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Editorial

Categories, Boundaries, and Bridges: The Social Geography of Schooling and the Need for New Institutional Designs

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Abstract: As unprecedented child and family migration patterns continue, neighborhoods, hamlets, towns, cities, states/provinces, and entire nations are impacted. These impacts are especially profound when migrants' first language is not the host nation's dominant one; when they relocate in communities already challenged by poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation; and when educator-controlled, standardized, stand-alone schools continue to focus exclusively on teacher-directed, academic learning during the school day. Under these circumstances, standardized schools struggle to achieve desirable results, making it clear that relations between schools and their host locales are consequential for everyone. Using the United States as a case example, this introductory analysis provides an appreciative framework for the new designs presented in this Special Issue of *Education Sciences*.

Keywords: social geography; collaboration; partnerships; collective impact; policy integration; systems change; community schools

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Beginning in the latter half of the 20th Century, leaders in many industrial nations have searched for an optimal model for their respective school systems. Framed by ambitious political goals, this common quest typically has included five fixtures: (1) An economic development plan that connected schools with jobs; (2) Standardized policy founded on ideals for equity, excellence, and efficiency; (3) National imperatives and state/provincial requirements in substitution for local goals, organizational configurations, and curricula; (4) Pedagogical systems that emphasized teaching more than learning; and (5) The conflation of the subordinate concept of schooling with the superordinate concept of education.

The complex idea that standardized schools are able to function as stand-alone organizations was especially noteworthy. In nations with liberal democracies it was part of an important governmental promise: The local circumstances surrounding a child's birth will not predict his or her life chances. Standardized schools allegedly delivered on this equity-oriented, promise because they transcended local barriers and provided opportunity pathways to a healthy, productive adulthood, including employment, social integration, and active citizenship.

This 20th Century optimism for all that schools can be and do has been challenged by the 21st Century realities associated with the multi-faceted process of globalization (e.g., [1,2]). Chief among the "game-changers" are the revolutionary impacts of digital technologies (e.g., rapid connectivity); unprecedented individual and family migration patterns; changes in family system configurations and dynamics; resistance by immigrant families to social integration and cultural assimilation; marginalization and social exclusion dynamics experienced by diverse peoples; innovative, spatially-distributed jobs and economic production systems; and the continuous transformation of jobs and work, implicating grand issues about whether employment is a right or a privilege.

This globalization constellation also challenged inherited assumptions regarding a placeless school system. Owing in part to globalization's pervasive influence, today's rural, suburban, and urban schools and their surrounding locales can be categorized and their developmental trajectories predicted by their respective population profiles, employment patterns and economic development indicators, home ownership rates, social problem indicators, child and family well-being indices, and educational opportunity structures [3–6]. Significantly, in nations such as the United States a child's well-being, school quality, postsecondary education access and completion, and life course developmental trajectory can be predicted in part by the delivery codes used by the nation's postal system [4,7]. In contrast to national, equity-driven promises, the places where children grow up often predict where they will end up.

The manifest differences between the place-based "haves" and "have nots" have far-reaching consequences for schools, higher education organizations, and other social institutions. To begin with, these differences serve as reminders of the antecedent and co-requisite conditions needed for conventional, stand-alone schools to function and perform. Examples include two parent families with requisite social supports and resources; consistent employment for at least one parent; stable housing in safe locales where parents and other adults monitor children's behavior; health-enhancing nutrition and active lifestyles; a stable, competent, caring education workforce; and firm beliefs in and shared commitments to schools as equitable, accessible opportunity pathways to adult well-being.

As these conditions erode and public policy decisions inadvertently strip them away, conventional schools increasingly struggle to achieve the lofty goals proclaimed by politicians and education's leaders. Some lack the capacity to innovate and improve [8], indicating that their leaders need to build capacity before their schools are able to perform effectively. But even with strategic capacity-building, modest reforms directed at schools as stand-alone institutions cannot stem the tide in rural, inner ring suburban and urban places with enduring economic development problems; transient, diverse, isolated, under-resourced and socially excluded populations; and diminishing local capacities to meet the needs of vulnerable people [9,10].

Clearly, places are more than coordinates on a map. They are decidedly social and cultural spaces, and they are defined in part by their local histories and traditions, population features, economic characteristics (especially employment patterns), cultural/linguistic diversity, child and family well-being indices, and their adjoining territories. In fact, differences among local contexts help to explain variability in child, family, school, and community outcomes. Contexts thus are consequential, not incidental, to educational policy and practice, demonstrating that place-based uniqueness needs to become a priority in school designs and operations.

