The Concept of Policy Paradigm:
Elaboration and Illumination

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Using the educational system of the Irish Republic as the cultural setting, the concept of policy paradigm as an analytical tool for use in policy studies in education is developed.   Policy paradigms are defined as frameworks embodying linguistic, normative, and epistemic dimensions, among others, that govern the policy process.   Three characteristics of the concept of policy paradigm — its components, regulatory power, and change — are described and illuminated in relation to those aspects of the Irish educational system that have been highlighted by cultural strangers. This exploration also facilitates an assessment of the contribution of cultural strangers to educational change in an indigenous culture.

Et se référant au système d'éducation de la république d'Irlande comme cadre culturel, le concept de politique d'encadrement est utilisé en vue d'étudier les politiques éducationnelles en cours. Les politiques d'encadrement sont définies comme des cadres qui comprennent entre autres, les dimensions linguistiques, normatives et épistémiques.   Trois caractéristiques du concept de politique d'encadrement — ses composantes, son pouvoir de règlement, son changement — sont décrites et illustrées en relation avec les aspects du système d'éducation irlandaise mis en lumière par des observateurs étrangers.   Cette exploration facilite l'évaluation de la contribution d'observateurs étrangers au changement éducationnel dans un autre culture.

In this article the concept of policy paradigm is introduced in the context of the educational policy process of the Irish Republic and the substantive issues considered there are used to facilitate its refinement and elaboration for use in educational policy studies. The issues selected for analysis are drawn from those that have been raised by cultural strangers in their commentaries on Irish education since it is under the scrutiny of those who

are culturally distant from an educational system that its paradigms are most likely to be exposed and made available for analysis.

Policy Paradigm

Paradigm is used here in the manner in which it has been introduced to the social sciences under the influence of Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). While a succinct definition is unlikely to do justice to Kuhn's formulation, with one reviewer claiming to have identified 22 different meanings in the text (Masterman, 1970), the idea of a model or a framework is a useful starting point for the purpose of this analysis. Policy is considered in its process dimension rather than in relation to the substantive elements of particular educational policies. The establishment of priorities for educational development is a distinguishing feature of this process, without which policy, as an organizing concept, becomes too diffuse and lacking in discriminatory power. If educational policy is to be set aside from education, the procedures by which one option for educational change is favored over another seem an adequate basis for differentiation, while avoiding the paralysis that can follow from over-definition. Even when there is a recognizable policy decision to be analyzed this definition allows for immediate and remote, as well as antecedent and posthoc, developments to be considered.

Policy paradigms, therefore, are frameworks that govern the policy process. They embody linguistic, normative, epistemic, empirical, and methodological dimensions: They regulate what is to be defined as a meaningful problem; how it is to be thematized and described; what is to be considered worthy as data; who is to be recognized as a legitimate participant, and with what status; and how the policy process is to be enacted, realized, and evaluated.

Policy paradigms are powerful regulatory forces in the generation and enactment of policy. Their boundary maintenance function, by which terms, themes, problems, data, and personnel are excluded from consideration, is a critical feature of their regulatory power. As Kuhn (1962) himself puts it:

One of the things a scientific community acquires with a paradigm is a criterion for choosing problems that, while the paradigm is taken for granted, can be assumed to have solutions. To a great extent these are the only problems the community will admit as scientific or encourage its members to undertake. Other problems, including many that had previously been standard, are rejected as metaphysical, as the concern of another discipline, or sometimes as just too problematic to be worth the time. A paradigm can, for that matter, even insulate the community from those socially important problems that ... cannot be stated in terms of the conceptual and instrumental tools the paradigm supplies. Such problems can be a distraction. (p. 37)

Policy paradigms can assume an ideological status that makes them difficult to effectively question or challenge and their hegemonic force can be such that they are considered to coincide with the limits of normality and common sense (O'Sullivan, 1989).

Cultural Strangers

Cultural strangers take a variety of forms — disaffected locals, tourists, missionaries, and anthropologists, to name but a few. By the fact of their location within a different culture they bring with them a set of expectations, categories of knowledge, and interpretations that may well differ from those of the native culture. The extent of this cultural divergence will depend on geographical propinquity; social and economic context; and linguistic, religious, and political differences — in fact any of those characteristics which give a culture its distinctive conceptual, paradigmatic, and ideological contours. While the perils of being a cultural stranger are best known anecdotally through travellers' tales with all their humorous, perplexing, and revealing undertones, they have been most systematically documented through the experiences of anthropologists. In making sense of another society there is the inevitable temptation to interpret the new culture in terms of the assumptions and logic of one's own culture. This can take the form of using culture-bound tests, misinterpreting symbols and practices, and making inappropriate assessments. Within this weakness lies the peculiar function of the cultural stranger as an agent for illuminating a culture to its participants. A feature

of the humanistic sociology as espoused by Berger and Berger (1976) is its encouragement of participants in a social encounter to develop an artificial sense of strangeness, a cultural withdrawal, or alienation in a positive sense for the purpose of illuminating the hidden and taken-for-granted features of daily life which otherwise remain part of the unexposed cultural fabric. "Familiarity breeds not so much contempt as blindness," say Berger and Berger (1976, p. 94). The uncompromisingly alien view of the cultural stranger can challenge us to "exoticise the domestic" by disrupting our "relation of intimacy with modes of life and thought which remain opaque ... because they are too familiar" (Bourdieu 1988, p. xi) and thus help us to see our culture and our relationship to it more clearly and fully.

