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Education and culture: a political perspective

Hypotheses on the importance of education for development

*Pedro Demo**

After analysing the educational situation in Brazil, and particularly stressing its shortcomings, the author seeks to answer an important question: wherein lies the need for education?

Those who attempt to reply to it from a socio-economic standpoint place emphasis on the role of education as an adequate means of gaining a foothold in the labour market and as a channel of social mobility which makes it possible to rise in the occupational scale. The author does not think that to accord priority to the expansion of education is justifiable from this point of view, since if education is to be able to fulfil its role as a means of occupational insertion and a channel of social mobility, the economic structure must be expanded and new opportunities must really be created; unless it is accompanied by a consistent increase in productive jobs, the expansion of education will end in the frustration of the educand and the devaluation of its results.

Education can also be justified by its role as an instrument of socialization, although there are two sides to this: positive, in so far as it furnishes knowledge with which to face life, and negative, in so far as it makes for moulding individuals in conformity with the social system.

Without disregarding the socio-economic and socializing importance of education, the author asserts that its most important role lies in the political formation of educands, whereby they can become citizens participating in an increasingly democratic society. He therefore concludes with the proposition that the educational system be changed in such a way that its expansion may create a climate in which a free and democratic society can flourish.

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Introduction

Belief in the importance of education is almost universal. This is suggested by certain attitudes nowadays shared in common, such as the interest of families in guaranteeing education for their children, and the social concern for establishing compulsory schooling up to a given childhood age. Its importance, however, has undergone changes in the course of history. In the first place, its economic importance for development is not what was assumed in the theory of human resources. Secondly, there are societies with high indexes of school attendance that do not develop satisfactorily, as may perhaps happen in the case of some of the more southerly countries of Latin America, to say nothing of the advanced countries that have produced extremely anti-educative ideologies, such as racism, colonialism, etc.

In development contexts, it is easy to see that education reflects the effects rather than the possible causes of the pressure represented by the necessity of material survival.¹ The difficulties of school attendance make this still more clearly perceptible, for without an improvement in material living conditions it is virtually impossible for the benefits of schooling to be duly reaped. On the other hand, if *from the socio-economic angle* education is not as powerful as is imagined, *from the political angle* it is a *sine qua non* for attaining effective citizenship, although relations between the two are not mechanical or automatic.²

The aim of the present study is to formulate, even if in embryo, a few *hypotheses* on the importance of education for development, taking as a point of departure certain data from the 1980 census in Brazil, which suggest the existence of an educational situation that is still

¹L.A. Cunha, *Educação e desenvolvimento social no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora Francisco Alves, 1977; C.G. Langoni, *Distribuição da renda e desenvolvimento econômico do Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora Expressã e Cultura, 1973; R.A. Costa, *Distribuição da renda pessoal no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora Fundação Getúlio Vargas, 1977; R. Tolipan and A.C. Tinnelli (org.), *A controvérsia sobre distribuição da renda e desenvolvimento*, Rio de Janeiro, Zahar, 1975.

²G. Rama (compiler), *Educación y sociedad en América Latina y el Caribe*, UNICEF, Santiago, Chile, 1980; R. Franco (compiler), *Planificación social en América Latina y el Caribe*, UNICEF, Santiago, Chile, 1981; R.V. Vega, *Democratización y educación básica en la reforma educativa peruana*, UNESCO/ECLA/UNDP, Buenos Aires, draft, Fichas/13. March 1981.

very unsatisfactory and up to a point disconcerting. Accordingly, it is worth while to ask in what respect would this unsatisfactory situation appear to be prejudicial for the country... is it prejudicial to growth? is it prejudicial to the establishment of conditions favourable to political participation?

Attention will be drawn, in addition, to the importance of the concept of *culture* in relation to this latter approach which gives priority to emphasis on the political importance of education and an endeavour will be made to establish what may perhaps be a middle way between positions that carry the socio-economic, political or autonomous point of view to extremes.

