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ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses how the future of school counseling is bound to political processes interwoven with the contemporary education reform movement and with the social and economic conditions of the emerging global economy. Specifically, 20 years from now, school counseling and guidance will reflect the dynamics at work within three distinct yet overlapping domains: the contemporary school reform movement, the professionalization of school counseling, and the relationship between counseling and the critical, social, and economic issues of the twenty-first century. The chapter offers a brief analysis of the future of school counseling through the dual lens of institutional theory and progressive social commentary. (Contains 73 references.) (GCP)

Preparing Students for the Globalized Society of the Twenty-First Century: A Comparative Perspective on the Ideological Roots of Guidance

By

Lonnie L. Rowell

Chapter Seventeen

Preparing Students for the Globalized Society of the Twenty-First Century: A Comparative Perspective on the Ideological Roots of Guidance

Lonnie L. Rowell

The future of school counseling is bound to political processes interwoven with the contemporary education reform movement and with the social and economic conditions of the emerging global economy. More specifically, 20 years from now school counseling and guidance will reflect the dynamics at work within three distinct yet overlapping domains: the contemporary school reform movement, the professionalization of school counseling, and the relationship between counseling and the critical social and economic issues of the twenty-first century. The context within which school counselors work today has been increasingly shaped by a sustained effort to bring about a particular set of changes in the form and content of American education. In the short term, the politics of school reform influence all aspects of what counselors do and do not do in schools, how the profession is viewed within education circles and within the larger society, and how many counselors will be working in schools over the next 20 years. In the longer run, how school counseling positions itself in relationship to the professionalization of helping, the changing demographics of American society, and the increasingly unequal distribution of wealth will be defining elements in whether school counseling continues its development as a minor actor in the unfolding drama of global corporate domination or realigns itself with the

heritage of progressive reform that marked its beginnings in the early twentieth century.

Ultimately, all aspects of counseling practice are tied to political processes. Politics are present both in the large domain of the special interest we represent as professional counselors and the smaller domains of how we wield the power of our expertise in counseling sessions and the everyday decisions we make, or that are made for us, about the allocation of time in the performance of our work and the living of our lives. In addition, all the counseling research imaginable—on guidance and counseling outcomes, on the efficacy of comprehensive counseling programs, and on the specific methods that most enhance effective counseling—passes through the crucible of politics. By politics I am referring simply to individual and organized actions affecting the distribution of power within various social systems. From a practice as well as research perspective, all the new models, new standards, new programs and new techniques in school counseling are either privileged into practice or shrugged off to institutional backburners or academic dustbins by the political decisions of legislatures, governors, credentialing commissions, licensing boards, counselor education programs, accrediting bodies, school boards, superintendents, principals, and others. In short, although we often would prefer to deny it, there is simply no escaping the press of politics in our lives.

Thus, it should come as no surprise that to understand fully where school counseling is headed as we begin the new millennium, some kind of political analysis is needed. How is it that time after time reform efforts steer clear of addressing the links between home and neighborhood conditions and school experience? Why do the powers that be in education most often marginalize the significance of prevention-oriented counseling and guidance and yet point with pride to the crisis-response teams of counselors, social workers, and psychologists rolled out when the latest schoolyard, hallway, or classroom tragedy bites the national psyche? In its broadest terms, a political analysis of school counseling entails a concern with how counselors in schools "reinforce the values, institutions, and human behaviors on which our present social order rests or . . . challenge those values, institutions, and behaviors" (Galpers, 1975, ix).

In an effort to address these and other issues, I offer a brief analysis of the future of school counseling through the dual lens of institutional theory (DiMaggio, 1988; Knoke & Prensky, 1984;

Laumann & Knoke, 1987; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Salganik, 1985; Scott, 1987) and progressive social commentary (Galpers, 1975; McKnight, 1995). The analysis explores how school counseling, represented by its organizational actors, or "institutional entrepreneurs" (DiMaggio, 1988), and by its formal and informal networks of influence (Laumann & Knoke, 1987), has sought to find its voice among the calls for changes in the institutional structures of American education and to define its place in the professionalization of American life in general. The crucible of politics I examine is tied to an understanding of the educational reform agenda of the 1980s and 1990s, to an understanding of how school counseling reform is positioned within this larger reform, and to the limitations of the dominant reform agenda in relationship to some pressing issues facing us at the turn of the new century. My findings point to the need for a more carefully developed political awareness as well as a more pronounced political involvement by school counselors and all those who support guidance and counseling.

The visible contours of the political processes at work in school reform are relatively easy to spot. For example, we look one direction and see new laws and policies being enacted by legislatures and school boards to increase student achievement and hold teachers more accountable; we look another and see national commissions, task forces, and committees hard at work on recommended changes in virtually every aspect of education; we look again and see the corresponding counseling task force, commission, or committee redefining counseling and guidance, setting new standards for the profession, or advocating for its inclusion in the newly emerging institutional configurations of education. The subterranean contours of these politics, however, are harder to see. Here, I believe, a political analysis is needed that confronts the relationship between school reform, globalization, and a corporate domination of society that, among other things, "establishes the market as the patron of educational reform" (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2000, p. 25). Such an analysis also must address the overlapping of demographic factors and the normative elements reflected in cultural values and beliefs with the interests of various political actors (Lipman, 1998; Oakes, 1992). These less visible political processes are no less significant to the future of school counseling, and we can better understand what is occurring beneath the surface of school reform and school counseling reform by bringing these deeper elements to light.

I am well aware that some readers may be turned off by a

partisan call for political awareness and activism. Many counselors have made it clear that they are not "into that political stuff." Some feel that they must preserve their energy for "the kids." For others, politics seems too tiresome or too interwoven with shrewdness, expediency, or contrived interactions to be considered a priority. All I can ask in the face of these objections is that you temporarily suspend your disbelief and consider an alternative view. In this view, given that politics are unavoidable, it is essential for us to learn to do our politics wisely—with care, skill, and humility—on behalf of, first and foremost, children and youth. Helping skills are indeed an honorable set of tools for use in all aspects of human relations. But such skills do not exist in a vacuum, and the people who employ, and are employed by virtue of, those skills have a responsibility to conduct their practice in ways that reflect democratic and humane values, that is, in ways that empower people. Furthermore, I assert that we must develop our capacity to put those values to work among and between counselors, learning to work politically in ways that challenge and nurture us individually and strengthen our collective capacity for collaborative action. In my view, this task also must be made a high priority for all who wish to be advocates for social justice and who believe that our democracy must be revitalized and transformed into an authentic participatory system based on the genuine practice of citizen-power. In this context, I suggest that counselors have a direct stake in articulating and creating linkages between counseling practice and progressive social movements.

School Reform, School Counseling Reform, and the National Standards

The first domain to examine in this political analysis is the contemporary school reform agenda. This examination includes consideration of the reform of school counseling and the place of school counseling within the larger reform movement. Readers are no doubt familiar with the call for greater accountability and standards in education and are well aware that this particular education reform alarm was sounded in the 1980s with the publication of a series of papers, books, and pamphlets decrying the poor state of American education and proclaiming the need for urgent action to better prepare America's students for the soon-to-arrive twenty-first century (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1995). Following publication of A Nation at Risk in 1983, more than 30

other major reports and examinations of public education in America were released over a 10-year span (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1995, pp. 196–198). Throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, education was a top national priority.

The recently adopted National Standards for School Counseling Programs (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) provide the clearest link between the contemporary school reform movement and school counseling, and it seems clear that sustained advocacy for the standards will constitute the centerpiece of the formal political future for school counseling. As Campbell and Dahir describe it, the call for reform and revitalization in school counseling, evident since the late 1980s, is the counseling profession's response to larger school reform initiatives "enacted in the name of achieving excellence in education"(p. 2). Campbell and Dahir explicitly tie the standards to "the current educational reform agenda that focuses on raising expectations for teaching and learning" (p. 1).

