



Mapping Knowledge: A Survey of U.S. Educational Historiography

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Abstract

The following paper provides an overview of the primary themes that have shaped American educational historiography. It rests on the notion that when guided by an awareness of our past, we can better understand the windows of opportunity available to impact the present. This paper is by no means a definitive statement on U.S. educational historiography. The aim is simply to contribute to an on-going academic conversation, to better understand the manner in which knowledge in our field has spread, and further contemplate how our field might progress over time.

Keywords: *history of education, foundations of education, education, historiography, teacher preparation, teacher training, education and society*

Introduction

Peter Burke helped us to understand the value in studying the manner in which knowledge spreads.¹ To understand the peculiarities of the present it is important to review the trends in perspective that have developed over time. Examining central themes in the history of education allows us to understand the manner in which the field is a network and a type of epistemological community in which knowledge is constructed, diffused, and how it evolves over time. Furthermore, understanding these trends can allow contemporary and future historians to ask new questions about the past.² In March of 2000 the Spencer Foundation gathered 40 U.S. historians of education to discuss trends and to facilitate historians asking these new questions about the past.³ Participants discussed issues such as race/ethnicity, gender, higher education, policy and so forth.⁴ Nonetheless, some of the last thorough essays on educational historiography in the U.S. were written in the 1970s.⁵ This work seeks to build on these earlier works, as well as the more recent contemplation on future directions, with a broad survey of the field. In doing so, this paper

1. Peter Burke, *A Social History of Knowledge: From Gutenberg to Diderot, Based on the First Series of Vonhoff Lectures Given at the University of Groningen (Netherlands)*, (Malden, Mass.: Polity Press 2000). 4.

2. *Ibid.*

3. Ruben Donato and Marvin Lazerson, "New Directions in American Educational History: Problems and Prospects," *Educational Researcher* 29, no. 8 (2000).

4. *Ibid.*

5. Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "Education: Its History and Historiography," *Review of Research in Education* 4 (1976); Douglas Sloan, "Historiography and the History of Education," *ibid.* 1 (1973).

reveals the need to challenge the boundaries of thought that have traditionally defined the field and to reinvent frameworks relevant to the political struggles impacting the field of education.

The history of education is not a simple homogenous category, it consists of multiple histories.⁶ There are, however, recurrent themes that have emerged and developed over time. The aim of this paper is to make us more conscious of the knowledge system in which the history of education operates by examining prominent themes that have developed and changed over time. This includes, as McCulloch has instructed us to examine, the field's strategic location in relation to education, history, and the social sciences.⁷ We must remember that the history of education is a contested field of study, a site of struggle, and highly relevant to an understanding of broader issues in history, education, and society.⁸ McCulloch suggests the gravitational pulls of education, history, and the social sciences have tended to destabilize the field. He also argues, however, that the field has benefited from scholars building on an enhanced sense of this unstable past.⁹ This work, therefore, seeks to examine some of the main themes in U.S. educational historiography.

The first major theme is the role of educational history in academia and teacher preparation. The second section considers the critical examination of public schools, the role of bureaucracy in the formation of public schools in the U.S., and the focus on class bias in public education. The third major theme is the influence of social issues in educational history. The paper ends with some closing thoughts on future directions for the field of educational history.

In Teacher Education, Textbooks, & Social Foundations

One of the most prominent themes regarding educational historiography is the professional development of teachers. As Lawrence Cremin states, "One of the oldest and most respected studies in the professional education of American teachers is the history of education."¹⁰ He goes on to suggest that during the twentieth century the history of education was a 'necessary ingredient' of teacher preparation and dominated the field.¹¹ Archibald Anderson also notes that prior to 1900 the history of education was one of the most commonly offered courses for teachers.¹² While the training of teachers has been a prominent theme in the history of education, teachers as historical agents is not a prominent theme of historical research.¹³ One theory for this neglect is the factor of gender bias in educational historiography as noted in the chapter *Teachers*

6. Gary McCulloch, *The Struggle for the History of Education*, 1st ed., Foundations and Futures of Education (London, England: Routledge, 2011).

7. Ibid.

8. Peter Cunningham, Clyde Chitty, and Wendy Robinson, "The Struggle for the History of Education," *History of Education* 41, no. 5 (2012).

9. McCulloch, *The Struggle for the History of Education*, 114.

10. Lawrence A. Cremin, "The Recent Development of the History of Education as a Field of Study in the United States," *History of Education Journal* Volume VII Number 1(Fall 1955): 1.

11. This theme is supported by: H. G. Good, "Rise of the History of Education," *ibid.* 8, no. 3 (1957). Donald W. Russell, "The Status of the History of Education in the Teacher Education Curriculum," *ibid.* 1, no. 4 (1950).

12. Archibald W. Anderson, "Is There a Functional Role for the History of Education in the Training of Teachers?," *ibid.*, no. 2 (1949): 58.

13. This point is made by: Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "Saints, Sinners, and People: A Position Paper on the Historiography of American Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (1975): 265-67. Some notable examples are: Willard S. Elsbree, *The American Teacher: Evolution of a Profession in a Democracy* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1970)., and: Wayne J. Urban, *Gender, Race, and the National Education Association: Professionalism and Its Limitations* (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2000).

and the *Male Mystique* by David Tyack.¹⁴ Tyack notes that “hierarchical organization of schools and the male chauvinism of the larger society fit as hand in glove.”¹⁵

Although educational history has enjoyed periods of relative prominence, most historians note that since the First World War, the history of education as a professional discipline in universities and colleges has declined in importance.¹⁶ Bruce Wesley, for example, refers to this as a catastrophic decline.¹⁷ According to Lawrence Cremin, the history of education remained “among the frequent professional offerings” in teacher instruction until its peak in 1925, after which it began to fall off.¹⁸ Many authors note the decline in the status of the history of education in colleges of education at a time when paradoxically there was a massive increase in the number of institutions offering teacher-training programs, the social foundations of education grew as a field of inquiry, and the history of education gained professional status. For instance, Cremin posited this decline may be attributed to an increase in demand for “the practical value in professional curriculum and the contention that history of education failed to serve this value.”¹⁹