In response to these firm realities and aiming to connect social analysis and social action, scholars have developed the concept of the concept of *social geography* (e.g., [4,9,11]). This concept presents neighborhoods, hamlets, towns, suburbs, cities, counties, regions, provinces/states, and nations as dynamic entities, ones that are endlessly socially constructed and constituted. Each locale is instrumental in their respective populations' life chances, identities, aspirations and goals, well-being, and standard of living. Each offers a somewhat unique, dynamic combination of cultural histories, demographic features (population characteristics) and organizational ecologies for schools.

Already social geographic analysis has yielded an important finding. Despite policies developed in service of equity, the opportunity structures available in some places are under-developed. This variability, manifested in the glaring disparities between privileged and so-called disadvantaged communities, collides with the idea of a placeless, one best system for schools. Notwithstanding needs for umbrella-like policies with external accountability mechanisms, there is no escape from the endemic conflicts created by inherited, universalistic 20th Century policy assumptions regarding a placeless, standardized school system.

New designs for schools and education systems overall are needed, especially in rural, inner ring suburban, and urban locales challenged by the punishing combination of poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation [12]. New designs for schools are featured in this special issue. Analyses start with

innovative policies, which are grounded in new social realities [13]. They include macro-level models and strategies, especially ones that strengthen relationships among schools, families, community agencies, and businesses [14–16]. These new designs also necessitate meso-level, innovative programs and services, especially multi-faceted ones that address co-occurring and interlocking barriers to children's learning, healthy development and school success (e.g., [17,18]) Last, but not least, place-based, micro-level models and strategies are needed to facilitate student engagement, academic learning and achievement, social-emotional development, school completion, and, in a growing number of nations, postsecondary education readiness (e.g., [19–21]).

This Special Issue of *Education Sciences* is structured accordingly. It features design experiments undertaken in Scotland, England, and the United States. Each offers a report-like description of a new macro, meso, or micro design or policy need in response to one or more urgent priorities. Their most important contribution may lie in their generativity, i.e., the extent to which they stimulate other new designs for schools, place-based education systems, and their surrounding social geographies.

This potential for generativity should not be confused with automatic generalizability and easy transportability [12]. Mindful of international commonalties and similarities, every new design needs to be fit for purpose in relation to the characteristics of the population being served (demography); the features of local schools, businesses and community health and social service agencies (organizational ecology), and the characteristics of locales, i.e., social geography [22].

Additionally, all new designs depend on detailed analyses of, and strategic action plans for, salient categories, boundaries, and bridging mechanisms. Examples of these categories, boundaries and bridges, derived mainly from the United States, provide indicators of need for new designs as well as collective action strategies for developing them.

1. Categories

All new designs necessitate clarity regarding the unit(s) of analysis, which also can be called policy and planning categories. To begin with, states, provinces, counties, cities, suburbs, towns, and hamlets have long provided the units of analysis for national governmental planning, policy development, and resource allocations in the world's democracies. In the same vein, national, regional, state/provincial and local electoral politics are structured by these social geographic units of analysis.

1.1. Digging Deeper: Other Categorical Layers

Inside this political, place-based system is a second category. Governments sponsor and support schools, health, mental health, juvenile and criminal justice, housing, employment services, and child welfare/family support services. Sector-specific, categorical policy reinforces this institutional design. For example, educational policy is for schools, while a considerable amount of social policy is developed in support of social service organizations.

A third categorical layer follows suit: Governmental data systems. In addition to census data systems with their informative demographic profiles, governmental analysts provide selective facts about specific organizational performances in discrete locales. For example, fact sheets identify the outcomes each sector (e.g., the school system; the mental health system) has achieved for particular sub-populations of people who reside in somewhat unique places.

It bears repeating that these reports and policy briefs tend to be organized in sector-specific categories. For example, school performance data for a particular locale are presented apart from categorical data for other government-provided services. Faceless data systems, standardized organizational designs, and placeless policies go hand-in-hand.

This dominant pattern is not innocuous. For example, encouraging research findings regarding schools that beat the odds with high poverty student populations [23] can be deceptive when they are divorced from local, place-based characteristics that help to account for success. Absent a robust examination of these schools' keynote social geographic features, policy makers and all manner of educational leaders might conclude that every school serving high poverty populations can and

should achieve these encouraging results, if they only redouble their efforts and imitate the policies and practices of the odds-beaters.

