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CONTENTS

Introduction	7
Education in Latin America. Exclusion or participation. <i>Germán W. Rama</i>	13
A historical perspective of Latin American education. <i>Gregorio Weinberg</i>	39
To educate or not to educate: Is that the question? <i>Carlos H. Filgueira</i>	57
The role of education in relation to employment problems. <i>Juan Pablo Terra</i>	81
Development and education in rural areas. <i>Carlos A. Borsotti</i>	113
Pedagogical model and school failure. <i>Juan Carlos Tedesco</i>	133
Education and culture: A political perspective. Hypotheses on the importance of education for development. <i>Pedro Demo</i>	147
Styles of development and education. A stocktaking of myths, prescriptions and potentialities. <i>Marshall Wolfe</i>	157
Some CEPAL publications	175

Development and education in rural areas

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The problems connected with education in rural areas are so many and varied that the author has arranged them in four broad categories with a view to facilitating their consideration by those who are responsible for adopting decisions in this field.

The first category embraces 'preliminary questions', relating in particular to the normative and technical principles on the basis of which the existing situation is interpreted and proposals for action are formulated; the second comprises the orientations of education policies, i.e., the application of the above-mentioned principles to decisions bearing on what for, for whom, in what form and how education is to be provided; the third refers to the conditions in which educational policies are put into practice; while the fourth examines the status of society and education in rural areas.

The problems falling within this fourth and last category are discussed in the second half of the article, which endeavours to present a brief picture of the structures of rural society, of the changes that have taken place during the last few decades, and of some particularly important aspects of education in rural areas, such as the educational profile, and the formal education system and its quantitative performance. The author's conclusions include some remarks on the probable future of education in the next few years in rural areas; in a time of crisis it is unlikely that these will be able to compete successfully with other more powerful areas and groups for the scanty resources available.

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Introduction*

The Regional Intergovernmental Meeting on the objectives, strategies and *modus operandi* of a major project in the sphere of education in Latin America and the Caribbean recommended that activities be centered upon a few specific objectives and that priority should be accorded to certain population groups, particularly relevant to the purpose of improving the educational situation in the rural areas of the region (OREALC, 1981).

These specific objectives include the following: a) to provide schooling for all children of school age and to offer them a minimum general education of 8 to 10 years' duration; b) to eradicate illiteracy; c) to develop and expand educational services for adults. An improvement in the quality and efficiency of educational systems figures as a necessary (although not a sufficient) condition for the attainment of the foregoing goals.

Among the population groups to which priority attention should be devoted the following are included: a) population groups suffering from critical poverty (generally located in rural and marginal urban areas); b) indigenous populations handicapped by poverty and the language barrier; c) the adult population aged 15 years and over which has had no schooling and is in a state of illiteracy; d) youth and children in the rural environment who have been unable to start school or have dropped out; e) children under six years of age whose nutritional status and family and socio-economic environment place them at a disadvantage as regards their incorporation in the educational system, their continued school attendance and their progress in school.

The problems which it is sought to combat are not of course new, and, notwithstanding the improvements achieved in recent decades both in absolute and in relative terms, their persistence would seem to indicate that they spring from deep-rooted causes, of different kinds (political, economic, cultural and technical) and closely interrelated. Even those countries of the region that have attained relatively high levels of educational development still have pockets of

*Section IV of the present article is a concise synthesis of documents Nos. 25 and 26 in the appended bibliography.

rural population affected by serious educational deficiencies. The gravity of the whole problem, the deep-seated nature of its causes and its very perpetuation point to the advisability of dismissing any illusory hope of kitting upon rapid solutions or improvements. Moreover, the problem's long-standing character itself, in conjunction with the partial approaches to it that have frequently been adopted, has bred stereotyped ideas as to 'the rural question', 'rural culture', the 'rural school', which hinder complete understanding of the problems and dictate even the fashion in which they are presented.

Perhaps a good way to gain a clearer picture of the difficulties arising out of the very complexity of the problem and, at the same time, to avoid the biases implicit in a negative attitude (based on those same difficulties and complexities) or in a sort of ruralist romanticism (grounded on highly justifiable value judgements), is to centre these reflections on an exercise in empathy and to pose the question: what would you do if you became responsible for education in a country's rural areas?

Since there are almost as many answers to this question as there are countries in the region, each potential bearer of responsibility will meet with diverse problems and will be faced with different possibilities and limitations in resolving them. Accordingly, no claim is made here to reflect the real situation of any individual country or to offer prescriptions valid for any social space. Analyses are useful instruments (neither more nor less) for stating problems as adequately as possible and for estimating the probable results of the action taken, but they are not the source from which the values constituting the pivot of social projects can be deduced, or the political strength for executing such projects can be drawn, or changes can be produced that ultimately depend on the social agents that make history, whether these be individuals, groups or social classes.

Reverting to the proposed exercise, whoever

is accountable for education in the rural areas of his country will probably make his response under a number of separate heads. In the first place, he will try to make sure that the position he holds enables him to carry out an educational development project, and will go on to describe it. Secondly, he will do his best to retain his post, which implies taking up a position in the political conflict (overt or latent), and involves political contacts, procurement of a consensus, building-up of willing support, neutralization of groups that are not in power and partly or wholly dissent from those that are, and an endeavour to get dissident opinions expressed in terms of policy (what education, for whom, when, how, where, etc.). Thirdly, he will try to obtain the necessary resources. Fourthly, he will attempt to estimate the 'resistance of the material'—i.e., the attitude of the administrative and technical members of the office staff (educationists, planning experts, sociologists, etc.) and of those in the field (teachers, heads of educational establishments, inspectors, etc.)—as well as the degree of flexibility allowed him by legislation, regulations and formalities (what he can do on his own account, what must be approved by an official of higher rank). Only when he has reached this point will he be in a position to say to what extent the educational development project he advocates can be put into practice.

Before getting this far, the future official will have stated (more or less explicitly) his response to a number of matters which crop up whenever education in rural areas is on the carpet: some of these could be catalogued as preliminary questions; others bear more directly on the orientations of educational policy; others are connected with the conditions in which this educational policy will be implemented; lastly, yet others relate to the diagnosis of what is happening in the rural environment and in the educational service to which the rural population has access. In pursuit of the proposed exercise in empathy, the above-mentioned topics will be reviewed.

I

Preliminary questions

1. *Education for the poor or satisfaction of basic educational needs*

It has been argued that between poverty-oriented policies and policies centred on basic needs there is a substantial disparity (Graciarena, 1979; UNESCO/ECLA/UNDP, 1981, a). Policies that take poverty as the focal point of their approach define it as a self-contained problem, without projections into other structural spheres and broader social processes; in consequence, they seek to deal with the problem of mass poverty as an anomaly that must be eradicated or extirpated, and take it for granted that this can be done without deferring or reducing growth, or changing either the structural features of the economy and of power or the dynamics of the prevailing development style... Such policies are usually conducive to care-oriented or paternalist proposals... which are marginal to overall development policies and strategies (UNESCO/ECLA/UNDP, 1981 a), p. 159).