In the 1940s, the social foundations of education developed as a component of teacher education spread from the Teachers College at Columbia to other schools around the country. The most significant impact this had was in The College of Education at the University of Illinois.²⁰ This included an emerging generation of educational philosophers along with educational historian Archibald Anderson. Cremin also contributed to the professional formation of the history of education by forming the History of Education Society and History of Education Journal, which by 1961 became the History of Education Quarterly.²¹ In 1968, Division-F (History and Historiography of Education) was added to the American Educational Research Association.²² Despite this professional development, the significance of the field had declined. In 1957, for example, The Ford Foundation sponsored a committee of American scholars to explore the historical role of education in the development of American society. Their conclusion was that the history of education had been “shamefully neglected by American historians.”²³ Historians of education, however, were purposely snubbed from the committee with the assertion that “too much of it [the field of educational history] is parochial, anachronistic, and out of touch with main currents of contemporary scholarship.”²⁴ The field also lost influence in teacher training programs. This factor inspired a variety of responses among educational historians; notably the call “to consider the history of education in the context of a host of other agencies engaged in education.”²⁵

14. David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974), 60.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Lawrence A. Cremin, "The Recent Development of the History of Education as a Field of Study in the United States," *History of Education Journal* Volume VII Number 1(1955): 1.

17. Edgar Bruce Wesley, "Lo, the Poor History of Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1969): 331.

18. Cremin, "The Recent Development of the History of Education as a Field of Study in the United States," 5-8.

19. *Ibid.*, 8.

20. Sol Cohen, *Challenging Orthodoxies: Toward a New Cultural History of Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 15.

21. *Ibid.*, 21-22.

22. *Ibid.*, 23.

23. *Ibid.*, 4-5.

24. *Ibid.*, 6.

25. *Ibid.*, 6.

There are different reasons given for the decline of educational history in the preparation of teachers. Stephen Rich, for example, attributed the problem to textbooks in the history of education. He suggests that textbooks “do not properly relate education to the social order of each epoch under consideration” and pay “insufficient attention to the actual practical problems of teaching.”²⁶ While Bailyn and Cubberly wrote the most influential textbooks in the field by the mid-twentieth century, they had, according to Sol Cohen, a “promising future and a disappointing present.”²⁷ Edward Power believes textbooks in the history of education have perpetuated several myths, and suppressing these myths may help elevate the history of education to a deservedly significant role in college and university teacher-education programs.²⁸ He believed these myths span from antiquity to the influence of religion in universal education. Stuart Noble presents an extensive criticism of textbooks,

The main fault I find with most textbooks in the history of education, and with thesis and treatises in general, is that they are too narrowly conceived. The older textbooks in American educational history, for instance, were largely accounts of schools and of school administration. The curriculum was only briefly considered and the educative process, which is the heart of the whole matter, was touched upon only in passing. This process of education in any given period cannot be understood apart from its social setting. One must see the moving panorama of people, their motives and interests, their manners and customs, their religion and philosophy, their weaknesses and their strength, if one would understand the educative process in its true perspective.²⁹

Frederic Lilge notes his displeasure with texts in the history of education and specifically those like “Cubberly’s text written in the fact-collecting tradition of scholarship.”³⁰ This led a committee on the foundations of education comprised of scholars and administrators to claim that, “history of education courses are too often presented in traditional text-book manner with no chance for philosophizing or problem solving.”³¹ The criticism of textbooks also represents a difference of opinion regarding the subject matter and basis of historical content. For example, Perdew stated, “many textbooks reveal adherence to outmoded scientific and historical concepts and fail to make use of the best results of modern scholarship in the fundamental disciplines.”³² Although some of the criticism textbooks is legitimate and justified, it’s also emblematic of a more widespread attack on those in the humanities and social sciences seeking to influence the ethical dimensions of education.

The history of education was attacked by prominent figures in academia. James Conant, for example, attacked social foundations with his 1963 publication of *The Education of American*

26. Stephan Rich quoted in: Cremin, “The Recent Development of the History of Education as a Field of Study in the United States,” 9.

27. Cohen, *Challenging Orthodoxies: Toward a New Cultural History of Education*, 5.

28. Edward J. Power, “Persistent Myths in the History of Education,” *History of Education Quarterly* 2, no. 3 (1962): 143.

29. Stuart Noble quoted in: Archibald W. Anderson, “Bases of Proposals Concerning the History of Education,” *History of Education Journal* 7, no. 2 (1956). p. 45. Also see: Stuart G. Noble, “The Relevance of the History of Education to Current Problems,” *ibid.* 1(1949).

30. Frederic Lilge quoted in: Archibald W. Anderson, “Bases of Proposals Concerning the History of Education,” *ibid.* 7(1956): 46.

31. *Ibid.*, 47.

32. *Ibid.*, 49.

Teachers.³³ He suggested that courses in this area “frequently attempt to patch together scraps of history, philosophy, political science, sociology, and ideology.”³⁴ Conant suggested the elimination of foundations courses, stating that give education departments a bad name.³⁵ Conant stated that foundations courses were often “of limited value” and that “the discipline of psychology is...more closely related to the work of teaching than are philosophy, history, and sociology.”³⁶ In 1949, Archibald Anderson acknowledged what he believed were the primary charges made against the history of education; that the work is valueless because it is theoretical; that the aims, materials, and methods have failed.³⁷ Many educational historians have been equally critical of their profession’s historiography. Bernard Bailyn’s 1960 publication of *Education in the Forming of American Society* sharply criticized the main currents within the field as “parasitic literature created by a powerful ‘academic ecclesia’ to inspire and revere a newly self-conscious profession.”³⁸ He notes the longstanding neglect of educational history by social and intellectual historians, and suggests that historians are capable of giving educational history more relevance and a place within the public domain. Other historians of education supported this view. Archibald Anderson, for example, claimed that while there was an influence by historians such as Cubberly and Monroe, so-called ‘mainstream’ historians and professional historical organizations, such as the American Historical Association, remained unaware of the history of education.³⁹

