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THE DEMYSTIFICATION OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION:
A Critique and Suggestions for a New Research Direction

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Working Paper Number 2

Draft for discussion at the Annual Conference of the
Comparative and International Education Society
March 26-29, 1975
Sir Francis Drake Hotel
San Francisco, California

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to initiate an inquiry into a currently "fashionable" educational phenomenon presently referred to as "non-formal education." It is hoped that the paradigm presented will provide yet another interpretive perspective by which we can more fully understand the consequences of this educational phenomenon. It is a major contention of this paper that a more conceptually rigorous approach will enable us to understand better how non-formal education might contribute to or inhibit social change and development in societies undergoing rapid modernization.¹

This is not, by any means, the first attempt to deal with non-formal education in conceptual rather than practical terms. Already studies have been initiated attempting to assess the economic effects of these social action and education programs. Under the direction of Philip H. Coombs, the International Council for Educational Development is conducting research on non-formal educational programs for out-of-school young people in rural areas of developing countries. The African-American Institute recently sponsored a comprehensive survey of non-formal education in Africa (Sheffield and Diejomaoh). Regional conferences sponsored by various international agencies have been held in order to assess non-formal education and the extent to which it might become an important instrument of development.²

Organized university efforts include the innovative experimentation and field-testing of non-formal instructional technology at the University of Massachusetts' School of Education and Michigan State University's Institute for International Studies in Education's comprehensive investigation of non-formal education. In cooperation with the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.), they have set up task forces comprised of scholars and graduate students who are attempting to examine, conceptually as well as
practically, various aspects of non-formal education. Thus far they have produced a number of insightful working papers concerning this topic, including a major bibliography on non-formal education. ³

We have, however, become increasingly concerned about the strong "promotional" posture assumed in most of the current non-formal education literature -- a stance not yet supported by any very substantial body of empirical or evaluative research concerning the assumed contribution of NFE to national development. More important, we have come to seriously question the adequacy of the interpretive framework implicit in this "advocacy" position.

Much of the writing and research on NFE over the past three or four years assumes the relationship between education and development to be a benign one; and proceeds to argue from that "given" that NFE is a more cost-effective means of achieving those universally desired and agreed upon development outcomes. Furthermore, within this body of literature, NFE is posited as a viable solution to the problem of inequality of opportunity -- that it has a strong potential for providing an alternative channel of upward social and economic mobility for low status social groups. ⁴

Philip Coombs, probably the most articulate and vociferous promoter of the positive development role of NFE, has presented the above position most eloquently in his book, The World Education Crisis, as well as in other of his more recent writings. According to Coombs' analysis, the crisis of educational development in the Third World is a consequence of the fact that despite enormous expansion of educational systems since World War II there remains an unsatisfied and, even, increasing social demand for education. Thus, as Martin Carnoy points out in his review of Coombs' book, the main problem, as Coombs sees it, is that of increasing "output" -- and the factors which are identified as inhibiting the necessary educational growth rate are: rapidly rising educational costs; inefficient management and teaching methods;
unsuitability of present output; and scarcity of resources available to educational expansion. Coombs proposes that the solution to these problems of restricted output is the introduction of capital intensive educational technology, increased foreign aid, and a rapid expansion of non-formal education.

With respect to the latter, Coombs' contends that non-formal education "when well aimed, has a high potential for contributing quickly and substantially to individual and national development." We have singled out Coombs simply because his arguments advocating non-formal education and, particularly, the assumptions underlying these arguments, appear to be held in common with most of the other current proponents of non-formal education (World Bank, MSU, A.I.D., U. Mass.). Moreover, it is the same set of assumptions that characterizes the Western "developmental" view of education in general.

This developmental model is essentially reformist, and at its heart is the conviction that the ills and disparities of society can be remedied by an increased investment in education as a means of improving the quality of "human capital" -- that the gap between rich and poor social sub-groups, between developed and underdeveloped countries can be substantially diminished by well-planned educational programs. There is only minimal acknowledgment of the possibility that education itself may serve to maintain, even exacerbate, such social disparities -- and, then, only formal schooling is so charged, certainly not non-formal education.

Another assumption implicit in this model of educational development is that the socio-economic structure of a society describes a single, linear continuum, ranging from unskilled blue-collar worker or farm laborer upward through white-collar managerial and professional. Accompanying this human capital model of the labor force is the belief that the reason some individuals or social sub-groups persistently and systematically continue to occupy
the lower rungs of this ladder is due to some "psychological or skill deficit." "Culturally deprived" and "socially disadvantaged" are but two of the euphemisms commonly used by the liberal community to describe the concept of "deficit." In brief, this model assumes that the root cause for the problems of inequality and maldistribution of resources and statuses lies within the individual, not the social structure, and can best be remedied by prescribing more education as a cure for the "deficit." Implicit in this model is the notion of how social change occurs: change comes about evolutionarily as a consequence of raising the consciousness and competence of individuals, through education, who in turn bring "enlightened" pressure to bear for structural reform. Within this perspective it is clear that non-formal education has become the new weapon in the development arsenal: if formal schooling can promote development, then non-formal education, through its ability to reach a broader range of people during a greater span of their lives, can do it better and cheaper.

But another analytical perspective based upon a different set of assumptions may result in some other conclusions and, thus, some alternative policy paradigm.

We do not believe that the overly "psychologized" mode of analysis which has characterized most Western educational thinking is particularly useful in any attempt to understand the relationship of education, as an institution, to the process of social change. We feel there is a need to develop an interpretive frame work which is better able to take social structure and context into account and can, analytically, deal with the "centrality of power" in the relationship between education and the other social sub-systems. We find the implicit assumption, that severe problems of distribution and participation which arise as a result of power conflicts in other social sub-
systems to be amenable to solution through the manipulation of educational variables alone, to be singularly unconvincing.