More nuanced analyses and data systems that take stock of surrounding community settings suggest otherwise. They point to a slippery tipping point for schools in particular places, ones that make it nearly impossible to succeed at scale. This tipping point includes a formidable combination of student characteristics, family demographics (especially employment rates, housing, and residential stability overall), high turnover among teachers and principals, and place-based, concentrated disadvantage overall [9,10]. Schools and entire districts dubbed as "turnarounds" provide cases in point [24]. Despite inspiring success stories involving some of them, most such schools and districts simply cannot overcome and compensate for pervasive, place-based challenges and manifest disadvantages.

1.2. The System of Professions and Their Host Organizations

A fourth categorical layer is provided by a system of specialized human services professions [25]. In the advanced liberal democracies, there is a specialized profession for nearly every human need, want, or problem. The professions include education, psychology, nursing, social work, community planning/development, juvenile justice, public health, and counseling. All are beneficiaries of governmental categorical systems, and this is why their members actively support and co-construct it.

Rooted in university-based preparation programs dominated by theory and research, and supported by governmental credentialing and occupational control systems, each profession has a unique, internally-controlled and closely-patrolled knowledge base and language system which members purportedly employ in their specialized services. Each relies on its specialized knowledge in relentless competitions focused on the employment monopolies (economic authority) and the power to define needs and problems (cultural authority).

In many nations, the system of professions is a formidable, lasting institutional arrangement, which can be viewed in three ways. It is a building block for new institutional designs. It is a fixture in the global political economy [26]. And this system is itself a special improvement priority, extending to yet another categorical layer.

Most of these professions also have a specialized organizational home. Educators have schools, social workers have children's services organizations, and nurses have hospitals and health clinics. What is more, each profession and its host organization are supported and resourced by a specialized governmental policy sector. For example, categorical educational policy is structured for educators and schools. At the same time, a considerable amount of social policy supports the social workers expected to serve vulnerable children and families.

Three main assumptions underlying this categorical system of professions and their respective organizations are noteworthy because they are instrumental in the clarion call for new institutional designs: (1) Human needs, wants, and problems can be reduced to one or more discrete technical problems; (2) All such discrete technical problems fall within the jurisdictions of, and can be assigned to, one specialized profession and its host organization; (3) Specialized, technical problem-solving and policy development can proceed efficiently and effectively without reference to specific locales because the professions and their organizations comprise a transportable, generalizable helping system.

An industrial age analogy is apt. Just as automobiles are expected to function efficiently and effectively anywhere and under all manner of conditions, it is assumed that the specialized professions with their respective jurisdictions over category-bound, technical needs, wants, problems, and opportunities are transportable to all manner of people and places. In this view, social geographies get short shrift, and so do complex problems other than technical ones.

2. Boundaries

Categories are circumscribed and defined in part by their respective boundaries. When conventional boundaries become blurry or no longer hold firm, an institutional system based on technical problems and enduring categories cannot perform at scale. It follows that changing

boundaries and the emergence of new types of problems necessitate new designs and action strategies. Some of these strategies result in professional and organizational adaptations, while others may catalyze complex systems change [27]. All such boundary changes stimulate and necessitate learning [27,28].

2.1. Fuzzy Boundaries Accompanying Adaptive and Wicked Problems

The new social geography has made it impossible to ignore a startling development, and it is especially evident in locales challenged by the terrible combination of poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation [12]. Child, parent and grandparent, and family needs and problems no longer can be reduced to a singular, technical problem and then assigned to just one profession and its host organization. Especially where social and economic disadvantages are clustered in particular locales, needs and problems co-occur and nest in each other. Their interactions are instrumental in the systematic production of outcome disparities for people, organizations and particular places.

Examples include inadequate nutrition, unsafe neighborhoods, insufficient family supports caused by social isolation, lack of affordable and appropriate housing, high rates of unemployment, and under-resourced and under-performing schools with high rates of staff turnover and student transience [7]. Find one need or problem and sooner or later, you will find one or more others. Addressing one entails addressing one or more of the others.

Little wonder that, in these special places, industrial age professions and organizations founded on just one technical, categorical problem struggle to achieve desired results. Blurred boundaries undermine the old categories and shatter inherited assumptions about isolated, technical problems solvable by just one profession and its host organization.

