

# From Voluntary Societies to Government: Social Control in Primary Education in Britain before and after the Industrial Revolution

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## Abstract

The Industrial Revolution caused great social changes, and primary education in Britain played a positive role in social control during the transition period. For a long time after the Industrial Revolution, the British government's involvement in education was limited, the lower class families were poor and could not afford to pay the tuition fees, so the voluntary societies assumed the responsibility of primary education in Britain; with the increase in the number of educated people and the improvement of the quality of education, the voluntary societies were unable to satisfy the national demand for education; in the middle of the nineteenth century, the government intervened in the primary education, and strengthened the control of the primary education through the appropriation of funds and inspection, and the control of primary education shifted from the hands of the voluntary associations to the government. Primary education adapted to the needs of the stabilization and growth of the industrial revolution in Britain, and social control drove the development of primary education in Britain.

## Keywords

Social Control, Primary Education, Voluntary Societies, Government, Britain

## 1. Introduction

Education is a matter of personal development, social progress, and national destiny, and its advancement requires the joint efforts of government, society, and the family. In the area of primary education, the government formulates educational policies and ensures that education is fair and just; society supports the government and the family in providing a favorable educational environment;

and parents pay part of the educational costs and guarantee their children's right to education (Private Education, 2013). However, primary education for the lower classes in Britain before and after the Industrial Revolution was dominated by voluntary associations, so why was there such an anomaly? This paper attempts to explore the reasons for the dominance of the voluntary sector in primary education in Britain before and after the Industrial Revolution, the shift in the control of primary education from the voluntary societies to the government, and its implications.

## 2. The Industrial Revolution Requires to Strengthen the Social Control of Education

The concept of "social control" was first put forward by Herbert Spencer in *Principles of Sociology*, in 1901, Ross (1969) published the book "Social Control", which is the first monograph on the systematic study of social control, discussing the basis of control, the means of control and the system of control. He believed that social control is a kind of purposeful and conscious social domination, which is the control of society over the animal instincts of human beings; the means of social control include both intangible control such as public opinion, customs, habits, beliefs, and tangible control such as law, education, science, and so on; and the purpose of social control is to contribute to the "welfare of mankind". He also formulated five guidelines that social intervention should follow. With more and more sociologists joining the study, "social control" has long been a hot topic in the field of sociology. The theory of social control has gone through three stages of development, namely, the sociological stage from the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century, the cybernetic stage in the middle of the 20th century, and the social philosophical stage since the end of the 20th century. In the sociological stage, sociologists studied the object, system and its change of social control from the sociological level, represented by Herbert Spencer in Britain, Edward Roth in the United States and Emile Durkheim in France; in the cybernetic stage, sociologists focused on the instrumental value of social control. In the cybernetics stage, sociologists focus on the instrumental value of social control, the study of social control is increasingly patterned, the object and content of social control is limited to individual behavior, the representative figure is the American mathematician Norbert Wiener; in the social philosophy stage, sociologists believe that social control is a function of the social structure, and the key to social control is to grasp the connotation of the social structure and its formation mechanism, and the study of social control in the nation state. social control. Yang (1998), for example, holds this view, arguing that "how to establish a self-actualized control that is based on self-actualized control and abandons self-actualized control has become the goal that human beings have been pursuing". Differences in research perspectives and scope of application have resulted in "no definition of the term is agreed upon by sociologists" (Meier, 1982). Social control has shown a strong and lasting vi-

tality when the concept has been introduced in such disciplines as education, psychology, history, and biological sciences.

Education (including school education) is an important means of realizing social control, which is mainly manifested in the following aspects: firstly, education has a preventive function. Education can moderate personal desires and respect the rights of others; it can determine children's preferences and cultivate the concept of order (Ross, 1969). It can make children satisfied with the status quo, "should be taught to be satisfied with any, even the humblest lot, and to discharge their duties with contented acquiescence." (Hart, 1997). Because of this preventive function of education, voluntary associations believed that the creation of more schools would prevent social instability and widespread revolution. Secondly, education has a corrective function. 19th century British charity educator Carpenter (1970), after comparing the materials presented to the Parliament in Liverpool in 1846, concluded that the average expenditure on reforming criminals in prisons was 63.5 pounds per person, while that of reformatory schools was 13.3 pounds per person, and that the reforming effect of reformatory schools was better and that reformatory schools were more effective. Failure to educate these children effectively may result in overcrowding in workhouses and prisons, increasing the burden on taxpayers. Once again, education also has the function of promoting social harmony, acting as a lubricant between social classes and maintaining social security and stability.