On the other hand, the point of departure of policies centred on basic needs is a broad spectrum of problems: food, non-renewable natural resources, population, ecological balance, democracy, international order, social justice and the overcoming of human alienation... The issue that this approach raises is the attainment of full development of the human being, and it implies a radical repudiation of the social systems extant and even of industrial civilization... Proposals deriving from the basic needs approach demand, in one way or another, the total reorganization of the individual and social personality and of the international and national social order, requiring, in the latter respect, the restructuring of institutions and of political and economic power (UNESCO/ECLA/UNDP, 1981, a)). Between these two positions, intermediate possibilities exist which, although they presuppose transfers of resources of various kinds and some degree of downward income redistribution, do not involve an increase in social and political participation as a requisite for the fundamental democratization process

implicit in the basic needs approach (Graciarena, 1979). The decision as to which position must be adopted is a value judgement, based on criteria different from those on which a feasibility judgement is grounded. In an education policy, as in any other, this tension between the desirable and the feasible is ever-present, and the ways in which it is resolved cannot be appraised in the abstract.

2. *The degree of neutrality of technical mechanisms or instruments*

Recommendation on strategies or projects for the development of education in rural areas frequently review all aspects of educational activities (politico-administrative organization, planning, designing of curricula—programmes, timetables and time schedules, activities—, textbooks and teaching material, evaluation, supervision, teacher training, inter-institutional co-ordination, research on education, etc.). There would be nothing to say against this practice if it were not observable over and over again that the socio-political context is not usually made explicit, and neither is the way in which the various aspects considered will be put into practice or their effective possibilities of realization. The proposal to establish regionalization as a means of conducting political and administrative business may be acceptable, but it leaves a number of questions pending: whether regional authority will be confined solely to the technical aspects of education or whether it will also cover political decisions; whether there will be a real transfer of technical and financial resources or whether each region will have to manage with whatever resources it has at its disposal at the time; whether regionalization presupposes an effective upward flow in the adoption of decisions, whether it will signify dealing only with educational matters and whatever falls within the sphere of rural education, etc. The proposal to promote appropriate low-cost technologies for the teaching-learning process (OREALC, 1983)

evokes all the doubts that invariably arise in ascertaining for what these technologies are appropriate, who is responsible for the pertinent decision and on what criteria it is based. The reply to such questions may give some indication of whether the approach on which educational policy is based focuses on basic needs or upon poverty, since appropriate low-cost technologies can be promoted either for the whole educational system, with a view to mass outreach among the population whose educational levels are lowest, or in such a way as not to alter the distribution of resources allocated to education in the urban sectors.

It is a somewhat striking fact that many of the proposals put forward in the context of education in general are referred to and reiterated in relation to rural areas, in particular those that concern the designing of plans and programmes in accordance with each area's needs, community participation, knowledge of the environment, etc. The limitation of these proposals to the rural area may be attributable to the idea that the needs of the urban areas are much the same, or that community participation is not indispensable since the urban population has other means of participation, or teachers already know (because they are urban) the needs of the community, or knowledge of the urban environment is shared by teachers and pupils alike. Many of these assumptions are clearly unsatisfactory, for which reason it may be concluded that what underlies them is a conception of education for rural areas entirely different from urban education, which may be acceptable, but leaves it open to question whether the object of this recognition of heterogeneity is to arrive at homogeneous results or to establish, from the standpoint of education, two separate worlds.

3. *Crisis in education or crisis in incorporation*

Education is in a state of crisis, and this crisis affects all its aspects: the authoritarianism implicit in the teacher-pupil relationship; the lack of objectives with respect to the human personality that it is desired to form; its 'bankers conception'; its reproduction of social relationships; its failure to encourage a critical attitude in the educand; its propensity to restrict personal creativity; etc. Nor is this crisis anything new; it has long been a

palpable reality in the middle and upper urban sectors (among both teachers and parents), and has been reflected in proposals ranging from the development of methods and techniques to the total abolition of formal schooling. This crisis, to which the region's cumbersome systems of formal education are making disjointed and evasive responses, is different from the critical situation created by the need for these systems to incorporate a public which they hitherto have been or still are excluding *de facto*, in so far as their structure, methods and practices afford a service appropriate for a public of a different type. Paradoxically, the rural population wants the traditional school it has never had, while the proposals of the technical experts aim at offering it an informal, participative and active system which is not yet in real and widespread currency in the urban environment, either because no decision is taken to adopt measures implying a revolution that goes beyond the educational sphere, or because the necessary human and financial resources are wanting.

As regards the development of education in rural areas, the confusion between the crisis in education and the critical situation in respect of incorporation may lead to the maintenance of existing conditions: defective traditional schools and experimental application of innovations whose impact is slight.

4. *The different forms assumed by education*

If education is understood to mean the various learning processes by which knowledge, abilities, skills, attitudes, etc., are acquired, it is possible to draw a rough distinction between the following spheres: a) early socialization, including all the practices in which children participate in their family and their community; b) the pedagogical practices included in the formal education system; c) the pedagogical practices included in the diverse non-formal educational activities, whether they are directed towards supplementing or replacing those of the formal education system (the three R.'s, etc.), or whether they pursue the most widely varying ends (training in different skills); d) incidental education, which includes all the diffuse and inadvertent teaching-learning processes implicit in any social practice (activities and relationships), whereby new lessons are inculcated or those formerly learnt are kept up,

reformed or called in question. Early socialization and incidental education are carried on in the socio-cultural environment to which individuals—both educators and educands—belong, and that environment may recognize in the pedagogical practices of formal or informal education different degrees of congruence, complementary or contradictions with its own culture.

Compatibility between the culture of the educands and that of formal and informal education eliminates one possible source of failure in the teaching-learning process. This, however, is only one of the angles from which the matter can be considered. Another is that of the values embodied in that culture (consumerism, competitiveness, individualism, etc.) and transmitted both by the communication media and through all sorts of everyday practices. When the culture of the educands is not coincident, or is definitely in contradiction or parallel with that of formal and informal education, one of the most formidable causes of failure in teaching-learning processes looms up, and, at the same time, a number of deep-rooted ethical questions arise: possible cultural violation; the aspiration of the supposed victims of such violation to become incorporated in the culture of which the school is just one manifestation; scrupulous respect for their cultures on the part of certain population groups which, having no political representation in a State that is not defined as polyethnic, may remain enclaves, etc. From this standpoint, discussion on the efficacy of teaching, reading and writing in the mother tongue or in Spanish is a purely technical problem which presupposes that answers have been found to all the questions posed above.