Another primary factor noted for the decline in the role and significance of educational history was the growing influence of science and scientific research in the field of education. This factor is related to the mental measurement movement as seen with intelligence and achievement testing. An additional factor was the emphasis on child development in education. This led to the notion that the most valuable and relevant training for teachers would be determined scientifically in fields such as psychology. Both Cremin and Bruce Wesley noted the influence of scientists such as Binet, Thorndike, Goddard, and Terman on the decline of the history of education.⁴⁰ Many scientists in the early-to-mid twentieth century promoted science as a panacea. For example, in 1910, Thorndike wrote,

A complete science of psychology would tell us every fact about everyone’s intellect and character and behavior, would tell us the cause of every change in human character, would tell the result which every educational force—every act of every person that changed any other or the agent himself—would have. It would aid us to use human beings for the world’s welfare with the same surety of the result that we now have when we use falling bodies or chemical elements.⁴¹

33. Cohen, *Challenging Orthodoxies: Toward a New Cultural History of Education*, 23.

34. *Ibid.*, 23.

35. Cohen, *Challenging Orthodoxies: Toward a New Cultural History of Education*, 23.

36. James Bryant Conant, *The Education of American Teachers*, 3rd ed., Carnegie Series in American Education (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 129-32.

37. Anderson, "Is There a Functional Role for the History of Education in the Training of Teachers?," 65-67.

38. Bernard Bailyn quoted in: Jennings L. Wagoner, Jr., "Review: Historical Revisionism, Educational Theory, and an American Paideia," review of Public Education by Cremin, Lawrence A.

Traditions of American Education by Cremin, Lawrence A., *History of Education Quarterly* 18, no. 2 (1978): 201.

39. Edgar Bruce Wesley, "Lo, the Poor History of Education," *ibid.* 9, no. 3 (1969): 336.

40. Cremin, "The Recent Development of the History of Education as a Field of Study in the United States," 2-3.

41. E. L. Thorndike quoted in: *ibid.*, 3.

The notion that science would provide the most valuable and useful information in child development grew in popularity over the mid-to-late twentieth century. As Cremin notes, it was believed, and perhaps still is, that science “would reveal what to teach.”⁴² Furthermore, several historians of education came to embrace the scientific method as applied to historiography. This, however, did not necessarily increase the validity of the field. Freeman Butts in the *Emerging Task of the Foundations of Education* (the report of the Committee on Social Foundations, NSCTE), points to the following criticism,

the history of education has been taught in a systematic chronological way that often failed to relate the past to the present and failed to indicate the meaning of historical generalizations for the present. Much of this emphasis stemmed from an overly academic view of historical research that borrowed its methods from the physical sciences and was concerned only with facts for their own sake to the exclusion of their meaning for present problems.⁴³

These forms of criticism led to a move away from trying to replicate scientific methodology in historiography. Archibald Anderson noted, “there seems to have been some diminishing in the frequency with which the History of Education is charged with being too theoretical as the over-emphasis on the ‘scientific’ and technical aspects of education, so typical of the 1920s, has declined.”⁴⁴ As Edgar Knight stated,

The right of the past to be heard in discussions of problems of the present is perhaps as clearly established in the field of professional education as anywhere else. Probably nowhere else is history a stronger ally of science than in this field. Even the highly confident use of alleged scientific method in educational effort in this country during the past few decades seems sooner or later to invoke the aid of history in facing problems which the science of education has promised to solve. There may yet remain in the kind of education most human beings need in these days of divided aims some qualities and elements that are not subject to laboratory proof.⁴⁵

The influence of science as a validation of useful forms of knowledge, and the growth of educational psychology over the twentieth century has been a complex issue for educational historians. The modern role of scientific notions about aptitude and ability seen in the deficit model became a focus of inquiry for recent historians of education.

Various authors use the decline of the history of education as leverage for different approaches and concerns. In response to the declining significance of the history of education several authors made suggestions for changes within the field. Archibald Anderson, for example, begins his essay on the role for the history of education in the training of teachers by stating the principles he believes the history of education should be based on. The first is content, or enriching the experiences of the educator. The second principle is broadening or extending the depth or horizon of a teacher’s perception.⁴⁶ This includes the idea of situating ‘men in time’, which incorporates the reconstruction of experience, problem solving, and the use of the method of intel-

42. Ibid.

43. Archibald W. Anderson, "Bases of Proposals Concerning the History of Education," *ibid.* 7, no. 2 (1956): 45.

44. *Ibid.*, 48.

45. Knight quoted in: *ibid.*, 62.

46. "Is There a Functional Role for the History of Education in the Training of Teachers?," *ibid.* 1(1949): 65-66.

ligence. In addition, Anderson makes an interesting insight, noting the shift and tension between the roles of educational history in the service of the 'academic' verses in the 'training' of teachers. Cremin concluded one of his essays on teacher training suggesting that historians of education needed to explicitly detail the contribution they could make to the field and follow through in the service of teachers.⁴⁷ Sol Cohen, in his overview of the history of the history of education, suggested that university staff want to be 'useful', but goes on to ask to whom, with what aim, interest, or purpose.⁴⁸ Although there is often push for uniformity in educational historiography, Sol Cohen states, "I think history of education has persevered because there have always been historians of education who have resisted having their function defined by colleagues or institutional pressures and have found different ways of being useful in the professional program."⁴⁹

Contemporary historians have researched the influence of science on education, which has become a fruitful field of inquiry for educational historians.⁵⁰ Although, traditionally, science has been a problematic issue in educational historiography, many contemporary historians of education are optimistic about the relationship between history and the social sciences, as well as interdisciplinary approaches to historical inquiry. Maxine Sellers, for example, states, "Historians of education have built intellectual bridges between history and other disciplines, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, economics, demography, history of childhood and the family, American studies, women's studies, and ethnic studies."⁵¹ Maxine Greene states, "we obviously need to confront the difficult question of the discipline's significance in teacher education."⁵² She suggests that historians of education became too interested in their professional public image as opposed to their role in teacher education. She advocates the role of explanatory history over descriptive history.⁵³ The role of explanatory paradigms is derived from a connection between history and other social sciences. This connection is intended to allow the history of education to deal with relevant social issues, and therefore more relevance for teachers. Greene states, "relevance is still the crux of the matter where the determination of professional significance is concerned; but relevance, to me signifies relevance for the individual teacher or the teacher-to-be not simply utility, and certainly not utility in enhancing the status of the profession."⁵⁴

More recently, Kate Rousmaniere has taught us about the contrast between the noisy complex world of teaching and the silence about it in the history of education.⁵⁵ The world of the teacher is still open territory for historians of education. The historical study of teaching as a profession was shaped by the gravitational pull, in the relation of the field to colleges of education. The relationship of educational historians to teacher development and colleges of education was also impacted by the emergence of a critical examination of public schooling.