The cultural strangers selected for analysis include an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) sponsored survey team, an economist from the United States, A. Dale Tussing, and two Canadian historians, Donald H. Akenson and E. Brian Titley. Not all of these are by background cultural strangers. While the members of the OECD survey team were Irish, they are conventionally represented as working to an OECD defined agenda of issues and research problems. Brian Titley, although born and educated in Ireland, appears to have been able to achieve a sufficient sense of cultural distance from Irish educational consciousness to justify inclusion. In their commentaries on Irish education these cultural strangers cover a wide range of issues — the function of the educational system in relation to the economy, the financing of education, questions of equality and justice, and the role of religion and the Roman Catholic Church (henceforth referred to as the church). I begin with a brief overview of educational change in these areas in recent decades and then proceed to use the detail of this change to describe, extend, and illuminate the concept of policy paradigm.

Cultural Strangers and Irish Educational Change: An Overview

Economists and economic ideas have constituted a major force for change in Irish education in recent decades. Their most significant contribution was the introduction of the human capital paradigm to Irish educational policy making in the late 1950s. According to this

interpretation of schooling, education was investment in people which would increase industrial efficiency and output and generally invigorate the economy (Breen, Hannan, Rottman, and Whelan, 1990). Up to that point the dominant understanding of Irish education had been within the personal development paradigm. This stressed the function of schooling as character and religious formation achieved by means of a broad curriculum comprising general subjects rather than occupationally-specific areas of study (Mulcahy, 1981). With the personal development paradigm it was the pedagogue — a teacher, frequently religious — who was accorded the status of authority.

The OECD report *Investment in Education* (IIE) published in 1965 contributed to this paradigmatic shift though not, as might be expected of a cultural stranger, through illumination, confrontation, and cultural interrogation. Rather, IIE functioned to extend the human capital paradigm beyond the consciousness of Department of Finance officials and their advisors to encompass the main partners with an interest in educational policy — Ministers for Education, Department of Education officials, teachers, and parents (O'Sullivan, 1992a). Expressions of anxiety and reservation about the emerging dominance of the human capital paradigm never amounted to sustained or mobilized contestation (O'Connor, 1986). To communicate within the policy community it was necessary to deploy the discourse of IIE. This discourse evolved, having coupled itself to the careerism of the personal development paradigm, to embody a commercialized view of schooling and a vocationalization of the curriculum (Lewis & Kellaghan, 1987). At present, there is evidence that a marketization of education is emerging with very novel implications for the local politics of schooling (National Economic and Social Council, 1990).

New themes were incorporated into the commercialized view of schooling as a result of Tussing's (1978, 1981, 1983) contribution to Irish educational debate. These included distinguishing between the private and public benefits of education, arguing that the public funding of schooling should be guided by explicit principles, and characterizing existing funding

arrangements in terms of elitism, class stratification, and the reproduction of inequality (O'Sullivan, 1992b).

The role of the church in Irish education has changed significantly since the 1960s. The numerical representation of religious personnel within their own secondary schools has dropped from over a half to about one-tenth and lay principals are increasingly being appointed (Costello, 1991). There has been a level of self-interrogation and reflection within the church itself which amounts to a legitimation crisis about its role in education and which is in stark contrast to the dogmatic assertions about the primacy of the church in the control of education which were routine in official church discourse up to the 1960s (*Future Involvement of Religious in Education*, 1973). The ideological leanings, on social and economic as well as on educational issues, of the bishops, religious associations, and church bodies have moved to the left at a time when Irish politics has become increasingly conservative (O'Shea, 1990). Akenson (1975) and Titley (1979, 1983a, 1983b) had written critically of the church's narrow conservatism, its monopoly in education, and its control over the consciousness of the Irish in general and, in particular, their legislators. Yet their contribution to these changes has been minimal. The forces which led to a relaxation of the regulatory span of the paradigm have been indigenous to Irish society or from within the international church (O'Sullivan, in press).

Policy Paradigm: Elaboration and Illumination

The concept of paradigm has much in common with the constructs formulated by a number of writers within educational, social, and philosophical studies — Mezirow's perspectives, Foucault's epistemes, Bourdieu's habitus/field, Lakatos's research programs, Hesse's networks, and Quine's webs of belief (Fay, 1987). Paradigm has the merit of already being well known in educational studies and is routinely used by way of description. What is now required is an elaboration of the concept.