5. *Interpretations of fact*

If anything is suggested by the topics just outlined it is that interpretations of the societal trends recorded, and proposals for influencing them, are based, however consciously or unconsciously, on a scale of values and on some theory or other. Diagnoses and policies will tend to differ radically: a) if development is held to consist in changes in the technical relations between a series of indicators, or is understood as the history of the countries of the region in respect of the formation of socio-economic structures of the dependent capitalist type, whose development styles are in one way or another conditioned by their insertion in the world order; b) if the State is conceived as a bureaucratic apparatus responsible for designing and implementing policies, or as the political groundwork of society, having predetermined and specific relations with the civic society; c) if differences in the various social sectors' access to employment, income and the diverse social goods and services (including education) are regarded as the result of discriminatory incorporation or marginalization deriving from the deficiencies of the modernization process, or as necessary consequences of the sociopolitical relations attendant upon the process of capital accumulation. This point is of crucial importance in rural areas, since it is linked with the way in which the peasant question and its relations with the question of indigenous population groups are defined; d) if education is viewed as a means of training human resources, in order to increase economic efficiency, attach the peasant to the soil and reduce migratory pressure, or as fundamental human right.

II

Orientations of educational policies

Policy orientations (what for, for whom, what, how) inevitably have an ethical component and, as has just been shown, this component immediately comes to the fore in the case of education and finds expression in the technical instruments utilized. Values, however, are not a set of abstract textbook principles, but take concrete shape in everyday life, even though it may be inadvertently. In the light of this necessary application of values to reality, some aspects of the orientations of policies for education in rural areas will next be considered.

As a general rule, in documents in which these policies are set forth the key questions are answered in the following order: what for, what, for whom, how. By the time the replies to the question 'how?' are reached, a suspicion has dawned that the reshuffling of the questions is not a mere matter of orderly presentation and that 'what for?' and 'what?' have been given priority over 'for whom?'. This highlights the fact that, paradoxically (but not inconsistently with technocratic thinking), the axis on which the policy pivots is not man and his interrelationships but one of the now not-so-modern mythologies (increases in productivity, growth rate of production, economic development, etc.) from which stems the abstraction known as the 'rural population'.

The conception of rural life as a separate and static world has been shelved. Progress has been made, as in the Quito recommendation quoted at the outset, in differentiating the target population by age groups and sex. Some typical situations in which the rural population are found have been identified (medium-scale producers with accumulation capacity; producers integrated into the market, although without accumulation capacity; wage-earners resident in semi-urban areas; subsistence farmers; indigenous groups—commonly concentrated in these last situations—and non-indigenous population). Nevertheless, all this is not yet reflected in policy orientations, and a proposal persistently urged, for example, as one of the answers to 'what for?' is to keep the population settled in the

rural environment by means of appropriate incentives and to gear the development of skills to work and employment in agricultural areas (OREALC, 1983, p. 39).

In addition to this unrealistic practice of responding to the question of 'what for?' without taking into account the living conditions of the target populations, there is a possibility of segregation of the population groups concerned, which is not, it would seem, being generated by education but is in any event legitimized and endorsed by education policies. It is of course no easy matter to define in archetype of human personality that the educational system should seek to form in societies which are characterized by structural heterogeneity, with an expanding nation-State, and in which the inter-class correlation of power is shaped by a particularly changeful period of time and social space. Nevertheless, either the challenge will be taken up or the question of what education is for will continue to be answered in relation to an abstract human being representing no real type (although approximating to that of the upper middle strata of the urban population), or by splitting up the population into fragments whose reassembly in a body politic with national solidarity will be problematic.

This challenge is not confined to the issue of what education is for. The origin and early expansion of the region's educational systems have urban roots. In so far as it was sought to homogenize the entire population, to integrate the nation-State, and to prevent or palliate the characteristic implications of the rural irruption into the cities, the single national school and single national teacher model, in a peculiarly deteriorated form, was transplanted to the countryside, with a complete disregard of sub-regionalisms and subcultures that made matters even worse. In view of this situation, a solution is proposed which is structured around two main axes: technical and administrative decentralization; and dismissal of urban models, inappropriate for the rural area. This has come to be stated in terms of dichotomies; basic education

common to the nation as a whole or differentiated education; centralized organization or decentralized organization. Furthermore, the extreme versions of the two alternatives are usually taken, and a choice is propounded between a common basic education, nation wide and centralized, and a differentiated basic education with decentralized administrative and technical organization. This habit has bred a tendency to overlook intermediate options, such as a differential basic education with technical and normative but not administrative centralization, or a common basic education with administrative and technical decentralization, or others such as have been put into practice, with some degree of continuity, in certain countries of the region (Costa Rica, Colombia).

The proposal of a common basic education, nationwide and centralized, is in actual fact upheld in many countries of the region, and is perhaps the most consistent with prevailing development styles if it is considered from the angle of the political discourse. Should an attempt be made really to implement and to give the rural and marginal urban population access to, and retain them in, a school approximating to the urban model (complete, with staffs of more than one teacher, certificated teachers, and proper teaching material, etc.), this proposal would entail political and financial requirements that would make it non-viable.

The option of a basic education differentiated at bottom but pursuing common objectives, administratively and technically decentralized but integrating its various levels, has been put into practice through recourse to nucleation and regionalization (also called 'mapping education'). Into this design are incorporated official educational activities, both formal and informal, in the fields of basic education, literacy campaigns, vocational education and, on occasion, secondary education. The exclusion of universities and of private educational establishments, as well as the limitation of this way of organizing the education-service, while it indicates the characteristics of the integration of the educational system that is pursued and those of its connections with the rest of society, should not lead to negation of all the progress signified by this proposal and the contribution that it may be expected to make.

Given conditions as they really are, some technical proposals relating to more specific aspects of educational policies are manifestly inapplicable, particularly those emanating from international meetings at which the identity of target populations is watered-down amid the diversity of situations existing in the countries of the region. Undoubtedly, the policy orientations deriving from them fulfil an invaluable twofold role: expounding the programme of the 'other education' and denouncing the serious deficiencies of the educational system in force. The proposals mentioned suggest, *inter alia*, the achievement of a pedagogical relationship implying inter-education; the explosion of the idea of educational space as separate and graduated; an education which takes the environment into account from the standpoint of its educational effect; a change from an attitude of dependence and conformity to an attitude of criticism and participation; an education useful for supplementing and improving the community's conception of the world; an education based on the postulates that it should be active, relevant to the time and place, integral, integrated and conducive to action; a personalized education; an education integrated with productive activities and helping to increase production and productivity; a formal education system flexible in its structure, agile and adaptable to changing needs, so that it can be more efficient and equitable; teachers whose role is determined by the real situation, so that they thus become agents of economic, cultural, social and political change in rural areas; teachers qualified to maintain a new pedagogical relationship, to participate in inter-disciplinary educational activities, to organize experiments in community promotion; teachers, in short, who have sufficient knowledge and motivations to apply a pedagogy pertaining and adapted to the environment, and operating on inter-disciplinary lines.

The length of the foregoing list makes it strikingly clear how right Gregorio Weinberg is when he maintains that current thinking is keyed to twenty-first century education, whereas the educational system and the organization of schools correspond to nineteenth-century education, which has afforded the population of rural areas little accessibility and still less permanence.