I

Some data on Brazil in 1980

The sole purpose of this section is to serve as an empirical starting-point, taking into consideration the hypotheses which will be adopted. It therefore presents a concisely summarized set of data, which, despite their typical unreliability, may suggest certain points for analysis. Three historical frames of reference have been selected within the course of two decades, i.e., 1960, 1970 and 1980, years in which censuses were taken in Brazil.³

a) The most striking feature is the relative stagnation during the 1970s of the compulsory (7-14 age group) school attendance rate, which was 67.20% in 1970 and stayed at 67.70% in 1980. It is hard to escape the impression that a decade has been lost. The two most serious problems here would seem to be: firstly, that no progress has been made; secondly, that the rate is as yet very low, signifying in practice that of the children of school age who ought to be attending school, over 30% are not doing so.

Many children drop out of school too early,

either because little more than 50% survive the transition from the first to the second year of basic education, or because in most rural schools teaching is given only up to the fourth year. The figure cited does not therefore mean that over 30% of the children had never been to school; it does imply that they ought to have been in school and were not.

b) The number of children not attending school is impressive because, besides being very large, it remains virtually unaltered during the three reference dates selected: about 7 million. In all likelihood this number is concentrated in the poorest areas, where it may perhaps be said that the need to survive is much more pressing than the need to be educated.

The very magnitude of these numbers is a reminder of the peculiar character of a country that is geographically and demographically oversized, which makes it exceedingly difficult to attain what are considered minimal educational levels.

c) Much significance attaches to the age distortion, i.e., the presence of youngsters over 14 years of age in the basic education cycle. Although there are also pupils under 7 years old, what is typical is the exceeding of the legally defined age limit for basic education. In 1980, children over 14 accounted for 25.20% of total basic education enrolment, which means that one out of every four pupils is over age. There are places in which this percentage is much higher, a circumstance which might be somewhat 'unfair' to the 'real' rate of enrolment, inasmuch as this does not take into account children outside the age group considered. But since these

³The data from the 1980 census are very disappointing, inasmuch as they suggest that as regards basic education we would seem to have lost a decade. This is generally admitted to be an unsatisfactory census, in which considerable distortions may exist. It is hard to believe that in 1970 and 1980 the rates of school enrolment were the same. For instance, it is strange that the population aged 7 to 14 years should have increased by 5 million between 1960 and 1970, but only by a little more than 2 million between 1970 and 1980. At the same time, the census records what are almost the final enrolment figures (it was taken in September), while other statistics relate to the initial enrolment. In any event, there is little point in arguing over whether the pupils that did not attend school numbered 7 or 5 million.

children nevertheless are in fact in the basic education cycle, a 'virtual' rate is also used, which may make the rate of schooling a good deal higher.

However, neither can it be concealed that there are children who ought to be in school and are not.

Furthermore, the rates deriving from the

census data can be said to be rigorous in the sense that they virtually represent final enrolment (the data are compiled in September, while the school year ends in December). In any event, they are certainly much more real than the initial enrolment rate, since this is often distorted by the tendency to take promises of enrolment into account, and by other problems.

BRAZIL: SOME EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS

Category	1960	1970	1980
Population	70 070 457	93 193 037	119 070 865
Population aged 7 to 14 years	14 406 371	19 692 771	21 933 936
Population aged 7 to 14 years attending school	7 480 673	13 236 860	14 842 092
School enrolment rate, 7 to 14 years of age	51.92%	67.20%	67.70%
Pupils aged 7 to 14 years not attending school	6 925 698	6 455 911	7 091 844
Proportion over age in basic education	24.87%	32.29%	25.20%
<i>Literacy (15 years and over)</i>			
Percentage of illiterates	39.48%	33.11%	26.08%
Absolute figures	15 877 113	17 882 248	19 413 034
<i>Indexes of school performance</i>			
Began in first year and reached fourth year	23.29%	36.80%	39.40%
Began in first year and reached eighth year	8.60%	17.20%	17.70%

