past,” in *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2002), 7.

proliferating images, histories and literature, in addition to serving as a bridge between the interests of the state and the people.

Eric Hobsbawm's work on invented traditions mirrors scholarship on memory in a number of important respects. Like memory, traditions rely upon the past to invest legitimacy in practices (rule-driven as well as ritualistic and symbolic) designed to "inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition."⁸³ Specifically referring to the post-industrial revolution 19th century, these values and norms helped to sustain relationships within groups and communities; they established and legitimized institutions and authority relationships; and they aimed at harmonizing value systems and behavioral conventions.⁸⁴ Additionally, echoing memory, traditions must work their way into the popular mind in order to impact behavior, which necessitates consideration of the processes that make this happen.

Hobsbawm highlights three mechanisms that are "particularly relevant" to the invention of tradition in Europe from 1870-1914: public ceremony, mass production of public monuments, and education, which he labels the "secular equivalent of the church."⁸⁵ German schools, for example, brought together public ceremony centered on the emperor with the study of history and literature; meanwhile, British schools intersected with the sporting tradition, which served to bolster a vision of English superiority and gentlemanliness.⁸⁶ Otherwise, the treatment of education is regrettably brief.

⁸³ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Invented Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992), 1.

⁸⁴ Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Invented Traditions," 9. Cf. Terence Ranger, "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa," in the same volume, 211-212.

⁸⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992), 271.

⁸⁶ Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions," 277-293.

Ceremony and education receive especial notice for their role in the periphery of the British Empire. Bernard Cohn describes how, during the 1870s, British authorities resorted to pageantry as well as the bestowal of titles and arms in order to foster belief in a common Anglo-Indian tradition. The clear intent was to ensure the loyalty of the Indian ruling class while simultaneously paving the way for Victoria's assumption of her title as Empress of India – itself wrapped in ceremony designed to visually assert her 'rightful' claim and authority.⁸⁷ Meanwhile, Terence Ranger explains how the establishment of schools in some settler communities in Africa helped to instill traditions that "validated the British governing class".⁸⁸ Furthermore, in the late 19th century, it was hoped that, through the extension of education in the colonies, even at the elementary school level, "some Africans might be turned into governors by exposure to British neo-traditions."⁸⁹ Ranger does acknowledge the value of ceremony alongside other mechanisms like churches, clubs and societies, but the attention to education is promising particularly because of its perceived value in governing imperial possessions by spreading European traditions and thereby cultivating identities meant to validate imperial rule. This reminds us that education was a mechanism not exclusively employed in the metropole; its influence was felt in the periphery as well.

Constructing mechanisms through 'spectacle' aligns with recent work by Cristina della Coletta, who presents a rather appealing claim about the significance of World's Fairs to Italian identity construction in the 19th and early 20th centuries. World's Fairs and smaller exhibitions enabled the controlled exposure to ideas and images bound up in displays of the

⁸⁷ Bernard Cohn, "Representing Authority in Victorian India," in *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992), 165-209. For a treatment of education in India under the British colonial regime, see Sanjay Seth, *Subject Lessons: The Western Education of Colonial India* (Durham: Duke University, 2007).

⁸⁸ Ranger, 217.

⁸⁹ Ranger, 221. Cf. Apollos O. Nwauwa, "African Initiatives for a West African University and their Frustration, 1862-90," in *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and the University Education for Africans, 1860-1960* (London: Frank Cass, 1996), 1-33.

latest technology, art, architecture, science – the trappings of modernity and civilization. And, following the 1867 Paris Exhibition, where exhibits were classified by country of origin, these displays carried a distinctly national significance while trumpeting broader themes of Western cultural and technological superiority.⁹⁰ The Fairs were spectacles meant to impress upon the observer a sense of awe and majesty and enable interaction with a world that the average individual might never know firsthand. Beyond this immediate effect, Fairs benefited identity construction by leaving a legacy of music, art, publications, literature, museums and architecture in their wake. In some instances we might expect this legacy to be closely tied to the exhibition itself (e.g. the Eiffel Tower), but, in others, it can take on a broader meaning inspired by but not limited to the exhibition, both intended and unintended. Regrettably, this points toward an obstacle to deploying World's Fairs as explanatory mechanisms behind identities. World's Fairs are bounded, which enables only limited direct exposure. And though, as Peter Hoffenberg argues, they may leave behind tangible 'monuments' which extend the shadow of exhibitions,⁹¹ it is reasonable to expect that the meaning associated with them would become swept up in the broader currents of memory and subject to reinterpretation. Yet, we should not be too quick to dismiss World's Fairs for their contributions to popular identities. Both della Coletta and Hoffenberg observe that, as the 19th century progressed, exhibitions became increasingly political and prized for the opportunities they afforded to project power and prestige to observers at home and abroad. In addition to the cost and time involved, this indicates that organizers perceived real value in producing the exhibitions even if, from our vantage point, we might

⁹⁰ Cristina della Coletta, *World's Fairs Italian Style: The Great Exhibitions in Turin and Their Narratives, 1860-1915* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2006), 44-5.

⁹¹ Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001), 12-3.

question the potential of a lasting effect. It would appear that World's Fairs should be added to our proverbial toolkit involving mechanisms behind popular national and imperial identities in the late 19th century.

Edward Said provides an interesting twist to the constitutive forces behind identity in *Culture and Imperialism*. Like Paul Fussell, Said privileges literature but less as a representation of memory.⁹² Instead, a society's cultural *zeitgeist* manifests in literature and, by tracing themes among influential works, we may better understand the popular mind. This is, however, a departure from other works that link literature, culture and empire. He criticizes authors like Martin Burgess Green (*Dreams of Adventure and Deeds of Empire*), Molly Mahood (*Colonial Encounter: A Reading of Six Novels*), John McClure (*Kipling and Conrad: The Colonial Fiction*), and Patrick Brantlinger (*Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914*) for being too descriptive and even normatively biased.⁹³ The task, Said argues, is to appreciate the literature in its time and see it as a manifestation of and contributor to cultural thinking about empire. Reflecting on literature in the mid-to-late 19th century, he writes, "Without empire, I would go so far as saying, there is no European novel as we know it, and indeed if we study the impulses giving rise to it, we shall see the far from accidental convergence between the patterns of narrative authority constitutive of the novel, on the one hand, and, on the other, a complex ideological configuration underlying the tendency to imperialism."⁹⁴ Though imprecise, Said's claim is nonetheless compelling. If we accept that literature and the 'imperial disposition' were mutually constitutive and put aside the need for an origin story to set this relationship in motion, then literature becomes a mechanism for

⁹² Cf. footnote 80.

⁹³ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1993), 64.

⁹⁴ Said, 69-70.

identity construction worthy of study and significant for its influence over the exercise of power in addition to the support of the people for the imperial cause.

Education plays little part in his treatment. Schools, he acknowledges, heavily influenced the ‘science’ of empire – the sociological, philological, and racial theories that often trumpeted the natural superiority of Europeans over non-Europeans – and therefore represent one of the prongs of the “disciplines of representation.”⁹⁵ Beyond this, the heavy lifting of his analysis is done by careful exploration of major literary works like Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim*. If we return to the idea of education as a mode of conveyance, however, a different sort of relationship between schools, culture and imperialism can easily be imagined. Education would represent a means by which one places this literature into the hands of the youth and sanctions it as something that should be read. This would add force to fantasy by making the novel something to be emulated in real life, amplifying (if not clarifying?) the causal link that Said believes exists between literature and imperialism.

Nation-building and identity construction are closely linked, conceptually. Both Emile Durkheim and Eugen Weber, for example, consider the two aims to be essentially interchangeable. It is therefore consistent with our efforts here to look more closely at literature involving nationalism in order to observe if education is accorded a constitutive role.

Ernest Gellner’s oft-cited work, *Nations and Nationalism*, affords special attention to education as a mode of social reproduction vital to modern society.⁹⁶ Gellner’s thesis holds that the industrial age has promoted a high degree of specialization, which in turn requires

⁹⁵ Said, 99.

⁹⁶ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2006), 28.

training thereby creating a central place for education. Knowledge can no longer be transmitted informally; instead, it must be certified. The importance of education magnifies in the nationalist age where the state, under threat from industrialism, seeks to reassert control through the proliferation of high culture. This enables the state to arrange its component parts to ensure prosperity. Without centralized education, this would be impossible; and in this way schools become mechanisms of social order more important than the state's monopoly of legitimate violence.⁹⁷ He writes, "Men acquire skills and sensibilities which make them acceptable to their fellows, which fit them to assume places in society, and which make them 'what they are', by being handed over by their kin groups...to an educational machine which alone is capable of providing the wide range of training required for the generic cultural base."⁹⁸ Education is central to the state's ability to intervene at the local and even household level, which is necessitated by the inability of the locality or the household to function in the industrial age without the state. The emergence of the nation serves to amplify the importance of the state because the state "inevitably is charged with the maintenance and supervision of an enormous social infrastructure...The educational system becomes a very crucial part of it, and the maintenance of the cultural/linguistic medium now becomes the central role of education."⁹⁹

Other studies of the growth of nationalist identities highlight education without offering criticism. Michael Jensmann, for example, finds that patriotic choir societies, celebrations of historical commemoration days, and the construction of memorials were common and effective mechanisms of socialization in Europe during the 19th century. He also affords particular recognition to schools and the military. Jensmann writes, "The nation-

⁹⁷ Gellner, 33.

⁹⁸ Gellner, 36.

⁹⁹ Gellner, 63.

state had, in school and the military, two instruments with which it could steer society, and it was able in this way to promote widespread acceptance of certain national dispositions.”¹⁰⁰

Timothy Baycroft observes the same phenomenon in his study of the French Third Republic. Like Eugen Weber, Baycroft notes that language was an important part of nation-building at this time, but schools were especially important to shoring up the republican idea of the nation and French civic heritage. “The historical vision of France presented by [republican leadership] was used as a basis for the primary school curriculum which was at the heart of the republican school project of Jules Ferry in the early 1880s.”¹⁰¹ And though Stefan Berger does not assign a specific constitutive role to schools in his study of nationalism in 19th century Germany, he does include teachers among a short list of a “new social class of state employees” responsible for imagining the nascent German national community.¹⁰²

* * *

It should be clear that the interest in modes of identity construction is high across a number of disciplinary paradigms; and though the approaches to identity vary, they uniformly value education as a constitutive mechanism. Advancing the question, therefore, bears upon a vast field of scholarship. There are, of course, general points to keep in mind. First, the approach to education is generally either unsystematic or abbreviated. This is not

¹⁰⁰ Michael Jensmann, “Nation, Identity and Enmity,” in *What is a Nation? Europe: 1789-1914*, Timothy Baycroft & Mark Hewitson, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006), 26.

¹⁰¹ Timothy Baycroft, “Ethnicity and the Revolutionary Tradition,” in *What is a Nation? Europe: 1789-1914*, Timothy Baycroft & Mark Hewitson, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006), 31.

¹⁰² Stefan Berger, “Germany: Ethnic Nationalism par excellence?” in *What is a Nation? Europe: 1789-1914*, Timothy Baycroft & Mark Hewitson, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University, 2006), 44. Berger goes on to identify a number of mechanisms responsible for identity construction in Imperial Germany (Berger, 58). These include: national rituals and ceremonies; books and newspapers; symbols and stories; maps and postcards; as well as tourist travel and exhibitions. While schools are not expressly discussed, their role in the conveyance of history, geography and literature would appear to carve out a place amidst Berger’s list of mechanisms.

to say that observations about education nested in the literature on identity are suspect.

Rather, we should seek to learn more about a factor many acknowledge as important and use their observations as a starting point.

Second, where education is discussed, it is generally folded into a conversation about a number of other constitutive mechanisms. For example, while Hobsbawm clearly qualifies education as a significant force behind inventing traditions in 19th century Europe, he also explains how other factors – such as the growth of monuments and museums – are important as well. The lesson here is that, on the one hand, we must avoid sealing education in a bottle if we are levying a causal claim about education's constitutive role. On the other, even if no causal claim is posited, we should seek to understand how education relates to these other factors. Alone, monuments neither teach one how to worship nor provide content for one's prayers, necessarily. They must be supplemented by a mode of conveyance to pass along and renew the intended shared meaning. Education could play such a part.

Third, education's constitutive function is often associated with particular fields of study. The authors we have reviewed generally link identity construction with the study of history, geography, language and literature. Schools are often important mediums for each, housing those whose scholarship defines the field while also instructing young and maturing minds. The purview of the school over history, geography, language and literature makes education systems quite relevant to identity construction. Moreover, in order to better understand how education works, the content of lessons in these subjects should be quite instructive.

Last, even in broad brushstrokes, the literature tends to assign education a functional and cognitive role in the construction of identities. Education trains individuals for social

functions, imparting particular skills and degrees which are meant to guide one into a group or class. While some criticize the limitations this places upon the individual, we may still abstract away to see that education imparts a sense of purpose on the individual, which in turn shapes one's understanding of where one fits into society. Consider, for example, Max Weber's comments on the Chinese literati or Terrence Ranger's observations about drawing native leadership from colonial schools in Africa. Education also conveys ideas about how the world works; it cultivates a way of thinking about the world, from means-ends relationships to the preferences that motivate us to act. These ideas also inform our sense of belonging and our place in the fabric of history. Eugen Weber notes that a central objective of schools in 19th century France was to help the rural peasantry think of themselves as French. Likewise, Peter Utgaard explains how education in post-WWII Austria aimed to invest the national identity with a particular theme of victimhood.

In the next chapter, I will develop a number of these themes while tapping into literature from the sociology of education to refine our expectations about education's constitutive role. I intend to explain in precise terms how education works as a mechanism, drawing from theoretical work on identity and social mechanisms to identify two pathways (cognitive and functional) by which education constructs identities. In the third, fourth, fifth and sixth chapters, I will employ case studies of English and French education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries to probe each component of the mechanism, starting with a consideration of the structure of education in each country, and followed by treatments of the two pathways. In the final chapter I will assess English and French education as mechanisms for the construction of an imperialist identity, while suggesting additional

opportunities for a research agenda driven by the mechanistic approach to education and identity construction.

While the orientation of this work is not positivistic, the exploration of education as a social mechanism can provide a strong foundation for theory development down the line. Furthermore, identification and close analysis can be just as valuable to social science as theory building, particularly when our understanding of the object of theorizing is superficial or incomplete.¹⁰³ Additionally, researching education's role in identity construction promises to bridge across disciplines addressing a controversial theme in political science literature.¹⁰⁴ But I think the most straightforward justification is simply that there are questions to be answered: does education matter and, if so, how? This certainly fits within the Lakatosian frame in that all steps forward are good and worthwhile, be they small or large.¹⁰⁵

Within the field of International Relations, I argue that the question at hand is quite relevant to previous and ongoing scholarship and should be of particular interest to constructivists and those studying identities and ideas. Constructivism has yet to rest comfortably in the 'middle ground' as concerns remain over the explanatory power of constructivist research, let alone the scope of the research program. Criticism from within the paradigm points toward a need for a better understandings of the internal processes that constitute identities either at Wendt's pre-social stage or during the ongoing interactions between actors. Establishing education as a mechanism for identity construction will begin

¹⁰³ I believe this aligns with the message behind Peter Hedstrom & Richard Swedberg, "Social Mechanisms," *Acta Sociologica* 39 (1996), 281-308. For a bolder pronouncement, one need only read Michel Foucault.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Paul Pierson, "The Costs of Marginalization: Qualitative Methods in the Study of American Politics," *Comparative Political Studies* 40: 2 (February, 2007), 145-169.

¹⁰⁵ Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Imre Lakatos & Alan Musgrave, eds. (New York: Cambridge University, 1970), 91-139.

to fill this void, illuminating a fascinating interplay between the state, society, the élite and the general populace which bears down upon the national interest.

CHAPTER TWO

A MECHANISTIC APPROACH TO EDUCATION AND IDENTITY

“All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.”

- Aristotle

In the previous chapter, I sought to explore education's fit within the varied literature on identity. I found that though there is widespread agreement that education is important, the attention paid to its part in identity construction is rather unsystematic and imprecise. There is, therefore, an opportunity to enhance our understanding of a causal factor which many acknowledge as significant. Shoring up education as a theoretical construct is not simply relevant to identity scholarship, however. I also argued that International Relations could benefit from taking education seriously because of its linkage to identity. Before this can happen, we must establish a better framework. This will be achieved by taking a mechanistic approach to education that subsequently explains how education shapes identity.

We have already encountered references to education as a mechanism within the literature on identity, yet the exact meaning of the association between education and mechanism is unclear. Is education, *writ large*, a mechanism? Is education comprised of mechanisms? What, for that matter, *is* a mechanism? These are critical questions to resolve, otherwise we merely bandy about a term the exact meaning of which is taken for granted or, worse, entirely misunderstood. The following chapter specifies a mechanism-based approach to education and identity. This will be achieved by, first, exploring themes in the sociology of

education that pertain to identity, and, second, looking closely at mechanism-based literature. A careful consideration of the sociology of education will uncover shared ideas about how education contributes causally to social phenomena. Mechanism-based literature will serve as a corrective for the rather loose language surrounding education which we encountered in the previous chapter. Taken together, I will extract and refine a mechanism-based explanation of education's effect on identity that I will apply in subsequent chapters to studies of England and France in the age of empire.

IDENTITY AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

One of the dominant paradigms within the sociology of education begins with Weber. Though discussed previously, his core argument is worth repeating: education is a functional mechanism in that schools train and thereby confer social roles. Subsequent scholars have elaborated upon his model while maintaining an emphasis upon the linkage between the evolution of the modern state and the social value of education. Bureaucratic efficiency, it is argued, requires an education system that standardizes “the pattern of socialization and social control to encourage both the blue-collar and white-collar workers to follow clearly prescribed rules, procedures, and practices in order to fulfill routine tasks in a predictable fashion.”¹ In a similar vein, Andy Green posits that the drive for national education systems emerges from a need for trained administrators, engineers and military personnel alongside the opportunity to spread dominant national cultures and ideas of

¹ A.H. Halsey, Hugh Lauder, Phillip Brown, and Amy Stuart Wells, “The Transformation of Education and Society: An Introduction,” in *Education: Culture, Economy, Society*, A.H. Halsey, Hugh Lauder, Phillip Brown & Amy Stuart Wells, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001), 2. See also, for elaboration of the authoritative and bureaucratic aspects: Erich Fromm, *Man for Himself* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990); and, Gareth Morgan, *Images of Organization* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006).

nationhood. Schools thereby “forge the political and cultural unity of burgeoning nation states and cement the ideological hegemony of their dominant classes.”² Though Green folds in Marxist themes involving class conflict, his view of education – substantiated by his study of the rise of national education systems in England, France, and the United States – nevertheless shares Weber’s emphasis on education’s central part in the rationalization of society corresponding with the interests of dominant groups. Meanwhile, Talcott Parsons explains that education helps break the stranglehold of the family over social advancement, relying instead on merit as the basis for one’s functional role.³ Hierarchy remains, but it is accessible to those who share the appropriate talents and skills. Education therefore holds a dual mandate: bar entry to the unworthy and train the few who remain – all for the sake of the aforementioned modernist credo of social efficiency.

Contemporary approaches diverge somewhat. In some instances scholars maintain Weber’s appreciation for the power dynamics guiding education yet amplify Marxist claims about the priority of economic structure; in other instances, education is a force for social justice and democracy. To better appreciate the nuances, we will explore three influential models that assign education a role in identity construction. The first – the ‘Human Capital Model’ – stems from the work of A.H. Halsey and Jean Floud in *Education, Economy and Society* (1961). Based upon a study of mid-20th century English secondary schools, they explain that education serves the needs of the modern national economy, the competitive nature of which requires the most skilled and talented people in the most demanding jobs.⁴ Like Parsons, Halsey and Floud argue that education shapes the social order by determining

² Green (1990), 309.

³ Cf. Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (New York: Free Press, 1949), and “The School Class as a Social System: Some of its functions in American Society,” *Harvard Educational Review* 29, 297-318.

⁴ Jean Floud & A.H. Halsey, “English Secondary Schools and the Supply of Labor,” *Education, Economy and Society*, A.H. Halsey, Jean Floud and C. Arnold Anderson, eds. (New York: Free Press, 1961), 80-92.

merit and providing necessary training. And though the competitive nature of the modern economy creates the incentives to which education responds, this model avoids any hint of the Marxist critique found in Green (1990) and others.

The second model conceives of education as a promoter of social justice: schooling opens up pathways to social advancement.⁵ Similar to the Human Capital Model, this approach relies upon the incentives created by the modern economy. The increased value of skilled labor achieves a concomitant increase in the value and pull of education. Expanding educational opportunities in response to demand for skilled labor – a trend underway when Burton Clark (1962) elaborated upon this model – facilitated greater movement and, ostensibly, new opportunities for a better life. Regrettably, events would not initially bear out Clark's thesis. Protests spread throughout Western Europe in the late 1960s, as students expressed frustration over a system that had expanded too quickly without a concomitant increase in the capacity to provide quality instruction.⁶ This, however, does not mean that the logic of the model is flawed; rather, the potential benefits in terms of social justice were hampered by uneven policies.

The third model draws upon a rich pedigree in classical liberal thought, advancing the view that education is a prerequisite for a vibrant democracy. Classical liberals – e.g. Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill – recognize an important link between enlightenment, education, happiness and human fulfillment. There is an inherent morality in encouraging the intellectual development of 'the people' so that they may be truly *free*, unfettered by the subtle yet heavy, encumbering weight of social discourse that inhibits not only free thinking

⁵ See Burton Clark, *Educating the Expert Society* (New York: Chandler Publishing, 1962).

⁶ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), 390-4.

but free discussion as well.⁷ Mill, however, advanced the notion further, pointing toward the role of education as a means to create a liberal society by, essentially, socializing behavior to accord with liberty and respect for the individual.⁸ It is just as important to Mill to condition the liberal mind in order to foster an adequate environment for the exercise of one's freedom. If anything, in fact, one is inherently related to the other. But beyond the mere exercise of freedom, the progress of the human mind also served to prepare the individual to participate in the exchange and adoption of various ideas of a liberal character. As John Dewey would later elaborate and formalize, the key is to avoid imposing any sort of ideational or belief structure through education, as it were. "Education is not an affair of 'telling' and being told," Dewey explains, "but an active and constructive process."⁹ Education, rather, should equip the individual with the necessary intellectual tools to universally rationalize those 'truths we take to be self-evident' – truths which are replicated across generations – but not in such a way as to violate the integrity of the individual mind. Thus the liberal model of education, as Amy Gutmann aptly describes, promotes a process of "*conscious* social reproduction" (author's emphasis) rather than blind conformity.¹⁰

The Human Capital and Social Justice models are commonly characterized as functionalist. In each instance, education constitutes society by imparting functions on individuals. Arguably, the Human Capital model is limited in its scope in that education promotes a merit-based hierarchy. The Social Justice model, however, promises to be fundamentally transformative with significant implications for social order. Lastly, both

⁷ See, for example, Immanuel Kant, *On Education* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2003); and, J.S. Mill, *On Liberty and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000).

⁸ Mill, 73-77.

⁹ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: The Free Press, 1944), 38. Cf. R. H. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1955); and A.H. Halsey, *Change in British Society* (New York: Oxford University, 1995).

¹⁰ Amy Gutmann, *Democratic Education* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1999), 14.

models locate education as an intervening factor, mediating between the structure of the economy and social order. By implication, education could lead to different social outcomes if the incentive structure created by the economy were to change. To be clear: education plays a constructive role, but it responds to structural pushes and pulls found in the economy. The Liberal model is both normative and cognitive. On the one hand, education shapes the value system of the individual; on the other, it trains the mind to think about the world from the perspective of enlightened self interest. Unlike the former models, the Liberal model does not respond to structural incentives nor is it expressly linked to the economy, though some classical liberal scholars – namely, John Locke and Adam Smith – argued that education could unlock our natural productivity upon which freedom and prosperity hinged.

To be sure, these models intersect with a contemporary critical paradigm that borrows from both Weber and Marx, and speaks to themes we have already discussed in reference to Andy Green. This branch of scholarship aims to reveal the ties between education, power and social reproduction, such that education reinforces divisions between the elite and the laboring, or subaltern, classes as well as strengthens social stratifications based upon, for example, race and gender. In a relatively recent study (bordering on polemic), Martin Bloomer, et al, claim that education follows the will of the political elite whose interests lay in ensuring economic prosperity, key to their social and political status.¹¹ Schooling creates opportunities for mobility but only to serve a rationalized, elite-driven

¹¹ *Knowledge and Nationhood: Education, Politics and Work*, Martin Bloomer, Geoff Esland, Denis Gleeson, Phil Hodgkinson, & James Avis, eds. (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 1996). Cf. Randall Collins, “When are Educational Requirements for Employment Highest?” *Sociology of Education* 47 (Fall 1974), 419-442. In this study, Collins tests for the impact of education on cultural value transmission. His data shows that organizations rely upon schools as a source for workers who have internalized their value-sets, as opposed to seeking them out for their technical training. In this frame, degrees are markers of exposure to preferred values and norms.

agenda friendly to the capitalist, free market economy. Also consider Rosemary Deem's study of women and science.¹² She observes that education served to reinforce the divide between boys and girls relative to their interests in the hard sciences. Others have further advanced this claim noting broader connections between the education of women and their place within the division of labor.¹³

These neo-Weberian and neo-Marxian variants are bounded by what is known as 'Conflict Theory'. Broadly understood, Conflict Theory identifies education as a mechanism that sustains social divisions. From the Neo-Weberian perspective, education strengthens 'status cultures' by constructing walls to keep outsiders out and insiders in.¹⁴ The central purpose is to sustain the domination of one group over another, hence the correspondence with Weber's earlier thesis in the 'Chinese Literati'. Randall Collins' work from the early-to-mid 1970s is a prime example of Neo-Weberian Conflict Theory.¹⁵ The Neo-Marxian contribution, as one would expect, further specifies the basis of domination as resting upon the "prevailing system of private property."¹⁶ Social roles, including the division of labor, reflect this hierarchical distribution. Education merely reinforces the dominance of the capitalist class.¹⁷

Conflict Theory's critique of social reproduction finds a potent mouthpiece in the work of Pierre Bourdieu. His writing indicts education for its role in "[transmitting] power

¹² Rosemary Deem, *Women and Schooling* (London: Routledge & K Paul, 1978).

¹³ John L. Rury, *Education and Women's Work: Female Schooling and the Division of Labor in Urban America, 1870-1930* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991).

¹⁴ Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey, "Educational Research: A Review and Interpretation," in *Power and Ideology in Education*, Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey, eds. (New York: Oxford University, 1977), 31-33.

¹⁵ Cf. Randall Collins, "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification," *American Sociological Review* 36 (December, 1971), 1002-1019; and, "Where Are Educational Requirements for Employment Highest?," 419-442.

¹⁶ Karabel and Halsey, "Educational Research: A Review and Interpretation," 33.

¹⁷ In the same vein, consider: Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, "The Problem with Human Capital – A Marxian Critique," *American Economic Review* 65 (May 1975), 74-82; and, Bowles and Gintis, "Capitalism and Education in the United States," *Socialist Revolution* 5: 25 (1975), 101-138.

and privileges” from one generation to the next, and, in so doing, “contributing to the reproduction of the structure of class relations.”¹⁸ He finds that ‘initial cultural allocations’ are critical to accessing the social benefits of education. While, in theory, education should open up opportunities to all students, this is simply not the case when confronted with data indicating a correlation between education and the dominant class. In other words, those who achieve the most advanced degrees – degrees which are the passports to power, prestige and wealth – are all too often those whose families are already in possession of power, prestige and wealth. In this way, merit is a charade, and education is a mechanism that reconstitutes the *status quo*. Meanwhile, the tread-upon classes buy into the system because they regard the process and product of education as just. In a rather acerbic passage, Bourdieu captures fully the dynamic between education and social reproduction,

In even more completely delegating the power of selection to the academic institution, the privileged classes are able to appear to be surrendering to a perfectly neutral authority the power of transmitting power from one generation to another, and thus to be renouncing the arbitrary privilege of the hereditary transmission of privileges. But through its formally irreproachable verdicts, which always objectively serve the dominant classes since they never sacrifice the technical interests of those classes except to the advantage of their social interests, the school is better able than ever, at all events in the only way conceivable in a society wedded to democratic ideologies, to contribute to the reproduction of the established order, since it succeeds better than ever in conceding the function it performs. The mobility of individuals, far from being incompatible with reproduction of the structure, by guaranteeing social stability through the controlled selection of a limited number of individuals – modified in and for individual upgrading – and so giving credibility to the ideology of social mobility whose most accomplished expression is the school ideology of ‘l’Ecole liberatrice’, the school as a liberating force.¹⁹

¹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, “Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction,” in *Power and Ideology in Education*, Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey, eds. (New York: Oxford University, 1977), 487.

¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passenon, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (London: Sage, 1977), 167.

The school, therefore, is not simply a mode of conveyance; it is a mechanism that conserves and legitimizes the (exploitative, closed) social order.

In the early 1970s, a largely British-led movement began to criticize Conflict Theory for building a ‘black box’ around education such that the causal linkages between social stratification – or any outcome, for that matter – and education were structural in nature. Inspired by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s *Social Construction of Reality* (1967), this ‘new’ paradigm argued instead that the content of education matters; therefore pedagogy and curriculum should be studied.²⁰ Though Berger and Luckmann’s broader agenda was to understand how we know what we know, they were just as interested in the ‘processes’ by which knowledge is “developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations.”²¹ In their view, knowledge shapes identity, and the means by which knowledge is packaged and shipped matter to identity formation. Hence, if we want to know more about how identities are constituted, we should concern ourselves not simply with knowledge but with the mechanisms that locate this knowledge in the mind of the individual.²² Schools are an obvious mechanism for systematically conveying knowledge.

Basil Bernstein has written extensively on the importance of pedagogy, and his work has proven instrumental in promoting the ‘new’ sociology of education. The work referenced here draws from a body of largely theoretical writings informed by his studies of French and English education. They represent his contribution to a broader debate in the

²⁰ Cf. Karabel & Halsey, 46-58.

²¹ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1967), 3.

²² Berger and Luckmann make this point quite well where they discuss the ordering of knowledge in the sciences. Knowledge-as-science becomes objective reality in that it may be “borne out in experience and that can subsequently become systematically organized as a body of knowledge.” As a body of knowledge, they continue, knowledge-as-science is “transmitted to the next generation. It is learned as objective truth in the course of socialization and thus internalized as subjective reality. This reality in turn has power to shape the individual” (67).

sociology of education on the influence of pedagogy and curriculum over the transmission of knowledge through the classroom. As will be explained, the concepts are particularly useful because they help us avoid the mistake of assuming that understanding follows from content alone.

According to Bernstein, pedagogy is central to socialization because it dictates the manner of proliferation of norms and ideas.²³ While Conflict Theory subsumes norms and ideas within the functional, social roles that follow from education, Bernstein argues that norms and ideas expressed through education are causally significant because they “[formalize, crystallize, even idealize]...an image of conduct, character and manner.”²⁴ To be clear, he does acknowledge that education is a force for social reproduction as well as control, often reflecting the interests of dominant social groups.²⁵ However, he differs as to the mode of reproduction and, furthermore, he advances the claim that education’s influence may actually cut across social groups including, but not limited to, economic classes. In this way education is not reduced exclusively to a weapon of class warfare, though we may continue to conceive of it as a potentially sweeping mechanism for the exercise of power *qua* Max Weber.²⁶

Bernstein’s behavioral model identifies two “complexes” transmitted by schools.²⁷ The first, which he labels the “expressive order”, conveys social norms and mores. It is

²³ Basil Bernstein, “Class and Pedagogies: Visible and Invisible,” in Karabel & Halsey, 59.

²⁴ Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes and Control, Volume 3: Toward a Theory of Educational Transmissions* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 49.

²⁵ Bernstein (1975), 55-56; 85.

²⁶ Bernstein does conceive of the school as a “major instrument of the division of labor”, but, like Weber, he characterizes its function as ‘bureaucratic’ (63). Furthermore, he argues that the bureaucratic mode tends to dominate where schools must educate for a diverse range of economic *and* social functions, which arguably corresponds with the requirements of advanced industrial societies. For our purposes, this perspective informs expectations about how the value of and reliance upon education systems might increase in order to meet the demands the industrial revolution and the ensuing era of imperial competition among Europe’s Great Powers.

²⁷ Bernstein (1975), 38; 54-55.

understood to be universally applied to a student body, cutting across social divisions within the school. The second, known as the “instrumental order”, imparts skills and task-oriented, factual knowledge. This order, which mirrors the functional model of education, is stratifying because it divides students according to the particular nature of the knowledge they receive. Of the two, the expressive order is the “major mechanism of social consensus,” though both clearly play a part in constructing identity.²⁸ Herein we see the importance of the *content* of education. Bernstein claims that these behavioral complexes are conveyed through three “message systems” broadly framed as ‘content’: curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation. “Curriculum,” he writes, “defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as a valid transmission of knowledge, and evaluation defines what counts as a valid realization of this knowledge on the part of the taught.”²⁹ Taken together, these message systems expose students to knowledge of both the instrumental and expressive types thereby ensuring, through instruction, exposure and examination, the internalization of this knowledge which, subsequently, shapes identity.

The influence of education on identity is not uniform within Bernstein’s model. Classification, framing and visibility – curricular and pedagogical attributes – are possible sources of variation. I take each in turn. According to Bernstein, classification describes the relationship between contents of the education code found in the curriculum; in less abstract terms, this refers to the differentiation of subjects – the extent to which subjects are rigidly defined and organized.³⁰ Strong classification implies that the boundaries between subjects are distinct, leading to a highly compartmentalized knowledge base which students must absorb in order to be considered ‘educated’. Weak classification schemes integrate subjects

²⁸ Bernstein (1975), 55.

²⁹ Bernstein (1975), 85.

³⁰ Bernstein (1975), 88-89.

and blur lines between them such that the focus of the knowledge base imparted to students is general. With this in mind, it is important to note the implications for identity construction. It would seem that strong classifications accord with, to borrow from Bernstein's model, instrumental complexes because knowledge may be specialized according to particular tasks and social needs. Therefore, strong classifications are important to the construction of role identities which are, as we have already discussed, defined by function. The implications of weak classification schemes are more ambiguous. While weak classification schemes would do less work in shaping role identities, they could nevertheless impart normative complexes. One could further speculate that weak classification schemes shift the onus onto or interact with other social structures to define roles and, in this way, weak schemes play a mediating function. For example, weak classification schemes signal a generalist curriculum which nevertheless reinforces social boundaries in a fashion similar to the role of the classics in 19th century European education systems.³¹

Framing qualifies the context surrounding the transmission and reception of knowledge. It defines the lines between what may and may not be taught.³² Like classification, framing is understood in terms of degrees. Strong framing indicates that instructors and students have fewer options relative to the "selection, organization, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received," while weak framing implies the opposite. In an important respect, framing helps to explain the relationship between teachers and students; it also generates expectations about the impact of education systems relative to the conveyance of norms and ideas found in the cultural milieu or even dictated by political

³¹ Conventional arguments hold that the laboring classes struggled to access the classical curriculum because they lacked the time and resources to learn Greek and Latin. In this example, the generalist nature of the classical education merely replicated social divisions that existed independent of the weak classification scheme.

³² Bernstein (1975), 88-89.

actors, which is of particular interest to unpacking the significance of education in England and France during the 19th century. Like weak classification schemes, weak frames should still shape identities but one could speculate about the predictability of results especially if one's interest lays in the influence of a certain set of norms and ideas. If, for instance, policymakers sought to inculcate worldviews that favored imperial expansion yet the framing within their schools and universities was weak, confidence in the successful transmission of this set of ideas declines because of the increased uncertainty that the preferred worldview will in fact be 'purchased' by the student within a wider marketplace of ideas. Contrarily, strong frames would provide the greatest assurance of successful transmission because of the monopoly held by the dominant worldview ensured by a rigid pedagogy within the classroom (which corresponds with a strong frame). Strong frames therefore enhance the constructive role of schools particularly when the aim is to impart/replicate certain norms and ideas in addition to skills and practices.

Bernstein binds framing and classification together with the concept of visible and invisible pedagogies. Strong frames and strong classifications correspond with visible pedagogies, while weak frames and weak classifications characterize invisible pedagogies. Accordingly, visibility and invisibility pertain to the 'presence' of the school in the behavioral development of its students. Bernstein elaborates, "The more implicit the manner of transmission and the more diffuse the criteria [that defines what is knowable], the more invisible the pedagogy; the more specific the criteria, the more explicit the manner of transmission, the more visible the pedagogy."³³ Based upon the prior treatment of classification and frame, it should be evident that visible pedagogies are a stronger force for social reproduction and invest the school with the greatest influence, all else being equal. In

³³ Bernstein (1975), 116-117.

other words, where subjects are clearly noted and knowledge valued, and where transmission is strictly guided, giving little room for interpretation and innovation on the part of the teacher or the student, there is a greater likelihood that education will replicate dominant modes of thought and behavior. Imagine a classroom setting where students are presented a range of ideas and facts with a clear sense of importance (e.g. anyone who hopes to be considered ‘civilized’ *must* know the classics). Furthermore, these ideas and facts are communicated through rote memorization reinforced by an examination system that confers degrees only upon mastery of the facts and ideas. *This* setting, which arguably applies to school systems in 19th century England and France, will very likely, according to Bernstein’s model, reproduce the dominant social order.

We have devoted such attention to Bernstein because, I believe, his emphasis on content is especially useful and less vulnerable to the normative biases that pervade other clusters of scholarship. Though the trajectory of research within the sociology of education aims in large part at questions pertaining to the social footprint of education, well-established paradigms are at times too narrowly focused on how certain patterns in education reflect broader, world-historical forces like capitalism. Often, their work appears satisfied with mere correspondence between factors, and the significance of their findings is bound up in contests of strength between critical schools of thought. It is subsequently difficult to disentangle their observations from the normative claims that inspire them. For example, the notion that education serves a functional role is easily co-opted by neo-Weberians and neo-Marxians who adjoin this functional role with systems of power and class hierarchies, respectively. As a result, systematic analyses of education seem flawed by their initial biases and therefore fail to treat education itself systematically. Research can become a matter of

‘spin’ instead of validating causal factors or clarifying the constructive properties of education. Once this happens, how education works in the abstract becomes taken for granted when viewed through a distortive, critical lens.

Perhaps of greater importance, Bernstein’s model helps inform standards by which we may evaluate the education systems in the test countries and gain some degree of insight into whether these systems were even equipped to reproduce and inculcate certain norms and ideas that would translate into an imperial identity. If the classification and frames are strongly associated with these ideas and norms then we should have greater confidence in the impact of education on the students as well as a worthwhile explanatory factor behind popular support for imperialism.

WHAT IS A ‘MECHANISM’?

Thus far, I have employed the term ‘mechanism’ frequently and highlighted writings that conceived of education similarly if not used the very same word. We should not, however, take for granted what this construct actually means and why mechanisms are useful to social and political science. Regrettably, achieving a coherent, uniform understanding from the literature is no easy task. The construct suffers from what one observer describes as “semantic overload”.³⁴ While we can find shared assumptions and ideas about mechanisms, another observer criticizes the literature for “loose talk” and “confusion about

³⁴ John Gerring, “Causal Mechanisms: Yes, But...” *Comparative Political Studies* 43 (July, 2010), 1501. Cf. James Mahoney, “Beyond Correlational Analysis: Recent Innovations in Theory and Method,” *Sociological Forum* 16: 3 (September, 2001), 575-593; Zenonas Norkus, “Mechanisms as Miracle Makers? The Rise and Inconsistencies of the ‘Mechanistic Approach’ in Social Science and History,” *History and Theory* 44 (October, 2005), 348-372; and Peter Hedstrom, “Studying mechanisms to strengthen causal inferences in quantitative research,” paper to be published in J. M. Box-Steffensmeier, H.E. Brady and D. Collier (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

what ‘mechanisms’ are.”³⁵ These indictments are not unjustified. Even within what is commonly regarded as a seminal volume of contemporary approaches to social mechanisms, the elaboration of ‘mechanism’ is hardly uniform from author to author.³⁶ There is connective tissue, but the particulars vary, and sometimes in a seemingly arbitrary fashion.

Within recent years, mechanisms have received ever more attention in sociological scholarship dissatisfied with the dominance of nomological-deductive explanation and the push for covering laws. “The turn to mechanisms,” as John Gerring observes, “offers a helpful corrective to a naïve – ‘positivistic’ – view of causality, according to which causality is understood simply as a constant conjunction (Hume) or a probabilistic association between X and Y.”³⁷ Mechanism-based approaches to social phenomena frequently draw inspiration from Robert Merton, who advanced a similar claim. Identifying the inadequacies of grand systems theories, Merton advocated middle range theory-making in order to bring theories closer to the actual causes while also making empirical testing easier. He writes, “To concentrate entirely on a master conceptual scheme for deriving all subsidiary theories is to risk producing twentieth-century sociological equivalents of the large philosophical systems of the past, with all their varied suggestiveness, their architectonic splendor, and their scientific sterility.”³⁸ Merton’s ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’ is held out as a classic example of a mechanism that explains a broader social phenomenon (the translation of fears into reality)

³⁵ Renate Mayntz, “Mechanisms in the Analysis of Social Macro-Phenomena,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 34 (2004), 238.

³⁶ I refer here to Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedberg’s *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998). This volume brings together no less than twelve scholars whose work, in some instances, is cited as foundational. While they agree that mechanisms enrich understanding of causal connections between factors beyond simple covariation, the subsequent explanation of mechanism as a construct varies according to the units of analysis and the internal workings.

³⁷ John Gerring, 1500. Cf. Peter Hedstrom and Petri Ylikoski, “Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (April, 2010), 54.

³⁸ Robert K. Merton, “On Sociological Theories of the Middle Range (1949),” in *Classical Sociological Theory*, C. Calhoun, et al, eds. (Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 457.

with a cogent logic that is limited in its scope yet at the same time generalizable across instances fitting the initial conditions that set the mechanism in motion.³⁹

The contribution of mechanisms to explanatory richness is perhaps the most commonly proffered justification for mechanism-based research. They help open up the ‘black box of causal claims and macro-theory to reveal *how* relationships between factors actually happen.⁴⁰ Unsurprisingly, there is some debate about the ‘essentialness’ of mechanisms. Stuart Glennan (1996) goes as far as to assert that a connection between two events is not causal if we cannot identify a mechanism to connect them.⁴¹ This account of causation elevates the significance of mechanisms not just to the validation of particular causal claims but to theory generation as well. As Daniel Steel (2004) explains, “We can infer that X is a cause of Y, if we know that there is a mechanism through which X influences Y.”⁴² Though Steel does not appear to adopt Glennan’s position that causal claims necessarily require a corresponding mechanism, he clearly argues that mechanisms are certainly a strong basis for causal inference. Others, however, caution against qualifying mechanisms as “scientific ‘miracle makers’”, in that mechanisms are somehow short-cuts to causal ‘truths’ or *prima facie* valid theories. Instead, mechanisms are merely means to trim down the universe of possible causal explanations of a phenomenon into a more manageable (read: testable) set.⁴³ This view, which still aligns with Merton’s understanding of social

³⁹ Robert K. Merton, “The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy,” *The Antioch Review* 8: 2 (Summer, 1948), 193-210.

⁴⁰ Cf. Jon Elster, “A Plea for Mechanisms” in *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*, Peter Hedstrom & Richard Swedberg, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998), 47-48; as well as Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedberg, “Social Mechanisms: An Introductory Essay,” in the same volume. Also, among others, Peter Machamer, Lindley Darden, and Carl F. Craver, “Thinking about Mechanisms,” *Philosophy of Science* 61: 1 (Mar. 2000), 1; Hedstrom and Ylikoski (2010), 60; and, Pierre Demeulenaere, “Introduction,” in *Analytical Sociology and Social Mechanisms*, Pierre Demeulenaere, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2011), 14.

⁴¹ Stuart S. Glennan, “Mechanisms and the Nature of Causation,” *Erkenntnis* 44 (1996), 64. Cf. Demeulenaere (2011), 16.

⁴² Daniel Steel, “Social Mechanisms and Causal Inference,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 34 (2004), 56.

⁴³ Zenonas Norkus, “Mechanisms as Miracle Makers? The Rise and Inconsistencies of the ‘Mechanismic Approach’ in Social Science and History,” *History and Theory* 44 (October, 2005), 358.

mechanism, simply relaxes the necessary and sufficient conditionality while maintaining the utility of mechanisms to the advancement of our understanding of why things happen the way that they do. At the end of the day, all roads in mechanistic scholarship lead to this conclusion, though they often diverge once we set about unpacking what the construct actually means.

In 2001, James Mahoney took stock of the burgeoning paradigm and noted twenty-four distinct definitions of mechanism circulating in the literature.⁴⁴ More recently, Peter Hedstrom (2010) identified seven ‘alternative’ definitions which have, in his estimation, the greatest following.⁴⁵ How we are to interpret ‘alternative’ is left to our imaginations, perhaps in order to avoid privileging one definition over another. Nevertheless, mechanism-based scholarship has made little progress toward a shared, precise understanding of the construct despite, or perhaps even because of, the flowering of research in the field. Though it is tempting to take advantage of the prevailing ambiguity and simply declare by fiat that education is a mechanism, in doing so we would run the risk of reducing our definition to one of convenience or even tautology. Some treatment of mechanism in the abstract is therefore worthwhile.

In the most basic sense, a mechanism constitutes the link between two variables in a causal chain. It is, simply, “whatever connects the cause and effect.”⁴⁶ Therefore, to describe

⁴⁴ James Mahoney, “Beyond Correlational Analysis: Recent Innovations in Theory and Method,” *Sociological Forum* 16: 3 (September, 2001), 579-580.

⁴⁵ Peter Hedstrom, “Studying Mechanisms to Strengthen Causal Inferences in Quantitative Research,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University, 2010), 322.

⁴⁶ Petri Ylikoski, “Social mechanisms and explanatory relevance,” in *Analytical Sociology and Social Mechanisms*, Pierre Demeulenaere, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2011), 160. This scaled-down definition is not terribly controversial and is widely shared. Cf. Hedstrom and Swedberg (1998), 7; Renate Mayntz, “Mechanisms in the Analysis of Social Macro-Phenomena,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 34 (2004), 241-2; Hedstrom and Ylikoski (2010), 50; Demeulenaere (2011), 12; Keith Sawyer, “Conversation as mechanism: emergence in creative groups,” in *Analytical Sociology and Social Mechanisms*, Pierre Demeulenaere, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2011), 78.

a mechanism is to explain how an input generates an output. To some, mechanisms detail necessary and sufficient processes through which a causal chain occurs, even where complex systems are involved at the aggregate or macro-level.⁴⁷ Others, however, hold that the very complexity of social phenomena makes it difficult to assign mechanisms such a law-like role in explaining said phenomena.⁴⁸ Instead, they welcome a certain degree of indeterminacy.⁴⁹ Mechanisms, borrowing from Darden (2006), may provide ‘how-possible explanations’ or, from Tilly (2002), “partial causal analogies”.⁵⁰ In other words, mechanisms “[tell] us how the effect could in principle be produced.”⁵¹ In this vein, mechanisms ‘tend to’ or ‘may likely’ cause or simply ‘influence’ or ‘affect’ outcomes.⁵² While strict positivists bristle at the epistemological implications of this inherent (and accepted) ambiguity, we must keep in mind that mechanism-based approaches do not by and large aim at empirical prediction; rather, as Hedstrom and Ylikoski (2010) explain, the emphasis falls upon “diagnostic and explanatory reasoning.”⁵³

It is difficult to assign mechanisms a particular level or unit of analysis that is generally agreed upon in the social and political science literature. A dominant view holds that mechanisms operate at a lower level, where “the components that are accepted as relatively fundamental or taken to be unproblematic,”⁵⁴ beneath higher level laws (Glennan

⁴⁷ For example, see Glennan (1996), 54; and Sawyer, 78.

⁴⁸ Machamer, Darden and Craver, 4.

⁴⁹ John Elster, “Indeterminacy of emotional mechanisms” in *Analytical Sociology and Social Mechanisms*, Pierre Demeulenaere, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2011), 50.

⁵⁰ Lindley Darden, *Reasoning in Biological Discoveries: Essays on Mechanisms, Interfield Relations and Anomaly Resolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Charles Tilly, “Historical Analysis of Political Processes,” in *Handbook of Sociological Theory*, Jonathan H. Turner, ed. (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2002), 569.

⁵¹ Hedstrom and Ylikoski (2010), 52. Cf. Gudmund Hernes, “Real Virtuality,” in *Social Mechanisms*, Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedberg, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998), 78.

⁵² Neil Gross, “A pragmatist theory of social mechanisms,” *American Sociological Review* 74: 3 (Jun., 2009), 364; Steel, 59; Gerring, 1500

⁵³ Hedstrom and Ylikoski (2010), 55.

⁵⁴ Machamer, Darden and Craver, 13.

(2010)), theories (Stinchcombe (1991)), or, simply, macro-level phenomena that require explanation.⁵⁵ Methodological Individualists, including Peter Hedstrom, employ this approach when studying the roots of social events or social states. Causality, they argue, occurs at the level of the individual, or the micro-level. Therefore, “proper explanations of change and variation at the macro level entails (*sic*) showing how macro states at one point in time influence the behavior of individual actors, and how these actions generate new macro states at a later point in time.”⁵⁶ This claim has two key implications. First, mechanisms operate through individuals rather than at the macro-level. Second, the directionality of a mechanism is linear and step-wise. In fact, we should clarify this latter point. According to James Coleman’s (1986) macro-micro-macro model adapted by Hedstrom and Swedberg (below), change/variation at the macro level is explained by a number of mechanisms, rather than one single mechanism that captures the relationships between macro-micro, micro-micro, and micro-macro, under a single umbrella. The causal chain, as it were, is therefore broken into a series of steps that occur across time.

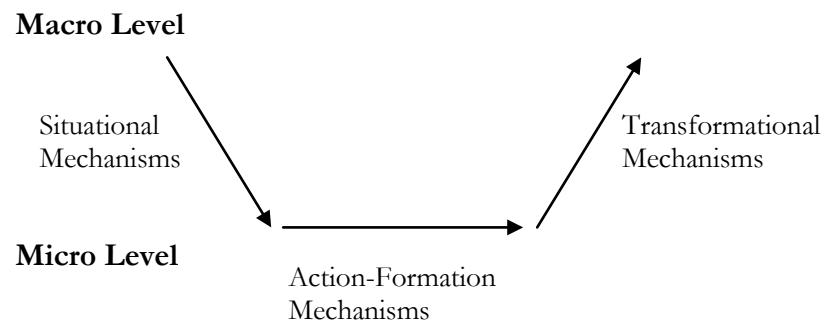


Figure 1

The exclusive ‘assignment’ of mechanisms to the micro-level is not without its problems, and as a result Methodological Individualism (MI) has been the subject of criticism within

⁵⁵ Arthur L. Stinchcombe, “The Conditions of Fruitfulness of Theorizing About Mechanisms in Social Science,” *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 21: 3 (September, 1991), 367.

⁵⁶ Hedstrom and Swedberg (1998), 21.

mechanism-based literature. For one, and this is a point which MI concedes, the actions of individuals may be necessary, but they are not sufficient causes of macro-level phenomena.⁵⁷ This would appear to open the door to widening the focus on mechanisms from the micro-level such that mechanisms can operate at the macro-level as well. Granted, advocates of mid-level theory-making tend to resist looking to structural causes to explain outcomes, though this does not mean that mechanisms cannot be located at the macro- *and* micro-levels. As Keith Sawyer (2011) argues, “social mechanism is not definitionally identical with methodological individualism. Mechanisms exist at many levels of analysis. A sociological explanation could be a causally mechanist explanation even if it does not concern properties of individuals. One could provide mechanistic explanations of large-scale social systems in which the components are smaller-scale social units.”⁵⁸ Pierre Demeulenaere advocates shifting the focus of attention to the ‘active’ level where change and variation are produced.⁵⁹ ‘Higher’ and ‘lower’, he notes, are merely “metaphors designating various relations between properties concerning separate individuals and properties concerning groups of individuals, involving different types of causal links.” Ultimately, what would seem to matter most is the object of one’s research. For Methodological Individualists, the aim is to develop better understandings of individual action, which aggregates to social events and states. Therefore, mechanisms operating at the individual level make sense according to their ontological assumptions. To expect this same level of analysis to hold across other fields would require parallel reductionist strategies. This simply is not the case.

Consider the use of certain game theory models in International Relations scholarship to explain, for example, reciprocity among states. In an important and well-

⁵⁷ Mayntz, 252.

⁵⁸ Sawyer, 79-80.

⁵⁹ Demeulenaere (2011), 24.

regarded book, Robert Axelrod deployed the Prisoner's Dilemma to underpin his theory of cooperation.⁶⁰ While we need not explore the book's conclusions or even the logic of the theory, it will suffice to note that the unit of analysis is a state, as opposed to an individual human being. While the model's narrative evokes images of human prisoners struggling to achieve their most favorable outcome under conditions of limited information, the application of the model does not remain at the individual, human level. One could counter that states take the place of individual human beings as micro-level agents, such that there really is no difference. However, it is unlikely that this analogy would sit well with either paradigm. The point is that Methodological Individualists study individual humans – this is the nature of what they do – and to equate states and individual humans even in the abstract would begin to unravel MI's attempt to move away from the macro-level. Similarly, a number of IR scholars would reject the association as they consider individual humans to be of limited causal importance, subsumed within the black box of the state. It would appear from this example that Demeulenaere (2011) makes a very sound observation about the problems one may encounter if relying too heavily on 'higher' and 'lower' levels as domains for mechanisms. The labels can be troublesome if not confusing to apply; but if we seek out the 'active' level, as he suggests, then we avoid confounding the overarching objective that guides the use of mechanisms across fields in social and political science: explanation.

A second objection to the macro-micro-macro frame involves the challenge of 'bottoming out'. As Machamer, Darden and Craver explain, the movement from higher to lower level units of analysis ends where components are understood as fundamental or unproblematic. It is at this level that mechanisms operate. However, some question whether fundamental or unproblematic components truly present themselves such that the researcher

⁶⁰ Robert Axelrod, *Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984).

faces the problem of ‘infinite regress’,⁶¹ or must rely upon processes that are unobservable. Neither state is desirable because each, in a different way, calls into question the validity of the mechanism. ‘Infinite regress’ implies that the better causal explanation is not found with the mechanism initially identified as appropriate; whereas mechanisms that rest upon unobservable processes cannot be verified but through correlation of input to output, which, one could argue, runs against the grain of the mechanistic project.

While infinite regress and unobservable processes do pose certain challenges, they are far from paralyzing concerns for mechanism-based research. ‘Best possible’ explanations need not require the lowest level mechanism conceivable, particularly if the contribution of further reduction is marginal. Further, that a process is unobservable does not *ipso facto* make it any less real, especially if the relationship between output and input explained by the mechanism are regular and frequent. Researchers can also go a long way to shoring up unobservable mechanisms by excluding compelling alternatives.⁶² Again, as Demeulenaere suggests, the aim should center on the active level mechanism, which we can affirm does the most to explain a causal relationship even if it does not do everything.

Following this brief treatment, we are in a better position to achieve a workable definition of mechanism which we may deploy in our study of education in 19th century England and France. First and foremost, mechanisms help explain how an input (I) generates an output (O). To use a rather crude analogy, mechanisms are similar to an automobile engine that links pressing the gas (I) to motion (O). From the driver’s perspective, the introduction of a certain stimuli, gas, makes the car accelerate. To truly understand, however, the causal process that connects gas to motion, we need to pop open

⁶¹ Norkus, 371.

⁶² See, for example, Hedstrom and Ylikoski, 52.

the hood and inspect the engine underneath in order to observe the spark plugs igniting the gas which pumps the pistons, etc. Second, mechanisms cannot operate at the same level of abstraction as the input and the output. Instead, mechanisms involve the *active* level in the causal relationship between two variables. This is important because the central aim of mechanism-based research is to *explain*. To return to the automobile engine analogy, pressing on the gas (I) may give the impression of creating variation in movement (O), from standstill to forward motion or slower to faster; to state, however, that pressing on the gas is in fact the mechanism would not reveal anything about how motion is actually achieved. Instead, the researcher must shift from the level of the input and output to the active level – the engine – where the causal process occurs. Third, a given mechanism or mechanisms need not carry the entire burden of causal explanation. Instead, mechanisms may involve a particular stage in a causal chain or one of many mechanisms that influence an outcome. That the causal weight of the mechanism may be indeterminate is problematic only in so far as one might try to offer a prediction – which is not the primary aim of most mechanism-based research – or test for the influence of the mechanism without accounting for the other mechanisms in play. For this reason it is acceptable and even worthwhile to elaborate upon how a mechanism works in a given causal relationship just for the sake of knowing more about causal process that the mechanism describes. Last, mechanisms may entail observable and/or unobservable processes. Clearly, the former are easier to map and provide the researcher with a greater sense of confidence in the validity of the mechanism as comprising the causal linkage between two variables. Where the latter are involved, the researcher is not without recourse. As stated above, one could examine alternative mechanisms that are observable in order to rule them out; e.g. eliminate the possible and whatever is left, no

matter how unlikely (or unobservable), is the cause. Another option which I did not discuss above involves looking to related research on the mechanism which does not necessarily involve the study variables. Where there is a body of research that has determined a consistent, regular relationship between factors that can be attributed to an unobservable mechanism, the validity of their conclusions may be transferrable.

EDUCATION AS A MECHANISM

At this juncture it is appropriate to connect observations from each of the preceding sections in order to establish, clearly and simply, how education works as a mechanism. In the previous chapter, I framed the question in terms relating to the growth of an imperial identity in England and France during the 19th century. Policymakers at the time explicitly turned to education as a means to transmit certain ideas, values and practices with the aim of cultivating popular and élite identities. This impetus was particularly strong during the last quarter of the 19th century when the Great Powers were competing for influence in rather closed quarters. The basic schematic therefore places education within a basket of tools available to policymakers who have a broader foreign policy agenda. To achieve their goals, policymakers deploy education to shape the popular identity and in following accumulate the political, human and material capital perceived to be necessary to successfully implement their foreign policies.



Figure 2

The mechanisms pertain to the relationship between education and identity (Box 1, Figure 2), or *how* education (I) *constructs* identity (O). This is achieved along two conceptually distinct yet related pathways.

First, education influences the roles people play in the polity, society and economy. Roles impart a sense of purpose – understandings of what one ought to do when certain roles are evoked. According to this view one’s reflexive understandings of self and thereby what one wants and what one does follow from the role(s) one assumes within a broader social structure.⁶³ Since schools are a key source of training and a foundation for one’s employment the linkage between education and role-identity would appear to be quite strong. Therefore,

⁶³ Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets, *Identity Theory* (New York: Oxford University, 2009), 26. Cf. Sheldon Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version* (Caldwell, New Jersey: Blackburn Press, 2002); George McCall & J.L. Simmons, *Identities and Interactions* (New York: Free Press, 1978); and Peggy A. Thoits and Lauren K. Virshup, “Me’s and we’s: Forms and functions of social identities,” in *Self and Identity: Fundamental Issues*, R.D. Ashmore and L.J. Jussim, eds. (New York: Oxford University, 1997), 106-33. This also taps into a deep literature drawn from Weber’s ‘stratification theory’ which argues that education systems serve to further the interests of dominant social groups by reinforcing norms and values particular to the status group while also restricting membership to those capable of achieving the right sort of education congruent with the background of the status group. (Cf. Max Weber, “Selections on Education and Politics,” in *Education: Structure and Society*, ed. B.R. Cosin (Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), 211-241, in particular “The Chinese Literati,” 230-241.) Weber and others (e.g. Randall Collins (1974), Samuel Bowles (1971, 1972) and Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976)) argue that the conflicts driving education reflect economic factors, which is not exactly what I argue here. While economic interests do play a part, as I see it competition is enlarged to include imperial interests as well, which are linked to but not subsumed by economy as Lenin argues in “Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism” (1916).

- 1) Education is both a *mediating* and *limiting* structure that serves to guide individuals into their social roles while also creating barriers to entry for other functions.

Second, education shapes one's cognitive identity through the introduction of ideas as part of any given curriculum. It is not so much that we are taught to think a certain way. Instead we tend to rely upon information transmitted in the classroom. In this way education can shape worldviews which in turn "[allow] members of a group to make sense of social, political and economic conditions"⁶⁴ and, further, understand how they should behave within them. For example, being 'British' has no inherent meaning beyond what is cultivated by society within the individual. Without images and ideas to create meaning, we have no expectations about how one should act when thinking as a 'Brit' either today or during the 19th century. Cognitive identities, however, fill this gap with the content necessary to guide behavior and inform what it means to be British. Thus,

- 2) Schools are 'content drivers' in that they impart certain normative and ideological dispositions on the educated classes, leading to shared worldviews and collective logics of appropriateness.

I concede that role and cognitive identities are 'nonexclusive' in that the instructions, if you will, to the agent may overlap. This is problematic if one is seeking singular causes of behavioral phenomena. However it is still important to acknowledge that role and cognitive identities are conceptually distinct because they offer up different types of meanings even if

⁶⁴ Abdelal, et al., 25.

the content may be consonant or even dissonant. Meaning derived from, say, one's role as a soldier may not involve behavioral cues that one picks up from a broader worldview associated with 'king and country'.⁶⁵ Yet it does stand to reason that where both identities coincide we should expect the behavioral implications to be particularly potent.

In general terms, the mechanisms that connect education to identity are functional (1) and cognitive (2). These align with the understanding of mechanism which we derived in the previous section. One, they are situated within a causal relationship such that they connect education (I) to identity construction (O). If we 'zoom in' on Box 1 from Figure 2, we may elaborate upon the arrow connecting education and identity with the two mechanisms.

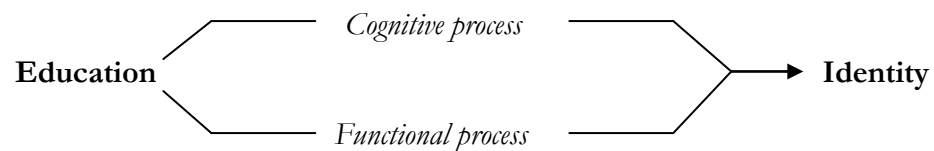


Figure 3

In short, each process is meant to explain how education shapes identity. Two, the mechanisms are not framed at the same level of abstraction as the input and output. Rather, they constitute the active level, and represent parts of the whole relative to the causal variable, or input. Three, these mechanisms do not pretend to explain the entire range of

⁶⁵ Perhaps this is what Machiavelli truly meant when, cautioning against mercenaries, he wrote, "no ruler is secure unless he has his own troops. Without them he is entirely dependent on fortune, having no strength with which to defend himself in adversity." Niccolo Machiavelli, *Selected Political Writings*, David Wootton, trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 45. More to the point, even the educational field of sociology has historically drawn a line, rightly or wrongly, between role (e.g. functionalist) analysis and content. Karabel and Halsey (1977), 11.

causal processes behind identity construction, though they are presented as the dominant processes associated with education. The former distinction is critical. Recalling our discussion from the previous chapter about literature involving identity, it was clear across a number of sources that education was but one constructive force behind identity. We therefore cannot isolate education and its mechanisms from the influence of other causal factors. This is significant were we to attempt to test for education's effect upon identity; as it stands, the chief aim is to elaborate upon the two mechanisms that I have identified, which avoids the conundrum of sorting out what is without question a complex social process behind identity construction. Fourth and finally, the mechanisms are observable in so far as we may explore the means by which cognitive and functional processes achieve their ends. At the level of the individual student, however, the active *effect* of the processes is unobservable because we cannot see inside his or her mind directly. It is possible, however, to identify indirect indicators, such as exams which signal whether a student learned a particular lesson or memoirs which might reveal whether school shaped their way of thinking about the world. That the cognitive and functional mechanisms are observable is quite significant to the task of elaborating upon how the mechanisms work; that we may not be able to directly observe their active effects is problematic but only in so far as testing for the mechanism. While during the treatment of each subject country we may pause to gauge the effect of education on identity, the structure of the case studies emphasizes tracing the mechanisms that comprise education; the methodological concerns about testing are not of primary importance.

While the cognitive and functional processes essentially 'do the work' in constructing identities, the force of their impact is deeply affected by the structure of education within

which they are nested. To be clear, the structure of education is *not* a component of the mechanism. It *is*, however, a critical conditional factor that establishes the limits of the mechanism's reach: it puts the mechanism into practice. By 'structure', I refer to four elements. First, structure entails the centers of authority within a given system. Whether a structure is centralized or fragmented, for example, bears significant implications for the harmony of the curriculum across regions, as well as the ability of policymakers to implement a specific program (and thereby fashion a particular identity). A centralized system would favor the state's agenda while increasing the likelihood that particular content or functional training would spread throughout the system. Second, structure involves the types of schools within the system (e.g. primary, secondary, technical, university), both public and private. These in turn set the range of educational opportunities formally available to school-age children. Though other socio-economic and familial factors interact with pursuing these opportunities, the fact remains that if the school does not exist, one cannot attend. Fourth, the school curriculum is a component of structure because it defines the list of subjects taught in schools, including the temporal (e.g. sequential) relationship between the various subjects, in addition to prioritizing the subjects across and within school grades. Importantly, from the perspective of structure, curriculum is distinct from content, though it does influence the emphasis that certain content receives by managing the time devoted to the subject. Last, structure consists of the formal provisions and incentives that bring students into – and keep them out of – the schools. These include legislation that universalizes attendance and defines age ranges for certain types of education, measures that encourage attendance through indirect means (e.g. compensation for lost income from child

labor), as well as entrance examinations that standardize requirements which students must meet in order to go to school.

Accounting for structure is essential because of the variation it introduces relative to the functioning of education as a mechanism. If one were to consider content alone without an eye toward, for example, the distribution of subjects within a given curriculum, one might incorrectly gauge exposure of students to particular ideas and images. Similarly, a decentralized education system would likely hinder efforts by central authorities to implement their curriculum. Further, multiple centers of authority might obstruct the transmission of a core set of ideas and images, in turn making the cultivation of a coherent national identity rather difficult. These are but two examples of the influence of structure on the processes that construct identities. However, one should not gain the impression that structure necessarily problematizes education. It can certainly lend to a rather potent mechanism, such as under a rigidly centralized system of universal education. The key point to remember is that properly tracing and estimating the impact of the cognitive and functional processes requires an eye toward structure.

The elaboration of education into cognitive and functional processes did not materialize out of thin air. The review of work in the sociology of education as well as studies on identity construction frequently emphasized the cognitive and functional pathways even if in isolation from each other or outside of either the context I suggest (e.g. late 19th/early 20th century England and France), or the study variables of interest here (e.g. identity, in particular *imperial* identity). This is worth noting because a common concern in the mechanistic literature involves the utilization of mechanisms that are ill-conceived in that they lack a basis in reality. As mentioned previously, the indeterminacy often found in

mechanisms and mechanism-based arguments makes the explanatory validity of mechanisms to a given causal relationship a subject of concern. Establishing the pedigree of the mechanisms deployed here lends credibility to the framework I will use to study identity construction in the chapters that follow.⁶⁶

There are, however, other important methodological questions to address. According to John Gerring, two techniques dominate mechanism-based scholarship. On the one hand, researchers devote their energies to carefully specifying the causal path connecting the study variables; on the other, researchers test the connection through empirical observation.⁶⁷ The latter path is fraught with difficulty for a number of reasons, which Gerring notes. Of particular relevance to this study is the challenge of sorting out the effect of multiple factors and their related mechanisms upon a given study variable.⁶⁸ The complexity of identity construction makes it especially unlikely that a definitive test on the causal effect of education on an aggregate level could be conducted. Moreover, such a test presupposes that there is a clear understanding of what is being tested (read: education). Absent such an understanding, the first approach to mechanism-based scholarship, noted above, becomes quite valuable.

With this in mind, the chief task consists of taking a mechanism in a form that is abstracted from reality, locating it within a context where the key processes are in play, and determining whether the mechanism does in fact reveal how a causal relationship occurs.⁶⁹ This narrative method is strengthened if we are able to place the mechanism into other

⁶⁶ This responds to a concern voiced by John Gerring (2010), where he reflects upon the challenges of mechanism-based research. He writes, “Specifying a causal mechanism is sometimes a highly speculative affair. The posited mechanism may be highly specific but at the same time remain entirely unproven, and perhaps highly dubious” (Gerring, 1505).

⁶⁷ Gerring, 1501-02.

⁶⁸ Gerring, 1506-11.

⁶⁹ Hedstrom and Swedberg (1998), 13-14. Cf. Hedstrom and Ylikoski, 52-54.

contexts with some degree of variation as to potentially confounding factors.⁷⁰ If the mechanism performs well across, say, historical or political contexts, then we increase our confidence in its validity vis-à-vis the causal connection between, in this instance, education and identity. The same can be said if we hold certain confounding factors constant while varying the outcomes. If identities differ across instances where education was used as a mechanism *and* inputs (e.g. curricular content) differ as well, then confidence the mechanism's explanatory validity likewise increases. Furthermore, there is tremendous value in case studies with a certain degree of situational homogeneity because they allow for the observation of subtle differences in how a mechanism functions while promoting the goal of systematic understanding.

This study comes to bear upon two cases that reflect a number of these core methodological considerations: England and France in the 'age of empire' (1870-1914). First, during the long 19th century, both countries relied upon education to impart dominant cultural norms and functional skills to élites as well as the populace at large. Generally, officials consistently regarded education as a means to "[instill] a feeling of loyalty toward the state," and thereby ensure social and political stability.⁷¹ In this respect, policymakers deployed education as a mechanism, relying upon the two processes I have already identified as the 'engines' of identity construction. Second, and concomitantly, authorities in England and France sought to 'democratize' education, opening the doors to greater numbers from the lower strata of society while likewise expanding the number of institutions to meet the increase in demand. This served to extend the reach of the state as more students passed through the doors of state-controlled schools subject to their rules and curricula. Meanwhile,

⁷⁰ Tilly 571; and, Glennan, 53.

⁷¹ Rich, 69.

these reforms did little to fundamentally alter societal composition in each country. It is generally understood that these reforms were not designed to address social inequalities or enhance mobility. Policymakers were presented a choice during these periods of reform and rather than open up their schools to new practices and content they instead opted to retrench. So, while there were certainly more opportunities for those previously shut out of the education system, these opportunities did not equate to significant gains in social standing. If anything, as Gramsci observes, they were designed to address the competitive pressures of the industrial and imperial eras.⁷² Nevertheless, an increasing number of the general populace in France and England were brought into the education system, exposing them to dominant norms without disturbing the social, economic or political fabric. Additional reforms would follow along similar lines, reaching their apex of activity in the latter decades of the 19th century, intensifying particularly during the 1880s and again in the early 1900s.

Third, both countries were Great Powers with economic and strategic interests beyond their borders. As such, they were subject to many of the same competitive pressures and embroiled in the same race for colonies that defined international politics during the latter quarter of the 19th century in Europe, Africa and Asia. Fourth, England and France were nominally democratic and, after 1870, shared key political institutions that provided an

⁷² In Gramsci's words, "This social character is determined by the fact that each social group has its own type of school, intended to perpetuate a specific traditional function, ruling or subordinate." He continues, "The multiplication of types of vocational school thus tends to perpetuate traditional social differences; but since, within these differences, it tends to encourage internal diversification, it gives the impression of being democratic in tendency. The laborer can become a skilled worker, for instance, the peasant a surveyor or petty agronomist" (40). Subsequent research has offered compelling evidence supporting Gramsci's observations, finding that in Germany, France and Britain alike, the social impact of education reform in the mid-to-late 19th century served to reproduce and retrench in addition to rationalizing society for the sake of other, generally outward-looking ends (e.g. economic and imperial competition with neighboring Great Powers). Cf. *The Rise of the Modern Educational System: Structural Change and Social Reproduction, 1870-1920*, Detlef K. Muller, Fritz Ringer & Brian Simon, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1989).

expanding base of eligible voters a means to influence policy through the ballot box.

Furthermore, efforts to expand their empires and even wage war extracted blood and treasure from the populace. Policymakers in both countries therefore faced a number of incentives to reach broadly into the people and touch their hearts and minds, and inspire them to give what would be too costly – politically or otherwise – to take by force. Last, during this timeframe, both England and France experienced a shift in social and political power to the middle classes largely brought on by the effects of the Industrial Revolution. Though this change to the fabric of French and English society was not terribly destabilizing, it is nevertheless an event significant enough to disrupt any comparison of the functioning of education *vis-à-vis* identity if experienced in one case and not the other.

These commonalities alone are compelling reasons to study education as a mechanism for identity construction in France and England. There was a lot at stake, and education could resolve a number of social, political and economic problems by proliferating dominant cultural norms and cultivating useful skills. Yet there is an additional element that makes these cases all the more intriguing. If we narrow down identity into a smaller set of ideas, images and functional roles involving each country's empire, then these cases may also demonstrate the explanatory value of a mechanistic approach. In England, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Empire was a prevailing concern among both the élite and the general populace. And while we cannot claim that there was universal support for the Empire or for imperial expansion, there was nevertheless a widespread acceptance of the 'Englishness' of the Empire – especially among the governing and administrative élite. In other words, there was a vibrant imperial identity in England of the time. Contrastingly, the French empire was contested if not outright ignored even at the height of colonial expansion

during the 1880s. By all accounts, policymakers demonstrated wavering support, if not hostility, while the French people were far from enthusiastic supporters. These are not strong indicators of a viable, shared imperial identity in France. A puzzle could be made of this contrast between France and England; and while I would not go as far as to assert that education was the lone, decisive factor, one could certainly make a case for its relevance because of the reliance upon education for identity construction at the time. We would simply need to uncover variation in the cognitive and functional processes in order to lend some explanatory weight to education.

With this aim in mind, I limit the cases by privileging a particular identity outcome (imperialist) when tracing the cognitive and functional processes. This is not to say that I will ignore other significant cognitive frames or functional roles when exploring education as a mechanism. I will, however, hold them in the balance against their potential contribution to an imperial identity. To be clear, I do not set out to assert that education *created* imperialism. Rather, education provided a means to cultivate imperialist sentiments conducive to broader political and strategic objectives.

Focusing on the French and British empires as a subject for identity yields an additional benefit. The issue area resonates strongly with existing work in International Relations concerned with security studies and great power politics. Of special interest is Jack Snyder's theory about imperial overexpansion, which resolves the puzzle of 'self-defeating strategies' primarily through the interplay among domestic coalition partners.⁷³ Snyder finds that propaganda played a role in ensuring popular support for these strategies but he does not really develop this line of inquiry; education is overlooked entirely as a mechanism for the proliferation of ideas about the importance of empire to national security; and the impact

⁷³ Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1991).

of popular identities is therefore underdetermined. As Norman Rich writes, “Governments did not depend altogether on physical force to maintain themselves. Through official censorship, and manipulation of the press, they had means to control the minds as well as the bodies of men. But their most effective instrument for this purpose was compulsory education, which was instituted in all major European states during the second half of the nineteenth century.”⁷⁴ Eric Hobsbawm also notes that in the decades leading up to the race for empire (e.g. 1870-onward) popular nationalism (or, ‘middle class nationalism’) quickly caught wind across the educated strata as schools and universities became champions of the ideas framing the burgeoning nationalist discourse.⁷⁵ Historians, then, have found that policymakers turning toward the education system to promote a popular identity that would support the race for empire. Thus, Snyder’s explanation of overexpansion could be deepened by mapping preferences and behavior from what we know of the ideas introduced through schools and universities by policymakers bent on the pursuit of empire.⁷⁶

With these parameters in mind, this study of education as a mechanism for identity construction rests upon a process trace divided into three stages. I begin with a treatment of

⁷⁴ Norman Rich, *The Age of Nationalism and Reform, 1850-1890* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977), 68-69.

⁷⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolutions* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 135-6. For more on the link between nationalism and imperial expansionism in France and England, see Timothy Baycroft, *Nationalism in Europe, 1789-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998), 62-66.

⁷⁶ Surprisingly, mechanism-based scholarship has not deeply penetrated International Relations. Though I made mention of the Prisoner’s Dilemma in reference to Robert Axelrod’s theory of cooperation, models of this sort, in their construction and application, have not been located by the literature within mechanistic studies. Alexander George and Andrew Bennett give some attention to causal mechanisms in *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), largely nesting the treatment in the agent-structure debate though exploring the contribution of mechanisms to the micro-foundations of theory making (see Chapter 7 in particular). Otherwise, mechanism-based approaches have gained traction in somewhat obscure work on the Democratic Peace. Cf. A. Hasenclever & B. Weiffen, “International Institutions are the key: a new perspective on the democratic peace,” *Review of International Studies* 32 (2006), 563-585; Sebastian Rosato, “The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory,” *American Political Science Review* 97:4 (2003), 585-602; Alexandre Debs and H.E. Goemans, “War! Who is it good for? The relationship between war, regime type and the fate of leaders,” Manuscript, University of Rochester (2008). Finally, Alfio Cerami’s quite recent study of European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) is certainly worth mention. Alfio Cerami, “Social Mechanisms in the Establishment of the European Economic and Monetary Union,” *Politics & Policy* 39: 3 (2011), 1-33.

the structure of education in each country. Though structure is neither a part of the mechanism nor a process, *per se*, mapping the institutional landscape is important. By discerning the major trends in policy and practice, including the composition of the education system (e.g. primary, secondary, higher; public, private), we may determine the educational opportunities available to children and young adults during the timeframe in question. This is modeled on the four elements described previously: degree of centralization, types of schooling available, rules governing the curriculum, and measures impacting the composition of the student body.