We would argue that the right questions have not yet been asked with regard to non-formal education. It may be that non-formal education, just as its advocates contend, does have the capacity to transform underdeveloped societies. But before proceeding to invest in that assumption, we need to seek answers to a number of complex questions. For example, within a specific context, who benefits from investment in non-formal education? (Simply because a given program is directed at a specific sub-sector of society does not assure that that group will be the ultimate beneficiaries.) Since they are complexly interrelated, what is the nature of the interaction between schooling and non-formal education? How do they each differentially serve those social functions which education has always served -- socialization, mobility management, and transmission of cognitive and non-cognitive skills? How do they differ in their patterns of recruitment? in their internal/structural characteristics? in their relationship to the occupational structure and the world of work?

We would like to develop here an analytical paradigm which is better suited to more rigorously seeking answers to both such macro and micro level questions as these. But such a paradigm will, of necessity, be based upon a different set of assumptions than those which underlie the current writing on non-formal education. First, we need to step back from the expansive optimism reflected in Coombs, which assumes that the relationship between education and development, particularly non-formal education, is necessarily benign. Also, contrary to the "psychological" model assumed above, we would like to construct a more "sociologized" approach which is better designed to allow us to view education within its societal context -- not an autonomous
system, but a sub-system continually acting upon and being acted upon by the other social sub-systems -- political, economic, and cultural.

Moreover, we do not believe that a model which assumes that social inequality and maldistribution of resources are a consequence of individual psychological deficit, to be reformed through increased investment in education, adequately takes into account the dynamic and conflictual context of third world nations. Indeed, to the contrary, there appears to be a growing, and convincing, body of research which raises serious questions as to the validity of the "human capital/psychological deficit" paradigm.

Nathan Caplan and Stephen Nelson, in their article "On Being Useful: The Nature and Consequences of Psychological Research on Social Problems," explicate the inherent dangers of this "over-psychologized" view toward human development. They point out that the preoccupation of social scientists with person-centered variables leads to "person-blame" casual attribution bias. This bias serves several functions:

1. Displacement of blame for prior political and technological failures.

2. It reinforces social myths about one's degree of control over his own fate.

3. It leads to person-centered "treatment" rather than institutional or system "treatment" in efforts to understand poverty.

4. It encourages and justifies continued study of the poor rather than the rich.

Instead (and particularly in underdeveloped countries), the opportunity structure can be more accurately described as "dual labor market segmentation." Consistent with this position, the labor market is viewed as being segmented into two distinct (non-linear) sectors: primary (white-collar, managerial, professional); and secondary (blue-collar labor and agricultural workers).
Empirically, it is observed that there is very little mobility, or "cross-over," from the secondary to the primary sector, and that, important from our perspective, increased investment in education does not significantly increase the opportunity for cross-segment mobility. Thus, it is posited that the maintenance of this segmentation (and the inequality of opportunity indicated by it) is not a consequence of the secondary segment suffering some systematic deficit, but is, rather, due to systemic structural malfunction of the entire system. It cannot, therefore, be remedied simply by investment in, and manipulation of, the educational system. Indeed, it can be argued that education serves as one of the most effective social institutions for maintaining that segmentation.

This is due to the fact that: (1) formal schooling, through its selection and recruitment process, provides markedly differential elite access to the different socio-economic segments; and (2) even those relatively few members of the secondary segment who are successful in gaining access to the elite schooling track, instead of becoming "enlightened to the need for social reform," tend to become co-opted through socialization to dominant values and interests. Moreover, from the perspective of this analysis, if formal schooling is serving as a systems' support for the maintenance of inequality and maldistribution, then non-formal education is potentially an even more effective means for limiting cross-segment mobility.

For example, by not providing either the accepted or socially valued certification or the non-cognitive attributes necessary for continuing to learn on the job (for promotibility), non-formal education "locks" workers into the lower segments of the occupational structure. Needless to say, this issue could be clarified by extensive study of what the non-cognitive outcomes are in non-formal education programs and what are the effects of certification on job opportunity for NFE products. Since the overwhelming majority of non-
formal education programs are designed for, and directed at the secondary (and frequently rural) segment of the labor market, and since most of these programs have aimed at producing more competent "farmers and fishermen," it may be argued that they, more than formal schools, serve to effectively inhibit mobility between segments. (At least schools do provide the brightest of the secondary segment with some limited mobility opportunities.)

Thus, it is not difficult to understand why, from a radical or critical perspective, non-formal education is frequently viewed as a "rip-off," simply another contemporary example of the reformist maneuver of "feeding slops" to the low status groups. For if non-formal programs are successful in producing more competent, more satisfied, farmers and fishermen, they are likely to effectively defuse legitimate social discontent, and inhibit the development of concerted demand for sweeping social and economic restructuring of their society. Quite the contrary, then, of providing an alternative channel for upward socio-economic mobility, non-formal education may serve to rigidify existing channels.

Such questions concerning the relationship of social mobility or socio-economic status to education -- both formal and non-formal -- remain unanswered. Most of the studies, from Warner et al. Who Shall Be Educated? to Jencks et al. Inequality, have produced quite contradictory evidence concerning this relationship. Moreover, no one to our knowledge has yet investigated the distribution of non-formal educational opportunities. For example, to what extent are non-formal educative opportunities differentially and unequally distributed to groups in a society according to social class, ethnicity, urban-rural residence or years of schooling completed? Our initial enthusiasm has perhaps encouraged us to overlook a whole range of questions that educational researchers quite routinely examine in regards to formal schooling. It is our
contention that these questions are appropriate for non-formal education as well.