Source: Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia y Estadística (IBGE). Index of performance data supplied by SEEC/MEC. Data processed by SEAC/SEPS/MEC, Brasília, 1982.

d) The rate of illiteracy continues very high, i.e., approximately 25% of the population aged 15 years and over, and in absolute terms the number of illiterates in 1980 reached nearly 20 million. Although a considerable decrease was recorded between 1970 and 1980, it fell far short of expectations, especially considering the programme specially set up to tackle this problem: the Brazilian Literacy Movement (*Movimento Brasileiro de Alfabetização—MOBRAL*), the objective of which was to reach a rate of approximately 10% by 1980.⁴

e) School performance is still a substantial challenge. In 1980 the eighth year of basic education was reached by only 20% of the children who had entered school seven years before, which means that drop-out and school retard-

ment affected 80%. Although performance made considerable progress between 1960 and 1970 (rising from 8.6% to 17.2%), it remained virtually stationary throughout the following decade.⁵

These data, indubitably disconcerting, must be compared with the economic growth data. The 1970s, of course, were the decade of Brazil's maximum growth, although at its close the rate visibly declined; at its opening very high growth rates were recorded, reaching in 1973 a 14% increase in the gross domestic product; thence arose the exaggerated notion of a Brazil-

⁴See V. Paiva, "MOBRAL: um desacerto autoritário", published in three parts in *Síntese* 23, Nova Fase, Rio de Janeiro, Centro João XXIII, September/December 1981, January/April 1982 and May/August 1982.

⁵In the Second National Development Plan (II PND), proposed for the period 1975-1979, it was assumed that the rate of school enrolment would exceed about 80% by the end of the 1970s, which in practice was not the case. See P. Demo, *Política social nas décadas de 60 e 70*, Fortaleza, Editora das Universidades do Ceará, 1981; *Brasil: 14 anos de revolução*, document prepared by the Institute of Economic and Social Planning (IPEA), Brasília, 1978.

ian 'economic miracle'. Obviously, such an achievement brought about very complicated effects—for instance, the external debt—but it cannot be denied that in practice economic growth did take place.

This evidence suggests that education would seem to have contributed very little to growth, in view of the foregoing figures, which revealed a relative stagnation of basic education. No strictly causal relation should be looked for, either in a negative sense (the training of human resources has nothing to do with economic growth) or in a positive sense (the training of human resources is a cause of economic growth).

At all events, it is important, as will be seen later, to distinguish between growth and development. We shall seek to relate education with development rather than with growth, since the latter signifies the accumulation of wealth and capital, and the display of a capacity to maximize the economic product in quantitative terms, while development implies the distribution of the product and of wealth, participation in the progressive enrichment of the country. The concept of development is primarily qualitative and exhibits a political participation component; for this reason, we would say that it is participation that converts growth into development.⁶

Thus, growth can occur without development, provided that the former is accompanied by a concentration of income; income increases, but its distribution is unfavourable to the lower groups. In the last analysis, it might be said that a country can grow without education but cannot develop without it, since it is a necessary (although not a sufficient) pre-requisite for all forms of political participation. Perhaps this is just what happened in Brazil during the 1970s.

In social policy two central spheres of action are to be distinguished: the *socio-economic* and the *political*.⁷ The socio-economic sphere reflects the problems of material survival and in it, accord-

ingly, attention is concentrated on the question of occupation and of income. In these terms, there is no more effective and structural way of distributing income than through insertion in the labour market. This is more important than vocational training and than nutrition, sanitation and housing programmes. Any social policy, in the socio-economic sphere, will be the less welfare-oriented and the more redistributive, the more capable it is of adequately incorporating the active population in the labour market.

This depends essentially on the performance of the economy, for it is the economy that generates jobs and employment opportunities; in this connection, there is little that education can do. At all events, here we have one of the fundamental challenges of development, i.e.: on the quantitative plane, how to create a sufficient number of jobs; on the qualitative plane, how to generate earnings higher than the minimum wage.