The second stage involves the cognitive process of the mechanism itself. Here the focus shifts to curricular content and pedagogical techniques corresponding to the main institutions identified in the treatment of structure. Knowing what was taught uncovers the main currents of ideas and images imparted to the students, which, in turn, reveals the possibilities for the construction of cognitive identities associated with empire. Meanwhile, knowing how the material was taught provides some indication of whether these ideas and images were internalized or whether they were likely ignored or quickly forgotten.⁷⁷ Because education in France and England was functionally differentiated across the primary, secondary and higher levels, I will disaggregate content according to each level. Additionally, I will maintain a wide enough lens in order to present a picture of what students were learning at each level without assuming that the empire was necessarily involved or that the

⁷⁷ This borrows from the work of Basil Bernstein. His article “On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge” (1975) describes educational institutions as ‘agents of cultural transmission’ working through three ‘message systems’: curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation. He writes, “Curriculum defines what counts as valid knowledge, pedagogy defines what counts as a valid transmission of this knowledge, and evaluation defines what counts as a valid realization of this knowledge on the part of the taught” (85). Studying these message systems through textbooks and documentation of teaching standards as well as modes of evaluation should provide insight into what was being taught and what was being learned. Accordingly, curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation are three tracks along which we may trace the diffusion and absorption of ideas and worldviews contributing to a particular cognitive identity.

attention afforded to the empire was constant across time. This ensures that we are in better a position to assess the functioning of education as it relates to constructing an imperial identity while also taking in the dynamics of curricular change as educational priorities interacted with social and political factors in each country.

Paired with this broader investigation of curricular content is a closer consideration of lessons in history and geography. A key component of this stage involves surveys of contemporary history and geography textbooks in order to isolate the dominant themes involving the French and British empires. Because, for reasons given above, history and geography were particularly popular modes for exploring the empires and their subject peoples, history and geography texts are likely the best sources of a clear understanding of how the empire was formally taught and whether a coherent cognitive identity could coalesce around these ideas and images. This will be achieved by observing the treatment of themes involving the place of Britain and France in the world, the significance of their respective empires in the scheme of world and national history, the characterization of native societies and economies, and justifications for their respective empires. The choice of texts, however, will be made independently of any imperial content as I make no presumptions that imperial ideas and images populate the books. Instead, I will focus primarily on texts that were commonly used as well as those authored by notable historians and geographers of the day as this will provide the best indication of the significance of the empire and inform expectations about the efficacy of education in actually promoting an imperial identity. I will also sample textbooks across the time so as to gauge any changes in the presentation and tone of ideas and images relevant to the empire.

The third and final stage of the trace unpacks the functional process through which schools cultivated roles related to imperial governance and administration. The aim is to determine whether there are strong correlations between certain schools and/or fields of study and elite positions in the government and civil services. Where possible, I will tightly focus on roles that have a clear and direct connection to the empire, though I will also consider officials in a position to create policy even if the empire was but one of many portfolios that they held. This data is valuable because it can confirm a necessary connection between education and the governing elite such that rising to a position of authority required a certain type of schooling. In certain instances, we may identify a specific set of skills without which one could not hope to access the halls of power. In other instances, one's training might be of a general nature, yet equally essential. Either outcome is welcome because it would demonstrate that the functional process was at work in populating the government and administration.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A MECHANISTIC APPROACH TO EDUCATION AND IDENTITY

At the outset of this chapter, I argued that while there is a sense in the literature that education could play a part in explaining identity construction, we must improve upon attempts to elaborate how education assumes such a role. The key is to conceive of education as comprised of causal mechanisms that explain the relationship between education and identity. A survey of important themes in the sociology of education helped identify two such mechanisms, which we subsequently refined through a review of mechanism-based literature. It is the task of the following chapters to trace these cognitive

and functional processes with an eye toward the cultivation of an imperial identity in England and France during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The bridging across multiple disciplines promises to yield fruit. In particular, the introduction of a mechanistic approach will, I believe, solidify a place for education as a theoretical construct in International Relations, and promote the use of mechanisms to clarify processes behind identity construction.⁷⁸ These objectives strongly resonate with Petri Ylikoski's treatment of the value of mechanisms to explanation.⁷⁹ According to Ylikoski, mechanisms make four important contributions. The first is heuristic: mechanisms guide the search for causes of phenomena by providing insight into what one should look for and where one may find it. Second, mechanisms shore up causal claims because they articulate a logic by which events happen – a logic that may be held up to empirical observation. The third contribution involves presentation. Mechanisms distill and systematize information about how events occur, making it easier to understand and trace the causal claims that mechanisms represent. Last, harkening back to the point with which I concluded the last chapter, mechanisms advance scholarly knowledge. “The locus of generality (and explanatory power) in social scientific knowledge is considered to lie in the mechanisms schemes...When social scientific knowledge expands, it does not do so by formulating empirical generalizations that have broader application, but by adding or improving items in its toolbox of possible causal mechanisms.”⁸⁰ While some may contest Ylikoski's position vis-à-vis the limited value of meta-theories to the expansion of scientific knowledge, perhaps common ground may be achieved by focusing on the richness of understanding that

⁷⁸ For an interesting foray into a mechanism-based explanation of identity formation, cf. Jean Kellerhals, Cristina Ferreira and David Perrenoud, “Kinship Cultures and Identity Transmissions,” *Current Sociology* 50 (2002), 213-228.

⁷⁹ Ylikoski, 159.

⁸⁰ Ylikoski, 159. Cf. Mayntz, 255; and Hedstrom (2010), 8.

mechanisms can afford, especially when the starting point is mired in confusion and uncertainty.

CHAPTER THREE

STRUCTURE AND OPPORTUNITY IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH EDUCATION

“At this moment all the students of the lycées are explaining the same passage from Virgil.”

– Hippolyte Fortoul

Our trace of education as a mechanism for identity construction begins with a treatment of the structure of education in England and France. As I explained in the previous chapter, mapping the institutional landscape is vital because it reveals the educational opportunities that were available to children and young adults in each country. Without this knowledge, we could not be certain of the audience that would receive the ideas, images and skills transmitted through the school curriculum; and any assessment of the mechanism would be inaccurate. Furthermore, one would be awash in a sea of details involving content and function without a sense of how they relate systematically or temporally.

Structure defines the ‘rules of the game’ – the policies and practices that bring children into the schools, assign them a place within the institutional order, and determine the bounds of one’s education, including the standards of matriculation. Structure may be formal, including specified procedures or laws backed by the authority of a particular institution or the state, or informal, reflecting dominant cultural norms or socio-economic incentives. Structure can also be dynamic, changing over time to reflect new social and political priorities. In sum, structure entails the environment within which the mechanism’s

cognitive and functional processes operate, influencing how ideas and roles translate into identities.

In turning a blind eye toward these elements, one cannot truly appreciate how education works as a mechanism *especially* when they are not held constant. For example, in this study, we are primarily concerned with tracing education as a mechanism, but we are also interested in whether education may have cultivated imperial identities. One of the chief tasks, which I undertake in chapter 5, entails a review of ideas and images in history textbooks. Let us imagine that this review reveals that history texts consistently gave pride of place to imperial subjects, with not-so-subtle messages instructing schoolchildren to give the last full measure in order to protect it. One might be inclined to conclude that, by virtue of their history lessons, these schoolchildren would grow up with a strong sense of obligation to the empire. Such a narrow lens, however, might not capture the entire picture. Let us also imagine that these history lessons were nested in the curriculum of upper grades for students over the age of twelve. This in itself is not problematic, but what if we confront socio-economic pressures that tended to keep most children twelve and over out of school in order to enter the working world and contribute to the family income? This simple, informal incentive radically alters the initial assessment about the legacy of history lessons. While we can maintain the claim that history instruction was a *potentially* potent force for the construction of an imperial identity, we could no longer be confident that history instruction had a widespread effect because most children would never sit for these classes. Admittedly, this is a simplified example, but it drives home why we cannot place the cognitive and functional processes in a vacuum if we are to achieve any explanatory value from this study.

This is particularly true since education in our two cases underwent fairly significant changes during the time period in question, as we will discover.

The following chapter unpacks the structure of education in England and France from 1870 until 1914.¹ This is modeled on the four elements described previously: degree of centralization and hierarchy, types of schooling available, rules governing the curriculum, and measures impacting the composition of the student body. In doing so, I hope to provide a fairly complete picture of the dynamics behind education in each country that will subsequently frame out later treatments of content and function. The chapter is divided according to case, and followed by a comparative discussion of significant trends.

I. THE STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

The English education system during the 19th century was highly fragmented and stratified – to one observer, a “tangled welter of competing institutions and jurisdictions that remained largely uncoordinated.”² While it is certainly true that English education was fairly decentralized – many schools remained outside the direct influence of the state – a distinct, informal structure evolved by the first decade of the 20th century that provided a rather comprehensive net for England’s children and young adults. The gradual alignment of middle class and aristocratic interests drove the system forward and indirectly guided the involvement of the state by creating opportunities to smooth out wrinkles in the provision

¹ The range of schools under consideration is limited to England as opposed to Great Britain as a whole. This choice reflects both the distinctiveness of the Scottish education system, which was jurisdictionally separate and, arguably, more progressive, as well as the relative dominance of English schools within the British government and the Services. Omitting the Scottish system does leave our picture incomplete, but only marginally so. Without question, the reach of English schools into the general populace and, especially, the elite was longer. This makes the sole consideration of English schools reasonable, if not compelling.

² James G. Greenlee, *Education and Imperial Unity, 1901-1926* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 41.

of education for the poor and laboring classes. Furthermore, the dominance of the classical model assured that schools operated by different entities still had a star to guide them, leading to greater harmonization despite the absence of a strong, central authority.³ Even where alternatives arose, their value reflected a contribution made necessary by the limitations of the classical model.

The objective of this section is to determine the opportunities available to England's children. Because these entities are not static, some background is provided so that we may trace the trajectory of their constituencies and curricula. This will help define the parameters of the analysis that follows pertaining to the 'meat' of the mechanism. The schools are organized according to type rather than name so as to maximize exposure. Where significant disparities arise, they are noted. Otherwise, we should be confident in the degree of similarity within each group such that important trends subsume minor differences.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The public schools arguably constitute the core of England's education system in the 19th and early 20th century because of their close relationship with the education of England's political, administrative and professional classes. The label 'public', however, is misleading: they were neither open to all-comers nor controlled by public authorities. Instead, the public schools were exclusive, delineated by class, and catered to England's elite.⁴ They were expensive and, predominantly, boarding schools, drawing students from outside the area within which they were located. The public schools were also endowed rather than privately-

³ Cf. Rupert Wilkinson, *The Prefects: British Leadership and the Public School Tradition* (London: Oxford, 1964), 22.

⁴ Vivian Olgilvie, *The English Public School* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 7.

owned or run for profit, which generally granted independence from the state and local governments.

The origins of the modern public schools are tied to grammar schools that first emerged in the 12th century. These institutions were tasked with producing ‘perfect Latin men’ able to speak read and write Latin, which was essential to an elite career. The mastery of Latin grammar also bestowed upon the initiate a sort of magical quality in the eyes of the commoner, reinforcing the perception of superiority claimed by the educated over the ignorant.⁵ The grammar schools were initially under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and would remain so for quite some time.⁶ Their social role, however, was not limited to the activities of the church despite the fact that the schools overwhelmingly educated future members of the clergy. Though they were likely to be ordained, being a member of the clergy generally involved the function of a clerk or professional. At first, the landed gentry and aristocracy did not often patronize grammar schools; instead, they employed private tutors and educated their children at home. This trend began to change during the 18th century, and grammar schools became the preserve of the English elite. The modes and methods of the schools were increasingly associated with what was noble and good about Englishness that they were largely unquestioned and widely imitated. By the late 19th century, the public schools had achieved widespread public admiration as, one contemporary source explained, the ‘bosoms of our countrymen’.⁷

The nature of a grammar school education, steeped in the classics (e.g. study of Latin and/or Greek), would change little over the ensuing centuries. Despite the diminishing

⁵ Olgilvie, 13.

⁶ The sanction over masters of a grammar school would remain in the hands of the bishop until the reforms of 1869.

⁷ Mack, 135.

practical value of a classical curriculum to the economy of the Industrial Revolution, the ascending social significance of a classical education among the landed gentry and the aristocracy created powerful disincentives to introduce new, modern subjects into the curriculum. The endowments that supported the schools also made change quite difficult. Operating from the proceeds from money or property donated for the purposes of education, the grammar schools were subject to various legal provisions governing charities – provisions that made it rather difficult to change the terms of an endowment, some of which dated back centuries.⁸ The narrow classical curriculum of grammar schools was also, for a time, enshrined under English precedent due to a ruling by Lord Eldon in 1805. Eldon found that the attempt by the Leeds Grammar School to introduce ‘modern studies’ violated the conditions of its endowment. Thereafter, the grammar schools could petition Parliament to modify their constitutions, but this presumed willingness by key administrators within the schools to accept any modifications – something that was simply not there at the time, especially at bellwether institutions like Eton. According to Vivian Olgilvie, the Eldon ruling shored up the grammar schools against change, while contributing to a larger problem plaguing the grammar schools in the late 18th and early 19th centuries: the declining quality of education.⁹

Despite the enlarging preference for a classical education among the aristocracy, the grammar schools would not escape scrutiny for shortcomings in the method and mode of instruction. Criticism would intensify at mid-century as the middle class emerged as a vocal force for change. The middle class interest in expanding educational opportunities followed from socio-economic advancement in the late 1800s, made possible by the Industrial

⁸ Winchester, the oldest of the seven most prominent endowed schools, dates to 1382, and Eton to 1440.

⁹ Olgilvie, 116-7.

Revolution. Simply, middle class families were in a position to afford education heretofore reserved for the aristocracy; and, at first, they sought to reshape the grammar schools into institutions that better represented their perceived needs. A prominent argument targeted the classical curriculum, claiming that grammar schoolboys never actually learned anything, and certainly not anything of any clear practical value.¹⁰ Critics also found fault with the instructors themselves, who too often wanted in technique, passion, or both; and the extremes of the prefectorial system also came under fire for being dehumanizing if not outright dangerous when taken to extremes.¹¹ The line of attack against the classical curriculum was harder to maintain, especially since critics generally fell short when it came to a “novel or consistent program of reform.”¹² Additionally, the middle class began to value the social and political benefits of a classical education, even as they continued to lobby for the expansion of the curriculum to include subjects like the sciences and modern languages, because of access it provided to elite social and political circles.

Ultimately, demands for quality trumped curricular concerns; there was also a broader base of support for improving instruction. It was in this climate that the Clarendon Commission (1864) investigated seven of the oldest and most prominent schools in England (Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Charterhouse, Rugby, Westminster, and Shrewsbury), in addition to two well-regarded day schools (St. Paul’s and Merchant Taylors’). The subsequent reports criticized the schools for average academic achievement and instruction, and questioned the integrity of their finances. Nevertheless, the Commission praised the

¹⁰ Mack, 154.

¹¹ The prefectorial system was commonly employed by headmasters who turned over the maintenance of discipline to older boys, who in turn wielded tremendous power over the younger children, often without direct supervision. There was also a semi-formal system, known as ‘fagging’, designed to further subordinate younger boys to the older students. Essentially, the younger children acted as servants, responsible for menial tasks in the residences, at the beck and call of the older boys.

¹² Mack, 159.

schools for their contributions to character-training, making reference to the prefectorial and house systems, the emphasis on games, and the moral and religious instruction offered.

Though the Commission did suggest some broadening of the curriculum, the continued dominance of the classics was supported. The Public Schools Act (1868) responded to the complaints of the Clarendon Commission and, in addition to initiating administrative and financial reforms, suggested curricular changes as well. State intervention would remain limited to overseeing administrative reforms. The remaining reforms touching on the curriculum were left in the hands of the new administrators.¹³

The Act formally acknowledged the elite status of what became known as the ‘Great Schools’ (also, the ‘Clarendon Schools’, or the ‘Seven’). In doing so, the Act gave the impression to some that the public schools were somehow legally separated from lesser schools with a special role to play within the broader, informal English education system. In reality, the separation was only a matter of perception, though the public schools – and the Great Schools, in particular – would serve as models for other secondary schools.¹⁴ The lesser schools were willingly drawn into the orbit of the Greats, emulating their methods, including the emphasis on the classics, in large part to attract elite clientele.¹⁵ In the words of T.W. Bamford, “the really important boys were at Eton and Harrow, and education in the

¹³ This is not to say that the public schools were completely free from outside supervision. In 1862, Cambridge launched a plan by which the public schools would be inspected in order to ensure the quality of public school education in line with Cambridge standards. Additionally, Cambridge would eventually implement a teachers’ certificate program to improve the caliber of instruction – an endeavor which Oxford would join in 1873, under the auspices of the Oxbridge Schools Examination Board. Oxford also deployed inspectors, but not until 1876, and then limited to one school (Roach(1971), 107; 239). The University of London likewise developed a Matriculation examination for a Certificate. The leaving exam helped provide a signpost for secondary schools, and thereby forced some change on secondary schools from above (Roach (1971), 259). John Roach, *Public Examinations in England, 1850-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1971).

¹⁴ Stephens, 48; cf. Olgilvie, 5.

¹⁵ Olgilvie, 101-4. T.W. Bamford observes that perception of a school as ‘elite’ was often the critical driver behind school attendance, though the architectural and pastoral environment also impacted school preference during this period. See T.W. Bamford, *Rise of the Public Schools: A Study of Boys’ Public Boarding Schools in England and Wales from 1837 to the Present Day* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1967), 13-15.

same school was obviously preferable, but it was the public school image as a type that was important, for similar schools produced similar products that spoke the same language.”¹⁶ It is at this point that the public school model effectively absorbed the grammar school.

Extending the reforms of the Public Schools Act required a follow-on study of the remaining 782 endowed schools, executed by the Taunton Commission in 1868. The Commission’s report noted significant variation in quality and availability across England, and even called for the establishment of a national secondary education system to correct for the shortcomings of the endowed schools. The Endowed Schools Act of 1869 created a Commission to monitor the allocation of existing endowments while managing monies distributed to state-supported schools. This had the effect of enshrining public school autonomy for solvent institutions and introducing some state influence among the public schools that needed financial assistance. The stipulations of pre-existing endowments, however, limited the capacity of the state to effect much in the way of curricular change, and the state was largely a non-factor in the public school system after the Public Schools Act.

In fact, the middle class exercised the greatest transformative influence over the public schools, largely through increased demand for educational opportunities. This led to a dramatic broadening of the pool of public schools, giving rise to a new vernacular to capture the distinctions between them. Beyond the Great Schools, there was a ‘short list’ for institutions with a claim to the same sort of pedigree of exclusiveness and aristocratic favor. The ‘long list’, or lesser schools, referred to those without the pedigree yet still emulated the short list model. The semi-official criterion for the long list was membership in the

¹⁶ Bamford (1967), 20.

Headmasters Conference.¹⁷ Each of these schools filled an important role in the last quarter of the 19th century and into the 20th: they cultivated the essential characteristics for positions of political authority. They were, essentially conduits that channeled young boys into the universities, the Services and the Army.¹⁸ And while they would remain vulnerable to criticism for what some believed was an outmoded curriculum, the public schools continued to provide an exclusive service vital to the strength of England's social fabric up to and beyond the First World War.

Private Schooling

England's private schools constituted an important underlying layer beneath the public schools. Private schools are similar in that admission was closed but, unlike public schools, private institutions were run for profit. We should not consider private schools as competing with public schools; rather, over time a sort of symbiotic relationship developed whereby private schools most often functioned as preparatory schools that provided the necessary foundation (e.g. basic knowledge of Latin or Greek) for study at a public school. This relationship also assured a similar curriculum, and encouraged growth to match the demand created by the expanding number public schools in the 19th century.¹⁹ Where this

¹⁷ The Headmasters Conference was formed in 1869 in order to ensure some uniformity among the public schools despite the absence of an overarching, official structure. In 1871, there were 50 schools on the Headmasters Conference List; in 1886, there were 79, and more than 100 in 1902 (243). Cf. William C. Lubenow, *The Cambridge Apostles, 1820-1914: Liberalism, Imagination, and Friendship in British Intellectual and Professional Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998), 9.

¹⁸ Cf. Donald Leinster-Mackey, "The nineteenth-century English preparatory school: cradle and crèche of Empire?" in *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism*, J. A. Mangan, ed. (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 59.

¹⁹ Donald Leinster-Mackay, *The Rise of the English Prep School* (London: Falmer Press, 1984), 3.

was not the case, private schools operated alongside public schools but because of their legal status they could, and often did, take greater latitude with the curriculum.²⁰

Private, preparatory school educations typically involved three basic ‘essentials’.²¹ First, the schools provided boys with the necessary foundation for classical study. Second, the schools divided boys according to age, which became known as ‘forms’, with the implication that subjects were gradually advanced in difficulty as one moved from a lower to a higher form. Third, preparatory schools boarded boys while attending, and often in the country. This served to wean children from their parents and bond them to the school and each other. In each respect, preparatory schools lived up to their name, and fulfilled important functions by ensuring that children were ready for the public school experience both in terms of character and intellect. The Clarendon and Taunton Commission Reports both lent a sort of official sanction to this role when they endorsed the segregation of boys by age into separate institutions in order to improve the quality of education and prevent younger boys from being preyed upon. This prompted the Great Schools and other lesser schools to raise the age of admission, leading to an increase in the population seeking preparatory instruction, which in turn spurred growth in the number of preparatory schools.

Arguably the success of their graduates validates the importance of preparatory schools to English education, particularly of the elite. Certain schools – Cheam (1645), Eagle House (1820), Temple Grove (1810), Twyford (1809) and Windlesham House (1837) – gained the greatest notoriety as particularly adept at fostering success while also providing a

²⁰ Windlesham House and Stubbington House are noteworthy examples because of their ties to the Navy. The introduction of examinations for all recruits in 1838, prompted the formation of these schools to prepare potential officers. Admittedly, their curriculum could not entirely evade the classics as the Naval exam did include an emphasis on Latin and Euclid, as well as English history, geography and scripture (Leinster-Mackay (1984), 61).

²¹ Leinster-Mackay (1984), 12.

higher quality academic and athletic environment.²² Others developed close relationships with prominent public schools (e.g. Summer Fields to Eton), which ensured the continued placement of students by virtue of their strong performance on entry examinations.²³

Dame schools, private elementary schools typically run by women, formed a subset of the preparatory school and provided essentially the same service. Dame schools were attractive because they were much smaller in terms of enrollment and often closer to home.²⁴ Admittedly, the quality of instruction in the classics suffered because of the lack of educational opportunities in the 19th century for middle class women, who typically ran the dame schools. This, and the increasing availability at the end of the century of better qualified male instructors – likely from Oxbridge, contributed to the crowding out of dame schools as preparatory institutions for England's elite.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION & STATE-SUPPORTED SCHOOLS

Education expanded for all classes during the 19th century, but the impetus to school the working classes reflected shared impulses to improve morality and character, and thereby shore up the social order. At the time, there was widespread agreement that greater opportunities should be opened up for the lower classes, but not through the Public Schools, necessarily. Some circles held that the lower classes were a breed apart and, therefore, should receive a separate education tailored to their nature and needs.²⁵ This was not a novel line of reasoning. Even the much revered Thomas Arnold, headmaster at Rugby

²² Leinster-Mackay (1984), 40.

²³ Leinster-Mackay (1984), 110-115.

²⁴ Leinster-Mackay (1984), 97-99.

²⁵ Bamford (1967), 253; Roach (1971), 35; J.S. Hurt, *Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes, 1860-1918* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 21.

(1828-41) and noted reformer, stressed separation on the grounds that the lower classes would not be able to fully appreciate and act upon the moral lessons found in a public school education steeped in the classics. "If my boys were of ordinary talents," he remarked in 1842, "with no marked fondness for reading, or in other words with a feeble intellectual appetite, then I should think that another kind of treatment was best for them; that a weak curiosity should be stimulated by a more agreeable knowledge, and that while the mind was incapable of receiving the benefits of a classical education, precious time and opportunities would be wasted by ostensibly forcing upon light soil a crop which requires the strongest and richest."²⁶ In true Platonic form, many headmasters at the public schools, including Arnold, believed that one could not invest capabilities in students through teaching if these capabilities were not already present in the child. Education could cultivate, but it could not create. This perspective also helps one appreciate that when headmasters spoke of 'community', they meant something exclusive to one's class because, in their view, the cultural and moral bonds would be strongest among 'like' groups, and strained if nonexistent among 'unlike' groups. The elite schools, therefore, became much more exclusive, leaving the education of the poor to better-suited institutions. To be clear, educating the poor and laboring classes was unquestionably a worthwhile endeavor to the Victorian aristocracy and schoolmasters of Arnold's ilk. One could hope to improve upon the moral character of those who, by virtue of their background, required it most. One simply needed to place them within the most appropriate environment.

England's elementary schools were thus primarily intended for the working classes. They were not primary schools by definition because they would provide all of the education

²⁶ Quoted in J.R. De S. Honey, *Tom Brown's Universe: The Development of the English Public School in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Quadrangle, 1977), 8-9.

that a majority of their students would receive. “Their purpose was essentially utilitarian: part protective in ensuring a basically literate and numerate workforce who knew and accepted its place in society; part response to the economic needs of an industrializing society.”²⁷ Prior to 1870, educational opportunities for those unable to attend private or public schools were largely limited to schools operated by the Church of England and other religious movements. Charity schools and Sunday schools dominated education in Britain during the 18th century. They typically focused on the ‘three R’s’ with a heavy dose of religion, but there were no uniform standards applied either vertically or horizontally. On occasion, they would also provide trade education as their chief audience was children of the working poor.

By the turn of the 19th century, Sunday schools were particularly prominent. The appeal was twofold.²⁸ First, Sunday schools freed children to work during the week while still affording some instruction in the three R’s. As the Industrial Revolution took hold in Britain during the late 18th century, the opportunities for work (and, most importantly, additional household income) increased, creating strong incentives for the working classes to resist schools that would take children out of the workforce and into the classroom. Second, Sunday schools invested in working class children some moral education in addition to the three R’s. From the perspective of the British aristocracy, upon whose contributions Sunday schools relied, Sunday schools could elevate the moral standing of the poor and cultivate English values, such as duty and obedience, thereby contributing to social stability.

There were alternatives to the Sunday school model in the early 19th century. Day schools, for example, increased the frequency of instruction while also allowing students to

²⁷ Mary Waring, “‘To make the mind strong, rather than to make it full’: Elementary school science teaching in London, 1870-1904,” in *Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum: Subjects for Study*, Ivor Goodson, ed. (London: Falmer Press, 1985), 121.

²⁸ Stephens, 4.

return home in the evenings, as opposed to boarding on the premises; however the day schools, too, were often under religious control. A second alternative to Sunday schools involved schools opened by businesses for the children of their employees. These schools largely catered to the mining and manufacturing industries and were structured on a part-time model so as to minimize the disruption to family income while offering education to a particularly vulnerable segment of the population. The 1830s also experienced the introduction of ‘ragged’, or industrial, schools to educate vagrant and orphan children. Largely located in urban centers and philanthropically financed, these sectarian schools focused on the three R’s as well as vocational training. Eventually, the ragged schools that received government funding were absorbed into the penal system and supervised by the Home Office, thereafter reclassified as ‘certified industrial schools’.

The system that grew up around charity schools, Sunday schools and day schools, was far from unified (denominationally). Perhaps more importantly, the quality varied and the coverage was uneven. In 1833, the state began to offer financial assistance to support the efforts of education-related and religious societies to remedy these flaws. The aid was supplemental and designed to defer some of the costs associated with establishing and running a school that largely catered to the poor, while also encouraging the expansion of education into areas previously beyond the reach of existing schools. The growth of the ‘voluntary schools’ – the label later applied to state-supported schools – necessarily expanded the state’s influence over education, as the schools became subject to official government inspection. This is noteworthy considering the aforementioned limited involvement by the state in education, but we must be careful not to overstate this influence as the most prominent public schools remained entirely independent.

British governments had heretofore resisted involvement in education. They were, according to W.B. Stephens, characteristically “suspicious of bureaucratic centralization and state intervention, and felt it unnecessary to emulate the mass system of state schooling adopted by some European countries for the purpose of strengthening centralized government, promoting national unity, encouraging economic development and buttressing ruling elites.”²⁹ Liberal concerns for the moral character of the poor and a growing fear of lower class agitation pushed the state to play a greater part in the provision of elementary-level education. The state’s role noticeably expanded in 1839, as most voluntary schools accepted state aid. This effectively created an English primary and secondary school system through the, albeit limited, extension of central authority. It also set in motion a process of secularizing the curriculum and professionalizing the workforce, which, as one would expect, increased tensions between the state and the religious authorities who commonly ran the schools.

Unfortunately, during the first half of the century, the voluntary schools were often unable to draw in those most in need of help: working class children.³⁰ This reflected, in part, some aversion by the religious authorities themselves; but the overriding reason was economic. Family need and, subsequently, parental pressure created strong incentives for children to enter the workforce. As noted, school attendance, even if desired by parents, necessarily deprived the family of much needed income. This meant that working class children were unlikely to attend schools without some sort of rule mandating compulsory attendance – assuming, of course, the capacity to enforce it. Associated fees complicated matters further by increasing the direct cost to the family. Oddly enough, for a time, middle

²⁹ Stephens, 77.

³⁰ Hurt, 4; 34-5.

class children populated state-supported schools because they appealed to the practical sensibilities of their parents who wanted an education their children could use, as opposed to that found in public or private schools oriented toward the classics.³¹ To them, the fees were not prohibitive and the loss of income was not a concern. Their numbers would dwindle, however, as the middle class came to recognize the greater value of a classical education. The eventual introduction of compulsory attendance would play its part as well, as middle class parents withdrew their children so as to avoid socializing with the lowest children of the town.³²

A series of measures during the 1850s and 1860s sought to address the children ‘left behind’ by the voluntary schools. Parliament clearly targeted the poor and sought to expand opportunities through industrial and reform school legislation that fit the sensibilities of working class parents who resisted the public school model because they believed it was neither practical nor culturally valuable.³³ Yet these measures did not acknowledge the strong incentives, created by poverty, to keep their children out of school. The prevailing view from the top held that the moral burden lay upon the parents to provide the best education they could afford, even if it meant sacrifice.³⁴ In 1862, a Revised Code was introduced, effectively strengthening the position of the state as not only a source of funding but the locus of educational standards. According to W.B. Stephens, “The Code thus represented a ‘crash course in literacy’ doing much (in England and Wales, at least) to raise standards in the basic subjects, curtail over-emphasis on religious instruction, improve attendance and ensure that

³¹ Hurt, 9-11.

³² Hurt, 55. The educational authorities would in fact cater to this stigma. For example, to allay fears of lower middle class parents of ‘contamination’ brought on by the influx of the poorest students, the London School Board developed a differential schedule based on one’s ability to pay which effectively segregated students by class (70-1).

³³ Hurt, 30-1.

³⁴ Hurt, 36-7.

all pupils were given proper attention.”³⁵ Schooling, however, remained voluntary until the 1870s; and there was variation geographically in the quality and provision of education. Both circumstances muted the impact of reforms, and subsequently inspired the Elementary Education Act of 1870.

According to Alan Penn, “Educationally, 1870 was a milestone in the field of elementary provision, marking as it did the time when a serious effort was set in train to provide schooling on a compulsory basis for all children.”³⁶ The prevailing hope at the time, writes another observer, “was to bring the social and educational outcasts of the nation into the schools.”³⁷ The Act of 1870 certainly represented the most concerted effort to date by the state to expand and improve the provision of education, particularly for the children of the poor and working class. Where there were gaps in the provision of voluntary schooling, additional schools would be created and administered by locally-elected school boards.³⁸ Furthermore, the new schools would fall under a grant system dependent upon meeting certain requirements regarding staffing and performance.

In actuality, the Elementary Education Act of 1870 was a compromise measure installing, effectively, a dual system that was largely voluntary and decentralized. New schools would be created only on the basis of need. Otherwise, voluntary schooling, likely offered by religious authorities, would remain in place. The Act, therefore, would not resolve concerns over the quality of instructors and the nature of the curriculum in the existing voluntary schools. The devolution of authority to local school boards could also impair efforts to improve quality. On the one hand, grants were initially awarded on a matching

³⁵ Stephens, 7-8.

³⁶ Alan Penn, *Targeting Schools: Drill, Militarism and Imperialism* (London: Woburn Press, 1999), 10.

³⁷ Hurt, 59.

³⁸ Membership on the boards was open – one of the most democratic institutions in all of England, in fact.

basis such that poorer localities were limited by what they could raise locally. On the other, there was tremendous pressure felt on the local level to base curricula on practical social value and cost, which ensured that many schools would offer only basic subjects like reading, writing and arithmetic.³⁹ There were also systemic problems. Tellingly, the state was reluctant to remove real obstacles to the working classes despite the apparent intent of the School Act.⁴⁰ Food for children while at school was not provided; and fees remained in place. Only in rare instances would they be waived.⁴¹ Also, there was no form of compensation for the income lost by placing children in school instead of at work. The poor, least-equipped to pay for education, were effectively taxed twice.

The sheer size and diversity of the elementary education ‘system’ put into place by the Act of 1870 made it difficult to manage from the center, and the state at the time was rather incapable of seeing through the provisions of the Act.⁴² Though the state attempted to make attendance compulsory, many children lived in areas where enforcement was near impossible. In 1876, only 46% of the population of England and Wales resided where attendance was nominally compulsory, mostly in London and other large cities.⁴³ Rural areas were simply beyond the reach of the authorities. On the whole, the state of play was uneven across England, where school provision and quality varied greatly – compounded further by the existing structures of authority over elementary education, namely the Church.

³⁹ Penn, 10.

⁴⁰ Hurt, 101.

⁴¹ School boards could remit fees or pay the fees themselves, but they faced an additional and significant disadvantage beyond the cost of the fee itself. Remitting too much in the way of fees would actually limit the amount they might receive as a grant from the state, because grants could not exceed the amount brought in by the board through fees in line with the states ‘doctrine of self-help’ (Hurt, 158). Lower fees diminished funding.

⁴² Stephens, 93.

⁴³ Leinster-Mackay (1984), 188.

Pressure to centralize increased during the 1890s, made more acute by similar reforms underway in France and Germany. The dilemma involved maintaining English distinctiveness while making the system more efficient.⁴⁴ The Bryce Commission on Secondary Education (1895) declared that the goal should involve organizing rather than harmonizing, while avoiding the unnecessary extension of state authority. Nevertheless, the Board of Education, formed through the fusion, in 1899, of the Education Department and the Science and Art Department, sought greater central control in order to improve Britain's competitiveness. However, the absence of will on the part of the government to fund a full-fledged system ensured that change would be slow and sporadic.⁴⁵ Prior to the creation of the Board of Education, the state's presence was primarily felt through the grant structure, the corps of inspectors (HMI's) and, after 1882, an annually amended code for elementary education issued by the Education Department and the Science and Art Department. No modifications to these instruments were made once the Board was created. The Board's power to effect its agenda was essentially limited to inspections and issuing grants.

Nevertheless, following the Act of 1870, real gains were accrued: elementary education became compulsory and free, state elementary and secondary schools were created and central government control expanded. The state was increasingly willing to use its control over funding to crowd out religious instruction on the grounds that it was impractical, as well as due to concerns over the adequacy of instructors at Church schools.⁴⁶ State-supported, voluntary schools also expanded rapidly in number after 1870, which is a clear indicator of both the weaknesses in the provision of education across England at the

⁴⁴ Christopher A. Stray, "From Monopoly to Marginality: Classics in English Education Since 1800," in *Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum: Subjects for Study*, Ivor Goodson, ed. (London: Falmer Press, 1985), 26-7.

⁴⁵ Stephens, 79.

⁴⁶ Stephens, 18; Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1971), 104.

time, as well as the positive impact of the Act itself in expanding educational opportunities.⁴⁷ Aside from the implementation of compulsory education for all children under the age of 10 in 1880, the next major innovation involved the introduction of free public elementary schooling in 1891. Taken together, these policies served to bring working class children into elementary schools controlled to some extent by the state, while also eroding the influence of religious authorities over education as their voluntary schools were effectively crowded out. Admittedly, the capabilities of teachers remained a pervasive weakness over the time period in question.⁴⁸ This meant that improving the quality of instruction was a work in progress, though a consistent goal to which the state remained committed, even within its limited means.⁴⁹

Higher Grade Schools

The ambition for elementary education in England was limited. The middle class was content to pay for the education of their children and resisted sending them to schools that received government grants. “They felt that they neither needed nor wanted the state aid which was recognized as inevitable for their social inferiors.”⁵⁰ This created a rather strong lobby against the expansion of state authority over the supervision and provision of education beyond what would be available for the poor. By the turn of the century, some were pressing for the vertical development of lower class elementary education through higher grade schools.

⁴⁷ Stephens, 85.

⁴⁸ Roberts, 107.

⁴⁹ Concerns over the quality of instructors and training in schools toward the end of the 1880s led to a revision in the 1890s of the grant structure such that performance influenced the type of grant (read: amount of money) received (Penn, 31-2).

⁵⁰ Roach (1971), 46; cf. Mack, 121.

Prior to 1902, England did not have a centrally organized or financed system of secondary education.⁵¹ In the late 19th century, however, economic considerations coupled with greater demand from the artisan and lower middle classes prompted change. Higher grade schools first emerged in 1876 as local school boards, often in urban centers, sought to expand opportunities for higher education for all comers, but especially for the poor. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 did not anticipate that students would stay into their teens, and generally the Education Department left the local school boards to resolve what to do with students upon leaving elementary school.⁵² Up to this point, one could only find advanced study (e.g. education beyond Standard VI) at the public schools, which were largely closed off to the working class. Higher grade schools would remedy this deficit, in theory. By the 1890s, 60 of these schools existed, concentrated in northern industrial cities like Sheffield and Manchester. These schools did receive some state support specifically targeted to science and technology under the auspices of the Department of Science and Art. The Technical Instruction Acts of 1890 and 1892 helped to ensure a steady revenue stream as long as technology was not the sole subject of instruction.

Their curricular focus was scientific and technical, though the primary goal was to respond to local demand for particular types of instruction.⁵³ Overall, the quality of instruction was high. The teachers were typically better than those found in elementary schools as they held greater expertise in their subjects. Further, their methods were, by and large, progressive in order to make the classroom experience interesting to the student.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Secondary schools referred typically to the schooling of children after the age of 10, as well as the education of children of the middle class and aristocracy, more generally.

⁵² Meriel Vlaeminke, *The English Higher Grade Schools: A Lost Opportunity?* (London: Woburn Press, 2000), 52.

⁵³ Vlaeminke, 36.

⁵⁴ Vlaeminke, 44-5.

Yet the higher grade schools would make few inroads into English education. Critics called for their closure on the grounds that the school boards had overstepped their authority, and there were certainly objections to the curriculum – which was not classically-oriented – and teaching methods – which were too ‘hands-on’.⁵⁵ In 1901, the Cockerton judgment declared that the higher grade schools were, in fact, illegal. Shortly thereafter, Parliament passed the Balfour Education Act (1902), creating a secondary school system, administered locally, based on the classical curricular model.⁵⁶ The brunt of the assault, however, was led by the newly-minted Board of Education. In an effort to make the higher grade schools redundant, the Board implemented provisions for secondary education in 1900, with some room for instruction in the sciences. Within five years, the Board introduced a four year course of general education as the foundation for a standardized secondary education curriculum acceptable to the establishment. ‘Special courses’ beyond this curriculum, such as those taught in the higher grade schools, would not be sanctioned by the Board. Essentially, the Board sought to fashion state-supported secondary schools after the public schools, despite local preferences otherwise.⁵⁷ An array of provisions touching upon what fee-based schools could and could not do made it very difficult for localities to sustain the higher grade schools financially. This, coupled with the efforts of the Board to subvert the curriculum, drove the higher grade schools out of existence by 1906. This signaled the triumph of the public school model for secondary education, which effectively

⁵⁵ Vlaeminke, 14; 135.

⁵⁶ Ironically, these new schools would successfully modernize their curriculum to include the sciences while avoiding the stigma of vocational instruction. They were, however, fee-based, which was problematic for the poor until 1906, when scholarships were increasingly made available.

⁵⁷ Vlaeminke, 186.

closed off advanced education to the lower classes, and made the elementary schools a strictly lower class preserve.⁵⁸

THE UNIVERSITIES

The university system in England was small and highly concentrated around the ancient universities, Oxford and Cambridge, throughout much of the 19th century. In fact, there were no alternatives outside of Scotland until 1829, with the founding of King's College London. University College London (c. 1836) and the University of London (1836) followed, and thereafter, no new universities were established until Royal Holloway (1879), which was actually a college for women. This meant that Oxbridge dominated university education in England, while exercising tremendous influence over subordinate institutions – namely, the public schools – which sought to place students at the ancients. Smaller regional, medical and vocational (including engineering) colleges dotted the landscape, but none could be considered of any great significance until, in some instances, they became one of the civic universities. Even at the century's turn, there really was very little competition for Oxbridge, especially if one hoped to matriculate to the Services or rise to a position of political and social authority.

This was not always the case, however. In the 18th century, England's ancient universities “were backwaters in national life, characterized by dull and mechanical teaching,

⁵⁸ Bamford (1967), 261. As a point of note, at the turn of the century, public schooling began at age 10 or 12 and would last until university age, generally between 16 and 18. Meanwhile, preparatory schooling began around 7 or 8. For the laboring classes who sent children to elementary school, the age range was much wider, beginning at 4-5 and sometimes ending at 14 to 16 – though economic necessity made such late attendance a rarity as children were pressed into the workforce. Cf. Roach (1971), 245.

an absence of intellectual zeal and Anglican domination.”⁵⁹ Interest in university education was on the decline until the early 1800s, when renewed dedication to scholarship revived enthusiasm, particularly among the middle class.⁶⁰ Yet the momentum waned by mid-century. Middle class agitation for a more practical curriculum targeted the universities as much as the public schools. Meanwhile, the ancients failed to respond, instead preferring to cement the classical curriculum. Popular perception of the universities was also negative. Religious tests were still in place; the atmosphere was thick with Victorian, aristocratic values; and there was some concern about the likelihood of employment in a professional world that appeared to outpace the staples of an Oxbridge education: law, government and the church.⁶¹ Oxford’s reputation for “habits of extravagance and dissipation” likely also contributed to sagging enrollment.⁶²

Most observers agree that mid-century reforms were far-reaching, if gradual. Both Oxford and Cambridge initiated commissions empowered with altering the statutes to reflect modern socio-economic conditions – namely the rise of the middle class and the decline of the landed gentry. The results generally touched on finances as well as internal arrangements to promote better quality instruction and a freer intellectual climate. According to Reba Soffer, these latter changes helped make Oxbridge ‘modern’, signaling a “willingness to become a transitional, rather than a recalcitrant, retreat in which undergraduates would learn to govern themselves so that they could lead others.”⁶³ The improvement of the Oxbridge

⁵⁹ Stephens, 51.

⁶⁰ Lawrence Stone, “The Size and Composition of the Oxford Student Body, 1580-1909,” in *The University in Society, Volume I: Oxford and Cambridge from the 14th to the Early 19th Century*, Lawrence Stone, ed. (Princeton: Princeton University, 1974), 59.

⁶¹ J.P.C. Roach, “Victorian Universities and the National Intelligentsia,” *Victorian Studies*, 3: 2 (Dec. 1959), 131-3; Stone, 60-62.

⁶² Stone, 61.

⁶³ Reba Soffer, *Discipline and Power: The University, History, and the Making of an English Elite, 1870-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1994), 17.

experience also included some broadening of the curriculum to include law, the sciences and history, which responded, though modestly, to the appeals of the middle class. Taken together, these reforms contributed to a relatively dramatic and sustained expansion of the student rolls.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Oxbridge would remain under pressure to further broaden their curricula. Additionally, the opening up of fellowships and scholarships to competitive exams served to close off opportunities previously available to the poor and working class.⁶⁵ This helped to entrench the Victorian value system, which included a strong aversion to practical studies and anything that smacked of vocational education.

The trajectory of reform at the ancients was fairly stable up to the First World War. The battle over the curriculum was fought internally among the dons, while the classics emitted such a strong gravitational pull that even when new subjects were offered, it was often a struggle to entice students to take them up. At the turn of the century, the children of gentlemen, esquires and clergy comprised the key constituencies of Oxford and Cambridge, though the latter tended to be more thoroughly populated by the children of the professional and educated middle classes.⁶⁶ Annual admissions had risen dramatically since the early years of the 19th century – increasing from approximately 200 in 1800 to 900 in 1900⁶⁷ – though the numbers for both universities plateaued from the 1890s onward.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Oxbridge accounted for 1/3rd of university attendance in England in 1900.⁶⁹

We should keep in mind that university education at one of the ancients was unrealistic for much of the population. It was either too expensive or too time consuming or

⁶⁴ Stone, 65.

⁶⁵ Roach (1959), 153.

⁶⁶ Stone, 20; 93. Cf. Lubenow, 93.

⁶⁷ Lubenow, 92.

⁶⁸ Stone, Tables 1A and 1B, 91-2.

⁶⁹ Stephens, 114.

too demanding, relative to prerequisite knowledge. While the Oxbridge share of university attendance in England sat at nearly 33% in 1900, this figure should be qualified by its significance to the whole. Lawrence Stone estimates that, in 1910, the percentage of young men admitted to Oxbridge, when compared to the entire cohort of males of the same age in England and Wales, is but 0.20 %.⁷⁰ Not only does this amount to a very small percentage of the overall population of England and Wales (approx. 0.0002% of 36.1 m), it reinforces the commonly accepted observation that Oxbridge was largely an elite preserve prior to and for decades after the turn of the century.

University attendance was on the rise in the latter decades of the 19th century, facilitated by the growth of new universities created to meet an increasing demand for higher education – much like the experience of the public schools in response to the heightened interest of the middle class. Throughout the 1800s, the University of London played an important role in opening up the education system as well as its curriculum, while also improving the standards of secondary schools. The University was particularly successful in appealing to groups otherwise excluded from Oxbridge. Owens College (est. 1851) served a similar function in provincial areas, providing a real alternative to Oxford and Cambridge both in terms of location as well as curriculum. In fact, the provincial college was the engine behind the expansion of higher education in England. These civic, ‘red brick’ universities, as they were known, cropped up in larger urban centers in order to enlarge the radius of university education beyond London. By 1909, there were six civic universities in total: Victoria – formerly Owens and later the University of Manchester (1880), Birmingham (1900), Liverpool (1903), Leeds (1904), Sheffield (1905), and Bristol (1909). And, in large

⁷⁰ Stone, Table 12, 103.

part, they were populated by the middle class, which found their broader, modern curricula appealing.

The civic universities tended to pay greater attention to the applied sciences alongside the traditional disciplines. This is partly due to their ties to medical and engineering schools which valued curricula involving the natural and physical sciences. There is also a simple argument to be made about supply meeting demand: offering a diversified curriculum would entice students who found the Oxbridge curriculum unsatisfying and out of touch. Sarah Barnes carefully reminds us, however, that the civic universities embraced a ‘dual mission’ involving both a liberal and a modern, practical curriculum.⁷¹ The ‘academic drift’ of the Oxbridge curriculum made certain that even the newer universities adhered to the dominant Victorian preference for the classics. To be clear, the civic universities did make available a curriculum broader than what was found at the ancients. Their work was both theoretical as well as practical, and by the dawn of the 20th century an “extraordinary institutional diversity” could be found offering technical, vocational, professional *and* liberal educations.⁷² Nevertheless, it appears that a certain risk was attached to pursuing these routes if one wanted a place in government and the services. The grip of a generalist liberal education in the classics was simply too strong. Students, when given the choice, generally gravitated toward the classical, liberal subjects. On the eve of the First World War, for example, while 17% of students at the newer universities read the applied sciences, one third read the arts.⁷³ Thus, we should acknowledge that the civic universities were legitimate options in the 19th and early 20th century, validated by the overall increase in university

⁷¹ Sarah V. Barnes, “England’s Civic Universities and the Triumph of the Oxbridge Ideal,” *History of Education Quarterly* Vol. 36: 3 (Fall, 1996), 274-5.

⁷² Soffer, 28-9.

⁷³ Stephens, 115.

attendance during this period.⁷⁴ By all accounts they took their research and teaching agendas seriously. Yet the novelty of the civic university education must be tempered by the undeniable popularity of subjects modeled on the Oxbridge curriculum.

The Colonial College

Unlike France, Britain did not have a dedicated professional academy for colonial administrators. Haileybury was the erstwhile training facility for the East India Company, but its services were no longer required after the East India Company ceded authority to the British government, and competitive exams became the basis for recruitment. Some, like Sidney James Mark Low, advocated for an ‘Imperial Seminary’, but their calls remained unanswered because a sort of staff college was deemed unnecessary. “Up to the end of Empire the British believed, as with their predecessor civil services of Rome and China, that an education in the humanities would be an advantage to their overseas administrators in the exercise of the art (never the science) of imperial administration.”⁷⁵ In 1887, a school was founded in Hollesley Bay, Suffolk, tasked with helping classically educated schoolboys adapt to colonial life. The Colonial College, as it was called, offered largely vocational training in, for example, veterinary medicine, carpentry, and surveying. This was, however, a private venture without any official sanction that addressed an entirely different need.

Between 1880 and 1914, approximately 3 million adult males emigrated from the United Kingdom, of which nearly 300,000 could be considered ‘gentleman emigrants’: well-

⁷⁴ Stephens estimates that, from 1861 to 1911, the percentage of university students in the population rose from .02% to .06% in England (119).

⁷⁵ Anthony Kirk-Green, *Britain's Imperial Administrators, 1858-1966* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 18.

born, well-educated, and relatively affluent.⁷⁶ The increase in educational opportunity from mid-century onward created a glut of ‘younger sons’ and ‘supernumerary gentlemen’ brought up in the best way but lacking practical skills and few job prospects. To those in pursuit of work, wealth and adventure, emigration to the Empire was an attractive option in the last quarter of the 19th century. Robert Johnson’s Colonial College therefore provided a potentially valuable service, while also drawing attention to the allure of the Empire through artifacts and memorabilia as well as notable lecturers on imperial subjects. In the scheme of things, however, the College left a small footprint and closed its doors in 1905, overwhelmed by debt.

II. THE STRUCTURE OF FRENCH EDUCATION

The French school system of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was more complex and centralized to a far greater degree than England’s school system, and increasingly so as the century wore on. Additionally, French education was dominated by the state and the Church, entities that varyingly contested each other’s authority but generally did not operate at cross-purposes. The legacy of the Revolution tended to ensure, however, that the state took the lead in advancing a progressive agenda that promoted education for the sake of social harmony, popular enlightenment and economic prosperity on a national scale. This is not to say that education became a tool of *déclassement*. While the Jacobins may have hoped for true economic and political equality, the regimes that followed – monarchical, imperial and republican, alike – regarded education as a stabilizing force. As in England, the French

⁷⁶ Patrick Dunae, “Education, emigration and empire: the Colonial College, 1887-1905,” in *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism*, J.A. Mangan, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University, 1989), 195. Cf. Symonds, 10.

education system was a means to manage merit without tearing apart the social fabric, strained as it already was by stratifications rooted in the divide between Paris and the provinces as well as the Industrial Revolution. In the words of one observer, “The schools were also to serve as agents of the centralizing state. By means of uniform instruction, employing the French language, diverse local communities were to be more effectively integrated into the national whole.”⁷⁷ In fact, education took on a unifying function, promoting from the center an idea of France meant to guide her people in their relations with each other and, to a lesser extent, the world.

While we are most interested in the state of the system from 1870 until 1914, French education was a work-in-progress throughout the century, and there were fairly significant reforms in the 1830s and 1860s with which education policy under the Third Republic had to contend. Nevertheless, the core components remain fairly stable up to and beyond 1870, with the albeit significant exception of the exclusion of the Church from the education system in 1903. This structural continuity, however, belies the internal struggle to modernize French education and align it with the republican ideology. This warrants a closer look at the process of reform as it touched upon the primary, secondary and higher levels in order to better appreciate how the stage was set for the ongoing efforts to shape the French popular identity.

⁷⁷ Roger Price, *A Social History of Nineteenth-Century France* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 308; Weber (1976), 332-6.

PRIMARY SCHOOLING IN FRANCE: TRAINING THE MASSES

The expansion of primary education in France began in earnest with the Restoration when, in February, 1816, the government decreed that each commune must provide primary education and ensure that the poor could attend for free. Further, the national budget increased the funds allocated to supporting primary education, including the construction of new schools in the provinces where they were needed the most. The most intense period of growth occurred between 1829 and 1886, when the number of schools nearly doubled.⁷⁸ Much of the momentum up to midcentury reflected the expansion to communes previously lacking schools.⁷⁹ Meanwhile, the number of students grew twofold, with the most rapid surge occurring from 1837 until 1847.⁸⁰

Another important innovation of this era was the creation of the *écoles primaires supérieures* in accordance with the Guizot Law (1833). The *écoles primaires supérieures* effectively extended primary education, and were capable of keeping students until the age of 17. The schools were divided into two sections – general and professional – with a majority of students taking the general curriculum, which meant that their education was more academic than practical in nature. The *écoles primaires supérieures* differed from the secondary schools (*lycées*) because they were tailored to industry and commerce, training clerks and junior supervisors. “They were accordingly very successful; they got the most ambitious pupils of the primary schools.”⁸¹

⁷⁸ Raymond Grew & Patrick Harrigan, *School, State, and Society: The Growth of Elementary Schooling in Nineteenth-Century France – A Quantitative Analysis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1991), 31-2.

⁷⁹ Grew & Harrigan, 34.

⁸⁰ Grew & Harrigan, 55-6.

⁸¹ Theodore Zeldin, *A History of French Passions, Volume Two: Intellect, Taste and Anxiety* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1993), 191-2. By the 1860s, *écoles municipales* and the *cours complémentaires* would supplement the *écoles*

By midcentury, primary schooling for boys was quite common, even in rural areas.⁸²

Availability, however, did not necessarily equate to attendance. Distance remained an obstacle especially for girls whose schools were less common, at least until the 1860s. The further away the school was, the less likely a child would attend. Seasonal factors also came into play in rural regions, which made attendance irregular as children temporarily left the schoolroom to work the fields during harvest.⁸³ Other concerns included the balance between economic opportunity and the cost incurred from the loss of income from child labor. Similarly, poverty inhibited the adequate supply of learning materials among the rural children. And, finally, parental perception of the value of education, beyond loss of income, was a significant influence on whether their children would attend school – this included perceptions of the use-value of what the schools purported to teach children.⁸⁴ In this light, as James Lehning observes, “It seems remarkable, given the catalog of reasons that rural children would not attend, that there were any improvements in primary education. But school attendance was rising all the same.”⁸⁵ This growth can be rightly attributed to the

primaires supérieures as instructional facilities for the applied sciences and arts. These ‘higher primary schools’, initially conceived by Guizot as a means to avoid the problems of a legion of over-educated, under-employed, dissatisfied *déclassé*, would ultimately compete for students with secondary schools, especially those that offered a ‘special’ (or, essentially, vocational/professional) education. Cf. Price, 338.

⁸² In rural France, historically, education was informal and chiefly concerned with practical skills mixed with a bit of folklore. During the 19th century, particularly under the Third Republic, “the school became...one of the favored sites for the negotiations that went on between rural culture and French culture, a place that moved to the foreground in the creation of the ‘French’ nation. Entering the classroom became a part of the process by which country dwellers were to be civilized and brought into the French nation” (James R. Lehning, *Peasant and French: Cultural conflict in rural France during the nineteenth century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995), 132). Cf. Antoine Prost, *Histoire de l’enseignement en France, 1800-1967* (Paris: Armond Colin, 1968), 102.

⁸³ Deborah Reed-Danahay, *Education and Identity in Rural France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996), 113. Cf. Colin Heywood, *Growing up in France: From the Ancien Régime to the Third Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2007), 222.

⁸⁴ Lehning, 134. Deborah Reed-Danahay points out that there is some disagreement among educational historians about the strength of popular demand for education and the openness of rural provinces to educational mandates from the center. However, she concludes based upon relatively recent studies of the Alpine region of France as well as Brittany that the peasantry embraced universal education because it taught their children how to speak and write French. Cf. Reed-Danahay, 111-12.

⁸⁵ Lehning (1995), 135.

increased role of the state in securing the penetration of primary education into rural areas and in moderating the economic incentives facing parents relative to child labor.⁸⁶

Importantly, the efforts of the state were also supported by a shift in the beliefs of parents relative to the value of education and schooling for their children. By 1860, it would appear that schooling for boys was near universally accepted and opportunities for girls were expanding behind changes ushered in by the Industrial Revolution. In this respect, the change in parental disposition can be linked in part to an exposure to ‘urban influences’. While the question of whether labor could be spared at home was typically paramount, parents came to realize that the “futures [of their children] depended on the growing cities and the role of educational skills in that milieu.”⁸⁷ This change in perspective appears to be confirmed by the disproportionate increase in *certificats d’études* awarded in urban centers when compared to rural areas during the 1860s and 1870s.⁸⁸

Primary Schooling under the Third Republic

The defeat at the hands of the Prussians in 1870 triggered interest in improving perceived deficiencies of primary education in France. In the words of Émile Zola, ‘France will be what the primary teacher makes it.’⁸⁹ In particular, efforts concentrated on improving the curriculum and attendance – which essentially involved perfecting the reforms underway

⁸⁶ In 1841, a law on child labor limited working hours while also mandating that children under 12 receive instruction either at midday or in the evening. Unfortunately, the law was not often enforced and the conditions that the children faced within factories limited their attentiveness (largely due to fatigue). Yet, the law has been interpreted as representing a growing awareness on the part of the state of the socio-economic obstacles children faced in terms of securing their attendance in schools (Price, 312; and, Parry & Girard, 35). Zeldin (1993) also notes that what appeared to matter most in encouraging poor and working class parents to send children to school was the payment of wages and family allowances to offset the lost income (297). The communes also established *caisses d’écoles* to assist poor children with their expenses and supplies.

⁸⁷ Lehning (1995), 138.

⁸⁸ Heywood (2007), 229.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Zeldin (1993), 151.

since the Guizot Law that fostered the aforementioned rapid expansion of the primary education system. Under the Third Republic, new initiatives did not address availability in as much as ‘type’, in that newly-created schools were intended to offer alternatives in terms of content rather than accessibility.⁹⁰ The state also moved to consolidate control over primary schools. In certain respects this involved crowding out the influence of the Catholic Church; in others, it meant ensuring uniformity among teaching methods and syllabi. Last, the state sought to ensure that children actually attended. Even where schools were available, attendance was simply ‘too brief and too irregular’.⁹¹

A series of measures passed during the 1880s to advance these ends, some of which were fairly significant in light of the prior, relative disengagement of the state and the subsequent freedoms exercised by local authorities. In 1881, public primary schools were made completely free (Law of June 16), though certain courses remained subject to tuition – namely, classical studies available for the purpose of preparing children for advanced study beyond primary schooling. Within a year, education became compulsory for all children between the ages of 6 and 13 (Law of March 28, 1882). The Law of March 28 also centralized control over the content of primary education while abolishing religious instruction in all public schools. An order from the Minister of Public Instruction later that year (July 27, 1882) extended central control over content to the organization of instruction, insisting on absolute uniformity so that the same subject would be taught at the same time of day at any school in all of France. Additional legislation sought to bridge any lingering gaps in the provision of primary education, first by requiring primary schools in all towns and villages (Law of March 20, 1883), and, second, by offering state subsidies to primary schools

⁹⁰ Grew & Harrigan, 47.

⁹¹ Prost (1968), 101.

(Law of June 20, 1885). Last, the Law of October 30, 1886, promised to further lengthen the reach of the state into primary schools by formalizing provisions for state inspection as a means to control schools and teachers. Interestingly, though perfectly in step with the political climate of the time, the law also infused primary education with patriotic themes for the expressed purpose of imparting a republican, daresay nationalist, civic culture.

The steps taken in the 1880s cast a long shadow over primary education in France. Little in the way of its structure or content would change up to the Second World War. “The reason,” Joseph Moody explains, “was simple. Since primary was seen as a separate unit for the mass of the people, not leading to further education but providing sufficient equipment in seven years that must last a lifetime, it had an encyclopedic character and there was no awareness that courses should change in response to new conditions.”⁹² Having largely satisfied the demand for universal education – 90% of the departments had achieved full enrollment during the 1880s, while the number of communes without a primary school declined from 312 in 1876/7 to zero in 1886/7 – the emphasis instead fell upon improving the quality of instructors (by implementing a higher *brevet*) and expanding the scope of opportunity for children through, for example, advanced primary education (which was in higher demand since the 1870s).⁹³ These were objectives valued by the state and parents alike.

⁹² Joseph N. Moody, *French Education Since Napoleon* (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1978), 98.

⁹³ Grew & Harrigan, 79. Cf. Hayes, 56. Data on primary schools in communes from Prost (1968), 108.

SECONDARY SCHOOLING: A WAY-STATION FOR THE ÉLITE

The roots of France's modern secondary school system lay with the colleges and *écoles centrales* of the *ancien régime*, subsequently recast by Napoleon in 1802 for the purpose of providing the Empire with élite administrators and soldiers. Secondary schools thereby constituted the 'core' of French education in the early years of the 19th century.⁹⁴ Classically-oriented *lycées* comprised the upper tier, while communal colleges and private boarding schools provided opportunities for secondary education of a lesser quality and a narrower curriculum. After the fall of Napoleon, the subsequent regimes did not seek to alter the system. On the one hand, they lacked a viable alternative; on the other, they recognized that the system still fundamentally favored the social and cultural elite.⁹⁵ In short time, secondary schools became closely associated with careers in public service and the liberal professions, while also serving as a mechanism for cultural transmission and assimilation of the rising middle class into the traditional bourgeoisie. In the spirit of the Revolution, they also figured prominently in refashioning of the élite from one based on patronage and familial connections to one based on merit. This latter function fit within the broader visions of French education advanced throughout the 19th century by Guizot, Duruy and Ferry. Through the secondary schools, the state could fashion a 'legitimate aristocracy', an élite whose position above the masses was secured by their education rather than by property or birthright.⁹⁶ This claim was not simply moral, but vocational as well. The secondary schools provided essential training for the professions, including but not limited to government

⁹⁴ Moody, 14.

⁹⁵ Moody, 17.

⁹⁶ R.D. Anderson, "Secondary Education in Mid Nineteenth-Century France: Some Social Aspects," *Past & Present* 53 (Nov. 1971), 121-4.

service. Ultimately, preparation was the core task of the secondary schools from the point of their reimagining under Napoleon through the Third Republic.

Secondary education in France divided along two lines: *lycées* and municipal colleges, the latter being funded and managed by town councils. The two were functionally equivalent in terms of the education offered; and, in theory, both were open to everyone as long as one could afford the fees. There were neither entrance exams nor academic prerequisites. Not all secondary schools, however, were created equal. The *colleges* generally catered to children of a particular municipality, and therefore a broader clientele that included the local peasantry and the *petit bourgeoisie* (e.g. small shopkeepers).⁹⁷ The *lycées*, contrastingly, were regionally-focused, if not nationally. For example, the five Parisian *lycées* – foremost among them, Henri IV and Louis-le-Grand – drew students from across all of France, which also made them rather exclusive. This exclusivity was also underwritten by the cost of tuition that some students at the *collèges* could not afford, though the costs were not so exorbitant that the middle class could not attend. In fact, the middle and upper middle classes comprised the common stock of both the *lycées* and the *collèges*. Interestingly, small shopkeepers were particularly prominent among the *lycées* and *collèges*. This was facilitated in part by the relatively lower cost of day-schooling; but there was also an important cultural dynamic at play. According to R.D. Anderson, “Families which had raised themselves above the working class sought to mark this differentiation by buying a more extended education, and in most French towns the lycée or college was the only public school above the elementary level.”⁹⁸ Admittedly, this also opened up secondary schools to students who had little real interest in (or ability to) seeing their education all the way through. Many students of

⁹⁷ R.D. Anderson, “New Light on French Secondary Education in the Nineteenth Century,” *Social* 7: 2 (May, 1982), 152.

⁹⁸ Anderson (1982), 154.

secondary schools never actually completed their studies because this was never the intent or because they failed the *baccalauréat*. Only government officials, members of the liberal professions and the more successful businessmen and landowners appeared to appreciate the ‘virtues of secondary education’ because the *lycée* “provided their sons with careers which would help them to preserve their social status.”⁹⁹ Rural families and the working poor, who were the least well represented among students at the *lycées* and *collèges*, also tended to be the first to drop out short of the *bac*.¹⁰⁰ The issue was not so much that a poor child could not endure. Rather, their sustained presence was against the norm – an “[indication] of exceptional ambition, luck or talent.”¹⁰¹

The guideposts for the secondary schools were set by the examination system. First and foremost was the *baccalauréat*, which one took upon completing one’s secondary education. Second were the competitive exams required by the *grandes écoles* and universities. The *lycées* and the *collèges* alike fashioned their curriculum to prepare their students for these examinations. On the one hand this perpetuated classical studies at the secondary level; on the other, it opened up the curriculum to modern subjects, including the sciences, which suited the entrance examinations for the more specialized schools.

In fact, there were two general courses offered at the *lycées* and the *collèges*. The first was ‘classical’, which included literary subjects and mathematics in addition to Latin; the second was ‘special’, which involved modern and applied subjects and was shorter in

⁹⁹ Price, 343.

¹⁰⁰ This was partly due to the cost, though the benefits were also weighed in the balance. As the perception of relevance to their lives dimmed, the likelihood of withdrawal increased (Price, 342). Cf. Zeldin (1993), 273.

¹⁰¹ Anderson (1982), 162.

duration.¹⁰² Aside from the particular nature of the content, prestige separated the two courses. Simply, a classical education was an essential bridge to the *grandes écoles*, and its rigor carried with it a certain cache which modern subjects lacked. Meanwhile, students who entered the special program were typically drawn from a lower stratum of society.¹⁰³ Figures taken from the 1864 inquiry into secondary education affirm that, among the *lycées*, classical studies were more popular than the special; among the *collèges* the disparity between the two subjects still favored classical studies but was comparatively less severe.¹⁰⁴ One's career ambitions were key determinants behind whether one took up special or classical studies. Once again, data from the 1864 inquiry is quite revealing. Career expectations of students in the special course overwhelmingly involved becoming shop-keepers (or, '*petit commerce*') to the tune of 30.8%.¹⁰⁵ Meanwhile, among the classical course, there was much more of a balance. *Petit commerce* still fared well at 12.4%, but proportionately similar expectations of careers in law (16.5%), the Army (9.7%) and science (12.1) show that students in the classical course tended to envision different paths ahead. To be fair, the prominence of classical studies was not simply a function of demand. Victor Duruy, for example, recognized the link between the classical course and the cultivation of France's élite. 'The humanities,' he observed, 'which require much time and money, will preserve the privileges of the upper classes'.¹⁰⁶ Once again we are reminded of the part played by secondary schools during the 19th century in preserving the dominant bourgeois culture. More importantly, in this context,

¹⁰² The 'special' courses first appeared in the 1830s and were viewed favorably by the lower middle classes because they excluded Latin and focused on modern, practical subjects. In fact, the 'special' courses were adopted from the higher primary schools introduced by Guizot (Anderson (1971), 129).

¹⁰³ Fritz Ringer, *Fields of Knowledge: French Academic Culture in Comparative Perspective, 1890-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1992), 58.

¹⁰⁴ Anderson (1982), 152. According to PJ Harrigan's assessment of the 1864 inquiry, 27,628 students took up classical studies at the *lycées*, while only 5,002 enrolled in special studies. At the *collèges*, 15,943 studied the classics compared to 11,880 enrolled in special studies.

¹⁰⁵ Anderson (1982), 155.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Moody, 78.

Duruy affirms the interest of the educational authorities in erecting classical studies as a barrier to entry for those lacking in talent and ambition.

By the middle of the 19th century, the *lycées* carried a reputation for the sciences that grew from their role as preparatory institutions for the *grandes écoles*. This relationship also benefited public *lycées* over their private and often ecclesiastical competitors because of the ‘special connection’ between public *lycées* and the *grandes écoles*. “The result,” R.D. Anderson explains, “was that the lycées had a disproportionate attraction for those interested in certain careers (engineering, the army, the bureaucracy), and this factor interacted in a very complex way with other causes of preference for state education.”¹⁰⁷ Meanwhile, the municipal colleges still served a viable function despite the ease of travel made possible by the advent of the railroad in France. They were cheap and local, and able to provide a basic Latin education.¹⁰⁸

Outside of the formal education system, there were alternatives to the secondary schools for those inclined to the liberal professions. A lesser-used route into commercial and industrial careers involved the *écoles professionnelles*, which were schools created by local interests and common to larger industrial centers. They did not attract the élite of the business world, however; and their curriculum could not be considered modern or secondary in the same sense as a *lycée*.¹⁰⁹ Ultimately, their impact on French education was minimal and they certainly did not operate at the expense of the *lycées*.

¹⁰⁷ Anderson (1982), 158.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Gildea, “Education and the Classes Moyennes in the Nineteenth Century,” in *The Making of Frenchmen: Current Directions in the History of Education in France, 1679-1979*, Donald N. Baker & Patrick Harrigan, eds. (Waterloo: Historical Reflection Press, 1980), 279.

¹⁰⁹ Anderson (1971), 138-9.

Secondary Education under the Third Republic: Plus ça change

While the *l'Année terrible* inspired efforts to extensively reform primary and higher education, secondary education remained largely untouched because of a widespread agreement on the purpose of the *lycées*. The social and political élite of the early Third Republic continued to believe that the *lycées* were the “source of cultural eminence” and that they should “adhere to the tradition of humane letters, elegant style, and free inquiry.”¹¹⁰ The approach to secondary education under the Third Republic was, therefore, essentially conservative, and the *lycées* were “quintessentially ‘bourgeois’”.¹¹¹ The structure, content and pedagogy changed little while enrollment swelled among public schools, as revealed by the following figures.

Total Enrollment, Secondary Schools

	1854	1865	1876	1888	1898
State	46,440	65,668	79,231	89,902	86,084
Private (lay)	42,462	43,009	31,249	20,174	9,725
Ecclesiastical	21,195	34,897	46,816	50,085	67,643
Jesuit	2,818	5,074	9,131	7,735	8,496

Source: John W. Bush, “Education and Social Status: The Jesuit *Collège* in the Early Third Republic,” *French Historical Studies*, 9: 1 (Spring, 1975), 128.

By 1876, the apex of the conservative MacMahon regime, state secondary schools had expanded by more than 70% in 22 years. How does one interpret this increase? Clearly, state

¹¹⁰ Moody, 104.

¹¹¹ Heywood (2007), 240.

schools experienced a boom but, comparatively, ecclesiastical secondary schools grew at a faster rate. As will be discussed in a later section, ecclesiastical schools were viable alternatives to public schools up to the turn of the century in part because of their flexibility in responding to the curricular concerns of the middle and upper middle classes in addition to their lower tuition and economy of location. Therefore, while the expansion of the state secondary system was certainly impressive in absolute terms, this growth does not appear to represent a sustained, vibrant interest in the classical curriculum alone, nor does it indicate that the public schools had a monopoly on prestige. In fact, a portion of the observed increase must be attributed to simply increasing the educational opportunity for girls, which one author has qualified as the ‘greatest change’ among the *lycées* over this time period.¹¹² Though this assertion, too, must be qualified by the fact that legislation formally opening up secondary education for girls was passed in 1880. Nevertheless, the perceived and actual benefits that state secondary schools enjoyed relative to promoting students into the *grandes écoles* served as a draw to students, even if the *lycées* were largely resistant to change in the face of growing demand for revisions to the structure and content of the education they offered.

Also of note, institutional growth was largely in the periphery. From Napoleon I to Jules Ferry, only one new *lycée* opened in Paris. Meanwhile, the student population was surprisingly static. Immediately prior to the Revolution, 5,000 pupils attended the preceding Parisian *collèges*; in 1880, 6,792 students were enrolled in the Parisian *lycées*.¹¹³ On the one hand, this indicates that, during the period of rapid expansion, the leading *lycées* continued to service a narrow clientele centered on the social and political élite. On the other, the expansion of secondary education in the provinces did more to attract the lower middle

¹¹² Moody, 106.

¹¹³ Zeldin (1993), 254.

class, the peasantry and the *petit commerce*, whose curricular and professional interests boosted the popularity of modern, practical subjects.

This is not to say that there was no interest at the state level in reforming secondary schools or modernizing the curriculum, but the majority of public secondary school teachers were resistant to tampering with either their methods or the classical curriculum.¹¹⁴ Any changes promoted by the state required accommodation with the instructors, which kept the classical curriculum alive up to the First World War. For instance, in 1880, the license in letters was broadened to include specialization in philosophy, letters and history, though a common section was still required with components involving Greek and Latin. Likewise, the Reform of 1902 divided all secondary education into a lower cycle of four years with two options – classical or modern – while the upper three years had four options – three of which linked Latin with the study of other subjects (e.g. Latin-Greek, Latin-Modern Languages, Latin- Sciences, in addition to Science-Modern Languages). The introduction of a modern track lacking Latin was offset by the entrenchment of Latin and Greek in the humanities courses. Additionally, “The modern remained inferior even when it adopted the methods of the classical – an emphasis on the explication of texts and the pursuit of general culture without regard to utilitarian purpose.”¹¹⁵ Special education in technical subjects gradually fell out. Thus, on the eve of the First World War, public secondary schools – by now the clear, dominant force in the wake of the exclusion of the Church from all levels of French education – remained important components of the education system but more for the function of vetting than for their progressiveness or responsiveness to popular demand, at least among the schools most responsible for cultivating the French élite.

¹¹⁴ Moody, 109.

¹¹⁵ Moody, 101.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Revolution's war against the *ancien regime* manifested itself in the French education system with the abolition of the universities. The traditional institutes of higher learning that had served the aristocracy were deemed hostile and faulted for largesse and poor academic quality. Napoleon moderated the ambition of the Jacobins with the designation of the *grandes écoles*, which would, he hoped, perfect the training of the élite administrators and soldiers that he required while likewise "[discouraging] organized dissent."¹¹⁶ The *grandes écoles* were to be instruments of loyalty and national strength, and they formed the chief branch of French higher education during the 19th century. The restored and reformed universities comprised a second branch, but they struggled for relevance in the shadow of the *grandes écoles*. Last, advanced, state-controlled technical schools, research institutes, and a small number of privately endowed institutions operated alongside the *grandes écoles* and the universities, carving out a niche by offering highly specialized degree programs. The *baccalauréat* tied these institutions together by serving as a baseline for admission, though the *grandes écoles* and the technical schools required additional competitive exams beyond the *bac*. Relying only on the *bac*, the universities were easier to access, which, coupled with the generally academic bent of the education one received, helped foster a reputation of relative inferiority at least until the Third Republic when greater attention was paid to improving the quality and rigor of a university education.

¹¹⁶ Terry Nichols Clark. *Prophets and Patrons: The French University and the Emergence of the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1973), 13.

The Grandes Écoles

The origins of the *grandes écoles* lay in the 18th century with the creation of the École des Ponts et Chaussées (1747) for the training of engineers, and the École des Mines (1783) for the training of military officers. In 1794, the Convention established two additional institutions of this type: the École Normale Supérieure, eventually tasked with training senior schoolmasters; and the École Polytechnique, for the training of military technicians and artillery officers. Thereafter, *grandes écoles* spread to address the growth of science and public needs, offering a more specialized education such as in different forms of engineering and the applied sciences. Examples include the École Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Saint-Étienne (1816), the École Supérieure de Commerce de Paris (1819), the École Centrale des Arts et Manufactures (1829). The system of *grandes écoles* would slowly expand over the course of the 19th century, riding the wave of late-century reforms to offer opportunities for advanced study in new fields like telecommunications, electricity, chemistry and brewing.¹¹⁷

In addition to the *baccalauréat*, competitive examinations (*concours*) regulated entrance into the *grandes écoles*. This differed from the university in that, at the time, the university was open to all-comers who met very basic qualifications. Through the *concours*, the *grandes écoles* exercised tremendous influence over secondary schools in France due to the preparation required for the exams.¹¹⁸ The private and public *lycées* and *collèges* tailored their curricula in order to successfully place students at the *écoles*; and, in certain instances, secondary schools established special reputations as feeder institutions into the *grandes écoles* (e.g. the Collège Sainte-Barbe and the École Polytechnique). Also of note, the proportion of students taken from Catholic secondary schools increased over the course of the 19th century, which dispels

¹¹⁷ Harry W. Paul. "The Issue of Decline in Nineteenth-Century French Science," *French Historical Studies* 7: 3 (Spring, 1972), 436.

¹¹⁸ Ezra N. Suleiman. *Elites in French Society: the Politics of Survival* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1978), 47.

the notion that public secondary schools possessed a particular advantage in placing their students in the state-controlled *grandes écoles*.¹¹⁹

The *grandes écoles* were not impervious to criticism despite their prestige. In the late 1860s, for example, Victor Duruy moved to improve the quality of French higher education in general, attempting to shift the focus of higher institutions to research and away from the overwhelmingly practical orientation of the *grandes écoles*. Likewise, after the Franco-Prussian War, the republican governments were broadly concerned with the quality of France's higher education system as measured by the intellectual capacity of the élites they produced and the subjects they were teaching.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, the *grandes écoles* remained especially popular in the latter decades of the 19th century, and the relative weakness of the universities only served to enhance their status as essential, élite schools (even if they possessed, in the eyes of some, shortcomings).¹²¹ Additionally, figures like Ernest Lavisse and Fustel de Coulanges sought to enhance from within the profile of the *grandes écoles*. Their success in modernizing the curriculum (more positivism, less romanticism) and improving the rigor of scholarship served to make the Normale, in particular, a model for French higher education at the turn of the century, while also looming large over the republican elite, including Marcel Proust, Charles Peguy, Jean Jaures, Lucien Herr, Marc Bloch and Edouard Herriot.¹²²

¹¹⁹ P.J. Harrigan, "The Social Appeals of Catholic Secondary Education in France in the 1870s," *Journal of Social History* 8: 3 (Spring, 1975), 131. Cf. John W. Bush, "Education and Social Status: The Jesuit *Collège* in the Early Third Republic," *French Historical Studies* 9: 1 (Spring, 1975), 136.

