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Barth and Shermis: Defining Social Problems

Giroux and Penna: Social Education in the Classroom: The Dynamics of the Hidden Curriculum

Shaver: Political and Economic Socialization in Elementary School Social Studies Textbooks: A Reaction

Anyon: Education, Social 'Structure' and the Power of Individuals
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To The Readers:

This is our first issue since being elected editors of Theory and Research in Social Education. We were pleased to assume the responsibility of editorship because of the tradition that has been established in the few years of publication. The vitality of a scholarly field is represented by the literature that exists to express its ideas, purposes and direction. Under the previous editors, the Journal has provided an important forum for members of the field to give coherence to the problems, issues and dilemmas that confront social studies education. We hope to be able to continue that scholarly tradition during our own tenure.

The imagination and creativity of a discipline is related to the dialogue and conflict that exists about the purpose, procedures and findings of its inquiry. The conflict of ideas and resulting cross-fertilization that occurs in scientific communities helps to prevent the crystallization and reification of ideas.

As editors, we intend that the Journal continue to present arguments from the many intellectual traditions present in social science philosophy, history and the teaching of social studies. Further, we hope that critical responses to Journal articles can be published, such as the Shaver and Anyon interchange in this issue.

In the following issues we shall discuss current issues in the field through a book review section. Jack Nelson of Rutgers University has agreed to edit a section that reviews significant literature relevant to social studies education. We also invite notices of professional meetings in social studies and related fields that might be of interest to our readers.

Finally, being editors for one issue has been enlightening. We have sharpened our bookkeeping skills (hopefully), learned about copywriting, made clearer the operations of the printing business, checked out office procedures in the university and National Council for the Social Studies, and learned what “wait time” is. We have become good story tellers about the post office and the xerox machine. We have also realized what Godfather means — it is a Lee Ehman who keeps good records and does not mind phone calls about details that make new editors nervous.

Thomas S. Popkewitz
B. Robert Tabachnick
DEFINING SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Samuel S. Shermis Purdue University
James L. Barth Purdue University

Introduction

Of all the paradoxes embedded in the social studies, the most puzzling involves the term "social problem." First, the selection of social problems by teachers of history, civics, economics and the rest has little or nothing to do with social problems as they are studied by social scientists. Second, the rationale for the study of social problems in the social studies movement is based is ignored in theory and denied in practice.

To develop these two propositions, we shall analyze the relationships among the definition of social problems, social studies and the social sciences. We propose, first, to comment upon the original rationale for social studies as we have come to understand it. Second, we shall focus upon the history of the discipline of sociology and especially upon the definition of the term "social problem" as it has been used from the 1890s to the present. Finally, we shall draw some implications for the teaching of social studies.

The Social Studies at Birth

In our recent work on the nature, structure and goals of the social studies, we decided that there are at least three distinct traditions, all having their roots in the distant past (Barr, Barth, Shermis, 1977, 1978). One tradition we designated Reflective Inquiry (RI), a term which combines the meanings of "reflective thinking" as used by John Dewey and "inquiry" as it has come to be employed in the last decade or two. The essential purpose of RI, we thought, was to teach students to make decisions in complex and morally ambiguous circumstances because our society long ago decided that the making of decisions, i.e., self-rule in a political democracy, must be taught the young and schools are taken to be the ideal place for this. We have since come to believe that the social studies arose in the second and third decades of this century as a direct response to perceived complexity. The growth of an urban civilization — and the concommitant fading away of a more simple, agrarian, small town life — was accompanied by industrialism, the importation of exotic philosophical doctrine, ethnic conflict, expanding and painful contact with other nations and most especially the changes wrought by an ingenious technology. These and other complexities generated the understandable response that American public schools could no longer rely upon transmission of a relatively
few core values. The vastly complicated newer way of life mandated an approach that would teach the young to understand and to cope by training them in a mode of problem analysis.

Such an approach to social studies was based, in part, upon the writings of John Dewey, in particular his How We Think, the point of which was to convince teachers that teaching should naturally follow the way the mind works to solve a confronting problem. Social studies educators early perceived that this could best be done by building the curriculum upon social problems. Unfortunately, there is good reason to believe that Dewey's use of the term was never understood by the profession. The result was that while social problem, problem solving and problem were used, and continue to be used, none of these concepts was ever employed in a clear sense.