The standards imply a dual political strategy for school counseling in relation to the larger school reform efforts. On the one hand, the standards take their cue from the increased emphasis on higher achievement and accountability in education: they thus are dependent on, and contribute to, the momentum of the larger reform agenda. On the other hand, the standards acknowledge the struggles of many students against the numerous barriers to learning that so often block school success: in this context, the standards give at least some voice to the fairness, equity, and social justice issues often marginalized by the current reform agenda. Politically, from another perspective, advocacy for the standards most likely will bring gains for school counseling as a recent professionalized addition within the institutional framework of American education. Although, as will become evident, these gains make perfect sense in terms of larger trends for professionalization and specialization in helping, they need to be weighed against the need for, and potential of, a far more concerted populist effort in relation to crucial social and economic issues currently brushed aside in favor of the corporate interests that underlie the current school reform agenda. In my view, the tension between these two positions captures some of the deeper issues school counseling will face in the coming years.

Although many students are motivationally prepared to meet the challenge of higher academic standards, a very high percentage are not, and the barriers to learning that these students face put them seriously at risk of failure and of unproductive

and troubled futures in the larger society. Yet with programs and services that address these barriers and promote healthy development for all students continuing to be seen both as "supplementary" and as items that interfere with activities directly related to instruction in reformed schools (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1999), the dominant reform agenda appears oddly out of sync with the lives of the estimated 40 to 50% of American students who manifest some form of significant learning, behavior, and emotional problems (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 2000, p. 1).

On the other hand, the national standards define the counseling and guidance program as the cornerstone of student success and present a case for ending the "support services" view of school counseling in favor of a more comprehensive approach. Without this change, some argue, the emotional, physical, economic, and interpersonal barriers to learning found among so many students will continue to be addressed in a piecemeal manner, thus insuring that not all students will be able to meet the more rigorous expectations of higher academic standards (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1999). In addition, the lack of a comprehensive approach to guidance and counseling creates unbearable pressures on classroom teachers to incorporate into their already excessively burdened classrooms ever-new and expanding curriculum related to such things as character education and development, conflict resolution, and violence reduction. From this standpoint, the challenge is to incorporate an updated understanding of learning and the development of the whole child within the drive for higher educational standards and to expand current school reform models "to fully integrate 'educational support activity'" (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1999, p. 1). In short, the case for comprehensive school counseling and guidance is built around the idea that we cannot "win" the battle to maintain America's place in a changing world market if we simply leave behind those who are "at risk" and if we ignore the need to integrate academic achievement with the development of the whole child. Thus, although the standards reflect some of the priorities of the dominant school reform agenda, they have potential as a focal point for discussion of reform directions that promote not only the value of greater productivity but also the humane recognition that for today's youth, growing up in a "cold new world," to borrow part of the title of William Finnegan's recent book, extraordinary efforts are needed from caring adults to bridge the growing divide between

generations and to end the isolation of the American adolescent "tribe apart" (Hersch, 1998, p. 1).

Another locus of activity linking school counseling and school reform has been the work of the College Entrance Examination Board. The College Board recognized in the 1980s that school reform efforts were overlooking counseling and guidance and appointed a Commission on Precollege Guidance and Counseling to examine the issue (College Board, 1986). The commission found, among other things, that "those initiating programs of educational reform must recognize that in the interest of justice and equity for all students, higher standards of performance can be achieved only by mutually supportive systems of instruction and guidance" (College Board, 1986, p. 31). Following a two-year investigation and completion of a major report, the board initiated three projects to field-test recommendations contained in the report (Nailor, 1999). The projects demonstrated that school counselors have a crucial role to play in school reform and that when counselors are active in the planning and implementation of such reforms, the whole school benefits. The Board's total effort provided evidence that the piecemeal approach to school counseling is an ineffective and inefficient use of educational resources, and that, conversely, carefully planned and systematically implemented high quality school counseling and guidance programs are crucial elements in student achievement as well as in successful school reform efforts (College Board, 1986, 1994, 1996).

In many respects, the alignment of school counseling reform with the broader school reform agenda constitutes a reasonable foundation both for building a better future for school counseling and for advocating for success for all students. If carefully planned and systematically implemented, high quality school counseling and guidance programs are crucial elements in student achievement, and if standards now exist that clearly identify what those programs ought to consist of, then, from an institutional politics standpoint, the future is clear: The formal and informal networks of professional counseling should simply continue advocating for the implementation of what they know works. With leadership from the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and the College Board, among others, the key political work is to advocate for the careful planning of, and to secure the systematic implementation of, high quality counseling programs in which the role of school counseling is clearly defined according to the new national standards.

Such efforts are presently underway across the country. Teams of national standards trainers are at work in virtually every state. County offices of education and state departments of education are forming committees and task forces and sponsoring workshops and academies to disseminate the national standards or to develop localized versions of the standards. (I have just completed seven months' work on just such a county task force). An impressive mobilization on behalf of reforming school counseling programs is now underway, and it is unlikely that this mobilization will slow in the next several years. There is easily two decades worth of hard work and agonizing political mountains to climb on behalf of the changes described above.

The Politics of Professionalization and the Reform of School Counseling

Nevertheless, the reform mobilization described in the above positive narrative primarily positions school counseling advocates as a cautionary chorus behind the divas singing the praises of higher academic standards for students and greater accountability for teachers and administrators. While specific reforms for improving instruction and reorganizing school management have become the centerpieces in school districts' efforts to implement higher academic standards, counseling and mental health advocates have had limited success in gaining recognition that higher student achievement requires more than good instruction and well-managed schools. Although advocacy for comprehensive approaches has met with some success (e.g., in the Memphis City schools and the Central O'ahu District in Hawaii, according to the Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1999), these institutional and infrastructural solutions are few and far between and often mask an ongoing inability of our dominant educational structures to respond in meaningful ways to the needs of the children and youth. In addition, by not aligning with efforts to create a modernized progressive agenda that could perhaps more convincingly articulate the limits of "assembly-line, multiservice 'care'" (McKnight, 1995, p. 19) in a variety of helping settings, and more genuinely define a compelling vision for change, school counseling reform advocates inadvertently raise false hopes about what they can deliver and ultimately contribute to the deepening of public cynicism about service providers.

To fully understand this point and its implications for the future of school counseling requires further clarification, including a quick glance at the history of guidance and counseling in schools. Concern for those marginalized by the dominant agenda of contemporary school reform calls us back to the emergence of school guidance and counseling and the broader reforms of the progressive movement at the beginning of the twentieth century. As Gladding (1988) describes, counseling "developed out of a humanitarian concern to improve the lives of those adversely affected by the Industrial Revolution of the mid to late 1800s" (p. 5). Similarly, "most of the pioneers in the early guidance movement, which evolved into the profession of counseling, were social reformers" (p. 9). Gerald Stone (1986) discusses the era's "reform ideology" (p. 13) whose basic sentiment was humanitarian and arose in part from the individualism expressed in religion, the ideas of the Enlightenment, the pioneer spirit of the frontier, and the ideals of democracy. Whatever its sources, this humanitarian concern, stressing the improvability of humankind through the application of reason and scientific procedures, was expressed in diverse forms and in many localities across the country.

The reform ideology of this period was broad in scope, with reformers active in education, children's rights, treatment of the mentally ill, women's rights, workplace safety and workers' rights, food inspection, electoral reform, and challenges to the growth of monopoly capital (Zinn, 1980). Stone (1986) cites John Dewey and Frank Parsons as two of the most influential reformers in relationship to guidance and counseling. Dewey's ideas concerning the importance of schooling as preparation for vocation, citizenship, and responsible adulthood provided "fertile ground" (Stone, 1986, p. 14) for the growth of guidance, and Frank Parsons's founding of the Boston Vocational Bureau in 1908 was a critical first step in institutionalizing vocational guidance (Gladding, 1988). Dewey, in particular, has been acknowledged as a leading figure in the progressive education movement (Pulliam & Van Patten, 1995).