¹²⁰ Price, 348.

¹²¹ Suleiman, 53. Suleiman goes on to assert that because the universities were regarded so poorly, policymakers were hesitant to tinker with the *grandes écoles*, even if there was reason to do so, because they feared damaging the entire higher education system.

¹²² Moody, 117.

The 'University'

Under the *ancien regime*, there were 24 universities, and a handful of state-supported specialist schools, including those that would, following reclassification under Napoleon, become *grandes écoles*. Unlike the specialist schools, the universities were generally autonomous, supported by endowments/charities, and staffed by clerical or lay personnel. The state could intervene by issuing regulations; but, during the 18th century, there really was not an official 'system' of higher education in France.¹²³ Furthermore, the quality of a university education was, at the time, quite poor. As noted above, the universities were abolished during the Revolution, only to be reconstituted as a loose structure of independent faculties resembling the *écoles spéciales*. The distribution of the faculties varied regionally, and typically concentrated in major cities.¹²⁴ Their informal nature lent to the notion that there really was no university *system* in France – a view that would sustain until the 1870s.¹²⁵ The term itself, after Napoleon, did not apply exclusively to institutions of higher education; 'university' was commonly used to describe both higher and secondary schools.¹²⁶

While the university languished through the early part of the 19th century, the Revolution of 1848 was particularly damaging. "The conservative interpretation of the Revolution was that it had been caused by *déclassés* and intellectuals, educated above their station, ambitious to succeed and finding their paths blocked by the notables of the July Monarchy."¹²⁷ As a result, many students abandoned their studies and the state divested from the faculties their official designation as *l'Université de France*, which in theory

¹²³ Moody, 4.

¹²⁴ By the mid-nineteenth century, sixteen towns had faculties but only a few could offer the full range, including the sciences, letters, law, medicine and theology (Zeldin (1993), 317).

¹²⁵ Suleiman, 35.

¹²⁶ Clark, 18.

¹²⁷ Robert Gildea, *Education In Provincial France, 1800-1914* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983), 191.

encapsulated all of the faculties across France. This is not to say that the faculties disappeared from view. They continued to provide higher education, but for want of students and money, which only amplified preexisting concerns about the value and quality of a university degree.

Momentum to reform the university system emerged in force during the 1860s, when higher education came under criticism for having “too many unrelated institutions competing for too little money and too few students.”¹²⁸ Standards were perceived to be too low, and some of the faculties in the letters and sciences did little other than grade the *baccalauréat*. In fact, the growth of secondary education and the success of the *grandes écoles* made the university seem irrelevant or, at best, a very poor sister. Moreover, external considerations linked to French *grandeur* entered into play. “The growing prestige of German science and universities also awakened fears that France’s intellectual status within the international academic community was on the wane.”¹²⁹ The eventual defeat in the Franco-Prussian War only confirmed these fears.

The *l’Année terrible* was certainly a significant trigger, but it was not the only factor inspiring interest in reforming the universities. During the 1860s, positivism was on the rise as intellectuals turned to science to reveal the “moral and political values necessary for social integration.”¹³⁰ Disciples of the noted French intellectuals Henri de Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte, the positivists believed that society, like the physical sciences, functioned according to observable laws which could be delineated, understood and applied. To Comte, positivism represented the “true final state of human intelligence,” where the human mind

¹²⁸ George Weisz, “The Anatomy of University Reform, 1863-1914,” in *The Making of Frenchmen: Current Directions in the History of Education in France, 1679-1979*, Donald N. Baker & Patrick Harrigan, eds. (Waterloo: Historical Reflection Press, 1980), 364.

¹²⁹ Weisz, 367. Cf. Clark, 28.

¹³⁰ Weisz, 369.

rejects theological and metaphysical modes of understanding.¹³¹ “All phenomena,” Comte explains, “[are] subject to invariable natural *Laws*. The exact discovery of these Laws and their reduction to the least possible number constitute the goal of our efforts; for we regard the search after what are called *causes*, whether first or final, as absolutely inaccessible and unmeaning...we only try to analyze correctly the circumstances of their production, and to connect them together by normal relations of succession and similarity.”¹³² This elevated the importance of the scientific method because of its application to social phenomena, which, in turn, contributed to France’s economic strength and international competitiveness.¹³³ Coupled with a greater willingness to devote financial resources, the state appeared poised to modernize the university.

However, the weakness of governments under the Third Republic hindered efforts to improve higher education.¹³⁴ The creation by private interests of the École Libre des Sciences Politiques in 1872, is an indication of the low estimation of the prospects for the university held by certain circles in spite of a generally agreed-upon need for change.¹³⁵ Support for reform was never broad-based, though it did appeal to influential republicans like Ferry, Rene Goblet and Leon Bourgeois, which assured that it would remain on the

¹³¹ Auguste Comte, *The Fundamental Principles of the Positive Philosophy*, Paul Descours and H. Gordon Jones, trans. (London: Watts & Co., 1905), 25.

¹³² Comte, 26.

¹³³ Price, 349. Cf. Sanford Elwitt. *The Making of the Third Republic: Class and Politics in France, 1868-1884* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1975), 171.

¹³⁴ Suleiman, 49.

¹³⁵ The École Libre des Sciences Politiques (“Sciences Po”) was founded in order to provide advanced study of *culture generale* (i.e. liberal arts). A secondary ambition was to train the élite, quoting Emile Boutmy, the founder of the school, ‘formed of men who by their family situation or special aptitudes had the right to aspire to exercise an influence on the masses in politics, in the service of the state, or in big business’ (quoted by Zeldin (1993), 343). Enrollment was modest, fluctuating between 300 and 400 students during the 1890s. The school offered two departments diplomatic and administrative studies, and later expanded to include economic, financial, social and general studies, as well as colonial studies. Cf. Suleiman, 49.

agenda even if its success was hindered by the vicissitudes of parliamentary government.¹³⁶

The events surrounding the Law of 1875 exemplify the point. The Law of 1875 extended freedom of education to higher levels, which allowed anyone deemed competent to offer post-secondary schooling. If a non-public association could bring together as many professors with doctorates as the smallest of the state faculties, it could qualify as a ‘free faculty’; should three faculties of this sort unite, they could assume the label of ‘university’ (for the first time since its suppression in 1793). The state would retain the exclusive right to issue degrees, though examinations would be conducted by a mixed forum of public and private faculties. This law prompted the establishment of a few private institutions, largely by the Catholic Church (at Paris, Lyon, Lille, Angers and Toulouse). Interestingly enough, these Catholic universities were not staffed by theological faculty, which signaled a desire to appeal to the lay clientele. However, by 1880, a Republican-controlled legislature repealed the Law of 1875 and stripped any and all private institutions of their university and degree-granting status. While the institutions would remain, they would shift their curriculum to theological subjects. Admittedly this example reflects deeper tensions between secular and ecclesiastical authorities as well as mounting anti-clericalism, though it also demonstrates how the initiatives of one government could be easily undone by another.

The most ‘extensive’ reform of the university system under the Third Republic was engineered by the law of 10 July 1896, which restored the official designation of ‘university’ nearly a century after its effective abolition – though Prost argues that nothing new was really achieved that was not already underway in practice.¹³⁷ The law also formally sanctioned 15 universities, and established a Council of the University to oversee them. The principal

¹³⁶ Weisz, 370.

¹³⁷ Prost (1968), 239.

university was the University of Paris (the ‘New Sorbonne’), and the method employed was positivistic, which marked a rather significant change from the ethical neo-Kantianism that previously dominated university instruction. Advances made in the study of history capture the significance and nature of this change. Previously history was approached in the amateur tradition; the new academic rigor emphasized precision, and the content was infused with the study of contemporary history. Notables include: Emile Durkheim, Albert Sorel, Ernest Lavisse, Alfred Croiset, Gabriel Monod and Alfred Rambaud. “This distinguished body of scholars shared a common goal. They had begun their careers with the conviction that the study of the national past could contribute to the recovery of France’s morale after the catastrophe of 1870. But they believed that literary and romantic history could never fulfill this role; historiography, they argued, must shed its moralistic mantle and win acceptance as a sister discipline of the natural sciences.”¹³⁸ This approach fit the spirit of the times, and they won support in the upper echelon of officials leading to increased funding for the study of history, which translated into an increase in students – more so than the other humanistic subjects. In fact, the university became a hotbed for politically charged courses and content in line with moderate and progressive republicanism, though the message was not always consistent due to the variety of viewpoints held by the instructors.¹³⁹ Nevertheless, the university became a social tool employed, if somewhat unevenly, by the state.

Yet, as the century turned, the university system struggled to compete with higher primary schools and Catholic colleges which appealed to a greater extent to the middle class. The university was slow to adapt its curriculum to meet the needs of those most likely to

¹³⁸ Moody, 115-6. Cf. Prost (1968), 336; Nora (2010), 339.

¹³⁹ Weisz, 377-8.

attend.¹⁴⁰ This meant that the footprint of the university in French society was rather insignificant up to the First World War. Part of this can be attributed to shortcomings in the implementation of its initial syllabus as well as through subsequent reforms. On the whole, the weakness of France's university system at the time reflected its failure to achieve a status as the height of French education. According to Theodore Zeldin,

The scale of values established by Napoleon survived. It was the *lycées* which were considered to provide *culture générale*, a complete education in itself, rather than a mere preparation. Their top forms, the *classes de philosophie* and *mathématiques spéciales*, and the preparatory classes for candidates for the *grandes écoles*, had very high standards and worked to a level which could rival that of the *licence*. [Meanwhile] the *licence* remained depressed because it was a professional qualification for an ill-paid and still inferior school-teaching job. The revival of the universities took place long after an active cultural life had already been established in France and had found different ground in which to grow. The intellectual élite, men of letters, the world of the *salons*, continued more or less independent of the universities. The progress of knowledge took place largely outside them too. The most specialized forms of education were entrusted to *grandes écoles*, which became major institutions of higher learning outside the university.¹⁴¹

In this respect, the value of the reformed university in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was abridged by the pre-existing dominance of the *grandes écoles* and a broader social context that limited their relevance as centers of learning and intellectualism. Yet the state still recognized an opportunity to deploy the university, despite these obstacles, to cultivate particular ideas about France. Furthermore, by the turn of the century, the Sorbonne became the epicenter of modern French higher education, and a serious center of research and study. Many French primary and secondary students were learning to “love the nation and its Republic” through textbooks written by faculty at the University.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Gildea (1983), 303.

¹⁴¹ Zeldin (1993), 333.

¹⁴² Moody, 116.

Research Institutes

During the 19th century, there were only two small institutions devoted solely to research: the Collège de France and the École Pratique des Hautes Études. The roots of the former lay in the Collège Royal, founded by King Francis I in 1530, for the study of languages and mathematics. While the Collège went through a number of reincarnations, the institution's focus never wavered from the core mission of promoting scientific study purely for its own sake. Yet, even upon its reformation in 1870, the Collège lacked certain elements common to the other branches of France's higher education system: namely, the Collège did not confer degrees. Student life was nomadic in that one could come and go as one pleased, with only a few restrictions placed upon more advanced classes. Further, there were no entrance requirements; the Collège represented a true public service open to all. The intent was to foster innovation, and it was believed that a loose structure at the level of the student and the faculty would be liberating.¹⁴³

Victor Duruy created the École Pratique des Hautes Études (EPHE) anew in 1868, in order to rejuvenate France's higher education system. Its chief task was to promote advanced research and training in mathematics, physics, chemistry, natural history, physiology, and historical and philological studies.¹⁴⁴ Like the Collège, the EPHE did not confer degrees. There were no requirements or fees for entry, and students could attend courses as they wished. His hope was to achieve the same degree of excellence as the *grandes*

¹⁴³ Clark, 53.

¹⁴⁴ Ringer (1992) asserts that Duruy had been particularly inspired by the International Exhibitions of 1856 and 1862, which shaped his posture regarding the link between curricular change, workforce training, and economic productivity (115).

écoles, but without the emphasis on practical application and technical training. The EPHE was to produce a generation of scholars rather than simply civil servants.¹⁴⁵

In assessing the relevance of each institution, we must keep in mind that the Collège and the École Pratique des Hautes Études were ‘created’ at a point when policymakers sought to arrest France’s moral and intellectual decline. The perceived poor state of research within the higher education system was a liability. It was hoped that both institutions would restore France’s ascendancy and enhance her competitiveness relative, in particular, to Germany. To be clear, the nationalism and, daresay, fear that created interest in the Collège and the École Pratique des Hautes Études were muted. Research was genuinely for its own sake. However, it was also understood at the time that this research could also address France’s insecurity. The motivation behind the Collège and the EPHE was, therefore, a mix of principle, prestige, and power.

Vocational & Technical Education

Prior to 1880, technical education was the responsibility of municipalities and private interests in addition to the state-operated *écoles des arts et métiers*. Vocational studies, which overlapped with technical education, were increasingly popular at mid-century – mostly among private schools – in response to demand from the middle classes for training that would open up career opportunities in engineering and transport.¹⁴⁶ In 1863, Victor Duruy expanded the prerogatives of the state in this direction through ‘special’ courses, but disdain among the élite for practical studies had a countervailing effect among the middle class,

¹⁴⁵ Clark, 43-48.

¹⁴⁶ Gildea (1980), 284.

which recognized that social advancement could not be achieved through the special course. The 'special' courses initially foundered.

With the advent of the Third Republic, some effort was extended to enhance the legitimacy and, thereby, attractiveness of special education in large part through the extension of the course from four to five and ultimately to six years. Further, special education in the five year iteration made one eligible for the *baccalauréat ès arts*, though not *ès lettres*. It was not until 1891, however, that special education was reclassified as 'modern' in order to shed the association with purely practical studies. Yet tinkering and reclassification did not stifle demand for practical education, particularly during recessionary periods when there was a greater interest in schooling that would secure employment as a *petits fonctionnaires*.

The government's general sensitivity to waning interest in special education and higher primary education prompted changes designed to draw students into schools by making them more like but not identical to the classical secondary schools that catered to the élite. These efforts actually contributed to the expansion of private institutions because the demand for vocational and technical training remained. Perceptions of German superiority in these fields of study during the 1870s only intensified the interest in expanding educational opportunities, such as through apprenticeship schools to train skilled workers.¹⁴⁷ Trade unions also became involved in the provision of courses and programs that combined practical instruction with French, mathematics and basic science. The law of December 1880 joined apprenticeship courses with the *écoles primaires supérieures*. Additionally, the state established a training college for technical instructors in 1881 at Vierzon. Otherwise, aside from the renowned higher engineering schools, the state contributed little to technical

¹⁴⁷ Moody, 99.

education. The higher engineering schools served the functional needs of the state, providing the state with trained graduates for the public services.

In the 1890s, interest in technical and commercial education increased in conjunction with a wave of economic expansion and increasing strategic and commercial tensions between France and Germany.¹⁴⁸ The state responded by creating a number of provincial institutions for the instruction of chemistry and electricity as part of the *grandes écoles*. The rest was left to municipalities and private interests. In 1892, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce assumed control over apprenticeship schools (called *écoles pratiques du commerce et d'industrie*). By 1900, Commerce would extend its authority to include the four *écoles nationales professionnelles* (regional technical boarding schools). By 1914, Commerce oversaw more than 100 schools with 28,000 students mostly instructed in heavy industry. Meanwhile, after 1906, the 450 higher primary schools under the Ministry of Education also moved toward a greater emphasis on technical training.

ECCLESIASTICAL EDUCATION: THE 'ENEMY' WITHIN

The most distinctive feature of French education, when compared to the English model, is the enduring prominence of ecclesiastical schools, which were viable alternatives throughout the 19th century for parents seeking to educate their children across primary, secondary and higher levels. The role of the Church was not without controversy, as the state pursued, on multiple occasions, an agenda designed to aggressively secularize education in France. It would, however, be unfair to characterize the Church and state as perpetually in

¹⁴⁸ Weisz, 372.

a state of conflict. There were long periods where the Church provided a valuable service both tacitly and actively sanctioned by the state. Furthermore, across many schools of all types, religion was woven into the curriculum. “In all of France there were few classes that did not begin each day with prayer and teach some history of the Church and the lives of saints.”¹⁴⁹ Yet, it is also true that, under the Third Republic, anticlericalism intensified among the republicans and radicals, who waged a *guerre scolaire* with the Church in an effort to increasingly marginalize if not outright eradicate its influence over French schools.

According to David Thomson, “The long struggle between Church and State hardened the outlook and creed of both, and reinforced the natural tendency of both to regard a national system of education as a means of spreading and inculcating certain positive beliefs.”¹⁵⁰

Nevertheless, the significance of the Church within the structure of French education is undeniable and merits careful consideration if we are to fully appreciate available opportunities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Broadly speaking, a variety of schools comprised ecclesiastical education, including those run by particular orders, those established by bishops, and others run by individual priests.¹⁵¹ In fact, throughout much of the 19th century, the key qualifying characteristic that separated religious and lay schools involved the disposition of the instructors. Public schools that received financial support from a commune, department or the national government, were still considered ecclesiastical if their teachers were trained and supervised by a particular congregation.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Grew & Harrigan(1991), 92.

¹⁵⁰ Thomson, 143.

¹⁵¹ Harrigan(1975), 124.

¹⁵² Grew & Harrigan, 91-2.

Religious Instruction in Early-to-Mid 19th Century France

Prior to 1789, education was the preserve of the Church, particularly at the elementary level. If teachers were not priests, then they were at least considered auxiliaries. After the Revolution, however, schools were radically reconfigured to marginalize Church influence and secularize content. In theory, legislation promoted ‘free, compulsory and lay education’, though in practice lack of funds and personnel limited the effectiveness of revolutionary ambition. Education policy during the Restoration unsurprisingly reversed the attempt to secularize education, looking to religion as an important device for moral education and social order, though the emphasis on free and universal education was maintained. The openness to religious influence fueled efforts by the Church to reassert itself over education. Meanwhile, the state was ineffective in extending its authority other than through requirements governing the accreditation of teachers.

Following the July Revolution (1830), interest in reining in the Church grew in order to shore up the constitutional monarchy. The subsequent Guizot law (1833) sought to strengthen state capacity, drawing more power to the center and further incentivizing the building of schools in rural areas. The law required every commune to maintain an elementary school and provide free education to the poor who could not afford the minimum fee. There was no stipulation requiring lay or public instruction, which had the effect of encouraging the Church to establish private schools as certain localities pushed forward with secularizing their schools. In effect, the Guizot Law established a sort of partnership between the Church and the state in the provision of primary education. “Private schools were to have the same standing as public, and moral and religious

instruction would hold a fundamental place in the latter.”¹⁵³ Admittedly, certain tensions emerged as a result of the Law. The professionalization of schoolteachers ran against Church sensitivities due to the longstanding perception of the teacher as a subordinate to the parish priest. From the perspective of the state, the chief concern involved whether the Church should be allowed to run secondary schools independent of government control.¹⁵⁴ Despite these bones of contention, the Guizot Law fostered the substantial expansion of schools: in 1833, 11,438 of the 38,148 communes lacked boys’ schools; by the end of 1840, the number fell to 4196.¹⁵⁵ It stands to reason that the accommodation between the Church and the state was an important contributing factor behind the pace of growth. It is highly unlikely that the state could have provided adequate plant and personnel. Meanwhile, by the 1840s, the Catholic Church backed off of its assertion that the Church should control education and that secular institutions should be repressed.

The significance of the Church would only expand as popular demand for education increased during the first half of the 19th century, particularly as state *lycées* failed to provide instruction aligned with the interests of the burgeoning middle class.¹⁵⁶ And while for similar reasons lay private schools would also enjoy a windfall at this time, by mid-century most were little more than crammers for the *baccalauréat*, which enhanced the position of dominance enjoyed by Church schools in the provision of private education. Church schools were also simply cheaper, enjoying a competitive advantage in terms of fees afforded by lower expenses on salaries paid to priests.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ Moody, 43. Cf. Gildea (1983), 39-41.

¹⁵⁴ Moody, 35.

¹⁵⁵ Price, 312.

¹⁵⁶ Zeldin (1993), 278.

¹⁵⁷ Zeldin (1993), 279.

The Revolution of 1848 led to rapid shifts in education policy, reflecting the ebbs and flows of political power between radical, republican and conservative forces. Conservatives interpreted the revolutions as evidence of the destabilizing power of education when extended to the poor and working classes, while republicans recognized an opportunity to extend education reforms as a means to further destabilize the social order.¹⁵⁸ Once the conservatives gained control of the National Assembly in 1849, the Falloux laws followed shortly behind in 1850, as part of the ‘*défense religieuse et sociale*’. As during the Restoration, the Falloux laws sought to improve the power of moral education by rehabilitating and strengthening the role of the Church in the provision of education in France. In no uncertain terms, the law declared that ‘the principle duty of the teacher is to give a religious education to the children, and to inscribe on their souls the sentiment of their duties towards God’.¹⁵⁹ Education, therefore, was character-building rather than a means to promote the intellect. Teachers, moreover, would submit to the authority of the clergy, and live essentially monastic lifestyles consistent with the moral instruction they were to offer.

By 1850, Catholic schools accounted for 40% of the enrollment in independent (private) schools, 24% of the enrollment in public schools.¹⁶⁰ This marks the beginning of era of expansion for ecclesiastical schools, reaching its apex in the early 1860s. Two factors largely contributed to this wave of growth. First, preferences among the élite and the middle classes aligned in favor of Catholic schools. As described above, the Revolution of 1848 unsettled the aristocracy, which recognized a valuable ally in the Church as a force for moral stabilization. In certain instances, ecclesiastical institutions were also a means to perpetuate class division. Robert Gildea observes, “Top Catholic schools, like the Institution Saint-

¹⁵⁸ Price, 312.

¹⁵⁹ Quoted by Price, 313.

¹⁶⁰ Grew & Harrigan, 93.

Vincent at Rennes, drew essentially on the Breton nobility and haute bourgeoisie, keeping the *classes moyennes* at bay by a combination of exorbitant boarding fees, a deliberate refusal to adopt the modern syllabus as just another ill-conceived pedagogic experiment in the public sector, and propaganda in favour of the superior ‘education,’ in the moral sense, that they provided.”¹⁶¹ Ironically, the sense of exclusivity that the aristocracy sought to cultivate enhanced the popularity of Catholic schools among the middle classes, which regarded education as a gateway to élite culture because it bestowed the manners and language of *la bonne société*.¹⁶² Second, with the advent of the Second Empire, the government was, at least initially, quite supportive of the Church’s place within the French educational structure. In practical terms, the privatization of local education, by placing it in the hands of the clergy, lessened the burden of education on the budget of cash-strapped localities. There were also social gains to be had through the extension of the Church as a counterbalance against social unrest. That the government, like the aristocracy, embraced the stabilizing role of the Church is at least partly evidenced at the time by the decision to grant official status to many previously unauthorized congregations, which in turn legitimized their participation in the education system in both a private and public capacity.¹⁶³ The combination of a favorable social, legal and political environment ushered in the ‘Catholic renaissance’ in education, during which the Church was instrumental in the instruction of French youth at the primary and secondary levels. “The Church grew richer and stronger during the Second Empire. Teaching orders thrived. Jesuits banished from France under Louis-Philippe now slipped back into the corridors of power. Intellectuals known for their positivist convictions were

¹⁶¹ Gildea (1980), 294.

¹⁶² Gildea (1980), 280.

¹⁶³ Cf. Curtis, 24; and, Gildea (1983), 44.

purged from the school system.”¹⁶⁴ This privileged and protected position would endure until the early 1860s, when, after Napoleon III’s break with Rome over Italian unification, such a prominent position was untenable.

The subsequent decade witnessed a tug-of-war between secular and religious authorities over the provision of education. That the state was seemingly uninterested in asserting its authority provided a window upon which the Church capitalized despite wavering support from Napoleon III, but the opportunity was not unbounded as legislation moved to check Church influence, including the expansion of the budget for the construction of new schools (which had the effect of crowding the Church out in the provision of new public primary schooling). The appointment of Duruy as Minister of Education in 1863 also amplified an increasingly anti-clerical agenda. The Church’s counter-reaction only served to drive moderates away, strengthening the hand of lay reformists like Duruy.¹⁶⁵

Despite rising anti-clerical sentiment among government officials, the Church continued to thrive, though increasingly in the private domain.¹⁶⁶ For one, popular demand for education was unabated, and perceptions of the exclusivity of Church schools were unaltered. Furthermore, ecclesiastical schools could rely upon alternative sources of funding other than the state or locality, which spurred their growth at a time when a lack of interest and resources inhibited the growth of public schools. “Until the advent of the Third Republic, local initiative and local money – or lack thereof – were the most important factors determining the extent and type of schooling offered to French children. Precisely because they had never received strong public financial support but had relied instead on private

¹⁶⁴ Frederick Brown. *For the Soul of France: Culture Wars in the Age of Dreyfus* (New York: Knopf, 2010), 13.

¹⁶⁵ Price, 315.

¹⁶⁶ Gildea (1983), 27.

charity, teaching congregations had a network of schools they could call their own and which would stand them in good stead during the Third Republic.”¹⁶⁷ Finally, ecclesiastical schools retained a superior pool of trained teachers, on whom certain localities had no choice but to rely; the state simply had not yet trained an adequate force of lay teachers.¹⁶⁸ This presumes, of course, that these localities would otherwise welcome secular instructors, which was not the case in certain Catholic strongholds like Rennes, Douai and Toulouse.¹⁶⁹ And even where local communities were ostensibly hostile to religious education, certain Catholic schools enjoyed an advantage due to proximity and quality.

Though Duruy’s reforms did slow the expansion of Church schools, particularly after 1863, the figures for the period bridging the Second Empire and the Third Republic are striking. From 1850 to 1877, the percentage of boys educated within congregational schools rose from 15.1% to 28.4%, while the percentage of girls increased from 44.6% to 59.9%.¹⁷⁰ Theodore Zeldin’s data reveals a similarly steady increase in the percentage of pupils attending Church-run, private secondary schools, a trend that endured until the turn of the century at which point the proportion nearly doubled and, perhaps more importantly, almost achieved parity with state schools.

¹⁶⁷ Curtis, 41-2.

¹⁶⁸ Curtis, 61-2.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Harrigan (1975), 123; Gildea (1983), 118.; Grew & Harrigan, 106; Zeldin (1993), 280.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. Table 2, Curtis, 25.

**Proportion of Pupils in Public and
Private Secondary Schools**

	State <i>lycées</i> and <i>colleges</i>	Lay Private Schools	Church Private Schools
1855	42	36	22
1867	47	28	25
1887	56	13	31
1899	51	6	43

Source: Zeldin (1993), 278

We can clearly see that the rate of increase among state schools was not nearly as significant as that experienced by Church-run, overwhelmingly Catholic, private secondary schools.

Additionally, we may attribute much of this rise to a bleeding off of students from lay private schools, which appears to have benefited congregational schools more than state *lycées* and *colleges*.¹⁷¹ This tells us that Church-run schools were an increasingly important component of the French educational system during the second half of the 19th century despite near-continuous efforts on the part of the state to reduce the influence of the Church over French education.

The Church & Education under the Third Republic

The catastrophe of the Franco-Prussian War gave the Church a reprieve, of sorts, as the Church and state recognized a common interest in restoring the moral order perceived to be a cause of France's defeat. The Catholics argued that France lost the war with Prussia because she had forsaken true religion under the Second Empire. "Only an act of national

¹⁷¹ Admittedly both the state and the Church held certain advantages over private schools during this period, notably: the availability of schools, the costs of education, as well as the adaptability of each to a curriculum valued by the middle and lower classes for reasons of practicality and social mobility. Catholic schools were particularly flexible relative to their curriculum, and they were willing to set up shop in remote locations. Cf. Harrigan (1975), 125-127; Curtis, 8-9.

repentance and a return to the Church could restore France to her providential role as eldest daughter of the Church and defender of the Papacy.”¹⁷² This argument resonated with the conservatives – monarchists and Bonapartists alike – who were able to capitalize upon the failures of the Commune and discredit the radical left. The not-unfamiliar condominium between the Church and the subsequent regimes, led first by Adolphe Theirs and then by Marshall MacMahon, opened another window of opportunity for the extension of Church control over education. The ensuing ‘Moral Order’ fueled the Catholic resurgence in the schools, further supported by a government policy (28 October 1871) that enabled provincial authorities to choose between lay and congregational authorities for their *écoles communales*.

From the demand side, by the advent of the Third Republic, purely religious considerations were not often drivers of school attendance. The popular view was much more pragmatic, and those who prioritized religious instruction were in a minority. According to P.J. Harrigan, “Those who saw secondary education primarily as a way for sons to preserve or enhance social status sought the best available school, the one that would provide the greater chance of success in the *baccalauréat* or in admissions to a *grande école*. During the Third Republic, many Catholic secondary schools seemed to offer a better preparation than did public schools in the same area.”¹⁷³ This led to greater patronage by the middle classes, which were most interested in enjoying the social windfall of a good education. In fact, the most desirable Catholic schools avoided tampering with dominant cultural mores of the time, emphasizing contemporary liberal alongside traditional moral values. Education remained a tool for social transmission, without question; but the teaching

¹⁷² Gildea (1983), 106. Cf. Prost (1968), 184.

¹⁷³ Harrigan (1975), 127.

congregations did more to reinforce existing, albeit conservative, understandings of morality. Furthermore, in the early years of the Third Republic, they achieved this through an emphasis on the classics rather than an exclusively religious curriculum.¹⁷⁴ They likewise benefited from a prevalent popular perception that, especially at the secondary level where boarding was common, children would be properly nurtured so that they would fully internalize moral instruction.¹⁷⁵

As the conservative honeymoon came to a close in the late 1870s, the newly-installed, left-leaning republican regime regarded the Church as a competitor particularly for the hearts and minds of the upper and upper middle classes. Subsequently, the state began to assume a much more hostile position regarding the influence of non-state actors over education. “At a time when nationalism in Europe was near its height and Frenchmen worried about France’s weakness vis-à-vis Germany, any independent institution that exerted powerful influences in society created limits on the power of a national state over its citizens and their loyalties.”¹⁷⁶ To Jules Ferry, chief ally of republican firebrand Leon Gambetta and Minister of Education during the 1880s, education was critical to the proper functioning of the Republic. ‘Instruction and education are at once the Republic’s goal and its vehicle: its goal because they alone allow each person to be fully a citizen; its vehicle because citizens alone make it work’.¹⁷⁷ As the figures provided above indicate, the Church’s influence had continued to rise even after the collapse of the Second Republic. The extent of state authority over education could be called into question as, by 1879, 22.4% of *écoles communales*

¹⁷⁴ Harrigan (1975), 130-4.

¹⁷⁵ Prost (1968), 49.

¹⁷⁶ Harrigan (1975), 135. Cf. Moody, 92-4.

¹⁷⁷ Quoted by Brown, 55.

were directed by clerics.¹⁷⁸ This realization inspired efforts to curb the power of the Church; and the republicans first targeted secondary and higher education. According to a re-reading of revolutionary-Napoleonic law, the Catholic colleges that had emerged following the Falloux law were considered illegal. In turn, the republican-controlled Chamber propagated the Law of 1879 – a measure that abolished Catholic universities and granted exclusive control over the *baccalauréat* to the public universities. Additionally, teaching congregations were barred from public secondary schools.¹⁷⁹ Ferry sought to go further by disbanding unauthorized congregations altogether (including the Jesuits), but the corresponding Article VII within the law did not pass. This setback did not deter Ferry, who achieved the desired results through the ministerial decrees of 29 March 1880.¹⁸⁰

The elections of August 1881 consolidated republican control over the Chamber, which gave them a freer hand to push through reforms designed to wrest away Church authority for the sake of civic virtue and national unity. The victory of the republicans in municipal elections likewise emboldened the effort to expunge the Church from the French education system. Three measures of note followed, each promoting the ‘laicization’ of French education:

Law of 16 June 1881: Every primary school teacher, lay or congregational, public or private, had to pass an examination in order to receive a teaching credential (*brevet de*

¹⁷⁸ Price, 315.

¹⁷⁹ Admittedly, the provisions addressing secondary and higher education did not address the Church’s chief domain: primary education. Prior to the 1880s, the Church was not able to compete effectively with state-run facilities at the secondary level (Zeldin (1993), 321). Likewise, the Church was unable to penetrate higher education despite a push to expand its authority here, as well. The law of 12 July 1875 denied Catholic universities the right to issue degrees, nor could they craft their own syllabi.

¹⁸⁰ For the Jesuits, who were particularly active in the provision of education in France, the decree forced the order to vacate their 27 *collèges*. Starting in 1885, the Jesuits would gradually return; and by 1890, twenty-five of their *collèges* were revived.

capacité). This reversed the policy under the Second Empire ostensibly to improve the training and quality of instructors, though the republicans were fully aware that many in the teaching congregations lacked formal credentials.¹⁸¹

Law of 28 March 1882: Education became compulsory; and, every village or hamlet with more than 20 children of school age was to maintain at least one public school. The teaching of the catechism was banned, replaced by ‘moral and civic’ education in public schools.

Law of 30 October 1886 (Goblet Law): Congregational instructors were forbidden from teaching in public schools. A five year transition plan was put in place to completely laicize teachers in *écoles communales* for boys.

Admittedly, the anticlerical legislation yielded certain unintended consequences which in some ways benefited the Church. The attempt to laicize the faculty, for example, merely drove congregational instructors into private schools, which localities, in some instances, funded because their provincial schools had come to rely upon congregational instructors, and lay instructors were not in abundance at the time. This is not to say that the legislation was entirely ineffective. In absolute terms, it did suppress the share of the school-age population in France that attended schools with congregational instructors. From 1879/80 to 1899/1900, the percentage of boys attending schools employing members of religious orders fell from 24.7% to 18.8%. For girls, the decline was even greater: from 62.4% to

¹⁸¹ Curtis, 109.

45.2%. These numbers, though, can be deceiving, and the effect could at best be characterized as ‘uneven’. On the one hand, regional disparities created obstacles relative to implementation. Remote and/or predominately Catholic provinces were less capable of or, simply, less willing to laicize faculty, which says nothing about the low supply of trained lay teachers during the 1880s.¹⁸² On the other hand, parents faced different incentives depending upon their socio-economic status which heavily influenced their school choices – incentives which these laws did not directly address. Children from particularly poor families were more likely to attend state rather than private schools due to lower fees, while middle and upper middle class families continued to value the prestige associated with private Church schools.¹⁸³ Therefore, though the anticlerical agenda did to some extent laicize public education, it did not radically alter the overall composition of the French education system.¹⁸⁴ Ultimately, according to Sarah Curtis, “the continuing presence of congregational schools after the passage of the Ferry Laws was primarily a question of money, service, and community norms as well as a reflection of the enormous challenge of providing personnel and material resources to build a public lay system. Teaching congregations continued to offer basic education at low cost as well as to provide additional social services.”¹⁸⁵

Nevertheless, ecclesiastical authorities were at times vocal in their opposition to Ferry’s agenda. France’s leading Catholic newspaper, *L’Univers*, “vilified republican schoolmasters as ‘professors of atheism,’ ‘masters of demagogy,’ ‘seasoned revolutionaries,’

¹⁸² Antoine Prost (1968) also demonstrates that these trends were fairly stable from prior to the Third Republic until the late 1880s. While the importance of congregational schools declined in certain regions, the degree of decline (in terms of students taught) was generally a matter of a few percentage points; in a other instances, such as in the northeast, reliance upon congregational schools actually increased (38).

¹⁸³ Lehning, 148. In fact, to Lehning, the shortcomings of this legislation relative to remediating socio-economic incentives were not terribly surprising. The reformist class of lawmakers who happened to be Republican and nationalist were not drawn from the traditional aristocracy.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. Grew & Harrigan, 103.

¹⁸⁵ Curtis, 127.

‘missionaries of the modern mind’ intent upon corrupting ‘*la France profonde*’ – rural France.”¹⁸⁶ Yet, by the 1890s, most of the ecclesiastical schools were willing to adapt to the new conditions. In some instances they were able to defend against laicization; in others, they simply opened *écoles libres* to compete with the state-run public schools. They also assumed functions that more prestigious *lycées* shied away from, namely preparing students for the ‘*moderne*’. In 1891, the *baccalauréat* was revised to literary studies that did not include Latin or Greek. This ‘easy bac’ was held in some disdain by the classically-oriented *lycées* which perceived it as an opening for students with poorer academic backgrounds and from a lower social level. That the Church schools were open to the *moderne* enhanced their attractiveness in certain circles, including middle class families who regarded the *classique* as outmoded.¹⁸⁷ Meanwhile, the teaching congregations sought out and obtained the required *brevet de capacité*, which sustained the relevance of the Church as a source for trained instructors. Thus, the Church proved to be resilient in the face of the republican, anti-clerical agenda, and their share of student enrollment actually expanded at the secondary level while maintaining the *status quo* at the primary level.¹⁸⁸

The Crisis of Ecclesiastical Education in the Early 20th Century

At the turn of the century, teaching congregations thrived in large part due to their flexibility, which served to cultivate constituencies among the middle classes and the aristocracy.¹⁸⁹ For the former, Church schools occupied a space between elementary and classical education. Perhaps more importantly, Catholic education was also perceived as

¹⁸⁶ Brown, 56.

¹⁸⁷ Bush, 129.

¹⁸⁸ In fact, the share of total enrollment of all elementary school students at Catholic schools in 1901 (27%) was barely different than its share in 1891 (28%) and 1850 (28%). Grew & Harrigan, 101.

¹⁸⁹ Gildea (1983), 283.

better suited to landing students jobs upon matriculation. For the latter, the Catholic *colleges* – especially Jesuit *colleges* – remained rather exclusive while offering “moral and religious training, close supervision, newer and better facilities.”¹⁹⁰ Taken together, teaching congregations were the driving force behind private school education in France. “*Ecole libre* became a virtual synonym for *école catholique*.”¹⁹¹ It is, therefore, not surprising that, from 1880 to 1901, Catholic secondary schools experienced an upswing in enrollment and came to near equality with public secondary schools.

Against a backdrop of resurgent anti-clericalism, the Church became a victim of its own success. Republican sensitivities over ‘the Two Frances’ – a term from the early Third Republic characterizing a secular and religious divide fostered by secondary education – were heightened not only by the growth of Catholic schools in particular, but also the reliance upon education as a means to wage a war for the soul of France at a point of intense vulnerability in the wake of the Dreyfus Affair.¹⁹² Likely making matters worse, fundamental disagreement over the nature of events and their causes led to divergent approaches to certain subjects, particularly history.¹⁹³ This ran against the positivist orientation of many republicans.

At the time, the French *élite* were divided over the question of divesting the Church of its public influence.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, little had changed relative to certain structural factors that favored the *status quo ante* (e.g. Catholic strongholds in certain provinces, a limited pool of trained lay instructors). This did not stop the republicans from pressing ahead with an aggressive campaign against the Church reminiscent of the Revolutionary era. According to

¹⁹⁰ Bush, 150.

¹⁹¹ Curtis, 122.

¹⁹² Cf. Curtis, 145.

¹⁹³ Price, 318.

¹⁹⁴ Gildea (1983), 112.

the Associations Law of 1 July 1901, congregations had to receive authorization from the Assembly in order to be considered legal entities, while unauthorized congregations would be disbanded. In theory, this measure would bring religious orders under stricter governmental control and supervision. Among the provisions touching upon education, unauthorized congregations were barred from teaching or operating schools. The Law of 1904 reached further, barring religious congregations from *any* teaching activity, public or private. Realizing that the law could not be effectively implemented in the near term, teaching congregations were given a window of ten years before dissolution and the confiscation of their property. (This measure anticipated the broader Law of 1905 on the Separation of the Churches and the State, which established secularism as the guiding principle of the French government.)

The Law of 1904 officially shut the door on religious education, and a ‘guérilla scolaire’ ensued over the following decade.¹⁹⁵ Ecclesiastical schools would be phased out, and the state would at long last gain exclusive authority over education in France. The effects were almost immediate: “By 1906, the number of students in Catholic schools was only one-seventh of what it had been five years before (and less than 1 percent of public school enrollment). Over half the departments in France now had no teachers who wore religious habits, even in private schools.”¹⁹⁶ The impact, however, was uneven. Most of the rapid decline in enrollment noted above occurred at the secondary school level, because many localities had no choice but to continue to rely upon primary schools run by congregations.¹⁹⁷ Nevertheless, Church schools could no longer be considered a dominant

¹⁹⁵ Prost (1968), 210.

¹⁹⁶ Grew & Harrigan, 107.

¹⁹⁷ Theodore Zeldin, *A History of French Passions, Volume One: Ambition, Love and Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 689.

force behind French education particularly at the upper levels which did the most to train élite administrators and officials. The sun was setting. On the eve of the First World War, private, mainly Catholic schools taught only one-fifth of all pupils, down from nearly one-third in 1886.¹⁹⁸

STRUCTURE AND OPPORTUNITY IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH EDUCATION

This chapter's primary objective involved dissecting the structure of the French and English systems in order to determine the educational opportunities available to schoolchildren and young adults across time. In particular, we focused on the degree of centralization and hierarchy, types of schooling available, rules governing the curriculum, and measures impacting the composition of the student body. This information is valuable for the picture we achieve of French and English education after 1870 – a picture with a number of moving parts which cannot be taken for granted if we are to understand how education worked as a mechanism for identity construction in each country.

Primary Education

English and French primary schools were very much a reflection of social need. Population growth (though to a lesser extent in France), industrialization, urbanization, and increased economic competition from the United States and Germany increased pressures to expand education especially to the poor and laboring classes during the mid-to-late 19th century. And while this did lead to the opening of more and more schools across England

¹⁹⁸ Price, 318.

and France, the endeavor to democratize education was hindered by economic factors that created disincentives for children to attend school – namely, the loss of income entailed by a child in the classroom. Authorities in both countries did move to address disincentives, and by the early 1890s French and English education was both free and compulsory at the primary level. Primary schools were truly public in that they were meant to provide elementary educational opportunities for everyone.

Yet, while the English and French poor and working classes now had at least some chance to attend school, the kind and quality of that education was not of the same caliber as that received by the aristocracy and the middle class. In both countries, the primary school curriculum came to reflect the influence of parents who wanted their children to learn the three Rs as early as possible, and in this respect practical value trumped interest in the vaunted subjects at the core of advanced education, which effectively closed off pathways to higher education and the *élite* and administrative classes. As Theodore Zeldin observes, there were two systems of education in France: “one very brief and elementary for the masses, and a fuller one confined to the *élite* which had the leisure and the need for it.”¹⁹⁹ The same could be said regarding English education. Nevertheless, as long as the primary schools cultivated the basic skills of reading, writing and, in France, speaking, then these institutions remained legitimate in the eyes of their chief clientele.

In England, the equivalency of educational opportunity, however, was never in the offing because the upper classes tended to believe that one’s education should suit one’s station and one’s capabilities. Social divisions should be accepted as natural, as should England’s highly stratified educational system. Where moral considerations fueled the

¹⁹⁹ Zeldin (1993), 150. Cf. Grew & Harrigan, 192. Reed-Danahay characterizes this as the ‘commoditization’ of education (125).

extension of education, the hope was to save souls and improve character, not remake their world or attempt to undo what Providence had wrought. There was, however, an additional benefit of a more practical nature. When, on the eve of the Reform Act of 1867, Robert Lowe urged Parliament to “educate our masters,” he addressed a necessity that would be created by further extension of the franchise. His was not a plea to throw open the doors to Eton, Harrow, Trinity and King’s arbitrarily and without concern for merit. His concern was for the maintenance of stability and good government. W.E. Forster put things far more bluntly during the parliamentary debate of the Elementary Education Act of 1870. “Now we have given them political power we must not wait any longer to give them education,” Forster pleaded. “There are questions demanding answers which ignorant constituencies are ill-fitted to solve.”²⁰⁰ Through this lens, we may better appreciate the rather limited scope of education for the working class (3 R’s, religion), and the highly-compartmentalized reforms carried out up to and beyond the Education Act of 1870. Though arguably the driving concern behind the expansion of education in much of the 19th century involved shoring up the social order in England, the means by which this would be achieved in the schools differed from class to class.²⁰¹

Similarly, in France, primary education assumed a normative function, though one invested with a clear nationalistic, patriotic purpose. Primary school teachers came to regard themselves as ‘secular missionaries’, tasked with the investiture of French moral and civic

²⁰⁰ *A Verbatim Report, with Indexes, of the Debate in Parliament during the progress of the Elementary Education Bill, 1870* (Manchester: National Education Union, 1870), 18.

²⁰¹ To be clear, according to the Victorian mindset, ‘shoring up the social order’ did not overtly involve class exploitation. While the dominant view was paternalistic and even Darwinian, the concern for the moral well-being of the working classes was genuine. Thus, social stability involved correcting for flaws in character; reduce immorality, and one necessarily promotes law and order. See Stephens, 15-6.

values into the minds of the provincials.²⁰² These values would bind the lower classes to French society, (theoretically) cutting across any potentially disruptive socio-economic divisions. In the main, primary education was a tool of the establishment employed to achieve social cohesion through moralization and proliferation of the common tongue, as opposed to *déclassement* through economic and social mobility.²⁰³ “Universal suffrage was a terrifying prospect when large sections of the population were considered ‘savages’ and ‘barbarians’ and the working classes were labeled the ‘dangerous classes’. For many, a common French language was the essential preliminary for national unity, but just as pressing was the need to gain acceptance for the moral values for which the new France stood.”²⁰⁴ From the perspective of the state, the primary schools were the bedrock of civic and political education.²⁰⁵

In the context of identity construction, the most significant features of French primary education were its universality and uniformity. The measures taken in the 1880s to ensure that children at a minimum attended primary schools were highly effective; and, in the latter decades of the 19th century, the state was increasingly active in harmonizing the content and structure of education at the primary level. Even private (or ‘free’, *libre*) schools were still subject to some state oversight through the regulation of teacher qualifications and the censoring of textbooks. Further, the state deployed examinations as a source of control, requiring all students to pass exams if they wished to enter into certain professions and thereby indirectly guiding the curriculum of the free schools. Taken together, the increasingly centralized structure of primary education in France assured that nearly all French children

²⁰² Reed-Danahay, 111.

²⁰³ Price, 308.

²⁰⁴ Zeldin (1993), 178. Cf. Charles Sowerwine, *France since 1870: Culture, Politics and Society* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 36.

²⁰⁵ Prost (1968), 159.

would be exposed – either in a private or public setting – to a core set of ideas and images at least for a few years.²⁰⁶ The key differences with English schools largely involve the pace of reforms and the scope of state authority. Universal education was achieved but slightly later than in France (and perhaps with fewer obstacles from families involved in the agricultural sector). The state, however, was not nearly as active a presence as in France, largely leaving curricular decisions to local authorities and the ‘marketplace of ideas’ influenced by England’s dominant culture. The implications of this will be explored in chapter 4, but the universality of English primary education similarly ensured exposure to the primary school curriculum among England’s poor and working classes.

Secondary Education

In England, a secondary school system dominated by public schools was in place by the last quarter of the century that would for the most part carry through until the First World War. Generally independent of state authority, it was a system that educated England’s élite – a system that served to bind together the aristocracy and the middle class, whose growing political and economic influence was impossible to ignore. Through the public schools, both groups received what they wanted. The aristocracy ensured that they would remain relevant by promulgating their values to the ascendant class. Meanwhile, the middle class gained access to a key – daresay, necessary – institution that opened up opportunities for power and influence. All of this was, in the eyes of contemporaries, for the benefit of England, and not merely necessitated by the potentially destabilizing social changes underway since the late 18th century. In the words of George Tevelyan, “the old

²⁰⁶ According to Robert Gildea (1983), most French children only attended school for 2 or 3 years, generally from the ages of eight until eleven (215).

landed gentry, the professional men and the new industrialists were educated together, forming an enlarged aristocracy, sufficiently numerous to meet the needs of government and leadership in Victoria's England and Victoria's Empire.²⁰⁷

The legitimacy of the secondary school in the French education system was similarly sustained by its role as a gatekeeper to advanced studies and success on examinations, both of which were deemed integral to career advancement. Enrollment, as in England, was partly a question of cost – could a family afford to pay, and could they live without the income generated by their children in the workplace? Enrollment was also a function of interest – did the course of study appear practical? Would it advance one's career prospects or social status? The children of families who were able to answer in the affirmative typically comprised the student bodies of French secondary schools.²⁰⁸ When considered against the entire population of school-age children, however, this pool of candidates for the liberal professions and the administrative élite was, as Roger Price observes, rather small: the share of children attending secondary schools in France (public or private) between the ages of 8 and 17 was a mere 2.4% in 1876 and 1887, and 2.5% in 1898.

In absolute terms, this is clear evidence of the privileged status of secondary school pupils in France. The exact nature of this privilege, however, was not simply numerical. The secondary schools were designed to impart a culture and thereby ensure that the graduates were of the same 'breed' – a breed which, in the spirit of the Revolution, could no longer be

²⁰⁷ Quoted by Olgivie, 169. Cf. Stephens, 49; Wilkinson, 10; and, Paul R. Deslandes, *Oxbridge Men: British Masculinity and the Undergraduate Experience, 1850-1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2005), 7. Interestingly, Bamford (1967) observes that while these changes certainly loosened the grip of the landed gentry by the 3rd quarter of the 19th century – merit could do more for someone than it had in the past – education actually served to harden class differences, particularly between the laboring classes and the aforementioned 'enlarged aristocracy' (173).

²⁰⁸ Price, 342; Moody, 65.

secured by blood and friendship.²⁰⁹ That this culture rested upon a foundation of particular knowledge (the classics) placed an additional obstacle in path of the unworthy. Thus, in the context of the *lycées* and the *collèges*, taking up the classics is better understood as a mark of ambition instead of intellect. Yet to take an alternate path did not resign oneself to failure. Even if they were not as popular as the classical course, the ‘special’ and the *moderne* did open up opportunities in the liberal professions which would not have been otherwise possible. It just so happens that, more so than the others, the classical course corresponded with the political and administrative élite: “le latin,” wrote Albert Duruy in 1886, “cet aristocrate.”²¹⁰ To be fair, the broader cultural significance of the classics was not uniformly shared across time. In the latter stages of the 19th century, educational authorities in particular began to question the value of a strict classicist regimen in secondary schools. To some – namely, the radicals – the classics represented a social milieu that they patently rejected by nature of their political and social beliefs. And, judging by the efforts to construct a French identity in the provinces during the 1860s, the classics were not essential to being ‘French’. Mastery of the French language, French geography and French history were the building blocks of French identity during the 19th century and early 20th century.

The edifice of England’s secondary school system likewise rested upon a classical foundation, and this, too, was a significant barrier to entry for the lower classes. One needed preparation at a private school or through a tutor, first, and either option was cost-prohibitive for many outside the middle and upper middle classes. Admittedly, the English clung more closely to the classics than in France. The question of abandoning classical education was never seriously considered; and while the middle classes at first pushed for

²⁰⁹ Cf. Prost (1968), 333.

²¹⁰ Quoted in Prost (1968), 266.

broadening the curriculum, by the end of the 19th century they recognized a great social advantage in the classics that moderated their demands for change.

Importantly, both French and English primary schools did little to grease the proverbial wheels relative to receiving a secondary education. The orientation of French and English primary education was, by and large, different than what was studied at secondary schools in either country. An exception is found in France, where state primary schools did provide preparation for secondary schooling, but only if the student could pay the fees. Nevertheless, primary and secondary schools in France and England functioned as distinct entities serving a broader social interest in stability. In France, primary and secondary schools worked to sustain social relationships in a post-Revolutionary world where merit was the razor's edge cleaving the *élite* from the masses.²¹¹ *Déclassement* was certainly a fear guiding education policy at both levels. Arguably, however, the greater impetus was the perceived need for moral and national unity. In England, social roles were also maintained, but only in small part due to an ideological commitment to merit as a basis for social advancement. Rather, the dominance of the English aristocracy was fading; and primary and secondary education, structured as it was, could sustain their influence and inculcate their cultural values into the ascendant classes.

Higher Education

From 1870 until 1914, higher education in England was characterized by limited choices. For centuries, Oxford and Cambridge were the only universities available; and though they struggled with enrollment through the first half of the 19th, Oxbridge cast a long

²¹¹ Price, 340.

shadow. This was mostly due to the lack of alternatives. Increasing demand for higher education, largely emanating from the middle class, sparked some expansion of the university system, but growth was still relatively limited up to the First World War. Furthermore, any new schools had to compete for prestige with the ancients, which were so well established that there really was no threat to their dominance. Existing cultural preferences for a classical education clearly privileged Oxbridge.

The ancient universities also exercised tremendous power through longstanding associations with leading public schools, such that whichever way they bent relative to curricular priorities, the public schools quite often followed close behind, especially in the era of local examinations.²¹² The relative chaos fostered by the absence of overarching, explicit standards for curriculum and teaching actually enhanced the influence of Oxford and Cambridge over the public schools when they went forward with locals examinations held in order to identify suitable candidates for admission.²¹³ This served to create a sort of hierarchy where none officially existed, in turn limiting the possibilities of the newer universities. By shaping the public school curriculum, Oxbridge influenced what was being taught at England's best secondary schools. The newer universities faced strong incentives to follow suit if they were to appeal to the educational backgrounds of the incoming, classically-trained students.

Though her higher education system also catered to the élite, France nevertheless offers a stark contrast to England with her array of functionally differentiated *grandes écoles* and quasi-universities. Like the English universities, the *grandes écoles* were exclusive. They

²¹² Stephens, 117-8. In 1857, Oxford implemented external exams (known as 'locals') designed to filter candidates by ensuring their readiness for the classical curriculum. Cambridge followed with the Local Examination Syndicate (UCLES) in 1858.

²¹³ Mack, 123.

punched meal tickets. They opened doors to the administrative and political élite. Yet they also offered specialized educations designed to fill key social roles, from military officers to engineers to teachers and scientists – a notion that Napoleon fully appreciated when he reformed the higher education system under the First Empire.. The English ‘Ancients’, if they offered similar subjects, did so without creating the impression that they were professional schools. This would have been socially unacceptable. The university, meanwhile, was the poor sister of French higher education. For much of the 19th century, the universities were not nearly as attractive to those with professional ambitions. Its chief purpose involved administering the *baccalauréat*. And while the university would reclaim official recognition in the 1896, it struggled to move out from under the shadow of the *grandes écoles*.

The Sorbonne did, however, occupy a more prominent position at the turn of the century thanks in large part to luminaries like Durkheim and Lavissee, who sought to improve the reputation of the University through their scholarship. An additional difference between the French and English higher education systems involves the locus of authority. The French higher education system was controlled by the state and explicitly served the interests of the state. This was not the case in England, where the Ancients remained fiercely independent, though one could make the argument that they, too, existed for the sake of England even if they were not controlled by the government or a particular ministry.

French Ecclesiastical Education

When compared to the English system, the role of the Church is without question the most distinct feature of French education. Throughout the 19th century, Church schools

comprised an integral part of the French system, and ecclesiastical authorities closely rivaled the state relative to their influence over French youth. Despite an increasingly acrimonious relationship with the state under the Third Republic, teaching congregations endured up to the first decade of the 20th century. We can attribute their success to a number of factors, from the geography of religious affiliation in France, to the competitive advantage afforded by lower fees and ‘in-house’ instructors (e.g. clergy), to their willingness to adapt the curriculum. Social forces also worked in their favor, even though Catholicism was mostly a matter of “outward conformity” for most Frenchmen and women during the 19th and 20th centuries.²¹⁴ In particular, the perception of exclusivity attached to Catholic schools served to draw in the aristocracy as well as the aspiring middle classes, as did the success of Catholic schools in advancing students to higher education and preparing students for key exams like the *baccalauréat*.

* * *

By the end of the 19th century, the reach of England’s schools was fairly comprehensive. Opportunities for education of some sort were open to children from all walks of life; and regulations making education compulsory ensured that, as enforcement became more efficacious, those least likely to otherwise take advantage – namely, the children of the poor and working class – attended school for at least some period of time. The regional distribution of schools also improved, which in turn smoothed over urban-to-rural disparities much as compulsory attendance addressed differences among the classes.

²¹⁴ Heywood (2007), 235.

The state also increased its presence by adapting its institutions and strengthening the linkages between grants, quality of instruction and the nature of the curriculum. Though education in England democratized over this period, opening up to the influence of local school boards, the Education Department and later the Board of Education expanded the scope of their recommendations, charging Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) with the task of seeing them through to the best of their abilities. These efforts secured better education for those most in need of it, while providing some incentive to harmonize standards and content. The introduction of competitive examinations for the Services as well as the universities likewise encouraged schools to employ similar curricular and pedagogical models in line with existing institutions that otherwise lay beyond the reach of the state. Lastly, the rising influence of the middle class over schooling fed the momentum to reform and, later, to adopt common methods and teach particular subjects.

This is not to say that education in England shared one mind and body. Schooling fell along class lines in the late 19th century much as it did fifty, sixty or even one hundred years prior. This is significant because the stratified nature of England's informal school system impacted the content and mode of education which the different classes received. The most significant division fell between the middle and working classes. The former gained access to the elite institutions heretofore dominated by the English aristocracy. The latter, however, were essentially led to water but could not drink. In other words, a smarting Liberal conscience extended education to the poor and working class not to revolutionize their world; rather, it was to secure their place within it. Meanwhile, the middle class gradually reaped the rewards of an elite education and embraced the Victorian, aristocratic culture. To be clear, we should hesitate to qualify England's system of education as

intentionally exploitative. Instead, in quasi-Platonic fashion, it merely sought to pair perceived capabilities with the best, most appropriate opportunities. Carrying this observation forward will help us best appreciate the approaches taken to inculcate an imperial culture at all levels of society, which was made increasingly possible by the innovations in schooling discussed above. The structure of education in England was essential to the possibility of cultivating an Imperial culture among generations of schoolchildren.

The growth and consolidation of education was a driving goal of French authorities throughout the 19th century, regardless of regime. These efforts were quite successful and, by the advent of the Third Republic, much that remained involved evening out opportunities in the provinces, completing efforts to universalize education by further incentivizing longer stays within the school system, and, perhaps most importantly, subordinating (if not eliminating outright) the influence of the Church. As the century turned, these objectives were largely realized. The state sat atop a rigidly hierarchical education system designed to advance the interests of France both at home and abroad.

The direct control exercised by the state over the curriculum of public schools is significant, amplified by the increasing proportion of school-age children that attended public schools even prior to the ban on teaching congregations. Taken together, this meant that the state could structure the curriculum to ensure that certain messages were transmitted and that certain skills would be cultivated through the schools. The success of these endeavors rested upon perfecting the structure of the education system.

The greatest potential weakness of the system involves the part played by teaching congregations. Until the reforms of 1902, the Church was a legitimate if, among republican

circles, vilified center of authority over education in France. This was due in part to the historical role of the Church as the chief provider of education prior to the Revolution, though sustained interest among the French élite was the most crucial factor explaining the enduring relevance of Church schools after the Franco-Prussian War. The Church's authority was problematic because it confounded the state's agenda to harmonize the curriculum and rationalize the structure. While Church schools would ensure that education reached as wide an audience as possible, creating social and economic opportunities for a broader base of the population, the independence of the teaching congregations meant that content might not perfectly align with the intentions of the state. Nevertheless, the state was able to exercise indirect control through the *baccalauréat*, as well as entrance exams to the élite institutions constituting the higher education system. As much as the Church schools relied upon the catechism, they still had to teach to the exams that unlocked professional opportunities of interest to their clientele. Ultimately, the comparative advantage of Church schools was eroded by legislation up to the point that the state stripped the Church of its capacity to teach. This restored an effective monopoly over education to the state at a critical juncture of French social and political history prior to the First World War.

A final point of note involves the interaction between the education system and the class structure. In the spirit of the Revolution, French education was ostensibly meritocratic in that children could advance beyond their station by virtue of their talents. While this certainly did happen, the system was largely intended to ensure social stability through the proliferation of dominant cultural norms and through the maintenance of certain obstacles that disadvantaged the working classes and the poor – namely, the emphasis on the classics at the secondary level as well as entrance examinations that required preparation which many

of the lower classes could not afford. Meanwhile, the structure opened up enough opportunities for the middle classes to meet their expectations, while making certain that they were invested in the dominant idea of what it meant to be French.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONTENT & THE COGNITIVE PROCESS (I)

**CURRICULAR TRENDS IN
ENGLISH AND FRENCH EDUCATION**

“France will be what the primary teacher makes it.”¹

– Émile Zola

“Down deep in the mind of the successful statesman, the clergyman, or man of letters, who looks back on his years of toil over the Latin Accidence and the Greek Lexicon there is the half-expressed conviction, ‘The system must have been a good one because it produced me.’”²

– J. G. Fitch

In the second chapter, I characterized schools as ‘content drivers’ because they inform normative and ideological dispositions through the introduction of ideas and images within the curriculum. The content of education is therefore integral to the construction of cognitive identities. Furthermore, in the context of education as a mechanism, I argue that it is the chief source of change and stability: vary the content, vary the cognitive identity. As we are interested in education’s function as a constitutive mechanism of imperial identities, the logical assumption holds that content should reflect themes related to the English and French Empires.

The treatment of content is divided into two parts. The first, undertaken in this chapter, aims to reveal significant trends in the content of education by tracing the main curricular and pedagogical currents across the various structures of the English and French education systems. The second, comprising the next chapter, narrows the lens to consider

¹ Quoted in Zeldin (1993), 151.

² J.G. Fitch, *Lectures on Teaching delivered in the University of Cambridge during the Lent term, 1880* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1892), 216.

how empire was taught through history and geography, which reflects observations about the potency of these subjects made in the first two chapters. Both tasks are essential. First, while the latter most directly addresses how imperial themes were conveyed to students, the former provides the necessary context – a sense, if you will, of the significance of history and geography within the wider curriculum. If we are to use this mechanism to explain particular identities or variation between identities, then we must have a sense of the full range of curricular priorities. To consider only history and geography would therefore miss the forest for the trees. Second, we should not assume that these subjects alone were vessels for imperial ideas and images. As we will discover, in the case of England, the general classical curriculum was strongly associated with the British Empire. Third, we must remember that we carry with us a general interest in how education functioned as a mechanism. From the outset, I have maintained that this study offers a unique perspective on identity construction, and a key goal involves working toward a framework involving education that can stand independently of our particular interest in imperial identities. Narrowing our focus to subjects in the curriculum which we believe are the most potent purveyors of imperial ideas and images would run against this goal and foster an incomplete understanding of education's cognitive process as described in chapter 2.

I. THE CONTENT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

The previous treatment of England's educational structures provides parameters to guide the consideration of content. First, the hierarchical nature of the system, loosely

constructed as it may have been, ensured that the dominant curricular model was determined at the top and embraced by subordinate institutions. Second, that the system was also stratified opens up the curriculum to some variation at least until curricular authorities converged. Third, even where curricular priorities coalesced, it was believed that the different constituencies feeding into certain types of schools required different degrees of emphasis relative to the subject matter, as well as different modes of instruction. Along these lines, the structure of English education shaped opportunities to convey ideas and images – about Empire or otherwise – to England’s youth.

THE CLASSICAL CURRICULUM & THE PUBLIC SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, a public school education was narrow yet general, dominated by the classics and mathematics, though the classics eclipsed mathematics in terms of popularity and significance. The roots of the classical program at the public schools ran deep. The broader value of the classics was subsequently reinforced over centuries of close association with the career trajectory of the clergy. Public school endowments typically contained specific stipulations about the prominence of the classics within the curriculum. Further, the aforementioned Eldon ruling (1805) ensured that, legally, the classics would remain the chief curricular focus at the public schools throughout the century, though the broader social climate arguably played a greater part in securing the primacy of the classics.

The classics largely entailed study of Greek and Roman languages, literature, culture and history. Insofar as there was a reading list of ‘usual suspects’, one would likely find

frequent reference to Homer, Herodotus, Virgil, Thucydides and Plato. At Shrewsbury, for example, the school statutes required the study of Tully, Caesar, Sallust and Livy, alongside Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Terence, Isocrates, Demosthenes, Xenophon and the Greek Testament.³ Students at Winchester similarly read Livy, Demosthenes, and the Greek Testament, as well as Euripides and Cicero.⁴ Meanwhile, at St. Paul's, the slate included Tully, Sallust, Cicero, Virgil and Terence, alongside Greek poets, orators and historians. Students also read the Gospels in Greek so that they "might be able to understand and appreciate the written precepts of the gospel for themselves."⁵

The Victorian preference for the classics rested upon a few key assumptions.⁶ First, the classics trained the young mind by improving one's memory, one's English (though translation exercises and attention to grammar, structure), and one's work ethic (due to the sheer difficulty of mastering the classics). As T.E Page explains, "for a boy to make out the meaning of a simple Latin passage, and still more to write even the shabbiest bit of Latin prose, requires something beyond mere memory and imitation, demanding as it does a real active and originaive mental effort."⁷ Further, this training was fungible: a faculty of learning in one subject leads automatically to a faculty of learning in another. Third, the classics were a necessary foundation for the study of other subjects like philosophy and history. Knowledge of Latin and Greek "train and discipline the mind of the scholars...[and]

³ Charles Pascoe, *Everyday Life in our Public Schools: Sketched by Head-scholars of Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Shrewsbury, Harrow, Rugby, Charterhouse*, Charles Eyre Pascoe, ed. (London: Griffith and Farran, 1880), 146-7.

⁴ W.H. David, "Winchester: the School Life," *Everyday Life in our Public Schools: Sketched by Head-scholars of Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Shrewsbury, Harrow, Rugby, Charterhouse*, Charles Eyre Pascoe, ed. (London: Griffith and Farran, 1880), 84.

⁵ Charles Pascoe, "St. Paul's School," in *Everyday Life in our Public Schools: Sketched by Head-scholars of Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Shrewsbury, Harrow, Rugby, Charterhouse*, Charles Eyre Pascoe, ed. (London: Griffith and Farran, 1880), 271.

⁶ Honey, 129; cf. Wilkinson, 65.

⁷ T.E. Page, "Classics," in *The Public Schools from Within: a Collection of Essays on Public School Education* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1906), 9.

cultivate a feeling and sense of beauty in the scholars...such as art, music and poetry.”⁸

When singing the praises of Greek, in particular, T. Field claims that “the language is capable of expressing the subtlest distinctions of thought...[it] is the best key to the study of history.”⁹ And, fourth, the classics offered a ‘standard of certainty’, in that what was true in the classical era would be truth in subsequent times. Again, Page asserts that the classics “[lie] at the roots of all modern intellectual life; [the classics have], from the dawn of European history, quickened and inspirited every effort toward progress; and its efficiency as an instrument of education has been tested by the experience of centuries.”¹⁰ Socially, the classics were also a means of identification – a badge of honor – and indoctrination into a shared elite culture. As J.G. Fitch explained during a lecture at Cambridge in 1880, “Down deep in the mind of the successful statesman, the clergyman, or man of letters, who looks back on his years of toil over the Latin Accidence and the Greek Lexicon there is the half-expressed conviction, ‘The system must have been a good one because it produced *me*.’”¹¹

Classical education, however, was not a constant in the 19th century. Early on, Thomas Arnold, the noted reformer and headmaster at Rugby, reoriented classical studies toward an appreciation of the content of ancient writings, emphasizing analytical interpretation. This contrasted with the existing *modus operandi* which relied upon rote translation and duplication. Arnold’s reforms cast a long shadow. The proliferation of his students to other schools increased the demand for classical programs cut from the Rugby

⁸ R.E. Hughes, *School Training* (London: W.B. Clive, 1905), 33-4.

⁹ T. Field, “In Behalf of Greek,” in *Thirteen Essays on Education* (London: Percival & Co., 1891), 244-5. Coincidentally, by the late 19th century, preparatory schools – through their umbrella organization, the AHPS – agreed that the study of Greek should be modified if not dropped altogether by the public schools as an entry examination subject. The public schools initially rejected this request, which led the AHPS to ratchet up pressure for a more modern curriculum. Thirteen years later, the Headmaster’s Conference voted to make Greek optional, allowing preparatory schools to drop the subject from their curriculum. This resolution, however, was selectively applied.

¹⁰ Page (1906), 5.

¹¹ Fitch, 216.

cloth. The schools that adopted his reforms met with success in the public eye, as gauged by their enrollment.¹² At mid-century, as noted earlier, the public schools came under pressure from the middle class to expand the curriculum in a more practical direction, and, particularly after the Public Schools Act of 1868, some adjustments were made to include the three R's and other subjects. These changes, though, occurred but only gradually and to varying degrees, and largely due to external pressure from parents and the ancient universities rather than from a sea change in the public school culture.¹³ Languages and mathematics acquired some legitimacy in the shadow of the classics, but only to an extent. Newer languages were often "viewed condescendingly as trivial pursuits, cheap pabulum for second-rate minds."¹⁴ The sciences would likewise struggle to gain respectability in the eyes of the elite as the subject was too closely tied to industry – too menial and too much the work of artisans and craftsmen.¹⁵

Yet, despite a relatively freer curricular climate, the classics remained the primary subject up to the First World War. And though many peculiarities about culture, accent, dress, etc., would be maintained, the public schools became increasingly similar in pedagogy and curriculum.¹⁶ Knowledge of the classics was an attribute of the true English gentleman – of the political and social elite – which made such an education quite valuable even if it was impractical. Middle class agitation for a broader curriculum became progressively muted as the perceived status-benefits of a classical education returned the public school model to

¹² Olgilvie, 138-48.

¹³ Olgilvie, 178. Cf. Honey (1977). The major universities cast a long shadow such that public schools could only make changes concomitant with whatever the universities offered as a part of their curriculum, otherwise their students would struggle to gain entry (128).

¹⁴ Harry Radford, "Modern Languages and the Curriculum in English Secondary Schools," in *Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum: Subjects for Study*, Ivor Goodson, ed. (London: Falmer Press, 1985), 211.

¹⁵ Bamford (1967), 89; 100.

¹⁶ Mack, 120.

favor.¹⁷ In the latter years of the 19th century, universities came to offer degrees and scholarships to public school graduates in order to encourage taking up new subjects at the secondary school level, but the stigma of dampening job prospects was prohibitive.¹⁸ Even when a will to make changes could be found within the schools, calls for a broader curriculum were not easily to implement. Altering one's endowment status required costly legal wrangling such that the schools with mixed curricula were overwhelmingly urban and wealthy.¹⁹ An additional obstacle involved the nature of the educators themselves. Virtually all of the most highly educated instructors at the public schools were classicists.²⁰ Many taught and subsequently reified the classics because they were incapable of teaching anything else.²¹ In 1884, Eton employed 28 classics masters, 6 mathematics masters, no modern language or scientific instructors, and one historian. This vastly uneven distribution was typical of the public schools of the time.²² Twenty years later, classics masters still accounted for over half of the staff. T.W. Bamford also notes that there was a practical problem of staffing and scheduling such that classical educations were much easier to compactly organize and man. To introduce a science curriculum would have required significant changes at the level of faculty which the schools were ill-equipped to see through.²³

Internally, the perception of the sciences was so poor that instructors were often denied the

¹⁷ In 1865, approximately 25,000 boys in England and Wales were receiving a classical education, evenly divided between day schools and boarding schools. These numbers are drawn from nearly 209 endowed grammar schools, 45 'major' proprietary schools, in addition to other 'lesser' schools. Meanwhile, approximately 2,500 students attended the seven Great Schools. Bamford (1967) characterizes this distribution as evidence that the interests of the middle and upper-middle classes, formed and expressed over the first half of the century, were being heard and, more importantly, translated into reality (37).

¹⁸ Honey, 138.

¹⁹ Stephens, 42.

²⁰ Stephens, 44.

²¹ Stray, 23. Cf. Page (1906), 3.

²² Wilkinson, 65.

²³ Bamford, 95.

trappings and title of a master, and students might pay them less respect than they would otherwise to a classics instructor.²⁴

At first glance, the prevalence of the classical education might indicate that the public schools had little to do with cultivating an imperial identity through the content of their studies. This could not be any further from the truth, particularly in the late 19th century when, according to Edward Mack, “the relationship between the empire and public schools, for long an accepted fact...was coming increasingly into men’s consciousnesses.”²⁵ *Fin de siècle* Victorian ideology was intimately intertwined with the Empire. The dominant view in the last quarter of the 19th century held that England, by virtue of her superior institutions, morals and culture, was obligated to govern those who, without England’s rule, would otherwise remain uncivilized, inferior and unhappy. England’s mission, according to Lord Carnarvon, was to spread the “benificent (*sic*) rule of Great Britain...[to] races struggling to emerge into civilization, to whom emancipation from servitude is but the foretaste of the far higher law of liberty and progress to which they may yet attain...To them it is our part to give wise laws, good government, and a well ordered finance, which is the foundation of good things in human communities; it is ours to supply them with a system where the humblest may enjoy freedom from oppression and wrong equally with the greatest; where the light of religion and morality can penetrate into the darkest dwelling places. This is the real fulfillment of our duties; this, again, I say, is the true strength and meaning of imperialism.”²⁶ Carnarvon’s thesis had wide appeal and played upon the pride of place given to British political virtues and the broader benefits of civilization to inferior peoples. The

²⁴ Honey, 136-7. Cf. Wilkinson, 69; Stray, 24-5; Waring, 123.

²⁵ Mack, 217. Cf. J.A. Mangan, “‘The grit of our forefathers’: invented traditions, propaganda and imperialism,” in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, John M. MacKenzie, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University, 1986), 116.

²⁶ Henry Howard Molyneux, 4th Earl of Carnarvon, “Imperial Administration” in *Speeches on Canadian Affairs*, Sir Robert Herbert, ed. (London: John Murray, 1902), 373.

British Empire, remarked Lord Salisbury, was a “great civilizing, Christianising force.”²⁷ This was an idea in which many could believe, and one which tapped into, one might say, ‘nobler’ traditions from English imperial history.²⁸ Strong undercurrents of paternalistic morality, both secular and Christian, and the reification of English civilization found their way into the public schools. In the words of J.E.C. Welldon, headmaster at Harrow from 1881 until 1895, “I believe, and I want my pupils to believe, that the British race is the best in all the world. It is the race which has most succeeded in combining liberty with law, religion with freedom, self-respect with respect for other races. I believe that it is called by Providence to play a paramount part in the history of nations. I believe in my heart that the best thing which can happen to the uncivilized peoples of the world is that they should come more and more under the influence of Great Britain.”²⁹ Many headmasters at the public schools were imperial enthusiasts like Welldon, and employed a variety of means to convey patriotic sentiment, from chapel sermons, to prize day speeches, to magazine editorials, lectures and informal talks.³⁰ But the bedrock was always a classical education. To the contemporary observer, the classics were essential to the cultivation of an English gentleman who, by virtue of his character and quality, was apt to lead the Empire. For this reason the classical curriculum of the public schools was essentially imperial.

²⁷ Quoted in the *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, Vol. 22 (London: Royal Colonial Institute, 1891), 323.

²⁸ According to Anthony Padgen, for example, the justification for empire in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England (as well as France and Spain) was often cast in terms of exporting Christianity and civilization to inferior, heathen peoples. Anthony Padgen, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France, c. 1500-c.1800* (New Haven: Yale University, 1995), 126. David Armitage also traces the civilizing mission to the 16th century, though his analysis privileges the imperative to spread Christianity such that civilization and even commerce are but gateways to Protestantism. David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2000).

²⁹ J.E.C. Welldon, “The Imperial Aspects of Education,” in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute*, Vol. XXVI (London: Royal Colonial Institute, 1895), 333. See also, “The Early Training of Boys in Citizenship,” in *Duty and Discipline* (London: Cassell, 1910), 12.

³⁰ Mangan (1986), 118.

In truth, the identity-function of the public schools extended beyond the curriculum. In the Arnoldian vein, the school experience was holistic; it was much more of a process than strictly a purveyor of content, which had been the case when gentlemanliness had been exclusively linked to a classical education.³¹ Moral cultivation required a way of life, not merely episodic instruction after which a young man was free to do with his time as he wished.³² Public schools in turn strove to build a strong sense of community – to “sublimate the boys’ self to a team...which resembled nothing so much as a human anthill heaving for a common purpose.”³³ Meanwhile the schools sought to ensure loyalty to the school itself, and in so doing foster a sense of loyalty that would eventually transfer to an adult group.³⁴ This involved sustaining boarding houses run by masters; self-governance under prefects and fags; discipline maintained mostly by the older boys, uniform dress, including rules governing attire both in school and in the surrounding community, compulsory gaming, and various particularities like taboos, privileges and obligations.³⁵ Wilkinson likens these methods to “the educational techniques of advertising and brainwashing. That is to say, they operated almost subliminally, molding the individual’s very desires.”³⁶

The late-century ‘cult of the gentleman’ prescribed methods by which public schools were meant to achieve their results. School life at boarding schools was often quite strict and Spartan in accommodations – much like the army.³⁷ Discipline was frequently maintained by corporal punishment (e.g. flogging, caning/birching). While harsh, many – including those subjected to it – saw these disciplinary techniques as beneficial to the process of cultivating

³¹ Honey, 228.

³² Honey, 9.