I am mindful that paradigm is being used here in much the same way as the concept of ideology is sometimes used in social analysis. In drawing on the concept of ideology it has been very difficult to avoid its association

with "false consciousness." This is true even of those theorists who actively set themselves against such a positivistic stance whereby it is considered possible to specify which world views are misrepresentations, distortions, or false (Apple, 1979; Giroux, 1983). Furthermore, there is the ensuing implication of enslavement and manipulation. One is a victim of ideology which acts in the interests of those who have power in society whose creation, however unconsciously, ideology is. Policy paradigms make no such assumption or suggestion about distortion or victimization. Certain policy paradigms can indeed serve such negative functions. They have the capacity to make opaque, to narrow one's viewpoint or range of explanations, or to delude. But these are not necessary features of a policy paradigm which as an analytical construct makes no special claims on what is true, real, or valid. A policy paradigm may well act ideologically; it may equally illuminate, invigorate, raise consciousness, or liberate. Those interests that a particular policy paradigm actually serves remain a matter for analysis and contestation.

With a view to elaborating the concept of policy paradigm three of its characteristics — its components, regulatory power, and change — are described below and illuminated in relation to those issues within the Irish educational policy process which have been highlighted in the overview.

Components

Concepts. Concepts are boundaried categories of thought. They represent filters through which the world is progressively known and internalized. They differentiate and integrate what would otherwise be experienced as a buzzing mass of stimuli. Concepts are cultural and historical phenomena and can be seen to vary between cultures and over time. It follows, in theory at least, that it should be possible to interpret experience in the light of a totally novel set of concepts. In fact, culturally-prescribed concepts are invested with considerable power: They define boundaries of normality and demand allegiance for the purpose of meaningful, social contact. To deviate conceptually may well result in a disruption of social life, a lack of comprehension, and perhaps even attract the label of genius or schizophrenic. To analyze why certain concepts

dominate at any one time and the processes by which they change requires a consideration of the belief systems involved and the social interests represented. At its most fundamental there is an ontology implicit in a repertoire of concepts in that "concepts reflect and embody in their meaning beliefs about how the world operates" (Fay, 1987, p. 44).

Accordingly, even the very act of inviting an arbitration on the concepts deployed in interpreting experience is restrained by the fact that in advancing such an invitation one has to make use of existing conceptual frameworks. It follows, therefore, that for a policy paradigm to regulate the conceptual framework through which the educational process is known and interpreted is to exercise control over the policy process at a deep and hidden level of structure. The conceptual apparatus sanctioned by a policy paradigm is a crucial element and any analysis of the policy process, if it is to be other than culturally superficial, must engage the conceptual component of paradigm. It equally follows that this is not a straightforward task, and for the same reasons — the normative power, the cultural embeddedness, the connotations of reality, and the social interests vested in the conceptual frameworks deployed within an intersubjective community.

In the transition from personal development to human capital paradigm in the Irish policy process there was a reconceptualization of the social institution of education. The structures, procedures, and values which constitute the educational process were viewed in a new light and new markers identifying the conceptual boundaries were set out. The filtering function of an emerging concept acts to include and make salient a new set of elements of the educational process as well as to suppress key discriminators that are found to be inhospitable or discordant. Whereas the personal development paradigm would have made sense of the educational process in terms of individual pupils, formation, conformity, standards, behavior, and beliefs, the human capital paradigm invited us to think in terms of society, economy, and skills.

A factor which led to the invitation being so successful was the existence of the concept of career, derived from the selective function of

schooling, within the personal development paradigm to which the concepts of the human capital paradigm could be grafted. It was thus possible for Irish consciousness about education to reconceptualize along the lines demanded by the human capital paradigm by way of an outgrowth from the careerist view of schooling rather than as an intellectually discordant or disruptive experience. The fact that the conceptualization of education within the human capital paradigm, having coupled itself in this way, evolved by a series of cognitive stages to include commercialized, vocational, and market views of schooling eased the cognitive dissonance that would otherwise have been experienced had personal formation been immediately confronted with the concept of market forces.

Terminology. Concepts are abstractions and maintain a very precarious claim on reality in the absence of being labelled. The relationship between language, concepts, and reality is much disputed. Positivism, structural linguistics, semiology, and linguistic analysis all suggest their own interpretation and differ in the location of their emphasis. To what extent is the world available to be known as something "out there" independent of the modes of knowing (e.g., concepts, language) of the knower? Is our understanding of what is true or valid or real a function of the structure of the language we use to describe the world? Can we really justify the depsychologizing of the sending and receiving of signs? Is the system of social signification all that really matters in determining meaning? Or is the issue really a conceptual one which can be settled by an analysis of the concepts used by people in living life and making sense of the world (Winch, 1958; Fay, 1987; Kearney, 1986)?

In sanctioning a particular terminology to label and transmit its conceptual organization of the educational process, policy paradigms effectively bracket these questions. The complex contestation they embody is excluded. Not alone, therefore, does the terminology of a policy paradigm give a reality and sense of permanence to its conceptual repertoire, it also confers on it a taken-for-granted sense of ordinariness and normality. The manner in which the terminology of IIE (investment, deficit, surplus, manpower planning) routinized a reconceptualization of the Irish educational system exemplifies this. To speak about education in a

manner that conferred authority and legitimacy it was almost obligatory to cite IIE by way of viewpoint, interpretation, or quantified characterization of the Irish educational system. This functioned to introduce the terminology of the human capital paradigm to educational discourse and analysis and to redraw and stabilize the categories according to which Irish educational experience was comprehended.