III

Conditions attendant upon the implementation of education policies

It has been felt desirable to draw attention here to certain questions which are by no means new, but which have seldom been discussed in relation to the conditions in which education policies are put into practice.

One of the various ways of classifying development styles distinguishes between those pertaining to market-economy, mixed-economy or planned-economy societies. Almost all the countries of the region represent different combinations of mixed and market economies. What it is important to stress here is that these types of economy are also, and fundamentally, forms of articulation of societies and their classes. These different modes of class articulation condition policy practices, including those relating to education. The matter is further complicated by the fact that, owing to a series of circumstances, in Latin American societies market economies are not necessarily accompanied by liberal political systems, and neither are mixed economies inevitably matched with political systems of the social democrat or social democracy type. The room for action created in either case, both inside and outside official circles, offers different potentialities and limitations, but, in general, everything that leads to active education with community participation and organization is apt to be suspected of 'indoctrination of exotic ideologies' and accused of encouraging subversion, as has sometimes been officially acknowledged.

A point to be considered in the foregoing context is the way in which various politically active groups view the processes that have taken place in Latin America. For some, no changes have been brought about in the region, or at any rate none that have attained the intensity or followed the direction that could have been wished. Others, see the changes as having been controlled by the ruling classes. Lastly, yet others see the changes as radical, and while some maintain that carrying them on in greater depth may lead to the breakdown of the system, there are others who hold the opinion that the system

has an unlimited capacity for adaptation. The political weight carried by the supporters of one view or another will determine different possibilities of implementing a given education policy for rural areas.

Apart from the perceptions of the politically active groups, there are other states of collective consciousness which are none the less real for being more difficult to define. Each class considers it legitimate and appropriate to demand a certain quantity and quality of education. The question is to determine how far these demands are regarded as legitimate by the other classes and, furthermore, how far the recognition of their legitimacy implies that a reallocation of resources, should it occur, will be accepted or will lead to various forms of political protest. When the educational situation and prevailing living conditions in rural environments are taken into consideration and are reflected in a policy proposal, a movement of sympathy and of emotional solidarity tends to spring up in the middle and upper urban sectors. But as soon as the resources allocated to the development of education in the rural areas begin to affect or threaten to affect the quantity and quality of the education that the said sectors define as legitimate and appropriate for themselves, their emotional response is transmuted into political opposition. This is usually the point at which policies focusing on basic needs begin to turn into policies centred on attention to the problem of the poor. Moreover, those who have little or no education commonly entertain very vague ideas, if any, of the quantity and quality of education that they want, and in addition enjoy relatively little political power. Thus, the allocation of educational resources (human, technical and financial) which, according to the distribution rules in force, should be assigned to the upper and middle urban strata, becomes a top-ranking constraint on policies for the development of education in rural areas.

In view of the predominant characteristics of the region's formal education systems, there

are some who argue that no such systems exist in Latin America as formal organizations, i.e., deliberately planned and structured for the pursuit of specific ends. Others, again, maintain that such systems, with their own characteristics, do exist and that the form they take is one proper to segmented, structurally heterogeneous and concentric societies. These differences of opinion are not mere academic quibbling, since admission of the existence of a system with its own characteristics implies that an intervention designed to change any of its elements or their interrelationships will sooner or later have repercussions on the remaining components. Even in the case of systems to a greater or lesser extent unintegrated, as are many of the educational systems of the region, with the universities on the one hand and on the other the various departments (of secondary, primary, rural—in some countries—and adult education) operating separately from one another, they are integrated by popular demand for their services and by the allocation of resources to each of the segments, which, as explained above, affects the response to the demands in question. The administrative segmentation of education in rural areas may make it possible to reallocate resources to that segment (up to certain undefined limits) and to carry out a number of activities without interference from other segments of the system (likewise up to certain undefined limits), but it may also be conducive to the provision of a low-quality service without detriment to the situation of the remaining segments.

Another aspect of the question worth considering in relation to the praxis of educational policies is the historical background of each and all of the component features of the educational scene. There have been variations in the educands, in methods and techniques, in budget management procedures, in the size and complexity of Ministries of Education, etc. Changes have taken place in the teaching profession from the standpoint of its social status, the social background of its members, its recruitment, its relative income, its training, the ideology that is revealed in its attitudes and aspirations, etc. The aforesaid historical trends, each moving at its own tempo, have not always been

confluent, still less channeled, towards the improvement or at least the maintenance of the quality of the educational service for the popular sectors and in particular for rural areas. The fact is that these movements have their own inertia, which establishes different possibilities and constraints in respect of the implementation of educational policies.

Lastly, it must be recalled that intentional modification of the various aspects of the educational system calls for diverse types of social and political power and in addition takes different lengths of time. Some of the innovations can be handled with relative ease over the short term, especially if such resources as the following are available: family allowances; school lunches; exercise-books, textbooks and teaching material; monitoring of compliance with mandatory provisions, etc. Others, in contrast, present more difficulties and require a higher degree of consensus and legitimization, for example, technico-administrative reorganizations which imply changes in relative power within the system. Lastly, there are others by no means easy to deal with, inasmuch as they consist in behaviour patterns, values, ideologies rooted in everyday life, institutions, which have their own inertia: teacher training; popular aspirations reflected in demands for education; 'distance' from school culture; the role of education in family strategies; etc. The different degrees of political and social power required, as well as the differences in maturation periods, are apparent even when the aspects to be changed are confined to the formal education system. A case in point is afforded by those policies which aim at attaining short or medium-term objectives through teacher training programmes.

After this bird's-eye view not only of some preliminary problems which will have to be faced (consciously or unconsciously) by the future official in charge of the development of education in rural areas, but also of some of the stumbling-blocks to policy orientations and to the implementation of policies, the time has now come to consider what is happening in the rural environment and in the educational service to which the population of rural areas has access.

IV

The status of society and education
in rural areas

The following concise synthesis of some of the societal and educational trends observable in the rural areas of Latin America is simply an attempt to highlight the central structural aspects of the networks set up for satisfying educational needs in such areas and the problems deriving therefrom; and, undoubtedly, it will seem as unsatisfactory as any synthesis must, especially when it is of regional scope.

It should be made clear that the rural and the urban environments will not be understood here as separate worlds but as intrinsically overlapping spheres. Recognition of the fact that rural life has certain features of its own, such as the distribution of the population and its general occupational characteristics (predominantly linked to the natural cycles), can hardly blind one

to the fact that without understanding the dynamic connection between the urban and the rural spheres it is impossible to understand the real rural situation. What is more, the changes that have occurred in rural society are inseparable from those that have taken place in society as a whole; in addition, these changes affect the population in different ways according to the positions it holds, and have different educational effects and implications. It is important to determine not only the scale of the changes recorded in the various social respects, but also (and above all) in what direction they point: what is the type of society they prefigure; what is the situation of the rural world and of the population living in rural areas; and what is the significance of all that is summed up in the word education.