The political sphere relates to the problem of participation, i.e.: together with adequate insertion in the labour market, its defence as the worker's due by right of conquest or as an integral constituent of citizenship. Participation is essentially a conquest; it is not given or granted, nor is it pre-existent; it exists only if it is won. Nor can there ever be enough of it. It is an unending historical process of democratization.

The economy has no distributive function. If distribution is to be obtained, political pressure must be applied by those concerned. In the political sphere, participation is the road to redistribution and self-promotion, through which is constituted a society of citizens, or, in other words, individuals capable of assuming rights and duties, contributors to and participants in the destinies of society.

In this sphere, education is a necessary and irreplaceable requisite; this is what reinstates it as an essential component of development.

⁶See M. Wolfe, *Desenvolvimento: para que e para quem?* Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1976; P. Senger, *Desenvolvimento e crise*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz e Terra, 1977; P. Demo, *Desenvolvimento e política social no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro, Tempo Brasileiro, 1978.

⁷See S.B. Ammann, *Participação social*, São Paulo, Editora Cortez e Moraes, 1977; P. Demo, *Pobreza socio-econômica e política*, Florianópolis, Editora da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 1980; and by the same author, *Participação é conquista: Noções de política social participativa*, Universidade de Brasília/INEP, Brasília, mimeographed text, 1982.

II

Wherein lies the need for education?

It is impossible to show that education is of no socio-economic importance, taking this to mean above all its possible effect on the training of human resources.⁸ Of course any country needs skilled workers, especially at the secondary education level. The ever-quoted examples of Germany's energetic pursuit of its national reconstruction after the war and of Japan's pre-eminence in terms of occupation of the international market and of internal growth, are not without their *raison d'être*. Nor can it be denied that when some importance is attached to study, another end in view is the improvement of the conditions of survival. It can justifiably be asserted that someone who is short of economic resources tries to acquire some specialized skill in order to guarantee his rise in the social scale.⁹

Nevertheless, the socio-economic importance of education is less than is imagined or expected. In simplified terms, it may be said that:

- a) Education does not create productive jobs, as the economy can, especially in respect of its secondary sector;
- b) Education does not reduce the abundance of the manpower supply, and training for jobs through specialization never necessarily coincides with their generation;
- c) Education does not always succeed in neutralizing the effects of socio-economic poverty, such as malnutrition, which may mean that very little advantage can be taken of schooling.¹⁰

The foregoing points suggest that, on the socio-economic plane, lack of education is not the

most serious problem. More disquieting, undoubtedly, is the want of economic dynamism, when industrial activity absorbs only a very small proportion of the available labour force, with the result that too much of it is absorbed in the antiquated primary sector and in the swollen ranks of the tertiary sector.

Thus, from the socio-economic viewpoint, the employment/income variable is more decisive, since it has greater capacity to guarantee a higher level of education than the reverse.¹¹ The very selectivity of the educational system seems to bear eloquent witness to this effect. The eighth year of basic education is reached by 20% of the initial enrolment at most, and it is by no means difficult to show that this process of selection is mainly economic. Similarly, the inordinate growth of higher education during the past decade, especially of private institutions at that level, would appear to reveal the economic power of the privileged classes, which are capable of obliging the country to spend at a faster rate on higher education than on basic education.¹²

A somewhat ingenuous outlook is very common, according to which occupational training *per se* would guarantee access to employment. Although this may occur, it is patent that occupational training would only be effective if the economy were to generate a sufficient number of jobs. Otherwise, a surplus of professionals or skilled workers helps to force down salaries and wages, as is already happening in many university careers. Furthermore, everything confirms the view that enterprises could easily do without the schools, if all they offered was occupational training, since the enterprises themselves possess many other

⁸UNESCO/ECLA/UNDP Project on Development and Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, *La educación y los problemas del empleo*, Final Reports 3, Buenos Aires, October 1981; A.C. de Andrade, *Coordinación del sistema formal de educación con el de formación profesional en países de América Latina*, Montevideo, OAS/CINTERFOR, Estudios y Monografías, No. 34, 1978.