There are a number of myths concerning non-formal education (and schooling as well) that from a sociological perspective raise more questions than they answer. For example, vocational training programs in some developing countries are designed to train unemployed or underemployed farmers or peasants in modern skills. The ostensible purpose is to prepare manpower for the expanding modern industrial sector. It is a commonly articulated belief that this will lead to expanded participation in not only the economic but political realm. But, in fact, can it be said that the social order has really changed when what has occurred is that those in the lowest rungs of traditional society have simply shifted to the lowest rungs of modern, stratified society? Does this kind of educational program contribute to rural/urban dualities; does it accelerate rural/urban transformation, perpetuate maldistribution of wealth and resources and maintain discontinuities that the program was presumably designed to avoid or to eradicate in the first place? A change in the occupational structure without a concurrent change in the opportunity structure may be representative of the process of modernization rather than development.

Before moving on, we would like to point out that we are not unaware of the evaluation and research efforts that have been conducted here and abroad in connection with non-formal and schooling activities. However, as we stated previously, we do question some of the assumptions and contentions popular among the non-formal education proponents. In addition, we question the paucity of social science rigor and the lack of emphasis on non-cognitive and contextual variables.
In an analysis of 181 recent evaluation-research studies whose aims were behavior change, it was found that 61% of the studies were school studies; only 1% were conducted in non-formal educative settings. In 70% of the studies reviewed no instruments were used to measure individual change; in the studies which included such measures, no more than 45% indicated or demonstrated actual change. In any case, none of the studies seemed to take contextual variables into consideration at all! 14

Thus, as we rush to invest in non-formal education, we seem to be ignoring the fact that most of the evaluation studies which might guide our research and policy decisions suffer from lack of methodological rigor and misplaced emphasis -- practically as well as conceptually. In the few well-done evaluations of social action and education programs, the results have been meager or inconclusive. Weiss astutely observes that "the spate of negative results across a whole gamut of programs betokens a series of important shortcomings . . . evaluations may be revealing [not shortcomings in the programs themselves] but the error in the theories and assumptions on which the programs are based." 15 In other words, lacking a more rigorous examination of the structural features of non-formal education and its social and economic consequences upon those who undergo its processing, we might continue to create, fund or encourage educative activities that do not promote development goals, or may implicitly be acting counter to development aims.

The Societal Context of Education

It is our contention that a sociological analysis of non-formal education will enable us to understand better the current as well as the potential role of non-formal education in its relationship with social and political development. Such a perspective will enable us to focus not only on the content, i.e., the internal structural features, of non-formal education but on
the societal context in which it is embedded. We assume that all forms of education -- non-formal as well as schooling -- occur in a socio-politico-economic context and that this context, representing the other institutional domains of society, largely determines the extent to which non-formal educative agencies are successful in conveying both their cognitive and non-cognitive "messages" to their clients.

Underlying this notion, is the contention that non-formal education is not a unique phenomenon that requires for its evaluation or investigation new methodologies, new theories, etc. But, rather, it is but another aspect of the spectrum of purposive educative phenomena and as such lends itself to research models and present social science knowledge which has already been accumulated, developed and tested.

Non-Formal Education: An Historical Perspective

Most of the wide variety of educational activities that comprise non-formal education are, of themselves, not particularly new. Trade training centers, on-the-job training, management training, "morals or political" re-education, community development programs, literacy programs and even alternative schools have been with us for some time.

In the United States, for example, manpower training programs sponsored by government and private industry were introduced before the turn of the century. In Africa, agricultural settlement schemes, farmer training centers, self-help projects and work-oriented functional literacy projects are clear examples of non-formal education. In Latin America and Cuba, highly organized programs are already in operation. Cuba's parallel education system is representative of non-formal education in a revolutionary context, while SENA in Colombia represents a highly organized apprenticeship and training organization in a basically non-revolutionary context. In South
East Asia, Thailand's mobile trade training centers, their community development programs, and their functional literacy projects are examples of non-formal programs in non-industrial contexts.

Previously these non-formal activities were classified as adult education, agricultural extension, continuation education, social action programs, and vocational education. Sheffield and Diejomaoh suggest non-formal educational programs have ostensibly served as "(1) an alternative for those who lack the opportunity to acquire formal schooling; (2) as an extension of formal schooling for those who needed additional training to get them into productive employment (or to become self-employed); (3) as a means of upgrading the skills of those already employed." We also add to this list that it has served or has the potential to serve as a means for maintaining or changing political and social orientations as well.

Education, outside the classroom, has been with us long before the advent of formal schools. In fact, from an historical perspective, schooling is clearly the more recent educational phenomenon (Eerskowitz). What is new today, however, is our heightened interest toward the aforementioned educational activities, euphemistically called non-formal education. What is new is the development educator's attempt to reconceptualize non-schooling education so as to harness what potential it might have for social change and socio-economic development. Non-formal education as a term represents an important change in outlook or perspective among both radical and liberal educators, concerned governments and social scientists, rather than an emergence of a new educational phenomenon.

The reasons for this important change have their origin in a variety of factors, all critical in our attempts to understand the functions which non-formal education can and cannot serve. First, "growing dissatisfaction
with the apparent shortcomings of formal schooling in the Western world and a growing realization in underdeveloped countries that formal schooling, even with considerable reform, reorientation and further expansion can satisfy at best only a fraction of their educational needs, has led to a search for and experimentation with educational forms and structures that better meet contemporary needs and yet stay within the already taxed educational resources of all nations." Second, socialist revolutions in Russia, Eastern Europe, and more recently in China and Cuba have produced educational experiments whose apparent successes sharply challenge the assumptions of educational systems that distinguish between mental and manual education. In societies where this distinction is still made, we find social systems which allocate to those who have received "real, genuine education" social status, economic power, and political authority while it relegates those who have only received "training" -- the artisans and manual workers -- to positions of marked inferiority. Third, profound technological change and the accelerative thrust of these changes have increased the demand for education, thereby creating conditions in society which require people to pursue purposive education throughout most of their lives.