Most often, writers in counseling and counseling psychology focus on the humanitarian intentions of reformers. Authors such as Gladding (1988) and Stone (1986) stress the link between the emergence of guidance and a concern with improving the lives of children and youth through the application of rational and scientific procedures that would enable young people to learn more about themselves and to make rational

choices about vocations. Little is usually said, however, concerning the relationship among the emergence of guidance, the broader progressive education movement, and the broader yet progressive movements. In my view, this omission limits our capacity to develop cogent political analysis and contributes to the tendency of counseling, like its famous relative psychology, to be ahistorical. I suggest that this tendency needs to be challenged, and that such a challenge is critical to the future of counseling.

A more historically based understanding would take into account the political dynamics that both opened up possibilities for reform of institutions and limited the scope of such reforms. For example, Zinn (1980) asserts that the reforms of the earlier progressive era were principally aimed at siphoning off popular sentiments for more fundamental changes in the society. It was, in Zinn's (1980) words, a period of "reluctant reform" (p. 341) in which business interests took the lead politically to initiate changes to "stabilize the capitalist system in a time of uncertainty and trouble" (p. 342). As Richard Hofstadter (1955) discusses in a classic work, the urban crowding, poverty, crime, corruption, and immigration chaos summed up as "the social question" (p. 235) in the late nineteenth- early twentieth-century reform era was answered by policies and programs intended to "minimize the most outrageous and indefensible exploitation of the working population" (p. 235). Yet, with their primarily conservative impulses, the reformers feared the poverty and restlessness of the growing urban masses. Reforms of this period helped perpetuate the economic domination of big money and big business rather than initiate creation of social systems more conducive to human well-being.

Such an analysis is not intended to generate guilt regarding the reform heritage out of which modern professional counseling emerged. A fuller historical understanding can help illuminate some conflicting interests found within the contemporary school reform movement and can open up possibilities for alternative perspectives that can free us from constricting and self-defeating strategies. At present, for example, a clear conflict exists between the interests of a new corporate elite which is expanding and consolidating, without constraints, all over the world and the interests of children and youth expected to achieve higher standards, yet not given the necessary assistance that would enable them to do so. It is perhaps not as gruesome a scenario as Zinn's (1980) description of the treatment of indigenous people

on the island of Haiti by Columbus, but it has its parallels. In one Haitian province the Spanish conquerors were convinced that vast amounts of gold could be found and everyone fourteen or older was ordered "to collect a certain quantity of gold every three months. When they brought it, they were given copper tokens to hang around their necks. Indians found without a copper token had their hands cut off and bled to death" (p. 4).

I suggest that too close of an alignment with the dominant agenda of contemporary school reform threatens to identify counselors with an emerging managed-care, semiprivatized education system that, when it comes to the poor and disadvantaged in particular, will metaphorically cut off their hands. Without strong and broader advocacy for those increasingly marginalized by the rush to higher standards, the risk is that the national standards, like other aspects of the reform agenda, will primarily benefit those already in privileged positions within the educational system. Those who do not bring in the gold, so to speak, will be left to bleed to death (often quite literally) on the mean streets of urban decay and gang warfare.

A recent California lawsuit provides an example of this dynamic. In May 2000, the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit in California on behalf of students in a number of urban school districts contending that a "two class system" exists in which poor and non-White students attend schools with "terrible slum conditions, unqualified teachers, and few up-to-date textbooks" (Associated Press, 2000, May 22). The same conditions are not found, the suit contends, for White middle- and upper-class children. According to the Associated Press article, similar "adequacy funding" suits have been filed in 20 other states, with about half being successful to date. These lawsuits raise important issues regarding setting higher standards and providing adequate resources to ensure that all students have the opportunity to achieve them. In this context, the effort to pair good instruction and well-managed schools with comprehensive approaches to addressing barriers to learning and developmental issues is only part of the problem: The differential distribution of educational resources tends to systematically marginalize some students and privilege others, and unless this disparity is also addressed some students will be consigned to a much higher risk of failure regardless of program standards. Ironically perhaps, from the standpoint of the juvenile justice system, the unequal distribution of resources works in the opposite direction. A recent major study indicates that Black

youths are 48 times more likely to be given juvenile prison sentences than Whites, and that White youths "convicted of violent offenses are imprisoned for an average of 193 days" (Glasser, 2000, p. 28) while Black youths are imprisoned for an average of 254 days. These disparities, and more, contribute to results such as the recent Los Angeles Times poll in which 58% of Latino parents and 94% of Black parents rated local schools as fair to poor (Sahagun, 2000).

However, as in the prior reform era, the current culture of school reform reflects an inherently conservative agenda, with a reworking of the status quo emerging from a "reform mill" (Oakes, Hunter Quartz, Ryan, & Lipton, 2000, p. 265) environment dominating education. As an alternative, Oakes and her associates assert the importance of reinfusing a sense of "civic virtue" into school reform. In their view, the process of transforming American schools "must itself be educative, socially just, caring, and participatory" (p. 262). Here, it would seem, we catch our first glimpse of the potential for linkages between comprehensive school reform, a revitalized progressive movement, and the reform of school counseling. In my view, the more progressive reform heritage of counseling needs to be reclaimed as the yardstick by which the political work of school counseling is undertaken. Ultimately, we need to ask how counselors can contribute politically to heading off the antihumanitarian tendencies reflected in the dominant late twentieth and early twenty-first century school reform agenda. Here, a relevant question for the future of counseling is, are school counselors the political actors in education best situated to take leadership in a reform process that is socially just as well as caring and that combines the legitimate expertise of helpers with genuine participatory practice in relationship to parents and students?

Unfortunately, thoughtful reform processes seem a luxury today, and school reforms have come at a sometimes dizzying pace in state after state. Teachers, principals, administrators in California, for example, are said to be "shell-shocked" (Brydolf, 1999, p. 24) by the proliferation of reforms, and the state's superintendents and school boards have sent a message to the governor to "back off and give the districts a break" (p. 24). Similarly, researchers at the University of California recently reported that the state needs "breathing space" after the "reform frenzy" of recent years (Associated Press, 2000, May 27). The Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) report describes

school reforms in California as "pieces of a jigsaw puzzle just dumped from the box" (Associated Press, 2000, May 27). The hundreds of new education laws and programs coming out of legislatures and governors' offices around the country may create quite a whirlwind of activity in school district offices, but these reforms appear to have done little to generate genuine participation in building school community or to address issues of civic virtue in any substantive way.

Of course, in a larger sense it is not simply the reform process that is problematic. In a close examination of the outcomes of previous school reform efforts, Tyack and Tobin (1993) address why the current institutionalized forms of schooling in the United States have been so hard to change for the past nine decades. They coined the phrase "the grammar of schooling" to refer to "the regular structures and rules that organize the work of instruction" (p. 454). These structures and rules, as evidenced in particular in the graded school and the Carnegie unit of high school credit, have remained stable despite significant and determined efforts to change them. Although considerable evidence points to the archaic nature of existing structures and rules in education, it is the reform efforts that, time and time again, have faded. Perhaps this helps explain why so many veteran teachers and school counselors appear cynical in relationship to reform: They simply no longer believe that it is possible to work in education from a stance based on "norms, policies, and practices that promote the public good through a citizenry educated to come together across differences and solve common problems in a democratic public sphere" (Oakes et al., 2000, p. 5). Reforms, like fashions, come and go. Yet little substantive change occurs, and when substantive change does occur it often lasts only as long as the determined efforts of the most vocal reformers.