⁹See Claudio Salm, *Escola e trabalho*, São Paulo, Editora Brasiliense, 1980.

¹⁰See P. Demo, *Educação, cultura e política social*, Porto Alegre, Editora Fundação Padre Landell de Moura - FEPLAM, 1980.

¹¹See L.A. Cunha, *Educação e desenvolvimento social no Brasil*, *op. cit.*; P. Demo, *Desenvolvimento e política social no Brasil*, *op. cit.*

¹²During the 1960s enrolment in higher education increased by over 1 000% and in basic education by approximately 70%; in the 1970s, enrolment in higher education rose by over 300%, while the basic cycle showed practically no growth.

means of satisfying this requirement. Their primary interest is in the 'teaching of skills' to get the work done and thus increase productivity, though here, of course, an exception must be made of those few functions that call for creativity and administrative talent.¹³

It is not that occupational training must necessarily be a matter of teaching skills; although it is dependent, nevertheless, on prevailing socio-economic conditions, and tends to exemplify education as viewed from the angle of instruction, of teaching, of training of manpower, rather than from that of creative social motivation and the development of potentialities. From the standpoint of the enterprise, the tendency to teach skills is characteristic, since its objective is to increase productivity. For the same reason, there is a general preference for the training given in the enterprise itself, which, with its modern means of 'manipulating' the learner, makes for forming a well-adapted and productive worker rather than a citizen capable of constructive criticism and creativeness.

Nor is it possible, moreover, to fail to recognize that poverty profoundly affects school performance, owing either to the effects of malnutrition, to the compelling need to work all or part of the day or to a potential lack of interest in any content not directly linked to material survival.

Occupational training, however, is only one of the important facets of education. Equally fundamental is the *socialization* dimension, with its negative and positive aspects. Generally speaking, the negative features of social reproduction are accentuated, making themselves apparent mainly through the trend towards crystallization of social inequalities.¹⁴ In other words, education is not only a universal 'training'

¹³See Claudio Salm, *Escola e trabalho*, op. cit.

¹⁴See P. Bourdieu and J.C. Passeron, *A reprodução — elementos para uma teoria do sistema de ensino*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora Francisco Alves, 1975; B. Freitag, *Escola, Estado e sociedade*, São Paulo, Editora Moraes, 1980; J.C.G. Durand (comp.), *Educação e hegemonia de classe — as funções ideológicas da escola*, Rio de Janeiro, Zahar, 1979; C. Nunes, *Escola e dependência — o ensino secundário e a manutenção da ordem*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora Achiamé, 1980; M. de L.C.D. Nosella, *As mais belas mentiras — a ideologia subjacente aos textos didáticos*, São Paulo, Editora Moraes, 1980; W.G. Rossi, *Capitalismo e educação — contribuição ao estudo crítico da economia da educação capitalista*, São Paulo, Editora Cortez e Moraes, 1978.

process, which casts individuals in the moulds expected by the system and seeks to secure their commitment to the maintenance of order, but is also a means of safeguarding privileges through qualitative reservations: for the poor, a poor education; for the rich, a privileged education. So marked is this tendency that free public education itself, when it attains a good level, is monopolized mainly by the privileged members of the system, as in the chronic case of the universities; the privileged study in favourable conditions and free of charge, the rest pay for poor-quality private education.

But there are also the positive aspects, linked to the transmission of knowledge, of information, of accomplishments, etc.¹⁵ Even though ingenuously at times, considerable attention is usually paid to this facet, because it is generally the prism through which families envisage education. Their children go to school in search of instruction, of knowledge and even of erudition, in contrast to those remaining ignorant. And this the school can offer, playing therein an important role as a modernizing factor of society, in which is condensed the basic function of learning. To learn is an essential activity in life and, although more can be learnt from life itself than in school, the latter can be an effective source of learning. In short, in this respect the school can be said to play an essential formative role, necessary to equip us for facing modern life.