Fourth, non-formal education is increasingly perceived as a potentially powerful means for promoting dramatic economic growth. Finally, it is perceived as an efficient means for accelerating political participation and social development. Some radical educators and social scientists view this last factor as most important in the democratization and development efforts of feudal and recently decolonized societies. Lengrand puts it succinctly, "countries having recently experienced a revolution not confined to a mere replacement of ministerial ranks but affecting the country's structure in their social and economic aspects encounter problems of a similar character.
It is not enough to promulgate a new constitution, to install an administration of a new type: the main effort must be made at the level of minds, mores and relations.\textsuperscript{19}

Non-Formal Education: Definitions and Research Directions

Non-formal education is an education term, not a social scientific term or concept and, therefore, it is neither all inclusive nor mutually exclusive. Not only does it mean different things to different people, other terms used by the same people seem to refer to the same concepts. So we have considerable confusion when, on the one hand, we have one term representing diverse concepts and, on the other, one concept represented by diverse terms. Most writers on the subject have ignored this issue or excused it by arguing that this is non-formal education's "heuristic phase" and that any attempt at this time to establish meaningful and consistent usage will be a waste of creative energy and perhaps even stifle non-formal educative experimentation. We don't deny the heuristic value of many terms, many concepts, but we also believe as Merton does that "...conceptual clarity is effectively marred and communication defeated by competing vocabularies..." We also contend that this confusion obscures the direction the research and educational planning into this phenomenon must take.

Unlike the confusion concerning functional analysis that Merton addresses himself to, the "confusion" concerning non-formal education is not the result of what he calls an "unwitting shift in the conceptual content of the term;" rather it is the consequence of our inadequate knowledge of and lack of research in purposive education activities carried on outside the formal school system, the lack of clear conceptualization, the different purposes it serves in differing contexts, and the different and often conflicting de-
development assumptions that guide it. In addition, there is a tendency for educators and social scientists to think of education only in terms of formal, graded school systems. The wide-ranging and amorphous non-formal educative activities and agencies, frequently private in origin and management and often occurring as a by-product of activities directed primarily at objectives other than education, have only recently become appropriate subjects for educational researchers.

For example, in the United States, non-formal education as a term has had heuristic value in defining that area of education not neatly subsumed under formal education or schooling. It has been useful in distinguishing the education that occurs in the regular age-graded school system from that which occurs outside of that system. In Cuba similar educational activities are subsumed by the rubric, The Parallel Education System, and in China by the term, Spare-Time Education. In the United States non-formal education embraces educational activities and all purposive learning experiences from manpower training programs to alternative schools. In Cuba and China they include all programs -- technical and political -- from child care centers to cadre schools.

What distinguishes non-formal education as it has been conceived in the United States and in revolutionary societies is that in the United States the "theory" underlying most of the educational programs are "psychological;" that is, participants are seen as suffering some cognitive and/or non-cognitive deficit. If the individual could but be provided with the "right" skills or the appropriate attitudes, he would "make it." In revolutionary societies there obtains a more "sociologized" view. Wherein there is recognition of human deficit, there is a recognition of societal variables that must be taken into account if the educational programs are to be effective.
It is, in effect, a recognition that the education-development equation has two sides -- education and societal restructuring. Coleman in his article, "Conflicting Theories of Social Change," argues "the major distinction between theories of change, a distinction which divides them into two broad classes, is between theories which start with changes in the social conditions in which individuals find themselves versus those which start with changes in individuals. This distinction is one that pervades all action programs designed to produce change."

"One approach is based on the premise that if only the material conditions in which a group or society finds itself are changed, then the group or the society will itself go ahead to expand its resources."

An example of this perspective is typical in revolutionary Cuba. Perez states that in order to deal with problems of under-education and absenteeism among students, "we wish to approach their educational treatment with the firmest possible grasp of their social ecology [italics ours] ... in which behavior patterns and maladjustments are mingled with social and economic problems.... Awareness of these problems has led the Revolutionary Government to confer upon schools of the Parallel System the same degree of social prestige as that of other teaching establishments in the country, placing at their disposal similar resources for their basic studies. Their students are offered equal incentive and receive comparable attention from mass education bodies and the training departments of the various ministries and business firms."

The other approach is based on the premise that if only the individuals themselves are changed, then they will move toward an expansion of resources. This view of social change is embodied in Harbison's human resources approach. He says, "...the approach is in essence a perspective for looking at national
development and modernization... and it assumes that if [human resources problems] can be solved, most of the other obstacles in the path of progress may be removed as a consequence."

It is fairly clear that non-formal education as an educational term is "loaded" with different shades of meaning. These meanings seem to vary according to the context, revolutionary/non-revolutionary, underdeveloped/developing, and according to one's philosophical views of the role of education, in general. The term, "non-formal," is equally misleading. Non-formal suggests that there is very little or no formal structure; it suggests a highly participative, non-hierarchical and spontaneous learning environment where all participants are both teachers and learners. Let us quote a definition of non-formal education found in Non-Formal Alternatives to Schooling: A Glossary of Educational Methods prepared by the Center for International Education at the University of Massachusetts:

"[Non-formal education] is generally seen as need-oriented, ... utilitarian... and cheaper than the formal systems. Often it is tied to some productive activity...[is characterized by]...peer learning...and flexibility. Students, if the word be retained, generally enroll in non-formal courses because they are interested in what can be learned -- not because it counts for a degree.... And non-formal education does not engender elitist feelings among its students."

We do not, of course, deny that this definition might describe some non-formal educational activities accurately, but we do question whether it adequately describes all non-formal educational activities. Some of the assumptions which underlie this conception of non-formal education do not dovetail with the requirements of many skill training or political education programs throughout the world.