In Wilson's problem-based language system, these places are challenged by concentrated disadvantage, while children's and families' co-occurring and interlocking needs are concentration effects [29]. This result is spatial inequity, and its effects are manifested in multiple kinds of disparities—educational, health-related, job-related, crime-related, etc.

Co-occurring needs (concentration effects) in concert with blurred and changing boundaries defy categorization as technical problems. Two additional problem types merit analysis and strategic action: (1) Complex, adaptive problems without easy answers; and (2) Dilemma-rich, wicked problems, which may not be immediately solvable.

The resultant three problem typology (technical, adaptive, wicked) interrupts routinized problem-solving focused exclusively on categorical policies, inherited school designs, and practices with clear, firm boundaries [30]. Increasingly governmental officials, public policy experts, educators, social and health services providers, and other planners must start with place-based problem-setting [31]. Although categorical technical problems with clear boundaries remain, leaders engaged in school-related, place-based problem setting must anticipate adaptive problems and wicked problems for which they are no ready-made solutions. What happens next is consequential for children, families, elders, and communities as well as for the professions charged with meeting their needs.

2.2. Orientations and Actions at the Boundaries

Although assessment-driven problem-setting mechanisms may inspire new institutional designs, social institutions such as schools tend to be remarkably resistant to change. After all, inherited categories with their respective, familiar boundaries provide safety and security. Little wonder, then, that leaders from all walks of life tend to cling to the past. They hope that inherited institutional designs provide what amounts to a "back to the future strategy". Their preferences for boundary maintenance strategies in service of the familiar categories are social reproduction mechanisms.

In contrast, boundary change strategies such as innovative policy arrangements, reconfigured organizational borders, and shared professional jurisdictions are drivers for institutional reforms and transformative designs. In these ways and others, boundary changes and boundary crossing

stimulate social change, including new designs for professions, organizations such as schools, and social institutions writ large.

Given the complexity and uncertainty of all social change initiatives, this new design work requires mechanisms for boundary-related learning, knowledge generation, and continuous improvement [12,32–34]. Boundary-bridging and changing design experiments are especially timely and important.

3. Bridges

To recapitulate: Nations' social institutions, especially their respective school systems, are founded on inherited categories with their boundaries, language systems, and technical problem-solving mechanisms. This social institutional arrangement has survived because of its distinctive strengths and societal contributions. It is both enabling and constraining.

The new institutional design agenda can be framed and developed accordingly. To begin with, it should not be characterized as "out with the old, in with the new." It requires an empirically-grounded design and improvement strategy, one that begins with the distinctive strengths and contributions of the categorically-driven, technical problem solving system propelled by a system of professions with their respective organizations.

3.1. Cross-Boundary Bridge Builders

When this technical system falls short of expectations, and enduring categorical boundaries do not promise solutions, cross-boundary bridges need to be built. This work requires boundary-crossing experts with special communications skills and abilities [33,35–41]. These boundary-spanning bridge-builders are at the leading edge of new institutional designs, and all must be tailor-made in some ways for particular people, schools, and places.

Owing to the pioneering work of bridge-building pioneers, collective action formations and strategies have gained popularity. The catch-all concept of "community," with its emphasis on local priorities, is inherent in nearly all of these initiatives. Many are described variously, interchangeably, and imprecisely as collaborations, partnerships, and coalitions.

Sloppy language and imprecise conceptualizations go hand-in-hand. They give rise to what language scholars call "condensation symbols" [42]—a situation in which the same concept is used carelessly and gains multiple meanings. Condensation symbols are the norm with fledgling innovations, especially ones that bridge conventional categories and change long-standing boundaries.

However, when new designs achieve promising results, sloppy language and a lack of clarity are intolerable because a new design's scalability depends on precise specifications of the defining features of the new design and extending to the conditions that must be in place for it to be effective. Intervention logic is needed.

3.2. Four Bridging Interventions

Where complex, community-based collective action formations are concerned, four units of analysis are important: People, organizations, collections of organizations, and new policy configurations. It is possible to have one without one or more of the others. In places challenged by concentrated poverty, social exclusion and social isolation, all four units of analysis are in play because they enable diverse people to work together, crossing categorical boundaries and building action-oriented bridges for new institutional designs.