It is important to recognize, however, that in this function the school is tending to be superseded by the modern communication media, which can better its instruction. True, the school is a major source of transmission of knowledge, which gives it indisputable value, but it is not altogether irreplaceable. Without inclining towards the extreme position that advocates total deschooling of society, it must be acknowledged that real competitors exist in this field.¹⁶

¹⁵See W.E. García (co-ordinator), *Inovação educacional no Brasil — problemas e perspectivas*, São Paulo, Cortez Editora, 1980; UNESCO/ECLA/UNDP Project on Development and Education in Latin America and the Caribbean, *El cambio educativo — situación y condiciones*, Buenos Aires, Final Reports 2, August 1981.

¹⁶See I. Illich, *Sociedade sem escolas*, Petrópolis, Editora Vozes, 1979.

However, other important effects of education still remain, among which we would chiefly single out its effect on women, as regards the reduction of the birth rate, as well as the inculcation of habits of learning and behaviour which make for a general increase in adaptability. This last characteristic, above all, may be much appreciated by enterprises, inasmuch as it could easily be translated, in operational terms, as productive 'docility'.

Alongside what we have very briefly described as the *socio-economic* approach and as the *socializing* approach, there is at least a third approach which seems to us more essential and

possibly irreplaceable: that of *formation*. This is a specifically political approach, not necessarily linked to formal schooling, but committed to the process of forming citizens, in which the cultural dimension is also an essential ingredient. Certainly to educate is also to train human resources, still more to socialize, but primarily and in essence its purpose is *formative*, or, in other words, it should develop the creative and participative potentialities of the individual and of society. In this regard education is irreplaceable, and an essential factor in development.

III

Education and participation

What the lack of education means for the illiterate or for persons with insufficient schooling might be summed up as *being deprived of fitness for the exercise of citizenship*.

The essence of citizenship cannot be related to specific ideologies of actual democracies, inasmuch as these are only possible and relative prescriptions, but to the general objective of socio-economic and political participation, over and above and in spite of the systems in force.

It is important to grasp the tenor of this type of relation between education and participation, which is not mechanical or automatic. However much evidence can be collected to suggest that an educated people is a free people, the social sciences have been unable to interpret it as necessarily implying a cast-iron link between education and liberty. On the other hand, there is no difficulty in perceiving likewise that to be a democrat it is not indispensable to be able to read. The most extravagant ideologies are generally forged by intellectuals, or, in other words, highly educated persons, as in the case of Nazism, authoritarianism, racism, colonialism, and so forth.

Perhaps it may be useful to distinguish between two main dimensions in this field: the *formative* and the *cultural*. Education in the formative sense is a strongly humanistic project,

based on the creativity and potentialities of the individual and of society, and promoting by natural means the cultivation of the participative area. It takes the educand to be the protagonist in the process of formation of an individual with rights and duties, capable of self-determination and of adopting a creative position *vis-à-vis* the world and society. It is in this sense that it is asserted that education is less concerned with training human resources for the economic system, than with forming citizens. This is not prejudicial to the work approach, since work forms part of the citizen's life, but work is seen as a right of citizenship, not the reverse.¹⁷

Education as *cultural* achievement becomes a consequence of the cultural process, this latter being understood as the artificer of community identity and the context of self-promotion.¹⁸

¹⁷See the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais — INEP), *A profissionalização do ensino na Lei 5692/71*, Brasília, Ministry of Education and Culture, 1982: cf. the chapter on work, the conception of work and education ("Trabalho, concepção de trabalho educação"), pp. 11 *et seq.*

¹⁸See P. Demo, *La dimension culturelle de la politique sociale*, paper drafted for UNESCO (in preparation for the Mexico meeting on culture in August 1982), Brasília, mimeographed text, December 1980.