This view of non-formal education is mostly derived from the writings and critiques of formal schooling by Ivan Illich, Paul Goodman and Edgar Z. Friedenberg. It is derived from a reaction against schools and tends to be a
description of what some educators would like non-formal education to be, rather than what it is. Gintis argues rather persuasively that although Illich's attack on schools is consistent and pervasive in showing the negations, he does fail to pass beyond negations:

"The most serious error in Illich's analysis is his implicit postulation of a human 'essence in all of us preceding all social experience, potentially blossoming but repressed by institutions.' [If this is the thesis, then his] antithesis is no socialization at all -- individuals [would] seek independently and detached from a mode of social integration their personal paths of development." 28

Dewey commented in Experience and Education:

"There is always the problem in a new movement that in rejecting the aims and methods of that which it would supplant, it may develop its principles negatively rather than positively and constructively. Then it takes its clue in practice from that which is rejected instead of from the constructive development of its own philosophy." 29

It is our contention that the term, non-formal education, and its popular definitions have obfuscated our attempts to understand the educational activities it purports to describe and that this obfuscation has led us to minimize the commonalities and magnify the differences it shares with formal education. And although there are some promising features of "non-formal education" not often found in schools, it would be a mistake to focus our attention on these unique features alone, particularly if the features that are common to both types of education are of greater primacy. We do not feel that it is particularly useful simply to coin another term, even if more precise. Nor are we ready yet to offer some broader, all subsuming construct. We do feel, however, that in order better to understand this phenomenon, we should avoid too easy acceptance of conventional or faddish categories. Instead, we recommend recasting the issue of non-formal education into an analytical framework that facilitates our focusing on the underlying social processes which characterize these educative activities, the social structure of
these activities and its patterned effects on the experience of those who undergo the influence of these agencies. This means that we must go beyond the superficial attributes of non-formal education and examine its social attributes; (1) its recruitment-management functions; (that is, the relationship between non-formal education and systems of social stratification); (2) its internal structural features; and (3) its societal charter -- the institutional definition which defines the products of these agencies. It is one of our domain assumptions, then, that non-formal education, although commonly conceived as a corrective reaction against current institutional arrangements and as a solution to the problems that characterize those arrangements (MacCauly), is primarily a socialization agency with social features, and functions like any other socialization agency or organization.

Non-Formal Education: Socialization and Social Mobility

In order to understand more fully the need to deemphasize the "superficial" properties of non-formal education, we must digress for a moment and reexamine our current notions of education as viewed from a sociological perspective. From this perspective, education represents those institutional arrangements and procedures by which society attempts to meet its explicit demands and requirements for competent adult participants. It is in this sense a subsystem of a broader societal process -- socialization. Socialization refers to the process by which individuals acquire the knowledge, skills and properties which society demands for its maintenance or its change. In the broader sense it is that process which provides the individual with the competencies required in order to fulfill society's adult roles. "This conception...includes an individual's capacity to move to new statuses and to elaborate new roles." It includes all learning that is purposive as well as incidental or indirect.
Education, then is that specialized set of social arrangements which specifies and delineates the socialization process and which subsumes all learning that is purposive and direct. It includes all that is learned through instruction in some skill from a specialist or the inculcation of moral values found in the tales a boy or girl is told for that purpose. At the same time the social arrangements themselves represent patterned experiences which convey "indirect" lessons to those who experience them. These lessons might or might not be congruent with the explicit requirements or demands of the society in which these experiences occur. This means that educational institutions carry out explicit didactic directives but that the structures of those institutions and the relationship of educational institutions to other institutional domains constitute learning settings in and of themselves which convey skills, attitudes, norms and values to those who experience them. "Just as individuals may become differently socialized because of differences in past experiences, motivations, and capacities so may they become differently socialized because of differences in the structure of the social settings in which they interact." 

Schooling is in effect but one instance of the institutionalized arrangements that characterize the educational process. Schools represent education which occurs in particular formal organization. It is a form of education which is characterized by and limited to those processes of teaching and learning carried on at specific times, in places outside the home, for definite periods, and by persons especially prepared or trained for the task. It is education which organizes its consumers by age-grading, grants certificates and degrees, and frequently requires compulsory attendance by pupils. It usually, often legally, excludes adults. Bidwell in his "The School as a Formal Organization" describes schools as client-serving organizations...
that...are social units specifically vested with a service function...the moral and technical socialization of the young. In addition, they are to some degree bureaucratic with a functional division of labor and a hierarchic ordering of officers. Finally, the schools have a dichotomous role structure whereby the students have a recruitment role and the staff, achievement role. Young persons are required or compelled to enter school systems as students simply because of their placement in certain age-grades, without reference to specific performances. Staff members, on the other hand, enter their roles voluntarily, on the basis of prior performance."

Schooling as an instance of educative phenomena is characterized by diffuse goals and deferred "payoff," since students are to be socialized for adult life, and the central activities of their student role are not directly relevant to the immediate interest or lives of its incumbents. It is usually found in industrialized or industrializing societies, and its complex organization usually mirrors the complexity and form of the other institutions and structures of the society in which it is embedded. The school, its organizational structure and its diffuse goals are shaped in numerous ways and intricately connected to the other institutional domains of which it is a part. Moreover, while schooling is one of the important ways by which society attempts to meet its projected competency needs, it also produces, at the same time, indirect socialization consequences as well. The organization's social charter, the institutional definition in its larger social context, plays a role in shaping the products of this mode of socialization. Schooling is, historically speaking, a contemporary phenomenon, although it has been found in institutionalized but rudimentary forms in pre-literate societies in East Africa and Polynesia as well.
Non-formal education may be viewed as but another educative phenomenon, a socialization sub-system shaped by society or some aspect of it (class, subculture, political movement, etc.) in which it is embedded. It is a contention of this paper, that non-formal education is a social product inter-penetrating and interacting with the other institutional domains of the society in which it resides. And although many of its specific attributes may differ from schooling, such as its organizational character, or its role structure, the overall socialization functions it serves are similar. It serves to provide those who undergo its processing with the competencies required by that society, "whether those competencies represent the traditional fixed repertoire of statuses or roles of that given socio-cultural system or an emerging repertoire of new statuses and roles." Schooling also serves both functions as well, but the emphasis is on the fixed repertoire; non-formal education, it has been hypothesized, emphasizes the emerging repertoire.