Traditional agricultural societies were relatively stable and the social control function of education was not evident; after the industrial revolution, the social control function of education came to the fore. In traditional agricultural societies, the mobility of farmers was small, and they might not starve to death as long as they had a small piece of land or worked as agricultural laborers; most of the poor were able to receive a certain degree of relief in their respective parishes. The social control function of education came to the fore after the Industrial Revolution, which was manifested in the following ways: First, the Industrial Revolution brought about a dramatic increase in population, which threatened the social order. 1801-1851 the population of Britain grew from 8,892,536 to 17,927,609, with a growth rate of 101.6%; the population of Lancashire grew from 683,252 to 2,667,301, with a growth rate of 290%; and that of Lancashire grew from 683,252 to 2,667,301, with a growth rate of 290%. 301, a growth rate of 290.4%; and Lancaster County's 12 urban areas grew from 291,281 to 1,193,262, a growth rate of 309.7% (Chadwick, 1862). The rapid growth of the British population, especially the urban population, undermined the relatively stable social order of the agrarian society, and the churches and schools, which had maintained the traditional social order, were unable to cope with such a rapid increase in population. Secondly, the Industrial Revolution intensified the social division between the rich and the poor and increased the number of crimes. The industrial revolution accumulated huge wealth in a short time; however, due to the irrational distribution of wealth, it led to a serious polarization between the

rich and the poor. 1.1% of the rich people occupied 25% of the national income in 1801, 1.2% of the rich people occupied 35% of the national income in 1848, and 2% of the rich people occupied 40% of the national income in 1867 (Li, 2010). Due to the irrational distribution of national wealth, the lower strata of society did not benefit from the prosperity brought about by the industrial revolution for a relatively long period of time. After entering the industrial society, the mobility of the population increased, and the lower class mainly relied on wages to live, and once they did not have a job, they had no livelihood; the lower class was separated from the charitable blessings such as the relief of the original parish, and it was difficult for them to receive timely assistance. In addition, industrialization pushed the rapid expansion of the urban population, the original urban parish relief system has been destroyed, the existing poverty alleviation measures are far from being able to meet the demand for social assistance, the new social assistance system has not yet been established, and the problem of poverty of the lower class is highlighted. 1800, Britain about 5,000 criminal convictions, and by the thirties, the number soared to about 20,000, resulting in 1842-1877, the number of 90 new schools in Britain was increased. By the thirties this number had risen to around 20,000, leading to the creation of 90 new prisons in England in 1842-1877. While the population of England increased by 79% from 1805-1841, the crime rate increased by 482% (Brantlinger & Ulin, 1993). 11,348 young people aged 10 - 20 were in prison in England in 1844, 1/304 of their peers (Carpenter, 1970). Juvenile delinquents, represented by the Marginalized children, infesting the streets of the city and wandering the country lanes of the fields, “grow up in the most ignorant surroundings, without the benefit of the education provided for them by law” (Carpenter, 1853), seriously jeopardizing the safety and stability of society.