3.2.1. Collaboration as an Intervention

Collaboration and the family of related "c-words" (e.g., communication, consultation, coordination) can be reserved for the teams and communities of practice formed by people [43–45]. In other words, in an intervention-oriented conceptualization of collaboration people are the unit of analysis. Mindful that boundary-bridging basic communications, consultations, and coordinated

initiatives are progress markers, collaboration, in a strict intervention framework, is reserved configurations that create and reflect interdependent relationships among people. In other words, a collaboration is evident no one is able to achieve their goals without the contributions of other; and everyone recognizes and co-constructs this important, tightly knit, intricate, and fragile working relationship.

In challenging places characterized by co-occurring and interlocking needs, interprofessional team collaboration involving educators, social workers, psychologists, counselors, nurses, and others enjoys growing popularity [46], and it necessitates interprofessional education and training [12].

However, collaboration interventions also extend to professionals' relationships with laypersons [47]. Alternatives include collaborations with young people (youth-centered collaboration), families (family-centered collaboration), and elders (elder-centered collaboration). All such equitable collaboration formations are category-changers as people once called students, clients, patients, customers, and service consumers are charged with co-designing and co-creating innovative practices, policies, and research designs [48].

3.2.2. Partnerships as Interventions

When bridging relationships are needed among organizations such as schools, mental health agencies, and youth development organizations, a specialized intervention for organizations must be designed, implemented, and continuously improved. Building on a rich literature (e.g., [12,49–51]), partnerships are the preferred intervention when organizations are the unit of analysis.

Although partnerships are facilitators for people-focused collaborations, the relevant unit of analysis (category) is the organization. Practically speaking, it is possible to have a formal partnership without an authentic, people-focused collaboration; and vice versa. In the majority of circumstances, both boundary-crossing interventions are needed, and each has special requirements.

Like teams and communities of practice for people, these partnership arrangements can be designed and classified. For example, collaborative partnerships are needed when schools, community health and social service agencies, and youth development organizations fundamentally depend on each other such that no organization can achieve its goals without the assistance, supports and resources provided by the others. Coordinative partnerships, in contrast, are founded on turn-taking arrangements in which each organization makes its unique contribution while communicating regularly with others [12].

Formal contracts and memoranda of understanding are signature features of partnership development. Partnerships also require cross-boundary governance councils consisting of representative leaders of schools, mental health organizations, youth development agencies, and other organizational entities [12,22].

3.2.3. Collective Impact Interventions

In recent years the idea of Collective Impact initiatives has taken hold [51,52]. Unfortunately, the collective impact framework manifests some of the same intervention-related needs as collaboration and partnership. Presently collective impact is used for a garden variety of initiatives with attendant risks that it also will become a condensation symbol.

There is much to be gained by reserving this new Collective Impact concept to designate cross-sector, complex partnerships, especially what accurately can be called "mega-partnerships" which encompass sector-specific ones such as school-related partnerships, juvenile justice-related partnerships, and child and family service system partnerships. The research literature in this important area provides immediate guidance and direction (e.g., [53,54]).

However, a more expansive, intervention-oriented rationale is needed to advance this expansive idea of Collective Impact. To begin with, as school-based and -related partnerships have grown worldwide, particularly in locales challenged by poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation, both the strengths and the limitations of fledgling, school-linked interprofessional collaborations

and school-family-community partnerships have become evident. Alongside the impressive growth and development of all manner of bridge-building and boundary-crossing initiatives, including new school designs such as community schools, community learning centers, multi-service schools, and extended-service schools [12,14], there is no escape from the constraints and limitations accompanying "the school partnership strategy."

This strategy has been based on the assumption that new school designs are able to serve as place-based anchor institutions [55]. Grand expectations and lofty goals have accompanied these bridge-building and boundary-crossing school partnership designs. In addition to school-based neighborhood service centers, many of which are designed to stabilize and support fragile families, leaders have assumed that stronger, more effective schools progressively will help to transform other aspects of their surrounding locales.

In brief, designers have hoped for a dual benefit system [12,56]. Kids will experience better schools and, at the same time, strong school partnerships will have spillover effects into surrounding community locales. With schools as centerpieces, the overall strategy can be called "inside-out". The main idea is that benefits and assets from schools will spill over immediately into adjacent communities and perhaps larger, surrounding social geographies.

With due recognition of selective achievements and maintaining some optimism for other innovations on the horizon, there is just cause for skepticism and even doubt regarding how much new school designs can accomplish for their respective social geographies [12]. Something more is needed, especially in places challenged by concentrated poverty, social exclusion and social isolation.