A. RURAL SOCIETY

During the last thirty years the rural areas of Latin America have been the scene of a number of processes which belie their reputed want of mobility, and of which a mere list affords some idea of the changes brought about. The *modernization of agriculture* has meant that land and the use of agricultural machinery and technology have been concentrated in the capitalist sector to an extent which has signified the redefinition or destruction of the pre-existent system of production and an aggravation of heterogeneity among the economic units. *Temporary or permanent migrations*, whether from the countryside to the town, or from one rural area to another, have involved, on an average, more than one in every four rural inhabitants and more than one member per family. The *cash economy* and *consumption of industrial goods* have become generalized. *Communications* of every type have increased. The *role played by the State* has been extended through the provision of all sorts of services (technical assistance, health, agrarian reform programmes, etc.). This whole

set of processes must be taken into consideration in order to understand the new rural scenarios that have taken shape and their implications for culture and education in rural areas, with due regard to the fact that all this has happened in the space of one generation. The different ambits in which social relations are articulated must also be taken into account.

1. The status and dynamics of the *class structure* are linked to the modernization process. The *summit* of this structure is not in the countryside, but in the cities, incarnated in the directors and managers of various types of companies owning capitalist agrarian enterprises. Thus, the mutual link of personal loyalty between the landowner and his workers has been lost. The economic, political and cultural control that used to be exercised on the basis of these links now tends to be exerted by other means. The *former notables* (the doctor, the priest, the schoolmaster) are now accompanied by personalities of another kind (bank managers, heads of public services, techni-

cians, top-ranking personnel in agroindustries). These new notabilities share with those of earlier dates the position of representatives of official and urban culture, but they are more markedly modern and technical in character. The rural *middle strata* comprise a variety of situations (medium-scale capitalist producers; truck-owners; storekeepers; wholesale dealers; hirers, contractors or '*empreiteiros*'). To these rural middle strata belong the beneficiaries of agrarian reform programmes, a group bearing witness to the fact that when by some means or other one can 'get into the swim' of modernization it is possible to improve one's circumstances without leaving the rural environment. The broad mass of *small producers* includes *minifundistas* or owners of family or sub-family smallholdings; occupants of modest plots of land which they farm under some variant of the sharecropping system (*aparceros, medieros, colonos, inquilinos*); squatters in agricultural frontier areas, on roadside land belonging to the State and unmarketable. Some of them go to swell the glut of *wage-earning workers*, a landless and relatively superfluous agricultural labour force which works in the rural areas but in most cases lives in small towns or on the fringes of more highly urbanized localities. This class structure has a 'modernizing' cultural impact on the rural population through direct relations or by its mere existence.

2. *Permanent migrations* imply some sort of communication (visits, news), between the former rural resident and his relatives and friends. These communications sometimes take the form of transfers of money which reveal the implementation of a family strategy and the availability of a certain economic surplus. Visits involve a demonstration of access to appliances, clothing, modes of conduct, which are indicators of integration into urban life, estrangement from rural life, and the differences, between the two. They confirm that migration is a possible step and transmit a feeling that in the city people are at least as well off as in the country, but with better prospects. *Temporary migrations*, in which larger proportions of the rural population are involved, have a twofold impact on the non-migrants through the accounts given by migrants and on the migrants themselves as regards their perception of rural life after their experience of migration.

3. *Communications* also exercise a modernizing influence. The enlargement of the network of cities, road-building and more frequent and varied means of transport increase contacts with urban life, either through the transport of rural inhabitants to the cities or through the arrival of national and foreign tourists. To this must be added the expansion of symbolic communications (radio, television, periodicals, etc.) which transfer to the countryside an urban outlook even on rural life itself.

4. The extension of *State action*, in a national space totally incorporated in the countries' life, operates in the same direction through services of different kinds. Similarly, *non-State institutions* (especially those of a religious character) bring to the countryside individuals and families of urban extraction, whose income, life styles, language, modes of conduct and conceptions of the world are different from if not diametrically opposed to those of the country-dweller.

5. The installation of *agroindustries* may assume different shades of cultural significance: the processing plants imply the possibility of working for a stable wage and adopting an industrial way of life and discipline; the enterprises purchasing agricultural products impose certain standards of quality, which means that farmers get into touch with agricultural technicians, types of seed, credits, etc.; those who step in as agricultural producers bring the workers they engage into contact with machinery, tools, technological inputs of another kind and permitting a better quality product than can be obtained by the small farmers of the area.

6. A key factor of cultural change in the rural environment is the *extension of markets*, in whose ambits are determined the criteria and norms that regulate different types of transactions and on which converge the holders of the class positions described above: the rural labour force market; the market for foods and industrial goods; the credit market. But the hub of the agrarian question is the *land market*, in which the overlappings of the rural and the urban are clearly apparent, since provisions as to land ownership, issue of title-deeds, price-fixing, are settled upon in the urban spheres. The purchase of land in the market is out of reach for small farmers and the only possibility of acquiring it

that they can glimpse is through agrarian reform projects. In practice, the problem for them consists in not losing the land they have or in getting hold of land in one way or another.

7. The provision of *personal services and symbolic goods*, supplied by the State and by a vast range of institutions which carry out programmes designed to alleviate the people's situation, imply the appearance on the rural scene of a number of persons, norms, values, customs and appliances of urban origin and content. Generally speaking, the intercourse between officials of these institutions and the rural population is asymmetrical by definition, since the latter resort to the former only to receive, and thus the conjugation of power, prestige and legitimacy attains its maximum.

8. Consequently, the rural population is not homogeneous, and faces and participates in the various processes of change from different standpoints and in different ways. The processes observable, and their cultural implications, suggest a *cultural set-up* composed of objectively conflictive situations: i) land is valued as a source of security, and at the same time is inaccessible; ii) material and non-material goods are in sight which are valued but absent, and, obtaining which implies, in one way or another, some degree of uprooting; iii) organizational patterns are introduced in which direct or indirect participation is inevitable, but which are alien to those sanctified by custom; iv) involvement in processes of rapid change is combined with a predisposition against them; v) it is necessary to develop strategies which permit the continuity of the family and of the ties it creates, but which entail its disarticulation and break-up; vi) the development of markets places implicit emphasis on individualism, competitiveness, personal or family mobility, in relation to a population which cherishes other values and which sees itself as inferior and in an increasingly disadvantaged situation as regards employment, production and marketing; vii) while the importance of women is enhanced (because of their early migration to the city; because of their running the family business during the temporary migrations of the menfolk), patterns which place them in a subordinate position still persist.