47. Lawrence A. Cremin, "The Recent Development of the History of Education as a Field of Study in the United States," *ibid.* Volume VII Number 1(1955): 35.

48. Cohen, *Challenging Orthodoxies: Toward a New Cultural History of Education*, 4.

49. *Ibid.*, 26.

50. For an example see: Clarence J. Karier, Paul C. Violas, and Joel H. Spring, *Roots of Crisis: American Education in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago,: Rand McNally, 1972).

51. Maxine Schwartz Seller, "Boundaries, Bridges, and the History of Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1991): 196.

52. Maxine Greene, "The Professional Significance of History of Education," *ibid.* 7(1967): 182.

53. *Ibid.*, 183.

54. *Ibid.*, 184.

55. Ian Grosvenor and Martin Lawn, "Ways of Seeing in Education and Schooling: Emerging Historiographies," *History of Education* 30, no. 2 (2001).

Public Schools, Bureaucracy, & Class Bias

One of the most significant changes that shaped our modern educational system was the shift from religious and private control over education to the bureaucratic and institutional growth of public schooling. This became a primary focus in the history of education in the 1970s and 80s. Bureaucracy is composed of administrative staff that deals with the organization of the school and the curriculum.⁵⁶ Critics argue the major goal of bureaucracy is to expand its numbers, protect its members, and gain revenue.⁵⁷

The first wave of new historians to study education did not want to limit education and their frame of reference to the institutional growth of public schools. Cremin, for example, sought to move the history of education toward a much broader conception, in which education and public schools were conceived as naturally interwoven in the fabric of American society.⁵⁸ This includes various social institutions and organizations. Jennings Wagner wrote of Cremin that his “main concern, of course, is to encourage historians and others to adopt a conception of education which considers not only formal schooling but the entire range of agencies and associations which educate, a range which would include but in no way be limited to the influence of family life, churches, synagogues, libraries, museums, summer camps, benevolent societies, agricultural fairs, settlement houses, factories, radio and televisions as well as various forms of printed media.”⁵⁹ Cremin and Bailyn sought to move educational historiography toward social and intellectual history.⁶⁰ In a chapter in *Public Education* titled ‘Toward an Ecology of Education’ Cremin puts-forward a theoretical framework to analyse both the contemporary and historical dimensions of education.⁶¹ His framework on educational historiography raises questions regarding periodization, chronology, continuity, demarking historical time, as well as location as an issue that runs through much of the theorizing on educational historiography. Maxine Seller, for example, asks the question, “What happens to the history of education, in the United States or any other country, when we conceptualize national boundaries as bridges rather than barriers?”⁶² Other historians further the consideration of the relation between schools and society, but in a different manner.

Michael Katz in *The Origins of Public Education* traces the social, cultural, intellectual, and political development aligned with the formation of organized public schooling.⁶³ He suggests that those who have criticized the traditional historical narrative and metaphor have un-

56. Joel H. Spring, *Conflict of Interests: The Politics of American Education*, 5th ed. (Boston, Mass.: McGraw-Hill, 2005), 182.

57. *Ibid.*, 183.

58. For more see: Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Knopf, 1961)., *The American Common School: An Historic Conception*, Teachers College Studies in Education (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951)., and *American Education: The National Experience, 1783-1876*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

59. Wagoner, "Review: Historical Revisionism, Educational Theory, and an American Paideia." p. 205. Other historians support this more open conception of educational historiography, for example: Edwards Newton, "Social Forces in American Education," *History of Education Journal* 1, no. 2 (1949). Thomas Woody, "Fields That Are White," *ibid.* 2, no. 1 (1950).

60. Wagoner, "Review: Historical Revisionism, Educational Theory, and an American Paideia."

61. Lawrence A. Cremin, *Public Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

62. Seller, "Boundaries, Bridges, and the History of Education," 1.

63. Michael B. Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," *ibid.* 16, no. 4 (1976).

fairly been lumped under the single label of 'revisionists'.⁶⁴ He suggests the criticism that has been directed at 'revisionism' is political because it presents an antagonism to existing educational structures.⁶⁵ He points out that even those who are critical of the so-called revisionists agree that historians of education over the last decade have "dealt a devastating blow" to the traditional narrative, and even these historians can no longer return to a "simple narrative of the triumph of benevolence and democracy."⁶⁶ An example of the narrative Katz rejects can be seen in the writing of Harry Good, who states that historians of education should "demonstrate the continuity and progress of educational endeavors" as "the synthesizing function."⁶⁷ Even in the 1950s historians claimed that "historically a public school is a common school freely and equally open to all races, classes, and creeds in our society" as well as "our public common schools have played a large part in preventing the growth of rigid class outlooks and divisions in American society."⁶⁸

Regarding the bureaucratic development of public schooling, Katz offers three approaches to educational history centred on why, how, and the results. He centers on the first question of why, linking the history of education to its social context.⁶⁹ The four developmental aspects in this case are industrialization and urbanization, the assumption of the state's responsibility for social welfare, the invention of institutionalization as a solution to social problems, and the redefinition of the family.⁷⁰ According to Katz, this links the economy, social order, and schooling to what he calls 'incipient bureaucracy' or the strong regulatory role for the state in the area of social welfare and morality, as well as the function of taxation, experts, and a responsibility to legislation.⁷¹ The manifestation of these various factors, according to Katz, can be seen in the proliferation of schools, mental hospitals, prisons, and alms houses.⁷² Lawrence Cremin provides some level of support to this thesis by acknowledging the influence of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station in the 1920s.⁷³ Cremin also notes the influence of capitalism and the business model and principles influencing education in the twentieth century.⁷⁴ He also suggests that from 1933 to the present the economic depression created a 'profound change' in the thinking of the American people. This led to a reconsideration of industry and a social criticism of the capitalist system emerged. Ultimately, this created new perspectives on our social and economic organization.⁷⁵