The popular of education urgently requires the creation of schools on a large scale. In the traditional agrarian societies, which were relatively static, the lower classes of society relied mainly on oral tradition and hands-on learning of survival skills, and for the majority of the population, schooling was optional and more of a “luxury”, such as a very small number of clever children from peasant families who might be chosen to be sent to monasteries to become friars, or chosen by charity schools to receive mainly religious education. With the development of industrialization and urbanization, the transmission of survival skills became increasingly dependent on the acquisition of knowledge and on schooling, and education ceased to be a “luxury” for the general population and became a “necessity” for social development, with a sharp increase in the base of the educable population. For the lower social classes, the number of charity schools of various types can not meet the huge demand for education, the rapid creation of more and more schools became a social emergency. Eighteenth century charity schools with different names, such as charity schools, free schools, blue coat school, gray coat school and green coat school. As Joseph Lancaster, the founder of the Monitor system, pointed out in his book *Improvements in*

*Education*, the annual cost of charity schools was 15 guineas per pupil, amounting to 15 pounds and 15 shillings, which was a huge sum of money for the average family of the time, which was totally unable to pay such high tuition fees (Birchenough, 1920). The small size of these schools, coupled with the fact that these schools provided meals and clothing, made school expenses expensive and did not meet the need for education for the masses. In 1816, Parliament initiated a Select Committee to inquire into the education of the poor in the Capital District, and found that the parish of Bethnal Green, with a population of 40,000 inhabitants, had only two ordinary day schools, with a total of 120 pupils, and in addition there was a Wesleyan Sunday school. The committee found that not more than 1,200 of the 40,000 inhabitants were educated. A pastor who had worked in the parish for seven years told the Commission that he felt the parish was “dreadful scenes of riot and disturbance in the parish occasionally” (TR, 1816). The urgent need for schools to be established in this parish to curb this “air of uneasiness” epitomized English society at the time.

### **3. Social Control of Primary Education by Voluntary Associations**

The great social changes caused by the Industrial Revolution required the rapid establishment of a number of schools to discipline the children of the lower classes through education. However, as the government, which believed in liberal policies, did not intervene in primary education, and the families of the lower classes were poor and could not afford to pay tuition fees or relatively high tuition fees, the voluntary societies, which had the function of social control, took up the important task of primary education in Britain.

Before 1833, the Government, which believed in liberal policies, did not intervene in primary education. For a long time, the British government practiced the laissez-faire principle of “who educates, who benefits” and did not intervene in primary education, and voluntary associations played a dominant role in primary education, which was a typical “privately-run” education; in 1833, the Parliament gave building grants to new schools for the first time, and in 1839, the Education Committee of Privy Council (ECPC), a grant management body, was set up. After the 1840s, the government gave maintenance grants to primary schools and expanded the scope of grants to teacher training institutions, and from 1833 to 1869, primary education in Britain showed the following characteristics. In 1833-1869, primary education in Britain was characterized by “government-run and government-assisted”; after 1870, primary education in Britain was increasingly characterized by “government-run and government-assisted”.

In the early 19th century, the lower class of the British society was generally poor, and they struggled to make ends meet and could not afford to pay tuition fees for their children or to pay a large amount of tuition fees, so they were forced to throw the responsibility of educating their children to the society. 1834 a survey showed that in the 35 center towns of cotton, wool, and silk spinning, ac-

counting for 1/4 of the total population, the average income per person per week was 49, 294 people, and the average income per person per week was about 1s.  $9\frac{5}{8}$  d. per person, had an average weekly income of only one shilling and nine pence per person, of which, after deducting the cost of rent, fuel, and light, only one shilling and three pence remained for food and clothing (Qian, 2020). The average worker lived on a little more than 15 pence a week and simply could not afford to pay for their children's school fees of 1 - 3 pence a week, and moreover, workers often had more than one child needing to go to school at that time. During the Industrial Revolution, about 1/3 of the workers' families were always in poverty (Liu et al., 2016). None of these families could afford to pay tuition fees or pay more.