Paradoxically, understandings and feelings which have not been named in a succinct and recognized manner can, in certain circumstances, be similarly unassailable because of the difficulty in publicly communicating their disputation. What I have labelled as "careerism" in the personal development paradigm — the awareness that secondary schools, despite their general academic curriculum, nonetheless prepared pupils for state examinations which served as selection devices for white collar and administrative occupations and for third-level education — would have been known to participants in Irish education without the benefit of succinct terminology. "Socialization" and "selection" belonged to a sociological way of *talking* about education that didn't feature in the personal development paradigm. Yet, the conceptual referents of these terms existed in the manner in which education was *known* within this paradigm. It was easier to think about the careerist function of schooling than to talk about it. Disputation was not alone retarded but when the human capital paradigm, with its explicit orientation towards the economy and the world of work, was coupled with the personal development paradigm it was merely building on, stabilizing, and labelling a conceptualization of education that was already a feature of Irish educational consciousness.

The linguistic and epistemological issues nonetheless remain. The position taken here is that the terminology of a policy paradigm can act to expose or obscure, simplify or expand, confuse or clarify one's conceptual organization of the policy process. The degree of elaboration and taxonomic power of a terminology enhances the capacity of individuals to delineate, make public, and talk about concepts and the phenomena from which they are extracted. Yet attempts at blurring, refining, subdividing, redrawing, or otherwise reworking the boundaries of one's concepts through

language are frequently resisted and rejected as exercises in jargon. What is being resisted, and this goes some way to explaining what can range from inertia to hostility, is less a terminology and more a new or modified view of reality.

Themes.   Themes are topics that, when spoken of, can be reasonably expected to make sense to the participants in the communicative encounter. They are observational sentences or utterances that are recognized and understood. They constitute valid elements of discourse. Situated between concept/terminology (what can be thought or spoken of) and policy options (possible orientations for educational change), themes represent a gray though important realm of the policy process.

A delicate tension is represented in having the status of a theme in the policy process. While a conceptualization, interpretation, or proposition can, as a theme, be seen to have a meaningful place in educational discourse there is no necessary implication for the direction of educational policy. Themes are what can be spoken of within a specific intersubjective community. As such, they are an essential element in the establishment of a proposition as a policy option. But, in having the status of a theme, they are not yet on the policy agenda as possibilities to be considered and assessed relative to others with a view to directing educational practice.

Themes may at times appear as elements of "idle talk" — snap judgements, careless evaluation, ill-considered opinion — that functions to fill aural space and ease social interaction rather than advance authentic communication (Heidegger, 1962). Yet, even in idle talk there is a testing of the cognitive and communicative tolerance of a theme.   And it constitutes a testing ground that involves no statement of intent or commitment. As such, idle talk allows for themes to be filtered into the policy process without political threat.

IIE and economists introduced a series of economic themes to Irish educational discourse. The achievement of having viability, input/output, resources etc. accepted as educational themes, given the legacy of the personal development paradigm, should not be understated.   Tussing

introduced two themes — the private/public distinction in educational benefit and equity in educational funding — both of which experienced resistance. The possibilities that differentiating between private and public benefit opened up in relation to a fees policy and the provision of free post-primary schooling were so symbolically disruptive that "even" talk about such a distinction was shunned. It was easier and less politically sensitive to enact financial cutbacks than to communicate in terms of themes that would have constituted a rationale for such economies. Action was less politically compromising than discourse.

It would also appear from the response to Tussing's interventions that the introduction of principles as themes in Irish educational discourse can face specific resistance. This shouldn't be so given that so much of the discourse within the personal development paradigm was axiomatic, particularly when emanating from religious personnel and church bodies. The fact that attachment to principles commits one to a preordained line of action and thus reduces one's political flexibility may go some way to explaining this resistance. Another theme to experience resistance was that of the church as a coercive, manipulative force pursuing its own institutional interests through its involvement in education. Though proclaimed with different levels of subtlety by Akenson (1975) and Titley (1983a,b), this theme never penetrated the dominant native paradigm on church participation in schooling.

Policy Options.   Policy options refer to possible orientations for educational change. Accordingly, they are more recognizable elements of the policy process than such constructs as concepts, terms, or themes. They also represent the point at which conventional policy studies begin their consideration of the policy process. Influencing the agenda in policy making — keeping items off as well as putting items on — is conventionally seen as an indication of the relative power of the participants in the policy making process. To have one's favored line of educational change taken sufficiently seriously within the policy community to be considered for possible implementation is a necessary achievement for an individual or group intent on influencing the direction of the educational system. But this is to advert to what is most visible. Socio-

political processes — advocacy, lobbying, influence, power, forming coalitions, accepting compromises, making deals — are clearly involved in gaining prominence for a policy option. These socio-political processes are public if only, in the case of private or covert arrangements "behind closed doors," in the sense of being explicit to the participants. What needs to be kept in mind is that dimensions of a policy paradigm from the predebate level influence what can be made salient, spoken about and communicated in a manner that is meaningful to participants.