9. The *situation of indigenous groups* deserves separate consideration. In face of the quantita-

tive and conceptual difficulties of defining exactly what is meant by indigenous, it is proposed that the term should be taken to apply to the population constituted by social groups that maintain, even if in a modified form, their ancestral customs and their language, and are able, in many cases, to claim a territory for themselves. Their situation is different in different countries of the region. All the indigenous groups, as defined above, live in the rural areas and, from their discriminative position, have followed the changing fortunes of the national societies, so that they share with the non-indigenous rural population the economic and social vicissitudes in which it has been immersed. But just as the land is worth more to the peasant than its mere economic value, for the indigene the land is not a capital good, nor an investment, nor a means of living. It is *the* means of living, the spot where the family produces enough to keep itself alive, the place of the mythological/religious ceremonial which accompanies the worship of their ancestors' gods. The relation between man and the land is the *raison d'être* of their entire existence. The indigene who wants to shake off the title not only has to make a geographical move, but must break his links with the land, cease to till it, permanently leave his community, sunder the socio-cultural ties which bind him to his social and organizational nucleus and which give him his identity. In view of the long-drawn-out process of social, cultural and political discrimination and of economic expropriation to which the indigenous population has been subjected, there is some ground for asking how distinct and how persistent is its socio-cultural unity, and for doubting whether any such thing as *the* indigenous problem exists. Not only does it exist, however, but there are lively signs of increasing awareness of it on the part of the indigenous groups themselves. Given the presence of sectors of the population whose status in the national class system is consolidated or predetermined by their membership of one or other of the socio-cultural groups against which discrimination is practised, some people ascribe to the indigenous population, *in toto*, a cultural uniformity and a unanimous desire to reassert their identity which is far from being founded on fact. On the other hand, there are some who view

the indigenous population, *in toto*, as a species of civic incompetents and who feel it necessary to help them or to wait until in the course of history, through the social selection mechanism, they are finally assigned a place within or marginal to national society. From these different attitudes diverse proposals for action derive. In between the indigenous groups that decisively reassert their condition as such and the population of European origin a numerous social category has grown up: the *mestizos*, *mistis*, *cholos*. Among all of them there are reciprocal relationships which are economically and culturally prejudicial to the indigenous groups, but are also harmful to the national society. 'Being an indigene' is defined as a stigma by the whole of society; the notion is current everywhere and is affirmed and strengthened through countless everyday actions practised by all the members of the society in question. In that sense, it is a problem that affects national culture, political democracy and the whole of the social structure.

10. The scanty information available on local settlements, neighbourhoods or communities brings to light a high degree of heterogeneity as regards their socio-economic situation and their access to educational services. This heterogeneity among rural settlements must not be allowed to obscure certain basic facts: a) they constitute a restricted social unit, occupying a given territory, possessing some sort of (formal or informal) organization, keeping up fairly homogeneous customs, and predominantly engaged in crop and stock farming; b) a considerable part of the lives of women and children is spent in and conditioned by that physical and social environment; c) certain analogies exist which have led the residents to group together in the settlements, and a relative homogeneity prevails in respect of problems and needs, environmental conditions, services and infrastructure. In the case of indigenous settlements there is also a high degree of heterogeneity according to their real ethnical situation: use of the autochthonous language; degree of substitution of cultural elements; demand for 'anticipatory' socialization in the urban or national environment; maintenance of certain cohesive cultural patterns, forms of internal community government; etc.

11. In the local settlements, neighbour-

hoods or communities are to be found the *family units* that have been affected in diverse ways by the course of events in rural areas. However, the great majority of families in these localities produce goods and services for their own consumption; they are responsible for and directly undertake nearly all activities connected with generational reproduction and daily maintenance of their members; almost all their consumption is confined to the home; home is the centre of everyday social life and the *locus* where individuals become social agents, participants in economic, social and political relations, bearers of norms and values. Given the frame of reference constituted by the survival strategies of family units in the most deprived rural sectors and by the social, economic and cultural processes in which they are involved, two key questions must be considered in order to figure out the significance of education in rural areas and its performance: i) how do family units condition the participation of their members in the formal education system; ii) why and for what do families demand formal education.

12. For children in the lower rural strata, as for the other members of the family units, the hallmark of life is subsistence, which is the paramount motive of concern. The social environment in which these children move is reduced to their family, where they are allotted a status and tasks for which they are responsible according to different age and sex categories. The cultural gap between the family and the educational system, the methods adopted for giving lessons in early socialization, open-air life and the cultural conception of childhood itself result in a discrepancy between the psychomotor and mental development of children in rural areas and the preparation that the formal education system takes for granted. Given the general conditions prevailing in rural settlements and among families living in rural areas, and the characteristics of early socialization, women emerge as key agents in the development of education in rural areas, in their own right and because of the role assigned to them in social and family life.

13. All the aspects hitherto considered have some sort of incidence on values, norms, language, the material elements of culture and relationship patterns. The educative action of different kinds that takes place in the course of

early socialization cannot but be affected, since the socializing agents themselves are undergoing a relatively intensive process of resocialization or incidental education and probably, with regard to their activities in connection with socializing the younger generation, they may feel a great

many doubts as to what must be transmitted and as to the significance of what they do transmit, since the very speed of change makes it impossible to predict the positions of the future social systems for which youth is being socialized.

B. THE PROFILE OF EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS

1. *Illiteracy among the population aged 15 to 24 years* is definitely being steadily reduced in the region; but the incidence of this decrease has not been the same in the different areas of the various countries. In capital cities, as early as 1970, the rate of illiteracy for this age group was not more than 10% in any country of the region. In other urban areas the rates were higher, although in 8 out of 13 countries the illiteracy rate was below 10% and only in one did it approximate to 30%. In contrast, in rural areas, countries had illiteracy rates approaching or greatly exceeding 30%. For this age group, differentiation between countries is hardly possible in the case of urban illiteracy, whereas in that of rural illiteracy such a distinction can easily be drawn. The illiteracy rate for women in the 15 to 24 age group living in rural areas is lower than that of men in some countries of the region, but on the other hand is much higher in others. Bolivia, Peru and Guatemala afford notable cases in point, which are indicative of the difficulty of changing the situation of women in the indigenous rural population.

2. *Illiteracy among the adult population* (total population aged 15 years and over) has declined at a slow but regular pace. This tempo does not adequately reflect the most recent efforts made in many countries of the region, owing to the great inertia of the older population groups, whose situation has remained unaltered and tends to neutralize the changes that have taken place in the case of the younger generations. The reduction of illiteracy followed a homogeneous pattern between 1950 and 1970, since although the difference between the countries at the upper and lower end of the scale of distribution is no longer so wide, distribution throughout the scale is still uneven, the order of countries is unaltered and no discontinuity of any significance has been observed. The countries of

the region that are relatively most developed in respect of education seem to have reached some sort of limit to their possibilities of bringing down their illiteracy rates still farther, while the countries whose educational development is relatively less have reduced illiteracy at a cumulative average annual rate of approximately 1%. If this trend were to continue, the latter countries would take over 40 years to approach the illiteracy rates recorded by 1970 for the countries where educational development is relatively more advanced. It has been shown that in certain circumstances, a firm political decision can achieve if not the eradication, at least a drastic reduction of illiteracy, as in the case of Nicaragua in 1978.