In this context, we might say that if school counseling reform is to be more than complimentary rhetoric following the basic rules of the grammar of schooling, then school counselor leaders not only need to align more closely with those proposing fundamental changes in the rules but they also need to take care to sustain the reform process. As a preliminary step I suggest that reclaiming the progressive heritage of school counseling requires a more honest assessment of the role of school counseling in ideological and structural relationship to a whole set of institutional actors and forces in education. In particular, I suggest, professionalization as a force in counseling needs to be

critically reexamined and new directions for the future of counseling need to be charted, directions that build community rather than undermine it and that enhance the individual and social capacities of youth and adults rather than pathologize the challenges people face.

Perhaps, for example, the national standards need to be recognized as an action taken by organized actors working to institutionalize structural elements within education that advance the interests of professionalized helping. There is no mystery in this, as actors within institutional settings take action to put in place structural elements favorable to the actors' interests (DiMaggio,1988). These actions also fit well with larger trends of modernization. According to Scott (1987), the nation state and the professions are the two primary agents that shape modern institutions. As Scott describes it, the structures of our dominant public and private institutions are created through political contests between these two agents. Thus, the politics of the national standards and related efforts reflect actors concerned with the marginalization of school counseling as a nonessential support service (a subordinate institutional form from the standpoint of professional school counseling) locked in a political contest as the nation state works to advance its interests (at least those interests identified with corporate and global capitalism) through new structural elements in education that promote higher expectations for teaching and learning.

Clearly, ASCA and the College Board have taken actions consistent with the interests of those they represent. In this sense, they are using their organizational power quite appropriately. As Laumann and Knoke (1987) indicate, organizational actors, rather than individual actors, possess the resources needed to reshape institutions, so it is entirely fitting that the ASCA, the College Board, and others have taken prominent positions in the political contests defining the institutional forms of education for the twenty-first century. Yet, if in this scenario you begin to have some difficulty hearing the genuine voices of children, youth, and parents, then you are on the trail of the problem too often masked by the preeminence of political contests between the organizational gladiators of modern society. As we shall see, the involvement of all these experts in institutional reform, particularly reforms of human service (and, I would argue, educational) institutions, often creates a social and political environment in which the negative consequences of reform contradict the potential positive effects (McKnight, 1995). A chief

contradiction to be faced, whether or not counselors and counselor advocates like the idea of facing it, is the effect of increasing specialization in human services of all types on the community-building capacity of ordinary citizens. McKnight's (1995) critique puts the problem this way:

> The community, a social space where citizens turn to solve problems, may be displaced by the intervention of human service professionals acting as an alternative method of problem-solving. Human service professionals with special expertise, techniques, and technology push out the problem-solving knowledge and action of friend, neighbor, citizen, and association. As the power of profession and service system ascends, the legitimacy, authority, and capacity of citizens and community descend. (pp. 105–106)

Over the past 40 years, many authors have examined the emergence of experts and managers of all types, and the institutional and organizational forms that reflect their interests, as a defining characteristic of modern American history (e.g., Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Marcuse, 1964; McKnight, 1995; Roszak, 1969). As Roszak (1969) described it, "in the technocracy everything aspires to become purely technical, the subject of professional attention. The technocracy is . . . the regime of experts "or of those who can employ the experts" (p. 7). Szasz (1961) contributed significantly to the critique of psychotherapy as a particular domain of technocratic rationalization. He concluded that the popularity of psychotherapy, in all its forms, can be attributed to a "pervasive wish to deny, alter, or avoid facing up to well-defined conflicts of human interests, whether these be interpersonal, social, economic, or ethical" (p. 220). Ultimately, in Szasz's view, the problems that we all face, but that are particularly problematic for some, are the problems of human social interaction: They are problems of freedom, responsibility, and power.

As Bellah et al. (1985) saw it, the professions have been granted prominence in society because of the problem of "invisible complexity" (p. 207). In this view, people experience great difficulty making sense of both what is happening in society at large and how they relate to it. Special professions have been created to interpret the often overwhelming and paralyzing complexity and to run the society. Hence, "the therapist is a

specialist in mobilizing resources for effective action" (p. 47), and counselors and therapists of all types have proliferated as experts on the "management" of personal life.

In relationship to school counseling, the proliferation of narrowly defined experts may have been a critical factor in the effort to shift the emphasis from guidance to counseling in schools. According to Forster (1997), guidance became associated with the authoritarianism and paternalism of a bygone era, and leaders in the counseling profession saw a separation of guidance from counseling as a way to align with newly emerging paradigms of service. From another viewpoint, however, because guidance could be effectively done by virtually any educator, it may have lost favor with those advocating for the professionalization of counseling.

Whatever the case, by the late 1950s a new cultural sensitivity was emerging that called for a different approach to guiding the nation's youth. The emphasis on client-centered approaches that began to develop in counselor education programs across the country seemed to fit with the emerging cultural milieu emphasizing communication, listening, and a kind of "articulate energy" (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 123) that better enables us to handle "diverse, rapidly changing, and often demanding interaction with others" (p. 123). These are the interactions that predominate in the more impersonal and individualized social environments of the corporate culture we now inhabit. Schools play their part, of course, and large impersonal schools help prepare children and youth for a future in the community-less social landscapes of adult life. The functional differentiation of counseling from guidance, and the new emphasis on the development of a particular set of communication skills based on psychological knowledge and clinical skill rather than moral values (Bellah et al., 1985, p. 122), also fit with the emergence in popular discourse of the "expressive individualism" (p. 47) that has come to be the dominant social force defining the modern American character. Again, whereas guidance for good character is a function performed by all educators, counseling has come to be defined as a specialized activity centered on fostering a more expressive self. This activity can only be legitimately performed by, of course, professionals.

As McKnight (1995) sees it, the "professional problem" (p. 16) has three causes. First is the "inefficiency argument" (p. 18); that is, the contradiction in which more and more funding goes

into professionalized services of all types while the public perception grows that the problems defined as the jurisdiction of professionals "have consistently grown worse" (p. 19). The second cause is the arrogance and elitism of professions. As McKnight sees it, consumer revolts provide evidence of a simmering dissatisfaction with "modernized systems of assembly-line, multiservice 'care' that institutionalize the individual professional" (p. 19) but provide little genuine care. Third, in McKnight's view, is the iatrogenic nature of modern professions; that is, the tendency of "technological, specialized professionalism" (p. 20) to generate harmful negative side effects that amount to "professionally administered injury" (p. 20). One example of this is the excessive pathology labels applied to children and youth in the name of helping them.

As a specialization within counseling, school counseling has benefited from and contributed to "the united effort called professionalization" (Sweeney, 1995, p. 117). Although most effort and interest within the specialty is now focused on strengthening its position within education, McKnight's critique suggests a quite different emphasis needs consideration. In his scenario, to the degree that they promote an agenda based on excessive professionalization of roles and functions, school counselors are part of the problem and more often than not, however unintentionally, will contribute to the further weakening of communities and will generate parent and student revolt against the systems of care put in place by counselors.

Alternatives to this scenario were widely discussed in the 1960s but have been largely invisible within counseling circles in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, Vocations for Social Change (VSC) served as a "decentralized clearinghouse" for those "struggling with one basic question: How can people earn a living in America in 1969 and ensure that their social impact is going to effect basic humanistic change in our social, political, and economic institutions?" (Goodman, 1970, p. 729). In relationship to counseling and therapy, Jaffe (1973) explored the differences between "alternate services" and "established services" as experienced both by consumers and by service providers. For clients, as he saw it, "choosing an alternate service is thus based on a rejection of established services and a search for a process which is more connected with their often unarticulated values" (p. 37). The emphasis for both those providing services as well as those receiving services was on choices related to a more engaged sense of community and of opposition. The helper and

the client were engaged as equals in an effort to create a new society.