The establishment of a line of action as a policy option, therefore, is influenced by the filtering and delineating function of these paradigmatic components. The political players do not select from some infinite set of policy options and succeed or not succeed in having their favored option considered for implementation depending on their strength within the socio-political process. What are considered to be available policy options would have been influenced by the conceptualization of the educational process, its labelling and thematizing. Little of this is recognized with the result that the power of a paradigm is at its greatest when it operates at this covert level of predebate. This isn't to devalue the significance within the policy process of the designation of policy options. Rather, it situates this component of a policy paradigm in its context, in particular serving to identify the anticipatory and structuring influences which shape the pool of policy options from which the policy agenda is set. The establishment of policy options is nonetheless a distinct stage within the policy process involving all the socio-political processes of advocacy, negotiation etc., and shouldn't be seen as a mere epiphenomenon or representation of less visible structuring forces within a policy paradigm.

The fate of Tussing's analysis, interpretations, and proposals concerning the financing of Irish education illuminates the manner in which conceptualization and thematizing can shape policy options and at the same time establishes the significance of the socio-political process in the designation of policy options. Undoing free education and introducing a fees policy for second-level schooling, both raised by Tussing, were excluded as themes in state discourse on education and never managed to establish themselves as policy options. The themes of equity and social

justice in the funding of different categories of postprimary schools, including private, fee-charging schools, generated policy options. But this was achieved with the assistance of an indigenous sponsor, the vocational education sector, that stood to benefit from the exposure of policy options which proclaimed that the vocational sector, which accepted all comers and didn't charge fees, had a greater claim on state funding.

Authorities. Being accepted as an authority within a policy paradigm confers considerable power to influence the direction of policy. The basis of this acceptance can vary — being expert, experienced, trained, or committed, for instance. The relationship between the character of a paradigm and those it sanctions as authorities is not a once-off or a one-way process. Rather, it is recurring and interactive. An authority, once accepted, may move on to reshape the paradigm. Similarly, an authority may lose favor as the paradigm evolves. Economists replaced pedagogues as the personal development paradigm gave way to the human capital paradigm. Yet, it was an economist, Tussing, who added themes of a sociological and philosophical nature dealing with elitism, justice, and equity to the commercialized conceptualization of schooling. In debates on church, religion, and schooling, though lay commentators gained increasing credibility, religious personnel maintained their presence among those recognized as authorities. This made it possible for the church to influence the direction of the shifting policy paradigm governing the control of schooling. Forces for change in the paradigm were significant and included a dramatic reduction in religious personnel available to staff schools, changed assumptions about the primacy of the church's role in education, and an ideological move to the left on social and economic issues by church bodies. By maintaining the status of authorities, religious personnel were able to oversee and participate in the modification of the paradigm and so ensure that the legitimacy of their involvement in education was redefined rather than ruptured.

Discourse. Discourse is more than just another component of a paradigm. It elicits, normalizes, and makes routine the distinguishing characteristics of a paradigm. Concepts, themes, and policy options all become "real" in discourse: They attain a permanence, become embedded

in a social milieu, and embody power relationships. It is through a characteristic discourse that authorities set themselves apart from those who are not considered expert and knowledgeable. Indeed, resistance to the emergence of competing authorities and to their acceptance within a paradigm often takes the form of opposition to their distinguishing discourse. Dismissal can be on the basis of jargon, mystification, rationalism, emotionalism, or abstraction.

The axiomatic character of Tussing's analysis of funding principles in Irish education jarred with the pragmatic, adaptive mode of advocacy of official discourse on education. His suggestion that explicit principles be agreed on the basis of such considerations as justice and equity, and that these be applied inexorably in relation to the funding of schools with different student profiles and intake policies, was to be regarded as politically naive. This mode of advocacy has much in common with that of church social teaching. Both begin with first principles that are considered to be beyond dispute, in Tussing's case because of a combination of empirical analysis and democratic values and, in the case of the church, because of officially received teaching. Significantly, both embodied policy options that would be considered by official paradigms to be ideologically left of center.

Consideration of the church's role in education resulted in two domains of discourse — reflective and practitioner — largely segmented, generated, and participated in by different individuals as well as conducted in distinct social arenas and pursuing divergent objectives. The cultural strangers, Akenson and Titley, operated within the reflective domain on the church's role in education. These were academics who made their analysis public through publication in academic journals and texts, and their orientation was to critique. In contrast, the native discourse was more within the practitioner domain, participated in by front-line personnel such as teachers and principals and their representatives and spokespersons. It was conducted at conferences, study days, public speeches, and pronouncements and in church-related publications and was geared towards policy analysis and formulation and educational practice. It was this native discourse rather than that of the cultural strangers which had an impact on the

structuring of Irish consciousness about the position of the church and religion in Irish education. The segregation of these domains restrained the confrontation of the concepts, terms, themes, policy options, and authorities of competing paradigms.