Much of the change related to the bureaucratic development of public education, according to Katz, can be seen through intellectual history as the ideological changes regarding the conceptions and boundaries shaping family structures in the nineteenth century. One example is the 'cult of true womanhood' and the 'feminization of teaching' which both worked to redefine the role of women in the public and private sphere.⁷⁶ The 'feminization of teaching' was a com-

64. *Ibid.*, 381.

65. *Ibid.*

66. *Ibid.*, 382.

67. Harry Good quoted in: Cremin, "The Recent Development of the History of Education as a Field of Study in the United States," 10.

68. R. Freeman Butts, "Our Tradition of States' Rights and Education," *ibid.* 10, no. 1/4 (1959): 216.

69. Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," 384.

70. *Ibid.*

71. *Ibid.*, 384-85.

72. *Ibid.*, 385.

73. Cremin, "The Recent Development of the History of Education as a Field of Study in the United States," 2.

74. *Ibid.*, 3-5.

75. *Ibid.*, 19-21.

76. Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," 388-89.

ponent of the common schools, which were coeducational, yet these schools were viewed as a ‘nurturing’ environment, and thus women were allowed to work in the educational sphere as it was an extension of family life, considered a women’s traditional place.⁷⁷ During this period, women’s pay for teaching was low, as women took over the role of educating children in their early years. Other historians have noted the unprecedented political significance that women and the family-unit provided for both moral training and discipline in the U.S.⁷⁸ Katz suggests that the declining role or disappearance of ‘communities’ led to a reliance upon the state to innovate systems of order and regulation.⁷⁹ This was compounded by the widespread belief in a growing threat of crime, poverty, lawlessness, pauperism, and immigration.⁸⁰ These issues drew Katz’s attention to another major theme in educational history.

Assimilation is seen as one of the major issues in the history of education. Katz provides the example of Irish immigration in the nineteenth century, as well as the emphasis upon punctuality, regularity, docility, and the deferral of gratification.⁸¹ For example, the Common Schools were overwhelmingly Protestant, although they were claimed to be nonsectarian, which caused Catholics to begin their own network of parochial schools.⁸² Katz suggests that through school systems the habits of the population could be transformed to match the emerging social and economic order.⁸³ He states, “public school systems existed to shape behaviour.”⁸⁴ The issue of social and economic order became linked to a fear of idle young people. This also connects the school system to hegemonic social ideology, or as Katz says to be “concerned more with morality than minds.”⁸⁵ This also ties into the basis for compulsory education, which according to Clarence Karier was mediated through a notion of social crisis, a degeneration of the social body through the lack of proper habit, and mental development.⁸⁶

Another example of the bureaucratic growth of schools is seen in the work of David Tyack, who notes that more decentralized control in the early nineteenth century gave Black citizens more control over the appointment of teachers, the way money was spent, and curriculum. The growth of centralized control had many negative outcomes, such as the relegation of Black students into the lowest vocational tracks and diminishment of Black teachers.⁸⁷

Katz argues that historians have employed a simple paradigm of pre-industrial –to-industrial and rural –to-urban development in educational history. In contrast, he centers his focus on the spread of capitalism with the continual need for a labor force, and labor power as a commodity.⁸⁸ A major ideological element in the bureaucratic development of the modern school system is meritocracy. Lewis Terman, Goddard, Thorndike, and other scientists provided justifi-

77. Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, *American Education: A History*, 3rd ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004).

78. See: Jill K. Conway, "Perspectives on the History of Women's Education in the United States," *History of Education Quarterly* 14, no. 1 (1974). p. 4., as well as, Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

79. Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," 392.

80. *Ibid.*, 292-93.

81. *Ibid.*, 394-95.

82. Urban and Wagoner, *American Education: A History*, 105.

83. Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," 396.

84. *Ibid.*, 399.

85. *Ibid.*, 403.

86. For more see: Karier, Violas, and Spring, *Roots of Crisis: American Education in the Twentieth Century*.

87. David B. Tyack, "Growing up Black: Perspectives on the History of Education in Northern Ghettos," *History of Education Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1969): 290.

88. Michael B. Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," *ibid.* 16, no. 4 (1976): 390.

cation for the meritocratic ‘necessities’ of testing and tracking.⁸⁹ According to Katz, the idea of meritocracy became the norm among historians and failure reflects individual responsibility as opposed to the system itself. This connects the school system to the role of legitimizing the existing social order.⁹⁰

Responding to the same type of criticism noted by Katz against those who challenged the traditional narrative of progress in educational history, Clarence Karier provides a detailed analysis of the philosophy of history and presentism.⁹¹ From this perspective, historians do not regard the notion of researching and writing history in response to contemporary questions and issues as inherently flawed. In response to the accusation of presentism, and the idea that history has potential for social change, Paul Violas stated,

acknowledging this fact, however, does not mean that the historian has license to make the past perform whatever tricks are necessary to support his vision of the appropriate future for his present. When the historian’s construct does not adequately account for the evidential data or must warp, omit, rewrite, or pretend that the historical actor did not mean what he clearly said, then we usually can agree that the historian’s construct needs reformulation or that his history is really propaganda.⁹²

Karier rejects the belief among some historians that any form of socially relevant or critical history is a form of presentism. He wrote that for us, “To argue further as some have that we should not write a critical history of progressive education because it undermines public support of the schools today is clearly an abuse of presentism.”⁹³ The relationship between history and the present has been a complex issue for educational historians.