³³ Bamford (1967), 83.

³⁴ Wilkinson, 40-6.

³⁵ Olgilvie, 180-2; cf. Wilkinson, 9.

³⁶ Wilkinson, 5.

³⁷ Wilkinson, 16.

gentlemen. When queried about his childhood experiences at school, Lord John Lawrence, former Governor-General of India, quipped, “I was flogged every day of my life at school except one, and then I was flogged twice.”³⁸ The objective was to encourage self-discipline and manliness, which were considered true Victorian virtues and marks of civilization.³⁹

Honey believes, in fact, that the emerging ethic of manliness was the driving force behind middle class families sending their sons to boarding schools – as opposed to the prestige value acquired by their sons and transferred to the parents and family. To properly toughen up the young lads, one needed to remove them from the tender embrace of the home and place them in the somewhat hostile and certainly rugged life of a school dormitory – a view embraced by French middle class families as well.⁴⁰

Toward the end of the century, the accumulated liberties of the schoolboy relative to the management of his time outside of class evaporated. “The old principle of respecting a boy’s character and allowing it to develop in private as he wished gave way to a regulated existence, with the boys’ leisure ruthlessly time-tabled and supervised.”⁴¹ This had the added effect of stymieing the “creation of originality of thought or character.”⁴² The daily schedule of a student from Temple Grove gives valuable insight into the routine of a young man at public school.⁴³ Students roused early (6:30 am) and reported immediately for classroom instruction. The initial session would last a little over an hour, after which they would break for prayers and breakfast. Work resumed for another hour and fifteen minute period,

³⁸ Quoted in Reginald Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence, Vol. 1* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1883), 15.

³⁹ Leinster-Mackey (1988), 60.

⁴⁰ Honey, 208-10.

⁴¹ Bamford (1967), 79.

⁴² Mack, 124.

⁴³ Leinster-Mackey (1988), 61. Cf. M.J. Randall, “Harrow: The School Life,” in *Everyday Life in our Public Schools: Sketched by Head-scholars of Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Shrewsbury, Harrow, Rugby, Charterhouse*, Charles Eyre Pascoe, ed. (London: Griffith and Farran, 1880), 224-5.

followed by drill (30 minutes) and another session of work (1h 15 m) before a short break for play (30m) and dinner. Classroom instruction would resume at 4:00 pm for two hours, followed by tea (1 h), and a final session of work (1 h) before prayers and bed.

A common and dominant form of socialization involved organized sport, which is notably lacking among French schools of the time, as we will discover. Public school boys were expected to participate in and excel at athletics. Athletics was the most prestigious, most decorated and most valued of all school activities, perhaps even rivaling the classroom.⁴⁴ George Lyttleton (1906) asserts, “In the great majority of cases a boy’s chief ambition, on entering a public school, is to distinguish himself at some form of athletics. Latin and Greek are as yet hardly considered to bear any serious relation to everyday life.”⁴⁵ Educators of the day, inspired by theories relating to faculty psychology and transfer of training, regarded team sports – especially cricket – as a necessary complement to the classroom experience. By the 1860s, sport was increasingly seen, even at the more traditional schools like Eton, as essential to one’s character because it fostered a competitive spirit and a sense of solidarity toward a group.⁴⁶ One Etonite, writing in 1880, characterized sport as an “occupation”, and one that superseded academics.⁴⁷

According to T.W. Bamford, the hardening of Britain’s youth through game-playing and school life marked a shift in the conception of manliness toward a highly competitive

⁴⁴ Wilkinson, 71.

⁴⁵ George Lyttleton, “Athletics,” in *The Public Schools from Within: a Collection of Essays on Public School Education* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1906), 192.

⁴⁶ Bamford (1967), 80-1; cf. Wilkinson, 21. Also, Lionel Ford, “Public School Athletics,” in *Essays on Secondary Education*, Christopher Cookson, ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898), 285-6.

⁴⁷ Stanley M. Leathes, “Eton: Life in College,” in *Everyday Life in our Public Schools: Sketched by Head-scholars of Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Shrewsbury, Harrow, Rugby, Charterhouse*, Charles Eyre Pascoe, ed. (London: Griffith and Farran, 1880), 31. In fact, throughout the collection of memoirs, more space is allocated to the discussion of athletics than the curriculum or even the classroom experience. The level of detail afforded to the games is striking compared to the neglect of the content of their studies. What did the schoolboy seemingly take with him? Fond memories of the sporting days.

amateurism. “A feverish fight developed for perfection in muscular activity, the desire to win going hand in hand with a nonchalant superficial air of not caring about the result. The ideal became not only a complete concealment of the emotions, but the masking of them with a false façade, i.e. the stiff upper lip.”⁴⁸ The gains to be had were neither simply internal to the individual nor a matter of social aesthetics. Through games, young men would cultivate skills that would equip them to cope with the real world. A.J.C. Dowding, writing for the Board of Education at the turn of the century, would even go as far as to associate England’s dominance with the games spirit, encouraging schools to make sport an integral part of a student’s educational experience.⁴⁹ In this vein, athleticism became intertwined with patriotism and national preparedness. “It teaches duty to the Empire, and not merely the glorification of self or school.”⁵⁰ The themes of Christian virtue, historical mission, and racial superiority coalesced around games; and athletics were also closely linked to the extension of British power and influence. The Duke of Wellington is purported to have said that the ‘Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton.’ Though Eton had neither playing fields nor organized games when Wellington lurked forlornly about its halls in his youth, the meaning behind these words, rightly or wrongly attributed, was firmly believed and practiced in the last quarter of the 19th century. “The rise of imperialism had put a new premium on discipline, authority and team spirit.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Bamford (1967), 57.

⁴⁹ See A.J.C. Dowding, “Games in Preparatory Schools,” in *Special Reports on Educational Subjects, Volume 6: Preparatory Schools for Boys: Their Place in English Secondary Education* (London: Wyman & Sons, 1900), 344-5.

⁵⁰ Herbert Branston Gray, *The Public Schools and the Empire* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1913), 195. In general, Gray is rather critical of the community-building function of the public schools. He laments the paralysis of a boy’s ‘thinking powers’ while lambasting schoolmasters who have themselves become “slaves...to feudalistic preconceptions, they entirely subordinate the individual to the system, and, through a meticulous anxiety to carry out traditional discipline to the letter, succeed in stifling, for the time at least, the individuality of the more plastic pupil” (174-5).

⁵¹ Mack, 107. Cf. J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London: Frank Cass, 1986), 43; J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: the Emergence and Consolidation*

Weldon, as evident above, was a noted proponent of the view that education was essential to the maintenance of the Empire. His ideas are emblematic of a strain of thought which ran through the elite schools of his day. In an oft-quoted address at Harrow in 1895, Weldon states in plain terms that “education, as it relates to the whole conduct of human life, whether public or private, must in a sense relate to the administration of empire.”⁵² He goes on to partly attribute the greatness of the British Empire to the strength of her schools, but not for their academics in as much as their games. “The pluck, the energy, the perseverance, the good temper, the self-control, the discipline, the cooperation, the *esprit de corps*, which merit success in cricket or football, are the very qualities which win the day in peace or war.”⁵³

This is an important fiber in the connective tissue between Empire and public schooling during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There were certain prominent components of the educational experience which, the common view held, contributed to the Empire. While from our vantage point we might not readily assign significant value to the games ethic as a key to an imperial identity, were we to assume the dominant perspective of the time, sport prepared young men to be viceroys and governors. Nevertheless, the constitutive function of sport owes much to the Victorian value system, without which games would be nothing more than games. This, however, is the essence of social constructivism in that the meaning assigned to objects derives from the social milieu. For this reason, sport – like the classical curriculum – had a very specific significance deeply connected to the English imperial identity.

of an Educational Ideology (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 179-206; and, James Morris, *Pax Britannica: the Climax of Empire* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1968), 220.

⁵² Weldon (1895), 323.

⁵³ Weldon (1895), 329.

Similarly, the public school experience as a whole becomes a powerful incubator of imperial sentiment when weighted according to contemporary associations between gentlemanliness, civilization, rulership and Empire. The public schools, according to James Morris, “taught a man to be disciplined, tough, uncomplaining, reserved, good in a team and acclimatized to order. The prefect system, in which boys exerted much of the school’s authority, gave a man an early experience of command. The cult of the all-rounder taught him to put his hand to anything. The carefully evolved code of schoolboy conduct told him when to hold his tongue, when a rule was made to be broken, and even something about the nature of love – for love between men, generally platonic but often profound, was an essential strain of the imperial ethic. The stiff upper lip, the maintenance of appearances, the sense of inner brotherhood, the simple code of fair play – all these provided a potent ju-ju for the few thousand Englishmen who, in the 1890s, ruled so much of the known world.”⁵⁴

THE ANCIENT UNIVERSITIES & THE CONSECRATION OF THE CLASSICS

The public school ethos was advanced and enshrined by the ancient universities, which likewise valued the classics and also sought to surround its students with character-building, social institutions.⁵⁵ The objective was never to make them scholars or even practitioners. Instead, upright, Christian gentlemen would more than suffice. Furthermore, after the 1860s, the sense of ‘gentlemanliness’ propagated by the universities was “increasingly couched in patriotic terms: serve one’s country rather than exclusively one’s

⁵⁴ James Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1978), 27-8.

⁵⁵ Cf. Guttman, 17-18.

family or class.”⁵⁶ Yet the ancients, according to their graduates, did not seek to indoctrinate students with nationalist and militarist sentiments. The objective was never to teach them ‘what to think but how to think’.⁵⁷ According to Reba Soffer, “Higher education in England, directly and indirectly, provided a complete and enveloping educational environment which created durable patterns of behavior and permanent habits of thought...From the middle of the nineteenth century, higher education became an earnest training in character and civic duty.”⁵⁸

In many respects, the ancients were extensions of the public school, carrying forward the public school emphasis on community while employing like methods, including games and residential life. The colleges promoted common dress as a means to connect the student to the past; it was not unusual for schools to require caps and gowns on campus as well as when students were off grounds.⁵⁹ Reminiscent of Bentham’s Panopticon, nearly the entirety of college life – from dining to interpersonal relations – was observed, governed by a series of rules and regulations, including, per an 1892 guide for Cambridge students, ‘fines, confinement within the walls of the College in the evening, rustication (dismissal from the University for one or more terms or part of a term...), and expulsion from the University’.⁶⁰ Meanwhile, compulsory chapel served to ensure that moral, academic and spiritual goals were met; in fact, Paul Deslandes asserts that the entire disciplinary system was “fixated on moral issues...”⁶¹

⁵⁶ Soffer, 18.

⁵⁷ Richard Symonds, *Oxford and Empire: the Last Lost Cause?* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1986), 303.

⁵⁸ Soffer, 11.

⁵⁹ Deslandes, 32-5; 87-9.

⁶⁰ Quoted by Deslandes, 83.

⁶¹ Deslandes, 113.

The drive for well-roundedness was supplemented by sport for reasons identical to those given above. Oxford and Cambridge students were athletics-mad, to the point of raising concerns about the decline of scholasticism particularly in the last years of Victoria's reign.⁶² At the university level, games were perceived to be a "great solvent of social-class differences."⁶³ Socializing, considered essential to the development of leadership qualities because of the acquired contacts and social skills, also figured prominently.⁶⁴ An important underlying structure of student life was the associations and debating societies which convened to consider pressing questions as well as broader historical themes. The members were often the elite of the elite; and in the years immediately prior to the First World War, it was not uncommon to consider subjects involving patriotism and imperialism. The rolls included prominent, future academics and statesmen, from Members of Parliament to Prime Ministers; from tutors and masters to Regius chairs and professors.

The classics reigned at the ancients because of the association between classical study and gentlemanliness, though the tack varied slightly. Cambridge emphasized precision achieved through a focus on the Greek and Roman languages and translation. Oxford, by contrast, focused on the appreciation of Greek and Roman literature.⁶⁵ Despite these differences in approach, classical studies dominated the Oxbridge curriculum for nearly 50 years, with little in the way of change from the 1870s onward. Reba Soffer attributes this consistency to three factors.⁶⁶ First, the professionalization of teaching at this time increased the independence of instructors as well as their authority over students. The general familiarity with the classics among the dons made them more inclined to use this

⁶² Mangan (2000), 122-7.

⁶³ Honey, 116.

⁶⁴ Deslandes, 16.

⁶⁵ Lubenow, 120.

⁶⁶ Soffer, 12.

independence to teach what they comfortably knew.⁶⁷ Second, Oxford and Cambridge remained autonomous and capable of insulating themselves from outside pressures to broaden courses of study. Additionally, their prestige made them objects to be copied by other universities as well as the public schools, as has already been discussed. Third, even when calls for a more practical curriculum intensified in the late 19th century, the universities were able to manage the pace by gradually introducing new disciplines reinforced by honors programs and exams, thereby sanctioning which knowledge would be acceptable to teach and learn.⁶⁸

As a point of note, exams were also used to reinforce the standing of the classics. In the first half of the 19th century, Oxbridge formalized the written exam in order to address concerns about rigor, particularly in the public schools and grammar schools, but also at the university level.⁶⁹ Undergraduates had to submit to multiple exams in order to stay in school: all candidates had to attempt exams in Latin and Greek grammar, literature, the gospels, Euclid and Algebra in their first two terms.⁷⁰ The universities also attached scholarships and prizes to success on the exams, which inspired competition, built community, and fortified masculinity through the struggle to overcome the exams. In principle, the exams would test

⁶⁷ Soffer, 129.

⁶⁸ Public exams came to play a large part in England's education system at mid-century onward. Both the state and the universities came to rely on exams among the elementary and secondary schools in order to improve academic quality, determine the fitness of candidates, and arguably improve the prospects for talented children from lower classes. (Cf. Roach (1971), 8-9.) Interestingly, the universities – which lacked any official authority over secondary schools – also employed exams to leverage feeder schools to focus on a particular curriculum and likewise improve the quality of instruction. Schools that wished to successfully place students would naturally teach according to the exams – which at the time were steeped in the classics. Like dominoes, the public schools and grammar schools gradually adopted examinations for prospective students, which also had the effect of enshrining the classical curriculum while also setting a high bar for children who would not otherwise be able to afford a tutor or preparatory school. This had the effect of largely excluding the working class student from public schools despite their talents and even where scholarships were available to fund their attendance. Entrance exams, crowded with Latin, essentially barred entry. The working class family could not pay to prepare their children; meanwhile elementary education was not geared toward the requirements of entry exams. (Cf. Wilkinson, 23; 95-6.)

⁶⁹ Deslandes, 126-7.

⁷⁰ Deslandes, 129.

‘general’ knowledge, which would reward those who have received a general – as opposed to technical or vocational – education. Because of the dominance of classical studies at the time, it was unavoidable that ‘general’ would equate to ‘classical’, more so because a classical education was perceived to be, in fact, the best general foundation. According to prominent advocates of reform at Oxbridge, the objective of education was to create ‘men’ rather than ‘specialists’, which explains why the exams they designed adhered to this generalist (read: classical) model.⁷¹

Like the public schools, Oxbridge was under continuous pressure to modernize, and critics pointed toward the increasingly competitive international arena as an incentive for change. Yet changing the curriculum would, it was feared, reduce the universities to nothing more than vocational institutes. Consider the poor state of instruction in the sciences and technology throughout the 19th century.⁷² Science courses, when offered, were informal in nature; and when the universities did found science chairs, they were often occupied by classicists and theologians. At the turn of the century, when voices⁷³ calling for increased attention to imperial matters grew louder, the powers that be remained faithful to the classics as the best means to train administrators and secure the prosperity of the Empire. An Editor of the *Oxford Magazine* aptly captures the spirit animating the resistance to change, observing

⁷¹ Cf. Roach (1971), 86; Lubenow, 90; and, on the generalist curriculum at the public school level, Wilkinson, 64.

⁷² Stephens, 63.

⁷³ Lord Rosebery’s comments on the shortcomings of Oxbridge, though unmentioned by name, are worth recalling: “The newest of our universities has advantages which are denied to the more ancient with regard to modern requirements. For the practical purposes of the present day a university which starts in the twentieth century has a great superiority over a university founded in the fifteenth... These practical universities are the universities of the future, for the average man who has to work for his livelihood cannot superadd the learning of the dead to the educational requirements of his life and his profession. There will always be universities, or at any rate colleges, for the scholar, the teacher, and the divine; but year by year the ancient universities will have to adapt themselves more and more to modern exigencies. And where so much has to be absolutely novel it is perhaps easier to begin than to remodel or adapt. So that the new universities which do not require for their utilitarian purposes hoary antiquity or ancient prescription will have an advantage over the venerable schools which have for centuries guarded and interpreted and transmitted the accumulated treasures of erudition.” Lord Rosebery, *Questions of Empire* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1901), 28-9.

that “while French and German and chemistry, and the arts of brewing and stockbroking too for that matter, are probably more immediately useful to some people than the Classics, Latin and Greek are better instruments for training the individual mind...dunces and obscurants are hard enough to deal with, without being allowed to masquerade in the guise of Imperialism.”⁷⁴ To this editor, modernizing the curriculum would lower the bar and allow into the ranks of viceroys and governors those who might otherwise have failed in classical studies.

Nevertheless, the ancients were not completely unbending. History gained ground throughout the mid-to-late 19th century, which is of particular interest because of its strong connection to the growth of imperial studies at Oxbridge. At Oxford, Modern History was first offered in 1853 as a part of the School of Law and Modern History. Initially, one could only take up one of the three new degree-granting courses after completing the Greats. In 1866, students could specialize, though students who flocked to these subjects tended to be underachievers or ‘country gentlemen’.⁷⁵ In 1874, Law and Modern History were separated into separate schools, and within a year Modern History was established as an honors degree program that began with the fall of Rome and ended with the 18th century. Meanwhile, at Cambridge, a Law and History tripos was organized in 1870. Within three years, History would receive its own tripos oriented, under the guidance of J.R. Seeley, toward using history to teach political and moral lessons, which ran against the grain of the notion of cultivating individual, independent thought. The first lectureships, however, did not arrive until 1885. This was a reflection of the broader-based reluctance to adequately staff, house, or supply the program. In fact, there was a vicious circle at work, here: the university did not support

⁷⁴ Quoted by Symonds, 18.

⁷⁵ Soffer, 54.

the program due to the dearth of students interested in taking the tripos; meanwhile, students were not interested in taking the tripos because the university would not support the program.⁷⁶ The popularity of History at Cambridge would remain depressed until the late 1920s, despite attempts to pique interest through prizes and scholarships. To put this trend into perspective, from 1878-1885, there were 642 honors graduates in History at Oxford, compared to only 111 at Cambridge during the same time period.⁷⁷ In fact, at Oxford, the Honours School of Modern History produced more graduates than any other degree course after 1901, which accorded with the increasing popularity of history after the turn of the century.

As a discipline, Cambridge and Oxford approached history somewhat differently.⁷⁸ Cambridge presented history as a distinct subject, while Oxford bundled history with the liberal arts. Cambridge supplemented national history with foreign subjects and themes, while Oxford focused on English traditions and institutions. The Cambridge curriculum also included a wider array of subjects than at Oxford, such as political economy, international law and constitutional law. An important commonality was the focus on England's political and constitutional development, laced with heroic images and antiquarian, romantic idealizations. Seeming losses and failures were referenced as gains and successes. Meanwhile, the leading historians at Oxbridge extolled the virtues of the study of history as essential to civic duty, noble character, and sound leadership without popularizing or propagandizing.⁷⁹ They saw their conclusions, even if 'nationalist', as grounded in sound method and,

⁷⁶ Soffer, 132-3.

⁷⁷ Soffer, 179-180.

⁷⁸ Soffer, 57.

⁷⁹ Soffer, 33.

subsequently, historical truth.⁸⁰ In their view, the past informs the present while also providing a compass point for moral development. Hence, the study of history was geared toward the virtues of public life and good citizenship, as opposed to history for history's sake. The ends were not, as it were, professional. They sought, by teaching history, to make good leaders – not historians, at least no more than in the sense of an amateur.⁸¹

This perspective on history aligns with the aim of classical studies to cultivate the gentleman, and perhaps helps explain why proponents were able to better integrate history into the university curriculum than other subjects which were not perceived to be gentlemanly. For example, William Stubbs, Regius Professor (1866-84), Oxford, urged teaching history in order to prepare to execute their civic duty as well as navigate through their lives with sound judgment. He elaborates, “I am thoroughly convinced that the purpose which is answered by the study of Modern and Medieval History is twofold; it is at once the process of acquisition of a stock of facts, an ignorance of which unfits a man from playing the very humblest part as a citizen, or even watching the politics of his own age with an intelligent apprehension; and it is an educational discipline directed to the cultivation of powers for whose development, as it seems to me, no other training is equally efficacious.”⁸² History was also better able to respond to the calls at the turn of the century for a stronger imperial presence in the curriculum. While the classics could build upon comparisons between the Roman Empire and the British Empire, the study of Greek and Latin were not on their own able to impart a particularly nationalistic message. J.R. Seeley regarded history as a ‘political science’, entailing normative, empirical, and philosophical lessons that inform political practice. In his Inaugural Lecture as Regius Professor (1869), he dubbed history

⁸⁰ Soffer, 38.

⁸¹ Soffer, 56, 79.

⁸² William Stubbs, *Seventeen Lectures on the Study of Medieval and Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1887), 2.

“the school of statesmanship...of public feeling and patriotism”.⁸³ Seeley developed a popular model that blended history, politics and religion to promote a “vision of the patriotic and militarist expansion of the state.”⁸⁴ In Stubb’s wake, Oxford’s historians were often the most active in promoting the study of Empire. Hugh Egerton, the first Beit Professor of Colonial History (1905-1920), was instrumental in shaping the Oxford disposition toward the Empire at the turn of the century. Egerton did not care for overt propaganda, but his message was certainly supportive even if it was, at times, critical of a need for ‘responsible government’ of the colonies.⁸⁵ He preached against the exploitation of the subject peoples, lest they become “fruit which, when ripe, fall off from the parent branch.”⁸⁶ Meanwhile, he argued that imperial unity should rest upon a wider sense of patriotism spanning “all portions of the Empire [without which] the full meaning of Greater Britain must always remain unfulfilled.”⁸⁷ This balanced, patriotic approach became, according to Richard Symonds, the ‘hallmark’ of Oxford’s imperial historians, from Egerton to Sir Reginald Coupland to Vincent Harlow and Margery Perham, who succeeded Egerton as Beit Chairs.⁸⁸

⁸³ J. R. Seeley, “The Teaching of Politics: An Inaugural Lecture delivered at Cambridge,” in *Roman Imperialism and other Lectures and Essays* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1889), 312-15.

⁸⁴ Mackenzie (1984), 180.

⁸⁵ Hugh Edward Egerton, *The Origin and Growth of the English Colonies and of their System of Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 163-8.

⁸⁶ Egerton (1903), 16.

⁸⁷ Egerton (1903), 175-6.

⁸⁸ Symonds, 52.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS & THE 'THREE R'S'

For much of the first half of the 19th century, the primary school curriculum effectively rested in the hands of Church authorities, as they administered the layer of voluntary schools providing education to the poor and working classes. The extension of state aid in 1833 created opportunities for greater secular control, but the share of Church-run schools remained high up to the wave of reforms that began in the late 1850s. In 1860, for example, Church schools represented 75% of voluntary schooling, as opposed to just 10% by 'British schools' (e.g. secular schools).⁸⁹ The likely explanation for the Church's strong foothold at the time involves its traditional involvement in the provision of education to the poor, but low state capacity relative to the administration and oversight of education in Britain was also very likely an important factor as well. Among the elementary schools of this era, teaching was largely rote, emphasizing memorization, and classes were rigidly organized. Furthermore, especially among Church-run schools, moral training often superseded reading and writing since it impacted behavior, which held a certain premium in reference to the laboring classes (from the perspective of the aristocracy or, even, employers). In fact, the push to expand the institutional base and bring more students in arose from a perceived increase in crime.

Though the influence of the church lingered past mid-century, the rising dependency of many of England's primary schools upon state support gave education authorities a means by which to influence the curriculum and other practices, such as requiring teachers

⁸⁹ Stephens, 6.

to consult with inspectors about their syllabi.⁹⁰ By 1859 the Science and Art Department began to issue grants to reward performance on exams in the sciences, while the Revised Code of 1862 opened the door wider as grants to elementary schools were tied to examinations in reading, writing and arithmetic. A formal structure emerged tied to the grant structure to ensure that certain items – otherwise known as ‘obligatory subjects’ – were included in the curriculum of elementary schools. These included the three R’s, as well as drawing for boys and needlework for girls. ‘Class’ subjects afforded schools some discretion. In order to receive a grant, schools would have to offer two subjects taken from a narrow list of three: popular history, elementary geography, and grammar. The tenor of this system was clearly to make certain that the poor and working classes were literate, though some studies have shown that the literacy rate in England was fairly high at the time.⁹¹ An underlying motivation was tied to equipping these children to someday assume their civic duties, reflecting the rationale expressed by Robert Lowe and W.E. Forster. Economic considerations, however, seem unlikely. Primary schooling was not meant to alter career paths, and the skills one received were generally not transferrable beyond some attempts to bring in the sciences by the Science and Art Department. Its efforts, however, could not be considered successful in part because of the very nature of the obligatory and class subjects, which privileged the three R’s first, and history, geography and grammar second. It would appear that the chief value of the primary school curriculum was social, securing the exposure of the poor and working class to the ‘right’ sort of subjects and the ‘right’ sort of ideas.

⁹⁰ Penn, 25.

⁹¹ David Vincent, *Literacy and Popular Culture: England, 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993).

Toward the end of the century, techniques shifted to ‘lively teaching’. The aim was to capture the attention of students through illustrative lessons, blackboard work and models.⁹² Instructors were also encouraged to visit museums during school time. The newly-formed Board of Education would continue to limit compulsory subjects to the three R’s, which meant that science and technical courses were voluntary. This would effectively further marginalize science and technical education. The Board’s head, Robert Morant, was hostile to vocational and technical subjects, and those who served with him came from a narrowly defined educational background that favored the classics.⁹³ Shortly after its creation, the Board of Education affirmed that the focus of education among secondary schools should be general, which included a balanced approach to the classics and the sciences. This reversed efforts by the Science and Art Department (now subsumed by the Board) to encourage the inclusion of science within the curriculum. Meanwhile, BOE inspectors found that, outside the public schools, students were unlikely to receive much of a classical education at all. To right the ship, the Board issued regulations in 1904, requiring instruction in Latin because, the Board would later explain, knowledge of Latin was integral to admittance to the university and advancement into the professional world.⁹⁴ Within a decade, the Board would proclaim that a general education required instruction in other contemporary subjects as well as Latin, which amounted to the relaxation of its previous insistence that Latin was necessary and sufficient. The specific suggestion in the 1913 circular was for a ‘Modern Humanistic Studies’ course that would include the classics, two languages and history.

⁹² Leinster-Mackey (1984), 181-2.

⁹³ Vlaeminke, 183-4.

⁹⁴ Stray, 28.

While the classics were integrated nominally into the primary school curriculum, the aim did not involve expanding the gentlemanly class. The classics were deemed by some to be inappropriate to elementary schools because of the time required to master them.⁹⁵ Again, the central premise behind the moves taken by the Board in the first decade of the 20th century reflects a conviction that the classics were the best foundation for any education, even if diluted for the audience. This logic also reflects the same social considerations that lay behind the privileging of the three R's: education was meant to cultivate a sense of civic duty and acceptance of one's social role.

In capturing the significance of curricular change among primary schools at the turn of the century, another factor of the times is impossible to ignore: the Empire. Every layer of England's education system 'taught the Empire' after 1870, and the emphasis on imperial studies increased up to the First World War, with a particularly acute ascension in the 1890s and early 1900s. "Schools," according to John Mackenzie, "were indeed another important medium for the projection of an Imperial culture. While Empire's development was treated in some geographical texts, only after the Education Act of 1870 did the significance of imperial rule in the formation and development of the British state become truly prominent in the large numbers of school texts, on British history, world geography, and the development of English language and literature, which were produced until the 1950s."⁹⁶ In this way, the Empire cut across a variety of academic interests in the late 19th and early 20th century. As Symonds observes, everyone could find value in the Empire: the classical scholars saw their field as essential to sound political and administrative careers because the classics shaped character and good judgment; 'modern' scholars (e.g. natural sciences,

⁹⁵ Hughes (1905), 32-3.

⁹⁶ John M. Mackenzie, "Empire and metropolitan cultures," in *The Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 5, Andrew Porter, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University, 1999), 285.

geography, anthropology, even history) agreed that their fields were important to the practical requirements of the Empire; religious studies gravitated toward the evangelical overtones found in civilizing native peoples; and, for each, the Empire was simply a ripe field for employment.⁹⁷ The territorial expansion in the 1880s and 1890s also set the backdrop for a focus on empire at the elementary school level. The objective “was to give the nation’s children a sense of patriotic mission and a level of physical fitness which would enable them to sustain Britain’s position in the world.”⁹⁸ According to another observer, “The very curriculum of the public schools supported the Victorian’s moral faith in Empire...It seems to have been widely assumed in Victorian classrooms that the British Empire was a splendid thing, for ruler and subject alike.”⁹⁹

There were clear incentives to educate the working class in patriotic and imperialistic themes. Imperialism and patriotism could bind society together.¹⁰⁰ Again, the aim was never to broaden the base of English gentlemen. Most “sought instead to inculcate a different sort of imperialism in the working classes, one that was still compatible with the latter’s subordinate role.”¹⁰¹ Consider the following passage from John Finnemore’s *Famous Englishmen* (1901): “In every age we may call the great man the statue, and the people who supported him the pedestal. Few people in our time will become statues, but we can all take our share in forming a firm pedestal in support of a great leader and a great cause...Remember, then that men and women who wisely obey wise laws, who greatly

⁹⁷ Symonds, 1.

⁹⁸ Pamela Horn, “English elementary education and the growth of the imperial ideal: 1880-1914,” in *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism*, J. A. Mangan, ed. (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 40.

⁹⁹ Wilkinson, 102.

¹⁰⁰ Bernard Porter, *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2007), 168.

¹⁰¹ Porter, 174; 204-5.

support great men and great aims, are just as necessary as the famous leader himself.”¹⁰²

Similarly, Heathorn notes that, from the mid 1880s, school readers for elementary schools began to emphasize themes of ‘good citizenship’, which was interchangeable with being a ‘good subject’.¹⁰³ Further, citizenship was presented in patriotic terms, and patriotism in terms of obedience and duty, without reference to one’s social class. The readers also helped promote national symbols meant to smooth over social and political divisions and reinforce the themes of duty, citizenship, patriotism and Empire. In particular, the monarchy became a valuable focal point, capturing both the “continuity of the race and the future destiny of the English nation and Empire.”¹⁰⁴ ‘Service’ was therefore fungible – a notion applicable to one’s disposition to the government as much as the Empire. “Conspicuously, the duties of the English citizen did not stop with the boundaries of England or even the British Isles – they were explicitly connected to the present and future welfare of the empire.”¹⁰⁵ These obligations were framed in universal terms.

The drive to bring the Empire to the elementary schools was spearheaded by both public and private actors. The state, hindered by its rather limited ability, did play a part in encouraging the proliferation of imperial studies soon after initiating the widespread reform of elementary education through the Elementary Education Act of 1870. In 1878, the Education Department instructed Her Majesty’s Inspectors (HMIs) to incite interest in the colonies. As noted, HMIs were in close contact with instructors and empowered to consult over syllabi and teaching methods. Unless their recommendations were tied to funding, there

¹⁰² Quoted in Porter, 174.

¹⁰³ Stephen Heathorn, “‘Let Us Remember That We, Too, Are English’: Constructions of Citizenship and National Identity in English Elementary School Reading Books, 1880-1914”, *Victorian Studies* 38: 3 (Spring, 1995), 413.

¹⁰⁴ Heathorn, 420.

¹⁰⁵ Heathorn, 417.

was no guarantee that their advice would be heeded. Nevertheless, much of the state's involvement with advancing the Empire as a subject within the classroom was limited to suggestions touching upon syllabi.

The frequency of Empire-related recommendations from the Education Department and, after 1899, the Board of Education increased at the turn of the century. Furthermore, they often reflected the prevailing mood among the elite. For example, the Code of 1890 suggested modifications to history syllabi in order to reference and promote the study of the “acquisition and growth of the colonies and foreign possessions.”¹⁰⁶ This language is not in the least surprising considering the prominence of ‘new imperialism’ at the time. Similarly, following the Boer War and as foreign competition increased pressure on the Empire, the Board would issue a series of recommendations stressing stock patriotic themes. In 1904, the Board of Education called for the inclusion of the growth of the British Empire in lessons about English history. Meanwhile, geography lessons were to offer information about not just the British Isles but the Dominions as well. Secondary schools, the Code continued, were to spend no less than 4 hours on English, history and geography (which actually mirrored scheduling in the public schools).¹⁰⁷ The 1906 *Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools* included ‘moral instruction’ involving courage and love for one’s country as a component of the curriculum.¹⁰⁸ Among the BOE’s *Suggestions* for 1912, “It will be found that the best general subject for the last years of school life is the British Empire in some detail.”¹⁰⁹ These *were* only suggestions, and implementation fell upon the shoulders of the individual instructors. Lessons on the Empire at the elementary school level were likely

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Horn, “English elementary education,” 40-1.

¹⁰⁷ Thomas G. August, *The Selling of the Empire: British and French Imperialist Propaganda, 1890-1940* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1985).

¹⁰⁸ See Board of Education, *Code of Regulations for Public Elementary Schools* (London: Darling & Son, 1906), 3.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in August, 112.

compromised, if offered at all, by the quality of instruction. Teachers, especially before 1902 when training received greater emphasis, likely knew little about the Empire. And, considering the freedom that the Board of Education granted elementary teachers in the construction of syllabi, it was unlikely that the subject would have received much attention.¹¹⁰ Again, while the Board did call for certain subjects, they lacked the capacity to enforce compliance beyond the linkage between exam performance and funding.

II. THE CONTENT OF FRENCH EDUCATION

We now move to consider significant trends in the content of French education. Three observations are worth making at the outset. First, France's public education system, while highly centralized, was also highly segmented. Curricular initiatives applied at one level might not be similarly implemented at another level because they did not fit the intended purpose of the institution. We must, therefore, discern whether imperial ideas and images cut-across the various segments. Second, the Church was a prominent provider of education throughout the 19th century and into the early years of the 20th. In fact, the Church dominated the private school system at all levels such that to speak of private schools in France as the 19th century progressed, one necessarily referred to the Church first and foremost. The key issue involves the independence of the Church over curricula and pedagogy. While the national competitive exam structure imposed some restrictions, the Church could still introduce a particular bent and operate outside of the expressed will of the state in curricular matters. Did the relative freedom of the church to steer its own curricular course interrupt efforts to impart ideas and images related to the Empire? Third, French

¹¹⁰ Porter, 201-3.

identity is contested throughout the century such that efforts to impart a singular French identity subsume efforts to create an imperial identity, *per se*. This creates a key obstacle in linking education to imperial identity in that it may be difficult at points to separate a general sort of nationalism with a particular idea of the French Empire. In what follows, we must parse the two such that we can discern the relative importance of ideas and images related to Empire. If national and imperial themes are not terribly distinct or the latter is entirely absent at points, then we must downgrade our expectations about French education as a mechanism behind the construction of a popular imperial identity unless nationalism and imperialism can be understood as interchangeable according to perceptions of the day.

Primary Schooling: Identity for the Masses

Primary schools were the focal point of efforts to fashion a singular French identity throughout the 19th century. Generally the chief concerns involved national unity and stability, and education, it was commonly believed, would enable the state to attack the problem at the widest base possible. But the attraction primary education was not simply a function of exposure. Rather, primary schools in France were historically populated by those most ‘at risk’ to subversive influences. The Revolution of 1848 was, at its core, a mass phenomenon – as was the Revolution of 1789, at least for a time. Additionally, the socio-economic dislocation associated with the Industrial Revolution was most severely felt among those whose children attended primary schools, from the working poor to the peasants to the artisans and even the lower middle classes. In this respect, primary education’s value to French policymakers was largely derived from its audience – an audience that was guaranteed to be captive for at least a few years thanks to legislation that made attendance

mandatory – more importantly, an audience that most required socialization in order to be peaceful, orderly, or free (depending on one's perspective).

We must also keep in mind that French society and the French policy were in a state of transition throughout the century. The expansion of suffrage raised fears about the influence of the masses if left without a proper civic education. This was, for example, a prime motivation behind Victor Duruy's reforms in the early 1860s. Duruy believed that, on the one hand, education could impart necessary skills (namely, reading and writing) by which a citizen could remain informed. On the other, it could transmit the dominant values and beliefs that best make sense of the common good rather than submit it to the interpretation of the mob.¹¹¹ Meanwhile, the Industrial Revolution contributed to a shift in the distribution of economic and political power in France. The rise of the *petit bourgeoisie*, of the *classes moyennes*, promised to disturb French cultural moorings were it not for education. Education could similarly inculcate traditional values in the rising élite and, thereby, ensure the perpetuation of French civilization.¹¹² The latter function was chiefly reserved for the secondary school system which did the most to shape France's élite during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Returning to the nature of primary schooling in France, the Guizot Law (1833) cast a long shadow extending into the Third Republic. The law set in place a list of required topics in the elementary school classroom, including: religious and moral instruction, reading, writing, French, arithmetic, and the metric system. Clearly, the religious and moral instruction would appeal to the socializing instinct described above, while the latter subjects align with the interests of parents who demanded that education yield practical benefits. The

¹¹¹ Moody, 72-4.

¹¹² Cf. Price, 307; and, Gildea (1983), 4.

law also called for geometry, line drawing, natural and physical sciences, singing, history and geography, though these subjects were reserved for ‘superior’ primary education. The Falloux Law (1850) left the core subjects unchanged, while adding the option of teaching agriculture, industry, hygiene, surveying, history and geography, drawing and gymnastics. Once again, the list is populated by practical subjects that might position a child for an apprenticeship upon leaving school, in addition to subjects that advanced a nation-building agenda, namely history and geography, which had heretofore been reserved for upper grades.

A glimpse of the official daily schedule mandated for all public primary school students from 1882 until 1923 confirms that little changed by the advent of the Third Republic. While optional subjects like hygiene, surveying, agriculture and industry are not referenced specifically, room is conceivably afforded under the nonspecific category, ‘manual training’. Moral instruction remains a feature across all courses, as are mathematics and French-language subjects. Of perhaps greater significance is the extension of history, geography, and science to the preparatory level, which the Falloux Law reserved for the higher course alone. The schedule is also reveals the relative importance of certain subjects and how this emphasis is fairly static across time. (Beyond courses linked to the French language, mathematics is the only subject that experiences a relatively dramatic change.) We can also immediately observe the dominance of national, or patriotic, subjects within the schedule, which is fairly consistent across each course. The inclusion of military exercises even for children aged six is striking, though, as will be explained below, this reflects the political climate of the time. Otherwise, primary school student’s 30 hour week was divided accordingly:

	Preparatory Section, Ages 6- 7	'Elementary Course', Ages 7- 9	'Middle Course', Ages 9-11	'Higher Course', Ages 11-13
Instruction in Morals & French Citizenship	1.25 hours	1.25 hours	1.25 hours	1.5 hours
Reading, French language	10	7	3	2.5
Writing, French language	5	2.5	1.5	.75
Studying, French language		5	7.5	7.5
French History & Geography	2.5	2.5	3	3
French Songs	1.25	1	1	1
Military & Other physical exercises	1.75	2	2	2
Mathematics	2.5	3.5	4.5	5
Science	1.25	1.25	2.5	2.5
Design	1	1	1	1
Manual Training	1.5	1	1	1.5
Recreations	2	1.75	1.75	1.75

Source: Hayes, Table II, 39.

Based upon this schedule, it is clearly evident that a child matriculating through the French primary education system received a healthy dose of French language, literature, history and geography from the age of six onward. And while the initial emphasis on reading French declines, it is offset by an increase in studying the French language. Many of the other subjects remain consistent in their allotments. Non-French subjects were subordinated if not excluded altogether. The official doctrine framed the curricula “through French national eyes”.¹¹³ And while the *lycées* and *collèges* offered courses that were broader in their

¹¹³ Hayes, 48.

focus, most Frenchmen only attended primary school (in large part because this covered the compulsory range), where French-oriented subjects were dominant and the exposure to nationalistic/patriotic themes was the most potent.

Throughout the early to mid-19th century, the impact of education was especially affected by the pervasiveness and stickiness of local dialects. The elimination of patois actually became a focal point of efforts to extend education into the provinces in order to increase the effectiveness of education while erasing the cultural divisions between town and country (or, more accurately, Paris and the rest of France), though the near-obsession with language sustained the questionable – if not inaccurate – belief that having the peasants speak French would be sufficient to having them *be* French.¹¹⁴ In practice, education in rural areas varied, and many of the rural schools were limited in the instruction they provided, focusing generally on reading. Even upon matriculation, evidence indicates that provincials continued to rely on the preexisting oral culture, which calls into question the extent to which French ‘traditional’ culture imposed from the top reconstituted rural culture.¹¹⁵ However, this does not mean that cultural unification failed outright; rather, the rural and ‘traditional’ culture was viewed on the ground as mutually inclusive.

The drive to consolidate language instruction in French received particular emphasis in the late 1860s, inspired in part by the “growing menace of Prussia”.¹¹⁶ Victor Duruy, Minister for Education under Napoleon III, worried about the ‘germanization’ of Alsace and Lorraine, and he believed that expanding French language programs in the region would help counter Prussian influence.¹¹⁷ The promotion of language instruction also reflected a

¹¹⁴ Lehnig, 145-7.

¹¹⁵ Lehnig, 147; cf. 154-5.

¹¹⁶ Moody, 77.

¹¹⁷ Victor Duruy, *Notes et souvenirs, 1811-1894* (Paris: Hachette, 1902), 226.

sensitivity to the sometimes vast differences between Paris and the provinces, which was reaching a critical mass in the 1860s due to increasing migration as well as tensions between the state and the Church.¹¹⁸ French authorities especially valued French language instruction as a critical, practical tool: it trained the mind and cultivated a particular way of thinking valued by the élite; and, it encouraged the resolution to problems based upon intellect facilitated by special traits of the French language.¹¹⁹ To Duruy, language was also “*de moyens que la civilisation et l’équité pouvaient avouer tout haut.*”¹²⁰ This is not to say that language instruction was somehow a magical elixir that would elevate the French people *en masse* into enlightenment. The primary motivation remained grounded in the spread of the dominant, Parisian notion of French culture. Yet the perceived benefits to the intellect could also serve the interests of social harmony through the perfection of a civic *ethos*. This objective fit perfectly within the concept of primary schooling embraced by the Third Republic, which carried forward the emphasis on language (and French centrism viz. other subjects) with its broader program of moral and civic training.

It is widely accepted that moral and civic training formed the crux of primary education throughout much of the 19th century, but the sting of the military defeat at the hands of Prussia in 1870 made the need for such programs particularly acute.¹²¹ Initially the Third Republic abdicated part of the responsibility for ‘moralization’ to the Church. However, by the 1880s, moral education was increasingly secularized in public schools, moving away from religious themes and justifications.¹²² After 1881, secular, moral lessons replaced prayers at the start of the school day; and the content of the lessons was set by the

¹¹⁸ Weber (1976), 72-3.

¹¹⁹ Zeldin (1993), 240.

¹²⁰ Duruy (1902), 226.

¹²¹ Cf. Zeldin (1993), 177-8; Elwitt, 213; Gildea (1983), 6; Reed-Danahay, 114.

¹²² Elwitt, 195.

Ministry in consultation with Henri Marion and Paul Janet, both professors at the Sorbonne. In their view, the lay teacher would “complete what the priest and father began, or failed to accomplish: he had to ensure that every child ‘served an effectual moral apprenticeship.’”¹²³

The movement toward secularism as the basis for ‘*instruction morale et civique*’ in public schools was further advanced by the Law of 1882, which was one of Jules Ferry’s chief legacies relative to the substance of French education. Through the Law, Ferry extended Victor Cousin’s secular moral philosophical program in secondary schools to the primary schools. While the measure did represent a certain degree of compromise, Ferry was at least successful in introducing into law the notion that secular morality should be a part of the school curriculum.¹²⁴ Ferry’s logic was simple and bound up in the times: “Pointing to the modern development of the secular state, of secular civil society, of secular knowledge, all independent of religion, he maintained that the secularization of education was a natural consequence.”¹²⁵ Ferry believed it was “quite natural that the master, while teaching the children to read and write, should also impart to them those simple rules of moral conduct which are not less universally accepted than the rules of language or arithmetic.”¹²⁶ Clearly Ferry was a positivist of the late-19th century variety, and his views reflected the teachings of August Comte and Emile Littré, a contemporary of Ferry’s and a fellow Mason. Both Ferry and Littré believed moral education was integral to human progress, and the key to one’s

¹²³ Zeldin (1993), 178.

¹²⁴ For example, under the provisions of the Law, private schools could continue to offer religious instruction, but the state mandated that it had to be optional. Meanwhile, the exclusion of religious instruction was heavily criticized by the Right, which prompted Ferry to allow students to leave school on Thursdays in order to receive religious instruction at church. If the church was too far away, then the local priest was allowed to visit the school.

¹²⁵ Plyllis Stock-Morton, *Moral Education for a Secular Society: The Development of Morale Laïque in Nineteenth Century France* (Albany: SUNY, 1988), 98.

¹²⁶ Jules Ferry, “Letter to the Primary Teachers of France, November 17, 1883”, in *French Educational Ideals of Today: an Anthology of the Molders of French Educational Thought of the Present*. Ferdinand Buisson & Frederic Ernest Farrington, eds. (New York: World Book Company, 1919), 7.

moral consciousness was the rational faculty rather than religious dogma. Enhance the moral consciousness of the people and one improves the conditions impacting the achievement of the common good. Thus, taken as a whole,

The entire system of moral education set up by the republic in the 1880s can be seen as a program aimed at guaranteeing, politically, the existence of the republic, and socially, the predominance of the bourgeoisie as the natural leaders of the republic. In other words, although French leadership had moved from teaching secular morality only to the élite under the *monarchie censitaire* to universal moral education under universal suffrage, the goal was similar – the orderly society, administered by those most capable of guaranteeing order. In this light the moral education of the Third Republic seems only the substitution of secular propaganda supporting a bourgeois republic for the old religious propaganda which supported aristocratic monarchy.¹²⁷

Moral education would, it was hoped, ensure class stability and the integrity of the state (though it would appear that there was no direct value to the Empire). There remained prominent voices who found the notion that moral education could somehow be separated from religion to be contradictory. This view accorded with the regime implemented by Victor Duruy under the Second Republic such that moral education touched on one's duties to one's self, to society and to God, and the inability to achieve consensus under the Third Republic explains the continued relevance of the Church as a moral authority among primary schools (though typically private schools).

By the 1890s, science increasingly became the basis for moral thought. The tool of social order was the free and rational mind; and the task of education was to impart upon the individual a sense of responsibility to society – a willingness to fulfill one's social debt (e.g. *solidarité*).¹²⁸ This is not a significant departure from the secular trajectory of moral

¹²⁷ Stock-Morton, 95.

¹²⁸ Stock-Morton, 117. For a contemporary presentation of this theme, which captures the linkages between education, religion and social responsibility, see Eugène Bersier, *La solidarité* (Paris: G. Fischbacher, 1893).

instruction established by Ferry in 1882, though it certainly takes on added meaning in light of mounting anti-clericalism among republicans at the time, as well as rising tensions between France and the other Great Powers, Germany in particular. We must keep in mind that French maneuvers in the early 1890s – namely, the *entente* Russia (1894) paired with efforts to dislodge Italy from the Triple Alliance – reveal a fear of isolation *vis-à-vis* Germany and a certain lack of trust regarding Britain. Meanwhile, a brief war-scare with Britain in 1893, over French interests in Indo-China, provided evidence of the potential for violent conflict due to competing French and British colonial claims – a potential that very nearly became a reality at Fashoda five years later. In this climate, the state attempted to introduce an ethos to bind together segments of French society for the sake of national strength by folding *solidarité* into the official *morale*. Elizabeth Stock-Morton confirms that *solidarité* was integrated into *morale* textbooks in use at the turn of the century up to the First World War.¹²⁹

Ferry's *education morale* (or, the *moral laïque*) at the primary school level cut across a variety of themes, including “the nature and responsibility of family, duties of the citizen, history of the nation and its institutions and political economy.”¹³⁰ Through their largely didactic lessons resting upon instructional and probing lectures, teachers were to impart a respect for the state as the locus of authority rooted in law, order and property – core values of the established order.¹³¹ Examples of civic and social virtues were carefully chosen from among French heroes and heroines without reference to regional or local loyalties.¹³² Otherwise, varied methods applied to the different age groups populating the primary

¹²⁹ Stock-Morton, 120.

¹³⁰ Elwitt, 203.

¹³¹ Prost (1968), 121-2.

¹³² Hayes, 43.

schools. Instructors presented patriotic songs, poems and basic dialogues laced with patriotic and moral themes to preschoolers, while adding the rote memorization of words and phrases like ‘citizen’, ‘soldier’, ‘army’, and ‘patrie’ to lessons involving older children, aged seven to nine (also known as the ‘first cycle’). The second cycle (children aged nine to eleven) engaged in discussions of more complex ideas pertaining to civic duties, like paying taxes and serving in the army. The third cycle (children aged 11-13) “bore down heavily on social morality, democracy as the embodiment of social justice, and solidarity.”¹³³ This is evident in the following sample from Ferry’s official program of moral education for the third cycle:

1. The family: duties of parents and children; reciprocal duties of masters and servants; the family spirit.
2. Society: necessity and benefits of society. Justice, the condition of all society. Solidarity and human brotherhood. Alcoholism destroys these sentiments little by little by destroying the mainspring of personal responsibility.

Application and development of the idea of justice: respect for human life and liberty; respect for property: respect for the pledged word; respect for the honour and reputation of others. Probity, equity, loyalty, delicacy. Respect for the opinions and beliefs held by others.

Applications and development of the idea of love or brotherhood. Its varying degrees; duties of benevolence, gratitude, tolerance, mercy, etc. Self-sacrifice, the highest form of love; show it can find a place in everyday life.

3. The fatherland: what a man owes to his country: obedience to law, military service, discipline, devotion, fidelity to the flag. Taxes (condemnation of fraud towards the State). The ballot: a moral obligation, which should be free, conscientious, disinterested, enlightened. Rights which correspond to these duties: personal freedom, liberty of conscience, freedom of contract and the right to work, right to organize. Guarantee of the security of life and property to all. National sovereignty. Explanation of the motto of the Republic: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.¹³⁴

¹³³ Elwitt, 203-4.

¹³⁴ Jules Ferry, “Program for Elementary Education,” in *French Educational Ideals of Today: an Anthology of the Molders of French Educational Thought of the Present*. Ferdinand Buisson & Frederic Ernest Farrington, eds. (New York: World Book Company, 1919), 30-31.

Perhaps in praise or perhaps in criticism, David Thomson offers an apt assessment: “This blend of Christian ethics without Christian religion or faith, nationalist principles and middle-class virtues, was the creed inculcated by one of the most highly centralized educational machines in the modern world.”¹³⁵ A creed, we should note, which remained silent as to France’s place within the wider world, including any obligations or sentiments toward her imperial possessions.

Civic instruction from Ferry onward was fairly straightforward and distinct from moral instruction. Teachers based civic lessons on the presentation of facts and information on the organization of society and government. This allowed for brief, some say ineffective, lessons of up to only one hour per week.¹³⁶ To compliment civic instruction, military training and physical education were also introduced into schools as a means to build ties cutting across social divisions, which many believed would have the added effect of bolstering national unity.¹³⁷ Others saw it as appealing to a “prevailing taste for military music and display.”¹³⁸ The law of January 27th, 1880, introduced compulsory gymnastics in all public boys’ schools, based on four half-hours of physical training and military exercises per week. Within two years, a military education committee attached to the Ministry of Education, authorized by Gambetta in 1881, designed a plan to finance military instruction units attached to communal schools. The Ministry of War would supply retired officers and noncommissioned officers to supervise drills and parades; songs and books would also be distributed. The initiative was promulgated by a presidential decree of July 6th, 1882,

¹³⁵ Thomson, 146.

¹³⁶ Zeldin (1993), 184.

¹³⁷ Elwitt, 220.

¹³⁸ Eugen Weber, “Gymnastics and Sports in Fin-de-Siecle France: Opium of the Classes?” *The American Historical Review*, 76: 1 (Feb., 1971), 74-5.

established *bataillons scolaires* for military and gymnastics training at all teaching establishments. A subsequent decree in 1887 called for the curriculum,

To develop the fundamental qualities of discipline, love of duty, respect to orders and leaders...The officers of all grades must apply this unceasing manner to develop in the heart of their men the great ideas of sacrifice and devotion to the homeland. The evocation of our military glories, the historical readings of bodies of troops are the powerful means of military education that company commanders must not neglect in implementing...In speaking of the obligation of military service, one seizes all the occasions to highlight the dignity of military professions. One endeavors to inspire their respect for the uniform, love for the flag and the homeland. One strikes their imagination in citing the high deeds to which the officers and the soldiers of their corps took part in, in recounting to them remarkable examples of bravery, of discipline and of military sacrifices.¹³⁹

Clearly, the expressed intent behind military education made its pairing with civic instruction a matter of common sense and drew upon still-salient concerns rooted in the catastrophe of the Franco-Prussian War. On the one hand, the aim was, according to Eugen Weber, “to teach young Frenchmen the cult of the flag, a taste for arms, respect for discipline, and pride in being French.”¹⁴⁰ On the other, military education in public schools addressed national preparedness, a rationale that would endure through the Great War.

By contrast, the implementation of the moral *laïque* was more problematic due to deficiencies in its instruction. Initially teachers were able to choose their own (pre-approved) textbooks, and pedagogical guidance from the state was vague and frequently changing. For example, following the law of 1882, Ferry explained that ‘the teacher is not required to fill the child’s memory, but to teach his heart, to make him feel, by an immediate experience, the majesty of moral law.’¹⁴¹ In an address at the Sorbonne (1880), Ferry elaborated, “Can object lessons be properly taught unless there is profound sympathy and real love for the child?

¹³⁹ Quoted in Gerbod, Paul. "L'éthique Héroïque En France," *Revue Historique* 2nd ser. 268 (1982), 413.

¹⁴⁰ Weber (1971), 77.

¹⁴¹ Zeldin (1993), 179.

With the textbooks and the old methods one could dispense with the sentiments and the constant self-sacrifice; but in applying the new methods, those stimuli of thought, in order to give real object lessons that are intelligent and worth while, one must labor earnestly, one must put one's whole heart into it. In short, one must control through humanity rather than the rod; and when the human side appears, there is the educator."¹⁴² Within six years, Octave Gréard, an influential civil servant in the ministry of education, argued that teaching should be intellectual rather than emotional. Unfortunately, textbook reforms initiated by Ferry in the 1880s were of limited value pertaining to technique. Most were written to appeal to children while lacking instructions for teachers on how to proceed with the lesson, which Theodore Zeldin blames for the program's struggles across France, particularly in the west.¹⁴³ However, we should be careful to avoid characterizing French public school instructors as somehow incapable of finding their way without explicit instructions. As Carlton Hayes notes, primary public school teachers were carefully selected only after passing the higher brevet, which effectively means that they were well trained and that they had received a heavy dose of the government program.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, despite the openness of the Third Republic to pedagogical reform, a need for newer, more effective teaching methods was only sinking in among school inspectors and many of France's teachers by the century's end – which appears to affirm Zeldin's analysis.

To be fair, the 1880s marked an improvement for teaching in general, carrying forward reforms initiated in the early years of the Third Republic. Instructors were better trained and classroom techniques were more efficient and less mechanical. While teachers

¹⁴² Jules Ferry, "Our Need of Educators," in *French Educational Ideals of Today: an Anthology of the Molders of French Educational Thought of the Present*, Ferdinand Buisson & Frederic Ernest Farrington, eds. (New York: World Book Company, 1919), 16-17.

¹⁴³ Zeldin (1993), 179-80.

¹⁴⁴ Hayes, 56.

could select their own textbooks, they could only do so from a list approved by the Ministry. Moreover, each student within a given class had to use the textbook adopted by the instructor. Roger Price notes that this particular provision, though difficult to implement due to the cost and availability of texts especially in rural areas, was rather significant. The requirement opened up the curriculum for additional subjects because instructors could teach lessons simultaneously and thereby save time.¹⁴⁵ The supply of better quality textbooks expanded in response, though the approach to subjects and the style of presentation were fairly uniform, which reflected the publishers' awareness of government preferences as to tone and content. Considering the significance of textbooks to classroom instruction at the time, these were no small changes. Teachers tended to closely follow their textbooks and often based their lessons on memorizing lengthy passages.¹⁴⁶ Thus, textbooks designed to engage the students' interest – such as by writing in story-form – improved the chances that a lesson would be retained; and, similar approaches to subject matter meant that more and more students across France would be exposed to the same ideas and images. This was particularly important to the success of the government's overarching agenda involving the cultivation of a shared, national identity.

In this respect, the prevailing emphasis on memorization and a burgeoning examination culture are worth mention. First, the predominant teaching method employed at the time relied heavily upon memorization rather than creative thinking or independent research, which encouraged “passivity, obedience and conformity” among the students.¹⁴⁷ On the one hand, this made the classroom environment more manageable, enhancing the effectiveness of the lesson. On the other, it increased the likelihood that students would

¹⁴⁵ Price, 328.

¹⁴⁶ Hayes, 50.

¹⁴⁷ Price, 330; Gildea (1983), 263.

retain and internalize the ideas and images invested with normative significance.

Remembering that one of the guiding concerns behind primary education in France was, fundamentally, behavioral, improving the propensity for the internalization of normative understandings would be quite valuable. Second, the state began to rely upon examinations at the primary level beginning in 1880 with the introduction of a national certificate of primary studies. Additional certificates, typically for upper courses, were gradually offered, further incentivizing the retention of desired information while contributing, rightly or wrongly, to a culture that encouraged students to learn whatever it took to pass.¹⁴⁸ This supports the claim that memorization and examination constituted rather potent pedagogical tools for the dissemination of particular ideas and images intended to construct a shared, national identity.

SECONDARY SCHOOLING: STAGING THE ÉLITE

Throughout the 19th century, the classical curriculum dominated the secondary school syllabus, a holdover from the Jesuit and Oratorian colleges of the Ancien Regime and later propagated by Napoleonic decrees which privileged the study of French, Latin, geography, history and mathematics.¹⁴⁹ The preference for the classics reflected long-standing ideas about the essential character of a classical education to the perfection of the intellect. A classical education was a mark of distinction and a means to prepare for one's

¹⁴⁸ Theodore Zeldin goes as far as to qualify the examination, in this context, as “the key instrument that subordinated primary school children to values of those who were more privileged than themselves” (Zeldin (1993), 200).

¹⁴⁹ From 1880 until 1890, the study of Latin and Greek alone comprised more than one third (1880) to nearly one half (1890) of the weekly distribution of hours across all subjects. And while most subjects experienced a reduction in hours, Latin and Greek remained constant (Prost (1968), 251).

future in the salons or in political life.¹⁵⁰ “It was argued on pedagogical grounds that the classics were the best way to cultivate a pupil’s reasoning ability and quickness of mind, and his ability to express himself clearly in both written and oral forms. Even if Latin was often learned by rote without much reflection, it was believed to add quality to thought and elevation of style to the vernacular. Furthermore, reading the great classical writers was seen as a means of cultivating the moral senses.”¹⁵¹ The classics also served the interests of the élite, who deployed a classical education as a barrier to entry to those lacking in means and ability. In the ostensibly meritocratic era ushered in by the Revolution, such a barrier was deemed particularly necessary. Beyond the perfection of the mind for its own sake and the preservation of certain social distinctions, the secondary school curriculum was designed to prepare students for the *baccalauréat*, a critical prerequisite for the *grandes écoles* and the University. While a secondary education lacked the overt emphasis on French identity observed in the content of a primary education, one could claim that it had achieved a certain taken-for-grantedness by virtue of the fact that the secondary schools were the staging ground for France’s élite, a subset of which included the administrative and governing class.

As discussed in a previous section, state *lycées* and *collèges* were similar to higher primary schools, but the education they provided was more extensive and somewhat exclusive despite their public status. French secondary schools charged fees, directed and subsidized by the state, but prohibitive to poorer families who would otherwise rely upon scholarships for support. The opportunity to board gave secondary schools additional

¹⁵⁰ Prost (1968), 54-5.

¹⁵¹ Price, 345-6. Cf. Zeldin (1993), 262; Ringer (1992), 145. In the 1880s onward, however, rote memorization fell out of favor as the chief technique behind classical instruction. Instead, instructors sought to cultivate analytical skills through intellectual rather than memory-driven exercises (Prost (1968), 247-8).

leverage over their students, whose daily routines were closely regulated in a nearly monastic, militaristic fashion.¹⁵² Yet, arguably, the more significant factor involved the nature of secondary studies. Parents who sought only the three Rs and a practical course of study might see a secondary education as unnecessary when a primary education would satisfy their needs. While secondary schools often offered a primary course, their main contribution was a seven year course for children aged 13-20 steeped in the classics. The focus was literary, the mode of engagement was philosophical, and the method of instruction rested primarily on lecture and written work.¹⁵³ Students were encouraged to employ reason rather than merely memorize – though the *baccalauréat* certainly promoted cramming, which contrasted with the preferred approach to classical studies relied upon by secondary instructors.

Despite the continued dominance of the classics, the curriculum broadened to include French classes alongside Latin; and, with the introduction of the ‘special’ curriculum under Duruy, students could take classes with a more generalist track. In certain instances, such as among smaller schools, Latin was a subject in the minority, which actually appealed to the middle classes who did not aspire to a classical *baccalauréat* down the road.¹⁵⁴ On the whole, however, the classics remained prevalent among the *lycées* and *collèges* because, on the one hand, the *baccalauréat* was heavily biased toward the classics, which forced schools to teach to the exam in order to best position their students to pass. This created incentives to crowd out other subjects though they might be relevant to the *bac*.¹⁵⁵ Even the *Enseignement secondaire special*, Duruy’s four-year course involving the ‘masters of human thought’, was

¹⁵² Heywood (2007), 242.

¹⁵³ Walter Rice Sharp. *The French Civil Service: Bureaucracy in Transition* (New York: Macmillan, 1931), 106. Cf. Zeldin (1993), 209-210; Prost (1968), 50-2.

¹⁵⁴ Gildea (1980), 282.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Zeldin (1993), 230.

rather unpopular because it was viewed as a ‘second-best’ path for those incapable of taking on a classical education.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, and perhaps of greater weight, parents perceived an association between classical training and the cultivation of leadership skills, character and polite culture.¹⁵⁷ Even wage-earning parents recognized the linkage between a classical education and jobs that relied upon intellectual merit rather than blood-ties or patronage; special courses could not assure the same returns on the investment.¹⁵⁸ Thusly, the classics achieved a ‘gateway status’ with an undeniable magnetic quality that would endure in the minds of many of the established and aspiring élite throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The expansion of a classical education to the middle classes was a contested subject under the Second Empire, as the élite feared the penetration of “social groups outside the magic circle”.¹⁵⁹ The drive after 1840 to reinforce Latin at the *lycées* and in the *baccalauréat* was meant to create a barrier against undeserved intrusion by the middle class. Yet, despite the fact that, thanks to the Guizot Law, the middle class now had viable options between primary and secondary education, secondary education prospered because it was, simply, better – provided the family could afford the cost. Certain regions – typically industrial, commercial and sea-going locales – experienced greater success in diverting the middle class to primary schools, largely because leaving school prior to secondary school-age was already a norm; however, in other regions, such as Brittany, ambition rather than practicality drove

¹⁵⁶ Moody, 80. More specifically, the four year program involved French, modern languages, history and geography (of France, rather than ancient Rome) and the applied sciences. The *special* appealed to those with “more limited social ambitions” while imparting more in the way of prestige-value than would a strictly technical education (Price, 347).

¹⁵⁷ Moody, 33.

¹⁵⁸ Anderson (1982), 162-3.

¹⁵⁹ Gildea (1980), 282.

middle class decision-making, which meant that classical educations at secondary schools remained in vogue.¹⁶⁰

Science was not completely ignored within the secondary school curriculum, even at schools where classical studies remained in high demand. The upper forms of the *lycées* included ‘special’ courses, particularly in mathematics, designed to prepare students for the exams for the *grandes écoles*; and, lower grades – namely, those incapable of a classical education – were exposed to technical and general scientific courses. Hippolyte Fortoul, Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Education at mid-century, sought to deconstruct the barrier between higher and lower grades by integrating science into the classical program alongside modern subjects like history, geography, mathematics and foreign languages. The hope was to equip students with a foundation in modern and classical subjects such that they would be better able to choose their course of study at a more advanced level, likely at the age of 15. Resistance was strongest among the teachers themselves, though Fortoul would ignore this and proceed ahead with this plan in 1852. Unfortunately, the lack of qualified instructors hindered implementation. Fortoul’s reforms would be eventually undone by his successor, Gustave Rouland, who likewise desired a modern curriculum but yielded to pressure from the University. By the early 1860s, the classical curriculum was effectively restored to its dominant position.¹⁶¹

In the early years of the Third Republic, an attempt was made to lessen the classical component of secondary education. Jules Simon’s circular, *Messieurs les Provisaires sur l’Enseignement Secondaire* (September 27, 1872), introduced a course on hygiene and increased the hours devoted to history, geography, and modern languages. Meanwhile, the time

¹⁶⁰ Gildea (1980), 283.

¹⁶¹ Moody, 63-69.

allocated to writing Latin verse was eliminated and other written exercises in Latin were reduced. The circular, however, ran into resistance from parents and the University, which was responsible for overseeing the *baccalauréat*. Nevertheless, a wave of modifications to the syllabi of the *lycées* followed in an effort to introduce themes that corresponded with the agenda of the republican regime.¹⁶² These included patriotism and France's *mission civilisatrice*, which, during the mid-1880s, was a chief justification for the expansion of the French Empire.

During the Third Republic, the ideology of France's civilizing mission first emerged in the early 1870s, in large part due to a growing interest among geographical societies in the expansion of the French Empire in order to spread the light of French civilization.¹⁶³ They drew upon luminaries, such as Condorcet, who postulated that European societies were obligated to impart their morals, laws and institutions upon those who would otherwise remain backward and oppressed. He writes, "*Ces vastes pays lui offriront ici des peuples nombreux, qui semblent n'attendre, pour se civiliser, que d'en recevoir de nous les moyens, et de trouver des frères dans les Européens, pour devenir leurs amis et leurs disciples; là, des nations asservies sous des despotes sacrés ou des conquéreans stupides, et qui, depuis tant de siècles, appellent des libérateurs.*"¹⁶⁴ Journalists like Gabriel Charmes and authors/academics like Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, seized on the idea in the popular press. As Leroy-Beaulieu explains, France has a moral, philosophical and even religious duty to colonize for the sake of the "*traitement des races inférieures, l'estimation juste de leurs droits et leur acheminement à la civilisation.*"¹⁶⁵ By the late 1870s and early 1880s, the *mission civilisatrice* found its way into the political discourse, echoed, for instance, by Jules Ferry in his defense of

¹⁶² Zeldin (1993), 256.

¹⁶³ Conklin, 12.

¹⁶⁴ Condorcet, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (Paris: Agasse, n.d.), 335.

¹⁶⁵ Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonization chez les peuples modernes* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1882), xvi.

colonial expansion on the 28th of July, 1885: “*Je répète qu’il y a pour les races supérieures un droit, parce qu’il y a un devoir pour elles. Elles ont le devoir de civiliser les races inférieures.*”¹⁶⁶ This notion linking duty, civilization and colonialism was, as will be explored in at greater length in chapter 5, a prominent theme framing the treatment of French colonialism in textbooks.

There was also some pressure to expand practical and scientific education, though changes on this front were not achieved as quickly. A potentially significant innovation was the creation of a modern *baccalauréat* in 1881. The course of study in support of the *moderne* was six years (as opposed to seven for the classics), and the subject matter was grounded in literature and modern languages. This option was nearly identical to Duruy’s *special*, though Duruy did not pair his course with a dedicated *bac*, which might have enhanced its legitimacy. At first the *moderne* struggled to attract students in part because certain higher education tracks remained closed to those possessing the *bac* – namely, the Faculties of Law and Medicine.¹⁶⁷ In 1891, the *bac moderne* achieved full status equivalent to the *bac* associated with the classics. This appears to have added significantly to the appeal of the *moderne*. From 1865-1880, 68% of secondary pupils took up classical studies while only 32% chose modern; yet within eight years of the elevation of the *bac moderne*, modern studies had achieved parity. By 1900, moderns were in the majority with 52%.¹⁶⁸

During the 1890s, opposition to change within the secondary school establishment meant that the classics continued to dominate the curriculum as well as the *baccalauréat* up to the turn of the century, but the declining popularity of Latin and, especially, Greek was evident. The figures cited above demonstrate that student preferences were shifting toward modern subjects at the expense of the classics. The eclipse of the classics by the *moderne*

¹⁶⁶ << <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/ferry1885.asp>>> Accessed July 11, 2012.

¹⁶⁷ Gildea (1980), 293.

¹⁶⁸ Price, 348; Zeldin (1993), 249.

occurred as the Chamber of Deputies convened an inquiry regarding secondary education. For three years (1899-1902), the Chamber considered, among other questions, the rationale behind the continued preeminence of the classics. Various academic and administrative officials expressed concern over the capacity of a modern education to impart the same ‘*virtu éducatrice*’ as a classical education.¹⁶⁹ Modern education had little appeal, therefore, to the élite who were interested in a ‘slow osmosis of genuine culture’ rather than the forced cramming of facts that they believed often accompanied the modern curriculum. The subsequent Law of 1902 moderated these claims, advancing the conclusion that, though the classics should not be abandoned outright, additional opportunities must be available to students. As noted previously, the Law divided secondary education into a lower cycle of four years with two options – classical or modern – while the upper three years had four options – three of which linked Latin with the study of other subjects (e.g. Latin-Greek, Latin-Modern Languages, Latin- Sciences, in addition to Science-Modern Languages). The final track of the upper cycle most reflected changing attitudes in the first decade of the 20th century: (finally) a student could advance to the *baccalauréat* and pursue higher education at university or the *grandes écoles* without Latin.¹⁷⁰

FRENCH HIGHER EDUCATION: PERFECTING THE ÉLITE

After the Revolution, French higher education rested upon the *grandes écoles* of the *ancien régime*, which had long provided France with her elite administrative and professional

¹⁶⁹ Gildea (1983), 292.

¹⁷⁰ The Science-Modern Language course raised the ire of classicists who argued that excluding Latin would “[introduce] a certain slovenliness into training in the mother tongue” (Sharp, 103). This reflected a view, particularly popular at mid-century, that the study of Latin was a necessary foundation for the study of French (cf. Zeldin (1993), 227-8).

class. The nature of education in the *grandes écoles* was, in the early 19th century, classical because of its association with the training of the mind. “This view was supported by a public conviction that the ability to think logically was the prime achievement of man and that along with this facility must go that of expressing thought in graceful prose.”¹⁷¹ Toward these ends, the method employed among the institutions of higher learning, as among secondary schools, was literary and philosophical. In the tradition of Napoleon, the *grandes écoles* borrowed from the martial culture in that study was closely supervised and the syllabus was tightly controlled.¹⁷² While one was encouraged to think, the object of one’s thoughts was not a matter of free exploration. This approach would form the foundation of pedagogical techniques at the *grandes écoles* throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The absence of curricular uniformity was a dominant characteristic among the *grandes écoles*. Subject matter and the emphasis placed upon certain subjects varied according to the specialty of the school, which was itself a reflection of the school’s functional purpose. St. Cyr, for example, produced military officers, so its curriculum was tilted toward military training. The Normale was the top training institution for France’s school teachers, so the classics were prevalent in the course of study. By contrast, the Polytechnique offered superior instruction in the sciences, which relegated the classics to an inferior position in the curriculum. This in itself is an important observation relative to the curricular priorities of the *grandes écoles*. While many of the great schools were oriented toward the applied sciences and modern subjects, the curricula generally included something in the way of classical or humanist studies (e.g. study of the French language, history and geography). Again, the perceived value in training the mind made the classics worthwhile; and humanist studies

¹⁷¹ Moody, 7.

¹⁷² Zeldin (1993), 335.

reinforced the strain of positivism in vogue during the Third Republic, as well as the singular French identity propagated by the state. However, unlike at the secondary level, the classical and humanist courses were clearly not the focal points of the curriculum of most of the *grandes écoles* because their programs of study followed from their function. Moreover, in theory, the secondary schools should have already provided the student with the required foundation in the classics. Additional extensive study would have been redundant.

Turning to the university, for much of the Third Republic, the array of courses offered by the faculties tended to mirror the secondary school curriculum to a much closer degree, though the provision of subjects varied from province to province, leading to gaps – namely involving foreign languages and even French – while also lowering the quality of instruction in others, such as economics, sociology and psychology. By and large, the science faculties were consistently the strongest (though not the most popular among the students).¹⁷³ Nevertheless, university-level sciences were increasingly criticized as mere extensions of secondary schools. The point of differentiation was in the emphasis of the university on applied, practical studies. Even then, the universities were often handicapped by a “lack of laboratories, overcrowding, and chronic shortage of funds.”¹⁷⁴ Upon the reconstitution of the university, though many of these obstacles still remained, administrators and professors began a push to widen the curriculum, which was both a reflection of the times as well as a gesture to inspire interest in the university.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Zeldin (1993), 324.

¹⁷⁴ Zeldin (1993), 329.

¹⁷⁵ Weisz, 372.

The reform of the university during the late 19th century involved reorganizing around four fields of study: letters (classics), sciences, medicine and law.¹⁷⁶ Each culminated in a series of exams, which also set the parameters of their respective curricula. Additional control over provincial faculty was exercised by the Ministry, to which professors had to submit their syllabi for approval. Otherwise, each field formed around common subjects determined by Ministerial decrees. In the field of letters, the decree of 25 December 1880 set the common subjects as: writing; French and Latin composition; French, Latin and Greek verbal explication; as well as classics, philosophy and history. Modern languages were added in 1886. A narrower field of common subjects defined the sciences, according to the decree of 29 July 1885: mathematical science, physical science and natural science. The decree of 20 June 1878 established the common subjects of the study of medicine as: physics, chemistry, and the natural sciences. Finally, the study of law divided according to whether one pursued a license or a doctorate. After 1885, doctorates divided into either judicial science or political economy; meanwhile, the license entailed private law, political economy, the history of law and, until 1896, political and administrative sciences.

By the 20th century, the French university system was moving away from training and certification for the liberal and teaching professions to pure research and technological training.¹⁷⁷ One important innovation involved the introduction of the positivist method into all branches of study.¹⁷⁸ Led by Emile Durkheim, the movement to blend science with humanism intensified at the 'New' Sorbonne, impacting both teaching and research methods. Of note, the positivist movement also reshaped historical scholarship, as

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Prost, 232-235. Louis Liard, *L'enseignement supérieur en France, 1789-1893, Volume 2* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1894), 381-426.

¹⁷⁷ Weisz, 375.

¹⁷⁸ Moody, 114.

contemporary history became a viable field of study. Additionally, the classics began to fall out of favor among luminaries like Lavissee, who argued that classical studies were outmoded and of little use to the modern man unless framed in the context of modern subjects like linguistics, history and the sciences.¹⁷⁹ Without the study of national history, in particular, Lavissee lamented, “truly I would no longer know what I am and what I am doing in this world. I would lose the principal reason for living.”¹⁸⁰

Though the academic climate at the university improved after 1896, we must not forget the university’s prolonged limbo during the much of the 19th century. This suppressed demand for a university education while arguably stunting what a university education would entail. Throughout much of the time period in question, university students had to follow a fairly specific program of study beyond their initial choice of concentration; and, sometimes this choice was circumscribed by the varied availability of faculty across different regions of France (though this would improve by the first decade of the 20th century). Pedagogically, professors relied predominately upon magisterial lectures as the chief mode of instruction. Sometimes lectures were supplemented by discussion classes known as *conferences*. Students were otherwise evaluated via examination, but the standards were too low such that students did not have to physically attend the university in order to pass the examinations and obtain their degree.¹⁸¹ This is somewhat surprising considering the fact that the Faculty was at the same time responsible for administering the *baccalauréat*, the rigor of which was never in doubt.

On the whole, university enrollment expanded during the Third Republic, with a particularly concentrated burst after the turn of the century once the university regained its

¹⁷⁹ Moody, 118-9. Cf. Prost (1968), 223.

¹⁸⁰ Quoted in Nora (2010), 334.

¹⁸¹ Zeldin (1993), 342.

official mandate. One estimate places the growth in enrollment at more than 400%, from less than 10,000 students in 1875 to 42,000 in 1914.¹⁸² In 1900, the most popular concentrations were law (9,709) and medicine (8,781), followed by the sciences (3,857) and letters (3,476).¹⁸³ Interestingly, ten years later, the study of law (16,915), letters (6,363) and the sciences (6,287) nearly doubled in enrollment while medicine (9,721) grew at a much slower pace. The relative popularity of law is to be expected considering its traditional role as a pathway for the lower and middle classes into élite administration, a trend which actually strengthened under the Third Republic.¹⁸⁴ These figures also reveal the relative parity between letters and the sciences, which can be interpreted as additional evidence of the declining importance of the classics at the university level, especially if we consider the shifting significance of subfields within letters. Using university chairs as a measure, classical languages and literature ranked second with nearly one quarter of chairs in the 19th century. Modern languages and literature account for nearly 40% of all chairs (1865-1966). History and philosophy placed third and fourth, each with 18%.¹⁸⁵ Considering the sustained popularity of the sciences among university students from 1900 until 1910, as well as the dominance of modern languages and literature among university chairs, the 20th century university appears to have been fairly open to ‘modern’ concentrations, which is in itself

¹⁸² Weisz concedes that the figure given for 1875 is subject to error because of spotty record keeping among the faculties prior to 1878 (373).