The idea of progressive, comprehensive community development has arisen in response to this need (e.g., [57–59]). This comprehensive strategy frequently includes community-based, interprofessional collaboration and inter-organizational partnerships. Chief among the targets are the co-occurring and interlocking needs that remain outside the reach of more expansive school designs. Examples of these interlocking needs include housing, law enforcement and crime prevention, job creation, safe play spaces, access to nutritious food, and the development of neighborhood collective efficacy for children [5].

Schools stand to benefit from this progressive community development strategy because it helps to optimize the conditions kids and families need to thrive and learn. To use school-centered language, this strategy addresses barriers to children's learning, school readiness, and healthy development at the same time that it is directed toward a supportive place-based, community ecology [60–62], one that includes family supports and resources [61] and proceeds with fresh perspectives on the relationship between housing policy, school policy, and student characteristics and compositions in each school [63,64].

Where schools are concerned, this place-based, community development strategy can be characterized as "outside-in". Schools, in brief, are viewed as place-based assets for community development, including political strategies that enable local resident to advocate for children, families, and schools.

Clearly, both school-centered "inside-out strategies" and progressive community development "outside-in strategies" are needed when social geographic disadvantages make it impossible for categorical policies, stand-alone schools, and discrete professions to deliver on their respective promises. New institutional bridges are needed between schools and their surrounding communities, extending to cross-boundary roles and relationships for helping professionals [65].

The idea of a Collective Impact Initiative can be re-conceptualized and then tailored to fit this need [53,54,66]. In this expansive view, a Collective Impact Initiative is a collection of once-separate partnerships, starting with all manner of school-family-community partnerships in tandem with now-separate, community development partnerships.

The reminder here is that, in many communities, there are other such partnerships (e.g., for economic development, for crime prevention; for health). Until such time as all are brought

together under the same organizational and policy umbrella, they probably will continue to work at cross-purposes while competing for precious resources.

This is a grand boundary-crossing and bridging experiment. Special bridge-building leaders are needed to develop and optimize these Collective Impact initiatives, including agenda champions, community organizers, and school leaders [16,36,67]. At the same time, neutral, legitimate and trustworthy community organizations that serve as homes for Collective Impact initiatives are a fundamental requirement. Toward this end, the Collective Impact framework emphasizes "backbone organizations" [51], also known as "broker organizations" [68] and as "intermediary organizations" [69].

The various political theories associated with Collective Impact interventions lead to the same destination. Whether theorized as social network development [70], social capital [71], community social capital [72], or civic capacity [73], collective impact formations represent democracy in action [66]. An attractive and compelling new institutional design on the drawing board, it will not gain traction or develop at scale without policy innovations [74].

3.2.4. Policy Integration Interventions

Inherited, categorical policies are not automatically conducive to the development, continuous improvement, and sustainability of people-driven collaborations, organizational partnerships, and collective impact initiatives. In fact, all three collective action designs are likely to be sub-optimal without a fourth boundary-crossing, bridge-building intervention. Cross-sector policy integration structures and operational processes are needed, particularly ones that enable evaluation-driven, continuous policy learning and improvement and provide local leaders with flexible, adaptive, and even experimental resources in service of local school and educational designs.

Toward this end, state, provincial, and national policy innovation councils and child/family cabinets bearing a variety of names have been recommended. Indeed, some are being piloted (e.g., [22]). However, these national and state/provincial councils and cabinets are destined to be works in progress because there are no easy answers to questions regarding which sector-specific categorical policies to maintain and strengthen; which ones to amend; which ones to abandon; and which ones to connect, combine, and transform.

Like collaborations, partnerships, and collective impact initiatives, these boundary-crossing policy integration innovations depend on intermediary people able to build bridges and provide cross-sector leadership. The generative idea of a policy entrepreneur has import here [75], but it needs to be expanded to a new genus of interdisciplinary specialists who are well-versed in boundary-crossing and bridge-building systems change interventions. In brief, this policy integration agenda necessitates political scientists, public administration specialists, committed politicians, and savvy political lobbyists who understand needs for place-responsive, new institutional designs and who are able to serve as boundary-crossing, bridge builders in state/provincial and national governments.