Many within the field of educational history have attacked the historiography of those labelled ‘radical revisionist.’ Sol Cohen suggests that while radical revisionist historians of the 1960s saw urban schools as an instrument of social control for dominant elites, other historians have pointed to widespread support and participation of the working class in education development and reform.⁹⁴ Urban and Wagoner suggested that Katz’s argument that the wealthy maintained social control of lower classes through use of the Common School, is made with tenuous evidence.⁹⁵ In addition, some historians maintain a primarily positive view of schools. A primary critic of the so-called ‘radical revisionists’ was Diane Ravitch, who separated ‘revisionists’ into two groups, characterizing Cremin and Bailyn as moderate and Katz, Karier, Violas, Gintis, Bowles, and Spring as radical.⁹⁶ She claimed that revisionists have an inability to meld their dual commitment to liberty and equality. This includes a commitment to spontaneity, freedom, and individuality along with the urge for schools to pursue equality as an outcome or goal.⁹⁷ Ham-

89. Floyd Morgan Hammack, "Review: Rethinking Revisionism," review of *The Shaping of the American Educational State* by Karier, Clarence

Reason and Rhetoric: *The Intellectual Foundations of 20th Century Liberal Educational Policy* by Feinberg, Walter, *ibid.*, no. 1: 54.

90. Michael B. Katz, "The Origins of Public Education: A Reassessment," *ibid.*, no. 4: 401.

91. Clarence H. Karier, "The Quest for Orderly Change: Some Reflections," *ibid.* 19, no. 2 (1979).

92. Paul Violas quoted in: *ibid.*, 160.

93. *Ibid.*, 161.

94. Cohen, *Challenging Orthodoxies: Toward a New Cultural History of Education*, 36-59.

95. Urban and Wagoner, *American Education: A History*.

96. Joseph F. Kett, "Review: On Revisionism," review of *The Revisionists Revisited: A Critique of the Radical Attack on the Schools* by Ravitch, Diane, *History of Education Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (1979).

97. *Ibid.*, 230-31.

mack also critiques ‘revisionism’ and specifically Clarence Karier’s *The Shaping of the American Educational State* and Walter Feinberg’s *Reason and Rhetoric: The Intellectual Foundations of 20th Century Liberal Educational Policy*.⁹⁸ Hammack finds fault with both authors’ work and ‘revisionism’ in general. He wrote that, “Karier does not go far beyond the statement that America is a racist, elitist, materialistic and classist society.”⁹⁹ Hammack further suggested that Feinberg neglected historicity in favour of an ethical critique of liberalism.¹⁰⁰

Some of the historians who are critical of ‘revisionist historians’ still appreciate the contribution they have made to educational historiography. George Kneller in 1967 acknowledged, “the increased sophistication of recent studies, particularly as achieved by the revisionist.”¹⁰¹ Others, like Joseph Kett, suggest the debate over revisionists, “underscores the role ideology has played in forcing historians to consider new questions.”¹⁰² He suggests an over emphasis by both parties to stress the economic and social factors undermining the significance of culture and the function of transmitting culture.¹⁰³ Kett wrote that, “the new history is properly concerned to discover what really happened rather than what past philosophers and administrators wanted to happen.”¹⁰⁴ Though the move from the intensions of administrators is positive the idea of discovering ‘what really happened’ is an outdated remnant of historical positivism. Jettisoning notions of ‘discovery’ and ‘what really happened’ are essential for the advancement of educational historiography.

According to contemporary historians, bureaucracy remains a pertinent issue and there have been controversial political responses including home schooling, school choice, privatization, and charter schools.¹⁰⁵ These ideas supposedly allow schools to operate outside the control of state and local bureaucracy, effectively increasing diversity and innovation in instruction and organization.¹⁰⁶ This question of ‘public’ verses ‘private’ has been an on-going issue in educational historiography.¹⁰⁷

Contemporary Issues & New Directions

Some of the common social issues taken-up by historians of education are economic growth, social mobility, social reform, and social/political values. In addition, the theme of social issues in educational historiography is shaped around the history of those excluded or marginalized in the traditional ‘mainstream’ currents of education and educational research. For some historians these questions and issues are interrelated. Victoria Maria MacDonald notes, “contempo-

98. Clarence J. Karier, *Shaping the American Educational State: 1900 to the Present* (New York: Free Press, 1975). And, Walter Feinberg, *Reason and Rhetoric: The Intellectual Foundations of 20th Century Liberal Educational Policy* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1975).

99. Hammack, "Review: Rethinking Revisionism."

100. *Ibid.*, 59.

101. George F. Kneller, "Response to Professor Butts," *ibid.* 7, no. 2 (1967): 181.

102. Joseph F. Kett, "Review: On Revisionism," review of *The Revisionists Revisited: A Critique of the Radical Attack on the Schools* by Ravitch, Diane, *ibid.* 19(1979): 233.

103. *Ibid.*, 234.

104. *Ibid.*

105. Spring, *Conflict of Interests: The Politics of American Education*, 187.

106. *Ibid.*, 190.

107. See for example: Butts, "Our Tradition of States' Rights and Education; *ibid.*

rary social, political, economic, and educational issues raise the troubling question of why Hispanic-American history remained neglected for so long."¹⁰⁸

The notion of orienting the history of education toward relevant social issues is an ongoing theme when addressing the relevance to society and the professional development of teachers. Stuart Noble states in *The Relevance of the History of Education to Current Problems*, "I wish to conclude as I began by asserting my conviction that the history of education is a liberal rather than functional study, and depreciating the present tendency to use it only as it may contribute toward the solution of current school problems."¹⁰⁹ Thomas Woody wrote that we must, "let a problem of the present day be the point of departure, and make it the centre about which pertinent historic experience is integrated."¹¹⁰

As stated, many historians found the growth and influence of the social sciences useful for educational history. Freeman Butts, for example, suggested in 1967 that a genuine renewal in the history of education required "the need for constructing a vital and viable conceptual framework suitable alike to the requirements of historical scholarship and to the findings of recent social science scholarship devoted to the fundamental study of social change."¹¹¹ He also notes that education has become a central factor in the alignment of political, economic, and social forces in contemporary US.¹¹²

By the late 1960s, social issues began to drive the changes in educational historiography.¹¹³ The 1960s and 1970s are noted as the golden era of history connected to significant social movements.¹¹⁴ Other historians disagree with this notion. Edward Power writes that, "Neither history nor the history of education has any commission to identify personal or social goals for us, or to formulate contemporary guiding principles or devise present-day practices."¹¹⁵ Other historians feel differently, and have theorized new approaches to social issues. The question of cross-cultural education, for example, has been taken-up under the ethno-historical approach.¹¹⁶ Michael Coleman who researched American Indian children and Irish children suggests that the process of triangulation can 'prove objective truth'.¹¹⁷ Other historians see a need for varying approaches.