An interesting recent example of the tension between genuine caring and the professionalization of helping is provided by the newsletter of the Center for School Mental Health Assistance (On the Move With School-Based Mental Health, 2000). In a recent issue, a teen health center in Brooklyn is described as a "model for youth involvement" (Silverman & Barra, 2000, p. 3). The authors describe the center as a "strength-based approach to mental health services that focuses not on 'fixing the client' but on co-creating a program with the adolescents they serve" (p. 3). The distinction between "fixing" and "co-creating" is emphasized as a key element of the center's effectiveness. Yet when the developer of the primary method used at the center declares that his "Performance Social Therapy (PST)" is really an "anti-therapy" (p. 3), one begins to wonder. Isn't pathology implicit when youth attendance at center activities is still called "mental health visits" (p. 3) and when the primary method used in working with the youth is labeled a therapy? Nevertheless, as described in the article, this center deserves considerable credit for focusing on the strengths of youth and on inclusiveness and collective responsibility. As Silverman and Barra explain, "group members build their community and create an environment in which each of them is supported in their efforts to grow emotionally" (p. 3). At least here the professional helpers are encouraged to question the dominant paradigm in which, as the experts, they apply a pathologizing label on attitudes and behavior that only they can then fix. This kind of work offers a solid alternative to the scenario described by McKnight and others.

What position should school counselors take on these difficult issues in the coming years? Should the primacy of the professions as one of two shapers of modern institutions, and counseling's part in that primacy, be questioned? What alternatives to the present scenario might exist? The overlapping political domains of school reform and the professionalization of school counseling are complex. Critics of the present school reform agenda have noted that although the shortcomings of the American educational system turn up on virtually everyone's list of social concerns (Unger & West, 1998; Brydolf, 1999), the agenda for school reform has predominantly been shaped by those preoccupied with preparing the workforce for an emerging global economy. As an adjunctive element in the dominant reform

agenda, comprehensive guidance and counseling is required to make its case in terms of adding value to the mission of higher academic standards, and the role of school counselors becomes to provide specialized professional services tied to "student competencies" in three domains–academic development, career development, and personal-social development. Yet the comprehensive, developmentally based school guidance and counseling program that so many earnest reformers are working tirelessly to create runs the risk of becoming yet another, in McKnight's words, modernized system of "assembly-line, multiservice 'care' "(p. 19) that institutionalizes professionals, in this case, school counselors. I suggest that in this context the rush toward the professionalization of counseling represents a rightward drift from counseling's roots in the progressive reform movement.

In my view, counseling runs the risk of becoming a postliberal co-celebrant in seeking to align the education system with the entire sociopolitical-economic infrastructure being invoked for the convenience of an emerging global market economy (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2000). As McLaren and Farahmandpur describe it, postliberalism is defined by the corporate domination of society, the oppression of nonmarket forces and antimarket policies, the gutting of free public services, the elimination of social subsidies, limitless concessions to transnational corporations, the market as the patron of educational reform, and private interests controlling most of social life in the pursuit of profits for the few (p. 25).

Is it even possible at this historical moment to question the assumptions, values, and guiding principles that have dominated the past three decades? Can school counselors begin to work with students in ways that authentically engage them both in co-creating programs and building community in schools? Can school counselors help reinvoke civic virtue through the creation of a new moral discourse that supersedes the incessant "me-ness" of expressive individualism?

It is not that there is anything wrong with working to strengthen the practice of school counseling; to demand recognition by the mainstream educational establishment that professional counselors in schools enhance academic achievement, career development, and personal-social development of students; to improve the quality of the training entering professional counselors receive; or to contribute new knowledge concerning how best to help children and youth grow

and develop into mature, caring, socially responsible, economically productive, happy, and lovable adult citizens. These are worthwhile activities, and if they collectively constitute a foundation for the practice of professional counseling, then clearly professionalism does not have to be at odds with building community. The challenge is to take the best of what it means to be a professional—that is, the advanced study of some field—and put it to work in service of something. The challenge is also to balance any technical expertise one has acquired through a profession with the humble recognition that, as the Russian proverb declares, "the poor will never forgive us our help." The arrogance of much that passes for professionalism may seem like a nice escape from the "real world," but it disempowers people and promotes a cult of expertism in which only, for example, the counselors know how to fix people's problems, talk with kids, understand someone's emotions, develop plans for a future of promise, or help someone move on a little from a bad situation to a better one. What would serve us so well at this time, it seems to me, is honest conversation among counselors, counselors and teachers and administrators, and between counselors and students, counselors and parents, and counselors and counselor educators. While it cannot be foretold what would come out of such a conversation, holding it would represent something hopeful. From that conversation might emerge new directions for the professional practice of school counseling and new strategies for advancing a revised agenda for school reform.

Toward a Progressive Agenda for School Counseling Reform: Grounded Reflections on Critical Social and Economic Issues

The third domain in this analysis is the relationship between counseling and critical demographic, social, and economic issues. These issues take us outside the confines of school reform and school counseling and turn our attention to the neighborhoods, apartments, malls, parks, streets, and homes where America's children hang out and live and interact with the significant adults in their lives. As Joyce Carol Oates (1998) describes in a review of William Finnegan's (1998) Cold New World: Growing Up in a Harder Country, alarmingly high numbers of young Americans "live in poverty of varying kinds: economic, social, intellectual, spiritual" (Oates, 1998, p. 12). Her description of the modern "shadow world . . . populated by near-invisible, politically

powerless (or indifferent) Americans who have no share in our national economy" (p.13) is bound to disturb many a caring person. Yet this description needs to stand as the backdrop for our brief examination of three considerations that stand out regarding the future of school counseling: the demographics of the coming decades, issues of family and community in the twenty-first century, and wealth distribution and social fragmentation.

Demographics and Dollars

Overall, trends show a dramatically changing U.S. population. According to Melnick, (1993), demographic projections for the United States include

- The aging population phenomenon: Average life span is increasing and will continue to do so.
- A more diverse population: By 2000, 1/3 of Americans will be minorities: U.S. population growth for Asians since 1980 has reached 108%; for Hispanics, 53%; for African Americans, 13%; for Whites, 6%.
- The concentration of the population in large metropolitan areas: By 1993, 50% of Americans were living in the 39 largest metropolitan areas.

How might these projections relate to the future of school counseling? I will begin my analysis with the third trend: As the population in large metropolitan areas grows, even slightly, the effect is sprawl, or continuous development linking city and suburb into a mass of fragmented landscapes, concentrated poverty, regional malls, gridlocked freeway networks, and costly demands for expanding infrastructural elements such as police and fire services and schools (Florian, 1999). According to a recent Newsweek study (Pedersen, Smith, & Adler, 1999), "over the lifetime of a child born today, the developed area of the nation will more than double" (p. 24). By 2021, then, or roughly a quarter of the way through the average lifetime of millennium babies, the large metropolitan areas will have grown considerably, and those graduating from high school will have grown up with, and had their lives largely defined by, a social, cultural, and economic environment of sprawling development and loss of undeveloped land.

We cannot know with any certainty how sprawl will affect schools, parents, children and youth, teachers, and counselors. From the earlier age of reform, we know that the tremendous

growth in cities, overcrowding and poverty, poor sanitation and public health, and rampant crime and corruption of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century period fueled reforms in education, government, and business and industry, among others: Perhaps sprawling development will lead to another intense period of reform. From a psycho-social perspective, one wonders how Americans will respond emotionally and psychologically to the projected loss of undeveloped land? Our "wide open spaces" are as much a part of the American psyche as apple pie and baseball. How at peace will we be as a people when we are jammed further together in a tangle of fragmented landscapes, concentrated poverty, community-less malls, gridlocked freeway networks, and confusing infrastructures?