Regulatory Power

The regulatory power of a paradigm is a function of how weakly or strongly framed are its boundaries, the nature and range of the phenomena controlled, and where within the policy making community and beyond the paradigm is dominant.

The framing of a paradigm refers to its boundaries and how weak or strong are their definition. Framing relates to the degree to which the components of a paradigm are set apart from whatever concepts, terms, themes, and authorities are considered to be external to a paradigm. This is most obviously a matter of consciousness, of how reality is conceptualized and understood. But it isn't a "free floating" or "bodyless" consciousness: It is socially grounded, embedded in biographies and social space, and manifesting symbolic and material power.

Framing is at its strongest when a paradigm attains a hegemonic status. This is the ultimate in framing in that there is no awareness of another reality outside of the paradigm. The conceptualization and explanation of the world represent the boundaries of common sense and normality. There is no contestation because there is no world view, interpretation, or vision to be set against it. In fact, so deeply structured is a hegemonic paradigm that its existence as a paradigm is unknown to those whose consciousness it regulates.

Of the paradigms explored in this paper the tightly framed nature of Irish acceptance of the role of the church in the control of education came nearest to hegemony. It is also noteworthy that this has been modified from within due to contradictions and tensions that arose from the material circumstances of falling membership among the clergy and religious and

from the biographies of religious personnel in the context of changing church ideas on its role in society.

On the other hand, the human capital paradigm, though relatively strongly framed from its introduction to Irish educational thought, actually strengthened in the direction of hegemonic status. This was facilitated by the fiscal and industrial context. State economic difficulties in the form of an extensive national debt and rising unemployment, particularly among young people, rendered paradigms that didn't actively and immediately hold promises of rationalization, financial savings, and the cultivation of vocational skills to be irrelevant, in the sense of being programmatically and emotionally distant from the pressing national and human problems to be confronted. The traditional personal development paradigm was increasingly marginalized. Themes and policy options such as the alignment of the educational system with the needs of the economy, the management of financial savings, and the provision of vocational subjects didn't feature within its frame. As the human capital paradigm expanded to incorporate these themes and policy options, to think about education and society or individual formation was to think along these lines. Economists were confirmed as authorities as were their characteristic techniques of demographic forecasting, budgetary analysis, and financial costing, and the early reservations about their prominence were no longer voiced. The frame of discourse on education and society was increasingly strengthened to be coterminous with the theme of education and the economy. Cultural identity, language, civic competence, and moral development were excluded as themes. And explanations of unemployment that saw the problem as the failure of industrial and economic policies to provide sufficient work were dismissed in favor of an advocacy of a more vocationally relevant curriculum. To be given an audience within the policy community it was necessary to operate within the human capital paradigm.

The manner in which the human capital paradigm expanded, and its relationship with the personal development paradigm, also provide an example of how the regulatory power of a paradigm can vary in the light of the nature and range of the phenomena included within its frame. Both were institutional paradigms in that they encompassed the totality of

phenomena within the social institution of education and, in particular, its underpinning rationale.   Marxism, technical functionalism, liberation, nation building, and social emancipation have provided, in the writings of educational theorists and the operation of educational systems, examples of other visions which shape an institutional paradigm.   To regulate the manner in which the institution of education is conceptualized is to exercise an overarching influence that filters down to the themes and policy options pertaining to less global dimensions of an educational system such as curriculum, organization, and pedagogy.   The expansion of the human capital paradigm is an example of how an institutional paradigm can dominate the way education is thought about and spoken of.   In IIE the human capital paradigm was projected as a necessary view of education and one that should influence educational planning.   But it was presented and justified as providing another set of policy options to be considered alongside, rather than replacing, those of the personal development paradigm.   As presented in IIE, the human capital paradigm did not aspire to be the only institutional paradigm guiding Irish educational policy.   In effect, however, such was its dominance as it expanded to encompass commercialized schooling and a vocationalized curriculum that many of the themes and policy options of the personal development paradigm lost their unifying rationale.   Cultural identity, language revival, moral formation, and civic competence were dispersed as isolated themes.   Increasingly, they constituted the stuff of the preamble in educational discourse, to be mentioned and given token recognition before the serious business of the needs of the economy, financial savings, and skill formation were considered.   Competing paradigms pertaining to the cultural, religious, moral, and civic functions of education which haven't been considered in this article did indeed develop.   These created their own controversies as they generated discordant policy options with regard to the role of Irish in the educational system, the religious mix and ethos of schools, the balance to be struck between value transmission relative to pupil autonomy, and the emphasis to be placed on the teaching of political knowledge as opposed to the use of participative and analytical classroom approaches.   But, as isolated paradigms relating to single issues, they lacked the overarching regulatory power of institutional paradigms.

In contrast, Tussing began by operating within a paradigm that was limited in range — how to make the optimum use of the state's financial investment in education — and succeeded in expanding it to include themes such as elitism, class stratification of schools, and their selection strategies. Tussing succeeded in taking the themes of commercialized schooling and developing and adding to them to incorporate values, principles, and sympathies that pushed the range and nature of the coverage of the paradigm way beyond the narrow aspiration of getting better value for money which had characterized this aspect of the human capital paradigm.