In addition to this contention, there are some additional assumptions which will help to place this discussion in a more comprehensive framework. First, it is assumed that, like schools, non-formal education is consumer-oriented and has a service function which is the moral and technical socialization of people. This assumption is somewhat less constrained than the one for schools in that while non-formal education is primarily directed at adults, it can include the young as well. It follows that non-formal education prepares its youthful participants for adult statuses and roles and its adult participants for new statuses and roles.

It is also assumed that the goals of non-formal educative agencies are diffuse just as they are in schools. It remains, in our estimation, an empirical question, as to the extent of this diffuseness. From the point of view of role theory, one might view diffuse socialization goals as the prime
purpose of status socialization and specific goals as the prime purpose of role socialization. This distinction made by Bidwell and Wheeler is due to assumed differences both within and among socializing organizations in terms of the specificity or generality (diffuseness) of the goals. It has been commonly assumed by non-formal educators that what distinguishes non-formal education from schooling is its specificity of goals. We contend, however, that that has not been clearly demonstrated. There appears to be a wealth of examples which suggest that single skill (technical or cognitive) educative experiences are complemented by normative and non-cognitive dimensions. For example, the Cuban Literacy Mobilization Campaign in 1969 had clear political and social goals as well. Fagen comments:

"The literacy campaign, even though it dealt in main with adults, partook fully of this philosophy [education as revolution] of education. Skill training and civic education were tied together in a program that was intended to bring literacy and political awareness to the disadvantaged while at the same time introducing literacy workers to the hard realities of underdevelopment and backwardness." It would appear then that the assumption of specificity of goals is dependent on the socio-political context in which non-formal education occurs. It cannot be assumed that limited and specific goals characterize non-formal education.

We further assume that the major emphasis in non-formal education, however, is on resocialization rather than socialization to the long-standing repertoire of roles provided in a given socio-cultural system. In Brim and Wheeler, there is a distinction made between resocialization and developmental socialization. The process of resocialization tends to characterize the "correctional" attempts in preparing, say, law breakers to return to society as useful, constructive citizens. It is a socialization procedure that describes the process that social deviants undergo. Developmental socialization,
on the other hand, is typified by schools, universities or any learning system whose formal purpose is training and education.

Non-Formal Education and the Societal Context

If we take the societal context into consideration, however, these distinctions become obscured. In revolutionary societies in which dramatically new value-orientations are legitimatized and promulgated, previous value orientations, motivations, even occupations, and roles are declared illegitimate and deviant. All those who hold them begin to undergo formal and non-formal educative experiences to eradicate these 'inadequacies.' So, you have schools, universities, non-formal educative agencies previously typed as development socializing systems performing resocialization functions. In ethnically pluralistic societies and developing countries which have both traditional and modern sectors, educative agencies (if controlled by the modern sector) perform resocialization functions, taking those who have, say, communal value orientations and attempting to inculcate nationalistic values. To the extent that non-formal education has emerged in order to cope with and facilitate rapid social change, we believe it serves to resocialize its participants. When, and if, it becomes fully institutionalized and an integral part of the education system, then we concur that it becomes more similar to other developmental socializing organizations such as the family.

The structure of relationships that characterizes non-formal education's "students and teachers," we assume, can be either bureaucratic and hierarchical, or participative and non-hierarchical. The authority and evaluation structures, we assume, will vary according to the philosophy of education and the goal(s) of the socialization organization (and its context). The extent to which the role structure is dichotomous (between students and teacher) will vary considerably but will not attain the 'reification' that
it has in the schools unless, of course, it becomes institutionalize, i.e., a school. 43

Finally, we assume that non-formal education is of relatively short duration although the study or work schedule may be characterized by greater intensity than formal schools (two years of work done in five months, etc.).

It is clear, then, if the above-mentioned assumptions are accepted concerning schools and non-formal education that we have two variant forms of one overriding process -- that of socialization. It presumes that, just as in formal schooling, one can approach the study and research of non-formal education in much the same way we do schooling, its processes and outcomes. Nearly all the variables which characterize the study of schooling also characterize non-formal education. One can proceed to examine the micro-level relationship of pedagogy, instructional methods, and curriculum to achievement and technical skills; or, alternatively, it is possible to investigate the overall micro outcomes, attitudinal as well as cognitive, and their interrelations with other sectors of society. Non-formal education must be studied within the societal context in which it occurs, as well as in terms of its content. The limited research that has been conducted thus far has tended to focus on content alone.