Regarding the aging of America's population, some hard political realities await school counseling. Lacking real political power, children and youth are easily overlooked, and with an aging population of adult voters, it seems likely that attention will be increasingly focused on the needs of the older segments of the population. The altruism and abiding love of grandparents and the flurry of current school reform initiatives notwithstanding, the needs of children and youth and policy questions concerning K–12 education may be quietly pushed further into the background in the years to come. Melnick (1993), for example, cites projections indicating that as the population ages, the political agenda of the nation increasingly will focus on adult health and safety issues. As a Newsweek (1990) special edition on the twenty-first century family asserted, "by 2030, the entire baby boom generation will be senior citizens. No other change in the twenty-first century will have a more profound effect on the way American society looks, feels, thinks, and behaves" (p. 3). How does increased funding for education and school counseling stand up against baby boomer senior citizens asserting their needs for adequate care and services? I suggest this will be another crucial political question throughout the first half of the twenty-first century.

The aging population and continued sprawl, coupled with a slow-changing political climate, likely will create ongoing difficulties for school funding and, within that, the funding of counseling in schools. More development will mean a continued emphasis on building new schools. This often translates into making sure there is a "seat" for each child and pushes into the background the critical questions of just what will go on within the walls of these sparkling new sites. Given the "grammar of

schooling" (Tyack & Tobin, 1993), once the bricks and mortar are set, what gets put in the building is more often than not more of the same curriculum, staffing patterns, pedagogical approaches, and views of home-school relations. For school counseling this most likely means laboring under the support service umbrella, and this means, furthermore, that when school funding falters, counselors will be at the front of the line for reductions and elimination.

The issue of diversity will be a critical one for the coming decades. Counselors must be able to interact with a broad array of diverse populations. In addition to ethnic diversity, populations inhabiting social domains such as sexual orientation, the homeless, children and youth being raised by grandparents, the religious right and faith communities in general, single parent homes (dads or moms going it alone), and a huge variety of blends of everything above, and then some, also need to be heard, interacted with respectfully, and looked to for solutions to the problems associated with the complex variety of lifestyle and situational domains that now constitute the American experience.

The changing nature of the majority-minority designation and the higher dropout rates for Hispanic and African American students will remain two of the most critical diversity issues. Regarding the minority designation, for example, by the year 2030 in Texas, nearly half the population will be Hispanic (R. Vazquez, personal communication, October, 1999). In California, by 1994 54% of the state's K–12 students were members of ethnic minority groups with Hispanic/Latino students constituting 33% of the school population (State of California Association of Teacher Educators, 1994). Given that "the students most likely to drop out of high school in the United States are Hispanic" (DiCierbo, 2000, p.1), reforms that raise standards but do not meaningfully address the issues and concerns of Hispanic/Latino youth are bound to fail. And the increasing percentages of ethnic minority students in the nation's schools indicates that reform proposals lacking in even the most basic cultural sensitivity will carry increasingly higher stakes when they fail.

Family and Community in the Twenty-First Century

Changes in the family structure have been the focus of much concern for the past 20-plus years now. We are, by now, all familiar with the basic statistical litany: an increasing percentage of single parent families; declining percentage of traditional nuclear families; and increasing variety of family forms (e.g.,

single parent, step-parent, living alone, cohabitation, surviving a spouse, etc.) (Melnick, 1993). With less than 5% of year 2000 American families likely to be constituted as the traditional nuclear family and a projected 50% increase in single parent families over the twenty year period 1980 to 2000, the numbers provide convincing evidence of fairly dramatic change.

The status of the American family has been lamented by critics from both the left and the right, and the lamentations often invoke a deep nostalgia for an allegedly lost paradise of family life (Futrelle, 1992). Yet, as Arlene Skolnick (1992) describes it, this nostalgia arises out of a misleading moralizing about the decay of the family. Skolnick asserts that the large-scale demographic and social changes impacting the family have been in motion for the past 100-plus years and reflect, not a decay, but reasonable responses by Americans to changes brought about as a result of industrialization and middle-class affluence. What American families face on a daily basis are not the simple moral truths proclaimed by "family values" advocates, but an at times dizzying array of decisions about such things as the amount of TV time and the selection of programs appropriate for children, the division of labor for the domestic work of running a household, transportation schedules for after-school activities, the homework schedule, and so forth. For economically marginalized, impoverished, or single parent families, the choices are far more constrained, and the demands of keeping the household functioning are more pressing. The political rhetoric of family values aside, there is simply no longer much shock about the alleged collapse of the family. The 1990 Newsweek special edition on the twenty-first century family reported that "as many as one third of children born in the 1980s may live with a stepparent by the age of 18" (Kantrowitz & Wingert, 1990, p. 30). Whatever the parenting configuration, on a day-to-day basis what stands out in America's neighborhoods is not the lack of values. Rather, one senses that everyone is doing the best he or she can to cope with the complexities of reconfigured families and the intensification of the invasion of market forces into family life (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1991).

Yet, alongside all this determined effort, a weariness can be detected. The tangible social supports that families need so they can function in a healthy way have eroded, and in their absence the difficulties and challenges of family life seem to have worn many of us down. With the lack of adequate child care, the increasing number of hours per week adults are spending at

work, and the lack of adequate treatment programs for adults wishing to kick drug and alcohol habits (often so that they can become better parents or can retain custody of their children), among other issues, the structural elements of daily living often stack up against a healthy family life. Here, what is at issue is governmental indifference and not the weakness of, or absence of, family values. As Hewlett and West (1998) describe it, "American policy has never been more anti-family" (p.33). Their examples include the failure to address television programming issues, the lack of a remedy to marriage penalties in the tax code, and the lack of improvement in day care quality and availability for working parents. In this context, perhaps talk about family values is attractive to politicians because it is so nebulous: One does not really need to do anything other than proclaim the importance of those values. The phrase, in other words, is useful as an ideological construct and as a mask that obscures real injustices, inequalities, and contradictions in contemporary family life. As Futrelle (1992) points out, the family values debate ensnares us in a moral discourse oddly blind to important issues of race, class, gender, and sexuality (p. 531).

Against this backdrop, what do the next few decades hold in store for families, and how might school counseling be positioned in this scenario? On the surface, the challenges families face would seem to provide a huge boost to the case for school counseling. The fragmentation of lives that is so often cited as a consequence of the "weakened" family is an invitation to guidance and counseling provided by professionalized helpers of all sorts, including school counselors. If the busyness of adult lives makes it extra difficult for parents to cover all the bases in helping our children develop good character and learn to uphold standards of personal responsibility, then isn't it a real plus to have other caring adults involved in our children's lives? If, for whatever reasons, guidance from home has broken down or is under severe strain, then how thankful we ought to be that caring, well-trained professional counselors are there to fill the void. But as any aware reader recognizes, the scenarios just described are far too often more wishful thinking than reality as accurate descriptions of the relations between parents and counseling.

During the family values debates, school counseling, like other elements in education, has been a victim of the climate of opposition between home and school. Some have even challenged the work of counselors as maliciously usurping the authority of parents to guide (American Counseling Association

[ACA], 1996). Ultimately, the family values debate that emerged in the 1980s seemed to be more about generating guilt and assigning blame than about acknowledging the large-scale changes that impact American families and promoting democratic dialogue about how best to address changing economic and social conditions. Instead of increasing parents' capacities to responsibly handle the new conditions and providing practical means for solidarity between home and school in the task of educating children and youth, school reform policies have led to increased pressure on educators to do more in relationship to academic achievement. Many parents, in particular single parents and poorly educated working-class parents, have felt that they are being blamed for not providing family environments conducive to learning. In response, as parents were pressured to take more responsibility for the success of their children, they in turn expected more from the schools. From a public policy and fiscal standpoint, neither side was provided with the resources adequate to the tasks they were being assigned.