¹⁸³ Zeldin (1993), 330. Similar disparities are evident in the award of *licenses* prior to and during this period, when diplomas in law outpaced the sciences and letters nearly three to one. From 1906 to 1910, 1,954 *licenses* in law were granted, compared to 532 in the sciences and 537 in letters (Prost (1968), 243).

¹⁸⁴ Armstrong notes that under Gambetta, 70% of French prefects were legally trained; by 1918, this number rose to 94%. John A. Armstrong. *The European Administrative Élite* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1973), 170.

¹⁸⁵ Clark, 33.

another indicator of a shift in interest away from the classics from both the demand and supply side.¹⁸⁶

ECCLESIASTICAL EDUCATION: FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

Within public schools, congregational instructors had to follow the prescribed curriculum. When offering their services in a private setting, however, congregations were able to teach according to their own syllabi. Because the Church dominated private alternatives to public primary and secondary schools *and* because enrollment in Church schools was competitive with enrollment in public schools, the curricular choices of religious authorities were potentially far reaching. The state's sensitivity to the Church's influence over education is understandable especially in light of efforts to forge a singular French identity through education. Yet the Church did not entirely operate with a free hand in curricular matters. Church-run secondary schools still had to teach to the *baccalauréat* if they were to successfully launch their students into professional careers. The Church also had to respond to the demands of their clientele, in large part because the Church's flexibility was a key to its drawing power relative to public schools. These factors tended to bring the Church curriculum into closer alignment with that of the state despite the relative freedom enjoyed by the Church or any tensions between secular subjects (e.g. the classics, the sciences) and Church doctrine.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁶ Arguably this shift was made more severe by a provision implemented in 1907 that abolished compulsory classics (as well as French), while allowing students taking up letters to choose their own subjects within the degree program.

¹⁸⁷ Harrigan (1973), 271.

By the early years of the Third Republic, the staple of congressional primary schools was the three Rs with a modest amount of geography and history. The former adhered to popular demand while the latter followed the lead of the state, which employed history and geography as vessels for ideas and images consistent with French identity. This also evidences an awareness of the part of the Church of the heightened need to address the causes of France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War by cultivating patriotism and national unity. At the secondary level, the Church based its curriculum on the classics, which appealed to the aspirations of the middle classes as well as the *status quo* interests of the aristocracy. The teaching congregations likewise followed the official program of studies for the *baccalauréat*, in certain instances using the same preparatory textbooks as found in public schools. Church secondary schools thereby fit nicely within a system meant to educate the élite while maintaining the distance between primary and secondary education found among public schools – a separation which the Church was adamant to maintain.¹⁸⁸

The critical difference between the content of ecclesiastical education and public, secular education involved, as one would expect, the religious meaning that teaching congregations invested in the subject matter. Certain topics rested comfortably within the Church's exclusive domain, namely general religious instruction and the catechism. In the latter years of the 19th century, these items were unique to the curriculum of Church schools. Other subjects overlapped with those taught in public schools because, as noted above, the teaching congregations followed cues from the state and their clientele relative to the curriculum. The Church, in turn, made certain that religious justifications were attached to subjects otherwise taught from a purely secular perspective in public schools. For example,

¹⁸⁸ Harrigan (1973), 276.

moral education in the congregational schools promoted many of the concepts found in Jules Ferry's *laïque* – such as duty to one's family and one's country. The Church, however, made the legitimacy of moral principles a matter of faith rather than reason. Civic harmony and national strength, intended derivatives of a popular moral education, were but means to a greater end in the eyes of the Church. “In establishing a curriculum and method for their schools,” Sarah Curtis explains, “teaching congregations responded primarily to their vision of a well-regulated religious and social order that would increase piety and religious practice. Lessons learned in the classroom were essential to both personal and national salvation.”¹⁸⁹ Children who could read and write could better learn about God. Children who studied history and geography could witness God's work and understand the true nature of events.¹⁹⁰ Even patriotism was cast in a theological light, for children were taught that “God and the church were the primary agents behind the glory of France, not the Republic and the Revolution.”¹⁹¹

Classical instruction required finesse because of its reliance upon ‘pagan’ authors, which had been a subject of debate since the early days of the Church.¹⁹² The question involved the extent to which the teachings of pagan thinkers could qualify as knowledge if they were untouched by God. The reliance upon the classics for secondary school education in France forced the Church to resolve this question if they were to participate in the system. The Church did so by, first, limiting the exposure of the student and, thereafter, carefully framing the lesson. In the lower levels, students read only from a list of Christian authors from the classical era because they were deemed safe for young minds and useful to the

¹⁸⁹ Curtis, 82.

¹⁹⁰ Cf. Curtis, 87.

¹⁹¹ Curtis, 136-7.

¹⁹² Harrigan (1973), 256.

proliferation of dogma.¹⁹³ Advanced secondary students could read pagan authors, but not for the content in as much as the texts, though examples, inspired discussions of Christian vices and virtues. In this way, the classics achieved acceptability because they contributed to the broader goal of cultivating Christians – though not just *any* Christians. The Church also recognized that the value of their particular brand of classical education was enhanced by the nature of the audience. “Church leaders gave most support to those Catholic schools that stressed the classics and supported the upper classes because they believed that in the education of a Christian élite they would rechristianize society.”¹⁹⁴

III. COMPARING STRUCTURES

In chapter 2, I argued that the cognitive process of education as a mechanism for identity construction works primarily through the content of one’s education. Content includes the structure and framing of a given curriculum as well as the pedagogical methods employed in teaching it. Structure entails the relative distribution of subjects within a curriculum, while framing pertains to the meaning invested in those subjects. This chapter sought to trace the content of English and French education along these lines in order to observe major trends and evaluate their significance for identity construction in general and imperial identity in particular. The following section discusses key conclusions with an eye toward how they compare across the two cases.

¹⁹³ Harrigan (1973), 259.

¹⁹⁴ Harrigan (1975), 136.

The Primary School Curriculum and Identity

The trajectory of the content of a primary school education in England was fairly stable after the early 1860s when the Education Department began to more assertively deploy the grant structure in support of a curriculum steeped in the three R's. Thereafter, attention focused primarily on improving the quality of instruction and expanding the breadth of educational opportunities through compulsory attendance and the creation of new schools. While there was some attempt to introduce the sciences, resistance from working class parents and policymakers helped maintain the curricular *status quo*. The increasing emphasis on history and geography is noteworthy if only because of the utility of these subjects to the larger and, for the most part, non-academic goal of cultivating support for the Empire.

Pedagogically, English primary schools rested upon remedial techniques, though there was a shift to 'lively learning', including trips to museums, as a means to capture the attention of students. The poor quality of instruction in English primary schools up to the turn of the century, however, likely compromised efforts to impart more than just the basic lessons involving the three R's. Meanwhile, athletics and drill became a part of the curriculum for reasons that appealed to a general cultural appreciation for sport as well as a prevalent desire to enhance national preparedness among England's youth, a subject that will be explored at greater length in chapter 5. Of note, French schools did not emphasize sport to the same extent as English schools. Though some circles saw value in terms of preparedness and general health, the French school schedule was simply too rigid.

To the English working class, schools held a certain draw because of the extent to which they were associated with the better way of life which the middle class enjoyed.¹⁹⁵ Yet the working class child also received a healthy dose of imperialism in their instruction, particularly in the early years of the 20th century. Robert Roberts recollects, “Teachers fed on Seeley’s imperialistic work, *The Expansion of England*, and often great readers of Kipling, spelled out patriotism among us with a fervor that with some edged on religious. Empire Day of course had special significance. We drew union jacks, hung classrooms with flags of the dominions and gazed with pride as they pointed out those massed areas of red on the world map. ‘This, and this, and this’, they said, ‘belong to us!’”¹⁹⁶ While French primary schools also sought to educate the French ‘nation’, the imperial component was muted. Rather than maps of the world, coded to reveal imperial possessions, French school children practiced the ‘hexagon’, a basic geometric pattern representative of France and France alone.¹⁹⁷ The focus was national, first, and local, second.

Over the course of the 19th century, the varied French regimes conceived of primary education as a means to an end. The common concern involved social stability, and primary education offered an opportunity to impact the widest base of the population, the influence of which was growing and potentially most disruptive to the interests of the élite. As the century wore on, authorities linked primary education with identity construction. The perceived distance between Paris and the provinces made this necessary not just for the sake of domestic tranquility but national strength as well. Of course, the Industrial Revolution played a part, for there were positive externalities for the French economy associated with a common French identity; yet the looming threat of Prussia in the 1860s and the shame of

¹⁹⁵ Roberts, 105.

¹⁹⁶ Roberts, 110.

¹⁹⁷ Prost (2002), 74-5.

the subsequent defeat in the Franco-Prussian War raised the significance of cultural homogeneity. Against this backdrop, the Third Republic set about universalizing primary education while fashioning a curriculum that would impart the dominant conception of what it was to be French that included ideas involving class, the state and the nation. The government's agenda clearly pervaded the curriculum, and the distribution of time in the schedule implemented after 1882, favored nationalistic, patriotic subjects – namely, the study of the French language, French history and French geography. The array of subjects and the time allotted ensured, in principle, that all French children would be exposed to ideas and images meant to comprise a common French identity. Certain questions remain about the duration of exposure and the effectiveness of presentation, which have been acknowledged thus far. The Law of 1882 required that all children between the ages of 6 and 13 attend school, which spans the range of the four courses outlined above. Hence, exposure relies upon the extent to which the law was willingly obeyed and, thereafter, enforced. We know already that by the Third Republic, many of the families most at risk for truancy embraced education. And, while certain economic incentives did pull students out of schools, in the latter 19th century this was most prevalent in rural areas and mostly seasonal rather than absolute. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that, by the 1880s, 90% of the departments in France had achieved full enrollment.¹⁹⁸

Regarding presentation, pedagogical techniques and teaching aids – e.g. textbooks – were geared toward indoctrination. Memorization of texts laced with nationalistic and patriotic ideas increased confidence that these ideas and images would be internalized; and courses centered on France dominated the array of required subjects. However, the

¹⁹⁸ Grew & Harrigan, 79.

effectiveness of instruction was a matter of concern during the Third Republic. Some measures were taken by the state to address the matter, namely through the rigor of the *brevet*, the institution of examinations (according to which teachers could orient their lessons), and the influence of the inspectorate, which could coordinate with teachers to improve their techniques. These measures would certainly enhance presentation and improve the functioning of primary education as a mechanism for identity construction, but there is unfortunately no conclusive evidence available regarding the effectiveness of these measures in resolving pedagogical shortcomings with an eye toward improving the translation of ideas and images from the textbook into the hearts and minds of French children.

Setting aside any questions about the effectiveness of primary school education, a question remains regarding the extent to which a French national identity was necessarily imperialistic in the sense that the French people incorporated the Empire into a sense of self or, more appropriately, that the French identity at the heart of the primary school curriculum during the Third Republic involved imperial ideas and images. Based upon the prior treatment, the identity at stake was overwhelmingly Franco-centric without regard to the Empire. This is not to say that the Empire was uninvolved in the required course of study for primary school students. As I will discuss in chapter 5, history books in the late 19th and early 20th centuries conveyed some understandings of the French self derived from themes involving the Empire. At this juncture, however, I concede that though French primary school education would appear to have been a rather potent mechanism for identity construction, considering the structure of the curriculum, the relative significance of the Empire to this identity was not as I initially anticipated. By contrast, the English system was

less structured but more tightly focused on imperial themes, particularly in the early years of the 20th century. The broader social context appears to have been quite significant in this regard as it served to reinforce efforts to strengthen imperial education in English primary schools while also prioritizing the Empire to a much greater degree than we see in France, a point we will consider in chapter 7.

Secondary and Public Schooling and Élite Identity

In contrast with a primary school education, the secondary/public school experience was chiefly defined by classical studies in both England and France. The dominant perception among the upper echelon of English and French society during the 19th century held that the classics were essential to training the mind, and, with this training, one was best able to enter the professional world as well as the governing and administrative classes. A classical education was a mark of distinction and intellectual achievement. The possessor was presumed to be cultured and capable of walking comfortably within the circles of the political and social élite.

Pedagogically, the approach to teaching differed in England and France. English public schools relied upon rote methods and tended to allow athletics to overshadow academic achievement. The pitch was often regarded as an extension of the classroom. French secondary schools, like their primary schools, made little room in the schedule for sport. Moreover, teaching methods encouraged engagement and contemplation rather than memorization. Yet, French secondary schools and English public schools share a few important characteristics. First, boarding schools in both countries sought to create a lifestyle that was Spartan and disciplined, almost militaristic. The objective involved securing their

environment to avoid distractions while promoting a moral upbringing. Second, standardized examinations were a key source of uniformity and rigor at the secondary and public school level. In England, the public schools overwhelmingly taught to the examinations offered by the ancient universities, while French secondary schools sought to cultivate the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure success on the *baccalauréat*. This had the added effect of promoting classical studies because it was a key component of the exams.

Despite dominant social and institutional preferences as well as incentives created by the examination systems, the classical program was contested in both countries. In France, throughout the Third Republic, authorities attempted to whittle away at its influence by introducing new courses of study and tinkering with the *baccalauréat*. This was sustained by a mounting enthusiasm for scientific research across all fields of study, as well as concerns over French competitiveness. Were it not for the fact that the *bac* was administered by the University, where the classics were most firmly entrenched, it is possible that more extensive changes would have been made and sooner, though this is only speculation. Nevertheless, the essential character of the classics in France should be held in the balance against the additional, mandatory subjects included in the secondary school curriculum coupled with opportunities to specialize in other subjects at the *écoles supérieures*. Throughout the Third Republic, French literature, history and geography remained compulsory subjects for the entire secondary course (7 years), alongside mathematics, modern language and natural science. Students were also instructed in morality, philosophy and physical training. The classics were but one field amongst an array of subjects taken up by French secondary students. Meanwhile, the particular nature of the *grandes écoles* meant that one could quickly move on from the classics to study modern, technical subjects, which did not lessen one's

social or professional stature. Yes, it was argued that success on different educational paths required the right sort of intellect that only the classics could perfect, but the fact remains that after the *bac*, the significance of the classics to advanced studies generally diminished. Even at the University, where the classics remained one of the four core degree programs, the legal and medical programs were more popular.

The sustained inclusion of subjects like French language, history and geography provided inputs for ideas and images of a nationalistic, patriotic and, potentially, imperialistic nature. One could in fact argue that these inputs constituted the connective tissue with the efforts to fashion a uniform national – though, not necessarily an *imperial* – identity at the primary and secondary school levels. In this way, language, history and geography were perhaps more important than the classics in making secondary school students identify themselves with the dominant understanding of being French promoted by the state in the late 19th century. This was not the case in England, where the classics prevailed at both the public schools and the ancient universities, even after the turn of the century. English public school students had fewer options available, in large part because the public schools did not deem modern subjects, like the physical sciences, to be worth studying. They carried the stigma of being practical and beneath the English gentleman. This is arguably an indication that the classics were relatively more significant in England than in France, and certainly a prominent component of the identity of the English élite while linked by a strong, socially-constructed association to the British Empire. In other words, the role that the classics played in constructing an English identity reflects the dominant culture which said that the classics were integral to being English. The actual content does not appear to be as

important as the connection made by the élite between a classical education, Englishness and, as it so happened, the Empire.

Nevertheless, as in France, the classics were not above scrutiny. Prior to the First World War, the public schools were criticized for what was perceived by some to be an outmoded curriculum.¹⁹⁹ The emphasis on athletics was also questioned. The attack originated by the Liberals was well-worn, and equally well-resisted by schoolmasters who dug in their heels over the encroachment on their authority. An interesting addition to the mix came from critics who were concerned about the contribution of the public schools to the moral well-being and patriotism of Britain's youth.²⁰⁰ In part, their suggested reforms called for shifting the emphasis on patriotism away from jingoism; meanwhile, they argued for a revised curriculum that paid greater attention to scientific method, social awareness and 'adaptive intelligence'. This line of criticism did not challenge the existence of the Empire or the importance of imparting patriotism to Britain's youth. Rather, the chief complaint involved the woeful inadequacy of the *status quo* system to achieve those ends. In the words of Herbert Gray,

It forms a serious drawback enough to the proper fulfillment of the duties of citizenship in the future that the stalwart sons of England should seldom be taught in our public schools the scientific connection between mind and hand, except the non-productive process of beating a ball with hand or foot or stick. But it forms an infinitely more serious danger to the integrity of the Empire that they should be led to entertain a false idea of their position in the world of men, and to acquire airs of superiority, by having had everything done for them in their early days – by the fact that, at a period when self-evolution is the order of nature, they should have too often been pampered, bolstered up, prescribed for, and 'nursed into nothingness'.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁹ Cf. George Trumbull Ladd, *Essays on the Higher Education* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), 120-25; T. Raymond, *The Principles of Education* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1906), 89-118.

²⁰⁰ Mack, 280.

²⁰¹ H.B. Gray, *The Public Schools and the Empire* (London: Williams & Northgate, 1913), 200. Cf. G. G. Coulton, *Public Schools and the Public Needs: Suggestions for the Reform of our Teaching Methods in the Light of Modern Requirements*

These concerns were voiced against a backdrop of perceptions of British decline relative to United States and Germany. Periods of industrial expansion and depression in the decades prior to the turn of the century had amplified sensitivities to economic rivalry.²⁰² Meanwhile, Britain was flagging across key metrics that reflected her economic strength. From 1890 until 1910, Britain's population grew by 20%, while the populations of the United States and Germany expanded by 47% and 31%, respectively – and both surpassed Britain in absolute terms.²⁰³ Among the Great Powers, only France fared worse, growing at a paltry 3 %. Her share of world manufacturing output also declined noticeably, from 22.9% in 1880 to 13.6% in 1913, while German and American shares increased from 8.5% to 14.8% and 14.7% to 32%, respectively.²⁰⁴ And though Britain's rate of industrialization continued to increase on a per capita basis over this same time period, the rate of growth (32%) was far outpaced by the Germany (240%) and the United States (232%).²⁰⁵ These changes, coupled with Britain's diminishing share of world trade (23% in 1880; 17% in 1913),²⁰⁶ fueled calls for redress, particularly from those on the Right, who argued that the loss of economic might was eroding Britain's position as the world's preeminent power.²⁰⁷ In the words of Ernest Williams, who penned an influential assessment of Germany's *fin-de-siècle* economy, England's “*unique position as unchallenged mistress of the Industrial World is gone, and is not likely to be*

(London: Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1901), 203-214; Arnold White, *Efficiency and Empire*, (London: Methuen & Co., 1901), 286-308; Cyril Norwood & Arthur H. Hope, *The Higher Education of Boys in England* (London: J. Murray, 1909).

²⁰² Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (New York: Vintage, 1987), 42.

²⁰³ Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 199.

²⁰⁴ Kennedy (1989), 202.

²⁰⁵ Kennedy (1989), 200.

²⁰⁶ Paul M. Kennedy, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism, 1860-1914* (New York: Humanity Books, 1980), 292.

²⁰⁷ Kennedy (1980), 307.

regained. But some of the departed glory may yet be restored to her. At least let us see to it that she fares no worse” (author’s emphasis).²⁰⁸

Gray, Williams, and others were all too aware of the competition offered by Germany and the United States, and feared Britain’s relative decline if public school education remained untouched.²⁰⁹ French authorities expressed similar anxiety over relative decline – as noted above, the French population barely grew in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, while France’s relative share of world manufacturing declined from 7.8% in 1880 to 6.1% in 1913, and her share of world trade declined from 11% in 1880 to 8% in 1913.²¹⁰ However, the French curriculum was more flexible, muting calls for radical change; and there was broader support for modern subjects as the keys to improving France’s competitiveness. In England, some went as far as to advocate the extension of state control to divest the universities and, to a lesser extent, the public schools of their counterproductive, unofficial control.²¹¹ At the end of the day, these critics appear to have done little to alter the trajectory of reform prior to the First World War. The ancient universities and public schools were inoculated. Their endowments afforded independence from the state, and a certain sense of Englishness made it seem right that they remain so.²¹² Movement in the curriculum and changes to the mode of instruction were by and large internal questions, and the model that was in play had yet to be refuted by circumstance or convincingly countered by rhetoric.

²⁰⁸ Ernest Edwin Williams, *Made in Germany* (London: William Heinemann, 1897), 175. For a similarly striking analysis of the threat posed by the United States, see F.A. McKenzie, *The American Invaders* (London: Grant Richards, 1902).

²⁰⁹ Mack, 281. Robert Roberts explains that the same fear of German technological superiority inspired greater demand for vocational training, leading to the growth of technical institutes (Roberts, 116). Cf. Vlaeminke, 6-7; Mack, 180.

²¹⁰ Kennedy (1989), 200; Kennedy (1980), 292.

²¹¹ Norwood & Hope, 162-4. Cf. E. Lyulph Stanley, *Our National Education* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1899), 81-97.

²¹² Stray, 24.

Higher Education

In England, the ancient universities reinforced the curricular emphasis upon the classics found among the public schools. The cult of the gentleman invested the classical curriculum with social value, which, as one would expect, appealed to the constituents of both Oxford and Cambridge as much as it did at Eton and Harrow. This is played out in the sustained popularity of the classical exams from 1870 onward. Meanwhile, the dons generally favored the classics in part out of principle, though many were simply ill-equipped to teach anything else. Internal reforms would lead to the gradual introduction of additional subjects, some of which would rise to the level of honors courses, a distinction that bestowed added legitimacy in the eyes of the students. The classics, however, would remain *primus inter pares*. Also of significance, the preference for the classical curriculum at the ancients filtered down to 'lesser' universities and the public schools. The increasing importance of the Oxbridge local examinations effectively locked public schools into teaching to the Oxbridge curriculum. England's alternative universities and colleges tended to follow suit, guided by their interest in securing the best students whose background had been tailored to the classics. Even when newer, 'modern' subjects found their way in, the guiding principle was always to cultivate the nation's elite. While there were certainly benefits to be had relative to competing with Germany and the United States, and while modern subjects may have been better suited to the economy unfolding in the last quarter of the 19th century, the most compelling arguments for expanding the curriculum, in terms of social resonance, involved the potential contribution to the class of gentlemen tasked with leading the country as well as the Empire. Thus, English universities relied primarily upon the classics to cultivate identities

of both a gentlemanly and imperial nature; and when newer subjects are observed in the curriculum, they were framed in terms that align with these identities.

By contrast, French higher education does not appear to have played a significant role in cultivating a nationalistic or imperialistic identity through the proliferation of ideas and images. Rather, throughout much of this period, the chief function of higher education – especially at the *grandes écoles* – was to train individuals to serve in fairly specific, élite capacities in the private and public domain. While there was certainly a gain to be had relative to enhancing French prestige and power through better trained engineers and military officers, higher education at the *grandes écoles* did not work on the minds of its students in the same way as primary schools and secondary schools. This was largely due to the nature of the schools.

In theory, France's higher education system was a promising mechanism for identity construction. It was highly compartmentalized and, among the *grandes écoles*, tightly administered. (England's ancient universities remained outside of state control and fiercely independent.) Furthermore, throughout the period in question, French national authorities exercised more exclusive control over higher education than any other level because of the early exclusion of the Church from higher education in 1879, which in turn enhanced the capacity of the state to ensure that its 'message' was transmitted on all wavelengths and without distortion from, say, a congregational teacher. However, the lack of consensus among the French élite precluded ideological uniformity among the faculties of the university even after the university was reconstituted in 1896. In the face of reforms and growing popularity, "a comprehensive educational experience producing social and political

consensus was obviously not achieved.”²¹³ Nevertheless, the classics remained a favored course of study among university faculties, though it was not the only path available after the 1880s when degree programs in the sciences, law and medicine were formalized. Meanwhile, the *grandes écoles*, which were more prestigious than the faculties of the university, provided focused, technical educations across various fields considered to be important to France’s economy and society. While their curriculum might include history or geography – which figured among the subjects promoted at the primary and secondary levels with a nationalist intent – these subjects, even if they were compulsory, were relegated to minor importance within the broader curriculum because of the specific requirements of the fields of study to which the *grandes écoles* were dedicated.

The Content of Religious Instruction in France

While the teaching congregations accommodated the main curricular thrust of public primary and secondary education under the Third Republic, their agenda remained fundamentally religious. “To a certain extent, the other subjects were all directed toward the improvement of religious instruction, either by providing the tools, as in the case of reading and writing, or by keeping congregational schools at the academic level that would attract pupils and ensure that as many schoolchildren as possible would benefit from a religious education.”²¹⁴ Their objective was truly to save the ‘soul of France’ by fashioning Christians out of the children of the masses and the élite. In this way, the content of ecclesiastical education was designed for, essentially, evangelical purposes.²¹⁵ The construction of Christian identities was paramount, and the ideas and images transmitted through the

²¹³ Weisz, 377.

²¹⁴ Curtis, 88.

²¹⁵ Curtis, 128.

curriculum served the ends of a particular identity that was Christian, first, and French, second.

In this respect, Church schools had a distortive effect on the efforts of secular authorities to construct a shared French identity, but not necessarily in a way that ran at cross-purposes. The teaching congregations included within the curriculum subjects like history and geography which the state promoted for nationalistic and patriotic purposes. Granted, at times the lessons were not congruent. Robert Gildea observes, for example, that republican and Catholic history was not always written in the same way.

For the Catholics, the Middle Ages symbolized a chivalric, Christian, and paternalistic world, while for the republicans it was characterized by feudal strife, serfdom, and intolerance, relieved only by the emergence of the towns, *Tiers Etat*, and Estates General. For Catholics, the Reformation was the revolt of arrogant individualism against order, authority, and tradition that could only result in anarchy; for the republicans, it represented the triumph of the liberty of conscience. For Catholics, the French Revolution was the rule of sects and the Terror; for the republicans, it marked the assertion of the sovereignty of the people over divine-right monarchy.²¹⁶

Dissonance in certain instances, however, does not preclude the *possibility* that other images and ideas were mutually-reinforcing – such as the Empire as a vehicle for the spread of French civilization and Christianity. As J.P. Daughton explains, there was a strain of thought among Catholics that endorsed the idea that “God had chosen France to deliver Catholicism to the world.”²¹⁷ However, Daughton is also quick to point out that the French Catholic imperial vision was still fundamentally Catholic, which stood in opposition to anticlerical

²¹⁶ Gildea (1983), 116.

²¹⁷ J. P. Daughton, *An Empire Divided: Religion, Republicanism, and the Making of French Colonialism, 1880-1814* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008), 9.

Republicans who regarded Church officials and missionaries as threats to their authority.²¹⁸

Therefore, it would appear that the potential influence of the curriculum of Church schools over a popular imperial identity would be divisive because of its primarily religious orientation.

We must also keep in mind that the influence of the Church over education was not constant during the period under consideration. After 1879, the Church was a non-factor in higher education; and, its role as a provider of primary and secondary education was legally suspended in 1903. This latter measure shifted the onus for identity construction upon public schools at a point when French authorities were increasingly sensitive to France's power and prestige. Furthermore, leading up to this point, the teaching congregations were mired in stiff competition with public schools over enrollment, which created incentives to be flexible as to the content and tone of the curriculum.²¹⁹ Because the Church was more often a follower than a leader, the state could indirectly influence parts of the curriculum of religious schools.²²⁰ This ensured that certain ideas and images promoted by the state would reach the intended audience. Moreover, Church schools, by virtue of certain instructional tools employed by the teaching congregations for behavioral and social control (e.g. prayer, devotion, confession), were potentially a more effective component of the mechanism tasked with building a popular French identity.²²¹

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²¹⁸ Daughton, 13.

²¹⁹ Curtis, 128.

²²⁰ Cf. Harrigan (1973), 271.

²²¹ Cf. Curtis, 95.

Both English and French schools reached the widest audience at the primary level, and the curriculum largely involved basic education in the three R's. This reflected the interests of the clientele, who sought practical knowledge first and foremost. English and French authorities, however, recognized the opportunity to use the primary school curriculum to impart a moral education as well, which included lessons on civic duty and obedience. In England, this civic education increasingly assumed an imperial dimension; while, in France, civic education was anchored by the idea of the nation, defined first in local terms rather than imperial. Therefore, as the primary school curriculum in each country expanded to include subjects like history, the ends served by these subjects reflected different social and political priorities.

At the secondary level, English and French education converged on the classics. The classics, it was believed, best trained the *élite* mind and cultivated gentlemanliness (in England) and high culture (in France). In this latter respect, classics had the added function of reinforcing a dominant value system among the middle class and the bourgeoisie. Through the classics, secondary education was a stabilizing force that helped the new *élite* adopt traditional mores and beliefs. Notably, the most influential English secondary schools lay outside the control of the state, but their independence was never seriously contested because they continued to provide a valuable service in the interests of the governing class. In France, the state constituted the chief center of gravity, though French educational authorities had to compete with the Church over the direction of secondary education until the early 20th century. This did not prove to be a significant impediment as the Church curriculum followed closely the official curriculum in large part because the exams that capped French secondary education were determined by the government. In this way,

French secondary schools likewise served the interests of the social and governing élite. However, like primary education in each country, the ends differed. The classics in England became closely intertwined with the Empire; meanwhile, the classics in France served the interests of the nation. Therefore, despite the similarities in the content of secondary educations in England and France, the broader *meaning* of a classical education differed according to the dominant social and political cultures.

With regard to the functioning of the mechanism, this is a critical observation. At the primary and secondary levels, English and French schools taught similar subjects – and the same can be said for segments of each country’s higher education system, even as French schools were functionally differentiated to a far greater degree than in England. Yet these curricular similarities did not translate into similar identities. On the one hand, this was a matter of content. History, for example, can be flooded with ideas and images bound up in either country’s imperial legacy; or, it can subordinate the Empire and privilege other historical themes. On the other hand, the meaning of certain subjects – namely, the classics – varied according to the social milieu. Were we to isolate these subjects from their social context, their influence on English and French identities, imperial or otherwise, would not be self-evident.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONTENT & THE COGNITIVE PROCESS (II)

EDUCATION AND THE TASK OF TEACHING EMPIRE

“I think that it is the duty of a teacher to bring before his pupils, and not once in a way only, but habitually, the magnitude and dignity of the British Empire.”

– J.E.C. Welldon, Headmaster,
Harrow

“If the schoolboy does not carry with him the living memory of our national glories, if he does not know that his ancestors have fought on a thousand battlefields to unify our fatherland and to construct out of the chaos of our aging institutions the laws that made us free; if he does not become a citizen penetrated with his duties and a soldier who loves his rifle, the teacher will have wasted his time.”

– Ernest Lavisse, Professor of Modern
History, Sorbonne

In chapter 1, we observed that history is a frequently employed tool for identity construction because, to borrow from Benedict Anderson, it can imagine a common past and arm the nation with shared symbols, heroes, myths and, perhaps more importantly, a beginning. Bringing history into the school curriculum provides society with a potentially potent means to transmit ideas and images to children and, thereby, reinforce dominant cultural meanings and collective understandings of self and other. Geography is similarly useful in the classroom because it can establish a visual sense of the political and physical bounds of a given community. It can inform the schoolboy and girl of the characteristics of their locality, their region and their state, if not their place within the wider world.

Geography can also reinforce history lessons by locating events of historical significance and (literally) mapping the evolution of a political community over time.

In the previous chapter, we traced broad trends in the content of English and French education during the late 19th and early 20th centuries and found that, in each case, history and geography were components of the curriculum from primary to higher education. The emphasis on history and geography was sustained for a longer period of time in France; in England, these subjects became more prominent toward the turn of the century, and increasingly so during the first decade of the 20th century. However, this does not alter our assumption that these subjects were useful for identity construction in both cases; instead, it merely affects our expectations about the contribution of these subjects to the cognitive process of the broader mechanism.

We should also avoid assuming that history and geography necessarily conveyed ideas and images in support of a specific agenda simply because these subjects were components of the curriculum in France and England. In other words, the role played by history and geography in cultivating imperialist identities remains in doubt. In the following chapter, we sharpen our focus on education as a mechanism for identity construction to address this question: if history and geography are generally significant to nation-building within the context of the school curriculum, were these subjects similarly useful to imparting imperial ideas and images at a point when both countries endeavored to expand and sustain their respective empires? Knowing how empire was taught in English and French schools through history and geography will, ultimately, aid in our assessment of whether education was a viable mechanism for the construction of imperial identities and whether the treatment

of empire in each case may help explain differences in popular and élite perceptions of the importance of their respective empires.

Each case is divided into two sections. The first considers the transmission of imperialistic ideas and images through the history and geography curriculum. The primary objective of this section is to identify messages involving the respective empires that were communicated through textbooks while noting differences across time.¹ In a second section, I offer a summary examination of prominent extra-curricular influences in the orbit of English and French schools that promoted the transmission of themes pertaining to empire. These include, for example, children's literature, periodicals, student associations, and social movements – each of which, to varying extents across the two cases, complemented lessons in schools, effectively extending the classroom. The chapter concludes with a comparison of results and a discussion of the impact of history and geography on English and French identities.

¹ In selecting textbooks for both cases, I initially sought to build a sample primarily including books that were most commonly used. Unfortunately, I was unable to find official data tracking textbook use. On the one hand, this is a reflection of poor record-keeping; on the other, it is a by-product of the freedom afforded to instructors to select their own textbooks. To resolve this obstacle, I chiefly relied upon references to specific texts and authors that I came across in researching the English and French curriculum. Identifying prominent scholars was particularly useful in that their works were often the most frequently published (in terms of editions) or, at a minimum, were the most likely to be emulated by lesser-known authors – which was apparently a common practice in both countries as publishers sought to saturate the market with books fitting the mold that was popular at the time. I considered the works of foremost scholars to be model textbooks even as I could not determine the extent of their circulation. Another selection technique that I employed relied upon information, where available, about the number of editions that were published of a given textbook. I reasoned that multiple editions were an indirect measure of a textbook's circulation. Last, pertaining to the French case, textbooks did have to be approved by the Ministry of Education. Even if they were not widely read, that they were approved was considered to be a sign of their congruence with more widely used books.

I. HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY & EXTRACURRICULAR INFLUENCES ON ENGLISH EDUCATION

Despite some rather significant differences between the varied layers of the English education system, there was a marked convergence on the Empire during the time frame under consideration. The present task involves better understanding the vehicles of convergence, particularly those that cut across the types of schools considered thus far. We cannot frame imperial studies too narrowly, however. In other words, teaching the 'Empire' involved understandings of what the Empire was, how it was achieved, and even why it should continue to exist, *as well as* certain values and norms that may not be overtly imperial, though the Victorians considered them to be inextricably intertwined. Furthermore, the curriculum was not the only means to impart the idea and ideals of imperialism. Where schools sought to impart an 'experience', schoolhouse lessons were but one facet. Schools that had their own chapels blended religious and imperial instruction, using the pulpit to preach patriotism, duty and service to the Empire. Stories of adventure were employed to catch the attention of young boys, while the Queen became a symbol of Godly purpose which, in turn, lent legitimacy to Britain's Empire. Serve the Queen, and one served the Empire; serve the Empire, and one served God.² Symbols of Empire, like the Union Jack, were prominent in the classroom and even in textbooks. Iconography was also an important means of encouraging patriotism and even militarism.³ Illustrations of Nelson at Trafalgar and Wellington at Waterloo conveyed Britain's greatness as well as the sacrifice required to

² Leinster-Mackey (1984), 62.

³ Mackenzie (1984), 183.

maintain it. Groups, like the League of the Empire, also distributed badges, song sheets, postcards and calendars to promote the Empire among school children.

Teaching Empire through History and Geography

History gained ground during the 19th century as a viable subject across all levels of schooling in England. Yet, as noted, progress to elevate the status of history was slow. Teaching history was not dominant at university let alone the elementary and secondary schools in the 19th and early 20th century.⁴ As a discipline, history was bound up in the amateur tradition, a holdover from the early 19th century when reading history was a casual exercise reserved for the upper classes as a means of informing good character and leadership. History also struggled to achieve respectability relative to the classics, which were deemed essential to the educational background of a true Englishman.⁵ And while the quality of scholarship and the orientation of the field would begin to shift by the 1870s, introducing the subject at the elementary and secondary school levels was nearly impossible because of the various disincentives created, ironically, by legislation designed to promote the study of history. Among grant-supported schools, the weight placed upon core, ‘grant-earning’ subjects – namely, the three R’s – led to the marginalization of history. Even when history was included on a list of ‘extra subjects’ eligible for grant awards, it tended to be left behind because the Code limited the subject to Standards IV and V, while other optional subjects, such as geography or grammar, could be taught at a younger age.⁶ Meanwhile, particularly

⁴ John T. Smith, “‘No subject...more neglected’: Victorian elementary school history, 1862-1900,” *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 41: 2 (May 2009), 143-46; Richard Aldrich, “Imperialism in the study and teaching of history,” in *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism*, J. A. Mangan, ed. (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 30.

⁵ Mackenzie (1984), 175.

⁶ Smith, 143.

among the laboring classes, parents regarded history – and geography, for that matter – as impractical, preferring the basics of the three R's.⁷

Modest modifications to the Code in the 1880s yielded virtually no change, leading a number of Inspectors to declare the study of history in elementary and secondary schools to be nearly 'extinct'. John Smith provides startling figures taken from annual reports of the Committee Council on Education confirm the near-irrelevancy of history in the late 19th century.⁸ Among the optional subjects, history is the nearly least popular across the entire sample range of schools over the period of 1885 to 1901. In 1885, 382 schools took up the subject, while more than 19,000 opted for English and nearly 13,000 for geography; only science fared worse with a mere 51 schools. By 1901, the total number of schools taking up history as an optional subject had improved to 5,838, but its relative position declined as it was now the least popular subject. Science was now the most favored optional subject, offered at nearly 20,000 schools, and geography was second, offered at 18,632 schools. Even needlework was more popular than history, offered as an optional subject at 6,396 schools. The Revised Code of 1901 would alter this trend by making history a compulsory subject for grant schools. However, the relative dearth of opportunity to study history at so many of England's elementary and secondary schools is a strong indication that, as Smith argues, "very few elementary pupils before this time had been subjected to either the citizenship or the patriotism agendas" found in textbooks.⁹ Nevertheless, by the turn of the century, the gentry and commoners alike were expected to learn history, and the subject's popularity accelerated across all levels of English education.

⁷ Mackenzie (1984), 175.

⁸ See Smith, Table 3.

⁹ Smith, 149.

Responding to increased demand, history textbook publication expanded dramatically between 1890 and 1914. This in turn prompted change in the content and authorship of history textbooks.¹⁰ “In a period when fears of external threats,” Kathryn Castle explains, “national degeneracy and class antagonisms created anxiety within British society, a consensus about the past seemed essential.”¹¹ Earlier texts were meant to appeal to either the gentry, who viewed history as pure enjoyment with no practical aim, or Church authorities who ran the voluntary schools. The latter influence was of especial concern to educational authorities because of the tendency of religious texts to bias and censor in order to preserve a particular tone.¹² With the introduction of the Oxford and Cambridge locals, some textbooks assumed the role of primers detailing, in many instances, nothing more than dates and facts.¹³ By the end of the century, textbook authors defected from this style in order to weave in a more compelling, gripping narrative. In this vein, creating a sense of Empire for the young involved the joining of instruction and entertainment. Textbooks exposed children to the same stories and personages as popular periodicals, and often in the same tone. In fact, the Board of Education recommended that students “should feel the splendor of heroism, the worth of unselfishness and loyalty to an ideal, and the meaning of cruelty and cowardice.”¹⁴

¹⁰ Valerie E. Chancellor, *History for their Masters: Opinion in the English History Textbook: 1800-1914* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1970), 18; Mackenzie (1984), 176.

¹¹ Kathryn Castle, “The Imperial Indian: India in British history textbooks for schools: 1890-1914,” in *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience*, J.A. Mangan, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1993), 24.

¹² Chancellor, 10.

¹³ See, for example, Bartle’s *A Synopsis of English History* (1865), Pringle’s *Local Examination History* (1870), Rose’s *English History* (1873), Murby’s *Analysis of English History* (1895), and Morison’s *Timetable of English History* (1901). Gardiner’s *A Student’s History of England* (1892), while extensive, relies exclusively on short treatments akin to entries in an encyclopedia. This mirrors the technique employed in his other texts, *Outline of English History* (1881) and *Illustrated English History* (1887).

¹⁴ Quoted by Kathryn Castle, *Britannia’s Children: Reading Colonialism through Children’s Books and Magazines* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1996), 5.

The proponents of the study of history believed that it was a source of moral guidance, particularly as texts commonly linked the strength of the nation with the strength of its morals. When lamenting the failures of civilization and the emptiness of scientific progress detached from moral progress, C.W. Oman takes solace in history and its broader benefits to the nation,

But if we face the coming years with less enthusiasm and confidence than some of our fathers felt, it cannot be said that we look forward on the twentieth century with fear or discouragement. Not in blind pride and reckless self-assertion, but with a reverent trust that the guidance which has not failed us in the past may still lead us forward, strong in the belief in our future that grows from a study of our past, we go forth to the toils and problems of another age.¹⁵

History was also a means to teach the love of country, and history textbooks tended to portray English history as in the vanguard of civilization, and the middle class as the engine of commercial progress.¹⁶ In the words of Esmé Wingfield-Stratford,

It is obvious how this rekindling of the past tended to strengthen patriotism. As it had been in the days of the Armada, so it was now, and it is hard to distinguish between cause and effect. Men were moved to love their country by the loveliness of her past, and they studied her past because they loved her.¹⁷

The Crown was generally regarded as a unifying force, and Victoria, particularly in the mid-to-late 19th century, was portrayed in a positive light and praised for her virtues, which favored the strength of the nation.¹⁸ Students were likewise presented examples of English heroes like General Gordon – for is history not, ‘at its bottom,’ a history of great men?¹⁹ – who were always noble in character and increasingly martial in profession, with the aim of

¹⁵ C.W. Oman, *England in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1899), 211.

¹⁶ Chancellor, 31.

¹⁷ Esmé Wingfield-Stratford, *The History of English Patriotism, Vol. 1* (London: John Lane, 1913), 586.

¹⁸ Chancellor, 43.

¹⁹ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero Worship* (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1841), 1.

encouraging like behavior in England's youth.²⁰ This helped connect children of all classes with the theme of sacrifice as well as civic duty.²¹ These figures also helped place war in a favorable light even if overt militarism was generally frowned upon, especially in the 19th century.²²

After 1880, the Empire became a focal point for new history texts.²³ “Both junior and senior texts...felt obliged to describe with varying degrees of wonder, pride, and responsible scholarship how a small island nation had managed to gain control of vast territories and peoples, and export, with significant success, British values and institutions. This was the story which textbook authors agreed was an essential part of the education of a rising generation of imperial citizens.”²⁴ A revealing passage from the Blackwoods texts (1883) makes this point quite clearly:

We have seen England and Great Britain growing larger and larger, stronger and stronger, more and more free, more and more intelligent until our Empire has risen to be the greatest, most powerful and most respected on the face of the globe...We must learn to love our country for what she has been in the past, and what she is now, and what she is destined to become in the future.²⁵

Cotton and Payne agree that all Englishmen must know the Empire because of the intimate link with their responsibilities and obligations at home. To be an Englishman was to be an Imperial Englishman,

²⁰ In 1914, the Board of Education went as far as to suggest that “the [elementary school] teacher should place in relief those actions of heroes and heroines which exhibit their highest qualities but should take care not to raise them too far by the omission of their faults and shortcomings.” Quoted in Castle (1996), 16.

²¹ Heathorn, 416.

²² Chancellor, 70. In fact, the Revised Code of 1899 suggested that of 30 stories for Standard V involving England from 1688 onward should involve either war or war heroes. The Cambridge University Press Readers (1911) highlighted 24 military figures out of a total of 40 historical personalities. See also, Mackenzie (1984), 181.

²³ Porter, 182.

²⁴ Castle (1996), 12.

²⁵ Quoted in Chancellor, 47.

If, then, it is desirable that the English citizen should be taught those rights and duties which appeal everywhere and every day to his own immediate interests, it becomes absolutely necessary that he should learn something of his responsibilities towards an empire so immense and so remote.²⁶

J.G. Fitch echoes the imperative of teaching patriotism through history in order to cultivate a “rational and affectionate regard for the country in which we are born, and for the privileges we enjoy in it.”²⁷ A.H. Garlick, a contemporary of Fitch, frames the value of history in nearly identical terms: “It calls forth feelings of *patriotism*. It stimulates the *national* pride, promotes a love of virtue, gives powerful object lessons against *vice*, and tends, rightly taught, to make *good citizens*.”²⁸ The aim of Fitch and others was to temper nationalism, but not suppress it. There was a fine line, however, between reserved and ardent patriotism, and, by the late 19th century, a vocal lobby pressed for the presentation of a more potent form in history texts.²⁹ William Woodward framed his contribution with what he perceived to be the poor state of the discipline in mind,

No civilized country treats its national history with such scant regard as Englishmen. It surprises foreigners to see how phlegmatically we ignore the story of the growth of our great dominion, an unconcern which reacts inevitably upon our schools of all types and grades. If Germany, for instance, had such a history as ours it would be the central subject round which all their national education would revolve.³⁰

In the early 20th century, these texts were quite popular despite criticism for the quality of their scholarship and their thinly-veiled message. Kipling and Fletcher’s *School History of England* (1911) was perhaps the most used and most maligned. Chambers’ *Short History of*

²⁶ J.S. Cotton & E.J. Payne, *Colonies and Dependencies* (London: Macmillan, 1883), 2.

²⁷ Fitch, 355.

²⁸ A.H. Garlick, *A New Manual of Method* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1905), 258.

²⁹ Chancellor, 113.

³⁰ William Harrison Woodward, *A Short History of the Expansion of the British Empire, 1500-1870* (Cambridge: University Press, 1899), vi.

England and the *Nelson History Reader* are also quite similar in their approach, though lacking in the ‘star power’ brought by Kipling’s verse to the *School History*.

To be clear, though history books in the late 19th and early 20th century may have differed as to the tenor of their nationalist messages, they overwhelmingly converged at the turn of the century on what was known as the ‘Holy Trinity’: citizenship, empire and patriotism.³¹ Their authors were convinced of the primacy of Great Britain in the world and the historical significance of her achievements and, for that matter, her Empire.³² Textbooks in the 1890s took a more balanced approach relative to more sensitive issues, namely British failures. But the treatment of events like the Indian Mutiny appears to frequently locate the cause in aberrations of British character and norms of good governance. Thus the point was to demonstrate the value of British rule when ‘done right’. By 1900, according to Kathryn Castle, “the tone was becoming harsher and the judgments more uncompromising.” The books relied instead upon derogatory characterizations of the native while cleansing British authorities of their faults.³³ In the wake of the Boer War, the theme of defending the Empire became particularly acute, spurred by increasing sensitivity to British decline and the rising tide of competition with Europe’s Great and Imperial Powers. Valerie Chancellor also notes that there was a hint of fear and uncertainty about the perpetuation of the Empire within history texts. This was a likely impetus behind the increase in emphasis on loyalty and patriotism in many post-Boer war schoolbooks.³⁴

³¹ Horn, 43.

³² Chancellor, 114-6; Mackenzie (1984), 176.

³³ Castle (1996), 22-3.

³⁴ Chancellor, 130. See, for example, Hassell’s *A Class-book of English History* (London, 1901), 579-585.

Chancellor identifies a number of themes common to history texts at the turn of the century, and the Empire figures prominently among them.³⁵ Britain is generally portrayed as first among the imperial powers, if not anointed by God. This claim rested upon Britain's superior culture and values, which also legitimized the spread of British influence through the Empire. Britain was a civilizing influence, singularly beneficial to world commerce and the prosperity of her peoples. These themes easily contributed to ideas of national duty and racial superiority. For example, extending the benefits of British culture and political institutions to subject peoples became a moral imperative. Without the beneficence of British guidance, their natural resources and even their happiness would remain buried under ignorance and darkness. In the spirit of Robert Knox and the *Races of Man*, the British race was characterized as superior to Africans and Asians, who were barbaric, uncivilized and in need of moral salvation.³⁶ Fletcher and Kipling (1911), for example, described the natives of the West Indies as "lazy, vicious, and incapable of any serious improvement, or of work except under compulsion."³⁷ British rule was framed as liberating, and something every Englishman should want to be a part of and defend, and something that every native subject should welcome.³⁸ A.J. Berry characterizes the inhabitants of Borneo as "savage" and "wild", such that in the wake of British rule the native peoples "are now becoming peaceful traders."³⁹ We are told by Harold Putnam that British rule was "absolutely necessary for the

³⁵ Chancellor, 116-124. Cf. Mackenzie (1984), 178.

³⁶ Castle (1996). In particular, see "The Unknown Continent: Africa in history textbooks," 63-79; also, J.A. Mangan, "Images for confident control: stereotypes in imperial discourse," in *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience*, J.A. Mangan, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1993), 11-13; Heathorn, 406-9.

³⁷ C.R.L. Fletcher & Rudyard Kipling, *A School History of England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), 240.

³⁸ Chancellor, 128. See also, *King Edward Readers* (London, 1901).

³⁹ A.J. Berry, *Britannia's Growth and Greatness: an Historical Geography of the British Empire* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1913), 102.

peace of Egypt.”⁴⁰ These derivations of the ‘Whig interpretation’ of history made it easier to cover over inconsistencies and contradictions between core British values, like freedom, and the subjugation of native peoples within the Empire.⁴¹

Clearly these images were distant from reality, but the purpose they served was very real. The focus on race emphasized differentiation internally and hierarchy externally, which, in the late 19th century, accorded with the prevailing Social Darwinist thought.⁴² Those who attempted to resist British rule were characterized as enemies of progress and prosperity; those that embraced the Empire, or fit the British idea of law and order, bravery and courage, received better treatment. The portrayal of history in such a fashion served an overarching goal to inspire and shape the next generation to carry on with the Empire and relate to its native peoples in a certain way. Though sounding a cautionary tone against haste when a people is not ready to accept progress, a sample from Gardiner’s *A Student’s History of England* (1892), referencing the Indian Mutiny of 1857, folds the messianic impulse into a sense of Englishness: “England cannot but perceive that many things are done by the natives of India which are in their nature hurtful, unjust, or even cruel, and they are naturally impatient to remove evils that are evident to them.”⁴³ The justification for imperial expansion or, simply, intervention within the Empire itself is clearly linked to the characterization of subject peoples as inferior, and the prominence of these racial images in textbooks means that students received a healthy dose.⁴⁴ To be fair, Castle argues, “In the propagation of racial ideas textbooks were only part of a network of learning and leisure

⁴⁰ J. Harold Putman, *Britain and the Empire: a History for Public Schools* (Toronto: Morang & Co., 1906), 403.

⁴¹ Porter, 241.

⁴² Castle (1996), 13-14.

⁴³ Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *A Student’s History of England* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1892), 954.

⁴⁴ It is important to note that expansion and intervention are not on opposite ends of the spectrum. Both alternative images of the Imperial purpose, if you will, were proximate enough to ensure that students were still ultimately exposed to textbooks designed to evoke pro-imperial sentiments of some sort.

activities which mutually reinforced concepts of nationalism, character formation, and racial myths.” Nevertheless, textbooks were particularly advantaged. “Textbooks gave to the information they imparted to young minds the legitimacy of historical fact and analysis, and required for at least some of the recipients, the retention and display of this knowledge for teachers and examiners.”⁴⁵ Interestingly enough, the authors propagating the stereotypes arguably knew little of their subjects beyond what they learned in English schools.⁴⁶ They presented as fact what they had been conditioned to believe.

There was some variation in the treatment of the colonies and native peoples across time. India was a quite popular subject during the 19th century, befitting its status as the ‘crown jewel’ of the Empire. Africa was largely a “secondary concern” in textbooks until the Boer War, aside from some prior interest in the ‘scramble’ in the mid-1880s.⁴⁷ Once Africa became a subject worth teaching, the technique paralleled that used for India. Africa was full of mystery populated by natives in need of Britain’s civilizing influence. Africa’s ancient civilizations were all but ignored, or cast in a light of inferiority. In some instances, tribes were backhandedly praised for their war-making skills – such as the Asante or the Zulu – but these favorable references were ultimately empty. On the one hand, these references favored the power of the British, who ultimately triumphed; on the other, African military prowess was still characterized as savage, and therefore inferior.⁴⁸

The Empire was not a class issue within the textbooks. To be fair, the narrative histories in the latter 19th century trumpeted the middle class contribution to English history,

⁴⁵ Castle (1993), 23.

⁴⁶ Castle (1993), 36. See also, T. Lilly, “The black African in Southern Africa: Images in British school geography books,” in *The Imperial Curriculum: Racial Images and Education in the British Colonial Experience*, J.A. Mangan, ed. (New York: Routledge, 1993), 42.

⁴⁷ Castle (1996), 64.

⁴⁸ Castle (1996), 71-4.

and were forgiving of the aristocracy. The lower classes were often portrayed unfavorably, “slothful...promiscuous, wasteful and generally self-indulgent.”⁴⁹ They were not, however, beyond redemption, requiring strong guidance as a corrective, including what might be found in education. Yet when it came to the Empire, the duty to preserve and protect transcended class divisions – a duty that bore itself out during the Great War. Cyril Ransome made this point quite well in his *Elementary History for Schools* (1890): “On us, after all, devolves the responsibility of governing the Empire... It is a duty to which the interest of all parties, of all classes, and all nationalities within the Empire should be subordinate.”⁵⁰ Arabella Buckley ends her *History of England for Beginners* (1897) with Nelson’s tragic reminder, ‘England expects every man to do his duty’ – a “watchword” to “bind together England’s sons in all parts of the world.”⁵¹ It was hoped, in this fashion, that Imperial interests could unite the British people together and maintain social order while reducing tensions between the classes.⁵² As put in an article in the *Oxford Magazine* (1895), “We are all imperialists nowadays.”⁵³

* * *

The introduction of geography to school curricula generally followed the path taken by history, though by and large the former was more popular than the latter among instructors because it was perceived to be more stimulating as well as a necessary foundation for the

⁴⁹ Chancellor, 33.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Chancellor, 130.

⁵¹ Arabella B. Buckley, *History of England for Beginners* (London: Macmillan, 1902), 364.

⁵² Castle (1996), 115. See also, Soffer, 63.

⁵³ *The Nineteenth Century and After*, vol. XIX-XX, no. DXLII (London: Constable & Co., Ltd., 1922), 548.

study of history.⁵⁴ We have already observed that, during the 1870s, geography was included alongside history as an optional, grant-earning subject at the elementary school level; and, like history, the subject received increased emphasis from the 1880s onward. In fact, the Education Department began to issue rather specific suggestions to instructors about the content of their geography lessons. The Elementary School Code of 1882, for example, suggested that geography for Standard VI pupils include information on colonies and dependencies. Ten years later, the Code of Regulations recommended that the geography of the colonies and India should be taught in Standards IV-VII, including “their productions, government, and resources, and to those climatic and other conditions which render our distant possessions suitable fields for emigration and honourable enterprise.”⁵⁵ And, in 1905, the Board of Education issued *Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools*, which highlighted the benefits of studying geography alongside history. “From the geography lessons the scholars know that Great Britain is only one country among many others. It is, therefore, important that from the history lessons they should learn something about our nationality which distinguishes them from the people of other countries. They cannot understand this, however, unless they are taught how the British nation grew up, and how the mother country in her turn has founded daughter countries beyond the seas.”⁵⁶

Meanwhile, the universities were slow to expand their capacity to teach the subject, which meant that the public schools, lacking incentive, typically followed suit. According to

⁵⁴ John M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and the Empire: The Manipulator of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1984), 174.

⁵⁵ Quoted in *Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute, Vol. XXIV, 1892-93* (London: Royal Colonial Institute, 1893), 182.

⁵⁶ Board of Education, *Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools* (London: Darling & Son, 1905), 61.

Richard Symonds, in 1885, there was no university-level, full-time faculty in geography among any of Britain's universities (compared to 45 professors of geography on the continent).⁵⁷ In 1886, at the behest of the Royal Geographical Society, Oxford established a readership, assumed shortly thereafter by H.J. Mackinder. Mackinder founded Oxford's School of Geography (1899), the first of its kind at any British university to offer a diploma course in the subject. Mackinder and his successors promoted the expansion of geographical learning with some urgency because they believed that the lack of geographical knowledge imperiled the Empire.⁵⁸ Expand the curriculum, they argued, lest the Empire suffer. Their sense of urgency also reflected the fact that Britain's main competitors invested more heavily in geography when compared to Oxford, or any university in Britain for that matter.

The increasing importance of the study of geography at the turn of the century is readily apparent. This should surprise no one as the political climate was particularly tense, and the sense of imperial peril enhanced the value of subjects that could inspire awareness of and support for the Empire while cultivating the administrative class. As J.E.C. Welldon explained, geography stood shoulder to shoulder with history in this regard.⁵⁹ "A study of history and 'geographical structure' of the British empire was presented not only as desirable but also as a 'positive duty for every British citizen'."⁶⁰

The rising significance of the study of geography in the last quarter of the 19th century, as one would expect, increased the demand for atlases as tools of instruction while also prompting change in the content and style.⁶¹ Atlases were regarded as tools for

⁵⁷ Symonds, 141.

⁵⁸ Symonds, 144. Mackinder rode this wave by publishing a number of historical and geographical atlases. These textbooks proved to be quite popular.

⁵⁹ Cf. footnote 1.

⁶⁰ Jeremy Black, *Maps and History: Constructing Images of the Past* (New Haven: Yale University, 1997), 96.

⁶¹ Black, 51.

socialization. “Maps,” Jeremy Black explains, “played a crucial role in imperializing states, explaining through depiction new links and ambitions.”⁶² They could convey imperial greatness visually. In the words of a textbook first published in 1861, “The map of the British Isles of the reign of her most gracious Queen Victoria, is the best and truest record of the indomitable perseverance and skill of the Anglo-Saxon race.”⁶³ At mid-century, geography textbooks emphasized lists of names, locations, landforms and people. Racist imagery was generally reserved for the preface, as fact-driven content crowded out commentary that might be loaded with cultural biases and stereotypes.⁶⁴ In fact, people and culture were not paid much attention at all. When the people were afforded description, to say that the language was often unkind would be an understatement. The publishers of the early textbooks could not afford the inclusion of pictures. As photographs became cheaper to reproduce, the images typically reinforced any negative stereotypes – such as backwardness and savagery – advanced by the narrative.⁶⁵ Geography texts, much like history texts, tended to promulgate racial images and stereotypes in order to reinforce the themes of British superiority and the justness of the Empire itself.⁶⁶ Without British imperial intervention, the argument ran, a colony’s natural wealth would remain unexploited to the detriment of humankind.

C.P Lucas (1897) describes the natives of South and East Africa as “savages of a low type, filthy and revolting in their habits...”⁶⁷ European settlers were always portrayed as superior to any native group, and the British were foremost among the Europeans. When

⁶² Black, 53.

⁶³ Quoted in Black, 67.

⁶⁴ Lilly, 43.

⁶⁵ Lilly, 51.

⁶⁶ Mackenzie (1984), 184.

⁶⁷ C.P. Lucas, *A Historical Geography of the British Colonies, Vol. IV: South and East Africa, Pt. 1: Historical* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), 15.

detailing the final transfer of authority from the Dutch to the British over South Africa, he observes, "It was inevitable that such a commanding position on the trade route to the East as the Cape of Good Hope should no longer be held by any power merely on sufferance. It was inevitable that a people with longer arms, with greater resources, and with more citizens than the Netherlands possessed, should control and protect South Africa, if South Africa was to be enabled in time to work out its own salvation."⁶⁸ This passage is notable because it hints at the basis for British colonial superiority relative to her European competitors, while also linking the salvation of the native people to the right rule by the right people.

In a similar vein, Lucas refers to Africa as a land without history prior to the arrival of the European settlers and, in this particular instance, missionaries. He writes,

Missionary experience ennobled South African history by contributing to it an element of the picturesque, a spice of chivalry and romance. That history had hitherto been somewhat uninspiring and uneventful; few names of note were connected with it; few bright or stirring episodes enlivened its pages. Happy, it is said, are the people that have no history; they may be happy, but they do little work for the world; they leave it much as they find it, no better and no worse. Greatness and nobility come with struggle and endurance, and it is only through much tribulation that communities of men and women, like the individual men and women themselves, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The courage and the self-sacrifice of the missionaries were evident to all, and those qualities became associated with the land of their labours. Africa became attractive as a scene of adventure, where among wild beasts and wild men noble lives were lived and sometimes lost.⁶⁹

Colonists, therefore, brought 'life and light' into the interior of the continent.⁷⁰ They keyed the development of Africa's resources.⁷¹ Admiration for native peoples is muted, but present. In describing the Native Americans, Lucas praises them for their sense of patriotism

⁶⁸ Lucas, 105-6.

⁶⁹ Lucas, 131.

⁷⁰ Lucas, 137.

⁷¹ Lucas, 250.

and solidarity, as well as their reverence for their land as handed down across generations.⁷² Ultimately, however, they were still “savages”, and in some ways obstacles to the peace he associates with British sovereignty.⁷³ In fact, the nature of colonization in South Africa is described as relatively complicated when compared to Canada and Australia because of the ‘native question’.⁷⁴

Hereford George’s *A Historical Geography of the British Empire* (1905) advances the theme of English racial superiority in no uncertain terms. “The British empire,” he writes, “exhibits the dominant race in almost every possible relation to other races.”⁷⁵ His extensive narrative weaves together themes involving political and economic institutions, history and geography, though frequently tied to British primacy. This is quite evident in discussions of native peoples. The section of the text devoted to Africa is particularly telling for its association of native rule to chaos, and British rule to peace and prosperity. Consider, for example, his comments on Sierra Leone: “Under British guidance and control the motley population shook together, and not forms a peaceful and fairly prosperous community.”⁷⁶ Some respect is paid to native civilizations, but often in a backhanded fashion. The Indians, for instance, are described as “ancient, if somewhat barbaric.”⁷⁷ In the sections on Africa, however, the praise is far less forthcoming if not entirely absent. The treatment of Nigeria is particularly acute in its condemnation of native rule. Upon the arrival of a small group of Englishman, or so George recounts, “they have to create all the elements of civilization, to repress disorder, administer justice, collect revenue, make roads, initiate industries. And all

⁷² Lucas, 187-8.

⁷³ Lucas, 303.

⁷⁴ Lucas, 332.

⁷⁵ Hereford B. George, *A Historical Geography of the British Empire* (London: Methurn & Co., 1905), 8.

⁷⁶ George (1905), 260.

⁷⁷ George (1905), 266.

this has to be done by the influence of the white man, when he is in earnest, can exert over most of the lower races...”⁷⁸

This common claim points toward an important difference between geography and history texts: the treatment of the imperial economy. Geography textbooks, unlike history texts, were often concerned about the economic dimension of the Empire, discussing subjects like production patterns, the price of labor and even emigration.⁷⁹ That the aforementioned Code of 1892 would mention emigration explicitly in its suggestions for curricular foci hints at the broader significance of this theme, especially to the poor and working class. Emigration was linked to economic prosperity as well as ‘human advancement’, in which respect it was characterized as ‘judicious’ and morally appropriate.⁸⁰ Englishmen and women were effectively encouraged to venture abroad for their personal benefit and for the sake of their imperial subjects, who would otherwise founder in ineptitude, laziness and despair.

In *Britain and the British Seas* (1902), Mackinder treats “Imperial Britain”, and explains expansionism largely along economic lines, which intersected with strategic concerns. Of note, Mackinder does associate British rule with “internal and external peace and just administration,” an exchange for access to their markets and the opportunity to invest capital locally. This is also to the benefit of Britons at home, enriching them but also achieving moral gains. The spread of Britons abroad, to work and rule, has sustained links with family and friends, thereby “[helping] to imbue British society with a tone of detachment which undoubtedly contributes to the morality of our rule and counteracts the lower impulse of

⁷⁸ George (1905), 266.

⁷⁹ Lilly, 48-9. Cf. Black, 58.

⁸⁰ Horn, 44. See also Lucas (1897); and, Howard Vincent, *Map of Empire* 11th ed. (London, 1902).

commercial gain.”⁸¹ This is important to Mackinder because it ennobles and, in turn, sustains the empire. “For of all empires in the world’s history,” Mackinder explains, “the British is probably the best calculated to preserve the dominant nation from the destruction of its own liberties.”⁸² He goes on to claim that the moral aspects of the British race, at the time, will prevent decline.

From the 1890s onward, geography was taught along ‘human and historical’ lines.⁸³ Warfare, ethnic conflict, and the triumph of civilization were also common themes found in turn of the century texts.⁸⁴ George (1907) goes as far as to claim that geography explains British success in war because her dominance on the seas reflects her status as an island nation.⁸⁵ Otherwise, England’s historical greatness was quite often conveyed visually through battle plans. Samuel Gardiner’s *A School Atlas of English History* contains 21 maps depicting notable victories from Agincourt (1415) to the Battle of the Nile (1798), Trafalgar (1805) and Waterloo (1815).⁸⁶ Emil Reich (1903) likewise provides a number of maps depicting English wars and exploration, including four maps devoted to India, one charting the Campaign of Waterloo, three portraying modern Africa, and three that detail the “Geographical Distribution of British Genius”.⁸⁷ The map on the distribution of genius is interesting less for its conclusions than for what it represents as a form of academic study. Reich claims that localities have both spiritual and physiological effects, which helps correct for “vague considerations of ‘race’” (180). The author’s typology of genius is also worth notice, ranging from authors and artists to engravers and inventors to poets, soldiers and statesmen.

⁸¹ H.J. Mackinder, *Britain and the British Seas* (London: William Heinemann, 1902), 348.

⁸² Mackinder (1902), 349

⁸³ Mackenzie (1984), 174.

⁸⁴ Black, 80; 89.

⁸⁵ Hereford B. George, *The Relations of Geography & History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907).

⁸⁶ *A School Atlas of English History*. Samuel Rawson Gardiner, ed. (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1905).

⁸⁷ Emil Reich, *A New Student’s Atlas of English History* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1903).

A central, cross-cutting aim of geography textbooks, especially at the turn of the century, involved affirming the significance of the Empire by tracing its development and relating its success in pseudo-scientific terms to innate qualities found only in the English people. As Hereford George explains, “My object in writing [*A Historical Geography of the British Empire*] has been to present a general survey of the British empire as a whole, with the historical conditions, at least so far as they depend on geography, which have contributed to produce the present state of things.”⁸⁸ In this respect, during the 1890s, the study of geography helped bolster the wave of ‘new imperialism’; after the Boer War, it encouraged perseverance and rejuvenation.⁸⁹ Geography could even inspire remedies for England’s ills. George, in a latter text, asserts, “Geographical influences account for much that happens or has happened. Geographical knowledge affords valuable *data* for solving historical problems.”⁹⁰

Empire and Juvenile Literature

Many educators regarded juvenile fiction as a teaching supplement.⁹¹ Adventure stories, occasionally penned by headmasters themselves, played upon the imagination of the young, increasingly the magic and appeal of the Empire. “A blatant reiteration of racial pride, militaristic values and a coarse enthusiasm for conquest characterizes serialized adventure stories.”⁹² Empire stories also appealed to the children of the lower classes, offering

⁸⁸ George (1905), v.

⁸⁹ George (1905), for example, refutes the notion that the British Empire will necessarily fail because previous empires (e.g. Babylon, Rome) have failed. The British Empire is ‘unique’, and, while it might decay, it need not necessarily do so.

⁹⁰ George (1907), v.

⁹¹ J.S. Bratton, “Of England, Home and Duty: the image of England in Victorian and Edwardian juvenile fiction,” in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, John M. MacKenzie, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University, 1986), 76.

⁹² Bratton, 77.

exposure to ideas and images which they might not otherwise receive.⁹³ Not only would they know what the Empire was, but they would want to be a part of it. Following the Elementary Education Act of 1870, the genre took off as publishers ramped up production in order to tap into an expanding market of readers.⁹⁴ Additionally, new printing techniques increased availability while cheapening the cost of books, newspapers and magazines in the late 19th century.⁹⁵ W.H.G. Kingston and R.M. Ballantyne, who were most active at mid-century, were particularly well regarded until the end of the 19th century for their contributions to an adventure genre infused with themes of Christianity and Anglo-Saxonism. These publications, however, employed references to the Empire sparingly. It would not be until the end of the 19th century that the Empire would feature prominently instead of merely serving as a “dramatic background for adventure or...spiritual enlightenment.”⁹⁶ In this vein, G.A. Henty and Gordon Stable eclipsed Kingston and Ballantyne with a brand of adventure infused with aggressive militarism.⁹⁷ The Boer War inspired novels of this sort, not simply about the war itself, but also playing upon fears of what might be in store for Britain in an ever-competitive international *milieu*. These ‘invasion stories’ stoked fears of foreign aggression as a means to encourage support and prepare to protect not simply the British Isles but the Empire as a whole.⁹⁸

The genre of ‘schoolboy fiction’ likewise contributed to cultivating an imperial ethos, though less overtly, by presenting images to encourage “clean-living masculinity,” extolling

⁹³ Roberts, 143.

⁹⁴ The reality was not quite the same as the already high literacy rate did not dramatically change; perception, however, became reality. Patrick Dunae, “New Grub Street for Boys,” in *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature*, Jeffrey Richards ed. (Manchester: Manchester University, 1989), 14. Also of note, juvenile periodicals also underwent a similar wave of expansion for similar (perceived) reasons.

⁹⁵ Mackenzie (1999), 288; Thompson (2000), 62.

⁹⁶ Patrick Dunae, “Boys’ Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914,” *Victorian Studies* 24: 1 (Autumn, 1980), 106-7. Cf. Bratton, 85.

⁹⁷ Richards, 5.

⁹⁸ Dunae (1980), 118.

the virtues of the English public schoolboy.⁹⁹ Novels like Hughes's ubiquitous *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857) romanticized public school life which, to the Victorians, was integral to becoming a Christian gentleman upon whose shoulders the fate of the Empire rested. The heroes of these stories were meant to be examples of what the public schoolboy could become, while also celebrating the essential contributions of the public schoolboy to England and the Empire. According to J.A. Mangan, the overarching theme was to "acquire character and then demonstrate it."¹⁰⁰ And even when the plot did not involve the Empire directly, the games ethic was often present and linked to the cultivation of 'Imperial manliness'. In Horace Vachell's *The Hill*, the protagonist, John, explains that the training one receives at school was not merely mental or even moral, though these aspects were certainly important. Rather, "We're not sent [to school] at enormous expense to learn only Latin and Greek. At Harrow and Eton one is licked into shape for the big things: diplomacy, politics and Services."¹⁰¹ Being 'licked into shape', presumably through sport, fortified one's manliness and was essential, according to the literature, to the present and future of the Empire.¹⁰² At century's turn, the genre took Kipling's *Starky & Co.* as its model, attempting to blend realism with a compelling story in order to extol the virtues and reveal the defects of the public school. Generally these novels were supportive of the Empire, though their tone became increasingly critical in the years prior to the First World War, objecting in particular to the primacy of gaming which overshadowed intellectual pursuits.¹⁰³ Morality

⁹⁹ J.A. Mangan, "Noble specimens of manhood: schoolboy literature and the creation of a colonial chivalric code," in *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature*, Jeffrey Richards ed. (Manchester: Manchester University, 1989), 174.

¹⁰⁰ Mangan (1989), 175. Though fictional or, in some instances, semi-biographical, the logic of the games ethic in these stories tapped into a very real gaming culture, built upon the image of a muscular Christian gentleman, found at public schools throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

¹⁰¹ Horace A. Vachell, *The Hill: A Romance of Friendship* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1910), 80.

¹⁰² Mangan (1989), 191-2; also, J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 179-206.

¹⁰³ Mack, 200-210.

and manliness remained sacrosanct, but the skills and, therefore, the training of the English gentleman needed to better fit the modern world.

According to Kathryn Castle, these novels and periodicals were part of a “world of learning” that mutually reinforced the same ideas and images found in textbooks – all of which shaped what British youth thought of themselves and others. They “offered to the young a version of how to relate to the imperial world and to the peoples who lived within it.”¹⁰⁴ While it is certainly true that ‘penny dreadfuls’ and other adventure novels were quite popular among children, these were not formally part of the curriculum. Nevertheless, magazines like *Boys Own Paper*, *Magnet* and *Gem*, provided their audience with photos, comics, factoids and narratives that, particularly at the turn of the century, emphasized service of Empire alongside examples of the proliferation of British norms and activities.¹⁰⁵ Further, the novels by Henty, Stable, Vachell and Hughes captured imaginations with imperial adventures and romanticized the transition of a young school boy into a true Englishman. To young boys, these novels and periodicals portrayed the world as a “vast adventure playground in which Anglo-Saxon superiority could be repeatedly demonstrated *vis-à-vis* all other races.”¹⁰⁶

School magazines constitute another layer of literary influence, transmitting ideas and images about the Empire to students. These periodicals were often purveyors of the “sacrificial refrain” of the schoolboy’s imperial responsibility to “guard the empire with his life”.¹⁰⁷ Within their pages were various editorials, fictional accounts and news which captured the student’s attention and, perhaps more importantly, conducted a particular

¹⁰⁴ Castle (1996), 7.

¹⁰⁵ Castle (1996), 32.

¹⁰⁶ Mackenzie (1984), 204.

¹⁰⁷ Mangan (1986), 122.

disposition of duty to Britain and pride of place to one's school. According to J.A. Mangan, school magazines were "agents of seduction for an imperial dream...For decades they served on the one hand as colonial travel brochure, army advertisement and farming prospectus and, on the other, as an ideological mouthpiece for 'guileless patriotism' made manifest in the act of shouldering 'the white man's burden'." ¹⁰⁸ Further, the contributions of alumni were romanticized, particularly if the ends were tragic.

Imperial Societies and Schooling

The gaps in state capacity were evident at a point when the political space was pregnant with various private, activist organizations which sought to promote the Empire and involve the nation's schools in this effort. The decentralization of England's education system subsequently opened the door to outside influences, including other schools as well as private associations, even individuals. Meanwhile, the emphasis on education as a means to enhance interest in the empire received an important boost from an "upsurge in patriotism" after the Boer War, which made low state capacity and a (perceived as) poor foundation for imperial study within the schools especially acute. ¹⁰⁹

Lord Reginald Meath was perhaps the most vocal and certainly one of the most active private individuals who looked to spread the imperial message through schools. He conceived of education as a chief means to prepare Britain's youth to exercise authority over the Empire and its peoples, and promoted a curriculum steeped in imperial themes starting

¹⁰⁸ J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism* (New York: Viking, 1985), 58.

¹⁰⁹ Horn, 41. According to Edward Mack, "During the whole period from 1870 to 1890 or later, the average Englishman, whatever his class, seemed blissfully unaware of the vast changes occurring in the world. England was to him the richest, most powerful, most progressive, and most moral country in the world" (115). Against this backdrop we can better appreciate the crushing significance of the Boer War, which at the century's turn spurred feelings of self-doubt and introspection, as well as a reactionary impulse to preserve the Empire.

at the primary school level.¹¹⁰ The public schoolboy was exposed to similar images and ideas, but less overtly due to the generalist nature of the curriculum. The elementary school child, however, was presented a much more potent stream of images and ideas because, one would suspect, there was some concern as to whether he could ever achieve the gentlemanly character which, by its nature, would entail a sense of duty to the Empire. Furthermore, students from families influenced by radical and socialist ideas were less susceptible to imperialist ovations, and the likelihood that elementary school children came from such an environment was higher as they were commonly poor and working class in origin.¹¹¹ “There is little doubt,” explains Pamela Horn, “that the prime objective of imperialists was to instill in the rising generation pride in an achievement which had painted so much of the world map red. To this end, the elementary school curriculum was adjusted to emphasize the desired message and a range of youth organizations was promoted which inculcated a love of country and of Empire, and a willingness to sacrifice self for the common good.”¹¹²

Among the imperial societies, the Royal Colonial Institute (1868) and the League of the Empire (1901), in particular, sought to employ education as a means to capture the “supposed latent reserves of imperial sentiment” for the sake of popular unity.¹¹³ According to John Mackenzie, these groups regarded Empire “as a focus for inter-disciplinary approaches, as a means of integrating the moral and informational aspects of education, by concentrating children’s minds on the world in which their society survived through

¹¹⁰ For a concise statement of his views about education’s role in preparing Britain’s youth, see Reginald Meath, “Duty and discipline in the training of children,” in *Essays on Duty and Discipline* (London: Cassell, 1911).

¹¹¹ Horn, 50.

¹¹² Horn, 52.

¹¹³ Greenlee, 3.

contemporary patriotic and military excitements.”¹¹⁴ The National Service League (1902) focused largely on the extracurricular, advocating military-style drill and training in schools in order to improve health and contribute to a sense of citizenship among the young. We should also add the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee (COVIC) to this list, despite the fact that COVIC was an appendage of the Colonial Office and, therefore, a state institution. COVIC was not linked to the Board of Education, so its proposals for expanding knowledge of imperial geography, economy and social life held no particular advantage over private actors.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, elite activity in education coalesced around the Round Table in 1909. Composed of influential writers, administrators and politicians of ‘considerable colonial experience’, the Round Table attempted to develop an imperial studies scheme emphasizing the importance of history, which is not surprising in the least considering the participation in the Roundtable of well-respected historians Lionel Curtis, Arnold Toynbee, Reginald Coupland and H.A.L. Fisher.