The idea of culture cannot be restricted to its classic dimension of the *élite*, of leisure and of art; without depreciating that conception, what is most important is to understand a people's formative process, in order to grasp the characteristic features of its past creativity and its future potentialities, the end pursued being the capacity to define and to achieve the development that suits it best. Thus, this idea of culture easily reincorporates the *motivating* spirit of participation and becomes the natural frame of reference of education. The latter would be enforced, alien and aggressive if it were incapable of respecting the community culture and the existing potentialities.

Once again it seems necessary to reiterate here that the cultural relation too is neither mechanical nor automatic. Culture is an essential referent for any participative process, because participating means being capable of making a contribution, and this capacity materializes through the most characteristic product of the historical formation of a society, namely, its culture. Nevertheless, there are undoubtedly negative features in any culture, however much they may be expressive of a characteristic of the community: 'machismo', aggressiveness, urban anonymity, etc., are very typical features of our culture, but that does not make them positive.

It cannot be denied, however, that culture has a specific power, inasmuch as it moulds behaviour, nurtures ideologies, signposts the paths of history, and shapes ways of being and loving, as well as modes of doing and producing. This influence, although it does not generate coercion, which would be an assault upon the idea of participation, does constitute a historical tendency of recognized strength. Such is education: in so far as it is the expression of a democratic culture, while it does not necessarily guarantee democracy, it creates the most propitious atmosphere possible for participation.¹⁹

If participation is to be authentic, it must be the instrument and content of a historical process of conquest. The natural propensity of edu-

cation is to reproduce rather than to change the social structure. It can become a major channel of participation, in so far as it acquires the necessary historical and political awareness of its role in the formation of citizens. The educator is not participative by vocation: quite the opposite.

At all events, within the framework of social policy, the most appropriate place for education is the political sphere, alongside other channels of participation, such as the organization of civic society, participative planning and research and the cultural identification of the community.²⁰

Among the components of the citizenship project are the following:

- a) the idea of *formation*, not of training, since the starting-point is the potentiality of the educand, on the assumption that he is the principal party to the process;
- b) the idea of *participation*, of *self-promotion*, of *self-determination*, i.e., the central content of social policy, understood as the realization of the participatively desired society;
- c) the idea of a subjective social being, not an object, a patient, a client, an element;
- d) the idea of *rights* and of *duties*, above all those that are fundamental, such as human rights, the duties of a citizen the right to the satisfaction of basic needs, the right to education, etc.;
- e) the idea of *democracy*, as the form of socio-economic and political organization best suited to guarantee participation as a process of conquest;
- f) the idea of *liberty*, *equality* and *community*, which leads to the formulation of ideologies committed to the reduction of social and regional inequalities, to development, to enhancing the quality of life and well-being defined in cultural terms, to the satisfaction of basic needs and to the guaranteeing of the fundamental human rights;
- g) the idea of access to *information* and to *knowledge*, as instruments of the growth of the economy and of society, as well as of socio-economic and political participation;
- h) the idea of access to *skills* capable of in-

¹⁹See S.B. Ammann, *Participação social*. São Paulo, Editora Cortez e Moraes, 1977; and by the same author, *Ideologia do desenvolvimento de comunidade no Brasil*, São Paulo, Editora Cortez e Moraes, 1980.

²⁰See P. Demo, *Participação e conquista — Noções de política social participativa*. Brasília, Universidad de Brasília/ INEP, mimeographed text, 1982.

creasing the creativity of work, conceived here as a cultural component rather than as a mere productive element.