Individual social studies educators, to be sure, did attempt to translate Dewey's theories of problem-solving into curriculum. Thus, beginning in the 1920s, Earl and Harold Rugg produced curriculum materials designed to reflect a Deweyan problem-solving orientation. And in more recent times, Paul and Lavone Hanna and Hilda Taba developed both a curriculum framework and materials based upon a clear notion of problem-solving. However, the Rugg materials were forced out of schools by the late 1940s and there is no good evidence that the Hanna or Taba materials continue to be widely used on a national level. In any event, a problem solving curriculum — in the sense that Dewey defined the term — was not, in fact, accepted by the field.

As Dewey approached "problem" and "problem-solving," he talked of an obstacle or barrier to thought. A problem arises when an individual is confronted by some discrepancy, some deficiency or conflict in feeling. In order to clear up the felt difficulty, one engages in consecutive and serious thought. However, as the term was subsequently utilized, teachers substituted a variety of other meanings for problem defined as something that someone owns, internalizes, feels. Thus, teachers simply renamed a familiar concept and called it a problem, e.g., the topic Western Migration was now called The Problem of Moving Westward. Or, in recent years, teachers have attempted to create curriculum around the problems traditionally classified by scholarly disciplines. For instance, it has been possible to select from the discipline of anthropology a persistent problem and then label the curriculum derived therefrom "problem-solving." There are many instances of other kinds of problems being substituted for Dewey's conception. But the point is that all were called problems and therefore anyone who wished to claim that he was engaged in "problem-solving" could do so and there was none to deny it.

The essential reason for advocating the study of problem was tied in with the idea of the integration of knowledge. Problems recommended for study were to help young people learn to integrate knowledge, data, and information. The assumption was that in actual life
people facing a problem make use of data from whatever source is available — from memory, observation, experimentation or written authorities. Sources of data are not confined to a single discipline, one book or a field of study. It was clear even at the turn of the century that most complex issues require data from many disciplines and from sources that are within no discipline; and indeed problems often force the creation or merging of new disciplines, as bio/chemistry, astro/physics, socio/biology, social psychiatry, political socialization and the like. Thus, at the turn of the century as now, it was clear that easing lethal conflicts, deciding how to use technology humanely, coping with poverty — all require insights from philosophy, literature, history and all of the sciences and social sciences. Useful knowledge comes from who or whatever is disposed to provide it. And one does not know all of the sources of data prior to beginning inquiry.

To summarize, then, integration in the early Twentieth Century social studies sense meant integration from any source of knowledge. Use meant use in the solution of whatever problems face humanity and have been defined as such. We wish to conclude this section with the observation that those who were present at the creation of the social studies movement could not anticipate what would happen to their convictions about problem solving and integration. They could not predict that most teachers would redefine "problem" as a topic or subject of study. Nor could they know in advance that "integration" would be construed to mean selection of information from any source for the single purpose of driving home a moral lesson.

We need now to turn to the origin of the definition of social problem within the field of sociology. At a recent scholarly meeting,6 Michael Lybarger revealed that his research on the 1916 report — which exercised a good deal of influence on the thinking of subsequent social studies educators — was heavily dominated by sociologists. Since this appears to be true and since it was this committee that urged the study of social problems on teachers of social studies, it behooves us to know more about the sociologists' approach to the topic. There is another rationale for knowing more about sociologists' thinking, quite apart from the presumed impact on the social studies. A study of how another field with the same professional and intellectual concern went about their task should prove illuminating. Since there is some overlap in both the concern and the time period, the definition, research methods and techniques of one should be of interest to the other.

There is, in addition, one other persuasive reason to concentrate on the approach to defining "Social Problem" from the discipline of sociology. While, to be sure, all disciplines deal with problems, one in particular seems to have been concerned in any extended and analytical sense with definition. From the beginning of the third decade of this century sociologists became conscious of the need for a conceptual framework and from the 1920s onward journals, monographs and books have been engaged in an apparently unceasing debate as to the meaning and implication of "social problem."
In the beginning, there was no definition of social problem. (Sermis, Barth, 1978, p. 2-5) Sociologists announced or pointed to a problem — crime, intemperance, poverty. Their treatment of the subject was a mixture of naming, speculating and describing with occasional forays into social amelioration. A sense of the haphazard arrangement of concepts into lists of social problems can be gleaned from the table of contents of one work: (Dealy, 1909)