David Tyack suggests an appraisal of the history of education regarding northern black ghettos.¹¹⁸ He points out that almost no mention of northern black education appears in the pri-

108. Victoria-Maria MacDonald, "Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or "Other"?: Deconstructing the Relationship between Historians and Hispanic-American Educational History," *History of Education Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (2001): 365.

109. Stuart Noble quoted in: Anderson, "Bases of Proposals Concerning the History of Education"; Stuart G. Noble, "The Relevance of the History of Education to Current Problems," *ibid.* 1(1949).

110. Thomas Woody, "Fields That Are White," *ibid.* 2, no. 1 (1950): 14.

111. R. Freeman Butts, "Civilization-Building and the Modernization Process: A Framework for the Reinterpretation of the History of Education," *History of Education Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (1967): 151.

112. "Our Tradition of States' Rights and Education," 211.

113. The discussion of these issues began in the 1950s among some. See: Henry Neumann, "Should History of Education Be Scrapped?," *ibid.* 1, no. 4 (1950).

114. Donato and Lazerson, "New Directions in American Educational History: Problems and Prospects," 4.

115. Power, "Persistent Myths in the History of Education," 141.

116. Michael C. Coleman, "The Responses of American Indian Children and Irish Children to the School, 1850s-1920s: A Comparative Study in Cross-Cultural Education," *American Indian Quarterly* 23, no. 3/4 (1999).

117. *Ibid.*, 84.

118. Tyack, "Growing up Black: Perspectives on the History of Education in Northern Ghettos."

mary works in educational history.¹¹⁹ Tyack suggests that an appraisal of African American education cannot be carried out with traditional historiography and sources. He states, “one will need to try to see the school in its social context, from the black man’s point of view.”¹²⁰ He suggests the need for a psychological aspect to the history of education that can bring a voice to feelings and experiences.¹²¹ In addition to Tyack, Ronald Butchart suggests the historiography of African American education offers different interpretive and analytical frameworks for writing history.¹²²

Building on the aforementioned factors, Charles Payne highlighted the considerable thought required when considering source material and methodology.¹²³ He states, “Intellectual elitism has less to do with explicit feelings about race, gender, and class than with the kind of general models available to scholars, the kinds of questions that will flow from those models, and the background assumptions scholars bring to their work, assumptions about the nature of social structure and political change.”¹²⁴ This indicates the need to go well beyond a focus on topics and subject matter, to consider new theoretical frameworks available as the field expands its focus. Many scholars noted the significance in developing new frameworks when studying the dimensions of race, ethnicity, religion, class, section, and gender.¹²⁵ Victoria-Maria MacDonald, for example, notes a need for revised methods and sources related to the history of Hispanic education in the United States.¹²⁶

The need for new theoretical frameworks notwithstanding, several historians of education have found methods to document the experience of individuals who struggled for literacy and education.¹²⁷ For well over a century, for example, a select number of historians have traced the struggle of the African-American community for education.¹²⁸ This includes the struggle for lit-

119. An exception is the work of Horace Mann Bond; See: Horace Mann Bond, "The Role of the History of Education in Understanding the Struggle for Equalizing Educational Opportunity," *History of Education Journal* 1, no. 3 (1950).

120. Tyack, "Growing up Black: Perspectives on the History of Education in Northern Ghettos," 292.

121. Ibid.

122. Ronald E. Butchart, "'Outthinking and Outflanking the Owners of the World': A Historiography of the African American Struggle for Education," *ibid.* 28(1988).

123. Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

124. *Ibid.*, 439.

125. Clifford, "Saints, Sinners, and People: A Position Paper on the Historiography of American Education," 257.

126. Victoria-Maria MacDonald, "Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or "Other"?: Deconstructing the Relationship between Historians and Hispanic-American Educational History," *ibid.* 41(2001).

127. Examples include: James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988)., Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom*, The John Hope Franklin Series in African American History and Culture (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005)., Christopher M. Span and James D. Anderson, 'The Quest for Book Learning: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom', in: Alton Hornsby, *A Companion to African American History*, Blackwell Companions to American History (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005)., and: Christopher M. Span, "'I Must Learn Now or Not at All: Social and Cultural Capital in the Educational Initiatives of Formerly Enslaved African Americans in Mississippi, 1862-1869'," *The Journal of African American History* 87(2002).

128. This point is made by: Butchart, "'Outthinking and Outflanking the Owners of the World': A Historiography of the African American Struggle for Education," 334. He notes some of the following examples: Carter Godwin Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861*, The American Negro, His History and Literature (New York,: Arno Press, 1968)., W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negro Common School: Report of a Social Study Made under the Direction of Atlanta University; Together with the Proceedings of the Sixth Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, Held at Atlanta University on May 28th, 1901*, Atlanta University Publications, (Atlanta, Ga.,: University

eracy in the antebellum and postbellum periods, how the law and social conditions shaped the educational opportunities of African Americans, and how historians have recorded and analysed this history.¹²⁹ The historians who sought to document this history often did so against a racist mainstream in educational historiography. Victoria-Maria MacDonald notes that Cubberley in *Public Education in the United States*, which sold over 100,000 copies by 1941, incorporated scientific racism into his historical account.¹³⁰ In his book, Cubberley describes eastern Europeans as “largely illiterate, docile, lacking in initiative, and almost wholly without Anglo-Saxon conceptions of righteousness, liberty, law, order, public decency, and government.”¹³¹ The educational historians in the 1950s who criticized Cubberley’s textbook for its relevance to the field, generally failed to note this fact. MacDonald also notes Cubberley’s view of assimilation and education as a hegemonic force and ‘solution’ to the United States immigration burden.¹³² As previously stated, one of the most significant issues in the history of education is assimilation. A major issue regarding assimilation in schools is the issue of language and literacy. This issue took different forms, for example the physical and psychological punishment that accompanied the removal of Native American language in boarding schools over the twentieth century.¹³³