Educational voluntary societies were founded for the purpose of social control. The Industrial Revolution brought about great changes in British society and the social order was under great threat. In order to maintain social stability, the army, the police, the prisons, the workhouses, the schools and the charities all became instruments of social control, maintaining order in their respective fields, and the field of primary education was no exception. With the development of industrialization and urbanization, the British primary education ushered in the era of mass, if the children of the lower strata of society can not receive education, they may not have a skill and enter the poor house, or because of the "belly rebellion" frequent entry and exit of the prison, increasing the burden of taxpayers, endangering social stability. Therefore, a large number of voluntary associations have been established in the field of primary education in Britain, not only the National Society and British and Foreign School Society (BFSS), such as important national voluntary associations, but also the Congregationalist Church, the Wesleyan Church, the Baptist Church and the Roman Catholic Church and other denominations set up by the voluntary associations, and there are many local voluntary associations. They hoped to achieve the purpose of maintaining social order by educating and disciplining the children of the lower classes of society, ushering in the era of the voluntary societies of primary education in Britain. Another purpose of the voluntary societies was to compete for adherents, hoping to exert sectarian influence on children at a young age and to convert as many children as possible from other sects to their own; competition for adherents was also part of social control, so that adherents would be religious, believing in the natural order created by the Creator: that God made all things, and that man would govern the sky, land, and waters, and believing in the social order created by the Creator: that women (the poor) would be dependent on men (the rich). "Rich were rich and poor were poor. God had called them to their particularly stations, and both were to show gratitude—the rich to God, and the poor to their well-to-do benefactors, as well as to God." (Owen, 1964).

Voluntary societies achieved social control by founding, maintaining and supervising elementary school. National voluntary societies led the way in primary

education by founding central model elementary school. For example, Lancaster, the founder of the BFSS, founded Borough Road Elementary School in 1798, and the National Society founded Baldwin's Gardens Elementary School in 1812. The central model schools were examples for local schools to follow. As for the role of the model school, the BFSS stated in its constitution that the purpose of maintaining such a school was "to propagate a system of education and training"; the school was open to the public from 9 - 12 a.m. and 3 - 5 p.m. every day except Saturday (Report, 1819). Teachers and administrators from many local schools visited the Model Schools, e.g. in 1816 the number of signatures from visitors to the Baldwin Model School was 3922 (Hurt, 1971). Visitors to these model schools were favorably impressed, and William Wilberforce, vice-president of the BFSS, wrote in his diary after visiting the Baldwin Baldwin's Gardens School, "The children are well educated there, and are optimistic and agreeable" (Burgess, 1958). The BFSS and the National Society were two competing societies, and the fact that Wilberforce, as vice-president of the BFSS, gave his rival such a high rating suggests that the Baldwin School fulfilled the society's goal of founding a model school. A central model school could also "stimulate" the voluntary enthusiasm of visitors, such as William Allen, who was treasurer of the BFSS until 1843, and whose support for Joseph Lancaster and the BFSS became overwhelming after a visit to the school in Borough Road was overwhelming. Here's what he saw on his first visit to the School: "It was a sight I shall never forget. I watched 1000 children from different places who had been naughty and mischievous in the streets. Now the children, having learned the gospel truths of the Bible, were beginning to be educated to order, to obey, and to be useful. The observer will ponder what a change this admirable young man's system (the system of instructing students), obtained by practice, will bring about in our country and the world, and even the strongest man will shed tears of gladness." (Binns, 1908).

Schools founded by voluntary societies maintained social stability in two ways. On the one hand, schools founded by voluntary societies met the needs of the age of mass education, and if these needs were not met, these children, when they went out into the community, could add to the burden of the workhouse and become regular visitors to the prisons, thus threatening the security of the society; on the other hand, schools founded by voluntary societies educated children and trained them to recognize the existing order, which also achieved the purpose of social stability. In 1847, Lancashire men of different denominations met to plan a school to promote non-denominational secular education, stating in their appeal, "Let us not forget that our goals are filled with criminals, the ignorance of a large majority of whom is sufficient evidence that the existing educational agencies have not embraced the whole of the population; let us not forget that if we had built school houses instead of goals, many of our criminals might now have been honest and respectable members of the community." (Plan, 1847). At the impetus of this meeting, the Lancaster County Public School

Union was formed, which aimed to establish a system of free, secular, taxed, and locally controlled education in Lancaster County that would grow into the National Public School Union by 1850. Voluntary associations founded schools that in effect acted as a preventative “police” control. Thus, “schools and teachers were seen as substitutes for families and parents, repeatedly instilling civilized behavior and obedience to social status.” (Sanderson, 1995).