I. Ignorance  
II. Exploitation  
III. Pauperism  
IV. Crime  
V. Sexual Immorality  
VI. Intemperance

The reference to social amelioration above refers to the fact that those who called themselves and were called sociologists included a good many social workers, reformers, clerics and others who were angered and shocked by what they saw around them in the crime ridden cities, newly bloated with immigrants from all over the world. An example of a compound of assertion, speculation and unacknowledged assumptions comes from this Nineteenth Century abstract:

One of the most serious social problems of the day is presented by the rapid increase of large towns, more especially of London; and there is a tendency to regard the increase as wholly undesirable, and to some extent unnatural. (Dendy, 1895, p. 28)

From a 1920 work is this mixture of data-less speculation and indignation:

Again, civilization strengthens, rather than weakens man’s physical and psychical nature. One often hears that civilization develops a type of man aged at forty and a nervous wreck at fifty. This, of course, is not true civilization, but a civilization in which social energy has been highly stimulated without being regulated by scientific knowledge nor directed into the most useful channels by right education. (Binder)

Writing at a later time — when sociologists had turned a critical rejecting eye upon earlier attempts to conceptualize the term — one author argues:

Most of the early texts made no effort to orient the problems discussed to a more systematic framework of sociological theory. Each problem is considered more or less at random with reference to heterogeneous factual material, biological, psychological, or political in nature. No attention is given to interrelationships or classification of problems.7

The author is probably correct in this observation for it is clear that sociologists writing between the late Nineteenth Century and the 1930s lacked any specific sociological framework. Their propositions were largely a mixture of judgments and facts from philosophy, medi-
cine, history, economics and other sources. There were few coherent categories and one often finds speculation being substituted for explanation.

The eminent sociologist, C. Wright Mills, explained this historical phase of the discipline by arguing that early sociologists came from a rural, agrarian, small town background and were outraged by the spectacle of massed immigrants, dirt, illiteracy, prostitution, disease, political corruption and the like. Their inability to penetrate the complexity of the new urban framework permitted them to denounce and then to gather facts selectively to support their assertions. But growth of the discipline and improved methods of observation, recording, inference and interpretation did not permit this stage to last forever. By the mid 1920s we begin to see attempts at holistic approaches and tentative criteria for a definition of social problem.

We do not wish to suggest that there was no sociological framework available to early sociologists for this is not true at all. Historians, philosophers and social scientists had proposed comprehensive frameworks for the definition of a social problem for many decades. Hegel, for instance, would have perceived social problems as the necessary accompaniment to thesis-anti-thesis conflict. Marx thought that social problems — at least in the contemporary world — are a function either of class conflict within a society or capitalist conflict between societies. Spengler and Toynbee would probably have understood social problems as manifestations of a given historical developmental stage within a society. Durkheim saw suicide, anomie, etc., as a natural consequence of the loss of moral guidelines and folkways. This list could be extended to include many 19th Century sociologists. However, it is one thing to talk about a comprehensive conceptual framework and it is another for people to be aware of one. There is little evidence that sociologists writing between, say, 1890 and 1925 either paid much attention to Marx, Hegel, Tonybee, Weber, Spengler, Toennies, Durkheim, etc., or even that they had translations. Thus, while there was a sociological framework — indeed, there were a good many competing sociological frameworks — they were not widely used by the sociologists of that generation.

In retrospect we can perceive some implications of this first stage of sociologists' concern for social problems. First, without a context, without criteria for a definition, without a theoretical framework, the sociologists' efforts were fragmentary and piecemeal. And as a result they were unconvincing. Second, it would seem that the unrecognized preconceptions — what Mills would call the agrarian influence — actually blinded sociologists to their subject. For instance, obsessed as they were with the graft and devious political behavior of ward heelers, sociologists of that time usually did not perceive that politicians performed absolutely essential social services — from locating jobs for incoming immigrants to finding coal for the destitute widow. Finally, when all was said and done, little actually resulted from the sociologists' labors. There is little evidence that sociologists influ-
enced public opinion in any discriminable way or that their scholarly evidence shaped legislation. Indeed, the Immigration Act of 1924 was based upon most unsociological views and upon statistical evidence that was immediately disavowed. In short, the first stage, although productive of books, monographs, and articles was a dead end. If social studies educators had been paying attention, they might have learned an important lesson: research on social problems without a theoretical framework, without awareness of the part played by one’s own values and assumptions is likely to be sterile and unproductive. Unfortunately, as we shall see, social studies people were not paying close attention.