3.3. A Capacity Building Agenda as a New Institutional Design

Collaboration, partnerships, collective impact initiatives, and policy integration are systems change interventions [12]. All challenge inherited categories, change existing boundaries, and require new bridges designed, implemented, and evaluated by border-crossing change agents. Like all such interventions, their appropriateness and effectiveness hinge on five criteria. The first four are: (1) The goodness of fit between specific designs and the presenting need, problem, or opportunity; (2) The extent to which they are grounded in research evidence and solid theory; (3) The extent to which they are guided by mandatory and voluntary accountability systems [12,76,77]; and (4) Built-in mechanisms for evaluation-driven learning, knowledge generation, and continuous improvement.

The last criterion merits special illumination: The extent to which these system change interventions derive from and reinforce strong moral imperatives, enduring core values, and firm governmental responsibilities. For example: What are the core responsibilities of governments to

children and youth? What are schools' distinctive contributions to distributive justice, i.e., who gets what, how, when, where, and why? Can a monolithic school design deliver on governmental promises regarding excellence and equity? How are governments, professions, schools, and other child and family serving organizations responding to the growing number of adaptive and wicked problems, all of which require new connections and more strategic relationships among once-separate professions, organizations, and policies? In what ways are social-geographic forces, factors, and actors prioritized in the politics of schooling as well as in planning for new designs for education systems? There are no easy, generalizable, and lasting answers to these questions.

Significantly, international readiness and capacity for new institutional designs appears to vary. Here it important to note that, while these four collective action interventions have the potential to transform today's professions, organizations, and institutions and yield new institutional designs, they also can and should be framed, developed, evaluated, and improved in less revolutionary ways. In brief, collaboration, partnerships, collective impact initiatives, and policy integration mechanisms also are potent intervention strategies for modest reforms, which are tailor-made for unique combinations of people, schools and other community organizations, and special social geographic units of analysis.

The fact remains, however, that needs for new institutional designs promise to become more prominent in the immediate future. For example, the future of learning is not the same as the future of schooling [78]. In the same vein, pioneering work directed toward the future of learning and the development of educational ecosystems provides reminders about the oft-neglected distinction between education and schooling [79]. Both reminders challenge inherited categories and invite innovations that change enduring boundaries and necessitate cross-boundary bridges and bridge-builders.

Meanwhile, an important question looms in the background. Who will advance this agenda and how will it be supported and resourced? The twin reminders here are that everyone is in some ways a product of the current institutional order, and so everyone has needs for continuous learning, whether in service of modest reforms or new institutional designs.

Research and development initiatives for the private sector provide a partial exemplar. A tripartite arrangement involving higher education institutions, private sector organizations and governments is known world-wide as "the triple helix". Here, research and development, knowledge generation, and policy learning proceed hand-in-hand. New capacities develop as needs for new capacities become evident.

It is timely to advance a comparable capacity-building framework for the public sector with schools and education systems as centerpieces. A proposed "quadruple helix" [12] convenes higher education institutions, governments, schools, and community child- and family-serving agencies. The broad agenda can be called integrated, equitable, and sustainable social and economic development—with human capital development, via schools and education, as the bridge between the triple helix formation and the proposed quadruple one. It entails boundary changes and depends on novel connections developed and maintained by system change-savvy bridge-builders.

Schools, colleges, and departments of education in the universities are key drivers for this new capacity-building institutional design [37]. However, these "Ed schools" are limited in their reach and impact.

Other professional development and technical assistance organizations need to take on this bold, capacity building agenda involving, for example, interprofessional education and training programs (in service of collaboration interventions) and the preparation of collective action specialists able to develop, advance, and repair collaborations, partnerships, collective impact formations, and policy integration initiatives [37,80].

In fact, this enormous need for capacity-building worldwide is a seedbed for new institutional designs. Already some are in evidence, starting with alternative versions of scientific research offered by competitors to tradition-bound colleges and universities and structured to produce useful knowledge and [81].

In all of these cases, the way ahead can be understood and planned in relation to enduring, revised, and new categories, boundaries and bridges, which are deemed to be fit for purpose in particular social geographies. Where schools and other educational institutions are concerned, the immediate priority is to build bridges out of poverty, social exclusion, and social isolation, ensuring that one of today's salient social stratification categories—social class—does not regress into an intolerable alternative—caste. If this analysis and the companion articles in this Special Issue of *Education Sciences* facilitate this important, innovation-driven journey to the future, they have achieved their primary aim.

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