#### **4. Government Social Control of Primary Education**

Despite the relative strength of the voluntary associations, they are unable to meet the demand for expanding the number of recipients and improving the quality of primary education nationwide; their fund-raising capacity is inferior to that of the Government; and, after several internal divisions, they have been unable to accomplish the important task of popularizing primary education throughout the country and have had to give way to the Government.

First of all, the fund-raising ability of voluntary organizations was inferior to that of the government. In the early days of the National Assembly, it had a strong fund-raising ability. By 1815 it had raised £40,000 (Binns, 1908), and thus it had full confidence in the power of voluntary associations. In its annual report for that year, the National Society believed that “civilized and enlightened people will be unstinting in their generosity” and that “their resources will be inexhaustible” (National Society Report, 1816), yet by 1823 the National Society was running out of funds. The National Society had the backing of the powerful National Church, and the “Royal Letters” greatly eased the Society’s financial woes, but in 1849 the Society’s finances were once again strained, and “the finances of the National Society were already in such a straitened condition, that the Central Committee were obliged to postpone their plans in regard to the construction of new buildings, extensions, and the provision of teachers’ accommodation”, and had to settle on a new building at St. Mary’s, which was to be built in the same year. The Central Committee was obliged to postpone plans for the construction of new buildings, extensions and the provision of teachers’ lodgings, and had to tighten its spending on St. Mark’s College, Battersea College and administrative offices. At the same time, the National Society asked the managers of the National Schools to make an annual donation to the London Headquarters, which some did, for example, in 1848 the London Parish School of Clapham and the Swansea Girls’ Free School both contributed £2. 2 s (Hume Tracts, 1849). The number of local schools that contributed to the National Society was small, and even for those that did contribute their contribution amount was small and provided limited relief to the National Society’s financial situation. In the face of a burgeoning population and a growing potential educational audience, the voluntary societies were unable to meet the national educational burden, particularly in the cities, and in 1840 the Parliament conducted a survey of the state of education in five Lancashire towns, Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool. The survey showed that the number of children between the ages of 5 and 15 in



these five towns who should be educated was 171,250, 96,974 were educated, and 74,276 were uneducated (Minutes, 1841). In 1834 in Manchester amongst children aged 5 - 15 there were 17 10,000 or 1/3 of the children were not receiving any education (Maltby, 1918). Altick (1957) commented, "In the new industrial cities, private benevolence alone could not establish and support of schools charity alone could not create and maintain thousands of schools."

Secondly, the split within the voluntary society weakened primary education. The National Society, the largest educational voluntary society of the National Church, was greatly weakened by the split between the Factory District Education Bill of 1843 and the government's enactment of the "Management Clause" and the "Conscience Clause". The above Bill, which called for the establishment of schools in the factory districts and the education of these children by the National Church, died mainly due to the opposition of those who did not follow the National Church, but the lack of unity within the National Church was also a very important reason. Impacted by the Oxford Movement, the Church split into High Church and Low Church factions. Those who supported the Oxford Movement were known as High Churchmen, and Evangelicals and Broad Churchmen who opposed the Oxford Movement and did not adhere to the doctrines of the Church were known as Low Churchmen. Murphy (1971) argued that the Roman Catholicizing tendencies of the Oxford Movement were too pronounced and were opposed by many churchmen, splitting the power of the Church and "stirring up the hostility and suspicion of nonconformists and evangelicals," Murphy's analysis is very accurate. The "Education Clause", which dealt with the question of whether ministers should dominate the management of Church schools, and the Conscience Clause, which dealt with religious education in separate school districts, were the subject of serious disagreement within the Church. The second largest voluntary society in the country, the BFSS, has also suffered several splits due to loose internal management and religious education issues, further weakening the voluntary force.