The Royal Colonial Institute (RCI) formed at a point where Liberal policymakers voiced concerns about the durability of the Empire. They sought to respond to a perceived lack of commitment on the part of Gladstone, who was then Prime Minister, and the public at large. The Institute became involved with England’s schools in the 1880s through essay contests on selected imperial themes open to secondary school children and university students. Despite the promise of cash prizes, the response rate was quite low and the contests were discontinued, at which point the RCI shifted to advocating for colonial history and geography lessons in schools.

¹¹⁴ John Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University, 1984), 149.

¹¹⁵ John Mackenzie notes that COVIC left a relatively small footprint, and its operations were eventually handed over to the Royal Colonial Institute, a private organization. See Mackenzie (1984), 162.

In 1904, the League of the Empire (LOE) approached the Headmaster's Conference to propose a lecture series on imperial subjects at England's public schools. The proposal was accepted, and while official records from the League were lost in a fire during the Second World War, the list of speakers drew predominantly from Oxbridge dons.¹¹⁶ In the same year, the LOE formed a History Section chaired by J.B. Bury, Regius Professor at Cambridge, to spearhead curricular reform and advance the study of history as an academic discipline. According to A.F. Pollard, lecturer in Constitutional History at the University of London and a principal member of the Historical Section, the emphasis on the classics and mathematics in England's schools was a source of vulnerability particularly because marginalized working class children who would not be adequately trained for their national and imperial duties.¹¹⁷ In conjunction with curricular reform, the History Section also launched a Textbook Scheme to correct for perceived-as-significant gaps in the instruction of history. The Scheme's crowning achievement was *The British Empire: Its Past, Present and Future*, published in 1909 under Pollard's direction. Though the text was never listed as an official text by the British Board of Education, it was adopted by Oxford in 1912 for use in the University's local examinations. This in ensured some significant exposure since public schools, which lay outside the scope of the BOE anyway, would have to employ the text if they wished to ensure the success of their students on the locals. In addition to *The British Empire*, the LOE also published series of lectures on the Empire, and collaborated with George Philip & Son on *Philip's Primary Atlas of the British Empire*. These and other books evidence a cluster of activity around history scholarship, with ties to influential elites, historians and the broader Imperial society movement.

¹¹⁶ Greenlee, 18.

¹¹⁷ Greenlee, 23.

Extra-Curricular Sources of Imperial Education

The Second Boer War also drew attention to what was perceived to be the poor physical condition of the populace. The rejection of 40% of volunteers for the War was a cause for concern (as was the perceived superior physical shape of the German working class).¹¹⁸ This inspired calls for the introduction of military drill in schools as a means to not only increase preparedness for war but make children healthier and more ‘manly’. In the words of Lord Rosebery, “Health of mind and body exalt a nation in the competition of the universe. The survival of the fittest is an absolute truth in the conditions of the modern world. Even if our schools and universities train the national mind efficiently, the national body may not be neglected.”¹¹⁹ The aforementioned National Service League was particularly active in promoting mandatory drill in schools. This scheme, broadly understood, received official endorsement when the Board of Education, in consultation with the War Office, issued a “Model Course of Physical Training for use in the Upper Departments of Public Elementary Schools” in 1902. There was some resistance at the time because of the militaristic undertones, and this would be a source of some discomfort with the Board of Education in years to come. Yet improving the vitality of the nation’s youth resonated with the model of the muscular Christian gentleman “to whom the future of the empire could be trusted.”¹²⁰ There was also a purely practical value in that military drill at the school level would help build up an effective officer corps as well as the common soldier. In the words of John Mackenzie, “the games field came to be seen as a preparation for war.”¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Mackenzie (1984), 228.

¹¹⁹ Rosebery (1901), 24.

¹²⁰ Penn, 12.

¹²¹ Mackenzie (1984), 6.

The linkage between drill and schooling was not a new, however. It certainly borrowed from the image of the muscular Christian gentleman, and the sporting tradition of the public school aligned with the emphasis on physical activity. In its own right, drill was specifically mentioned in the Code of 1870, pertaining to elementary education. The Code included provisions for drill not exceeding 2 hours per week and 20 weeks per year. Additionally, the time spent in drill would count toward attendance for grant purposes as long as it remained within these parameters. The Code of 1871 went as far as to qualify drill as part of the normal routine to be conducted during school hours. Following through, however, proved challenging and mildly contentious, in part because ‘drilling’ was vaguely defined.¹²² Nevertheless, authorities at the time appreciated the value of drill for the purposes of discipline. And though the Boer War would embolden advocates in the early years of the 20th century, those behind the changes in the Code in the early 1870s revealed a strikingly similar awareness of the political and strategic value of introducing drill into the schools. In a particularly powerful passage from the *Report of the Committee of Council on Education* (1871),

The importance in a national point of view of having the youth of a country subjected to a system of good discipline cannot be overstated. Surely not least of the advantages which in the late war Germany has possessed over her antagonist has been the superiority of her people in regard to discipline, and in regard to the habit of self control and the power of acting in concern in obedience to orders, which discipline gives. Nor can it be doubted that this superiority is in great measure owing to the educational training to which, especially in Protestant Germany, the mass of the youthful population is subjected.¹²³

¹²² Penn, 20.

¹²³ Quoted in Penn, 21.

Not surprisingly, the War Office would have a hand in developing drill manuals for schools, including the *Field Exercise Book* and the *Manual of Elementary Military Exercise and Drill*. There were even exercises for infants designed to lay a cognitive foundation for obedience, form and marching.¹²⁴

By and large, the drill exercises involved marching (including rank formation), as well as exercise and calisthenics. It was, Anne Bloomfield explains, a “nexus between formal gymnastics and dance. It had militaristic roots, but its spectacular nature and rhythmical structure – often to music or even focal accompaniment – provided it with a strong choreographic element...Alongside folk dancing and singing games, it was popular throughout the country.”¹²⁵ Schoolchildren would often drill in formations of a nationally symbolic nature, such as the Christian crucifix or the anchor, in addition to simpler patterns like figure-eights, circles and squares. Some schools were impeded by a lack of space – particularly urban schools – and the need for qualified instructors was also an obstacle, though it was not uncommon to find former and current military servicemen leading the drills.

During the 1890s, the Code was gradually revised in favor of ‘physical exercise’ (e.g. the “Swedish model”) in lieu of drills. This was not simply a matter of semantics; it signaled some resistance to the militaristic elements behind drilling as well as a sense of the waning

¹²⁴ Penn, 22. See also Katherine Bathurst, “The Need for National Nurseries,” *The Nineteenth Century and After* (May 1905), 818-24. Bathurst, one of His Majesty’s Inspectors, in fact provides a rather interesting description of infant exercises at a Manchester school:

Fold arms – Sit up – eyes on ceiling (all heads are raised) – Eyes on floor (all heads are bent) – Eyes to the right – Eyes to the left – Eyes on blackboard – Eyes on me (all the sixty baby heads are wagged in unison). (823)

Accompanying this were exercises involving the threading of a bobbin needle for 10, 15 or even 20 minutes at a time. This struck Bathurst as militaristic rather than maternal, which she condemned in no uncertain terms.

¹²⁵ Anne Bloomfield, “Drill and Dance as symbols of Imperialism,” in *Making Imperial Mentalities: Socialization and British Imperialism*, J.A. Mangan, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University, 1990), 82.

need for military preparedness in some circles. Still, the turn to physical exercise was couched in terms of their value to civic virtue.¹²⁶ Critics have latched onto the social implications of the practice of drilling, enlarging the ostensible purpose of improving health and hygiene to include the reinforcement of class roles. Penn, for example, sees even the early advocacy of drill as reflecting certain necessities, namely that “imperialism depended on firm hierarchical structures.”¹²⁷ Drill, according to this reasoning, benefits the dominant classes because it imparts obedience. While there is likely some truth to this observation, we should not discount the motivations expressed in very clear terms from the 1870s onward. Drill, it was believed, served a *national* need, and responded to the competitive pressures bearing down on Britain in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War, or the Scramble for Africa, or even the Boer War. In the words of the Earl of Meath, physical education initiatives, including drill, would “bring up a generation of English men and women, physically capable of bearing the burden of the high civilization and extended empire they have inherited from their forefathers.”¹²⁸ His was not a class concern – it was an *English* concern.

In the years immediately following the Code of 1902, a debate raged over whether the measures were excessive let alone enforceable. Within two years, the Code was revised, restoring the emphasis on physical exercise, health and hygiene. A campaign to turn the tide back in favor of drills and rifle training was soon thereafter led by Field Marshall Lord Roberts, the hero of the Boer War, who took his appeals to the people as well as Parliament. The Code of 1905 was supplemented by a *Handbook of Suggestions for the Consideration of Teachers and Others Concerned in the Work of Public Elementary Schools*, which promoted the use of

¹²⁶ Penn, 38.

¹²⁷ Penn, 45.

¹²⁸ Earl of Meath, *Prosperity or Pauperism? Physical, Industrial, and Technical Training* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1888), 22.

organized games in order to cultivate teamwork and camaraderie. Among the specific suggestions were football and cricket teams, swim clubs and cadet corps.¹²⁹ This would appear to be a small victory for proponents of drills like Roberts and Meath. Rifle clubs, however, remained out of bounds to the Board because they were perceived as too militaristic, though extracurricular associations would attempt to fill the void, unofficially.¹³⁰

Ultimately, the Board's position favoring physical exercise with a 'splash' of drill remained policy through the First World War. Few modifications were made, and none were terribly controversial, such as the inclusion of dancing on the *Syllabus of Physical Exercises for Public Elementary Schools* (1909).¹³¹ While the Board clearly favored cultivating practices of good hygiene and health, they feared the impact of military training on self-reliance and individuality.¹³² That a moderate position would win the day is not in the least surprising considering the deeply set appreciation for these values within the idealized notion of the English gentleman. From this perspective, obedience could be secured through a strong sense of duty, which need not contradict self-reliance or individuality.

Drill was but one form of extracurricular activity nested in the schools which served to bring the schoolboy closer to the Empire. In 1902, the Earl of Meath founded the Empire Day movement which sought to celebrate the Empire and inspire patriotic sentiment. Meath hoped that Empire Day would "strengthen the ties between citizens at home and abroad," while giving outward expression to "inner beliefs: honouring the flag, loving the country and

¹²⁹ Cadet corps began to appear as early as the 1870s at prominent public schools like Charterhouse and Dulwich. Eventually, by the late 1880s and early 1890s, they spread to working class districts in larger urban centers, such as London's East End (Mackenzie (1984), 240-1). From the perspective of the working class, cadet corps actually promised the opportunity of social and career advancement.

¹³⁰ Penn, 138-144.

¹³¹ Folk dancing was actually framed as a means to awaken national sentiment. Cecil Sharp, a key proponent of the 1909 revision to the physical education syllabus, included folk dancing among a range of subjects that were essential to growing up a proper Englishman and Englishwoman. Moreover, folk dancing cut across regional and class divisions, providing a basis for a common sense of Englishness (Bloomfield, 85-6). See

¹³² Penn, 156.

endorsing the Empire.”¹³³ Schools were regarded as a natural partner in these efforts and prominent Empire Day advocates – Meath foremost among them – saw the school system as essential to the promotion of loyalty and character in Britain’s youth. Without education of the Empire, children could not be expected to rise up and assume their Imperial responsibilities. “The people of Great Britain – ‘the head and heart of the whole organism of the Empire’ – proud as they are of the prestige of world-wide rule,” Meath wrote in 1901, “know far too little of the outlying parts; yet adequate knowledge is the necessary equipment for the fulfillment of Imperial duties.”¹³⁴ Classroom lessons, while an important component of this education, were not the only means by which Meath’s goals could be achieved. Ceremony, as much as drills and games, was an integral part of a broader, imperial curriculum.

Even prior to the Empire Day movement, elements of the Empire Day ceremonies in the form of organized song and dance were included in school curricula. An interesting array of textbooks appeared at this time designed for use in schools and youth associations. These presented to children a variety of traditional music, pictures, dances and even costume designs intended to celebrate not only Englishness but Empire as well. Francis Palgrave’s *Children’s Treasury of English Song* (1875) is a good example of an earlier text that brings together, according to the author, English verse of the highest quality for the purposes of pleasure as well as “to encourage a patriotic temper”.¹³⁵ A healthy dose of Blake, Byron, Shelley and Wordsworth follows, with frequent songs to rouse the aforementioned ‘patriotic temper’, such as Dibdin’s “Before Battle”, Lord Macaulay’s “The Spanish Armada”, or Sir

¹³³ Bloomfield, 80.

¹³⁴ Earl of Meath, M.H. Cornwall Legh and Edith Jackson, *Our Empire: Past and Present*, vol. 1 (London: Harrison & Sons, 1901), 17.

¹³⁵ Francis Turner Palgrave, *Children’s Treasury of English Song* (New York: Macmillan, 1875), v-vi.

Walter Scott's "Last Charge of the French at Waterloo". At century's turn, the emphasis on patriotism strengthens within the texts. Though brief, William Henley's *For England's Sake: Verses and Songs in Time of War* (1900) compiles songs charging the reader to take up the fight for the sake of England and the Empire. Even the dedication laments the loss of the "many valiant souls" while romanticizing the idea that their "passing for England's sake has thrilled the ends of the world with pain and pride."¹³⁶ Canton's *Songs of England's Glory* (1902) lacks the overt militarism of Henley's text, but the distance between the two is not terribly great. *Songs of England's Glory* is pregnant with verse nostalgic for England's green fields, her maritime and military glory, the crown and the Empire. On the whole, the themes of patriotism and civic duty with an eye toward Empire were quite common, and point toward the greater aim behind these texts akin to that which inspired many schoolbooks on history and geography. In trumpeting the importance of national and folk dancing to the school curriculum, Grace Kimmins explains,

Instruction in civil government is good, to fire patriotism is good, the flag upon the school house and in the school yard is good; nor do all these and devices on flag drills, and national rejoicings live only on the surface. The real question involved is ethical, it reaches down to the very foundations of morality, it is illuminated by history; the public education of a great democratic people has other aims to fulfill than mere literary culture, or extension of scientific knowledge; it must prepare for future citizenship.¹³⁷

Kimmins and her contemporaries extended the scope of education to include dance, drill, and song because they believed in the essential character of the extracurricular *and* the curricular to the larger objective of fashioning a true Englishman and Englishwoman.

¹³⁶ William Ernest Henley, *For England's Sake: Verses and Songs in Time of War* (London: David Nutt, 1900).

¹³⁷ G.T. Kimmins, *The Guild of Play Book of National Dances, Part III* (London: Curwen, 1910), 2.

Further, their texts emphasize that the true Englishman and Englishwoman are necessarily patriotic, and that their civic duty was also an imperial duty.

II. HISTORY & EXTRACURRICULAR INFLUENCES ON FRENCH EDUCATION

The key vessels for imperialist ideas and images within the French school curriculum were history and, to a far lesser extent, geography. This aligns with expectations outlined at the outset of this study, as well as with our treatment of imperialism and English education. History and geography were especially significant in the context of French education because both were required courses at the primary and secondary levels, indicating that any exposure to ideas and images of the Empire would be sustained. Furthermore, these subjects were highly valued by educational authorities for their potential contribution to building a French identity. Speaking about history in particular, noted educator Octave Gréard poignantly explains, “In history we must emphasize only the essential features of the development of French nationality, seeking this less in a succession of deeds of war than in the methodical development of institutions and in the progress of social ideas; in a word, we must make of France what Pascal called humanity, a great being which exists forever. In this way we can give even the child an idea of the fatherland, of the duties it imposes, and the sacrifices it exacts...”¹³⁸

In the following section, I will explain how these subjects were used to help schoolchildren make sense of the Empire and their place within it, even if the Empire was

¹³⁸ Octave Gréard, “New Methods in the Paris Primary Schools,” in *French Educational Ideals of Today: an Anthology of the Molders of French Educational Thought of the Present*, Ferdinand Buisson & Frederic Ernest Farrington, eds. (New York: World Book Company, 1919), 34.

not a driving interest behind the construction of a shared French identity under the Third Republic. To do so, I will extract dominant messages pertaining to the Empire from textbooks employed at the time. As in the previous case, this should reveal how schoolchildren were meant to think about the Empire, themselves and others.

Teaching Empire through History and Geography

French history and geography textbooks underwent an evolution during the Third Republic. At mid-century, history and geography were basically a ‘collection of names’, taught through memorization.¹³⁹ By the 1870s, narrative, even story-like presentation became increasingly popular; substantively, most texts were squarely focused on French history and geography. There was no real interest in exploring international events and places abroad. Allan Mitchell explains, “So long as the republican government suffered from acute insecurity, there was slight prospect of official encouragement for ‘contemporary history’...The majority of Frenchmen, whatever their politics, had been far too closely touched by recent events to regard them as a proper subject for dispassionate inquiry.”¹⁴⁰ Moreover, geography and history were paired with moral and civic education for the sake of “fostering of pride in the national heritage, both human and physical.”¹⁴¹ Bruno’s *Le tour de la France par deux enfants* (1877) exemplifies this approach to both French history and geography, which perhaps explains why it was one of the most popular school texts even up to the First World War.

By the 1890s, authors began to broaden the focus of their textbooks to include not only treatments of French concerns overseas, but general histories of, typically, Europe’s

¹³⁹ Price, 328-9.

¹⁴⁰ Allan Mitchell. “German History in France after 1870,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 2: 3 (Jul, 1967), 83.

¹⁴¹ Zeldin (1993), 189.

Great Powers and the United States of America. This movement is largely attributable to a new breed of French historian, but it can also likely be explained as a sort of spillover from the rapid expansion of the French Empire in the 1880s. French historians and geographers simply had more to write about – and reformed codes detailing school curricula certainly impacted the choice of subject matter as well. History and geography were always conceived of as tools for identity construction; but the nature of the identity was evolving in that, at least according to the textbooks, a modest, albeit greater place was afforded for the Empire.

Between the two subjects, geography appears to be the poor sister, stunted by a ‘natural marriage’ with history and a Franco-centric or Eurocentric framing of relevant geography. As Pierre Nora observes, “No other discipline came close to the status of history. It sank its roots into the base of primary education and permeated its entire spirit.”¹⁴² Change would not occur until the early years of the 20th century, when, thanks in large part to the work of Paul Vidal de la Blache, geography was generalized to consider types rather than merely place-names. Meanwhile, geography was extended to involve economic and social factors, which in turn fostered the development of human geography as an academic discipline shortly before the First World War. For our purposes, it would seem that the nature of scholarship in the field limits its value to imperial studies. The Eurocentrism popular in the 1860s ensured that many atlases excluded consideration of anything outside of Europe – atlases that were popular in France up to the turn of the century.¹⁴³ Perhaps more importantly, as Antoine Prost observes, Republican educators regarded the study of geography as a means to impart a national identity without completely severing one’s ties to

¹⁴² Pierre Nora, “Ernest Lavisse’s *Histoire de France: Pietas Erga Patriam*,” in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Memoire, Vol. 4: Histories and Memories*, Richard C. Holbrook, trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2010), 330.

¹⁴³ Black (2000), 61.

the local community – an agenda that remained significant up to the First World War.¹⁴⁴

Thus, the French Empire and its peoples were left to the history texts, which occasionally included some information on geography, though often discussed in strategic or economic terms. For this reason, the following survey relies exclusively upon history textbooks for insights into how Empire was taught to French schoolchildren.

Prior to the mid-to-late 1880s, history textbooks were primarily vessels for nationalist imagery without great concern for the Empire. This is likely due to three factors. First, efforts to inject a heavy dose of patriotism into French education in the 1860s did not reference colonial possessions as a function of patriotic sentiment, and this formula was replicated across textbooks used in the following decades and over subsequent editions. The heroes and heroines of France meant to inspire French schoolchildren, for example, were praised for their contribution to French civilization, their embodiment of French ideals and their sacrifice for the national good, rather than colonial exploits.¹⁴⁵ Historical figures like Joan of Arc were ideally suited to convey these messages, as evidenced by Joseph Fabre's nationalistic biography. Fabre qualifies Joan's greatness according to her virtue as well as her role in advancing the greatness of France to heights seen never before, or after.¹⁴⁶ And to his audience, he writes, '*Mais, ce n'est pas assez de te chérir. Il faut encore t'imiter.*'¹⁴⁷

Second, the most active period of colonial expansion in the early-to-mid 1880s had yet to occur at the time of publication of the initial versions of the most popular textbooks. They were, in some instances, simply dated. In others, the structure of the text did not

¹⁴⁴ Antoine Prost, *Republican Identities in War and Peace: Representations of France in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, Jay Winter & Helen McPhail, trans. (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 76.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Paul Gerbold, "L'éthique Héroïque En France (1870-1914)," *Revue Historique* 2nd ser. 268 (1982), 409-29. Cf. Prost (2002), 78.

¹⁴⁶ Joseph Fabre, *D'Arc, libératrice de la France*. (Paris: Hachette, 1883), 223.

¹⁴⁷ Fabre, 224.

necessarily beg the inclusion of colonial expansion because they had already chosen to marginalize the colonial possessions belonging to France in the early years of the Third Republic. In other words, the scope of the book limited the topics considered as relevant. Third, the memory of the Franco-Prussian War crowded out French colonialism. The consideration of historical questions beyond French borders was more likely to involve Germany, as overcoming the legacy of the War was an important influence on the efforts of the Third Republic to restore French greatness through a renewed French identity.

Nevertheless, Algeria and Tunisia provide fodder for the historian, opening the door for some discussion of the French Empire in the 1870s, even if the Franco-Prussian War was the more dominant historical concern from abroad. Gustave Ducoudray's *Histoire de France et histoire contemporaine de 1789 à la constitution de 1875*, is a case in point. Ducoudray's treatment of the opening years of the Third Republic is overwhelmed by France's reaction to the War and, on the whole, the text is of limited value in conveying ideas and images related to the Empire in a way that would leave a strong impression. Yet, his account of Algeria is somewhat revealing. On the one hand, he presents an image of the Arab that reflects a cultural divide, if not a sense of cultural superiority, between France and the Algerian people.¹⁴⁸ On the other, Ducoudray offers a justification for colonial expansion that aligns with the *mission civilisatrice*. France, he explains, '*encouragea la colonisation par des concessions traduites de terres appartenant à l'État ou par des adjudications. Il créa des villages, construisit des édifices d'utilité publique, ouvrit des communications, multiplia les institutions de bienfaisance et de prévoyance.*'¹⁴⁹ However, Ducoudray does not frame his accounts of Cambodia and the Senegal in similar

¹⁴⁸ Gustave Ducoudray, *Histoire de France et histoire contemporaine de 1789 à la constitution de 1875* (Paris: Hachette & Co., 1885), 760-2.

¹⁴⁹ Ducoudray, 762.

terms; likewise, his treatment of Tunisia in the Appendix is rather sterile, lacking any sort of qualitative assessment, nationalist or otherwise.

Dhombres' textbook, *Précis d'histoire des temps modernes (1453-1889)*, appeared five years after Ducoudray's *Histoire de France*, and was intended for use at Saint Cyr and in preparation for the *baccalauréat*. More importantly, we can see a shift in the significance of the Empire measured by the space afforded to it as a distinct subject. Additionally, the text is a terrific example of how the nature of the writing can change as one advances in one's education. The *précis* structure presents facts with little in the way of narrative, which severely limits the opportunity to shade events in a nationalist or imperialist light. Colonialism for the entirety of Europe is reserved for a single chapter, and France is treated first, spanning twenty-five pages – which far overshadows any of the other European powers discussed in this section. As one would expect, the text focuses on the strategic dimension of colonization, explaining, for example, how a region was conquered and by whom. Otherwise, there is no consideration of economy, resources or native peoples. Interestingly, a chapter on 'La civilisation contemporaine' immediately follows, which was not uncommon in contemporary history texts at all levels. It would appear that consideration of France's role in the world extends logically from her efforts to expand her Empire. In the closing section of this chapter, Dhombres is at his most patriotic, explaining that France's return to the first tier of European powers was achieved, not by force of arms, but through the '*supériorité de la civilisation, par l'éclat des lettres et des arts; enfin, après de nouveaux désastres militaires et une catastrophe plus cruelle encore que celle de Waterloo, la France se relève par la science, par les arts et par l'industrie...*',

all of which were on display for everyone to see at the world exhibitions in 1878 and 1889.¹⁵⁰

The colonies are not mentioned in this list of factors contributing to France's greatness, but French culture figures prominently. In my view, this merely reminds us that the colonies were a subordinate concern – a means to a greater end: the universalization of French civilization.

Désiré Blanchet was a prolific writer known for texts that trumpeted particularly nationalist and even militaristic messages, linking citizenship with soldiery while preaching an ethic of love for the *patrie*. France is characterized as a light of civilization, a leader in the sciences, arts and letters, as well as a force for peace and prosperity, not simply within her borders alone but for all of humanity. In a closing passage from her *Cours complet d'histoire de France* (1903), she reminds the student that, even in the face of hardship,

*On éprouve une joie patriotique à la pensée que notre cher pays tient toujours une grande place dans le monde. Il a pu être un moment vaincu par la fortune de la guerre, mais il n'a pas cessé d'être à la tête de l'Europe par les travaux de la paix, par l'industrie active et ingénieuse de ses habitants, par le caractère vraiment humain et libéral de sa civilisation.*¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ G. Dhombres, *Precis d'histoire des temps modernes (1453-1889)* (Paris: Germer Bailliere & Co., 1890), 487. This serves to highlight the relevance of fairs and exhibitions as complementary mechanisms for identity construction, as discussed in chapter 1, though in the French context. At their core, fairs and exhibitions brought the trappings of modernity to the people. As Janet Horne (2002) observes, they were “great rituals for celebrating the industrial world” (56). Yet they were also engineered, and sometimes for very particular purposes of both a private and public nature. Horne's study, for example, demonstrates how the 1889 Universal Exhibition in Paris was the launching point for the ‘social museum’, which was, she argues, a driving force behind the conceptualization and implementation of the French welfare state (54). Meanwhile, Odile Goerg (2002) characterizes the national and provincial exhibitions held in France, including the 1889 Universal Exhibition, as a form of propaganda, imparting images of the empire and natives peoples by, among other spectacles, recreating villages (86-90). There was even a national committee for colonial exhibitions established in 1906 (officially recognized in 1913). Unfortunately, Goerg does not speculate as to the extent of its effect on the popular mind. See Janet R. Horne, *A Social Laboratory for Modern France: the Musée social and the Rise of the Welfare State* (Durham: Duke University, 2002); Odile Georg, “The French Provinces and ‘Greater France’,” in *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France*, Tony Chafer & Amanda Sackur, eds. (London: Palgrave, 2002), 82-99.

¹⁵¹ Désiré Blanchet & Jules Pinard, *Cours complet d'histoire de France* (Paris: Belin Frères, 1903), 540.

This particular passage is meant for an advanced student preparing for the *brevet élémentaire*, but the praise for France and its broader *mission civilisatrice* is prevalent throughout her texts for younger ages, which even go as far as to explain to the youngest primary school children that they should be prepared to shed blood as a testament to their love of France.¹⁵² Of note, there is no explicit reference to France's Empire as either an end of French civilization or an indicator of French superiority within this passage. Yet the reasoning she provides in order to justify French national pride is framed in similar terms to France's imperial mission found in other contexts. This logical coherence would arguably sustain the view that French imperialism is a natural byproduct of French patriotism, though the linkage is left to the reader to imagine.

In a few instances, Blanchet and Pinard directly discuss French colonialism in the 19th century. The consideration of the colonies is typically framed in light of efforts to establish control, such as through military victory, with limited commentary about the indigenous people. In one instance, for example, the authors describe the native Algerians as 'energetic and hard working', but no further explanation is given.¹⁵³ Across other treatments, the expansion of French authority is always justified with frequent reference to securing trade and natural resources (*mise en valeur*). The rapid period of colonization in the 1880s is given limited attention, only four dedicated paragraphs immediately prior to the text's conclusion. Of note, the authors offer nothing in the way of a normative evaluation of

¹⁵² Cf. Hayes, 347. In this instance, Hayes quotes a passage from a latter version of a text (*Histoire de France, Cours élémentaire* (Paris: Belin, 1926) in use prior to WWI, and, as far as I am able to determine, unlikely to have changed greatly during the intervening period in terms of the emphasis on sacrifice and the fatherland.

¹⁵³ Blanchet & Pinard, 543.

French colonialism, qualifying it as merely ‘considerable’ and the product of diligence and sacrifice.¹⁵⁴

George Duruy’s *Histoire sommaire de la France depuis 1610 jusqu’en 1871* mirrors the muted, one might say accidental, enthusiasm for the Empire, though one might attribute this to the fact that he reserves consideration of French colonialism for a ‘Résumé’ that extends the scope of the text from 1871 until 1904. The discussion is rather cursory and the presentation is driven by facts, though the colonial question receives the most attention and is framed positively. He does conclude the chapter by crediting the Third Republic with the ‘*magnifique développement de notre empire colonial*,’ because of which France has assumed a ‘*grand rôle dans le monde*’ thanks to her military and diplomacy.¹⁵⁵

Even as certain texts appear to take the Empire for granted in terms of exposition, one could argue that this reflects a self-assurance that the colonies are but another measure of the superiority of the French civilization. We can similarly observe this implicit, normative frame in texts that afford more space to French colonialism while evoking a sterile, fact-driven tone. For example, Gabriel Hanotaux’s *Histoire de la France contemporaine (1871-1900)* is exhaustively detailed and includes lengthy discussions of the expansion of the French Empire that capture the reasoning behind it as well as the political required political machinations. The broad justification that Hanotaux offers for French colonialism primarily involves the conditions on the ground prior to intervention. In Tunisia, for example, the people were characterized as suffering, experiencing famine and bloodshed because of the Ottoman regime.¹⁵⁶ French intervention thereby takes on a humanitarian purpose, and the colonial enterprise appears quite noble. The level of detail, however, renders any sort of

¹⁵⁴ Blanchet & Pinard, 574.

¹⁵⁵ George Duruy, *Histoire sommaire de la France depuis 1610 jusqu’en 1871* (Paris: Hachette & Co., 1915), 335.

¹⁵⁶ Gabriel Hanotaux, *Histoire de la France contemporaine (1871-1900)*, Vol. 4 (Paris: Furne, n.d.), 645-6.

normative assessment of the Empire difficult to discern, at least until the end of the text when Hanotaux explains that the expansion the colonies has ensured that glory and the French name are linked.¹⁵⁷

The most potent treatments of the Empire draw upon the link between patriotism and colonialism. These texts do the most to inform the reader that being French rests in part upon the *grandeur* that the Empire bestows. Along these lines, Ernest Lavissee was one of the most influential French historians at the turn of the century, and one of the most ardently patriotic. Having learned his trade studying at university in Germany, Lavissee – with Monod and Seignobos – imported the German practice of historical scholarship infused with French patriotism to the Sorbonne and, through his numerous textbooks, the French primary and secondary school system.¹⁵⁸ His *magnum opus* is the twelve-volume *Histoire générale du IV^e siècle à nos jours*, written in conjunction with Alfred Rambaud. The final volume, *Le monde contemporain, 1870-1900*, is wide-ranging and truly a contrast with the mode of historical study employed by authors prior to the 1890s. His history is ‘general’ in the sense that he discusses events taking place abroad – events that do not directly concern France. Lavissee also treats key dimensions of French culture, such as the sciences, the arts and academia. The French colonial empire occupies the twenty-second chapter, and we are informed immediately that the period under consideration is one of ‘capital importance’, not simply for the history of France, but for the history of the world.¹⁵⁹ France, he explains, has assumed ‘*la responsabilité de gouverner et de civiliser tant de nations africaines et asiatiques.*’¹⁶⁰ The treatment of French colonization is comprehensive and fairly neutral, presenting a narrative timeline for every

¹⁵⁷ Hanotaux, 775.

¹⁵⁸ Cf. Sowerwine, 52; Parry & Girard, 73.

¹⁵⁹ Ernest Lavissee & Alfred Rambaud, *Histoire générale du IV^e siècle à nos jours: le monde contemporain, 1870-1900* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1901), 702.

¹⁶⁰ Lavissee & Rambaud, 704.

colony, as well as a description of the structures put in place by the French for the sake of governance. Lavissee's conception of the superiority of French civilization is evident in his comments about the benefits achieved for the subject peoples. Through the Empire, the French dispense justice and secure civil peace to those who appear otherwise incapable of achieving these ends without assistance. It is unclear whether the people are, at their core, savage, or if they behave as such because they lack proper morals and institutions. In either instance, France appears to be integral to peace and prosperity for subject peoples who are portrayed as inferior either in nature or in lifestyle (absent civilization). Lavissee reiterates this theme in *Histoire de France: cours élémentaire*. French colonial influence is benevolent and, implicitly, necessary for the realization of the best traits of the subject peoples. In a treatment of Algerians, he praises the Arab children for their scholastic acumen while assuring the reader that France only wants Arab children to perform as well as French children in the school setting. "This," he explains, "will demonstrate that France is good and generous to the peoples that she has conquered."¹⁶¹ (*Cela prouve que notre France est bonne et généreuse pour les peuples qu'elle a soumis.*)

Coincidentally, Ernest Lavissee's brother, Emile, also penned a textbook, *Tu seras soldat*, that was extremely popular at the turn of the century. As the name implies, the text is loaded with patriotic imagery and messages, some of a general nature and others specifically related to the colonies. Here, Lavissee's chief concern is to inspire a sense of duty and love for France in the hearts and minds of French students. He stresses themes of preparedness and sacrifice in a clearly militaristic tone. In a poem by the author, from which he takes the

¹⁶¹ Ernest Lavissee, *Histoire de France: cours élémentaire* (Boston: DC Heath & Co, 1919), 182. Interestingly, Lavissee concludes the text with a treatment of the innovations of French scientists, who, he exhorts, contribute to France's greatness as much as her brave soldiers: 'La France est un grand pays, pas seulement parce qu'il a de braves soldats pour le défendre, mais aussi parce qu'il a des savants dont les découvertes font du bien aux homes de tous les pays' (195).

name of the textbook, Lavissee tells the student that one day their wooden rifles and childhood games will be substituted for the real thing:

Toi qui de si leste façon
Mets ton fusil de bois en joue,
Un jour tu feras tout de bon
Ce dur métier que l'enfant joue.¹⁶²

Emile Lavissee applies this soldierly sentiment to the colonies, which are portrayed as lands of adventure offering the chance for glory, all for the sake of France.¹⁶³ This violent backdrop for French imperialism is not unique to *Tu seras soldat*, but the romanticism is novel. It even permeates Lavissee's justification of French colonialism. For example, when discussing the military acquisition of Tonkin, the author explains that French military action was necessitated by, essentially, the savagery of the native peoples who spurned peaceful overtures.¹⁶⁴

For a number of textbooks, this theme of *rayonnement* – bringing light to the world – served to bridge general observations of French greatness with treatments of the Empire. Patriotism takes on a broader meaning as well in order to reflect the multiple dimensions of French civilization. Driault and Monod stress common themes consistent with the French identity promulgated by the Third Republic: freedom from oppression and absolutism, as well as the end of class privilege.¹⁶⁵ They also do their part to praise French brilliance in the sciences alongside the superiority of French culture. In chemistry, for example, '*La France y*

¹⁶² Emile Lavissee. *Tu seras soldat*. 17th ed. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1901), 27.

¹⁶³ Lavissee (1901), 208; 257.

¹⁶⁴ Lavissee (1901), 225.

¹⁶⁵ Edouard Driault & Gabriel Monod, *Histoire contemporaine de 1789 à 1902, deuxième partie (1815-1902)* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1903), 10.

*tient un suprématie incontestable.*¹⁶⁶ The discussion of French colonial expansion (under Ferry) is reserved for the third chapter of the fourth book in the text, which also treats the economies of Europe. Ferry's colonial policy is quickly justified as a social and economic necessity which contributes to French power and arrests decline relative to her chief European competitors.¹⁶⁷ And, in hindsight, France's commercial and industrial freedom from Germany was won through colonialism. '*Grace à [Jules Ferry], la France est demeurée une des grandes puissances universelles ; elle s'est relevée des coups de Bismarck; elle a refait un empire français plus grand que l'empire allemande; c'est comme une forme de la revanche*'¹⁶⁸ Here we see also greater reliance upon ideas consistent with the *mission civilisatrice*. French intervention in Algeria, and elsewhere, secures peace and prosperity; opposing rule by other Great powers creates chaos and leads to violence;¹⁶⁹ Also, throughout this section, Ferry appears in a quiet favorable light, consistently lauded for his decisiveness even if, at the time, he was under much criticism for his policies. The authors explain that unflattering names, like 'Tonkinois', have since become '*ses titres de gloire*'.¹⁷⁰ As the authors turn to discuss the 20th century, the text takes a decidedly assertive tone relative to the superiority of Christian conquerors over her subject peoples. The European nations have 'taken possession of the world'.¹⁷¹ France, in particular, has started to win over the 'esteem and affection' of a people heretofore defiant through education in French civic and moral culture.¹⁷² Meanwhile, French youth are able to expend their energies abroad, 'enlarging their intelligence through knowledge of the variety

¹⁶⁶ Driault & Monod, 510.

¹⁶⁷ Driault & Monod, 538.

¹⁶⁸ Driault & Monod, 616. This passage actually brings together two potent themes: one involving the benefits of colonialism and the other involving revenge against Germany. By extending the French Empire, in other words, Ferry has equipped France with the tools necessary to compete against her chief continental rival.

¹⁶⁹ Driault & Monod, 535-538.

¹⁷⁰ Driault & Monod, 544.

¹⁷¹ Driault & Monod, 609.

¹⁷² Driault & Monod, 616.

of social mores in the world'.¹⁷³ In doing so, they are better able to play a part in political life than their counterparts in the 19th century. On the whole, the Driault & Monod text paints the Empire in quite a favorable light and qualifies its significance in terms that relate to the most pressing concerns of the early 20th century – namely, rising tensions between France and Germany. While the scope of the work limits the focus on the Empire as a part of the greater whole of the text, the treatment of colonialism dominates the closing chapters and, perhaps most importantly, intersects with broader efforts to foster patriotism.

R. Jalliffier, with Henri Vast, pens a rather progressive contemporary history, acknowledging the dangers of the modern world while stressing the benefits that offset social and political tensions. 'Our world,' Jalliffier and Vast remind the reader, 'is better than that of our ancestors.'¹⁷⁴ Also, unlike textbooks commonly employed in the 1870s and 1880s, the *Cours complet d'histoire* casts a wider net and includes balanced consideration of the other Great Powers, though France is clearly the primary focus. The theme of colonial expansion is given a series of separate chapters divided according to region (e.g. Africa, Asia), each beginning with a general discussion of European colonialism, later converging on a particular treatment of France. Immediately, we are told that the drive for colonies reflects a people's pursuit of glory and future supremacy, and that the chief objective is to remake their colonies in the image of the metropole.¹⁷⁵ French colonialism involves intervention for the sake of the subject peoples, who '*travaillent peu et mal...[et] besoin d'être guidés pour mieux produire.*' This frames the French Empire as a noble endeavor through which everyone benefits: France, after sometimes prolonged sacrifice, gains access to rich markets to supply French industries and, in turn, sell French goods; meanwhile, the native peoples share in

¹⁷³ Driault & Monod, 617.

¹⁷⁴ R. Jalliffier & H. Vast, *Cours complet d'histoire: histoire contemporaine* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1904), 516.

¹⁷⁵ Jalliffier & Vast, 518-19.

French civilization.¹⁷⁶ Despite the condescending tone of the opening sections of the chapter, Jalliffier & Vast take a different tack in the presentation of French colonial possessions, weaving commentary on geography (including color maps as well as etchings and black and white photographs of local scenery and the native peoples, their art and their dress) into a narrative of the events behind the expansion of the Empire. In fact, the writing paints a rather enticing picture of exotic locales as if to inspire emigration.¹⁷⁷ The reader is only periodically reminded of the benefits wrought by French intervention, '*Par ces milices, l'influence française pénètre profondément; notre langue se répand, nos mœurs, notre civilisation s'implantent; notre domination est bien accueillie à cause des innombrables bienfaits don't elle est la source.*'¹⁷⁸ Taken as a whole, the textbook – which is billed as meeting the 1902 reform guidelines – aligns with the *mission civilisatrice* in its treatment of the Empire. France is characterized as a colonizing power compelled to bestow its superior civilization on the subject peoples. There is no attempt to mask the economic motivations, and French colonialism is described as 'exploitative'. According to the authors, however, the nature of this exploitation is beneficent, which makes it justifiable and necessary.

Jalliffier's *Histoire contemporaine de 1789 jusqu'à nos jours*, written for the *moderne*, is consistent with the *Cours*, but does more to emphasize French exceptionalism and the tone is much more pejorative. In a later chapter of this rather lengthy text, Jalliffier considers European and French imperialism together. The European colonizers are characterized as more intelligent and industrious, while the native peoples are portrayed as savages incapable

¹⁷⁶ Jalliffier & Vast, 520.

¹⁷⁷ An attempt to spark interest in the colonies as a place to live and work is actually consistent with a larger problem confronting imperial authorities relative to subdued interest in emigration. The reality of the French colonies was rather hostile and dangerous. A relatively high mortality rate plagued administrative officials stationed in certain remote regions. In this light, the authors' agenda no longer seems purely informative or even patriotic, but logistical and political as well.

¹⁷⁸ Jalliffier & Vast, 531.

of exploiting their natural resources.¹⁷⁹ On this basis, Jalliffier concludes that, '*tout le monde profite de cette expansion colonial. Les métropoles, après les sacrifices, souvent prolongés, nécessaires à la mise en valeur y trouvent de riches marchés pour l'approvisionnement de leur industrie et pour l'écoulement de leurs produits manufacturés. Les peuples soumis gangent plus encore à cette association féconde avec leurs aînés dans la vie civilisée.*'¹⁸⁰ Among the European colonial powers, France excels for her '*plus précieuses qualités nécessaires*', such as her spirit of adventure and her hardy initiative. He praises Ferry for his '*brillante intrépidité*' despite the weakness of his counterparts in the Chamber; interestingly, Jalliffier, too, notes that the terms applied to Ferry as a form of criticism at the time are now terms of affection, connoting glory.¹⁸¹ France, Jalliffier concludes, plays a pivotal role in the world at the turn of the century: '*son génie cosmopolite et humain n'a rien perdu de son action sure le monde.*'¹⁸² Her language and civic culture shape how people should think and how they should govern – both are, essentially, expressions of the aforementioned French genius.

While general histories were in vogue at the turn of the century, textbooks that solely addressed the history of French colonization also circulated, and were no less potent in their message. The die was initially cast by economist Paul Leroy-Beaulieu who, at the age of 31, penned the substantial *De la colonisation chez les peuples modernes*. First published in 1874, this text would enter into multiple editions through the First World War, without diluting the core imperial ideology. Leroy-Beaulieu's chief task involves a survey of French colonial possessions coupled with lesser treatments of competing European empires. Not surprisingly, from the outset, he emphasizes the economy of conquest by focusing on the

¹⁷⁹ R. Jalliffier, *Histoire contemporaine de 1789 jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1905), 825-6.

¹⁸⁰ Jalliffier, 828.

¹⁸¹ Jalliffier, 833.

¹⁸² Jalliffier, 1094.

resources and markets associated with each colony. The text is quite descriptive and folds in details about local geography, political structures and culture, in addition to the history of French involvement in the region. It is clear that Leroy-Beaulieu regards French colonialism as justified on economic and moral grounds. For example, in his section on Senegal, he writes,

*Notre tâche dans ce pays est un tâche d'initiation; nos principaux moyens sont l'influence morale, l'ascendant intellectuel, soutenu par une force matérielle uniquement réservée à la légitime défense de nos droits et, en second lieu, l'exécution de travaux publics, la commandite et la direction des cultures.*¹⁸³

The gains to be had were shared by France and the colonies alike, though they were achieved only by the grace of France and her superior culture.

Leroy-Beaulieu is sensitive to criticism of the Empire, and certain passages extol the benefits of its retention while, at times, directly addressing skeptics. “*Beaucoup de personnes doutent que nous puissions ou veuillions mettre ces immenses territoires en valeur: ce doute même est la principale cause de notre faiblesse. Avec un peu de persévérance, nous en triompherons.*”¹⁸⁴ Any sacrifice, he instructs the reader, is worthwhile, if not necessary for the sake of France. This confidence is sustained in part by his belief in the historical destiny of the Empire, though Leroy-Beaulieu appears most concerned with the implications of retreat for French *grandeur*. Turning one’s back on the Empire would mortgage France’s future. This is affirmed in the following selection, which deserves to be quoted at length for the insight it offers into the ideology of the imperialist camp.

¹⁸³ Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la colonization chez les peuples modernes* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1908), 25.

¹⁸⁴ Leroy-Beaulieu, 94.

*La colonisation est la force expansive d'un peuple, c'est sa puissance de reproduction, c'est sa dilation et sa multiplication à travers les espaces; c'est la soumission de l'univers ou d'une vaste partie à sa langue, à ses moeurs, à ses idées et à ses lois. Un peuple qui colonise, c'est un peuple qui jette les assises de sa grandeur dans l'avenir et de sa suprématie future. Toutes les forces vives de la nation colonisatrice sont accrues par ce débordement au dehors de son exubérante activité. Au point de vue matériel, le nombre sans limite; la quantité des ressources nouvelles, des nouveaux produits, des équivalents en échange jusqu'alors inconnus, qui se trouvent solliciter l'industrie métropolitaine, est incommensurable; le champ d'emploi des capitaux de la métropole et le domaine exploitable ouvert à l'activité de ses citoyens sont infinis. Au point de vue moral et intellectuel, cet accroissement du nombre des forces et des intelligences humaines, ces conditions diverses où toutes ces intelligences et ces forces se trouvent places, multiplient et diversifient la production intellectuelle... À quelque point de vue que l'on se place, que l'on se renferme dans la considération de la prospérité et de la puissance matérielle, de l'autorité et de l'influence politique, ou qu'on s'élève à la contemplation de la grandeur intellectuelle, voici un mot d'une incontestable vérité: le peuple qui colonise le plus et le premier peuple; s'il ne l'est pas aujourd'hui, il le sera demain.*¹⁸⁵

Leroy-Beaulieu frames the argument in general terms, but against the backdrop of his extensive treatment of French colonialism the message is undeniable: France's greatness hinges upon the Empire. In the preface to the 1882 edition, he goes as far as to characterize colonization as a "*question de vie ou de mort*."¹⁸⁶ Without colonies, France would be relegated to a second rate power (though not for 'a century or two'). At the time of the first publication of this text, the urgency of his tone is to be expected. France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War continued to sting, and French foreign policy was animated by *revanchism*. In this light, the Empire was a means toward this end. Interestingly, this passage remains untouched in the 1908 edition used here. Tensions between France and Germany were escalating in the opening decade of the 20th century, and *revanche* was still on the minds of French policymakers. It would appear that the salience of the Empire continued to be regarded in these terms.

¹⁸⁵ Leroy-Beaulieu, 683-4.

¹⁸⁶ Leroy-Beaulieu (1882), viii-ix.

Paul Gaffarel's textbook, *Les colonies Françaises*, provides an exhaustive account of French colonial possessions, tracing French involvement alongside sections on physical, economic and political geography. Nationalistic rhetoric is muted, aside from occasional assertions that the Empire has proven beneficial to the metropole as well as the native peoples. Rather, French exploits are presented in a dramatic fashion akin to an adventure novel. This is not terribly surprising considering his early acknowledgement that, in France, the people tend to be more concerned about European affairs than the colonies.¹⁸⁷ By presenting the history of French colonialism accordingly, Gaffarel strives to overcome this disinterest. Thus, he argues that it is necessary to promote colonization through 'all means possible'.¹⁸⁸ It is a matter of principle, but also a matter of grandeur, power and economy.¹⁸⁹ The colonies are presented as critical to French prosperity as well as regeneration, which speaks to the fears of decline due to decadence that were prominent at the turn of the century in France – decadence which he believes could lead to the ruin of the Empire.¹⁹⁰

Gaffarel, like Leroy-Boulieu, takes it upon himself to defend the colonial enterprise. Colonization, he explains, represents man's dominion over nature through the spread of civilization.¹⁹¹ It is also, seemingly, a natural byproduct of a country's greatness: "*N'est-il point vrai que les nations qui marchent à l'avant-garde de la civilisation, cherchent toutes à étendre leur domaine colonial?*"¹⁹² For France to turn her back on the Empire would be to deny herself a place among the Great Powers. To the skeptics, he writes, "*Une autre opinion fausse, mais celle-là bien plus dangereuse et contre laquelle on ne saurait trop s'élever, c'est qu'il ne faut pas colonizer, parce que la*

¹⁸⁷ Paul Gaffarel, *Les colonies Françaises* (Paris: Felix Alcan, 1899), 2.

¹⁸⁸ Gaffarel, 8.

¹⁸⁹ Gaffarel, 16.

¹⁹⁰ Gaffarel, 4.

¹⁹¹ Gaffarel, 1.

¹⁹² Gaffarel, 5.

colonisation est perniciense. Cette fois encore, nous n'hésiterons pas à la proclamer bien haut: au contraire, il faut coloniser, coloniser à tout prix, et la colonisation non seulement n'est pas dangereuse, mais encore patriotique et de première nécessité."¹⁹³ France must endure.

M. Raboisson's textbook, *Étude sur les colonies et la colonisation au regard de la France*, is brief, wanting in detail, and designed for use in Catholic schools. The approach is general and not limited to France, as he employs a rudimentary positivist method coupled with inductive investigation to extract his conclusions about the nature of colonialism. We are told early in the text that the fundamental ends of empire are power and prestige. "Historiquement, l'importance de l'expansion colonisatrice d'un Etat donne la mesure de sa puissance; philosophiquement, elle en donne la raison."¹⁹⁴ At points, he likens the colonial experience to functions of the body, and the colonies are the lifeblood – a source of energy and vitality.¹⁹⁵ Adjoined to this treatment is an argument about the proper nature of colonialism and the love of one's country: God is "la source la plus pure du patriotisme le plus généreux, et la garantie la plus efficace de la grandeur et de la prospérité de la France."¹⁹⁶ Not surprisingly, Raboisson treats the moral contribution of colonialism to France's prosperity first, acknowledging thereafter the economic benefits, though both are tied together by God and love. To avoid disorder and decay, he explains, "La France doit faire abstraction de sa conscience, comprimer les élans de son Coeur et les effusions communicative de son esprit, enchaîner les ardeurs de son zèle et ne rien laisser se répandre sur les peuples qu'elle gouverne, ni des illuminations de la vérité qu'elle possède, ni des héroïsmes de la générosité chrétienne qui l'anime! Qu'elle colonise avec cela! C'est-à-dire qu'elle s'assimile des peuples lorsqu'on lui

¹⁹³ Gaffarel, 4.

¹⁹⁴ M. Raboisson, *Étude sur les colonies et la colonisation au regard de la France* (Paris: Challamel Ainé, 1877), 13.

¹⁹⁵ Raboisson, 20.

¹⁹⁶ Raboisson, 25.

interdit de leur communiqué son esprit, son coeur et sa foi!"¹⁹⁷ In light of the texts considered thus far, the approach is quite novel for its Christian foundation, which is not in the least surprising considering the audience for which the book was intended. Yet, the conclusions are quite similar in the abstract: the Empire is necessary for the moral and material well-being of France and, through the Empire, France brings civilization and prosperity to the native peoples. There is also a noticeable patriotic subtext in that Roboisson works to establish the French as "*les plus vrais et les plus puissant colonisateurs de tous les peuples modernes.*"¹⁹⁸

Léon Deschamps' *Histoire sommaire de la colonization française* covers the span of modern French colonialism, from Henri IV to Ferry. There are a few moments of national pride – such as when he informs the reader at the outset that France has always been noted for its adventurers.¹⁹⁹ However, the presentation is generally informative and nearly absent of nationalist rhetoric. The discussion of France's modern colonial possessions stands out for his prioritization of the local economy, climate and geography; yet he neglects to comment upon the people themselves or upon France's contribution to their betterment.²⁰⁰

Eugene Josset places greater emphasis on patriotism and nationalism in *A travers nos Colonies*, which likewise focuses primarily on the French Empire. The text is meant to appeal to a younger audience as the lectures form around stories meant to capture the imagination; nevertheless, the meanings are potent. Josset evokes images of heroic sacrifice that appeal to themes found in Lavissee's *Tu seras soldat*, such as the tale of the execution of a Captain Duterte at the hands of his Arab captors, whose lips let slip 'Vive la France!' as he falls.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Roboisson, 47.

¹⁹⁸ Roboisson, 67.

¹⁹⁹ Léon Deschamps, *Histoire sommaire de la colonization française* (Paris: Librairie Classique Fernand Nathan, 1894), 6.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Deschamps, Chapter V, 'L'Empire Actuel', 74-106.

²⁰¹ E. Josset, *A travers nos Colonies* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1900), 136.

Josset also provides a commonly evoked justification for the Empire, and for the sacrifice of her soldiers lost in pursuit of the colonial enterprise: the spread of French civilization. The subject peoples are portrayed as savages who require French intervention – ‘charity’, in Josset’s words – in order to escape barbarism.²⁰² This is France’s especial obligation to the native. Josset writes, ‘*S’il nous est inférieur comme intelligence, notre devoir est de lui inculquer nos idées, dans la mesure du possible, de le rendre meilleur, de l’élever jusqu’à nous, en mot de le civiliser.*’²⁰³

Thus far, a common theme among the examples given here involves the link between patriotism and the Empire, regardless of the depth of focus given to the latter. Not every text, however, tinted history with a nationalist lens. Paul Thirion’s *Histoire contemporaine, 1789-1900: Classe de philosophie* devotes an entire chapter to a discussion of European colonial expansion in the 1880s and avoids any normative assessment of its significance or French *grandeur*.²⁰⁴ Joseph Bernard’s *Histoire contemporaine* falls into this category as well. In the IV^e lesson, Bernard discusses the expansion of the Empire, doing well to convey the competitive atmosphere surrounding the rush for Africa.²⁰⁵ Otherwise, the presentation is quite sterile, driven by facts aside from a hint of national pride in a moment of praise for Catholic missionaries, who have extended French influence in the name of Christ, and a comment regarding the spread of the French language, remarkable for its clarity of expression.²⁰⁶

Albert Malet folds consideration of the French Empire into a broader chapter on European expansion, which he frames in economic terms. Colonialism, Malet explains, is driven by an economic rationale: the expansion of industry, the emigration of excess

²⁰² Josset, 20.

²⁰³ Josset, 92.

²⁰⁴ Cf. Chapter 39 in Paul Thirion, *Histoire contemporaine, 1789-1900: Classe de philosophie* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1901).

²⁰⁵ Joseph Louis Bernard, *Histoire contemporaine de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Croville-Morant, 1897), 684-688.

²⁰⁶ Bernard, 689-90.

population, and the pursuit of resources and primary materials.²⁰⁷ The treatment of France is linear, highlighting personages of note who led the campaigns to conquer France's colonies. Malet repeatedly emphasizes the *'prise'* of French colonialism in military terms, noting the size of the conquering and opposing forces, as well as those who have fallen or were taken prisoner. On the one hand, this could amount to a veiled criticism of the Empire; on the other, it could simply reflect a particular area of interest to Malet. Considering the opening observation about the nature of European imperialism (as essentially economic), one might lean toward the former view. Yet Malet does occasionally offer insight into particular characteristics of the native peoples such that the price of economic gains mentioned above was truly negotiated in strategic terms. For example, when discussing Morocco, Malet explains that the Moroccan people are warlike – more so than the Algerians.²⁰⁸ Taken as a whole, the section on French colonialism reads most like a pair of surveys involving the process of expansion and colonial geography, both of which lack a strong normative bias from either a critical or patriotic perspective.

A final consideration involves textbooks which, for whatever reasons, essentially ignore French colonialism. Though the Empire was contested politically and fairly insignificant in the popular mind during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, history textbooks were generally willing to engage the Empire, to varying degrees. At the turn of the century, textbooks that made very little to no reference appear quite unusual. Ammann and Coutant's *Histoire de France et notions sommaires d'histoire generale de 1789 a nos jours* (Paris: Librairie Classique Fernand Nathan, 1902), written for upper form secondary school students, only gives passing mention to the Empire, briefly listing only the African territories

²⁰⁷ Albert Malet, *L'époque contemporaine* (Paris: Hachette, n.d.), 552.

²⁰⁸ Malet, 572.

and nothing of Asia.²⁰⁹ The authors, however, praise France for its role in the world, describing her as ‘heroic’ and ‘generous’.²¹⁰ France has fought for ideas rather than interests. France, they argue, benefits humanity – a beacon for democracy and nationalities.²¹¹ Neither of Alfred Rambaud’s histories of French civilization – one extensive, another simply a primer for elementary schools – treat the Empire, which leaves the reader wondering if Rambaud sets the Empire outside of the expanse of French civilization, looking instead to her institutions, her artists, her writers and her scientists.²¹² This is likely an editorial choice made by the author, who wrote about the (chiefly) economic value of colonialism in other contexts, including his preface for the French translation of Seeley’s *The Expansion of England*.²¹³

Extra-Curricular Sources of Imperial Education

Toward the close of the 19th century, French schools were but one potential force acting upon popular interest in the French colonialism. Scientific research, poster art, advertisements, music, fashion, travel, literature – each served to bring the Frenchman and woman closer to the Empire.²¹⁴ In many respects, these alternative mechanisms promoted favorable ideas and images, making them come alive for people whose only other evidence of the colonies might be found in letters from relatives living abroad. Melodies like ‘Ma Belle Tonkinoise’, a Frenchman’s love song to his Vietnamese concubine, were popular in

²⁰⁹ Auguste Ammann & Ernest Charles Coutant, *Histoire de France et notions sommaires d’histoire generale de 1789 à nos jours* (Paris: Librairie Classique Fernand Nathan, 1902), 375.

²¹⁰ Ammann & Coutant, 376.

²¹¹ Ammann & Coutant, 380.

²¹² Cf. Alfred Rambaud, *Histoire de la civilisation contemporaine en France* (Paris: Armand Colin & Co., 1900); and, Alfred Rambaud, *Petite Histoire de la Civilisation Française* (Paris: Armand Colin & Co., 1902).

²¹³ Cf. Girardet, 88-90; J.R. Seeley, *L’Expansion de l’Angleterre*, J.B. Baille & Alfred Rambaud, trans. (Paris: Armand Colin, 1885), i-Liii.

²¹⁴ Aldrich, 235-6. Cf. Hayes, 14.

dancehalls. Meanwhile, assorted exhibitions put the Empire and its peoples on display, sometimes in dramatic fashion. The 1900 World's Fair in Paris – the second such event in 11 years – attracted more than 50 million people, and featured a number of exhibits involving the colonies and Africa.²¹⁵ Of course, the value of an exhibition or a dancehall song is not specific to French education; and they are extra-curricular in the loosest sense of the word in that they operated outside the formal structures of French education yet, possibly, supplemented the school day lesson.

Literature & Periodicals

The spread of literacy, coupled with declining printing costs, increased the importance of literature as a means to convey ideas and images about the Empire. Robert Aldrich explains, “Works of fiction made the empire more familiar to the French, romanticized colourful and distant places, served as propaganda for colonialist ideas or, in some cases, for anti-colonialism.”²¹⁶ Some authors simply chose to make exotic locales the backdrops for their stories, though the storyline itself did not convey a strong message either for or against colonialism. Jules Verne, for instance, relished the exotic but tended to take the colonies for granted from a political perspective, or he sent mixed messages by lamenting the damage done by colonialism to native cultures while praising the advancement of civilization.²¹⁷ Thus, there was no single formula for employing the empire in a novel, beyond the allure of that which was exotic, strange, wild, and even sensual.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Schneider, 175.

²¹⁶ Aldrich, 236.

²¹⁷ Quinn, 170.

²¹⁸ Aldrich, 237.

One could achieve notoriety and distinction through popular fiction based upon the Empire. Louis Bertrand, who penned *Le Sang des races* (1899) and *La Cina* (1901), sought to inject realism into the genre, focusing on the characteristics of the settlers and the natives as he saw them.²¹⁹ His work would eventually secure his election to the Académie Française in 1925. Meanwhile, others – notably Pierre Loti (né Julien Viaud) – wrote for the tastes of the mass audience by sensationalizing the Empire in semi-autobiographical works. To Loti and contemporaries like André Demaison and Robert Randau, the imperialist was an adventurer, strong of will, intelligent and heroic.²²⁰ Loti's approach won him a wide following, and he was one of the most popular authors of his day to write fiction based upon the French colonies, though he was never invited to join the Académie.²²¹

The significance of the novel as a mode of conveyance for ideas and images about the Empire depends in large part upon the readership base. While authors like Loti were able to pen 'best-sellers' of the day, they still had to contend with the limits on time and desire faced by the working classes, in particular. Periodicals were a viable alternative. In fact, Carroll asserts that the newspaper press was "by all odds the most effective instrument for influencing public opinion and the most important medium for its expression."²²² By dawn of the Third Republic, newspapers were one of the primary sources for information about Africa and the colonies that could achieve a wide readership – illustrated magazines being the other.²²³ Interest in the 'abroad' was likewise stoked by the growth of mass circulation

²¹⁹ Aldrich, 242.

²²⁰ William B. Cohen, *Rulers of Empire: the French Colonial Service in Africa* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1971), 52.

²²¹ Quinn, 170.

²²² Carroll, 8. Cf. L. Abrams & D.J. Miller, "Who were the French colonialists? A reassessment of the *Parti Colonial*, 1890-1914," *The Historical Journal* 19: 3 (Sep. 1976), 713.

²²³ William H. Schneider. *An Empire for the Masses: the French Popular Image of Africa, 1870-1900* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), 5.

periodicals catering to geography, such as *Magazine Pittoresque*, *L'Annee géographique*, *L'Explorateur*, *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, and *Le Journal des Debats*.²²⁴ The *Tour du monde*, which covered voyages of exploration and discovery, and *L'Illustration*, which featured paintings, drawings and photographs of the colonial experience, were particularly popular examples that predominately focused on the colonies. The diminishing cost of illustrated publications featuring photographs coupled with rising public interest in geography after the Franco-Prussian War made geographic magazines especially popular.

As the republican regime began its push to expand French colonial possessions, the government looked to pique public interest through the press. Newspapers like *Temps* and the *Journal des Débats* picked up on the republican messages and presented the Empire in an economic, strategic and moral light. These efforts to capture the popular imagination were less successful than intended, however, because public opinion tended to be content to follow colonial exploits rather than debate their legitimacy.²²⁵

Some of the more widely read periodicals were 'penny rags' like *Petit Journal* and the *Petit Parisien*, which achieved daily sales of over 1 million copies each. Their subject was not exclusively imperial, but they did write about the Empire in a way that appealed to their largely working class audience, and often in a favorable light. The *Petit Journal*, for example, stressed themes involving markets for raw materials and manufactured goods as well as the essential character of the colonies for the greatness of France, as the following passage reveals: "The future and wealth of France depend above all on the extension and prosperity of our colonies...Once the French genius is put to colonization...we will find a draining of our overflow of factories, and at the same time we will be able to secure, at the source of

²²⁴ Quinn, 112.

²²⁵ Carroll, 88.

production, the primary materials needed in our factories'.²²⁶ These concepts align with what William Schneider observes as the two dominant images of Africa appearing in the wider popular media from 1870 until the turn of the century. Africa is portrayed as a land of abundance, ideal for economic development, but requiring European intervention in order to extract the natural resources, open markets and improve the lot of the native peoples through the spread of European – namely, French – civilization.²²⁷ This was a potent justification for colonial expansion as well as a means to abate social tensions by giving the working classes a target for their energies and highlighting a possible destination for emigration.

Of note, it is difficult to determine the extent to which these magazines and books found their way into the hands of French schoolchildren, or whether children may have read them after having left school. The rigid nature of the French curriculum did not make an allowance for Loti or other authors of popular fiction that romanticized the colonies. This is not to say that children did not read this material on their own, however. Additional research is required in order to more precisely determine whether there was a significant interaction effect between the formal curriculum and popular periodical literature and fiction of the day.

Social Movements

Prior to and during the Third Republic, a number of private societies arose to encourage the spread of education across France. Some sought to advance a particular political or social agenda, while most simply sought to shore up gaps in the education system, such as those involving education in rural areas and among adults. In the main, these

²²⁶ Schneider, 62-3.

²²⁷ Schneider, 156.

societies were most active in the proliferation of information, though they also organized lectures and offered classes to the general public. In certain instances, they became focal points for movements advocating education reform. These societies, however, appear to have played little to no part in the promotion of the Empire in the public mind. At most, they were inspired by the Franco-Prussian War or concerns for France's economic competitiveness and social stability.

The most prominent society was the *Ligue de l'enseignement*, which counted among its members a number of influential republicans, including Jules Ferry, Ferdinand Buisson, and Paul Bert. Reconstituted in 1881, the *Ligue* sought to advance civic culture through education while opposing the influence of the Church. Toward this end, the *Ligue* was particularly active in securing the passage of the Law on Associations (1901) that severely restricted the activities of religious congregations. The inclusion of military education in the school curriculum for the sake of national preparedness was another issue area around which the *Ligue* was particularly active and successful.

Societes des bibliotheques constituted an important layer of private associations involved in education, but on a local level. At mid-century, their primary interest involved the spread of education into rural areas. As this became less of a concern, they tended to press ahead with maintaining public libraries and offering adult education courses. These initiatives often served political purposes in that they broadly addressed the need for greater social solidarity and national unity.²²⁸ They also inspired popular interest in education as a practical remedy

²²⁸ Elwitt, 185.

for social problems, which, Sanford Elwitt claims, laid the groundwork for the wave of reforms in the 1880s.²²⁹

In certain instances, athletics organizations influenced the school curriculum while also providing extracurricular opportunities for physical activity. The issue at the heart of their agenda did not simply involve play – though concerns for the health of overworked secondary school students was a mounting concern in the late 1880s.²³⁰ Rather, organized physical activities were conceived of as a means to encourage patriotism: moral training through physical training. Private clubs like the *Club Alpin Francais* (1874) and the *Société des Marcheurs touristes de France* (1885) were in the vanguard of these efforts. More generally, gymnastic societies were most directly linked to military training, as were shooting clubs. Taken together, they were “seedbeds where the young soldiers of the future could be nurtured and trained.”²³¹ In a short time, these clubs pushed for absorbing gymnastics and even shooting into the school curriculum because the schools offered the greatest opportunity to teach large numbers of children for a sustained period of time, while individual organizations could not hope for the same.

At the turn of the century, intellectual societies flourished in Paris as well as in the provinces. Their topical interests were varied, ranging in scope from science to agriculture, education, and geography as well as history. Though the intellectual societies did not maintain particular ties to schools or even advanced particular curricular reforms, they did a great deal to spread the ‘salon culture’ that sustained French intellectualism prior to the First World War. As such, the intellectual societies were regarded as important to the spread of learning among the public-at-large. A formal complement to the intellectual societies, though

²²⁹ Elwitt, 190.

²³⁰ Ringer (1992), 119.

²³¹ Weber (1971), 73.

possessing a longer, more prestigious pedigree, is the *Institut de France*. Created in 1795, the *Institut* represents a grouping of five *académies*, including the *Academie des Science Morales et Politiques* and the *Academie Francaise*, which is tasked with maintaining the French language. The particular relevance of the *Institut* to French education involved its impact on the flow of ideas and the direction of scholarship through the award of grants and prizes, sometimes substantial.²³²

Though there was a layer of social groups operating in France during the Third Republic that were primarily concerned with education, generally their agenda did not involve the curriculum of French schools, aside from position taken by athletics societies and the *Ligue* regarding the inclusion of physical activity and military training in the school day. For the most part, these societies addressed shortcomings in the provision of education; and, in doing so, they served as conduits for republican notions of civic virtue which, they believed, would pay dividends through social order. Their unofficial role as a purveyor of information makes this layer of educational societies relevant to the state's efforts to fashion a singular French identity. And, because the most prominent national and local societies tended to adopt the republican position on social and civic morality, they should be considered supplemental rather than corruptive influences. Aside from the push to fold military training into the school curriculum, the educational societies active at the time appear to have been fairly unconcerned about the Empire, at least in the context of their activities.

Geographical societies were more closely aligned with the imperial enterprise in that they sought to increase exposure to the colonies, though their objectives did not necessarily

²³² Clark, 56.

involve the promotion of French national interests, *per se*. Generally, geographical societies were chiefly interested in knowledge of the Earth gained through exploration and discovery, and their frame of reference included the exploits of merchants and missionaries as well as soldiers and sailors.²³³ The first of note was the *Société de Géographie*, formed in Paris in 1821. It would enjoy a rather exclusive position for more than 50 years, until the establishment of the *Société de géographie commerciale* by the Parisian Chamber of Commerce in 1876. Meanwhile, during the 1870s, a layer of provincial societies began to emerge, which does indicate an increase in popular interest in the broader world beyond France, though their membership base was much more limited. In fact, by 1881, the rolls of all geographical societies in France could claim only 9,500 members, of which nearly 2,000 belonged to the *Société de Géographie*.²³⁴ Taken together, outreach efforts included organizing lectures for the general public, as well as periodic publications highlighting the travels and travails of their ‘correspondents’ and other information sometimes tailored to investors or those considering work overseas.²³⁵ These included their particular *Bulletins*, as well as general interest magazines like *L’Année géographique*, *La Revue géographique*, and *L’Explorateur*.

The growth of historical societies followed a similar trajectory under the Third Republic, if slightly delayed. They tended to organize around specific research agendas, such as the *Société de l’histoire de la Révolution française* (1888) and the *Société de l’histoire moderne* (1901), as well as broader themes like law (1913), art (1876) and the history of the Church (1914). There were also societies dedicated to the study of provincial history. Like the array of geographical societies, the footprint of these groups is best measured by their publications

²³³ Girardet, 39.

²³⁴ Girardet, 62.

²³⁵ Goerg, 85.

which, according to Pierre Nora, were occasionally of “high value”, promoting interest in national history at the local level.²³⁶

During the rapid phase of colonial expansion in the early-to-mid 1880s, social movements emerged with a much more focused agendas centered on nationalism and on the Empire which occasionally, but not always, involved education. The *Ligue des patriotes*, founded in 1882, grew out of the numerous physical education societies formed in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War to train French youth so that they might retake Alsace-Lorraine. *Ligue* activities involved organizing lectures all across France, stoking fears of German imperialism. Relative to the schooling of French youth, a core component of the *Ligue*’s educational program involved encouraging enthusiasm for war. The *Ligue* would remain an active force until the Dreyfus Affair when, after the exile of Paul Déroulède, the *Ligue*’s chief intellectual renowned for his nationalist writings, the tone of the movement’s rhetoric became starkly anti-Semitic. By the turn of the century, the *Ligue* was largely discredited and the movement faded to the margins.

The *Parti Colonial* was the largest and most influential imperial movement in *fin-de-siècle* France, though its membership base constituted a small minority bound together by economic interests in the Empire.²³⁷ In truth, the *Parti* is better understood as an amalgamation of smaller colonial societies, like the *Union Coloniale Française* (1893) and the *Comité de l’Afrique Française* (1890), with varied resources and subscribers, but common practices, including public lectures, conferences, banquets, and, occasionally, the publication of periodicals (e.g. the *Union*’s *Quinzaine Coloniale*, *Politique Coloniale*). While the individual societies continued to pursue their separate agendas, the *parti* brought their combined

²³⁶ Nora (2010), 330.

²³⁷ On the importance of economic interests as drivers of colonial policy as shaped by the *parti colonial*, see Abrams & Miller, 708-713.

influence to bear on the government. (Subsequently, the *parti* did not directly expend resources on the school system.) The chief instruments of parliamentary influence were the *groupe colonial de la Chambre* (1892) and, later, the *groupe colonial du Sénat* (1898), comprised of typically moderate Republicans in the Assembly. As a measure of the growing significance of the *groupe colonial de la Chambre*, between 1894 and 1899, five out of seven Colonial Ministers were members of the *groupe*, many members of the *groupe* would sit on the *grandes commissions* tasked with formulating foreign and colonial policy.²³⁸ The reforms implemented during their tenure also helped open the door for members of the four main constituent *comités* to assume leadership positions in the major colonial departments.²³⁹ The influence of the *parti* would wane, however, after the Moroccan Crisis, as the *group colonial* fell apart after elections in the spring of 1906, and it would struggle to remain relevant in the years prior to the First World War, despite a modicum of renewed interest linked to the increasingly tense international climate.

It would appear that the main cause of the *parti*'s demise was the fractious, vacillating political atmosphere prevalent during the first decade of the 20th century, which is ironic because its initial success as a pressure group has been attributed to the political instability of the Third Republic.²⁴⁰ Yet the lines of contention in the 1900s were arguably different than during the early 1890s when the patriotic ethic was much more stable and the radicals were less influential.²⁴¹ The new mix of factors crippled attempts to recreate the base of support in the Assembly that had once secured the influence of the *parti* over colonial policy. A fickle public also stymied efforts by other social movements to build broad popular support. The

²³⁸ C.M. Andrew & A.S. Kanya-Forstner, "The French 'Colonial Party': Its composition, aims and influence, 1885-1914," *The Historical Journal* 14: 1 (Mar. 1971), 108; Abrams & Miller, 710.

²³⁹ Abrams & Miller, 705.

²⁴⁰ Abrams & Miller, 686. Cf. Zeldin (1993), 683.

²⁴¹ Cf. Weber (1968), 43.

Ligue Coloniale Française (1907) emerged in the wake of the Moroccan Crisis (1905), when popular support for the Empire rapidly faded after a brief renaissance at the turn of the century. The *Ligue's* principal aim involved educating the French people about the Empire, but it never achieved widespread membership, declaring in 1914 that the colonial education of the French people was a great task yet to be accomplished.²⁴²

The significance of social movements to constructing an imperial identity derives from their more focused agendas. They are, in other words, able to frame their activities with a specific message. At the same time, these activities are not always complements to broader educational structures, nor do they necessarily involve shaping the public mind. The *parti colonial*, for example, was primarily a pressure group designed to influence colonial policy. On the whole, however, most other social movements of a nationalistic or imperialistic bent did perform some sort of educational function, typically involving public lectures, though they did not intervene in the schools themselves as far as I am able to determine. This separation from the schools locates social movements on the periphery of the educational mechanism, and minimally influential at that, based upon the self assessment of the *Ligue Coloniale Française*.

III. TEACHING EMPIRE AND IDENTITY

English history texts placed England in the vanguard of civilization and characterized her as the foremost power in the world, to some anointed by God. The Empire was merely an extension of her superiority – a mark of national strength. This feeds into what one

²⁴² Andrew & Kanya-Forstner (1971), 101.

author labeled the ‘Holy Trinity’: citizenship, empire and patriotism.²⁴³ Textbooks that treated the Empire emphasized key themes like duty to one’s country, which cut across economic and social class – to be an Englishman necessarily entailed a sense of imperial obligation to not only govern but, especially after the Boer War, to defend the Empire. Britain was also a civilizing influence, morally responsible for extending the benefits of British culture and political institutions. Native peoples were often characterized as uncivilized and barbaric, and their world would remain shrouded in darkness and ignorance without the benefits of British rule. These images were most unflattering. This was an important justification for imperial expansion, to which English schoolchildren were exposed with a heavy dose.

Geography provided English students with a visual representation of the Empire through maps, but their narratives also went a long way to reinforce lessons from history textbooks. Prefaces, for example, included racist imagery of native peoples, who were ‘savages’ requiring moral and economic salvation. The latter theme involving economy was more prominent in English geography texts than in history texts. Colonizers were also described as bearers of ‘life and light’.²⁴⁴ The English brought prosperity and order, at times framed in terms of ‘human advancement’ (as opposed to simply a local phenomenon).²⁴⁵

As noted, French schools appear to have relied less on geography as a means to present imperial themes; furthermore, history and geography lessons often privileged France as the chief subject, as opposed to French colonial possessions overseas. Where the empire was treated, the dominant theme involved France’s *mission civilisatrice* – her ‘civilizing mission’. French colonialism brought light (*rayonnement*) to the world by extending her

²⁴³ *Supra* note 32.

²⁴⁴ *Supra* note 71.

²⁴⁵ *Supra* note 81.

superior culture, institutions and markets. This strikes a humanitarian tone and makes colonialism appear noble. France appears benevolent in the extension of her rule. Empire was a source of ‘charity’.²⁴⁶ At times French texts, compared to English texts, painted a relatively generous portrait of native peoples as redeemable and possessing good qualities, if underdeveloped. Others characterized the native population as ‘savage’, ‘barbaric’, and incapable of exploiting their natural resources, which is more consistent with the tone taken by English authors.²⁴⁷

French schoolchildren were in some instances presented with the idea that patriotic duty entailed sacrifice, even of one’s life, for the Empire.²⁴⁸ This approach, bridged patriotic and imperial sentiment, aligned with other efforts to frame the Empire as pivotal to France’s place among the Great Powers, and without them she would be insignificant – a third or fourth-tier power. There was a certain urgency, even, as if France would somehow ‘die’ as a nation if the Empire was not sustained.²⁴⁹ In addition to presenting the Empire as a symbol of national pride, it was also a means for national recovery (in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War as well as, more generally, economic recession) and economic growth (*‘mise en valeur’*). Further, this fundamentally economic relationship was described as mutually beneficial rather than exploitative or a matter of right.