Tussing's role as a cultural stranger also illuminates the significance for a paradigm's regulatory power of where within the policy making community it becomes normalized. Tussing was much more successful in having his themes of elitism, class stratification, and selection policies incorporated into the discourse of senior personnel within the vocational education sector. The state educational planners, on the other hand, were more guarded in their treatment of Tussing's expanded commercialized paradigm. Nonetheless, though more furtive and indirect in its effect, the policy options introduced by Tussing did appear to have been incorporated into the state's policy process. However, Tussing's impact on the consciousness of state policy makers was never as comprehensive or as explicit as had been the dominance of the human capital paradigm among politicians, senior civil servants, and their political advisors.

In considering the role of the church in education a crucial element explaining the degree of change is the fact that the principal agents of the paradigmatic change in relation to the vocation of teaching, leadership roles within religious schools, the control of schooling, and the ideological character of church thinking on education and social issues were themselves religious personnel. This isn't to ignore the existence of different interests and traditions or to suggest that the church was monolithic in its adherence to a particular paradigm. The pattern of change, however, was sufficiently clear to exemplify the enhanced regulatory power of a paradigm, and its impact on educational practice, when it informs the consciousness of those with power within the policy process.

Paradigmatic Change

So far no attempt has been made to make qualitative distinctions in relation to the varieties of paradigmatic shift being considered in this article. Five kinds of paradigmatic change are worth attention: expansion, mutation, contraction, rupture, and resistance.

The clearest example of expansion among the paradigmatic movements considered in this article is Tussing's development of commercialized schooling. This approach to schooling was characterized by the themes of optimizing the use of such educational resources as buildings, specialized facilities and teachers, viability of schools of varying sizes and curricula, and maximizing the development of society's talents. To these Tussing added themes, involving social principles and values, and policy options which introduced considerations of social justice, a concern for less-advantaged sections of society, and the need to prioritize between the claims on state funding of different levels of the educational system and different school types. Tussing's success as a cultural stranger was facilitated by the sponsorship of his ideas by a well-placed interest group and by the fact that he wasn't questioning any of the essential elements of a native paradigm such as the social stratification of knowledge associated with the differential status accorded to vocational and secondary school systems.

Mutation also involves expansion of the concepts, terms, themes, policy options, and authorities of a paradigm. But in this case the expansion doesn't take the form of an incremental addition to the existing components of a paradigm. The defining characteristic of mutation is the reworking of an element of a paradigm to the extent that it facilitates the emergence of a new paradigm. The emerging paradigm is experienced as an outgrowth from the replaced paradigm. Since the growth is organic the sense of dissonance, confrontation, or contestation is greatly reduced. This was the experience with the demise of the personal development paradigm and its replacement as the dominant institutional paradigm.

The careerism of the personal development paradigm represented a conceptual and thematic manifestation of the selection function of

schooling. Yet it would have found no prominence in the official discourse on education. Nor would the terminology associated with a sociological analysis of education as a selection or status attainment process have been a feature of the personal development paradigm. Here we find an example of a conceptualization that lacks a terminology. For parents and students it would have been easier to recognize the manner in which schooling of different levels and kinds facilitated entry into occupations of varying levels of skill, status, and bureaucratic standing than to describe what was happening. For those professionally involved in education — teachers, academics, civil servants — there were similarly entrenched constraints on making careerism an explicit and public dimension of educational thought. This disjuncture between conceptualization and terminology meant that the mutation of the careerist dimension of the personal development paradigm, and its reforming as the human capital paradigm, occurred in the minds and thought processes of those with an interest in education rather than at any public level of educational discourse.

The careerist function of the existing system of general secondary education, so obvious to the users of the system, allowed for a transformation from within of the personal development paradigm to occur. In practice, the relevance of general secondary education to career opportunities meant that much of the human capital imperatives involved an extension of rather than a departure from the dominant function of schooling operating within the paradigm. Mutation continued with the effect of establishing the commercialization of schooling, a vocationalization of the curriculum, and a marketization of education throughout the components of the paradigm. But this is a much less obvious or dramatic manifestation of mutation since, unlike the reworking of careerism, a new institutional paradigm doesn't emerge. By expanding through mutation, the human capital paradigm acquired a substance and a dominance in the way education was thought about and communicated to the extent that it approached a hegemonic status.

Paradigmatic contraction is exemplified by the movement in the policy paradigm relating to the church's role in Irish education. The boundaries of that paradigm contracted to the extent that it increasingly released from

its control the designation of appropriate themes, policy options, authorities, and modes of discourse. These would have concerned the vocation of teaching, the control of schooling, the role of parents and the laity, and the contribution to be expected from the state in the resolution of educational and social problems. As this policy paradigm contracted the position taken in Irish consciousness about these issues became less fixed and more open to analysis and speculation, involving a wider range of personnel entitled to contribute and much less subject to dogma and received wisdom. Substantively, the lay teacher came to be accepted as the norm in the general staffing of schools and, increasingly, in positions of educational leadership; the prior right of the church in the control of schooling and anxiety about state involvement were no longer asserted and a concern for weaker sections of Irish society, together with a critique of its inequalities, pervaded church discourse and action.