Third, competition within the voluntary societies and the struggle between the voluntary societies and the government for control of education weakened primary education in Britain. Most of the voluntary societies had religious backgrounds, and the educational voluntary societies of different religious backgrounds, while promoting primary education in England, also wished to grow their own denominational power and convert more converts through education. For example, the National Society, the largest voluntary society of the Church, was a product of religious competition. Lancaster was a non-Nationalist, and the promotion of non-denominational education and the formation of non-Nationalist organizations challenged the authority of the Nationalist education system and stimulated a sense of competition among Nationalists, leading to the formation of the National Society. Supporters of the two societies also fought and blamed each other, and in 1834 Henry Althans, the inspector of the BFSS Schools, made a statement to the Parliamentary Select Committee of Inquiry into Educa-

tion that the standard of teachers in the BFSS Schools was higher than it had ever been before, whereas in the other Schools it was not; and that, compared with the teachers sent out after training in the National Society Normal Schools, the teachers sent out by the Society were of a higher caliber. The teachers sent are of a higher quality (Report, 1834). The implication was that the BFSS was better than the National Society. And William Cotton, a member of the Central Committee of the National Society, stated to the said committee that the contribution of the Anglo-Haitian Society had been small prior to the formation of the National Society, and he defended the view that the formation of the National Society had been the result of sectarian rivalry. He pointed out that the supporters of the National Society, and the friends who had promoted it, had supported education before Lancaster, and that its formation “had been encouraged by very good motives, and not by feelings of hostility toward Lancaster” (Report, 1834). The competition from voluntary societies may have led to the creation of two or even more schools of poor quality in a parish where there was a need for only one good quality elementary school. The competition between voluntary societies and the government for control of education also delayed the establishment of the English primary education system, leading to a growing disadvantage. The early establishment of national systems of primary education in both France and Prussia gave impetus to the flourishing of secondary and technical education, and by the time of the Paris World’s Fair in 1867, the industrial products of France and Prussia were already in fierce competition with those of Great Britain, whose absolute superiority in industry was declining.

The Elementary Education Act of 1870 established a “dual” system of national education led by the government in conjunction with a variety of charitable organizations. According to the Act, the national primary education department was the Education Department, the country was divided into a number of school districts (London was a separate district), school boards were established in school districts that could not provide effective primary education, school boards had the right to levy a local tax to build new schools and manage them with full powers, school boards had the right to compulsorily purchase school sites, and they could also delegate all the powers except the right to levy a tax to other organizations (Murphy, 1972). The act essentially establishes a model of education in which the central government provides maintenance grants for all types of schools, local governments fill local school gaps, and schools are operated in conjunction with charitable organizations, including voluntary societies.

## 5. Conclusion

Primary education was adapted to the needs of the stabilization and development of the Industrial Revolution in Britain. On the one hand, primary education trained modern enterprise workers. With the development of Industrial Revolution, more and more factories were established, and modern factories needed quiet, punctual and disciplined factory workers. Primary schools endea-

vored to discipline the children of the lower classes of society through school rules and regulations, the teaching of religious morality and easy-to-control secular content, and the training of teachers in a narrow range of content, who became qualified members of the industrial society after going out into the community. On the other hand, the cultural knowledge acquired in primary schools also provides the lower classes with a skill set that is socially relevant and contributes to their personal growth in the modern world.

Social control also drove the development of primary education in the UK. First, it promoted the popularization of British primary education. During the Industrial Revolution, various social conflicts arose in the transition period, education as a link in the chain of social control, in order to play a positive role in social control, people from all walks of life founded a large number of schools, enrolled children from the lower strata of society, morally disciplined them and taught them the basic knowledge of culture, which reduced the burden of poverty alleviation and prisons. Secondly, it promoted the secularization of primary education in Britain. When the religious and moral education in schools and the narrow “reading, writing and arithmetic” education could not meet the demand for social control, the 1830s and 1840s ushered in a wave of secularization of education, and schools increasingly taught easy-to-control socioeconomics and other content, and the religionization of primary education increasingly gave way to secularization. Thirdly, the “socialization” of primary education in England was promoted. Voluntary associations gradually shifted their control over primary education to the government, especially after the parliamentary reform of 1867, which made the working class the “masters” of society, and the “social control” of primary education gradually transitioned to “socialization”, i.e., the role of education gradually changed to “socialization”. In other words, the role of education changed from social control to personal development, social progress and national prosperity.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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