Regarding extracurricular influences, English schoolmasters drew upon a vibrant market of juvenile fiction, which framed the Empire in terms of mystery, magic and adventure. Toward the turn of the century, this literature became infused with aggressive militarism. There was also a complementary genre of schoolboy fiction which idolized the

²⁴⁶ *Supra* note 203.

²⁴⁷ *Supra* note 180, and note 203.

²⁴⁸ *Supra* note 153.

²⁴⁹ *Supra* note 187.

English gentleman and reminded the reader of the importance of Empire to this construct, even if the Empire was not its principal subject. While popular fiction involving the Empire also appeared in France toward the end of the 19th century, it is uncertain the extent to which it was regarded as a supplement to classroom lessons if marketed toward French youth. The same can be said of the various publications emerging from French geographical and imperial societies at this time. From what I am able to determine, this literature chiefly targeted a mature audience, but it is certainly possible that schoolchildren were drawn to the stories and imagery. Further research on this front would be valuable.

In England, imperial societies like the League of Empire promoted study of the Empire at England's public and state-supported schools. They tended to advocate curricular reform (at the expense of the classics), and even authored textbooks and published lectures meant for wider distribution as well as for England's schools. These groups were also involved in promoting military drill, even at the elementary school level, as well as cadet clubs and rifle clubs, which they conceived of as natural extensions of schoolhouse athletics. Schools also became bound up in ceremonies devoted to the Empire, exemplified by Empire Day, which were meant to inspire enthusiasm and reinforce the symbolic significance of the Empire within the classroom. This helped reinforce the view that civic duty and imperial duty were synonymous. French imperial societies appear to have had similar aims, but less success in terms of intervening in school life. This may reflect the scope of authority exercised by French policymakers over education, in that outside influences were more easily excluded. I assert that this is also a reflection of the limits of popular and even official interest in the French Empire. By and large, the efforts of these and other social groups appear, like the market for literature on the Empire, to target adults, first.

* * *

During the last quarter of the 19th century, imperial themes became increasingly important to the content of English education and, in the years prior to the First World War, the emphasis upon Empire in the official and unofficial curriculum became rather pronounced. Across each of the three main levels of England's educational structure – elementary schools, public schools, and the ancient universities – the Empire emerged as a dominant justification for teaching certain subjects and making certain activities available to students. In some instances, the relationship between the Empire and schooling was explicit. The treatment of history and geography textbooks demonstrates the pervasiveness of imperial themes coupled with the intent to shape young minds by imparting beliefs about, for example, native peoples and English racial superiority. Similarly, the movement to include military drill as a daily schoolyard activity grew in large part from concerns about the readiness of England's youth to defend imperial possessions. In these instances, it takes little imagination to see the strong connections between content and the attempt to cultivate a belief system based upon England's imperial 'mission'.

While we cannot be certain of the extent to which textbooks were used, we can, however, infer the likelihood of the communication of certain ideas and images based upon commonalities between textbooks. A marketplace of diverse brands yet a homogenous product ensures a high degree of similarity among whatever was in fact employed in the classroom. Yet we must temper our observations about the messages found within history texts with the simple observation that it was not a terribly popular subject. Geography fared

better, but both subjects were a distant second to the classics. This indicates that though history and geography textbooks often presented potent images and themes pertaining to the empire, investing in the reader a strong sense of self and other, they likely did not reach a wide audience. Nevertheless, this is a useful exercise because it reveals how the British perceived the Empire, how they located themselves within it, and how they related to the subject peoples.

Imperial content could be found at each level of schooling in England thanks, in part, to history and geography textbooks which appear to have presented a fairly consistent set of ideas and images. And while the popularity of these subjects and the capabilities of instructors introduced variation, the question is really one of depth of exposure rather than breadth. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the likelihood was high that gaps in the curriculum would be overcome by extra-curricular influences targeted at the schools. Therefore, if taken as a whole, the educational experience appears to have been a fairly potent, far-reaching mechanism for the transmission of an imperial culture.

By contrast, based upon the previous survey, we are in a position to doubt whether the French Empire was not an overriding concern among many of the textbooks published for use in French primary and secondary schools. While the level of attention afforded to the French colonies varies, the consideration of the Empire at its strongest, if measured by chapters, paragraphs and words, is but a small part of the greater storyline. It was common for turn of the century textbooks to devote one chapter to colonialism and perhaps another to France's role in the world, but the attention given is often limited relative to other

subjects and themes.²⁵⁰ Treatments of French science or art at times occupied as much if not more space within the text than did the Empire.

Nevertheless, certain textbooks did tap into an imperial ideology that can be traced to the 1860s, prior to the wave of colonial expansion undertaken during the first decades of the Third Republic. The notion of bringing light to the world for the benefit of humankind resonated with officials and intellectuals during the Second Empire. In 1864, Jules Duval – whose work influenced Leroy-Beaulieu – observed, “*la colonisation constitue l’une des faces les plus brillantes de l’histoire générale de l’humanité. Elle est le rayonnement extérieur des familles humaines; elle est l’exploration, le peuplement et le défrichement du globe.*”²⁵¹ And, in a tone reminiscent of the Catholic historian Raboisson, the marquis de Chasseloup-Laubat, Minister of the Navy from 1859 until 1867, described the Empire as an opportunity to not only spread the light of civilization but to open markets and propagate French laws and institutions – a sort of far-reaching, modern crusade: “*C’est un véritable empire qu’il faut créer, un sorte de suzeraineté, de souveraineté, avec un commerce accessible à tous, et aussi un établissement formidable d’où notre civilisation chrétienne rayonnera sur ces contrées où tant de mœurs cruelles subsistent encore.*”²⁵²

Following the Franco-Prussian War, imperialism was still characterized, by some, as a noble endeavor, but there was a shift toward the practical, immediate value of the Empire to France. For example, in 1872, Leon Gambetta acknowledged the importance of the Empire to the Third Republic as a ‘fruitful policy of recovery’.²⁵³ Without the colonies, Gambetta reasoned, France would inevitably decline. “*Pour reprendre véritablement le rang qui lui appartient dans le monde, c’est par l’expansion, par le rayonnement dans la vie du dehors, par la place qu’on prend dans*

²⁵⁰ Cf. Hayes, Appendix A, 343-399.

²⁵¹ Jules Duval, *Les colonies et la politique coloniale de la France* (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, 1864), v-vi.

²⁵² Quoted in Girardet, 48.

²⁵³ Quoted in Carroll, 85.

la vie générale de l'humanité que les nations persistent et qu'elles durent; si cette vie s'arrêtait, c'en serait fait de la France."²⁵⁴ Gambetta's position is doubly significant because, first, he was one of the first Republican leaders to embrace the Empire, and, second, he deployed imperialism to address sensitivities to France's decline. Jules Ferry likewise framed the Empire in moral and practical terms. Colonialism would, he argued in a series of writings on Tunisia and Tonkin, secure markets, ensure security and crusade for French values in the spirit of the Revolution.²⁵⁵ In defense of his policies during an inquiry into the Tonkin affair in July, 1885, Ferry explained, "*Rayonner sans agir, sans se mêler aux affaires du monde, en se tenant à l'écart de toutes les combinaisons européennes, en regardant comme un piège, comme une aventure, toute expansion vers l'Afrique ou vers l'Orient, vivre de cette sorte, pour une grande nation, croyez-le bien, c'est abidquer, et, dans un temps plus court que vous ne pouvez le croire, c'est descendre du premier rang au troisième et au quatrième.*"²⁵⁶

In this light, to claim that history textbooks were not in fact purveyors of an imperial identity, or that they were somehow ineffective in this role would oversimplify the matter. Rather, it is more appropriate to conclude that the construction of an imperial identity was a subordinate concern within an overarching patriotic narrative. Textbooks circulating in the first decade of the 20th century demonstrate that the Empire was a distinct historical theme, and that the treatment of the Empire resonated with broader ideas about French *grandeur*. Perhaps the most prominent of themes of this nature involved the superiority of French civilization. In accordance with the rationalist/positivistic spirit of the day, French colonial expansion affirmed this superiority; the Empire was the perfection of French civilization. The Empire was also another venue for extracting the last full measure from the citizenry.

²⁵⁴ Quoted in Girardet, 78.

²⁵⁵ Girardet, 82-5. Cf. Paul Robiquet, *Discours et opinions de Jules Ferry* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1897), 521-564.

²⁵⁶ *Revue Bleue: revue politique et littéraire* (Paris: Bureau des Revues, 1888), 79.

One's love for the fatherland and one's sense of duty could find expression in the colonies. Glory through death was not achieved on Europe's battlefields alone. In each of these examples, however, we also see that the Empire was not essential to either the worldview involving French civilization or the standards of appropriateness bound up in love, duty and sacrifice. The French school boy or girl was to internalize the superiority of French civilization and embrace love, duty and sacrifice all in the name of France even if the Empire was not a part of the equation. Amidst these themes, the Empire could be taken for granted.

Yet, and this is the critical point, there *were* particular understandings of what it meant to be French that could be gleaned from what was written about the colonies. The discussion of the Empire within texts akin to those written by Ernest Lavisse, for instance, conveyed understandings that were clearly patriotic and nationalistic, though these understandings were solely derived from and relevant to French imperialism. Granted, the *mission civilisatrice* rested logically – if not emotionally – upon the premise of cultural superiority, but the actualization of the *mission*, the *rayonnement*, was a purely imperial concept. It only made sense in the context of colonial expansion. Certainly, the *mission civilisatrice* fed into patriotism and nationalism, but the salience of its contribution relied upon the Empire and its historical progression in the late 19th century.

The relative prominence of France's civilizing mission across so many of the textbooks published at the time underwrites the defining contribution of teaching and reading history to constructing a shared imperial identity. Furthermore, the waxing intensity of treatments of colonial expansion, coupled with the persistence of the *mission civilisatrice* as the dominant frame, supports the claim that schoolchildren would most identify with the Empire at a point of mounting sensitivity to French power and prestige. We must also

acknowledge the likelihood, however, that any sense of a shared imperial identity was overwhelmed by a broader French identity steeped in nationalism and patriotism; or, that the Empire was merely folded into an idea of a 'universal France' that lacked any sort of distinction between the colonies and the provinces. In either scenario, a notion of 'greater France' would obscure an imperial identity, making it difficult to gauge the impact of ideas and images associated with the Empire that were disseminated through French education. These concerns will be addressed at greater length in chapter 7, which offers an assessment of both French and English education relative to the construction of imperial identities.

CHAPTER SIX

TRAINING THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND GOVERNING ÉLITE

The functional pathway likens education to a gateway: by cultivating certain skills, schools open up social, political and economic roles. In this fashion, education is, as explained in chapter 2, a ‘mediating and limiting structure’ by virtue of the formal and informal training that it imparts. As in the previous chapter, we will use this opportunity to focus on elite training as it pertains to the governance and administration of the English and French Empires. Toward this end, we will explore the educational backgrounds of decision-makers and bureaucrats across three clusters of governing élites: the government, the civil services and the diplomatic corps. This choice reflects an interest in drawing out dominant trends among individuals in a position to influence imperial policy and administration in each country. Narrowing the field in this fashion serves to convey the significance of certain types of education while avoiding the trap of stretching functional roles in order to make them appear relevant to the respective empires. Additionally, by focusing on elite decision-makers, we may strengthen the case for education as a factor of some importance to theories of International Relations.¹

I. THE FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION

The problem with the English education system is that the dominant classical model is fairly general, which is another way of saying ‘non-specific’. This does not mean that

¹ Cf. Alan Cassels, *Ideology and International Relations in the Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1996).

education in England did not include a functional pathway. We must be careful not to evaluate whether education served a functional role by contemporary or subjective standards of appropriateness. While we may be inclined to disqualify education on the grounds that the skills imparted do not, from our perspective, fit a range of functions, we must instead consider the perspective of the Victorian or Edwardian onlooker, whose socio-economic and political roles were closely associated with particular types of education. Yet to assess the functional pathway, one cannot simply observe the ‘skills’ imparted to England’s youth. One can, however, glean the functional significance of education by considering the linkages between England’s schools and posts taken up after matriculation. In this light, education proved to be extremely influential prior to the First World War.

In 1895, J.E.C. Welldon reminded the Royal Colonial Institute that “the boys of today are the statesmen and administrators of tomorrow. In their hands is the future of the British Empire.”² His aim in giving the address to the RCI was to emphasize the significance of English education to the imperial mission. According to Welldon, the public schools and great universities did more than merely churn out classicists and mathematicians; they staffed the Empire and led its peoples.³ Thomas Arnold’s system for cultivating the ‘Christian gentleman’ had become a means to sustain the public servant class tasked with winning and maintaining Britain’s vast territorial possessions.⁴ These institutions created, in the words of James Morris, “an imperial elite to whom Empire was a true vocation...These were the nurseries of Empire.”⁵

² Welldon, “The Imperial Aspects of Education,” 339.

³ Mangan (1986), 120; cf. William A. Reid, “Curriculum Change and the Evolution of Educational Constituencies: The English Sixth Form in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum: Subjects for Study*, Ivor Goodson, ed. (London: Falmer Press, 1985), 306-7.

⁴ Wilkinson, viii; Leinster-Mackey (1988), 67.

⁵ Morris (1978), 27.

Educating the Government

Lord Stanley Baldwin once remarked, “When the call came to me to form a Government, one of my first thoughts was that it should be a Government of which Harrow should not be ashamed.”⁶ Baldwin’s sentiment was not mere hyperbole catering to his audience. Rather, it reflected a dominant pattern during the last quarter of the 19th century: Britain’s governments overwhelmingly drew from the prominent public schools and the ancient universities. Likewise, Members of Parliament tended to be old boys of the seven ‘great’ public schools, a trend rooted in the 18th century.⁷ From 1734 until the Reform Bill of 1832, 1714 out of 5034 MPs (34%) received their education from one of the seven ‘great’ public schools; and though the proliferation of public schools in the mid-to-late 19th century would loosen the stranglehold of the seven, the public schools as a whole maintained a very high percentage. Figures taken from the House of Lords and the House of Commons capture this dominance.

⁶ Lord Stanley Baldwin, “Harrow” in *On England, and other addresses* (London: P. Allan & Co., 1926), 267.

⁷ Bamford (1967), 229.

Table 3.1: Education of Members of Both Houses of Parliament

	Total No. (% of whole, n=670)	
	1905 (Lords)	1909 (Commons)
Eton	121 (18.1)	88 (13.1)
Harrow	44 (6.6)	26 (3.9)
Other Public Schools	82 (12.2)	68 (10.1)
National Schools	23 (3.4)	54 (8.1)
Oxford	142 (21.2)	115 (17.2)
Cambridge	108 (16.1)	91 (13.6)
Oxford-Cambridge	250 (37.3)	206 (30.7)
Other Universities	107 (16)	117 (17.5)
Unspecified	58 (8.7)	47 (7)
Neither Oxbridge or Public Schools	271 (40.4)	329 (49.1)

Source: H.R.G. Greaves, "Personal Origins and Interrelations of the Houses of Parliament (Since 1832)," *Economica*, No. 26 (Jun. 1929), 177.

Among Prime Ministers, Eton and Oxbridge are well-represented. Between 1870 and 1963, six Prime Ministers attended Eton (38%), while four were educated at other major public schools (25%).⁸ Meanwhile, English state-supported schools were not at all represented in the sample. Over the same span, seven Prime Ministers went to Oxford (44%), and three went to Cambridge (19%). Of the six Prime Ministers holding office between 1870 and 1914, three attended Eton (Gladstone, Salisbury, and Balfour), three attended Oxford (Gladstone, Salisbury, and Asquith), and two attended Cambridge (Balfour, Campbell-Bannerman). Only Benjamin Disraeli was not an Oxbridge graduate.

At the cabinet level, the influence of England's elite schools is likewise evident. Between 1801 and 1924, Etonians alone comprised over a quarter of the Cabinet.⁹

⁸ Bamford, Table 18, 234.

⁹ Bamford (1967), 230.

Table 3.2: Secondary Education of Key Cabinet Posts, 1870-1914

	Secretary of State for Foreign & Colonial Affairs (n=8)	Secretary of State for the Colonies (n=14)	Under- Secretary of State for War & the Colonies (n=19)	Secretary of State for War (n=16)	First Lords of the Admiralty (n=13)
Eton	7	8	3	3	1
Harrow	0	3	4	2	3
Clarendon Schools	8	11	12	9	6
Lesser Public Schools	0	0	3	1	3
Other	0	1	1	3	1
None	0	2	3	3	3

If we narrow the focus to include posts particularly relevant to the Empire, the public schools and the ancients are represented to an even greater extent. Table 3.2 reveals the dominance of the Great Schools over key foreign and colonial policy-making posts in the Cabinet. From 1870 until 1914, 100% of the secretaries for foreign and colonial affairs attended a Great School, and Eton was foremost among them. Similarly, 79% of the secretaries of state for the colonies went to a Great School, while 57% (of the whole) went to Eton alone. The share of the Greats declines for the other posts in the sample but, even at its worst showing, the Clarendon students constituted 46% of the first lords of the admiralty.

Table 3.3: Higher Education of Key Cabinet Posts, 1870-1914

	Secretary of State for Foreign & Colonial Affairs (n=8)	Secretary of State for the Colonies (n=14)	Under- Secretary of State for War & the Colonies (n=19)	Secretary of State for War (n=16)	First Lords of the Admiralty (n=13)
Oxford	7	5	10	8	5
Cambridge	1	4	6	4	3
Other	0	0	3	2	1
None	0	5	0	2	4

Among the same sample, the ancient universities figure prominently with very similar ratios to the whole as noted with the Great Schools. Oxbridge graduates comprised 100% of the secretaries of state for foreign and colonial affairs, 64% of the secretaries of state for the colonies, 84% of the under-secretaries of state for war and the colonies, and 62% of the first lords of the admiralty. Oxbridge fared worst with the secretaries of state for war, yet still accounted for 51% of the whole. Like Eton, Oxford placed the most graduates across each of the posts in the sample, with the highest ratio of the whole found among the secretaries of state for foreign and colonial affairs (88%).

The Victorian elite generally believed that the public schools and the ancient universities, by virtue of their classical curriculum and extracurricular activities, best trained individuals to assume positions of responsibility. The matriculation of the gentleman class, cultivated at these schools, into government was not only expected but preferred as well. And despite the expansion and relative democratization of education in England during the mid-to-late 19th century, little appeared to change in terms of the schools that fed into the government. The pronounced share of cabinet posts occupied by graduates of either public

schools or the ancients confirms their role as gatekeepers for key positions in government, especially those touching upon Britain's foreign and colonial policy.

Elite Schools and the Civil Service

In 1854, under the direction of Thomas Macaulay, the Honourable East India Company began to reform its recruitment practices, which had previously relied upon patronage. Within two years, competitive examinations would supplant patronage in the Indian Civil Service (ICS). This change was part of a larger initiative to reform the entire British civil service, which was under attack for weaknesses created by a system reliant upon political and familial connections. Some of the momentum to reform reflected increasing pressure to democratize British governance and open up the avenues of power to the middle class, whose influence was on the rise.¹⁰ The burdens of staffing the Empire also put pressure on the Services to expand their roles, a task for which patronage was ill-suited.¹¹ Perceived ineptitude during the Crimean War likewise fueled the fire to deploy open competitive examinations as the prime mechanism of recruitment.¹²

The implementation of competitive exams in 1855, in turn fostered an important linkage to British schools and universities which could now assume a new function in preparing graduates for the civil and foreign services. According to C.J. Dewey, this was a beneficial outcome because it responded to a broader identity crisis underway among England's schools, while also improving the prospects for the employment of students after

¹⁰ Robert T. Nightengale, "The Personnel of the British Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, 1851-1929," *The American Political Science Review* 24: 2 (May, 1930), 313.

¹¹ Wilkinson, 10.

¹² Peter Kellner & Lord Crowther-Hunt, *The Civil Servants: An Inquiry into Britain's Ruling Class* (London: MacDonald, 1980), 105. See also, R.K. Kelsall, *Higher Civil Servants in Britain: From 1870 to the Present Day* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1966); Roach (1971), 191-2.

matriculation.¹³ In some circles, there was hope that competitive examinations would encourage the spread of new knowledge. Classical education and mathematics were firmly rooted subjects that dominated mid-century curricula; ideally, preparing for the competitive examinations would otherwise necessitate familiarity with ‘modern’ subjects which would also contribute to the quality of a university education. In the words of the Northcote-Trevelyan Report (1854), which articulated the reasoning behind and proposed direction of reform, “we need hardly allude to the important effect which would be produced upon the general education of the country, if proficiency in history, jurisprudence, political economy, modern languages, political and physical geography, and other matters, besides the stable of classics and mathematics, were made directly conducive to the success of young men desirous of entering into the public service. Such an inducement would probably do more to quicken the progress of our Universities, for instance, than any legislative measures that could be adopted.”¹⁴ Additionally, the exams would in theory provide outlets for the lower and middle classes to penetrate the services, and in turn improve educational standards.¹⁵ Ultimately, the chief aim was to ensure a high quality of civil servant, particularly among the ICS where extensive power was wielded at the local level. Macaulay, in particular, believed that the exams would not only ensure knowledge but also character. “The industry and self-discipline required to take high honours were incompatible with ‘dissolution’; gentle birth, often the sole qualification of the beneficiaries of patronage, afforded no such guarantee.”¹⁶

¹³ C.J. Dewey, “The Education of a Ruling Caste: The Indian Civil Service in the Era of Competitive Examination,” *The English Historical Review* 88: 347 (Apr. 1973), 264-5.

¹⁴ *Report on the Organisation of the Permanent Civil Service* (London: George E. Eyre & William Spottiswoode, 1854), 14.

¹⁵ Dewey, 265; Roach (1971), 141.

¹⁶ Dewey, 268; Roach (1971), 30.

On the ground, the attempt to reform the recruitment practices of the services actually served to retrench the *status quo ante* in that training in the classics was overwhelmingly considered essential, particularly for higher posts. Though a wider array of subjects were offered on the exams, their legitimacy depended upon the extent to which they were valued by Victorian society.¹⁷ Because these subjects were not considered the stuff of gentlemen, they were undervalued. Subsequently, the classics and mathematics remained the main subjects taken by the pool of candidates because the dominant culture so strongly associated them with gentlemanly character.¹⁸ This effectively ensured that the examination scheme would draw recruits from the Great Schools and the ancient universities.¹⁹ When the first open examinations were held in 1855, 70% of the successful candidates were Oxbridge-educated.²⁰ While reformers like Macaulay did not necessarily object to the prominence of top schools, they certainly underestimated the resilience of the classical curriculum and the resistance of the ancient universities to change. Some, notably Benjamin Jowett, Master of Balliol College, and perhaps the most prominent advocate of the competitive exam among the dons at the ancient universities, favored broadening the university curriculum to include practical subjects.²¹ In doing so, Jowett successfully transformed Balliol into a sort of incubator for the foreign services. Of Balliol's honors graduates from 1873 to 1913, public service was overwhelmingly the dominant career path among firsts and seconds

¹⁷ Soffer, 21.

¹⁸ These subjects also offered the highest maximum scores. A sample ICS exam distribution weights English language, literature and history at 1500 points; mathematics was weighted at 1000; Greek and Roman language, literature and history were weighted at 750 points each; while the natural sciences and the moral sciences were weighted at 500 points each. The remaining subjects – mainly 'modern' languages or languages of use in India – could score a maximum of 375 points (Roach (1971), 196). This distribution clearly reflects the dominance of the classics, while also creating a high barrier for anyone lacking in a classical education (such as native candidates).

¹⁹ Kelsall, 3.

²⁰ Dewey, 268-9.

²¹ Jowett's 'programme' at Balliol focused on Greek and Latin history, philosophy and literature. Aristotle and Thucydides were compulsory (Symonds, 31).

(combined).²² And, of the total number of matriculates (2,208) from 1874 until 1914, nearly 27% (600) worked in the Empire.²³ However, many at Oxford and elsewhere, for that matter, opposed Jowett's reformist agenda; and Balliol was more of the exception than the rule.

As long as the classics remained, effectively, *primus inter pares*, the lower classes in particular faced additional, nearly insurmountable obstacles if they hoped to penetrate the ranks of the Service. Preparatory education, be it through a formal school or a private tutor, remained beyond their reach because of the cost; and without preparation, they would be highly unlikely to receive a place in one of the public schools. And even when education was made available to the lower classes following the Education Act of 1870, it was not classically-oriented. This further reinforced the social structures in place to ensure that those in a position of authority would share a certain set of values gained through a certain type of education. To those in positions of authority, this outcome was quite reasonable and preferred. At first, the exams were not universally welcomed. In the field, older Haileybury men found that the new breed of 'competition-wallahs' were nothing more than "bookish hobbledehoyes who fell off their horses, misunderstood Hindustani and made silly mistakes about the ways of the country."²⁴ Even Queen Victoria worried that, because of the reforms, "low people without breeding or feelings of gentlemen" would end up in positions of responsibility.²⁵ The Chancellor of the Exchequer, testifying before the MacDonnell

²² Soffer, 189.

²³ Symonds, Table A.1, 306. Of the 600 matriculates, 50% worked for the ICS; nearly 13% were educators abroad; and nearly 11% worked for the Colonial Service (Table A.2, 307).

²⁴ Philip Mason, *The Men Who Ruled India* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1985), 186. We should also keep in mind that the introduction of the competitive exams spelled the end of Haileybury, which heretofore had been the chief educational institution established by the East India Company in 1806, for the training of its civil service. The open exams made Haileybury obsolete, and its doors would close in 1858.

²⁵ Quoted by Kellner & Crowther-Hunt, 105.

Commission (1871), nearly 16 years after the first wave of competitive exams, expressed similar concerns: “I think it is of great consequence that you should have men whose associations and ideas belong to the class with whom they will have to deal.”²⁶ In this way, education, as a barrier, fit comfortably with Victorian sensibilities and would serve to mute the effects of the reforms to the recruitment of the services.

Nonetheless, examinations as a mechanism for recruitment became the norm in 1870, when Gladstone issued an Order of Council that opened up all civil departments – with the exception of the Foreign Service – to open competition. The role of the universities, however, was not as firmly entrenched. The nature and timing of the exams was such that university education was actually perceived as inefficient and even unnecessary. In large part, aspiring candidates benefited from the growth of alternatives to the universities, as well as the national and public schools. ‘Crammers’, as they were called, flourished because they promised maximum results in minimal time. The crammer was solely geared toward success in the exams; it exposed students to the subjects required by the exams so that they might present themselves as more knowledgeable than they really were.²⁷ The public schools and universities found them abhorrent, in part because they specialized in subjects upon which the public schools and universities frowned – the so-called ‘modern’ subjects, as opposed to classics and mathematics. Yet a conventional, classical education would leave students unprepared.²⁸ And, as the public schools and universities overwhelmingly refused to

²⁶ Quoted by Kelsall, 35.

²⁷ Mason, 208. Cf. Kelsall, 60; Roach (1971), 198 & 218.

²⁸ Examination papers were offered in sixteen subjects ranging from jurisprudence to history to science, and one’s goal was to secure a high enough score from the cumulative results. Dewey observes that fears of superficiality led to implementation of a minimum threshold, under which one’s scores would be set aside. It was hoped, therefore, that economy of effort would prevent candidates from simply taking as many papers as they could; instead, they would only sit for papers in which they were confident of exceeding the threshold. Regardless, the scope of subjects was such that a generalist knowledge was required, and one which was not exclusively classical.

adapt, more and more aspirants turned to crammers. This phenomenon was also aided by age limits set by the various civil services. An age limit of, for example, 19 would increase the incentives to avoid a university education altogether, as it would prevent any student who passed the exam from actually securing their degree. Crammers, however, could push students out of the door well in time.

Macaulay's dream of a civil service populated by Oxbridge men would be realized, but not until the 1890s. This was achieved in large part by aligning the exam subjects more closely with Oxbridge honors courses, and the upward adjustment of the minimum age from 19 to 23 in 1892 also encouraged candidates to attend university.²⁹ The resulting shift proved quite dramatic. According to Dewey, between 1892 and 1896, 78% of successful candidates for the ICS were from the two ancient universities – a level consistent with the initial period of exams nearly four decades prior. This is also the more striking when one considers that the Oxbridge average for the previous five years was a mere 22%. These trends would maintain through the First World War, affirming that Oxford's classical orientation was actually favored by those that penned the exams for the ICS – and that Cambridge's more diverse curriculum was actually a disadvantage.³⁰

²⁹ Dewey, 274. Coincidentally, the lower age limit also had the effect of suppressing attempts at the examinations by native candidates. Indians, for example, complained that exams at the age of 18 or 19 created too great an obstacle to their successful and fair competition due to the rigor of learning the classics. Cf. Mason, 209; Roach (1971), 221; Symonds, 11.

³⁰ Symonds, 191. From 1892 through 1914, Oxford would account for 48.3% of the new recruits to the ICS, while Cambridge would account for 29.5%.

Table 3.4: Universities Attended by ICS Recruits, 1855-1896

	Percentage					
	1855--9	1874-8	1878-82	1887-91	1892-6	1855-96
Total University	96	40	18	40	93	67
Oxford	34	12	3	5	52	24
Cambridge	23	4	1	15	25	16
Irish	24	9	1	3	5	10
Scottish	9	8	7	6	4	10
London	6	3	5	7	4	5
Indian	0	1	0	4	3	2

Source: Dewey, 276. Figures taken from the *Civil Service Commissioners' Reports*.

It is also worthwhile to note that of the approximate 1600 successful candidates from 1858-1897, an overwhelming majority was drawn from the middle class: 67% were sons of professionals, 21% were sons of businessmen, and 12-13% were sons of farmers or lesser gentry.³¹

* * *

In the first decade of the 20th century, the patterns of recruitment for Intermediate Class posts in the Civil Service reveal a certain weight placed upon public school education. Over the period of 1906-10, ten percent of internal, Intermediate Class recruits had attended an HMC (Headmaster's Conference) school, as compared to 36% among direct entrants.³² Taken together, these figures point toward a marked shift in the prominence of a public school background among new civil servants. The origins of entrants to junior administrative posts from 1909 to 1914 evidence the same public school dominance: 27% came from the

³¹ Dewey, 285. See Appendix 1, especially.

³² Kelsall, 24.

‘Clarendon Schools’, with Winchester (8%), Rugby (4.3%) and Eton (4.3%) foremost among the nine.³³

Prior to 1914, “education was important because of the status it gave a man in dealing with the world when representing the office; those who lacked this educational status were unfitted from high positions.”³⁴ This effectively closed off the path to internal promotion for those occupying lower-level posts unless they possessed the right credentials, which would be unlikely as they would probably not assume such a post to begin with. The exams held out the promise of promotion, but, again, the subject matter of the exams reinforced the hold of the public schools on recruitment even if education would not, on the surface, be a qualifying factor. Exceptional ability was the only way for someone to leapfrog their class into a higher post.³⁵ As a result, in the years before the Great War, Britain’s Civil Service was heavily stratified by social class. “The social cleavage within the Service was both obvious and, with recruitment to the Higher Division largely restricted to the privileged few with an Oxford or Cambridge education, inevitable.” The backgrounds of successful candidates for junior administrative posts from 1909-1914 certainly bear this out: 52.2% attended Oxford, and 24.2% attended Cambridge.³⁶

From 1870-1914, open competition for higher posts was primarily intended for those in the process of or having completed university. There was, however, no ban on non-university candidates, though their rate of success was quite low.³⁷ The subjects of the exams were those found in honors programs at university, namely Oxbridge. The purpose of this

³³ Kelsall, 122. The extended tracking of schools shows that the influence of the Clarendon Schools was highest prior to WWI.

³⁴ Kelsall, 31.

³⁵ Kelsall, 34.

³⁶ Kelsall, 159.

³⁷ Kelsall, 59.

caveat was to release the candidate from having to study extra for the Service exams. The advantage of the Oxbridge students was, at the time, criticized because of their familiarity with the subjects that scored the highest on the exams. This was difficult to refute, though one could claim that Oxbridge was so successful in placing candidates because, simply, the best and brightest students attended the two ancient universities. And even as new universities came onto the scene in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Oxbridge share of posts in the services would only increase.³⁸

If we extend the analysis to permanent secretaries in the Higher Civil Service, the Oxbridge footprint is similarly large – all the more so because of the authority and prestige associated with these top posts. During much of the 19th century, the patronage system served to depress the percentage of university graduates who achieved posts as permanent secretaries; once open competition became the norm for recruitment and advancement, the percentage was much higher.³⁹ Cutting across these trends is a strikingly high percentage of the civil service elite who attended Oxford and, to a lesser extent, Cambridge. Among two samples of permanent secretaries (1870-99 (n=52); 1900-18 (n=60)) that cover the time frame of this study, 35% and 37% attended Oxford, respectively; meanwhile, 13% and 15% attended Cambridge.⁴⁰ The next highest percentage among any single university or group of universities was 6% who went to Scottish universities in the first sample and 7% who attended the University of London in the second. Barberis attributes Oxford's clear

³⁸ Kelsall, 61-2.

³⁹ Peter Barberis, *The Elite of the Elite: Permanent Secretaries in the British higher Civil Service* (Aldershot: Dartmouth, 1996), 97-8. Barberis finds that from 1870-1918, eighty-two percent of the permanent secretaries that entered the civil service through open competition attended university, as compared to 55% among those who entered through other methods of selection, including patronage.

⁴⁰ Barberis, 99. As a point of comparison, 38 % of the 1870-99 sample and 28% of the 1900-1918 sample did not attend university.

dominance to two key factors.⁴¹ First, the service was pregnant with Oxford graduates who tended to look more favorably upon like candidates with degrees in the humanities. Second, reflecting the efforts of Jowett at Balliol, Oxford was more disposed to preparing its students for civil service careers. While the impact of the former arguably dissipated as patronage became less and less important to recruitment and advancement, the latter highlights the value of an Oxford education as qualified by its capacity to impart the right sort of knowledge and training to ensure success on the exams (even if the knowledge itself was deemed, by some, to be impractical).

It should be of no surprise at this juncture to note that a public school education was also strongly associated with the background of the pool of permanent secretaries. From 1870 to 1899, fifty-five percent (n=49) attended one of the eleven Clarendon schools, while 11% received instruction from a private tutor, and 6% attended a 'middle status' school.⁴² Though the percentage of graduates from the Clarendon schools would decline across the sample (n=57) drawn from 1900 to 1918, thirty percent still claimed one of the Great Schools as their *alma mater*. This decline, however, is off-set by gains made by 'high status' schools (2% from 1870-1899; 14% from 1900-1918), which modeled themselves after the Greats in terms of pedagogy and curriculum. Among the Clarendon set, Eton is predominant. In fact, during the 19th century, Etonians occupied nearly 15% of the permanent secretary posts, and they were especially prevalent in the Foreign Office.⁴³ State-supported (or, 'maintained') schools bore almost no fruit whatsoever, yielding only one permanent secretary over the span of both samples. The message gleaned from these figures

⁴¹ Barberis, 100.

⁴² Barberis, 105.

⁴³ Barberis, 106.

is clear: prior to the First World War, if one wished to rise up the ranks of the civil service, one had to attend a public school – Eton, if possible.

Gann and Duigan (1978) show a similar trend among governorships in Africa during the same period: 18 were educated either at Eton, Harrow or Winchester; 21 at Charterhouse, Merchant Taylors', Rugby, St. Paul's, Shrewsbury or Westminster; 80 at smaller public schools; and 32 at established grammar schools.⁴⁴ Otherwise, no more than 17 came from a background that did not include a public school or grammar school education. In part, this is due to an overriding preference for governors who fit the model of an English gentleman, which included an exclusive education. Yet, with the upswing in available recruits at the century's end, selection became more rigorous, and public school education moved to the fore as a means to separate the wheat from the chaff. "The colorful pioneers were replaced by sons from the professional classes, properly trained and furnished with approved university diplomas."⁴⁵ Most commonly, they were graduates in the classics, mathematics or history.

Barberis is right to observe that these patterns may be indicative of Old Boys' networks and familial connections. Between 1870 and 1918, nearly two-thirds of Oxbridge graduates that matriculated into the services were sons of fathers who were also Oxbridge graduates.⁴⁶ Yet school ties can also be indicators of a certain 'type' defined by either a concentration of talent or a particular knowledge base – or, both. The point, here, is that while familial and school connections undoubtedly played a part in opening doors in the last 30 years of the 19th century, schooling became the grease to the wheels of career

⁴⁴ L.H. Gann & Peter Duigan, *The Rulers of British Africa, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1978), 175.

⁴⁵ Gann & Duigan, 181-6.

⁴⁶ Barberis, 107-8.

advancement to higher office.⁴⁷ This was very likely due to the growing presence of the middle class, which lacked the familial connections of the aristocracy, at the schools. Yet, the shared exposure to particular ideas and beliefs was perhaps of greater significance because these very ideas and beliefs were deemed valuable – if not essential – by Victorian and Georgian society, regardless of one’s social origins. In his study of imperial administrators, Anthony Kirk-Green explains that public schooling played a significant role in making District Officers because it freed the individual from familial and social pedigree. From the perspective of the aristocracy, education was critical to prevent the dilution of elite culture despite the changes underway in the social composition of key Services. The children of the middle class could rise to positions of authority because they were “socialized and homogenized in accordance with the prevailing code of expected behavior, at once accepted internally and admired externally.”⁴⁸ The public school education assured that they would possess the chief virtues of character, leadership, determination and discipline, as well as a sense of duty and fair play. The university served to reinforce these virtues.

The Diplomatic Corps

The study of the background of political elites is of only so much value unless we pair it with consideration of key bureaucracies. Robert Nightengale goes as far as to assert that “Parliament has but little power over foreign affairs. Some of the most momentous changes in the country’s relations with other Powers have, in the [twentieth] century, been accomplished without reference to the House of Commons, and often without its

⁴⁷ Soffer, 22.

⁴⁸ Anthony Kirk-Green, *Britain’s Imperial Administrators, 1858-1966* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1999), 12.

knowledge.”⁴⁹ This does not mean they were of different minds, however. The model of the refined Christian gentlemen to which many of the political establishment aspired was easily transferrable to the foreign services. Diplomacy, it had long been thought, required a particular “breeding and finesse” which could be achieved through the right sort of training.⁵⁰

Taken as a whole, the diplomatic corps and the Foreign Service were relatively small. Including permanent, deputy and assistant under-secretaries, chief clerks, counselors, assistant secretaries, ambassadors extraordinary and envoys extraordinary, a total of 249 men held one or more of these posts from 1851 to 1929.⁵¹ This small sample lends to some very interesting conclusions about trends in parentage and education. Overwhelmingly, these entities were populated by the aristocracy (93 out of 249, or 37%).⁵² The next largest group, in terms of parental occupation, was the rentier class (39 out of 249, or 15.7%), and then the army (24 out of 249, or 9.6%). Of little surprise, the public schools figure prominently in their educational background. Eton alone accounts for 85 of the 249 (34%), and Harrow a distant second at 27 of the 249 (10.8%). If we include the other leading (38/249) and lesser (26/249) public schools, the percentage of officials in the diplomatic corps and the foreign service educated at Britain’s elite institutions is dramatic: nearly 71%, or 176 out of 249.⁵³

Figures detailing university education also demonstrate a predilection for the ancient universities: 72 attended Oxford and 36 went to Cambridge.⁵⁴ The next largest contributor, Dublin, only accounts for 5 in the sample. Of note, 115 never attended university, but this

⁴⁹ Nightengale, 310.

⁵⁰ Nightengale, 314.

⁵¹ Nightengale, 315.

⁵² Nightengale, 316.

⁵³ Nightengale, 316.

⁵⁴ Nightengale, 317.

figure can perhaps be explained by the success of crammers in placing candidates, circumventing the university altogether. This assumption, however, must be qualified by certain realities of the recruitment process. In 1857, pure patronage was abandoned with the introduction of a qualifying test that would discriminate against unqualified candidates otherwise nominated for their post. Competition, on a limited basis, was only implemented in 1880.⁵⁵ These changes do appear to be somewhat disruptive when considering the Diplomatic Service. Eton's dominance, for example, increases after 1880, with 38 out of 87 officers (compared to 7 out of 30 from 1857 through 1879).⁵⁶ However, the leading eleven public schools as a whole remain overwhelmingly prevalent in both eras. From 1857 to 1879, these select few accounted for 20 out of 30 successful candidates, or 67%; after 1880, 66 out of 87, or 76%, were products of these same institutions.

The Indian Civil Service (ICS) also drew heavily from the ancients. Prior to 1914, 47% - or, 244 officers – had attended Oxford, while 29% (155) had attended Cambridge.⁵⁷ Scottish universities constitute the next largest contributor at 13%. The reliance on Oxbridge can be explained by recruitment policies in the ICS which for a time required a probationary period of two years at one of the two universities. But even prior to the institution of a probationary period, Oxbridge was the most popular source of recruits, to the tune of 75% of all personnel during the ninety-year existence of the ICS.⁵⁸ Oxbridge was likewise a breeding ground for the Sudan Political Service (SPS), but the entrenchment of Oxford and

⁵⁵ Even then, as R.K. Kelsall observes, the system could be manipulated in such a way that the desired cream rose to the top, namely by ensuring that preferred candidates only competed against those who were clearly inferior in their qualifications or their examination scores. Kelsall, 2.

⁵⁶ Nightengale, 321.

⁵⁷ Kirk-Green, Table 4.2.

⁵⁸ Kirk-Green, 21.

Cambridge was only underway in the early years of the 20th century.⁵⁹ Initially, at the inception of the SPS in 1899, military service was valued most, supplanted within a few years by a preference for athleticism.⁶⁰ Athletes were synonymous with good health, leadership and camaraderie. Education was still important, particularly because of the emphasis on gaming at the leading public schools. For this reason, the Great Schools are well represented in the backgrounds of SPS officers: 33.7% of all recruits for the SPS (1899-1952) came from Clarendon Schools.⁶¹

In the first decade of the 20th century, R.D. Furse was one of two private secretaries in the Colonial Office responsible for recruitment and appointments. Furse, a graduate of Balliol, embodied the public school ethic and he sought, in turn, to shape the Colonial Office in the public school image by selecting candidates “who had been prefects in British public schools, who had played cricket and made it to the rugby First Fifteen.”⁶² His hope was to make administrators more like governors in character and background, and populate the Office and the field with gentlemen. It would appear that his efforts were quite successful: from 1900 to 1914, 80% of Colonial Office administrators had attended public schools and/or university.⁶³

⁵⁹ From 1899 until 1952, Oxford provided 180 recruits to the SPS, while Cambridge matriculated 103. Other universities account for a mere 29 recruits (Symonds, 194).

⁶⁰ Kirk-Green, 173-4.

⁶¹ Meanwhile, 92% came from public schools more generally, including the Clarendon set (Mangan (1985), 79). The three largest contributors, comprising nearly 30% of the SPS, were Clarendon Schools: 30 officers attended Winchester; 21 attended Eton; and, 20 attended Rugby. Marlborough sent a respectable 19 to the SPS, but this figure is better understood as complimentary to the dominance of the Clarendon Schools since Marlborough was fashioned in their image. See Kirk-Green, Table 6.2.

⁶² Gann & Duigan, 200.

⁶³ It is worth noting that, traditionally, the Colonial Office was not as big a draw for the best students prior to and during Furse's tenure when compared to a number of the other Services. On the one hand, both the Indian Civil Service and the British Home Service required applicants to pass rigorous exams, which added to their prestige and ensured that only the best and brightest succeeded in their applications. On the other hand, the Colonial Office – like the Sudan Political Service and the British South Africa Company – did not employ competitive exams, which made them more attractive to Lower Seconds and Thirds. Granted, their recruits

II. THE FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF FRENCH EDUCATION

The functional role of education is derived from its ability to impart particular skills to students without which social, political and/or professional roles would remain closed off. In our previous case, England's dominant educational model was fairly non-specific such that the functional value of English education was highly dependent upon the cultural milieu within which it was nested. In France, culture was still important, but education was also much more precisely focused than in England. French institutions of higher learning were functionally differentiated, and largely designed to cultivate fairly specific abilities for use in the private and public domain. The influence of the state over the curriculum, especially among the *grandes écoles*, makes French higher education a potentially powerful mechanism for the construction of functional identities that serve the broader interests of France. The vital question, however, involves the extent to which these functional identities necessarily related to the French Empire.

Along the lines of the previous chapter, I restrict consideration to élite decision-makers and functionaries across the government, the services and the diplomatic corps. These individuals were best situated to influence colonial policy and administration, which makes their educational background especially germane. I make no presumption of a strong functional connection between education and the Empire, however. If we find among our pool a preponderance of general educational backgrounds, then the significance of education to the French Empire is likely social rather than technical. Conversely, if the pool is

were still more often than not university men and likely from one of the ancients, but they were also of a lesser caliber, "glad to find jobs that did not entail additional training of a formal kind" (Gann & Duigan, 204).

populated by individuals drawn from schools known for a particular field of study, then a certain technical background would appear to be a prerequisite for assuming that post (or, posts).

The nature of higher education in France supports expectations that the functional value of education was, in fact, technical – which contrasts with our assessment of the function of English education in the previous chapter. The consolidation of the education system during the late 19th and early 20th centuries allowed the state to exercise a high degree of control over the training of the administrative élite – a process which the state continuously strove to perfect.⁶⁴ This system rested first upon the *lycées* and *colleges*, which had assumed responsibility for educating the administrative and governing élite since the days of the *ancien régime*. Under the Third Republic, secondary schooling was not simply a passive force, according to Antoine Prost, but an active support of hierarchy and privilege.⁶⁵ It became a vital mediating force that managed the upward climb of the bourgeoisie by making certain that those who penetrated the halls of power did so on the basis of merit.⁶⁶ The effort to restrict access was made easier by the cost of a secondary education. If the student came from a poor or working class household and could not win a scholarship, the door to a *lycée* was essentially shut.⁶⁷ And the scholarships that were available were few in number when compared to total enrollment.⁶⁸ It is therefore not surprising to note that the overall percentage of boys who attended state secondary schools never rose above 2% (of the whole eligible population of boys aged 11-17) during the 1850s to 1870s, and never eclipsed 3%

⁶⁴ Suleiman, 17. Cf. Armstrong, 192-3.

⁶⁵ Prost (1968), 331.

⁶⁶ Zeldin (1993), 291.

⁶⁷ Sharp, 105.

⁶⁸ Zeldin (1993), 344.

through 1920, reaching a peak of 2.74% in 1910.⁶⁹ “Secondary education was, without a doubt,” explains Theodore Zeldin, “a luxury, an investment and a status symbol.” It was the chief conduit that channeled the French from their social origins into the élite.⁷⁰

From the state’s perspective, the fundamental task of the *lycées* and *colleges* remained the creation of the ruling élite, or so explained the chairman of a parliamentary inquiry into the secondary school system in 1895. Yet the secondary system was not an end unto itself. Rather, secondary schools cultivated the élite by preparing them for the *baccalauréat*, which was once characterized as the ‘first stage in the social mandarinat’ because, without it, one would never be able to gain a post in the civil service.⁷¹ The *bac* was also key to accessing the *grandes écoles* from which the upper echelon in government, industry, the military and academia emerged. This is arguably the true measure of the significance of the *lycées* and *colleges*. According to one observer, “there are comparatively few high posts either in government service or in private business or the liberal professions but are filled by men and women who have successfully passed the battery of 17 written and 43 oral tests given at the end of seven years’ hard, payless effort in *lycée* or *college* to determine who shall obtain the coveted *baccalauréat*.”⁷² The instruction offered by the secondary school system was primarily classical and certainly general. There was nothing particularly imperial about the skill set that the *lycées* and *colleges* cultivated. The sharpening of skills occurred at the *grandes écoles*, which sustains the claim that the *grandes écoles* bore the chief – some might say ‘decisive’⁷³ – responsibility of training the élite – of bestowing specific tasks and making them ‘useful’.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Zeldin (1993), 292-3.

⁷⁰ Christophe Charle, *Les Elites de la Republique, 1880-1900* (Paris: Fayard, 1987), 100.

⁷¹ Bush, 134-5.

⁷² Sharp, 106.

⁷³ Fritz Ringer, *Education and Society in Modern Europe* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1979), 127.

⁷⁴ Suleiman, 28; 42.

Of the *grandes écoles*, the École Normale and the École Polytechnique established themselves as the best of the best, drawing France's brightest students, and opening the door to success in public life and industry – which only fed the reputation of these schools.⁷⁵ In fact, from 1880 until 1914, nearly 60% of students at the École Polytechnique were from upper middle class backgrounds.⁷⁶ The elitist *esprit de corps* of the École Polytechnique was especially strong, even militaristic, which is not terribly surprising considering its status as feeder school for officers of the technical corps of the army and engineers for various government departments.⁷⁷ Graduating at the top of one's class from a *grandes écoles* also paved the way for entry into a *grands corps* (e.g. Corps des Mines, the Corps des Ponts et Chaussées, the Conseil d'Etat). The corps fostered a distinct identity, and in many ways the corps resembles the English 'school tie', or old-boy networks. Taken together, the *grandes écoles* experienced a windfall in terms of social, economic and political influence in the late nineteenth century due to the prestige associated with their diplomas and the prospects that their diplomas opened up for their students. "The result was that sizable groups within the ruling class and among the most influential people in the country's economic and intellectual life were graduates of a few institutions."⁷⁸

⁷⁵ While the Normale shouldered the burden of educating French academics, Fritz Ringer (1978) finds the role of the Polytechnique to be partly functional and partly symbolic. Because the Polytechnique trained the military élite, business and technical leadership, and a smaller percentage of high officials, the functional role it played was "surely unique, extending as it did from the public to the private sector, from traditional to more modern forms of power, from bureaucratic administration to economic management" (167). Fritz Ringer, "The Education of Elites in Modern Europe," *History of Education Quarterly* 18: 2 (Summer, 1978).

⁷⁶ Ringer (1992), 61.

⁷⁷ Zeldin (1993), 339-40. From 1880 until 1914, 74% of graduates of the École Polytechnique entered the military (Ringer (1979), 173).

⁷⁸ Zeldin (1993), 334.

The Governing Élite

During the Third Republic, the road to the Chamber of Deputies ran through the University. At a time when only 1% of French youth attended an institution of higher learning, nearly three quarters of all Deputies went to either the University or one of the *grandes écoles* before launching their political careers.⁷⁹ And while the percentage of *députés* with a University diploma would decline by the first decade of the 20th century, the available figures still attest to the dominance of the best French schools, from the Latin Quarter to the University of Toulouse: 70% of *députés* attended either the University or a *grandes écoles* from 1871-1898, and nearly 66% from 1898 until 1919. Among the *grandes écoles*, the École Normal Supérieure produced some of the more notable figures in the Chamber, but the dominant ‘laboratory’ of French politicians at this time was the Faculty of Law.⁸⁰ To remind the reader, the French university system rested upon faculties differentiated by subject; and because control of the faculties was centralized under the University, in theory, there was no variation from faculty to faculty, region to region. As such, one can speak of a degree in law while generally taking for granted the particular university that issued it, though there was an undeniable ‘*hyperconcentration des jurists de haut niveau*’ emerging from Parisian schools throughout the 19th century.⁸¹

Approaching the turn of the century, the background of most of the *députés* in the Chamber was concentrated among a few sectors, the training for which generally required at least the *baccalauréat*: in 1889, nearly 48% were professionals, 17% were recruited from either

⁷⁹ Mattei Dogan, “Les filières de la carrière politique en France,” *Revue française de sociologie* 8: 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1967), 477.

⁸⁰ Dogan, 480.

⁸¹ Christopher Charle, “La bourgeoisie de robe en France au XIX^e siècle,” *Le Mouvement social* 181 (Oct.-Dec., 1997), 68-9.

the army or the upper civil service, and nearly 15% from business.⁸² The *députés* drawn from the professions or the civil service largely comprise the '*bourgeoisie de robe*', a phrase coined by Christopher Charle to convey the predominance of legal training among the social and political élite while also capturing the socio-economic composition (chiefly middle class)⁸³ of this rather significant group.⁸⁴ As one would expect, during the Third Republic, the *bourgeoisie de robe* was quite prominently represented in the Chamber. From 1898 until the end of the Third Republic in 1940, nearly 29% of *députés* (802) were trained in Law.⁸⁵ *Députés* with a medical or pharmaceutical background constitute the next largest group (nearly 11%, or 304 *députés*). Meanwhile, the more prestigious *grandes écoles* were fairly underrepresented: Polytechnique, St.-Cyr, and Navale (4%, 115 *députés*); Centrale, Mines, Arts et Métiers (3.3%, 92 *députés*); and the Écoles normales d'instituteurs (2.7%, 70 *députés*).⁸⁶ If we shift our focus to ministers, the dominance of legal backgrounds is even more striking. Typically, ministers emerged from a cadre of long-serving deputies, and they were common across governments. Of the 561 men who served as ministers between 1879 and 1900, 122 sat in five or more

⁸² Christopher Charle, "Élite formation in Late Nineteenth Century: France Compared to Britain and Germany," *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (124), Élite Formation in the Other Europe (19th-20th Century) (2008), 253.

⁸³ The Third Republic marked the ascendance of the middle classes and the decline of the aristocracy in the Chamber of Deputies. From 1871 to 1919, the share of deputies from the middle class grew from 19% to 35%; meanwhile the aristocracy collapsed, falling from 34% to 10% (Dogan, 469).

⁸⁴ Charle (1997), 53-72. The term is actually a play upon '*noblesse de robe*', the élite administrative class during the *ancien régime* which was in the main aristocratic in addition to being trained in Law. Cf. Ringer (1992), 76.

⁸⁵ Dogan, 478. These percentages are all the more striking when compared to the share of students studying law among the overall population of the same age group: 0.2% in 1875/6; 0.2% in 1885/6; and 0.7% in 1910/1 (Ringer (1992), 48).

⁸⁶ Interestingly, there is a rather significant grouping among *députés* with only a primary school education, amounting to nearly 19% of the sample, or 527 deputies. Because the data is aggregated, we cannot at this point determine whether there is an intertemporal effect underway such that the size of this grouping represents a broader socio-economic shift in the Chamber occurring in the period surrounding the First World War. Furthermore, higher education – and law, for that matter – was not uniformly embraced by the parties in the Chamber, however. In the years immediately prior to the First World War, most of the socialist deputies only received a primary education until the age of 12 or 13, occasionally entering a technical school thereafter (Dogan, 480).

governments.⁸⁷ Some were able to establish a hold over a single post by virtue of their perceived expertise – such as Jules Ferry over education – or military officers over ministries for war and the navy (drawn commonly from outside the Chamber). From 1870 until 1940, more than 42%, or 266 ministers, were trained in Law.⁸⁸ The second largest group comes from the *grandes écoles* whose students typically matriculated into the armed services: Polytechnique, St.-Cyr, and Navale produced nearly 16% of ministers (98). Of note, *députés* with anything less than a secondary education were virtually excluded from any of the Third Republic's numerous cabinets. Ministers with only a primary school education amounted to only 2.7% of the whole, or 17 ministers out of a total of 631. *Députés* possessing only a secondary education fared somewhat better, claiming 10% of ministerial posts under the Third Republic. Clearly, however, the emphasis fell upon higher education at the ministerial level, where 85% of all ministers attended either the University or a *grande école*. (Though the range of each set of figures extends well beyond the period covered by this study, the skewed distribution is worth noting in order to reinforce the broader conclusions about the significance of legal training to France's governing élite. If anything, the trending of legal backgrounds in the late 19th and early 20th centuries is likely more acute than what these figures convey because of an ensuing decline in legal studies immediately prior to and extending beyond the First World War.⁸⁹)

At this point, there is no question of the significance of higher education to the governing élite in France from 1870 until 1914, especially at the cabinet level. The data also confirms that the main functional contribution of higher education to the governing élite

⁸⁷ Parry & Girard, 80.

⁸⁸ Dogan, 479.

⁸⁹ Dogan notes that, from 1919 until 1940, 'only' 55% of *députés* were legally trained, in contrast with 70% at the turn of the century (477).

involved legal training. On its face, therefore, there was no direct connection between the functional role played by higher education and the Empire. Furthermore, the broader social and political context did not impart even a tacit understanding that one's professional training, while legal, was somehow also of value to the Empire. There was, in other words, no imperial ethos bound up in pursuing the Faculty of Law promulgated by the dominant social norms of the day.⁹⁰ Thus, while one can easily claim that higher education in France played a decisive role in limiting access to the halls of power *and* that there was a distinct functional identity (*bourgeoisie de robe*) imparted in the process, it is decidedly more difficult to qualify the functional contribution of French education among the governing élite as somehow imperial. Simply, the training received by an overwhelming percentage of *députés* and ministers was not explicitly related to the Empire, and there was no implicit understanding that this training was somehow of value.

The Civil Service

Until 1877, those of noble or upper bourgeois birth enjoyed a stranglehold on administrative and political roles.⁹¹ Prior to this point, recruitment to the civil service was largely based upon appointment and influenced heavily by political and familial connections. The introduction of examinations as a filtering mechanism was slow to take hold. Even the attempt to enhance the rigor of the exams in 1872-4 really did not bear fruit until the turn of

⁹⁰ As Christopher Charle explains, "Influenced by the legal culture, the [*bourgeoisie de robe*] defend political liberalism inherited from the French Revolution against any excess of State power. They are attached to individualism as well, free initiative and enterprise, necessary to their professional status, and so may share the liberal vision of business elites. But there is also a segment of this legal bourgeoisie, influenced by a long tradition of a strong State, linked to the centralized monarchy and committed to the defense of public interest against corporatism and localism or Church power and even the help to the weak people against the powerful" (252).

⁹¹ Parry & Girard, 38-9.

the century.⁹² Meanwhile, a quasi-patronage system evolved that prioritized the recruitment of like minds rather than, necessarily, those most deserving. During the Third Republic, the Church had come to influence appointments, power it would retain until after the Dreyfus Affair, when rising anti-clericalism shifted the balance of power toward one's political beliefs, which had to align with republican and radical sentiments particularly during the first decade of the 20th century.⁹³ Additionally, deputies were able to shape departments in the service, forming a sort of mini-constituency, which in turn sought out advancement as the deputies advanced. This amounted to a sort of 'personal favoritism' – unsystematic but common at the time.

The growth of state capacity in the late 19th century necessitated the expansion of opportunities to enter the civil service: as the state's spheres of action increased, so too did the demand for a larger bureaucratic support structure.⁹⁴ Added pressure came from the middle class, which regarded the service as another possibility for social mobility. In this context, education became an increasingly important, mutually beneficial means to govern recruitment. Outsiders could hope to penetrate the administrative élite if they were able to pass examinations (*concours*), typically after matriculating through one of the *grandes écoles* or the Faculty of Law. The established élite could in turn restrict access on ostensibly meritocratic grounds, while ensuring that the pool of initiates possessed equivalent levels of education and 'culture'. Hence, observes Theodore Zeldin, "while the test of merit was still increasingly applied, the civil servants almost formed a hereditary class, with considerable

⁹² Zeldin (2003), 119.

⁹³ Walter Rice Sharp. *The French Civil Service: Bureaucracy in Transition* (New York: Macmillan, 1931), 76-7.

⁹⁴ Parry & Girard, 79. In fact, the ranks of French civil servants nearly quadrupled during the 19th century (Zeldin (2003), 114).

cohesion of outlook and values.”⁹⁵ In this way, the growth of the civil service promised to be less destabilizing and France’s administrative élite would remain privileged, though drawn from the aspiring middle and upper middle classes rather than the traditional aristocracy.⁹⁶ Yet this conservative approach was very likely the chief reason for the dearth of quality recruits, which was of particular concern prior to the First World War.⁹⁷ Democratization of the Civil Services, however, would occur only in its wake.

For the civil services, higher education became essential as recruitment increasingly relied upon the *licence* and the *baccalauréat*. The latter could be achieved after only a secondary education, though one’s opportunities within the service would be limited to certain middle grade posts, though generally only subordinate, manipulative and clerical positions. Most middle-grade and all upper-grade administrative posts required the *licence*, sometimes a *docteur*, or, where particular functions were concerned, a diploma from a *grande école*. The following sample taken from high functionaries in 1901 bears out the importance of advanced degrees:

⁹⁵ Zeldin (2003), 115.

⁹⁶ Armstrong, 86.

⁹⁷ Sharp, 86.

	High Functionaries (% of whole)
École polytechnique	13.9
École normale supérieure	--
Centrale, or another <i>grande école</i>	4
Law	19.4
Medicine	--
École militaires	20.4
No secondary education, and non responses	7.8
Other schooling	12.1

Source: Charle (1987), 114.

Where one's position was a matter of a *licence* or a *docteur*, the general nature of these degrees potentially opened the system up to a base of recruits with relatively diffuse school ties.⁹⁸

More to the point, where one's responsibilities did not require technical knowledge (e.g. engineer, chemist), a general literary (i.e. classical) education was sufficient if supplemented by a close knowledge of French public law.⁹⁹ In fact, from 1830 until 1930, 44% of high officials (including judges, diplomats as well as civil servants) held a degree in law (compared to 32% of politicians over the same time period).¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Of note, Jean Le Bihan observes that it was not uncommon to recruit locally for mid-level positions in the provinces (13). By extension, this may have allowed provincial faculties to exercise greater influence over regional postings, though this cannot be concluded from the results of Bihan's inquiry. Jean Le Bihan, "La catégorie de fonctionnaires intermédiaires au XIXe siècle: retour sur une enquête," *Genesis* 4: 73 (2008).

⁹⁹ Sharp, 104.

¹⁰⁰ Ringer (1992), 70.

Relationships did form between certain civil service postings and the *grandes écoles*. By one account, nearly 95% of all men appointed to the diplomatic and consular service from 1907 until 1927 attended one of the *grandes écoles*.¹⁰¹ The following table lists a few examples of from general categories of employment in the services.

Type of Position	Grande École
Foreign Service	École libre; École des Chartes
Council of State	École libre; École des Chartes
Accountants/Bookkeepers	École primaire supérieure
Engineers	École polytechnique
Archivists	École des Chartes
Interpreters	École des Langues orientales

Source: Sharp, 118-9.

For the Foreign Service and the Council of State, a diploma from either the École libre or the École des Chartes would substitute for a *licence*, but attending either *grandes écoles* was not a prerequisite.¹⁰²

Nevertheless, these schools were in a position to influence imperial administration because of their special relationship with the Foreign Service and Council of State.

Furthermore, that this relationship existed is an indication that the training one received at

¹⁰¹ Weber (1968), 3.

¹⁰² There is, however, some evidence that a shift was underway during the Third Republic among ministerial directors and the Council of State. From 1852 until 1870, 18.4% of ministerial directors and 9.2% of the Council of State attended the École polytechnique; by 1901, Polytechnique's share increased to 24.6% and 15.6%, respectively (Charle (1987), 109). Meanwhile, background in law declined rather significantly among ministerial directors, from 62.6% in 1852-1870 to 38.3% in 1901.

either school made one capable of exercising influence over some facet of the Empire.

Within the Civil Service, therefore, there was clear functional value to higher education but the relevance to the Empire appears to rather limited, reflecting established relationships between certain schools and Civil Service branches while lacking a broader cultural context to invest added meaning in schooling as somehow imperial.

Colonial Administration

In the 19th century, aside from Education, the fastest growing branch of the French Civil Service involved colonial administration. From 1839 until 1911, the Navy and the Colonial Service nearly doubled in personnel from 5,700 to 9,400.¹⁰³ The most rapid period of expansion occurred under Napoleon III, whose legitimacy hinged upon restoring France to preeminence among her rivals. Colonization was a means to this end. It was also added justification for the growth of the bureaucracy *writ large* which, in Marx's analysis, was but "an artificial caste, for which the maintenance of his regime becomes a bread-and-butter question."¹⁰⁴ Coincidentally, the mode of recruitment and training of colonial administrators was weakest at this time; and the colonial administration came to be known as the *régime de l'interimat*, characterized accordingly for overstaffing, wasteful spending and, subsequently, frequent turnover.¹⁰⁵

For much of the 19th century, the administration of the Empire was left in the hands of the Navy because of the strategic nature of the colonies. Most French overseas possessions were coastal or insular, and therefore best regarded as outposts for the

¹⁰³ Sharp, 16.

¹⁰⁴ Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, Robert C. Tucker, ed. (New York: Norton, 1978), 612.

¹⁰⁵ Stephen H. Roberts, *The History of French Colonial Policy, 1870-1925* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1963), 166-7.

projection of French naval power.¹⁰⁶ (This also served to foster a popular perception linking colonialism to militarism, especially during the early years of the Third Republic.¹⁰⁷)

However, as the Empire expanded, the naval officers came under fire for mismanagement. They were criticized for being outmatched by the complexities of administering a more diverse collection of colonies.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, as the value of French colonial possessions came to be measured in largely economic terms (e.g. *mise en valeur*), the role of the Navy did not appear consistent, enhancing the incentives to revise the administrative structure.¹⁰⁹ The government's solution entailed gradually replacing military officers with civilians, which really did not begin in earnest until 1879. Meanwhile, the Ministry of the Navy retained oversight over the civilian structure, a responsibility that the Navy would retain until the creation of the Ministry of the Colonies in 1894.

The move to civilian administrators did not ensure improvement, however. Many of the new recruits were “men of questionable pasts who for various reasons had decided to leave France and seek their fortunes elsewhere.”¹¹⁰ This is due in part to the realities of living and working in the colonies. Living conditions were generally inhospitable, leading to a relatively high mortality rate when compared to other branches of the civil service.¹¹¹ The lifestyle was best undertaken alone, which meant separation from one's family. In some regions of France, where the seafaring way of life was embraced, the colonies were more popular; but generally those who sought out these posts, in the early years of the shift to civilians, were “brutal and dishonest,” and uninterested in or incapable of enjoying the social

¹⁰⁶ William B. Cohen, *Rulers of Empire: the French Colonial Service in Africa* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1971), 8.

¹⁰⁷ Girardet, 35.

¹⁰⁸ Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: a History of French Overseas Expansion* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996), 149-50.

¹⁰⁹ Roberts, 125.

¹¹⁰ Cohen, 15.

¹¹¹ Cohen, 23-4; cf. Quinn, 116-7.

gains traditionally reaped by civil servants in France (e.g. the *Légion d'Honneur*). At the same time, recruitment was decentralized and left in the hands of colonial governors, which helped keep patronage alive particularly for mid-level, largely clerical posts.¹¹² Advanced education at either the higher or secondary levels was not required for agents in the field, unlike those at home who had to pass the *baccalauréat* in order to fill any administrative post. In fact, most administrators received no formal training, and, as late as the turn of the century, only half of French administrators in Africa held a *baccalauréat*.¹¹³ This poor state of affairs, prevalent at the height of colonial expansion in the 1880s, has led one observer to note, “France in these years was conquering an Empire, but she did not know how to deal with it.”¹¹⁴

In this light, the movement toward a central administration for recruitment was pivotal to reforming recruitment processes and, thereby, improving the quality of imperial administrators. An important step in this direction involved the creation, in 1887, of a colonial administration corps and a corps of colonial inspectors. Moreover, a central authority in Paris would thereafter oversee the recruitment of both corps. Initially, recruits for the administrative corps were scarce. In 1887, there were only 40 administrators; yet, by 1913, this number had swelled to 861, its highest point during this span of time. In fact, the first decade of the 20th century witnessed the strongest growth in the administrative corps, from 217 men in 1901 to the figure listed above.¹¹⁵ Regarding the inspectorate, numbers were intentionally low (only 26 in 1905), achieved by an ‘extremely difficult’ examination.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Cohen, 22.

¹¹³ Aldrich, 150.

¹¹⁴ Roberts, 126.

¹¹⁵ Cohen, 32. Cf. Aldrich, 151.

¹¹⁶ Cohen, 59.

At first, the manpower gap among administrators was overcome in part through the recruitment of colonial military officers. Between 1887 and 1900, 15-20% of the corps was comprised of former officers.¹¹⁷ At the turn of the century, Paris began to reduce its reliance upon the military due to pressure from the civilian contingent and a particular reputation of brutality assigned to military officers in the Corps. After 1905, the provision requiring that one-sixth of the Corps come from the military was abolished. As a result, by 1907, the presence of military officers had fallen to nearly 7 percent of the whole (34 of 465). Other than from the military, the primary pool of recruits for the administrative corps was found in the field among functionaries already employed in the colonial capitals – though they were typically under-qualified – and the existing cadre of agents. (Recruits from the domestic services were few in number.) Of these groups, former agents would ultimately comprise a majority of the administrative corps until the First World War.

A second measure designed to improve the quality of colonial administration and widen the pool of recruits was the creation of the *École Coloniale*, in 1889. The *École* emerged from an informal school established in Paris during the 1880s for the purpose of teaching French to Asians brought from the colonies. A ministerial decree converted the language school into a training institution for future colonial administrators and, toward this end, the *École* was given a monopoly over administrative posts in the colonies. This privilege, however, would only last until 1892 in part because of its inability to generate an adequate number of administrators due to limited resources. Further, there remained some resistance to the school in official circles even among those who could be considered ‘colonials’. In their view, there was no need for a professional school because they,

¹¹⁷ Cohen, 26-7.

themselves, had not required one.¹¹⁸ Provincial chambers of commerce, notably the Chamber of Commerce in Lyon, also objected to the school because they feared it would block local recruits from entering into the colonial services if they could not afford to relocate to Paris.¹¹⁹

In its early years, the school did not recruit its students on the basis of academic ability. The only entrance requirement was the *baccalauréat*, which meant that a secondary education was sufficient preparation. It was hoped that lower standards for admission would encourage enrollment from a broad base of the population while also spurring general interest in the school.¹²⁰ The lower classes, however, were effectively excluded because of the stipulation requiring the *baccalauréat*. In general, the school drew heavily from the middle class or the lower middle class, but to a lesser extent than expected and not always to the level of academic capability the school hoped to achieve from its recruits.¹²¹ With the exception of children of military officers, few sons of French nobility entered the École prior to the First World War because, as a matter of convention, the nobility only pursued the diplomatic service and the officer corps, which were more prestigious.¹²² Under pressure due to the poor quality of recruits, the École implemented entrance exams of a more specialized nature in 1896.

The curriculum of the École Coloniale emphasized law, reflecting a commonly-held view that Roman law was universally valid and that an understanding of basic principles

¹¹⁸ Roberts, 162.

¹¹⁹ This actually led the Chamber of Commerce in Lyon to press for introducing a colonial studies program into the Academy of Lyon – though introduction would be delayed until the turn of the century due to budgetary constraints. In 1910, Bordeaux reacted similarly, adding a colonial section to its École supérieure. John F. Laffey, “Education for Empire in Lyon during the Third Republic,” *History of Education Quarterly* 15: 2 (Summer, 1975), 172-3.

¹²⁰ Cohen, 41-2.

¹²¹ Aldrich, 151.

¹²² Cohen, 55.

could be applied anywhere in the Empire.¹²³ In turn, most students enrolled in a joint law degree program while they matriculated through the school in order to achieve an adequate understanding of the legal side of administration, which was the hallmark of French colonialism. Beyond law, coursework entailed the study of French colonial administration and policy, as well as history and literature. In this respect, the school's core curriculum overlapped with the curriculum found in French secondary schools, aside from the addition of the study of French colonial history and policy. Graduates were otherwise sent off into the field relatively blind to particular characteristics of the colonies they were to administer. According to William Cohen, "In many ways the school was divorced from the realities of colonial life, for it tended to stress a highly theoretical, rather than a practical knowledge of overseas affairs... They learned irrelevant minutiae to recite, instead of acquiring a well-rounded knowledge of the empire."¹²⁴ This oversight would be remedied in time, but with questionable results. Robert Aldrich explains,

Only after the turn of the century did the school institute permanent courses on ethnology and anthropology. Language training was minimal and sometimes of limited value. The requirement that future African administrators study literary Arabic hardly prepared them for communicating with indigenes in most parts of Africa, and those destined for Indochina learned classical rather than demotic Vietnamese and Cambodian. Practical training in accountancy, engineering and other fields which might have been of use to future officials was rudimentary. Critics concluded that the *École Coloniale*, despite its merits, hardly provided the training necessary for the colonial field.¹²⁵

After 1905, additional changes were implemented in order to enhance the practical relevance of the curriculum, including an emphasis on local customs, institutions and history. These changes were reinforced by a revised examination structure which covered more than

¹²³ Cohen, 45.

¹²⁴ Cohen, 47; cf. Roberts, 165.

¹²⁵ Aldrich, 151.

Roman law, French law, and French colonial history and policy. Matriculation required passing a series of special exams pertaining to one's regional specialty (e.g. African, Indo-Chinese) and an oral examination that covered one's understanding of road and building construction, hygiene, practical accounting, and a foreign language.

The implementation of the exams coupled with the renewed focus on rigor did improve perceptions of the quality of graduates.¹²⁶ Yet, despite a ministerial decree in 1905 that required all candidates for administrative posts to undertake a one-year training program at the *École Coloniale*, the school did not greatly impact the pool of colonial administrators: while there is some dispute about the exact figure, somewhere between 15 and 20% of the administrative corps were graduates of the *École* on the eve of the First World War.¹²⁷ This is partly due to the delayed enforcement of the aforementioned ministerial decree (until 1912); moreover, patronage still obstructed appointments.¹²⁸

In the *École Coloniale*, we find the most direct functional linkage between education in France and the Empire. While its impact appears to have been muted, the fact that administrators had to receive training at the *École* prior to the First World War assures that there was a formative institution that shaped the practice of imperial governance. Further, the content of the education one received at the *École Coloniale* was eventually tailored to providing a base of knowledge and skills valued only in the imperial context. It is also worthwhile to note the school's curricular foundations. In a previous section, I argued that though the Empire was not a dominant concern, it did fit neatly within broader notions of French identity which the school curriculum sought to advance. The prominence of the study of law as well as French history and policy at the *École Coloniale* is, in my mind, a

¹²⁶ Cohen, 44.

¹²⁷ Cf. Aldrich, 151; Cohen, 37.

¹²⁸ Roberts, 164.

clear indication of not only the fungibility of the skills derived from this course of study but also of the broader relevance of the ideas and images bound up in this course of study to the Empire. Again, we must avoid the temptation to judge the relevance of these ideas, images and skills from our contemporary vantage point. What matters most is how those on the ground at the time perceived the content and function of education. That general fields of study, valued in a broader curriculum designed to cultivate the French élite, were included, efficaciously or no, within the curriculum of the École Coloniale indicates that notions of being French and understandings of being imperial had to be linked by context – in this instance, the academic environs of a school dedicated to educating imperial administrators. In this way, context – e.g. school, regional culture, national political discourse – becomes the limiting function on the cultivation of a shared imperial identity among the French people. Absent the proper context, then the imperial dimension of French identity would be entirely taken for granted – and French education would *appear* to be ineffective as a mechanism for the construction of an imperial identity.

III. EDUCATION AND TRAINING THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH ÉLITE

The overarching message of the treatment of English education in this chapter is simple: education played a significant if not essential role in opening and closing doors to the halls of power; and even though we may note variation in the particular schools in play, more often than not we can consider them to be one and the same since they were cut from the same pedagogical and curricular cloth. This is not to say that everyone who received this type of education – be it from a public school or an ancient university – went on to play a part of some significance to the Empire. However, it is of some consequence that so many

of those who did went to these particular schools. Eton, according to J.A. Mangan, “bred viceroys and rulers for the Empire as the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics in Rome nourished cardinals and nuncios for the Roman Church.”¹²⁹ These trends are significant because they reveal the extent to which particular schools are represented among posts relevant to the Empire. The overwhelming reliance upon public schools to educate those who would later staff the Services responsible for the administration and governorship of the Empire firmly supports the claim that “once the Empire was established, the public schools sustained it.”¹³⁰ Accessing Eton and, perhaps thereafter, Balliol situated an individual in a prime position to win placement in the ICS, the Home Office, the Cabinet, or even Downing Street.

Consider the success of Oxford graduates in achieving key decision-making and administrative posts. Between 1880 and 1914, the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary were usually Oxford men.¹³¹ They also outnumbered Cambridge graduates by nearly two to one in the Indian Civil Service and the Sudan Political Service. Furthermore, over the whole of British rule in India, 15 Governor’s-General and Viceroys came from Oxford, while 5 came from Cambridge. Oxford, it was believed, gave the empire its statesmen, academics and intellectuals; its builders and organizers of the colonies; and served as a beacon of Imperial, Anglo-Saxon education. Here was the training ground for governors and viceroys.

These outcomes were far from mere coincidence. Education of a certain sort was perceived to be essential to securing one’s place. Though today we might question the relevance of a classical education to, say, a governorship in East Africa, the dominant perception at the time held that a classical education was the foremost means to impart the

¹²⁹ Mangan (1985), 23.

¹³⁰ Mangan (1985), 21.

¹³¹ Symonds, 2.

desired skills and character. For example, understandings of the ideal Oxbridge undergraduate took upon the image of the perfected gentleman – athletic, English, and white. These images lent well to predominant themes at the turn of the century involving colonial inferiority and effeminacy, as well as militarism and the defense of the Empire. “Exclusivity, superiority, and dominance became organizing principles in undergraduate culture between the years 1850 and 1920 and served to reinforce not only the Oxbridge mystique but also the status of varsity men as future statesmen, imperial leaders, and paragons of British masculinity.”¹³² The Oxbridge man conceived of himself as an inheritor of British power, obligated to prepare himself to wield it. Perhaps more importantly, he “operated within an imperial culture that allowed him to celebrate, as a component of his record, ethic and national identity, the British ability to conquer, administer, and civilize colonized peoples around the globe.”¹³³

In this way, education played an important functional role, training the future administrators and policymakers that would advance and sustain Britain’s imperial possessions, governing the metropole as well as the periphery. The functional value of education was also very much a product of the time, constructed from the Victorian mindset. The idealized man was a Christian Gentleman, and Christian Gentlemen knew their duty. And, in turn of the century Britain, there was no higher duty than to one’s country and, inextricably, one’s empire.