This scenario often resulted in a hardening of tensions between home and school. This tension has been reflected in political battles such as that over the proposed 1996 Parental Rights legislation. In this instance, counselors were set up as a target for all the frustrations parents were feeling toward the educational system. Indeed, because the legislation supported parents suing counselors if they offered guidance "in any way contrary to the parents' views and preferences" (American Counseling Association, 1996, p. 3), the ACA Advocacy Kit pointed out that one simple solution for districts fearful of litigation from parents "would be to end all guidance and counseling services for students" (p. 3).

Clearly, an alternative to this litigious milieu would be cordial and respectful home-school relations. Yet, when an emphasis on home-school collaboration can be found, it often seems glib and without real substance. In California, for example, although legislation was passed to better prepare educators, including counselors, to establish "effective, collaborative partnerships between educators and families" (Dear, 1998, p. 1) and the rhetoric of "family-school partnerships" abounds in the state's official "education news" (California Department of Education, 1997, p. 2), the practical elements for addressing the issues that lead to tensions between schools and families often cannot be found. Rather, the "concept of family-school

partnerships [as] a comprehensive approach to connecting families and schools to support student learning" (p. 2) amounts to a kind of ideological exhortation for everyone to work harder to enjoy the "benefits" of greater collaboration. Despite the "overwhelming evidence that family involvement in the education of children is critical to effective schooling" (California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 1997, p. 7), the structures and public policies for facilitating authentic involvement seem to elude school officials, governors, and legislators over and over again. In part this is undoubtedly because the conditions of family life work against having this partnership take on anything other than a symbolic, ideological meaning. Given all the other pressures on them, most parents simply do not have time to partake of the "potential benefits" (California Department of Education, 1997, p. 2) of the partnership.

School counselors, in the coming decades, have an opportunity to work collaboratively with parent and community groups to define new directions for home-school collaboration. This collaboration, I suggest, will involve advocacy for major state and federal policy changes concerning the relationship between schools and communities as well as specific program reforms at the local level that foster more authentic interaction between homes and schools. Current policy initiatives at the state level are often worse than Band-Aid approaches: they provide the paper cover for the Band-Aid, but when you tear open the cover, there is frequently nothing inside. From a political standpoint, Hewlett and West's (1998) call for a national parent movement whose objective would be to "retake some of the ground lost to the influence of popular entertainment, poverty, governmental indifference, and public hostility" (Johnson, 1998, p. 20) is a concrete and realistic alternative. As currently defined by the educational technocrats, home-school collaboration still smacks of condescension, and school counselors could work to change this.

Wealth Distribution

Perhaps in no area is the importance of connecting the future of school counseling with an activist stance more evident than in the domain of wealth distribution in the United States. The growing urgency of concern about the living wage as a family issue is one result of the growing gap between the haves and have nots in American society. (Living 125 miles south of Los Angeles, the city with "the widest gap between rich and poor of

any major American city" [Candaele & Dreir, 1999, p. B9], is a powerful reminder of this issue.) By 1999 the average family income in the top 5% of the earnings distribution stood at more that 19 times that in the bottom 20% (Lardner, 2000). This gap was up from 10 to 1 in 1979 to 16 to 1 in 1989. The 1999 figure was the largest gap since the U.S. Census Bureau began compiling this statistic and stands as the highest income gap of the world's advanced industrial nations (Lardner, 2000). In terms of the concentration of wealth, 1% of the U.S. population holds approximately 40% of the nation's household wealth (Lardner, 2000).The bottom 20%, it should be noted, contain more than five million children (Kozol, 1990).

The gap in income and wealth is increasingly recognized as a social problem (Lardner, 2000). As Jonathan Kozol (1990) put it in the 1990 Newsweek special edition on the twenty-first century family, "The willingness of the nation to relegate so many of [the] poorly housed and poorly fed and poorly educated children to the role of outcasts in a rich society is going to come back to haunt us" (p. 48). Even from a middle-class perspective, as a Newsweek article puts it, in the midst of "one of the greatest economic booms in U.S. history . . . many of us are feeling a little grumpy" (Bryant, 1999, p. 37). Yet adult angst is only secondarily our concern. In education, the financing of schools reflects the disparities in wealth, and as the trend of economic segregation continues (Lardner, 2000), we can anticipate an intensification of the disparities between schools serving the affluent and those serving the poor. In the words of a seventh grader attending a run-down California urban school: "I feel like I'm someone bad to go to a bad school like this" (Associated Press, 2000, May 22).

What are the overall implications of these projections and trends in demographics, family and community life, and wealth distribution for school counseling? First of all, cross-cultural skills and competencies for counselors and second-language capability will continue to be crucial considerations. The demographic projections are convincing evidence that our schools will be ever more diverse settings. The adults in these settings must have a whole set of skills, awareness, and knowledge regarding this diversity. Yet there are deeper aspects of this issue that cannot be adequately responded to simply in terms of counselor skill development, and counselors need awareness and knowledge that goes far beyond the focus of current training. McLaren (1999) has suggested, for example, that all educators learn from the work of the late Brazilian educator Paulo Freire. Recognized as a

controversial thinker and radical activist who had a deep understanding of the interrelatedness of education and social and economic transformation, Freire asserted throughout his career that "educational change must be accompanied by significant changes in the social and political structures in which education takes place" (McLaren, 1999, p. 49). I suggest that study of Freire's work and the closely related work of many others in the area of critical pedagogy is an important direction for school counselors and counselor educators to take in the coming years.

The themes of parents, students, and educators working together to achieve the goals of education and authentically valuing the family are intertwined. As Hewlett and West (1998) point out, if we really want to value the family, we need public policy that provides a living wage, adequate health and child care, and adequate parental leave. Without the specific policies, all the additional training of educators and all the exhortations to parents to collaborate will not make a difference. I suggest that these issues will continue to dominate public discourse about education and families, and they will be at the core of the relationship between school counseling and the family as well. To strengthen the relationship with families, counselors need to become strong advocates for the kinds of movements called for by West and Hewlett. As they indicate, the "economic facts of family life preclude a return to traditional structures" (p.122), and school counselors should work together to avoid positions that reinforce nostalgic notions of family or inadvertently reinforce the redomestication of women.

Indeed, demographics impact policy indirectly, after they have been filtered through the values, beliefs, and interests of various political actors (Welner & Mickelson, 2000; Lipman, 1998). As part of developing an increased political awareness, counselors can begin by more explicitly aligning their values, beliefs, and interests with programs and policies that benefit those marginalized by the current agenda of school reform. This also will necessitate participating in the articulation of an alternative future, one tied to real lives in real communities rather than to a Disneyesque global culture of shopping malls, superficial media, and theme park lifestyles. Putting counseling skills at the service of genuine dialogue with children, youth, parents, and other educators simply seems more personally and socially worthwhile than continuing to push the obsessive professionalization and rampant pathologizing that lie just beneath the surface of most school counseling today.

Opening up a more authentic dialogue about values, beliefs, and interests may take us in unexpected directions, but this step seems a precondition to reconnecting with a progressive heritage. For example, I recall the words spoken by a respected legislator here in California (a strong supporter of education) in a conversation with two university counselor educators advocating for a bill mandating school counseling in California. (I was one of those advocates, and the senator's words have stuck in my mind.) The legislator listened calmly and then asked two simple questions: "How much will it cost?" and "Where will the money come from?" Upon hearing the answer—"$350 million a year, and it will be new money"— the legislator replied, "That, my friends, will be a hard sell."