Conclusion

The major themes of teacher training, bureaucracy, and social issues are interwoven and interrelated. They have been the focal point for various historians and gained prominence at various times. The most persistent issue is change within the field, as well as uncertainty and concern for the historical significance and future relevance. Rather than considering the field of U.S. educational historiography as having passed through various developmental milestones, perhaps it's more fruitful to consider the themes examined in this paper as fluid, on-going concerns for educational historians. These recurring themes are not inherently problematic, however the tendency to confine the focus of the field to a limited domain or to function solely as the handmaiden of disciplines that become fashionable in the field of education. In addition, a survey of the past reveals that educational historians should be involved in on-going debates, discussions, current political struggles, and deliberation on future directions. The survey of past educational historiography indicates that the field’s strategic relation to other disciplines impacts its developmental trajectory by revealing trends in perspectives over time. Therefore, historians of education must be prepared to take part in debates arising in the social sciences. McCulloch suggests, for example, the field must be interdisciplinary including cultural studies, and history.¹³⁴ He suggests, the field must avoid becoming a pale imitation of the constituent parts and focus on

press, 1901). And, Horace Mann Bond, *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (New York,: Prentice-Hall, inc., 1934).

129. See: Christopher M. Span and James D. Anderson, The Quest for “Book Learning”: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom, in: Hornsby, *A Companion to African American History*.

130. MacDonald, "Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or "Other"?: Deconstructing the Relationship between Historians and Hispanic-American Educational History," 386.

131. Ellwood Patterson Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States; a Study and Interpretation of American Educational History; an Introductory Textbook Dealing with the Larger Problems of Present-Day Education in the Light of Their Historical Development* (Boston, New York [etc.]: Houghton Mifflin company, 1919), 485-86.

132. MacDonald, "Hispanic, Latino, Chicano, or "Other"?: Deconstructing the Relationship between Historians and Hispanic-American Educational History," 386.

133. Coleman, "The Responses of American Indian Children and Irish Children to the School, 1850s-1920s: A Comparative Study in Cross-Cultural Education," 87-89.

134. McCulloch, *The Struggle for the History of Education*, 115.

instead on becoming a broad coalition.¹³⁵ Ellen Langman notes that the relevance to contemporary social concerns must be more than just a string of dates, facts, and vignettes.¹³⁶

Many scholars note the need for a wider range of approaches, those that go beyond narrow institutional and national accounts. In addition, scholars suggest the need to examine contemporary globalization in the rapidly changing world in which we now live.¹³⁷ Furthermore, there is a movement to use new sources in educational history to facilitate these broader contemporary examinations.¹³⁸ One examples would be collaborative efforts to expand the domain of primary source materials to include images of schooling leaving open questions about interpretation and meaning.¹³⁹

McCulloch suggests that there is a future for the history of education if new opportunities are pursued. One potential new opportunity is a focus on how educational history can inform our understanding of contemporary reform movements and policy. James Leloudis notes that educational history can be a remarkable tool for thinking about policy, though educational historians often have a hard time finding a voice in policy debates.¹⁴⁰ In a tradition of continued influence for the 'practical value' in teacher education, history may lose out to a technical development approach. In addition to contemporary reform movements, there are ways in which various influences merge to shape scholarship. One example is the manner in which feminist scholarship of the 1990s shaped work related to teacher education.¹⁴¹ Another under examined illustration of the potential for a convergence of influences to shape educational historiography in disability studies. Kate Rousmaniere, for example, has shown how disability studies can provide an analytical framework to examine how female teachers were situated within the socially constructed binaries of normal/abnormal, able/disabled, and so forth.¹⁴²

Scholars argue that this theme still remains under-researched, and remains one to be reinvigorated.¹⁴³ There are other under-researched topics in educational historiography that have the potential to merge contemporary reform movements and policy with contemporary civil rights movements. One such example, would be examining experiences relevant to LGBTQ history in education.¹⁴⁴

Mapping knowledge is generally a challenging undertaking. Problems of classification, the identification of themes, and the establishment of patterns are difficult. The attempts at these undertakings often merge our curiosity with a crisis of knowledge that arises with floods of new information. When guided by an awareness of our past, we can better understand the windows of

135. Ibid.

136. Ellen Langman quoted in, *ibid.*

137. Roy Lowe, "The Changing Role of the Academic Journal: The Coverage of Higher Education in History of Education as a Case Study, 1972–2011," *History of Education* 41, no. 1 (2012).

138. Ian Grosvenor, "Back to the Future or Towards a Sensory History of Schooling," (Routledge, 2012).

139. Ian Grosvenor, Martin Lawn, and Kate Rousmaniere, *Silences & Images: The Social History of the Classroom*, History of Schools and Schooling (New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999), Conference Publication

140. Leloudis quoted in: Donato and Lazerson, "New Directions in American Educational History: Problems and Prospects," 5.

141. Joyce Goodman and Ian Grosvenor, "Educational Research—History of Education a Curious Case?," *Oxford Review of Education* 35, no. 5 (2009).

142. Kate Rousmaniere, "Those Who Can't, Teach: The Disabling History of American Educators," (2013).

143. David Crook, "Teacher Education as a Field of Historical Research: Retrospect and Prospect," *History of Education* 41, no. 1 (2012).

144. Karen Graves, "'So, You Think You Have a History?': Taking a Q from Lesbian and Gay Studies in Writing Education History," (2012).

opportunity available to impact the present. This paper is by no means a single definitive statement on U.S. educational historiography. The aim is a contribution to an on-going academic conversation, to better the manner in which knowledge in our field has spread, and to further contemplate how our field might progress over time.

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