The Selection and Recruitment Process in Non-Formal Education

Elsewhere we have argued that just as the institutional definition of the schools (i.e., their prestige, the success of their graduates, etc.) mediates the effects of the internal features (such as curriculum and teacher behavior) of the educative agency, so do the selection-recruitment procedures serve a similar mediating function. (doc. my dissertation Chap. III) In any attempt to systematically examine the question of "differential selection" for those who are "pushed" or "drawn" into non-formal education, there are
crucial research questions which have not yet been adequately addressed: Are there observable, systematic differences in the selection criteria utilized to determine which participants are recruited into non-formal education programs and which ones are selected into further formal schooling? To what extent does the pattern of school failures or non-school goers represent a particular segment of the population in any given society? And, following from this, to what extent are semi-skilled or middle-level skill training programs designed to "select in" the dropouts from formal schooling? Further, how do these observed patterns vary from society to society? In Yugoslavia, for example, there is a systematic attempt to provide workers with management training in preparation for management-coordinating roles in workers' councils in factories. In the United States, on the other hand, management training, leadership-management workshops and seminars, whether formal or informal, are primarily available only to those with many years of formal schooling and who are already in positions of management.44

In essence, the critical question we are asking is this: are participants systematically selected into non-formal education programs on the basis of antecedent criteria such as social class, ethnicity, rural origin or prior years of formal schooling? Moreover, if we find that this is indeed the case, do these programs prepare these systematically recruited participants with skills, values and "access" necessary to permit them to assume higher status roles in society? For if we find, for example, that non-formal programs recruit almost exclusively from the rural secondary segment of the labor force, but do not provide "status gains" for their graduates, can it be validly claimed that NFE offers an alternative channel for the upward mobility of low-status groups?
We contend that these questions are crucial and, as yet, unanswered. Such evidence as does exist suggests that NFE programs do, in fact, recruit primarily from the secondary segment, and, further, that these programs do not possess sufficient "social exchange value" to provide increased access to higher status occupations for their clients.

It can, therefore, be argued that not only does non-formal education fail to provide an alternative mobility channel, it may, in fact, serve a significant "cooling out" function within developing society, acting to lower those aspirational levels heightened by exposure to the early years of formal education and to the mass media. Nevertheless, the question as to whether non-formal education serves to transform traditional society or maintain and, even, reinforce existing disparities is an empirical one and requires further examination. We would simply introduce the caveat that the evidence alone that NFE selectively recruits from the secondary segment of the labor market should be sufficient to cast serious doubt upon some of the more optimistic claims for it.

The "Exchange Value" of Non-Formal Education

Most organizational socialization research has focused on the organizational attributes of institutions and their effects on consequent diffuse changes in the attitudes and norms of the participants undergoing the socialization experience. We argue here that social institutions, such as schools or non-formal educative agencies, exert influence on their participants both as a result of their internal structural characteristics and also due to important features which are largely external to the institution's own organization and which constitute its relationship with the larger socio-cultural system.

The principle concern of the research on institutional effects to date has been to study the impact which the internal characteristics of the organ-
ization alone have upon the values and norms of its socializees. There are a multitude of studies that have treated such attitudinal outcomes as authoritarianism, modernization, political efficacy, liberalism, etc., as the dependent variables in the research design and have conceptualized the independent variables as such internal features of the organization as its relative isolation from outside influence, its authority structure, and the interaction patterns within the institution. Thus, as John Meyer has pointed out, there has been "an odd emphasis in the research literature. Interest focuses to an unusual degree on extreme and total organizational settings as foci of socialization." 

We would recommend as an important line of inquiry, then, the reconceptualization of the standard "institutional effects" research design: instead of viewing the internal characteristics of non-formal socialization agencies as the only independent variables, as has been conventional in the previously cited studies, we would include contextual variables as independent variables as well.

The one overriding generalization which seems to emerge from our review of the literature in attitude formation and change is that individuals are motivated to adapt new attitudes or to modify existing ones if they perceive that by so doing they will be maximizing their social benefit while minimizing their social and psychological cost. Therefore, any social agency which, as a major aspect of its social function, seeks to bring about changes in the attitudes and values of its clients must possess sufficient social power to enable it to control the alternatives of its participants by manipulating the cost-reward structure of the agency, making the old attitudes too costly to maintain while rewarding the enactment of the new, institutionally desired attitudinal behavior.
So, to the extent one accepts the concept of non-formal educative agencies as a form of social exchange system, we would argue that the agency's socializing power over its participants is significantly related to students' perception of the agency's ability to offer and implement their future attainment of desired roles and statuses. 48

In that this contextual variable has been operationalized as a perception of participants undergoing processing, we might anticipate that if the student finds, upon graduation, that the adult opportunity structure differs markedly from his prior perception, then the school's or program's socialization power is likely to be quite impermanent. In that the social exchange concept does not assume perfect information, could we expect differential behaviors and attitude outcomes depending upon whether the non-formal experience has "delivered" or not? What happens to the "newly formed" attitudes of participants when they discover that their perception of the exchange value of their education changes during the processing, say, as a result of new information? In one case, Stinchcombe argues in his book, Rebellion in a High School, that expressive alienation can be explained by poor articulation of current activity in the school with the future perceived status outside the school. 49 He found that the worse the articulation between school activities and future work roles, the more likely students would be alienated (but not necessarily rebellious).

Similarly, we might expect adults to become alienated in non-formal educational programs if there is poor articulation. If their expectations are modified downward, they may be expected to drop out or exit prior to the completion of the program. On the other hand, if they have completed the program and encounter unanticipated difficulty locating desired employment, then alienation and discontent might very well occur. The evidence, however,
indicates that since the "payoff" in non-formal education programs is both more immediate and more limited (as opposed to the deferred, but more substantial rewards of completing formal schooling), there is less tendency for such discontent to develop in the first place. In short, there tends to be far less disjunctive, potentially alienating, disparity between the clients' perceptions and what the program actually delivers than is the case with schooling.

Summary

In this paper we have tried to recast the study of non-formal education into a sociological framework so as to better understand the potential, the limitations and significance of this educative phenomenon. We have attempted to show that in order to measure its effects we must draw upon or develop some middle-level theoretical framework that will enable us to focus on the underlying social features of non-formal education. We have suggested that it might be fruitful to conceive of a non-formal educative agency (or a system of non-formal agencies) as social organizations which, in common with formal educational institutions, possess important socialization functions and, in addition, serve as systems of social exchange.