A core assumption of the paradigm relating to the church's participation in education remained unthreatened — that the church's involvement in the provision of schooling was representative of the needs and interests of parents who desired such confessional education for their children. Parental acquiescence, insufficient lay involvement in schooling, and greater choice of school types were to emerge as themes as the paradigm contracted. But the assertion contained with varying force and subtlety in the writings of the cultural strangers, Akenson and Titley, that the church's involvement in education was manipulative and self-interested, orchestrated by its bureaucratical elite in pursuit of control over the minds of people and their political leaders, and motivated by a desire to maintain and replenish with a sufficient supply of new recruits their own hierarchical power structure rather than from a concern for the great mass of ordinary members of the church, never threatened to become a feature of native consciousness. Had this elite, manipulative, and near-conspiratorial conceptualization of the church's involvement in education been incorporated into Irish thinking, we would have experienced paradigmatic rupture, a comprehensive disintegration of the paradigm's regulatory power. The result would have been a cognitive *anomie*, an intellectual normlessness, an uncertainty as to how the church's involvement in education was to be thought about, thus opening the way for competition

among emerging paradigms. The fate of the personal development paradigm was also close to that of rupture. Mutation, however, based on careerism, ensured a degree of continuity. Nonetheless, themes such as cultural identity, linguistic revival, and moral formation lost their coordinating force in Irish educational thought. In arguing for a more equitable treatment of the vocational system, Tussing didn't appear to have entertained a proposition that would have ruptured the paradigm governing the relative social location of vocational and secondary school sectors: that the superior social evaluation of the academic and systematized knowledge of the secondary school should be made problematic.

It could reasonably be argued that resistance contributed to the paradigmatic contraction experienced in relation to church involvement in education. According to this interpretation, contraction would be viewed as a coping response to threat. In the case of the church's participation in the provision of education the relevant paradigm retreated to a more secure and sustainable position: that of a representative organization catering to the spiritual and pastoral needs of its members. Resistance or threat is unlikely to leave a paradigm unaffected. Sometimes filtration occurs as when elements, particularly the less discordant, are incorporated into the dominant paradigm. Even where the strategy is to attempt to marginalize the threatening ideas — as with the "discourse of derision" (Ball, 1990, p. 31) (alien, unsympathetic, biased, the product of industrialized North America or a materialistic Europe) — or to engage in their explicit confrontation (by means of cautionary tales of their consequences in other educational systems), at the very least the dominant paradigm becomes more public; there is a greater self-awareness and a resulting reduction in the strength of the paradigm's frame.

In all of these examples of paradigmatic shift the extent of change is less than might be expected in a more complex society. What Coolahan (1989) described as "pragmatic gradualism" in relation to Irish educational policy making and its suitability to a traditional, conservative society is also reflected in the character of change in Irish educational consciousness: "moving things forward on a gradual path, testing responses, slowing down or speeding up developments as circumstances permit" (pp. 62-63).

In such a context, to paraphrase Dunleavy and O'Leary (1987, p. 55), the best predictor of what paradigm will be dominant is whatever paradigm was·dominant last.

Conclusion

In this article the Irish educational system has constituted the cultural setting. There I have explored the application of the notion of policy paradigm in analyzing educational development, together with the role played by cultural strangers in facilitating change in relation to native Irish paradigms. Substantively, I have considered developments in three aspects of the Irish educational system since the late 1950s: its relationship with the economy and, in particular, the impact of economic ideas; the principles governing the funding of schooling; and the role of the Roman Catholic Church in providing personnel, in management and control, and in generating educational policy. These topics were selected because they constitute the context of intellectual interventions by cultural strangers. They are also important in their own right and provide a wide ranging, though not comprehensive, overview of contemporary Irish educational change.

Conceptually, the idea of policy paradigm has been tested in this substantive cultural setting. Irish educational consciousness has been considered in terms of its boundaried structures. At its broadest, this has allowed me to make salient the frameworks within which educational policy is explored and enacted. This has drawn attention to the regulation of, for instance, what is to be considered as an educational problem worthy of the attention of the policy-making community, the identity of the authorities who are deemed to be knowledgeable and competent to participate in the exploration of such problems, how policy is to be spoken of, and what is to be accepted as evidence.

In conclusion, I would argue that the concept of policy paradigm has an important contribution to make through the description, illumination, and interpretation of the policy process in education. If policy studies in education are to establish themselves as a worthwhile area of academic

endeavor it will be necessary for them to develop a conceptual apparatus that can be seen to emerge organically from the policy process while at the same time to be sufficiently precise and capable of elaboration as to penetrate, expand, delineate, and name the common sense understandings of the process of educational policy. There is a temptation to utilize a conceptual framework that is widely understood with the most worthy of democratic intentions of involving a wide range of participants and of being seen to be relevant and participative. The gains are likely to be short term. The ultimate price will be a trivialization of the complex processes that are involved in educational policy making.

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