In the light of these considerations, it seems possible to delineate more precisely what the lack of education means to an illiterate person, i.e., being deprived of fitness for the exercise of citizenship. If we do not understand it in either a mechanical or an automatic sense, the assertion may be made that without education a people cannot be emancipated. History is replete with examples of peoples which 'in a very well-educated way' exploit other peoples, inasmuch as knowledge, science and technology are used for projects of destruction rather than in the service of participation. At all events, this fact alone shows how necessary it is to think of education in the context of power and of participative conquest.²¹

As the daughter and often the slave of power, education has a natural tendency to reproduce social inequalities. For this very reason, facile proposals for education to be made participative by those in power may be overhasty, since such a change is a realistic possibility only if it is understood as a conquest and not as a product of prevailing trends. Participation must be defined precisely as its own conquest, since there is no such thing as given and definitive participation. It is native to the logic of power to incline towards imposition and accumulation of privileges. Of its natural tendencies, the first to appear is imposition; just as the market, left to its own logic, concentrates income. The distribution of income and power is a matter of participatory conquest, not the mechanical or automatic effect of economic growth.

It is essential that education be a formative process, not because it springs from a supposititious vocation for magnanimity, which would simply be ingenuous paternalism and welfarism, but because, since it tends to consecrate imposition, it must be transformed into a conquest of

participation. Education as culture acquires even more central importance, inasmuch as it implies transcending mere exhortatory flights and beginning to consolidate, through firm behaviour patterns and habits, the process of democratization.

In this connection, it may be asserted that an uneducated (unformed) person is more exposed to 'manipulation' by those in power, to adoption of imitative mass behaviour patterns, to ignorance of fundamental rights and duties, to the allurements of foreign ideologies, etc. If we revert to the data given at the outset of the present article, it will be easy to see that this situation is prejudicial to the formation of citizenship. The harm it does may take the following forms: a) *political obstructions*, such as casuistry in party life, populism and 'manipulation' of the vote, apprehensions as regards popular participation, indeterminate trade-unionism, and little organization of civic society; b) *socio-economic obstructions*, such as a timid, compensatory or welfarist social policy, lack of resistance to abuses of economic power, defencelessness with regard to unemployment and the satisfaction of basic needs; loss of the character of development, a process more dependent upon the outside world than generated from within; c) *cultural obstructions*: weak community participation, or a tendency towards State welfarism; imitativeness in the fields of science and technology; little remembrance of the country's past; and only a slight sense of national, regional or community identity.

In the political sphere, education may serve—in utilitarian phrase—to reject impositions on the part of the dominant structure, to repress inordinate economic exploitation and to rectify intolerable social inequalities, as it gradually forms citizens capable of self-defence and of collaboration. Education can establish the right conditions for a more acceptable society: it is not a sufficient but a necessary requisite for development.

²¹See M. Caciotti, *Educação e poder—Introdução à pedagogia do conflito*, São Paulo, Editora Cortez e Moraes, 1980; V. Paiva, *Paulo Freire e o nacionalismo desenvolvimentista*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1980; M. Carnoy, *La*

educación como imperialismo cultural, Mexico City, Editorial Siglo XXI, 1978; M. Berger, *Educação e dependência*, São Paulo, Editora Difusão Editorial, 1980.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears important to stress that the linkage between education and participation cannot be reduced to the specific dimensions of the systems in force, whether capitalist, socialist or of any other sort. The very notion of culture suggests the necessary diversity of models and, at bottom, the limitless character of our formative potentialities. Participation is an authentic utopia; it is not fully realized, but it is an indestructible and permanent constituent of a social process which is a constant evolution. All the participation that can be achieved is little in comparison with the infinite extent of our formative expectations. And like knowledge, participation knows no bounds, although it cannot be set up as an autonomous or exclusive variable, since if

there were no material production there would be nothing to distribute either. But political poverty may be no less than poverty of the socio-economic kind; or, in other words, the need for political participation is as infrastructural as the need for material participation.²²

Perhaps we might put forward the hypothesis that the economy, in general, *grows* irrespective of human resources, but society does not *develop* without education.

²²See P. Demo, *Pobreza sócio-econômica e política*, op. cit.; and by the same author, *Pesquisa participante — mito e realidade*, University of Brasilia/INEP, Brasilia, mimeographed text, 1982.