Why was this "sell" so hard? Why was it harder than, say, selling the $3.6 billion annual budget of the California Department of Corrections (CDC)? In fact, while California sleepwalked through a 20-year decline in support for school counseling, the prison budget trebled in the 10 years from 1987 to 1997 (Parkes, 1997). This despite research showing that so-called "intermediate sanctions" (such as house arrest and electronic monitoring), appropriate for as many as a quarter of California's new prisoners, could save as much as $14,000 of the $22,000 annual cost of incarcerating one person in the state (Parkes, 1997). The CDC has been confident enough of its future funding to request 17 more California prisons. Clearly, the difficulty of the "sell" had to do with more than simply the value-for-dollar of prevention versus incarceration. Perhaps California as the "Golden State of Jails" (Parkes, 1997, p. 1) is a preview of the coming safety issues agenda of an aging population? Whatever the case with this particular example, whatever the sudden temporary enthusiasm for counseling in the wake of tragic events at schools (e.g., "More Counselors Needed," 1999), and whatever the current temporary good fortune for school counseling based on sudden economic upturns, given the trends discussed, I suggest that the "sell" for school counseling will not become significantly easier in the coming 20 years without a fundamental reconceptualization of education (e.g., Oakes et al., 2000; Glasser, 1992) and of school counseling's role within this reconceptualization.

Summary and Conclusion

School reform is a quintessentially American enterprise: We love to tinker toward opportunity for all and success for all who work hard (Unger & West, 1998). Yet when one looks beneath the surface of our contemporary tinkering, as we have seen, the view can be troubling.

The trends and projections I have examined inform us about the momentum of daily living: They help us understand in a larger sense what is happening around us. They also can assist with planning ahead by informing us about what can only be dimly perceived on the horizon and providing a basis for calculating the resources needed to respond to emerging challenges. Although the numbers alone will not tell us just what will happen in the next 20 or so years, they may indicate the parameters within which public policy debates take place, the likelihood of one particular type of institutional change taking precedence over other types, and they may illuminate the political choices faced by those interested in a progressive agenda for school counseling. As Scott (1987) reports, the nation state and the professions likely will remain the primary shapers of modern institutions. Yet institutional actors working within the structures of professionalized helping can help or hinder the emergence of new consciousness among those being helped, and to do this these actors must have a keen sense of the values and beliefs that inform their efforts.

In the post-Columbine environment of late twentieth-century American education, it was easy to find headlines stressing "more counselors needed in schools" ("More Counselors Needed," 1999, p. 5). This was quite a change from the anxious moments of the late 80s through the mid-90s, when some asked "is it possible for counselors to remain an integral part of the educational system, or are they, like the rain forest, disappearing forever?" (Anderson & Reiter, 1995, p. 268). Was it merely the tragic shootings at campuses around the country that has brought the change about? I suggest that although this dramatic new expression of profound anger, opposition, and alienation has a lot to do with the newfound appreciation of the counselor, far more has been at work. Among the formal and informal networks of influence in education, the political processes of school reform have posed a threat to, as well as opened up opportunities for, the professionalized helping provided through school support services. As "institutional entrepreneurs" (DiMaggio, 1988),

school counselors have acted reasonably in asserting a position on school reform that advances the professional interests of school counseling and seeks to move it out of a subordinate institutional position and into a central, if not dominant, position. Yet, perhaps because of the primacy of concerns over institutional jockeying for position, present school counseling advocacy efforts do not adequately challenge the limits of the current school reform agenda. Something larger is needed, and I suggest that school counseling reestablish its intellectual, theoretical, and spiritual ties to the progressive reform heritage out of which it emerged nearly a century ago. Without this effort, school counseling will most likely serve as a handmaiden for a reform agenda that marginalizes the issues faced by our most disadvantaged children and youth and that blindly follows a global corporate agenda that intensifies income inequality and removes all constraints from a corporate elite that is expanding and consolidating its hold all over the world.

I have offered a brief political analysis of the future that stands humbly in the face of a veritable firestorm of bad news for children and youth preceded, and followed, by a sad litany of societal indifference and by evidence of limited vision and contradictions on the part of those guiding current reform efforts in education. Yet my view is not an antistandards position: I simply question the extent to which we want to camp out on that doorstep. As a recent guidance leadership document puts it, "every aspect of education has to be accountable in terms of student outcomes" (National Consortium of State Career Guidance Supervisors, 1999, p. 2), and in a sense this is the wave of the future. For school counseling and guidance, the new national standards provide a yardstick by which states, school districts, and schools can measure the extent to which their utilization of school counseling and guidance is in keeping with the practices identified through research as most likely to yield positive outcomes for students, teachers, parents, and all other stakeholders in education. In addition, for districts not currently utilizing school counselors, the standards provide a time-and-effort-saving framework and organizational tool for broadening and deepening reform efforts underway in those districts. In particular, higher standards can realistically lead to increased achievement when district reform efforts are broadened to include, in addition to the two components of improved instruction and better managed schools, a third component, equally as fundamental, that addresses comprehensively

enabling learning by lowering barriers that interfere with development, learning, and teaching (Center for Mental Health in Schools, 1999) and that increases the number of students finishing school with the "academic preparation, career awareness, and the personal/social growth essential to choose from a wide range of substantial post-secondary options, including college" (Campbell & Dahir, 1997, p.1).

Moments of sweeping historical change do occur, and there is much evidence to suggest that we may be approaching one of those historical crossroads in which the prevailing order of things is fundamentally altered. The challenge is to avoid the momentary fun of wishful thinking based on the notion that because we are entering a new century, things will somehow be magically different. Rather, we have the responsibility to engage in careful reflection on what changes are occurring and on the implications of these changes for, in this instance, school counseling. My hunch is that the immediate period beyond the millennium promises to be one in which the tensions among the "enduring institutional forms" (Tyack & Tobin, 1993 p. 453) of modern American education; the "shadow world" (Oates, 1998) of nearly invisible and politically powerless Americans with its crush of economic, social, intellectual, and spiritual poverty; the intensification of problems arising from the barriers to learning faced by increasing numbers of students; and the jarring transformations associated with economic, political, and environmental global change will continue to rise. I believe it will take more than two decades before the full scope of global change impacts America's schools, and hence, school counseling. Thus there is time for rethinking our direction and for taking steps that go beyond strengthening the position of school counselors as organizational actors in the broad political contests that are redefining the institutional forms that education will take in the twenty-first century. In addition to engaging on existing infrastructural battlegrounds (probably an inevitable occurrence given the overall position of professionalization within American society), I suggest that school counselors also need to reach out in bold new ways to students, parents, and communities, not merely in times of tragedy and grief but through the quiet daily work of raising consciousness and forging a new sense of common purpose as Americans.

The questions we face are both personal and political. How do we get through, in the words of singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen, this historically "shabby moment" (Iyer, 1998, p. 68) in

which people are simply "holding on in their individual way to an orange crate, to a piece of wood, and we're passing each other in this swollen river that has pretty well taken down all the landmarks, and pretty well overturned everything we've got" (p. 68).

Robert Heilbronner's (1980) *An Inquiry into the Human Prospect* was an early, and somber, look ahead. His "updated for the 1980s" edition began with "an oppressive anticipation of the future" (p. 12). Heilbronner was concerned not only with the nature of the external challenges to the human prospect but also, and perhaps more important, with our individual and collective capacities for response to the threats. The "civilizational malaise" (p. 19) Heilbronner wrote of had as much to do with the human spirit as it did with such elements as economic crises, world demographics, the prospect of nuclear terrorism, global warming, and other confidence-shaking events. The hope he saw, limited as it appeared to be in the 1980s, could be found in the exercise of individual responsibility. Now, some two decades later, it remains increasingly too easy, in the face of mounting economic, environmental, and global political problems, to answer "who cares" to the question of "what's to be done?"

In my view, reestablishing a progressive agenda for the future of counseling, and for school counseling in particular, means fostering a sense of critical consciousness among counselors and among those they serve. In Freire's views concerning educators and liberation, literacy was the crucial vehicle for the development of a "critical consciousness" among the poor, and it was from this consciousness that new personal meanings as well as common purpose among the oppressed could be created (McLaren, 1999). In this context, perhaps it is in the domain of a kind of emotional literacy that counselors will be able to help children, youth, and parents better articulate their views of what's needed to improve schools and better address the contradictions that have left our educational institutions tied in knots or chasing their tails.

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