Meanwhile, in France, it would appear that education was, at best, an indirect mechanism for cultivating functional roles that were specifically imperial. While French secondary and higher schooling was clearly pivotal to advancing into the upper echelon of

¹³² Deslandes, 45-47.

¹³³ Deslandes, 38. Cf. David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2001), 122; Porter, 60-3; Morris (1968), 220.

the Chamber of Deputies and the Services, the education one received overwhelmingly involved classical and humanistic studies, culminating in the Faculty of Law. While certain technical posts elevated the importance of a degree from one of the *grandes écoles*, most posts that touched upon the Empire could be achieved with a *licence* alone. Setting aside the prevalence of a degree in law, the core requirements for positions of authority in France involved, at a minimum, a general education. One's *licence* or *diplôme* was meant to be fungible – a badge that separated the initiate into the élite from the masses. In this way, the structure of French education during the late 19th and early 20th centuries interacted with the dominant social preference for the Faculty of Law to sustain a system of élite training that was neither explicitly nor implicitly linked to the Empire, outside of a few very specific contexts.

The nature of colonial administration evolved in such a way that the structure of French education described above likewise shaped the governing élite in this branch of the services. The shift to civilian administrators made secondary and higher education immediately relevant, though not always applicable. As observed, patronage lingered and afforded an opportunity for those lacking in the basic degree requirements (i.e. the *baccalauréat*) to enter the services at the lower levels. Meanwhile, the upper levels were manned by individuals whose qualifications mirrored those of the other branches of the Services as well as the Chamber of Deputies. It is not until the creation of the École Coloniale that education achieved a direct functional role, though the program of studies implemented in the early years of the school was barely different than that of the University. In fact, the preference for legal studies compelled many students to enroll in the Faculty of Law, further blurring the lines of distinction between the two institutions. In the early years of the 20th century, curricular changes did make one's training at the École Coloniale more

specific to the Empire, and it is at this point that French education assumes a clear functional role, though arguably at a remote outpost of the governing élite. The École Coloniale simply did not field enough administrators prior to the First World War to make it a significant force in the management of the Empire.

It is important to stress that French education did play a significant part in training the governing élite; however, this alone does not qualify education's role as imperial. Granted, it is possible for a general education to cultivate an imperial identity along functional lines *if* this general education is nested within a broader social context that recognizes an explicit association between education and the Empire. In other words, the functional role of a general education must be socially constructed. In practice, this does appear to be the case in France even as most of the people involved in administering the Empire shared a certain educational background. For the French, the Empire appears to have been a subordinate if not irrelevant factor in choosing one's educational path. One pursued a degree not to rule the Empire, *per se*, but rather, simply, to rule.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ASSESSING ENGLISH AND FRENCH EDUCATION AND PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

I. ENGLISH AND FRENCH EDUCATION: FASHIONING IMPERIALIST IDENTITIES?

I began this project with the aim of providing a replicable framework connecting education to identity that would, in turn, address questions over the causal significance of education to phenomena of interest to students of International Relations, and to the constructivist approach in particular. Previous work tended to avoid specifying how education actually works, making it difficult to deploy education to explain outcomes across instances where it appears to be in play. The mechanistic approach advanced here addresses these shortcomings while contributing to a broader debate within the constructivist paradigm about the internal processes that construct identities.

The mechanism works through two processes. The cognitive process shapes how we think about ourselves, individually and collectively; how we view the world and our place within it; how we understand cause and effect, true and false, right and wrong. The functional process involves assigning roles in society, the polity and the economy. This is achieved through training specific to certain tasks, but it can also reflect socially constructed associations between roles and schooling even if one's education is general. Each process occurs within a broader educational structure that defines the limits of one's exposure to cognitive and functional influences.

As this study progressed, we sharpened our focus on imperialistic identities in order to reveal how a mechanistic approach is not simply descriptive; it can be employed to

explain outcomes as well as variation between outcomes. This was achieved by tracing the cognitive and functional processes. First, we explored how education transmitted inter-subjective understandings of the respective empires and their importance to English and French schoolchildren. Second, we uncovered whether education made possible certain roles within the British and French Empires – namely, governance and administration.

Considering the novelty of mechanistic approach to education and identity construction, the case studies of English and French education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries proved to be quite useful. For one, contemporary policymakers and scholars in each country valued education for its capacity to shape identities, and their efforts to employ education for such a purpose aligned with the abstract mechanism, which meant that the cognitive and functional processes were observable. Two, England and France shared certain characteristics – Great Powers in relative decline, democratic, waning aristocracy/waxing middle class – that otherwise constitute behavioral logics common to International Relations. Three, the inputs (e.g. ideas, images, functions) and outputs (imperial identities) varied. As will be discussed below, this helps to refine our understanding how the mechanism works, including how it interacts with other factors that may complement or inhibit identity construction.

Nurseries of the British Empire

In the late 1860s and early 1870s, the imperial question in Britain centered on the benefits of the dissolution of the Empire – a ‘Little England’. The ‘Dismemberment Craze’, as it were, criticized the ‘excessiveness’ and ‘offense’ of British administration of the colonies. William Gladstone, Earl Granville and the Liberals latched onto the theme that

dissolving the empire was not only cost-effective but morally correct. Opponents, in turn, attacked the Liberal position as effectively cutting off one's nose to spite one's face. Certainly there was room to improve the administration of the Empire, but abandoning it would run against British interests. They agreed that the Empire was in danger; the solution, however, lay in consolidation rather than reduction or expansion.¹ During his premiership, Gladstone would not actually make progress on the dismemberment agenda. Events on the continent and the periphery would make dissolution politically impossible due to their strategic and economic implications. Upon his defeat in 1874, the scene was set for a more aggressive policy, and Benjamin Disraeli seized upon the opportunity. Meanwhile, colonial conflicts accelerated and were increasingly visible to the public at large. The Ashanti War (1874), the Kaffir War (1877), the 2nd and 3rd Afghan Wars (1878-9), the Zulu War (1879) and the First Boer War (1881) drew attention to the periphery of the empire and helped justify policies that aimed at expansion and consolidation. Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that Gladstone, having regained the premiership in 1880, would oversee the British occupation of Egypt in 1882.

Within twenty years, the Second Boer War (1899-1902) would shake Britain's confidence, and imperial policy subsequently reoriented away from expansionism. 'New Imperialism' was repudiated, and official policy became increasingly guarded and pragmatic. Much like the atmosphere of the 1870s, only a small minority favored outright dissolution. Majority opinion instead coalesced around strengthening ties with the existing colonies and correcting for flaws in the governance of the Empire. The Boer War experience also fostered rather vocal nationalist and, in some cases, militaristic wings whose chief, self-appointed task

¹ C.C. Eldridge, *England's Mission: The Imperial Idea in the Age of Gladstone and Disraeli, 1868-1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1973), 236.

was to ensure the vitality of the Empire in the hearts and minds of the British people and her imperial subjects.

While the course of imperial policy shifted about the spectrum from consolidation to expansion, there existed a certain cognizance of the need to cultivate an imperial culture at home. In some instances, this was justified by the demand for administrators and governors. In others, it reflected a greater sense of urgency – a fear that the Empire might go the way of Rome, disintegrating due to internal decay. Though the severity of these dual crises – of manpower and of faith – is a matter of some dispute, mere perception helped draw attention to England's schools as mechanisms for the cultivation of a popular imperial culture and administrative elite.

It seems right to end our study with 1914, the apogee, after a long crescendo, of imperialistic fervor among England's schools. The sounding of the 'guns of August' offered a true test of the patriotic influence of English education. The defense of Belgian neutrality provided an opportunity to confront Britain's chief competitors and, by extension, defend the realm and the Empire. And even as the War reached a point that wiped away the erroneous expectations of a quick, painless victory, the total war that followed challenged the base of popular support and, thereby, the durability of the imperialist ethos to a far greater extent than anything since the American War for Independence and, to a lesser extent, the Boer War, neither of which could ever really compare in terms of material devastation and moral repudiation. Hindsight would appear to beg the question of blame – do we criticize England's schools for their part in the march to war for God, king, country and Empire? According to one observer, "During the First World War, the public school characteristic of instinctive loyalty and unquestioning obedience found its counterpart in similar attitudes that

the military profession tends to instill.”² And another, “To a nation requiring the willing self-sacrifice of tens of thousands of its sons in a possibly senseless war, the ability to call on such reserves of unquestioning loyalty has obvious value. Old-boy loyalty is one factor which helps to explain the immolation of enormous members of British officers – largely recruited from public schools in WWI.”³ Certainly, on the eve of war, popular enthusiasm ran high. When Lord Kitchener called for 200,000 men in the first month of the war, 300,000 enlisted.⁴ In total, 2.5 million men would volunteer, 25% of those eligible; and it is fair to assume that the imperial ethos cultivated through English education helped spur the rush to enlist. “Eton, Winchester, Harrow, Shrewsbury,” Niall Ferguson explains, “were the gateways to the trenches in 1914-15.”⁵ From this perspective, the mobilization for the front was also a mobilization of the schools and the Victorian imperial culture with which they were infused.

After the war, some found fault with England’s schools. The reification of civilization in the classical curriculum – a plank of Victorian imperial culture and a source of legitimacy and pride for the Empire – was a cause for concern considering the war’s (perceived) repudiation of moral and material progress.⁶ Yet as late as 1944, the question before the Flemming Committee, which was created to review the state of play between independent and direct grant schools, involved the role of public schools in the promulgation of social hierarchy rather than imperialism, *per se*.⁷ Perhaps this was merely a

² Wilkinson, 87-8.

³ Honey, 158-9.

⁴ Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 198.

⁵ Ferguson, 201.

⁶ Richard Overly, *The Twilight Years: the Paradox of Britain Between the Wars* (New York: Viking, 2009), 24-49.

⁷ A.N. Wilson, *After the Victorians: the Decline of Britain in the World* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 504-5.

reflection of an awareness that the halcyon days of Empire were past, though it is more likely evidence of a shift in social values made possible, at least in part, by Britain's relative decline.

Our task, however, did not involve testing the specific efficacy of education as a mechanism of identity construction. It would be impossible to confidently establish the precise causal weight of education relative to an outcome like the First World War. Explains J.S. Bratton,

The limitations of teaching as indoctrination, even in the ideal circumstances of the Victorian public school, where influence extended beyond the classroom to the playing-field, the dormitory, and the whole ethos self-consciously created around the *alma mater*, are considerable...The ex-schoolboy needed to have become self-motivating, to have internalized the appropriate values to the point where the support of the school community was not only unnecessary, but was actually superseded by a more profoundly personal and conscious commitment to the ideology.⁸

The question of timing is also problematic. As Robert Roberts observes, "Even with rapidly increasing literacy during the second half of the nineteenth century, years were needed, sometimes decades, before certain ideas common to the educated filtered through to the very poor."⁹ Education cannot be conceived of as a switch that, when flipped, effects change as if turning on a light. Existing social structures beyond the control of the school, namely the family, can slow or obstruct the transmission and internalization of ideas.

In fact, it would be unwise to claim too much for education as a mechanism shaping popular culture leading up to the First World War. By the end of the 19th century, there were a variety of alternative mechanisms in play, from theater to sermons and tracts; from panoramas, exhibitions, museums, and music halls to local societies and youth organizations

⁸ Bratton, 74.

⁹ Roberts, 15-6.

– even advertising and film.¹⁰ And these alternative mechanisms permeated the British class structure to varying degrees. For example, the music halls were popular among the working classes, and patriotic songs became commonplace in the 1870s.¹¹ In fact, we derive the term ‘jingoism’ from an extremely popular music hall song, Macdermott’s “By Jingo”, written during a war scare involving Russia in 1877-78.

Nevertheless, English education possessed certain attributes which made it a potentially potent constitutive mechanism – attributes which these alternatives lacked either in part or in their entirety. Foremost among them is its scope. The gradual implementation and expansion of compulsory attendance ensured that England’s youth were in schools and thereby introduced to a curriculum which became increasingly infused with imperial themes and images. The elite schools also exuded a sort of magnetic quality, by virtue of their prestige-value, which overwhelmingly drew the upper middle class and aristocracy into their corridors. This served to concentrate future administrators and policy-makers within, generally, a select few schools. None of the other alternative mechanisms could claim to reach into as many homes for such a prolonged period of time with such a sustained exposure.

Second, imperial themes – e.g. “patriotism, excitements in adventure and colonial warfare, reverence for the monarchy, a self-referencing approach to other peoples, admiration for military virtues...and a quasi-religious approach to the obligations of world-wide power”¹² – were increasingly present in the curriculum, particularly through history and geography textbooks, while extracurricular activities – e.g. chapel sermons, athletics, drill –

¹⁰ Mackenzie (1999), 292.

¹¹ Penny Summerfield, “Patriotism and Empire: Music-Hall Entertainment,” in *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, John M. MacKenzie, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University, 1986), 25. Cf. Mackenzie (1984), 40; Porter, 177.

¹² Mackenzie (1999), 291.

provided additional reinforcement. Even when the curriculum was not overtly imperialistic, there were implicit linkages forged through supplemental themes like duty and gentlemanliness which, if placed within the broader social context, represented imperial culture to a greater extent than they might otherwise seem.¹³ The classical curriculum is the case in point. Yet, even the generalist, classical curriculum was often supported by the same extracurricular activities listed above, such that explicit and implicit influences converged. Young Winston Churchill may have written forlornly about studying the classics at Harrow, but he did join the Harrow Rifle Corps.

Third, the fashioning of policymakers and administrators for the Empire was a role which the elite public schools and universities embraced and performed well. In this sense, the effectiveness of the functional pathway moves beyond potential to actual. The elite schools were reservoirs for the governing class and military officers even as the social composition of the schools changed. The public schools supported the Empire by fostering qualities and characteristics deemed to be important to its administration: self-reliance, cooperation, hard work, and gentlemanliness. While the training the schools imparted was general, the dominant social perception held that it was essential to successfully performing one's role. This made a certain type of education, typically at a select few schools, virtually essential to one's role in the governance and administration of the Empire.

Certain limitations to the mechanism are evident. On the one hand, as we have already noted, education was but one mode of conveyance for imperial culture. Alternative mechanisms, like penny rags and adventure novels, could achieve similar results in terms of shaping the minds of England's children. Education also competed with the home; and

¹³ Cf. Porter, 48; 55.

among poor and working class families, the home was potentially obstructive if not outright hostile to imperial culture.¹⁴ On the other, the English education system was not of one mind and body. A blend of private and public structures comprised English education, and even where the state was involved, its influence was limited. This opened the system up to a number of influences while also ensuring that the bedrock of English education – the public schools – remained largely beyond the influence of either the Education Department or the Board of Education. While certain institutions – namely, the ancient universities and the system of competitive examinations – served to harmonize schooling somewhat, the English education system was guided by no single, overarching will. This made the role of education in imparting an imperial identity heavily reliant upon the broader social context. The significance of the generalist curriculum to the Empire, for example, reflected Victorian culture; it was not something that could stand alone and convey the same meaning.

For that matter, one would not be able to sustain the claim that imperial interests alone drove education in England. Throughout much of the 19th century, according to Bernard Porter, the Empire was not a salient issue to many of the British people.¹⁵ Reforms of England's schools sprung from larger concerns reflecting contemporary problems as well as priorities rooted in England's social history. The rise of the middle class, the changing incentives of a modernizing economy, and concerns for the moral welfare of the poor and working class are some of the factors that prompted movement in the English education system. Furthermore, aspects of the system forged prior to the machinations of Gladstone and Disraeli would remain relatively unchanged, such as the prominence and prestige of the public schools and the classical curriculum. Political and strategic concerns may have added

¹⁴ Porter, 216-9.

¹⁵ Porter, 3.

to a sense of urgency, but they did not originate the Victorian value system that made the public schools and the classics so important. The ebbs and flows of Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in other words, may have added to the use-value of education, but they did not create the structure.

The final limitation of English education as a mechanism involves the social stratification evident in her schools throughout the timeframe in question. This led to some differentiation in the nature and content of instruction. As such, the functioning of education as a mechanism varied. This would appear to imply that one would have to attribute any evidence of a shared culture among the classes to, at best, a mix of constitutive influences or, at worst, another mechanism altogether. It is unlikely that the latter is the case for reasons I have already discussed above. The former is much more probable.

Without question, the potential influence of education in England increased from 1870 until 1914. The focus on imperial themes progressively sharpened. The social context continued to place value in schooling, incentivizing education particularly for the upper middle class and aristocracy. Meanwhile, the poor and working class benefited from the coincidence between the introduction of compulsory education “with the overt propagation of the imperialistic idea.”¹⁶ “Schools,” Robert Roberts recalls, “set out with vigour to instill in their charges a stronger sense of national identity and a deeper price in expanding empire.” These sentiments did not differ greatly from those that led a generation of England’s youth to their Final Call on the fields of Passchendaele.

¹⁶ Roberts, 113.

In Defense of French Education

During the 19th century, the French Empire expanded sporadically. “If registered along a graph, it would show slight movement during the century’s first seven decades, a dramatic rise in conquered territories toward the century’s end, and then a drop to virtual inactivity.”¹⁷ After the defeat of Napoleon, the Empire would largely remain dormant until the 1850s when his nephew, Napoleon III, extended French influence into Morocco, coastal regions in Central and Southern Africa, as well as Southeast Asia. Territorial acquisition was nominal, however, as colonial expansion at the time was primarily guided by economic considerations. The driving aim was not to flood the colonies with French settlers; instead, the formula was rather simple: conquer, pacify and administer for the sake of resources and markets.¹⁸

With the advent of the Third Republic, renewed interest – largely concentrated in the minds of a small cadre of republicans led by Jules Ferry – ignited a phase of rapid expansion. From 1880 until 1895, the French Empire swelled from one million to 9.5 million square kilometers, encompassing more than 50 million inhabitants.¹⁹ While this partly entailed enlarging French influence in Morocco, Tunisia and Indochina, much of the growth occurred in Africa, where France ultimately assumed control over more than one-third of the continent.²⁰ Once again, a chief concern was economic: Ferry believed the European markets were oversaturated. The best option for the French economy was to pursue markets abroad.²¹ Yet Ferry also justified his imperial policy on strategic and moral grounds. On the one hand, the Empire enhanced French competitiveness relative to her European rivals,

¹⁷ Frederick Quinn, *The French Overseas Empire* (Westport: Praeger, 2000), 107.

¹⁸ Robert Aldrich, *Greater France: a History of French Overseas Expansion* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1996), 110-1.

¹⁹ Mort Rosenblum, *Mission to Civilize: The French Way* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), 170.

²⁰ Quinn, 108.

²¹ D.L.L. Parry & Pierre Girard, *France since 1800* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002), 87.

whose efforts to secure new colonial possessions were also on the rise.²² On the other hand, the Empire was a natural expression of France's *mission civilisatrice* – her obligation, by virtue of her superior culture, political institutions and economy, to bring light to those who would otherwise remain mired in darkness, incapable of self-rule and unable to prosper.²³ As Albert Sarraut would later convey to the Government Council at Hanoi in 1912: “The work accomplished is really grand, useful, fecund, and it deeply honors the nation that has conceived it. We came here charged with a high mission to civilize...Look at all this and ask yourself if French protection is an empty phrase, if any other nation of the world could have given you more, and if you, if left on your own, could have achieved this ensemble of progress and benefit.”²⁴

The *mission civilisatrice* proved to be the dominant rationale behind the French Empire in the latter third of the 19th century, cutting across the rather fractious divide between conservatives and republicans. Despite this common ground, the Empire struggled to engage the popular imagination. Among the French people, there was a blend of disinterest, ignorance and persistent doubt regarding the Empire.²⁵ Meanwhile, many in the Chamber still criticized Ferry's expansionist policies as wasteful and a distraction from the ambition to reclaim Alsace-Lorraine (*la revanche*).²⁶ Yet, the anti-colonialists proved unable to fully align public opinion against expansionism, and by the turn of the century, popular sentiment embraced the superiority of French civilization even if doubts remained over the efficacy or

²² Aldrich, 97-99.

²³ Alice Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: the Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1997), 1-2. Cf. E. Malcolm Carroll, *French Public Opinion and Foreign Affairs, 1870-1914* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1964), 17.

²⁴ Quoted by Rosenblum, 170-1.

²⁵ Raoul Girardet, *L'idée colonial en France de 1871 à 1962* (Paris: Hachette, 1972), 23. Cf. Eugen Weber, *The Nationalist Revival in France, 1905-1914* (Berkeley: University of California, 1968), 19; Sowerwine, 39; Parry & Girard, 86; Carroll, 84-5.

²⁶ Aldrich, 100.

necessity of the colonies.²⁷ The Empire even became a source of national pride – a means for France to arrest her decline relative to Germany and Great Britain.²⁸

The period of rapid colonial expansion coincided with efforts to reform the French education system and reshape the French popular identity, though admittedly in a broader sense. France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870) was overwhelmingly attributed to deficiencies in French education. In the words of Ernest Renan, a noted intellectual of the day and author of the influential *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* (1882), "In the conflict which has just ended, the inferiority of France was mainly intellectual; what we lacked was not heart, but head. Public education is of paramount importance; French intelligence is enfeebled and must be fortified."²⁹ Subsequent initiatives, the most significant of which were also spearheaded by Jules Ferry, strove to improve the quality of French schooling at all levels while likewise cultivating social harmony, civic responsibility and patriotic fervor.

We cannot assume, however, that one begat the other; and, unlike the previous case involving English education, where even informal structures spread an ethic of empire, an air of uncertainty hangs about French education. The timing of colonial expansion and education reform certainly raises the possibility that French education also functioned as a mechanism for the construction of an imperial identity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The movement of French popular opinion from ambivalence to, albeit, muted enthusiasm for the Empire indicates that something was working on the popular mind. However, we should not presume that education played a part in creating an imperial identity simply because the agenda was patriotic. One does not necessarily entail the other. We must instead differentiate between components that are strictly nationalistic and those

²⁷ Conklin, 2.

²⁸ Parry & Girard, 86.

²⁹ Quoted by David Thomson, *Democracy in France Since 1870* (London: Cassell, 1989), 229.

which might be considered imperialistic in order to uncover not only how education functioned in France, but whether the cognitive and functional identities made possible by French education were relevant to the Empire.

The French education system carried a heavy burden in the nineteenth century. While regimes came and went, education remained a constant force employed by the state to make and remake the people, inculcate loyalty, fashion the governing élite, bestow civilization upon the poor and peasantry, and, eventually, shore up the national resolve with patriotic spirit.³⁰ The teacher became a soldier of the enlightenment and the Revolution, “both a militant and a man of peace,” explained Ferdinand Buisson on the eve of the First World War. “At heart he is in sympathy with the people, yet he must not teach class hatred. He is the servant of the nation, and at the same time he is conscious of an international duty. He says openly, ‘Have a horror of war!’ But he prepares his pupils to be good soldiers, capable some day of being heroes.”³¹ As coincidence would have it, our period of study begins and ends with war, and it would seem, in light of Buisson’s words, to amount to the perfection of the system. In the wake of the shame of Sudan, French authorities under the Third Republic sought to impart the moral and civic virtues the absence of which, they believed, contributed to France’s humiliation. They also sought to unify French society in the face of stark ideological divisions percolating after the Commune.³² The fundamental task given to education thus involved constructing an identity – an identity that would serve many purposes all for the sake of France.

³⁰ Gildea (1983), 4.

³¹ Ferdinand Buisson, “The Schoolmaster as a Pioneer of Democracy – Dangers of his Mission,” in *French Educational Ideals of Today: an Anthology of the Molders of French Educational Thought of the Present*. Ferdinand Buisson & Frederic Ernest Farrington, eds. (New York: World Book Company, 1919), 136.

³² Prost (1968), 335.

This would appear seem to reinforce the approach taken in this study. The expressed intent to deploy education for the purposes of identity construction inspired a number of reforms that aligned with the model set out in the second chapter. The French government not only centralized education to the extent that the state was essentially the sole authority, but it reinforced the hierarchical structure responsible for training the *élite* while reconstituting the curriculum to convey particular ideas and images. In each respect, the French education system was primed to function as a potent mechanism for identity construction along both the cognitive and functional pathways.

The structure of French education was perhaps its greatest asset, particularly at the turn of the century. In the early days of the Third Republic, the government was content to allow the Church to play a role due to its historical pedigree and the emphasis on moral virtues, even if derived from God instead of reason. The market for education in France, however, was not terribly diverse, which ensured that the state was still the dominant force. Further, at the time, the drive to universalize education garnered more support in the Chamber than republican anti-clericalism; so while the Church remained a viable center of gravity, the broader aim of spreading education to all French children for a reasonable duration, especially in the remote provinces, was secured. With the passage of legislation that set in motion the complete secularization of French education, the state was able to fully promote its program.

The hierarchy of French education was also beneficial to imparting, at times, specific functional roles. And even where education was largely general, the structure created a barrier to entry which only the *élite*, by merit, could penetrate. Primary education addressed the concerns of the lower classes by providing basic education and skills alongside patriotic

messages. Secondary education prepared French adolescents for higher education or, at a minimum, professional careers. Meanwhile, higher education opened up opportunities for the study of technical – though not necessarily scientific – subjects at one of the *grandes écoles*, or liberal subjects at the University. Both served to direct students to fields deemed to be important to French interests, though the former, reflecting the ambitions of Napoleon, were more specific in their orientation.

Granted, French education was open to alternative influences. We have read about the obstacles created by regional differences along economic and religious lines, to say nothing about the challenge of penetrating local cultures, which proved to be quite resilient. There were also alternative mechanisms outside the school that impacted identity, including the arts, intellectual societies, literature travel, and, of course, the family.³³ Yet, the hierarchical and centralized structure of French education was particularly beneficial to the governing élite because it promised to shape the identity of French youth according to the interests of the state, a service which these other mechanisms could not provide for the same amount of time, or without creating degrees of separation from the official agenda.

It is important to recognize and acknowledge that French education sought to cultivate a distinctive French identity without overtly emphasizing the Empire. In certain respects, this is an anomaly. Some of the more progressive education reforms under the Third Republic were implemented concomitantly with a rapid phase of colonial expansion, yet the trajectory of French identity construction remained predominately nationalistic. Of

³³ Heywood (2007) notes that the family was a particularly powerful mechanism for the inculcation of social attitudes and political beliefs in France, particularly among the upper and upper middle classes, through a *bain culturel* ('cultural bath'). "Parents considered it a duty to pass on their values to their offspring, and the very young were hardly in a position to resist...The social élite of aristocrats and upper bourgeoisie was remarkably effective in immersing its young in a hermetically sealed world of family and friends. By this means it imposed a particular view of the world, barely contaminated by outside influences" (259). However, Christophe Charle (1987) asserts that the family worked in tandem with education as a mechanism for cultural transmission (73).

course, nationalism and imperialism often go together, yet nationalism *per se* need not involve imperialistic ideas and images. For example, among the various stories of her youth retold by Julian Green, the colonies are nowhere to be found. The Franco-Prussian War, however, left an impression that lingered many years after her days as a schoolgirl in Paris. She writes, “Today, it strikes me as an astounding absurdity that a child of eight or ten should be made miserable by the thought of military defeats which occurred forty years before he was born, but I suppose that this is part of what we are pleased to call education. Eighteen seventy was referred to as *l’Année terrible* and seldom mentioned without moans and sighs. Our professors, some of whom were old enough to have fought against the Germans, instilled in us the proper feeling of resentment and the hope that some day Alsace-Lorraine would return to France.”³⁴ And while others would recount images of France as ‘the foremost country in the world’, the pride of place given to France reflected civilization, inventiveness and even military prowess, but not explicitly the Empire.³⁵ Reflecting upon her teaching experiences prior to the First World War, one instructor explained how notions of historical progress were derived from the state and its governing regime rather than her imperial possessions. “*Le conformisme tranquille dans lequel nous vivons, mes parents et moi, jusqu’en 1918, je crois qu’il était en grande partie l’oeuvre de l’École primaire sous la III^e République. Nos manuels d’histoire nous avaient inculqué l’idée qu’après le mauvais gouvernement des rois, la Révolution de 1789, les erreurs du premier Empire, de la Restauration et du second Empire, la III^e République nous avait enfin apporté le gouvernement idéal avec lequel nous marchons de progrès en progrès.*”³⁶

The legacy of the Franco-Prussian War introduces a particularly problematic wrinkle.

Though the War inspired reform of the French education system, it also provoked concerns

³⁴ Julian Green, *Memories of Happy Days* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1942), 40.

³⁵ Cf. Heywood (2007), 254-5.

³⁶ Quoted in Ozouf & Ozouf, 152.

over moral degradation and French decline relative to Germany and the other Great Powers.³⁷ As Paul Leroy-Beaulieu cautioned, “We must tell our country the truth, we must dispel the illusions which would lead us into a new catastrophe. In the presence of a Germany of 45 millions, which will have 60 in twenty years, and 80 in fifty years, the hope of revenge is chimerical.”³⁸ These anxieties would linger until the First World War, permeating art, literature as well as scholarship and political discourse.³⁹ *L’Année terrible* also inspired a sort of ‘ideology of revenge’ that co-opted themes of moral and material decline – an ideology that shaped the outlook and teaching priorities of generations of French schoolteachers. According to Jaques and Mona Ozouf, “*Les vieux instituteurs, nous confient-ils, étaient des revanchards exaltés, inculquant à leurs élèves la haine de l’ennemi. D’autres, plus sobres et d’autant plus éloquent, dissent simplement, ‘Ils enseignaient encore la revanche’*.”⁴⁰ This is significant because revanchists and imperialists were not always comfortable bedfellows. During the height of Ferry’s expansionist policies, imperialism and *revanche* began to appear contradictory; the tension between the two only became worse during the 1890s as the Republican government was plagued by scandal and criticized for limited social reforms.⁴¹ While the latter did not necessarily touch upon either the Empire or the War, they did heighten sensitivity to the mismanagement of resources, and the Empire only served to further tap into the (perceived) scarce supply. As *revanche* remained a priority, the Empire could be labeled as an unnecessary burden, which partly explains why French colonialism continued to be contested up to the First World War despite attempts to impart ideas and images about the Empire with other

³⁷ Karine Varley, *Under the Shadow of Defeat: the War of 1870-71 in French Memory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 12.

³⁸ Quoted in Carroll, 88.

³⁹ In addition to Varley (2008), see R. Thomson, *The Troubled Republic: Visual Culture and Social Debate in France, 1889-1900* (New Haven: Yale University, 2004).

⁴⁰ Ozouf & Ozouf, 172.

⁴¹ Varley (2008), 48.

intentions in mind. Yet, the challenge to constructing an imperial identity does not end here. As we have observed, the drive for revenge and the resolution of weaknesses that caused France's defeat could subsume imperialism, framing the Empire as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

Meanwhile, socialists and radicals turned economic and moral arguments on their head to reveal, in their view, the hypocrisy of French imperial ideology as inhumane, unnecessarily militaristic and driven by narrow material interests. Anatole France framed these objections as part of a wider conspiracy, declaring in 1904 that "a syndicate of financiers and industrialists has made an alliance with the generals' party to drag us into Morocco."⁴² Opponents also waged this battle in terms of principle as well as in reference to what was perceived to be the more pressing foreign policy objective: *revanche*. The pursuit of colonies was a distraction, while expending resources that could be otherwise used to reclaim Alsace-Lorraine.⁴³ In the Assembly, M. Jules Delafosse (1883) acerbically attacked Ferry's position by calling the colonies a "*véritable hallucination...un leurre...un rêve...les plus décevant et les plus périlleux des rêves*."⁴⁴ Similarly, Georges Clemenceau (1885), whose nationalist *bona fides* were without question, demonstrates how the memory of *l'Année terrible* could bolster anti-imperialist rhetoric:

Races supérieures! Races supérieures! C'est bientôt dit! Pour ma part, j'en rabats singulièrement depuis que j'ai vu des savants allemands démontrer scientifiquement que la France devait être vaincue dans la guerre franco-allemande parce que le Français est d'une race inférieure à l'Allemand.

⁴² Quoted in Jonathan Derrick, "The Dissenters: Anti-Colonialism in France, c. 1900-1940," in *Promoting the Colonial Idea: Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France*, Tony Chafer & Amanda Sackur, eds. (London: Palgrave, 2002), 54.

⁴³ Girardet, 94; 103; James R. Leaning, *To Be a Citizen: The Political Culture of the Early French Third Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2001), 138.

⁴⁴ *Annales de la Chambre des Députés, Vol. IX: Débats parlementaires, 3^{me} législature, session extraordinaire de 1883* (Paris: Imprimerie du Journal Officiel, 1884), 700.

*Depuis ce temps, je l'avoue, j'y regarde à deux fois avant de me retourner vers un homme et vers un civilisation et de prononcer: homme ou race inférieure.*⁴⁵

The failure at Tonkin, which led to Ferry's ouster, fueled opposition in the mid-1880s, while their rhetoric sowed the seeds of a vibrant socialist critique of colonial exploitation that would emerge toward the turn of the century.⁴⁶

Our treatment of general patterns in the content of French education and the paired survey of history texts reveals that nationalism and imperialism were not closely or consistently linked throughout much of the time period in question. Imperialism was often overshadowed by larger concerns relative to the identity under construction. Even at the turn of the century, when history texts afforded greater attention to colonial exploits, the space allotted pales in comparison with broader themes from French history, let alone the legacy of the Franco-Prussian War. Meanwhile, the authors of texts devoted to the colonies wrote as if on their back foot, constantly on the defense, which indicates that they were contributing to a (persistently) contested discourse. Yet if we locate history within the general curriculum at either primary or secondary levels, most students would only receive a small dose of ideas and images related to the Empire. Therefore, the cognitive pathway of French education should not be considered an effective mechanism for constructing a distinct imperial identity.

The functional pathway was more promising. The prevalence of law degrees among the governing élite indicates that the University's Faculty of Law was particularly influential for the training it provided; and, there were formal links between certain *grandes écoles* and the services also based upon the training one received. The dominant mode of imperial

⁴⁵ Quoted in Girardet, 92.

⁴⁶ Girardet, 158.

administration was also steeped in the French legal tradition. In certain instances, such as at the *École Coloniale*, one could receive instruction tailored specifically to imperial administration. The reformed curriculum offered language instruction and courses on the social and cultural history of the colonies, among general subjects common to French higher education. This innovation marks a rather significant change in the approach to colonial studies as it broke with the standard tradition of merely superimposing lessons learned from the close study of France. Though the *École Coloniale* appears to have been only nominally influential, in large part because of the limited number of graduates funneled into the services from the school, it nevertheless represents the strongest connection between the French Empire and education in a functional sense *despite* the dominance of law degrees among elected officials and upper level administrators.

The issue at hand involves the social preferences which invested meaning in the Faculty of Law. Legal backgrounds among the mandarinat had a long history in France, and the importance of legal studies to the élite reflected a traditional association between the knowledge of law and governance. The rigors of obtaining a law degree also served to restrict access to the most capable, and the course of study ensured exposure to the appropriate moral and civic virtues common among the élite. The value of the Faculty of Law was therefore defined in hierarchical and normative terms as much as by a particular set of skills. Clearly, a legal degree was an important part of élite identity in France for cognitive and functional reasons. This is not in dispute. However, the social context of late 19th century France did not appear to build a *necessary* association between the Faculty of Law and the Empire. Nationalistic undertones are evident in the reification of French law when applied to questions outside of France's borders. Yet, the contested nature of French

colonialism at the time tells us that studying law did not impart shared understandings of the Empire any more than it cultivated skills specifically for the sake of the Empire. Were it otherwise, then we would expect to see a greater imperial *esprit de corps* invested through the study of law, and a wider base of support for the Empire among those possessing a law degree.

In fact, there is evidence to support the claim that economic interests drove imperial sentiment more than education at both the popular and élite levels. Support for the Empire, for example, tended to concentrate in regions whose economies directly depended upon imperial trade, such as the great ports on the Mediterranean and Atlantic (e.g. Nantes, Bordeaux, Marseilles), or in centers of textile production (Lyon).⁴⁷ Otherwise, as Raoul Girardet observes, general interest in colonization was an élite phenomenon, nested in the minds (and pocketbooks) of the Parisian and provincial bourgeoisie, of intellectuals, businessmen and policymakers.⁴⁸ Public opinion does not appear to have been a driving force behind French colonial expansion in the late 19th century.⁴⁹ Even then, Girardet prompts us to question the depth of élite sentiment in light of larger concerns over moral and economic decay that existed during periods of increased support for expansionism, particularly during the 1870s when writers like Gaffarel and Leroy-Beaulieu began to frame the Empire as France's lifeblood. By this logic, colonization appears to be less a matter of principle than a rather simple search for markets in order to contend with recessionary pressures.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Girardet, 31; Laffey, 169; Goerg, 82.

⁴⁸ Girardet, 71.

⁴⁹ Cf. Carroll, 88.

⁵⁰ Cf. Girardet, 72-5.

This leads us to a general concern about impact of education upon French identity in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Even as the potential of education to impart identity would appear to be high, the ‘stalemate society’ that prevailed during the Third Republic makes one wonder whether the results of French education could be translated across a salient, cross-cutting identity.⁵¹ Among the élite, vast disagreement remained about the nature of France’s dominant social structure and whether merit should triumph over social and economic networks.⁵² Meanwhile, throughout the period, a virulent strain of anti-Republicanism, trumpeted by the likes of Henri Vaugeois, cofounder of *Action française*, portrayed republicanism as a ‘disease’ attacking France’s national spirit and strength of moral character.⁵³ Elements of the conservative right – comprised of Monarchists and Bonapartists – sought to bring an end to the Republic, and coups were not beyond the pale as late as 1899, evidenced by Déroulède’s failed attempt. Furthermore, there were regional fissures with which to contend, as southern provinces assumed a much more radical character politically, hosting more in the way of radicals, socialists and communists, while also sustaining the view that it was underprivileged despite paying less in the way of taxes and holding more seats in the Chamber.⁵⁴ These regional variations alone lead Theodore Zeldin to conclude that there was no universal French culture during the 19th century, a claim

⁵¹ Stanley Hoffmann coined the phrase ‘stalemate society’ to convey the fragility of the social consensus behind the predominance of the bourgeoisie which, in turn, robbed France of a political consensus. “The complex hierarchical character of French society,” Hoffmann explains, “kept groups at every level looking above for authority, and suspicious of the authority that came from above” (10). As a result, “there was no agreement...on the objectives for which political power was to be used, or on the procedures through which disputes over such objectives can be resolved” (13). Stanley Hoffmann, *In Search of France* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1967).

⁵² Charle, 251.

⁵³ Brown, 260.

⁵⁴ Zeldin (1993), 44. Cf. Prost (1968), 105.

supported by Robert Gildea (1983), James Lehning (1995), Deborah Reed-Danahay (1996), and Stéphane Gerson (2002).⁵⁵

Determining the efficacy of French education as a mechanism for identity construction, in general, is beyond the scope of this study. We are, however, in a position to speculate and perhaps frame questions for future research. In light of the political and social fractures mentioned above, one could argue that education struggled to construct even a shared national identity, or that the resulting national identity was but a shell, incapable of overcoming preexisting stratifications. This would certainly make sense of the parliamentary instability for which the Third Republic was (and is) vilified. It also helps explain how, even on the eve of the First World War, there was no singular conception of ‘nationalism’ and ‘patriotism’ in the popular and political discourse.⁵⁶ Yet, either conclusion assumes linear causality with education as the precipitating causal factor. This overlooks the possibility that the contested cultural milieu described above – a constant during the period under consideration – was a limiting condition in that students, upon leaving the rather sheltered, stable environment of the school, found themselves possessing an idea of France seemingly without purchase amidst “one of the most confusing and paradoxical of political regimes.”⁵⁷ In this atmosphere it would be extremely difficult to perfect identities crafted in the schools. The attempt to achieve uniformity through education, even among the élite, would dash apart against a divisive political and social culture. This presumes, of course, that French

⁵⁵ Zeldin (1993), 67.

⁵⁶ Jean-Jacques Becker explains that, though French nationalist rhetoric varied prior to WWI (21-52), and that it was certainly not uniformly bellicose (27). This is no more clearly demonstrated than by the discourse surrounding Alsace-Lorraine, which did not necessarily endorse war even as tensions between France and Germany were on the rise (53-62). Jean Jacques-Becker, *1914: Comment les Français sont entrés dans la guerre* (Paris: Press de la foundation nationale des sciences politiques, 1977). Cf. Ozouf & Ozouf, 177.

⁵⁷ Zeldin (2003), 570. Cf. Stanley Hoffmann, *Decline or Renewal? France since the 1930s* (New York: Viking, 1974), 404-412. The nationalism that Hoffmann describes is thin and contradictory, unable to yield a consensus regarding domestic or foreign policy priorities.

schools were able to fashion coherent identities, which does not appear to have been the case in the imperialist vein.

* * *

It is somewhat ironic that the education in France, when compared to her English counterpart, struggled to cultivate a coherent imperial identity considering the highly centralized nature of the system. One would believe, as I did before beginning this study, that French authorities would have exploited their advantage to promote an agenda that favored French colonial expansion particularly at its ebb during the late 19th century. Ferry was as instrumental in shaping French education under the Third Republic as he was in accelerating French imperialism. Yet a bridge between the two never fully formed. Meanwhile, in England, the Empire was, especially after the turn of the century, a prominent fixture in the classroom and on the pitch. The system, which for much of this period operated outside the direct reach of the state, coalesced around an idea of being English which entailed a clear sense of Empire, and this idea cut across class divisions. This is not to say that French education was completely vacant of ideas, images and functional roles linked to the Empire, but the attention given to matters imperial was biased against a notion of being French that was derived from a seemingly contradictory interplay between the *pays* and the *patrie*. While the dominant idea of being English was, at the time, necessarily imperial, French youth were not shepherded to the same conclusion through their schooling.

This leads us to question why this is the case – what is the source of this variation in imperial identities in France and England? If the mechanism is the cause, then we should

expect to note important differences in the cognitive and functional processes. In England, the cognitive process rested upon ideas and images that consistently evoked a spiritual and essentialist connection to the Empire. It was portrayed as the primary indicator of English cultural superiority; it validated the march of English civilization; it represented the perfection of her social and political institutions. Schoolchildren at all levels received instruction about duty to the Empire – a duty that transcended their class differences. And, in the wake of crisis, these ideas and images were reinforced vigorously by public and private authorities alike.

In France, the Empire struggled to eclipse the *patrie* as a focal point of the curriculum. Aside from texts devoted to the subject of French colonialism, imperial ideas and images were buried in expansive historical narratives squarely focused on France from the Alps to the Pyrenees. When the Empire was considered, the focus tended to involve its economic benefits coupled with a sense of French cultural superiority. In this latter respect, French and English education ran parallel; however, the tone differed in that French textbooks did not always convey a sense that the Empire was the essential validation of French civilization. At times the Empire was portrayed as a natural stage in French history, but this was not a consistent theme. More often than not, the Empire took on an instrumental value through arguments over the material and political benefits accrued by colonial expansion.

The functional processes associated with the education of the governing and administrative élite also differed between the two cases. Though both processes were quite effective in restricting access to the halls of power, English education once again did more to sustain an essential relationship between the governance and administration of the Empire

and her elite schools. Even when these institutions lacked specific programs designed to train administrators, the general education one received was still framed as providing necessary skills without which one could not hope to assume a role in the upper echelons of the Empire. Despite the fact that French elite education was more rigidly differentiated by function than in England, there was not the same overwhelming association between certain schools and imperial governance and administration. Degrees in law were prominent, but this was not unique to elite roles in the Empire. French authorities did create a school tasked with educating imperial administrators, something that England did not possess; but the school's footprint was rather small when compared to the overall pool with typically generalist degrees.

In light of these observations about the cognitive and functional processes, it is not surprising to find a consistently contested discourse involving the Empire in France. However, we must be careful to avoid overreaching. What, precisely, does education explain? One could argue that the absence of a compelling, coherent imperial identity in France is rooted in her education system, while the opposite would be true in England. Our trace of the cognitive and functional processes in each country certainly fosters expectations consistent with each claim, even if we must resist asserting that education is the sole cause due to the presence of alternative mechanisms outside of the orbit of French and English education (e.g. family, class). Our confidence in education as, in the words of John Stuart Mill, “a necessary part of the cause” behind popular and elite identification with empire increases because other potentially confounding factors share similar values across both cases – such as the relative decline of France and Britain in the late 19th century, or the shift

in each country's socio-economic center of gravity in favor of the middle class, or their (ostensibly) liberal-democratic institutions.⁵⁸

To sustain this confidence, we must confront the possibility that education was but a mirror reflecting prevailing social and political mood in each country. Subsequently, education could be set aside as epiphenomenal, neither a primary cause nor a necessary contributor to, for example, the dissonance evident in France regarding her Empire. It is more likely, however, that education served to reinforce (rather than recast) dominant social and political beliefs. This would be consistent with previous studies of education in France and England during this period.⁵⁹ In this way, education still plays a role in constructing identities even if it does not create them anew.

Assigning education a reinforcing and reproductive function makes sense in light of what we have already observed of the cognitive and functional processes at work in England and France. The contested status of the Empire in France is consistent with the diminished importance of the Empire as a subject within the official curricula and the nature of élite education that did not generally cultivate roles specific to the Empire. This also signals a lack of political will to invest French education with a stronger emphasis on the Empire over the time period in question. And, where the Empire penetrated the curriculum, it involved ideas, images and functions that reflected views and interests that did not cut across a wide segment of either the general population or the élite. In this way, French education helped to perpetuate the *status quo* because it did not enlarge the constituency that regarded the Empire

⁵⁸ J.S. Mill, *System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive; Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1858), 226. This reasoning draws upon Mill's Method of Difference, which holds that: "If an instance in which the phenomenon under investigation occurs, and an instance in which it does not occur, have every circumstance save one in common, that one occurring only in the former; the circumstance in which alone the two instances differ, is the effect, or cause, or a necessary part of the cause, of the phenomenon."

⁵⁹ Cf. Muller, Ringer & Simon (1989).

as integral to being French. In England, education aligned closely with dominant understandings of the Empire, even ebbing and flowing in intensity as social priorities shifted, notably after the Second Boer War. As explained above, the content of English education was infused with ideas about the Empire as essential to being English, and functional roles in the governing and administrative élite, made possible by education, gave pride of place to serving the Empire. In fact, the general nature of the English curriculum that constituted the cognitive and functional processes, at least at the secondary and higher levels, only appears relevant to the Empire when nested in the broader social context. The classics imparted a way of thinking and doing essential to the imperial élite because the dominant culture held it to be true. By contrast, the French education system drifted without a truly dominant culture to impart cohesive, shared understandings about her Empire to serve as compass points for the cognitive and functional processes. The failure of a widely-held imperial identity to emerge in France, even at the height of efforts to expand the Empire, is to be anticipated if education functioned as a mechanism.

Taken together, our two cases demonstrate the explanatory value of a mechanistic approach to education. While we should refrain from characterizing education as the sole cause, the identity outcomes we observe in France and England are consistent with expectations that reflect our trace of the cognitive and functional processes. Furthermore, in the specific context of these two cases, education appears to have reinforced dominant understandings of Empire in England while sustaining their diffusion in France.

Regarding this last point, I maintain that the mechanistic framework outlined in chapter 2 is still a valuable tool for dissecting how popular and élite identities are constructed. Even if we take a minimalist stance regarding the influence of education in our

case studies, in that its primary role was to reinforce prevailing cultures, this does not mean that education cannot *create* identities in different contexts. However, in light of the significance of the dominant social milieu to identity construction via education, we should keep in mind that education may face more in the way of obstacles in constructing identities in the absence of a dominant normative system. This is perhaps of greater concern to the practitioner, but there are theoretical ramifications bound up in the interplay between dominant social systems and education as a mechanism of identity construction worth additional scholarly consideration.

II. PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The research agenda for education as a mechanism for identity construction is not limited by the number of potential cases. In fact, German education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries would be a perfect complement to the current study. German authorities likewise used their schools to cultivate a shared identity through a curriculum laced with nationalist and patriotic themes during a period of colonial expansion. The schools – and the faculty of history, in particular, explained Kaiser Willhelm II, bore the responsibility “to bring up nationalistic young Germans.”⁶⁰ They were conceived of as instruments of the *Kulturstaat*, ‘[nurseries] of true higher cultivation, harmoniously uniting intelligence and morality, ideal striving and practical ability, scholarly aspiration and patriotic spirit’.⁶¹ The extent to which their task entailed imparting an imperialistic identity remains to be seen, but a belief in the centrality of education to Germanization appears to have been widely held

⁶⁰ Quoted in Gordon A. Craig, *Germany, 1866-1945* (New York: Oxford University, 1978), 189.

⁶¹ Quoted in Konrad H. Jarausch, *Students, Society, and Politics in Imperial Germany: The Rise of Academic Illiberalism* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1982), 161.

among the social, political and academic élite, especially toward the turn of the century.⁶² Clearly there is fertile ground for observing the mechanism in this case. Moreover, differences in Germany's prevailing political culture, governing regime, educational history and structure should add to what we already know about the functioning of the mechanism as well as how the interplay between dominant social structures and education impact identity construction.

It is also important to pursue opportunities beyond the context of this study in order to reinforce the explanatory value of the mechanistic approach to education and identity to the field of International Relations. The invitation to embellish constructivism by revealing internal processes of identity construction is not without limits; these processes must advance our understanding of international politics to be considered worthwhile. An obvious path to take involves isolating identities that inform behavior relevant to existing research agendas in IR. Employing a mechanistic approach to education and identity construction will contribute to a richer, more robust picture of the factors behind, for example, stasis and change, or war and peace. For the remainder of this section, I offer a few additional treatments to further illustrate the potential contribution of this framework, beginning with Japanese remilitarization in the early 1930s.

Education, the Cult of the Emperor, and the Remilitarization of Japan

Japan emerged from the First World War as a second-tier Great Power with interests in Asia cautiously acknowledged by the Peace. As the decade unfolded, however, Japanese ambition would mount as certain advisors close to Emperor Hirohito as well as the military

⁶² Cf. James C. Albisetti, *Secondary School Reform in Imperial Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1983), 140-168.

pressed for change, viewing the Versailles system as merely a cover for the status quo interests of the United States and Great Britain at the expense of Japanese claims in China and Southeast Asia. These sentiments conflicted with the official government position favoring compliance and participation in the Versailles system, including restrictions on the Japanese navy voluntarily entered into at the Washington Conference of 1922. By 1929, military officials and key members of the government found themselves increasingly at odds over the issue of remilitarization. Ongoing negotiations in London over a revision to the Washington Conference, in which Japan was participating, further heightened tensions over downsizing the navy. In April 1930, a new Japanese government led by Hamaguchi Yuko accepted the London Compromise Treaty. This went against advice from the naval chief of staff and the vice-chief of staff and Hamaguchi's Cabinet immediately came under attack in spite of the fact that a rejection of the London Treaty, which the general staff favored, stood to provoke an Anglo-American naval alliance against Japan. Japan's adherence to the treaty eased pressures from Washington and London, but at home the divide between the imperial cabinet and the military continued to grow. Hamaguchi's assassination in November, 1930, reflected the divisiveness of the issue, as well as the diminishing popular support for the constitutional government. Within three years events would overtake the constitutional government and it would be set aside in favor of the Emperor and the military with the willing if not zealous consent of the Japanese people.

Japan's actions after acceding to the London Treaty in 1930 represent a turning away from the institutions constituting the postwar order, including the League of Nations – of which Japan was a founding member – and the Kellogg-Briand Pact – of which Japan was a signatory. Within three years Japan would leave the League and effectively renounce the

Kellogg-Briand Pact following the expansion of military activities in Manchuria (ostensibly in the name of self-defense). Against this backdrop we must consider the change of the popular mood which paved the way for the revision of Japanese strategic policy (primarily involving remilitarization) and the advance toward war in the Pacific. Of note, following the assumption of the throne by Hirohito in 1928, the Tanaka Cabinet formally advocated the use of education as a means to cultivate the *kokutai* (or, loosely defined as the cult of the emperor). Shortly thereafter the Ministry of Education issued an edict to schools and colleges requiring that they implement this ‘new thought campaign’.⁶³ Herbert Bix writes, “In this way the Showa monarchy became ideologically empowered through the indoctrination of the masses in the religion of Japanese spirit and deep veneration for – even worship of – the sacred ruler.”⁶⁴ These efforts capitalized upon nationalist and imperialist themes already prevalent in the content of Japanese education. The result was a populace primed to support ‘radical’ (read: conservative) elements favoring change even at the risk of war with the United States and Great Britain, let alone sanction by the League of Nations. Arguably the rise of the military to such position of political superiority would not have occurred without widespread popular support.

The mechanistic approach to education would benefit our understanding of precipitating factors behind Japanese aggression leading up to the Second World War, helping us better appreciate the basis for popular support for remilitarization as well as for Japan’s subsequent military campaigns in China and the South Pacific. We would also gain insight into the basis for and maturation of Japan’s strategic culture which, according to Niall Ferguson, “[engendered] a fanatical subservience to imperial authority and the military

⁶³ Herbert Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (New York: Perennial, 2001), 202.

⁶⁴ Bix, 202.

command structure.”⁶⁵ Last, we might also nuance arguments that provide thin explanations of variation in Japanese policy, which seem to rely on purely structural factors that have trouble resolving questions of timing and intensity.⁶⁶

The mechanistic approach can also serve as a tool for the evaluation of foreign policies that deploy education for nation-building purposes. Within the context of US foreign policy, this is neither an uncommon or insignificant occurrence. According to Noah Sobe, the 20th and 21st centuries comprise a “period in which American educational initiatives formed one of the means by which a preeminent or, if you prefer, hegemonic position has been established for the United States.”⁶⁷ This is not simply an academic concern. On May 28th, 2008, President George W. Bush addressed the Commencement Ceremony at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado citing success in Germany and Japan to justify staying the course in Afghanistan and Iraq. The President explained to the audience, “In both the 20th century and today, defeating hateful ideologies requires using our national resources to strengthen free institutions in countries that are fighting extremists...We've assumed this obligation before. After World War II, we helped Germany and Japan build free societies and strong economies. These efforts took time and patience, and as a result, Germany and Japan grew in freedom and prosperity. Germany and Japan, once mortal enemies, are now allies of the United States. And people across the world

⁶⁵ Niall Ferguson, *The War of the World: Twentieth-Century Conflict and the Descent of the West* (New York: Penguin, 2006), 290.

⁶⁶ Cf. John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 172-181.

⁶⁷ Noah W. Sobe, “American Imperatives, Educational Reconstruction and the Post-Conflict Promise,” in *American Post-Conflict Educational Reform: From the Spanish-American War to Iraq*, Noah W. Sobe, ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 6.

have reaped the benefits from that alliance. Today, we must do the same in Afghanistan and Iraq. By helping these young democracies grow in freedom and prosperity, we'll lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.”⁶⁸ This claim, however, is generic, and without a clear sense of the processes behind the development of ‘free societies and strong economies’, we cannot be certain of the policies that should be replicated and/or modified based upon the situation on the ground. The mechanistic approach could inform policy choices by providing a framework to dissect and compare prior instances like Germany and Japan. Moreover, it would likely reveal the extent to which education should be credited for the growth of ‘freedom and prosperity’, the spread of peace, and friendship with the United States.

Education and the Political Reconstruction of Japan and Germany after World War II

At the end of World War II, American officials confronted the political reconstruction of Germany and Japan inspired, in part, by a rather simple logic: prevent future hostilities by liberalizing and democratizing education. This was necessary, they believed, because the pre-war Japanese education system contributed to the rampant nationalism and aggressiveness of Japan’s foreign policy. Captain A.B. Chapman made this very clear in a letter to Senator John L. McClellan, dated October 16, 1945: “The educational system of Japan is the very heart of the evils which caused the suffering and bloodshed during the past four years in the Pacific Area and will undoubtedly be an arsenal for the

⁶⁸ {<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/05/20080528-2.html>} Bush also referred to Germany and Japan in his 2004 speech in a similar vein: “This conflict will take many turns, with setbacks on the course to victory. Through it all, our confidence comes from one unshakable belief: We believe, in Ronald Reagan’s words, that ‘the future belongs to the free’. And we’ve seen the appeal of liberty with our own eyes. We have seen waves of unstoppable freedom firmly established in former enemies like Japan and Germany...Now freedom is stirring in the Middle East, and no one should bet against it.” {<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/06/20040602.html>}

thriving of those evils in the future.”⁶⁹ In turn they proposed opening up the secondary schools and universities to a greater swath of the population as well as incorporating liberal-democratic values and methods into the curriculum. By reforming education in Japan, they could “eradicate militarism” and thereby ensure international peace and stability while making Japan a reliable partner in the postwar liberal order.⁷⁰ Washington similarly approached German reconstruction with an eye toward eliminating Nazi and ultra-nationalist elements, fashioning a curriculum that would imbue liberal-democratic ideas instead. “In no field,” one American official observed in 1945, “is complete denazification so important.”⁷¹

This agenda drew from ‘cultural internationalism’ – a movement on the rise in the United States during the interwar years among elite intellectuals and philanthropists inspired by the tragedy of the First World War. They associated education with cultural awareness, which would in turn remedy social tensions among groups and even states while shaping the ‘international mind’. The attempt to coordinate activities led to the formation of various institutes, committees and associations often financed by the Rockefeller Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation. These groups considered schools and universities as hubs of cultural exchange capable of enhancing cross-cultural communication and simultaneously promoting goodwill, peace and prosperity. Meanwhile, educational associations burst to the fore “promoting and forging an internationalist synthesis of power, intellect, and mass education in a postwar program of cultural relations.”⁷² They advocated a ‘cultural definition of

⁶⁹ Quoted in Gary Tsuchimochi, *Education Reform in Postwar Japan: The 1946 U.S. Education Mission* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 1993), 25. McClellan would forward this letter to Secretary of State James Byrnes, who expressed his intent to send a mission to oversee the liberalization of Japanese education.

⁷⁰ Office Memorandum from Hugh Borton to SFE 135/Miss Martin, Secretary of Ad Hoc Reorientation Committee, “Education in Japan,” December 6, 1945, Roll 7, SFE/SWNCC, Microfilm T-1205, 34.

⁷¹ Quoted in Brian Michael Puaca, “Drafting Democracy: Education Reform in American-Occupied Germany, 1945-1949,” *Carolina Papers: Democracy and Human Rights*, No. 2 (Fall, 2001), 26.

⁷² Frank Ninkovich, *The Diplomacy of Ideas: U.S. Foreign Policy and Cultural Relations, 1938-1950* (New York: Cambridge University, 1981), 73.

international relations' that "envisioned a world in which the exchange of students and scholars, collaborative intellectual enterprises, artistic exhibits, symposia on current affairs, and similar undertakings would take the place of arms races and military alliances as determinants of international affairs."⁷³ These efforts, it was hoped, would span national boundaries and encourage mutual understanding with the end of reducing if not eliminating conflict between peoples. The emergence of mass nationalism precipitating the outbreak of hostilities only served to elevate, in the minds of cultural internationalists, the importance of education to national security – a view which, as demonstrated above, informed postwar policy initiatives toward reconstruction.⁷⁴

More broadly, US policy sought to produce an organic cultural shift in the target countries; officials did not want to simply overlay American values. This is not to say that Washington was unmotivated by strategic concerns, but the belief in the security externalities of education reform reflected assumptions about the linkage between education and liberal identity construction rather than mere domination or subjugation as one might expect if operating from assumptions informed by realism or Marxism-qua-Leninism. And even if some may label American efforts to rebuild order in the West as 'imperial' those advancing education reform certainly did not perceive it as such.⁷⁵ Education reform would simultaneously serve American interests in democratizing and pacifying the general populace in each country while respecting pluralistic principles at the heart of Liberal Democracy.⁷⁶

⁷³ Akira Iriye, *Cultural Internationalism and World Order* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1997), 184.

⁷⁴ Ninkovich (1981), 27; 72.

⁷⁵ Cf. John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1998), 27.

⁷⁶ This notion arguably lay behind the Third Force concept which favored some degree of independence from both superpowers. State Department official John Hickenson put it best, explaining that the United States desired "not merely an extension of US influence but a real European organization strong enough to say 'no' both to the Soviet Union and to the United States, if our actions should seem so to require." Quoted in Gaddis (1998), 39. (Original passage from the Hickenson Memorandum, conversation with Lord Inverchapel, 21. Jan. 1948, *FRUS: 1948*, iii, 11.)

The political will to employ education, at least initially, to construct pacific and, essentially, Western identities in Germany and Japan makes either a worthwhile case study, especially in light of tendencies to hold up each country as a model of success for American reconstruction policies. To sustain this claim, we ultimately need to know more about the identity outcomes made possible by education reforms in each country, which can be achieved by tracing the processes that power the mechanism. Otherwise we may be left with a self-fulfilling prophecy that does not actually reflect how ‘success’ was achieved, which could, in turn, complicate the implementation of current and future policies or, worse, condemn them to failure.⁷⁷

Sovietization through Education in Central and Eastern Europe

The application of the mechanism for explanatory and investigatory purposes is not limited to cases involving US foreign policy. Stalinist Russia likewise pursued the political reconstruction of occupied territories after the World War, though the character of Soviet-engineered education reforms was dramatically different. Moscow overtly designed the structure and content of education to ensure rule by ideologically-aligned elites as well as the obedience (and indoctrination) of the general populace; further, education was to produce a technically-adept pool of labor. This program reflected guiding assumptions behind Soviet education at home, which Christopher Loss collapses into five key elements: “top-down centralized control; close coordination with Soviet industrial needs; the creation and

⁷⁷ For a revealing assessment of the failure of US education policy in postwar Iraq, see John Agresto, *Mugged by Reality: the Liberation of Iraq and the Failure of Good Intentions* (New York: Encounter Books, 2007), 71-96. Among the challenges recounted by Agresto, it is particularly interesting to note how the American reform agenda ran aground against countervailing “cultural characteristics” rooted in religion and tied to the legacy of despotism (96). One is left to wonder whether expectations could have been tempered by a more systematic treatment of education policy in Germany and Japan, let alone the two cases comprising this study where dominant cultures affected the functioning of the mechanism.

dissemination of nationwide fixed curricula; the elimination of social science courses and replacement with courses in Marxist-Leninist ideology; and, finally, the vigorous recruitment and placement of proletariat students through Soviet-style 'affirmative action' programs."⁷⁸ Education was viewed as a means to secure an obedient disposition toward the Party and the state. That Stalin would seek to enlarge Soviet education policy to the occupied territories after WWII follows logically from the Party's standing confidence in the transformative effects of education on popular allegiance and shared values, likewise conducive to the general objectives of enhancing national security and international stability.

In the early years after the Second World War, Stalin did not immediately move to Sovietize the occupied territories, instead opting to experiment with some elements of democracy. Many factors contributed to the viability of this policy in the short term, among them Stalin's adherence to the principles of socialism in one country, his openness to cooperation with the West, as well as his general uncertainty regarding the compatibility of Stalinist socialism with the democratic traditions in Central and Eastern Europe.⁷⁹ "Stalin felt much more secure in 1945 than he had done in 1939. He did not perceive the United States and Britain as posing the same kind of direct threat to the Soviet Union's existence as the one that had been posted by Hitler. The territorial buffer he acquired as his armies swept westwards in 1944-45 was therefore seen as a defence less against an Anglo-American attack than against an aggression by a resurgent Germany."⁸⁰ He goes on to relate, "The countries of Eastern Europe over which Stalin acquired control in 1944-45 had a strong commitment

⁷⁸ Christopher P. Loss, "Party School: Education, Political Ideology, and the Cold War," *Journal of Policy History* 16: 1 (2004), 104. See also Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921-1934* (New York: Cambridge University, 1979) and *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet organization of education and the arts under Lunacharsky, October 1917-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1970).

⁷⁹ Dimitrov, 181-86.

⁸⁰ Dimitrov, 21.

to their independence, sometimes with a virulently anti-Russian streak, and powerful, if limited, democratic traditions. This meant that the imposition of an unmodified Soviet system...could be expected to provoke rigorous resistance.”⁸¹ Radical regime change in the region was not the first item on the agenda as the war came to a close.

Sovietization would become the watchword only after experiments in ‘People’s Democracies’ failed to achieve the desired results alongside the intensification of perceived pressures from the West. At the end of the war Stalin wrongly anticipated that the Soviet occupied territories would vote Communist, hence his begrudging support for democratic elections. Communist parties struggled at the polls, exemplified by the elections in Hungary in November 1945, where the Communist party achieved only 17% of the vote. Thereafter Stalin began to modify his stance meanwhile distancing himself from his support for the ‘Declaration on Liberated Europe’ agreed to at Yalta. “By mid-1947,” Vesselin Dimitrov writes, “Stalin was faced with a situation in which communist parties in Bulgaria, and indeed across Eastern Europe, had achieved neither complete control nor widespread support, whilst communist parties in Western Europe were being ejected from power. In the realm of great power relations, Soviet ‘concessions’ failed to make an impression on the American and British governments. The postwar flexibility had thus worked to the disadvantage of the Soviet Union, and a swing back towards the usual operating mode of the Stalinist system proved to be an attractive option.”⁸² Soviet-style socialism had not become a mass movement; the people did not bind themselves to the Soviet model. This made direct involvement in the domestic affairs of Soviet-occupied Europe a prudent policy, and education reforms fit this agenda – with potentially long-lasting effects.

⁸¹ Dimitrov, 21-22.

⁸² Dimitrov, 191.

Sorting out the dynamics behind Soviet education policy in Central and Eastern Europe is not a task resigned to the dead letter office. While historians of Soviet foreign policy and the Cold War might evaluate Sovietization through education as a matter of particular interest or a point of comparison *vis-à-vis* American efforts in Germany and Japan, current students of identity in Europe or Russia could use the mechanistic approach to interpret the legacy of Soviet education reforms on contemporary identities, or to measure the impact of efforts to reconstitute civil society after the end of the Cold War.

A prominent theme in contemporary IR scholarship on Europe touches upon identity construction. The questions animating this literature typically involve the legitimacy of Europe's institutions as well as prospects for further integration in a world without a shared European identity. As Peter Kraus explains, "Without a fixed territorial realm, without a shared past, without an unchallenged cultural identity and without a common language, the foundations of political unity in the EU look precarious...The emperor has never been as naked as he appears to be in the headquarters of the European institutions in Brussels."⁸³ On the one hand, there are the doomsayers, Kraus *not* included, who regard European identity as chimerical. The EU, Glynis Breakwell pointedly observes, "has no unambiguous or unchallenged social meaning and has limited symbols. It has a short and unromantic history without what might be called heritage."⁸⁴ On the other hand, there are

⁸³ Peter A. Kraus, *A Union of Diversity: Language, Identity and Polity-Building in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2008), 36. Cf. Dario Castiglione, "Political identity in a community of strangers," in *European Identity*, Jeffrey T. Checkel & Peter J. Katzenstein, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2010), 33; and Neil Fligstein, "Who are the Europeans?" in the same volume, 154-5.

⁸⁴ Glynis M. Breakwell, "Identity Change in the Context of the Growing Influence of European Union Institutions," in *Transnational Identities: Becoming European in the EU*, Richard K. Herrmann, Thomas Risse &

those who don the seemingly quixotic mantle and investigate how Europe's 'identity problematique' might be resolved. I argue that the mechanistic approach to education would fit nicely within this branch of the literature, especially considering that some acknowledge a role for education though they lack a systematic account of its processes and effects.

Education and Identity Construction at the European Level

In 1987, the European Commission launched Erasmus, an exchange program designed to facilitate student mobility across the European Community. The initiative was set against a backdrop of broader institutional innovation at the European level as well as a burgeoning discourse on European identity and the need for a common culture. The Treaty of Rome (1957) initially, if ambiguously, claimed in its preamble that European integration rested upon the ideals of liberty and peace; and the subsequent 'Declaration on the European Identity' (1973) stressed that the peoples of Europe were bound together by shared values and institutions. Yet, by the mid 1980s, concerns mounted over the depth of this sentiment in the mind of the European citizen and the obstacles this might create as the prerogatives of the Community were expanding into new domains. According to a communication from the Commission ('The People's Europe', CEC 1988b) in 1988, 'action is needed in the cultural sector to make people more aware of their European identity in anticipation of the creation of a European cultural area.'⁸⁵ Though Erasmus could be framed

Marilynn B. Brewer, eds. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 32-3. Cf. Cris Shore, *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 30. Shore adds that "those cultural elements which give unity and coherence to existing national identities (such as shared language, history, memory, religion) tend to divide rather than unite fellow Europeans"(18). Shore nevertheless concedes that there is value in understanding how "certain discourses of Europe are rendered powerful and authoritative while others are marginalized and muted."

⁸⁵ Quoted in Shore, 25.

exclusively in terms that aligned with the EC's objective of the free movement of persons, student exchange could likewise serve the ends of identity construction.

Subsequent efforts at the European level solidified the linkage between education and identity formation as a matter of practice and principle. In 1990, the Commission created the Jean Monnet Project in order to promote the development of teaching projects involving European integration studies, including the endowment of Jean Monnet Chairs. Within two years, the Maastricht Treaty tasked the newly-christened European Union with taking action to improve “the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples.”⁸⁶ The so-called ‘culture article’ once again affirmed the importance of developing a shared European identity and invested the European institutions with the authority to cultivate it, leaving the door open to education programs even if they were not mentioned specifically. This oversight would be partly resolved in the Amsterdam Treaty (1997), which amended the preamble of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) to reference “the development of the highest possible level of knowledge for their peoples through a wide access to education and through its continuous updating.”⁸⁷ While the Treaty does not specify the instruments to achieve these ends, it does affirm that education falls under the scope of European-level policy. Moreover, in theory, the expansion of educational opportunities would advance the ‘dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples’ called for in Article 128.

As the member states clarified the role of education as a vehicle for the spread of European culture, the Commission complemented Erasmus with the Leonardo da Vinci

⁸⁶ Treaty on European Union (CEC1992a), Article 128, Section 2. *European Union: Selected instruments taken from the Treaties*, Book I, Volume I (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1995), 261.

⁸⁷ *Treaty of Amsterdam Amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties Establishing the European Communities and Certain Related Acts* (Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1997), 24.

Programme in 1995. Like Erasmus, Leonardo sought to expand student mobility, but for the sake of vocational education and professional training. In fairness, the inspiration for Leonardo was largely economic, reflecting fears prevalent in the mid-1990s of pervasive structural unemployment and a loss of competitiveness among Europe's economies. Identity construction was not a primary motivation for implementing the program, though one can imagine positive externalities for cultural dissemination yielded by, for example, interaction.⁸⁸

More recently, the member states have extended European-level initiatives to higher education through the Bologna Process. Begun in 1999, the Bologna Process aims at developing a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that would harmonize university degree structures and increase the compatibility of higher education systems across the EU and associated countries. The priorities of the Bologna Process are largely derived from Erasmus, and in the current context aim at internationalizing higher education in Europe.⁸⁹ This includes promoting international themes in the curriculum, the formation of foreign language programs, and modernizing the curriculum to align with the imperatives of the 21st century economy.⁹⁰ Taken together, these measures are meant to create a 'Europe of Knowledge...capable of giving its citizens the necessary competences to face the challenges of the new millennium with an awareness of shared values and belonging to a common social and cultural space.'⁹¹

Note the paring of the familiar theme of a shared cultural space with more practical considerations for mobility and employment. This appears to capture the current mindset of

⁸⁸ Neil Fligstein (2010) argues that interaction is, in fact, the "main source" of European identity because it builds a "basis for solidarity" (133).

⁸⁹ European Commission, "The Impact of ERASMUS on European Higher Education: Quality, Openness and Internationalisation," DG EAC/33/2007 (Brussels: European Commission, 2008), 4.

⁹⁰ European Commission, "The Impact of ERASMUS," 8.

⁹¹ Quoted in Roger Dale, "Changing Meanings of 'the Europe of Knowledge' and 'Modernizing the University,' from Bologna to the 'New Lisbon,'" *European Education* 39: 4 (Winter, 2007/8), 30.

European policymakers regarding the social and economic utility of education, evidenced by the rhetoric surrounding the Bologna Process as well as the Life-long Learning Programme, an umbrella program that includes Erasmus and Leonardo, in addition to Grundtvig (adult education), Comenius (primary and secondary education), and the Jean Monnet programmes. Life-long Learning was implemented in 2007, and it is presently the chief component of the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy for education and training – a strategy that reinforces the marriage of identity and capability. According to the European Council, “education and training have a fundamental role to play in achieving the ‘Europe 2020’ objectives of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth by equipping citizens with the skills and competences which the European economy and European society need in order to remain competitive and innovative, but also by helping to promote social cohesion and inclusion.”⁹²

Interestingly, the consistent emphasis on training and competitiveness has led some to question whether responding to the imperatives of the global economy has actually subsumed social cohesion and inclusion as the engine of identity construction in Europe. As Matthias Kaelberer argues, “There are international forces that push for greater levels of European identity and integration... Globalization and international economic factors have already pushed Europe to adjust and to search for joint solutions to commonly experienced pressures.”⁹³ This would mark a significant change relative to the dominant language previously surrounding identity involving shared values, norms and institutions. In terms of

⁹² “Council conclusions on the role of education and training in the implementation of the ‘Europe 2020’ strategy,” OJ C 70, 4.3.2011, 1.

⁹³ Matthias Kaelberer, “The euro and European identity: symbols, power and the politics of European monetary union,” *Review of International Studies* 30 (2004), 174. Risse & Grabowsky make a very similar point, though without reference to globalization specifically. See, Thomas Risse and Jana Katharina Grabowsky, “European Identity Formation in the Public Sphere and in Foreign Policy,” RECON Online Working Paper 2008/4 (March 2008), 5.

education as a mechanism, it places the burden of identity construction on the functional, as opposed to the cognitive, process.

This in itself is worth investigating with our mechanistic toolkit, but the picture actually appears to be more complex. Jack Citrin and John Sides (2004) observe a positive correlation between the level of formal education and European identity based upon Eurobarometer data from 2000. Respondents with less education tended to identify themselves as ‘nation only’ to a greater degree than respondents with more education or those who were still in school at the time.⁹⁴ Based upon a more recent survey, where respondents were queried as to their self-identification in the ‘near future’, the same correlation holds.

QA22 In the near future, do you see yourself as...?

Education (End of)	Nationality (only)	(Nationality) and European	European and (Nationality)	European only
15-	51%	37%	6%	3%
16-19	42%	44%	8%	4%
20+	29%	54%	11%	4%
Still studying	27%	51%	13%	5%

Source: ‘Future of Europe’, Special Eurobarometer 379 (April, 2012), 58.

This trend, also evident in Eurobarometer surveys from the 1990s, indicates that there may be something at work rooted in education acting upon how Europe’s citizens see themselves, and perhaps we should take seriously the continued emphasis on the dissemination of culture and history even as the impetus for creating a ‘European education space’ has shifted from preserving peace to withstanding the ill effects of globalization.

⁹⁴ Jack Citrin and John Sides, “More than Nationals: How Identity Choice Matters in the New Europe,” in *Transnational Identities: Becoming European in the EU*, Richard K. Herrmann, Thomas Risse & Marilynn B. Brewer, eds. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 172-3.

The mechanistic approach to education seems ideally suited to revealing the dynamics behind the positive correlation between education and identity. It would also help us assess the impact of the various European-level initiatives (e.g. Erasmus, Leonardo, Bologna, Lifelong Learning) which may have contributed to the identity outcomes observed in the surveys. Regardless, we would move beyond merely noting the trend to explaining it.

* * *

The approach to education and identity taken in this dissertation is novel for the field of International Relations, but the opportunity to add explanatory depth to our understanding of international politics should encourage further application. The capacity of education to shape minds and cultivate skills is extensive; and when education is studied with sufficient specificity and rigor, it can be traced as an important determinant of identity. This study provides a framework to explain how this happens. The cognitive process asks us to consider how content – e.g. ideas, images, pedagogical techniques – affects our understanding of the world and our place within it. Meanwhile, the functional process directs attention to the part that schools play in imparting skills and assigning social, political and economic roles. Taken together, the cognitive and functional processes give us valuable insight into influences on what we think and what we do that are nested in education. I do not pretend to have discovered a Rosetta Stone that somehow conclusively reveals how identities are formed. Education is but one possible mechanism – but I do argue that it is a potentially powerful constructive force behind popular and elite identities. This merits

greater consideration particularly among constructivists who are interested in the internal processes that build state identities and inform their preferences.

The English and French cases were valuable in two key respects. First, England and France were pivotal states in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Their foreign policies left a wide wake, which makes it worthwhile to investigate the factors that guided these policies, at least according to conventional wisdom within the field of International Relations. Second, we were able to observe the cognitive and functional processes at work while also demonstrating how the mechanism can be used to help explain identity outcomes. This is arguably more significant because it shines a light on the utility of the mechanistic approach. In England, the education system channeled dominant ideas about the British Empire into the classroom, which appears to have contributed to reinforcing a sense of Englishness bound up in the Empire. English education also served to restrict access to the halls of power to those who were trained to be gentlemen and viceroys. In contrast, though French education did take on ideas, images and even functions associated with her Empire, they were muted. The objective of fashioning a French national identity took precedent, and this notion of being French struggled to assign a place for the Empire that was widely shared. In this way, education reinforced the fragmentation found in France regarding imperial matters.

That France does not appear to have embraced a widely-held imperial identity is not an indictment against the mechanism. This outcome is entirely consistent with what we would expect from the cognitive and functional processes. The same can be said about education and identity in England. And while we should not assert that, in either instance, education is the sole determinant, the results of this study affirm that it should be strongly considered.

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