3. As regards the *level of education*, the overwhelming majority of the population living in rural areas fails to complete the primary education cycle or has not been to school at all. In the rural environment, the world of formal education is made up of those who have never gained access to the system, those who obtained access to it but got no farther than the third grade (functional illiterates), and those who have reached the higher grades of the primary school, these last probably linked to medium-scale production with accumulation capacity and to other not directly agricultural or extractive activities. These three groups, taken in conjunction, shape different educational profiles of different significance. There are countries with a low educational profile in rural areas (high percentages without schooling, low or medium percentages in the lower grades of the primary school and low in the higher grades); cases in point in 1970 were Bolivia, Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. In these countries the mere fact of going to school at all may be operating as a selection mechanism, since at best only one out of every two persons manages to do so. Moreover, the

possibility of retaining the knowledge required at school is very slight in social contexts with this educational profile. Other countries have a medium educational profile in their rural areas (medium percentages without schooling or with a lower primary grade and medium or high percentages in the higher primary grades); examples are Ecuador, Panama, Peru and the Dominican Republic. Lastly, there are countries with a high educational profile (low percentages without schooling, high percentages in the lower primary grades and medium or high in the upper primary grades); this is the case with Chile, Costa Rica, Paraguay. In these countries two out of every three individuals have gained access to the formal education system. The possibility of retaining the knowledge acquired at school is greater in social contexts where at least 60% of the population has attended primary school and 30% has completed the top grades.

4. The difference in *average years of educa-*

tion by area of residence and by sex reveals, on the one hand, the diversity of national situations and, on the other, the existing discrimination against rural areas and women. Generally speaking, town-dwellers have more years of education on an average than residents in rural areas, and men have more than women. The disparities between men living in rural and in urban environments are less than those between women in the two areas. At one extreme is Peru, where the average number of years of study is twice as high for males as for females, with great differences between areas of residence, by sex. This situation is understandable in view of Peru's high proportion of indigenous population and the incidence of this on the status of women. At the other extreme, in Costa Rica average numbers of years of study are similar for both sexes, women being at a slight advantage in both urban and rural areas. The average number of years of study is 1.6 times higher for the urban than for the rural population, and shows a declining trend.

C. THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN RURAL AREAS

In brief outline, the situation of the formal education system in rural areas can be described in terms of the following characteristics:

1. *A centralized and bureaucratic organization*, so that political, technical, organizational and financial decisions are apt to be biased by and urban view of problems and by pressures on the part of the city-dwellers;

2. *An education oriented towards an urban-citizen model*, the corollary of which is the introduction of a nation-wide curriculum and of normative procedures for the entire country;

3. *Educational objectives* centering on universal, free and public education, directed towards homogenizing the population, a tendency which gives rise to the contradiction mentioned earlier between these homogenizing objectives and population in heterogeneous situations and underlines the options previously considered between a common and universal basic education and differentiated schooling;

4. *A relation between formal education, socialization and incidental education* such that they are articulated more by juxtaposition than by cooperation or complementarity;

5. *Formal educational institutions or establishments* which, in addition to their maintenance and equipment problems, are under staffed. This implies that some schools cannot offer the complete cycle or have only one teacher for several grades;

6. *A school organization* with universalizing, academic and extensive curricula, ill-adapted to local conditions with detailed programmes that leave teachers little freedom, and with school activities designed on the basis of schedules and timetables that do not take into due account the characteristics of local life, the climate and the seasonal nature of farm work;

7. *Teachers working in rural areas* have the most widely varying levels of training, the percentage of uncertificated teachers being high in many cases. National education systems have raised the academic requirements for a teachers' certificate which, in most of the countries of the region, now has to be issued at the university level. It has been noted that the teachers recruited for the formal education system enter it in marginal urban and rural areas and teach mainly the lower grades, so that the service pro-

vided is staffed with insufficiently experienced personnel in the areas where educational deficiencies are most serious and in the grades that are of key importance for the encouragement of continued school attendance. To this must be added the type of training given to teachers, described over and over again as inappropriate for teaching in rural areas, as well as their working set-up as regards both general conditions of work and those that affect their technical performance. Emphasis has frequently been laid on the deficiencies of supervision or inspection, which tends to assume the form of administrative control rather than a support for educational activities. Among the human resources that have joined in the work of the formal education system, mention must be made of the promoters, monitors and activators, usually members of local communities, who, with diverse educational backgrounds (generally not superior to the complete primary cycle), characteristics and aims, act in association with teachers or replace them. There are also various types of educational auxiliaries, paid or voluntans (literacy campaigners, health and hygiene promoters, members of extension services, etc.). The efficacy and significance of these roles for the formal educational system has yet to be evaluated;

8. It is within this system that children belonging to a population whose situation is such as has been described come into contact with the teachers. The *teaching practices* applied in the social space represented by the school bear the mark of all the conditioning factors that are incorporated in each of its component elements. Scanty though it is, educational research on what goes on in the small physical and social space constituted by the classroom allows of some approximation to certain aspects: i) in non-Spanish speaking areas, the language situation is clearly a barrier; ii) the way in which teachers use their authority is apt to restrict the children's active participation; iii) the motivation schemes utilized generally reflect a wide cultural gap between teachers and pupils; iv) the use of textbooks and other teaching material is basically determined by the teacher, and children seem to utilize them more as a mode of entertainment, of introduction to the world of books, of familiarizing themselves with printed shapes, letters and colours, than as learning aids; v) the behaviour models transmitted, practised and taught in the classroom involve competitiveness, individualism, submission, passivity, and all this without explicit instructions, but as a natural emanation of the relation existing and of the conditions in which it evolves.

D. THE QUANTITATIVE PERFORMANCE OF THE FORMAL EDUCATION SYSTEM

This analysis is confined to primary or basic education and to the corresponding age cohorts, in which educational supply and demand in rural areas is almost exclusively concentrated.

1. By 1978, *enrolment in primary education* in the rural areas of Latin America amounted to 20 million pupils and represented 35.8% of total enrolment at the primary level. This lesser proportion of rural primary enrolment, conditioned by the degree of urbanization, is to be found in all the countries of the region. Those that have a relatively small percentage of rural population show growth rates of primary enrolment in rural areas which fall below urban primary enrolment, and even negative rates of growth, as happens in Argentina and Uruguay. In their turn, countries with high percentages of rural population do not exhibit a homogeneous behaviour pattern. The

inverse association between degree of urbanization and growth of primary enrolment in rural areas seems to hold good for the extreme cases, leaving a wide range of situations where the relation in question does not appear to be valid, which suggests the existence of a political decision to expand enrolment in rural areas.

2. The expansion of enrolment has resulted in an improvement in the *coverage* of the formal education system, although with differences between countries and between administrative divisions within each country. While in some countries high and rising levels have been reached in all areas and in all the age groups considered, in others 32% of boys and 34% of girls of school age living in rural areas have been left outside the school system.