It has been posited that non-formal educative agencies, again in common with schools, have internal features that contribute to the shaping of their clients' attitudes, beliefs and values, but the effects of these features are mediated by the institutional definition of the products of the agency and by the selection criteria applied to the recruitment of participants. While we see the value in those studies which have concentrated on the content of non-formal education, it is important to be cognizant of the fact that such internal features are constantly mediated by such contextual variables as the antecedent nature of the participants, the social prestige of the educative agency and the external occupational opportunity structure. It was also
pointed out that if non-formal education studies are going to be conducted across cultures, the context in which these activities occur must be taken into account. For example, we might suggest that non-formal education in revolutionary societies may serve different socialization and mobility management functions than in pre-revolutionary societies.

Finally, it is hoped that this discussion will help us shift our research emphasis from an overly psychologized view of human development and toward a more balanced view that includes societal factors as well. The human deficit approach is not completely inadequate, it is merely deficient.

Most schools of education, we believe, tend to focus their research efforts on schooling rather than on other educative activities because the units of analysis are much more clearly defined by the school setting itself, i.e., classrooms, school building, etc.

If we have seemed to be overly critical of the advocacy position regarding non-formal education, it is simply that we are not yet persuaded that this educational phenomenon comprises a bold, imaginative new approach to the problems of underdevelopment. In fact, to us it appears to be a relatively conventional patent remedy, marketed in a folksy new package designed to appeal to a specific segment of educational consumers. To mix metaphors, Philip Coombs warned that "non-formal education is the new girl in town, and everyone wants to dance with her." We simply have some suspicions that "the new girl" may be a transvestite.
Endnotes

1. In this paper, the authors distinguish conceptually between the process of modernization and development. Jacobs defines modernization as that process by which a society attempts to maximize the potential of the society within the limits set by the goals and the fundamental structure (or forms) of the society. Development, in contrast, is used to denote the maximization of the potential of the society, regardless of any limits currently set by the goals or fundamental structure of the society. Jacobs says, "In this view, development is an open-ended commitment to productive change, no matter what the consequences might be on existing goals or existing ways of doing things." See Norman Jacobs' *Modernization Without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study* (Praeger Publishers, New York, 1971), pp. 8-11.

   Overdevelopment as a social concept refers to a social condition which is characterized by a large-scale availability of human skills that are not used to their fullest potential. Underdevelopment and overdevelopment are both social concepts each of which represents responses to the problems of scarcity and affluence respectively. Where there is high scarcity, there is extensive underdevelopment; where there is high overdevelopment. For a fuller explication, see *Three Worlds of Development*, by Irving Louis Horowitz (Oxford University Press, New York, 1972), Chapter 2, pp. 57-71.

2. The most recent, to our knowledge, was the SEADAG Seminar on "New Strategies for Educational Development: Non-Formal Alternatives" held in Washington, D.C. at the Academy of Science, May 13-15, 1971. The result was a number of working papers which will, when appropriate, be referred to in this paper.

3. See Bibliographies In Non-Formal Education Numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 Nat J. Colletta (Institute for International Studies in Education, Michigan State University, May, 1971). In most libraries, non-formal educational activities
are catalogued under the following classifications: Adult Education, Out-of-School Education, Agricultural Extension, Public Health Education, Continuation Education and Educational Innovations. For copies of working papers contact Cole S. Brembeck, Director, Institute for International Studies in Education, Michigan State University.


9. Studies that have investigated the non-cognitive effects of non-formal education indicate that the challenge of the "unorthodox" socializing setting of non-formal education is not beyond the research models that have already been developed and tested. See "Some Social Psychological Effects and Non-effects of Literacy in a New Nation," Howard Shuman, Alex Inkeles, and David N. Smith. Report of the Project on Social and Cultural Aspects of Development, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1967. Also, "Individual Modernity and Non-Formal Education," F. B. Waissman. A paper presented on New Strategies for Educational Development: Non-Formal Alternatives," Academy of Science, Washington, D.C., May 13-15, 1971. Also, Economic Development and


11. Contrary to popular belief, many non-formal educational programs require that the participants have a minimum of schooling. For example, the mobile trade training program designed to provide the rural population with middle level semi-skills requires four years of elementary school training. See Mobile Trade Training Schools and Polytechnic Schools 1970 Report, (The Vocational Promotion Division - Department of Vocational Education, Bangkok, Thailand). Most culture and "leisure" programs found in the U.S. adult education programs are designed for participants with a minimum of high school; some even require a college education. Also see "Changing Status and Roles During the Adult Life Cycle: Significance For Adult Education," Havighurst, Robert J., Sociological Backgrounds of Adult Education, Burns, W., Robert (ed.), (Center for the Study of Liberal Education for Adults, 1963), p. 23. Havighurst says, "Adult education today is mainly a middle-class operation."

may be made between modernization and development is that the former can be satisfactorily termed growth. But development, although it can also be expressed quantitatively, because it is vitally concerned with the acceptance of novel interrelationships of human beings among themselves and in interaction with their environment, must be expressed qualitatively."


19. Lengrand, op. cit., p. 16. See also: Most of these educational activities appear to be serving "social mobilization" functions and some appear to be serving the functions of "revitalization." Mobilization denotes a concept


32. Dreeben, Robert, On What is Learned In School (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1968).


38. Herskovits, op. cit., Chapter III.

39. Inkeles, Alex, op. cit., p. 265.


42. Brim and Wheeler, op. cit., p. 68.

43. In Thailand, the mobile trade training program underwent a change in name -- from program to school. It did so as a result of pressure from in-
structors who demanded full recognition from the Royal Thai Civil Service Commission. Based on conversations with Thai Ministry of Education officials, April, 1973.


47. Bock, op. cit., p.


References