3. In these areas, the *retention* capacity of

the formal education system is low. In 1974, almost 70% of enrolment at the primary level in rural areas corresponded to the first three grades. Information based on apparent cohorts indicates that the retention capacity of the educational system is increasing, but the situation is far from satisfactory, since in the course of the primary cycle 85% of those who started school drop out. The rate of retention is lower during the first two or three years, and this phenomenon is particularly marked in rural areas. While the probability of retention from one course to the next varies from year to year, the fluctuations are relatively slight and in general the dominant trends are maintained. This would suggest that the low percentage of retentions is due to complex causes and that any notable progress is unlikely to be made in the short term. A breakdown of data by administrative divisions and by zones, even within rural areas, seems to show marked variations. Much the same thing would appear to be happening in the case of different population groupings (by sex, ethnic).

4. The scanty information available on promotion rates suggests that the higher the grade, the higher they rise. Accumulative estimate of the compound probabilities of promotion from one course to another puts the rate of final promotion very low, with a less-than-20% probability of promotion from the third to the fourth grade, and with better performance on the part of girls. The system's

low rates of retention and promotion point to the existence of repetition, retardation and, in the end drop out.

5. Trends in national *repetition* rates for the rural areas of the region have been dissimilar in those countries for which information is available. In some, the rate shows a measure of stability; in others, a definite reduction; and in another, lastly, an increase. Repetition rates generally tend to be higher in the first grades.

6. Repetition (and late entry) are reflected in *school retardation*. The available information shows that this phenomenon would seem to be declining, and that it varies widely from one country to another, but that even in those countries where indicators of the development of education in rural areas are satisfactory, the proportion of rural pupils with school retardation does not fall below 30%.

7. Repetition and retardation, in conjunction with other factors, finally conduce to *drop out* from the formal education system. In some countries the rates of drop out have substantially decreased; this generally happens when the drop-out rate is successfully reduced in the early years of schooling, which seem to be the most important as regards their incidence on illiteracy and on the general performance of the formal education system. National figures do not show the great differences that exist between administrative divisions and in all likelihood within these.

E. THE PARADOX OF EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS

A rough description has now been given, in broad outline, of the changes that have taken place in rural society, the educational profiles of the rural population and the characteristics and performance of the formal education system. The paradox of the situation seems to lie not so much in the poor results obtained by this system but in the fact that notwithstanding these and the consequent frustrations suffered by the population, formal education is still in great demand, as can be seen from the rates of increase of enrolment and its expanding coverage.

It may now be asked what are the bases of this keen demand. To judge from the available

information, rural family units want education for various reasons: i) formal education is regarded as a good in itself. Parents wish their children to receive elementary education because to study is always a good thing; ii) formal education is considered a source of prestige, and parents seek education for their children either in order to confirm the *status* already attained by the family, or as the road towards a higher *status* or towards getting better-paid jobs; iii) formal education is viewed as a way of integration into urban life and into national citizenship; iv) formal education is regarded as a source of instrumental know-how. It is sought as a means whereby young people can

be better trained for work, better prepared to engage in non-agricultural occupations or at least can learn to read and write, since the amount of paper work to be dealt with is constantly increasing.

In view of all this, in rural society the school ends by fulfilling a revulsive rôle: it inculcates an image of childhood alien to that current in the rural environment; it defines as work a series of activities unconnected with those formerly so defined; it appears as a means of access to the prized and distant urban way of life; it represents a different process of social selection of individuals. This revulsive rôle, which calls in question the elements of local culture, not only constitutes a mode of articulation between the

urban and the rural worlds but also (and possibly for the same reason) narrows, with the assistance of the other modernizing processes, the gaps between school culture and the public to which it is addressed. In the rural environment, the school as an outpost of the formal education system and of all it implies, would seem to be strengthening the receptive attitude of a public already predisposed to accept its services. The probable result of this will be an increase in migration from the country to the town, a destruction of local cultures, or both at once. These consequences, however, depend not so much upon the formal educational system as on the development style.

V

Conclusions

Some doubts may linger as to the extent to which the nation-States of the region have completed their internal integration, but it may be felt that the changes which have come about during the last thirty years have been conducive to the unification of national societies in the sense that the entire population (urban and rural) can be defined as participating in one and the same political space. From this same standpoint, the hypothesis might be postulated that as in the past the dispute respecting the legitimacy of domination led first to taking into account and then to incorporating the urban middle strata, something of much the same sort will happen with the rural sectors.

The situations are different, however: external debts have climbed to figures inconceivable a short time ago; the prices of export commodities have deteriorated; competition in the international market is becoming more and more difficult. In this context, there does not seem to be much future for the rural areas, except for those capable of producing surpluses and of improving their capacity to compete in national and international markets; i.e., those areas which are proving fertile soil for capitalism, which is far from having firmly struck

root throughout the whole of the national territories.

It has been argued that given the development of the nation-State, in relation to the consolidation of capitalism two main dilemmas arise: a) who is to take the initiative? the public sector, as the administrative and economic arm of the State, or the private sector, as the manifestation of private enterprise; b) where is the emphasis to be placed? on the homogenization or on the differentiation of political and socio-economic spaces, since capitalism calls for full operation of the national labour, merchandise, land and capital markets, with prices established in those markets through the interplay of supply and demand, and, above all, for universal rights invested in all citizens (De la Peña, 1982).

Whoever is responsible for policies relating to the development of education in rural areas will have to bear in mind that the option chosen in face of the aforesaid dilemmas will influence the changes that occur in rural society, the educational profiles of the rural population and the characteristics and performance of the formal education system. If, moreover, he wants to pursue a coherent and viable policy, he will take into account not only the political positions of the

group responsible for his appointment with respect to the foregoing questions and to global policy orientations, but also the conditions in which his policy will be put into effect.

Thence he will be able to draw up his policy on the basis of three major working hypotheses:

1. Given a maximum hypothesis, it would be a matter of changing the political, organizational and technical structure of the formal education system within a context of social reforms in greater depth, forming part of a basic needs approach;

2. Given a medium hypothesis, the question would be to bring about reforms in the political, organizational and technical structure of the formal education system from within that system and directed towards some aspect of it. On this hypothesis, unless measures are included for the purpose of discriminating in favour of basic or primary education in rural areas, the expansion of the traditional model may widen the gaps between the different social groups;

3. Given a minimum hypothesis, the aim would be to encourage all action taken from the bottom of the system or from outside it, or from the two sources in conjunction.

Some suggestions might perhaps be put

forward: for example, a beginning might be made by classifying the agricultural population in the following groups: a) those with accumulation capacity; b) those without accumulation capacity but linked to the markets by their production; c) own-account subsistence farmers; d) wage-earners; e) various combinations of *b*, *c* and *d*. Similarly, from *b* to *e*, the population groups that are indigenous could be distinguished from those that are not. The next necessary step would be to break down the population by pre-school age, school age and post-school age groups. According to the information available, the population group with accumulation capacity demands formal education at all levels. For the other groups, a possible policy might consist in carrying out non-formal activities for the pre-school cohorts (on the basis of training for mothers), and literacy campaigns, training programmes, etc., for the cohorts of post-school age. For the school-age cohorts, different alternatives might be considered to ensure their access to and retention in the school.

In other respects, very few will be better acquainted than the future official with the opportunities and constraints he will encounter on assuming his post.

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