The Second Stage

The second stage — “stage” is not really a good term and “tendency” or some other term suggesting more gradual re-emphasis would be better — arrived as scholars became aware of the inadequacy of what had been done in the name of the sociology of social problems. What were the needs to which sociologists in the 1930s addressed themselves? First, they wished to define the critical term “social problem.” Second, they wanted a theoretical explanation of the concept with logically consistent categories. Third, they wanted to group or relate one problem to another in a theoretically consistent category of some sort.

The theoretical categories began as a way of subsuming all social problems under one or another single-casual explanation. Thus, one could attempt to describe every variety of ill as a manifestation of “the social lag” in which one talked about discontinuities between prescientific and pretechnological society and the present. Or, the emphasis could be placed upon “social deviance” or “social pathology” in which an alleged ill could be perceived as a departure from a healthy pattern. As much as an improvement as these theoretical categories were over the haphazard practice of naming and decrying, they, too, contained their own theoretical difficulties. They were loaded with unexamined value judgments and assumptions. They were based upon a medical model (e.g., “pathology”) and this was probably inappropriate and confusing. Others created dubious categories of their own, as “individual” and “social.” And in later years most appeared to be tainted with a less-than-rigorous, romanticized view of the world. However, they did lead to more useful and certainly more interesting ways of conceptualizing the term social problem.9

Writing in the mid-1920s, Professor L. K. Frank attempted what appears to be the first definition of social problem:

A social problem, then, appears to be any difficulty or misbehavior of a fairly large number of persons which we wish to remove or correct, and the solution of a social problem is evidently the discovery of a method for this removal or correction. (1924-25, p. 463)

Although Frank makes extensive use of a social lag theory,10 his definition is clearly an attempt to view a phenomenon in holistic, systematic terms. He pointed out that there is a depressing element of
hypocrisy in a society in which illegitimacy is considered a serious problem but in which it would never occur to individuals to re-examine their attitudes that are the source of the stigma that generates the problem.

Within a very few years Richard Fuller seized upon Frank's insights and attempted to define social problem. Fuller insisted upon a multi-causal approach, arguing that many social forces come into play, thereby excluding the previous decade's single-causal explanations. Further, Fuller argued that "all social problems are not alike" and "... knowledge of the cause of a social problem does not solve the problem." He attempted to distinguish among different components of a social problem, i.e., what relates to research, to policy and to administrative efficiency. Finally, he argued that phenomena relating to social problems have "... a threefold relationship to the cultural value scheme in which they are imbedded," i.e., one must talk about value conflicts originating from clashing cultural patterns.

The eventual definition which arrived in the mid 1930s was based upon a number of assumptions which we shall briefly summarize. First, a social problem has both an objective, quantifiable dimension and a subjective, value-laden component. Second, because of the variability of our society, especially geographical variability, social problems will vary from place to place and will also vary in the intensity with which they are perceived. Third, cultural values and especially conflicts among cultural values are always involved. Finally, at the very core of a social problem is disagreement over the nature, meaning and shape of the problem — it follows that there will be disagreement over proposed solutions.

Given these assumptions, then, what is the first definition reached during the 1930s?

"A social problem is a condition which is defined by a considerable number of persons as a deviation from social norms which they cherish. (Fuller and Myers, 1941, p. 25)

A slight variation on this:

"A social problem is a condition which is an actual or imagined deviation from some social norm cherished by a considerable number of people." (Fuller and Myers, 1941, p. 320)

The history of the late 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s is essentially an attempt to amplify, refine and explore this definition. Although many have cast doubt upon all or part of this definition, it has been remarkably durable and continues to be held — consciously or otherwise — by many.

We conclude this section with a few observations and conclusions about the context of the definition we have just quoted. First, while not every sociologist accepted the Fuller definition, there is widespread awareness that a more systematic, more sophisticated approach is needed. Second, while many sociologists are concerned with social problems, by no means are all. We discovered many texts and general works in sociology in which there is either none or scarcely
any mention of the notion of "social problem." Third, there is a pronounced tendency for discussions of social problems to take place as a subset of one overriding principle, as a social lag, social pathology, social disorganization, or less frequently, social deviation. Co-existing with attempts to conceptualize social problems in a logical and coherent sociological framework, however, are still many vestiges of what we have called Stage I thinking. Thus, one still finds categories which do not communicate, pseudo-explanations, data-less speculation, moral outrage and pale descendants of Aristotelian philosophy. Our conclusion is that by the 1930s sociologists had devised a definition of the term social problem. This definition, whose roots are in the 1920s, was formulated in the mid 1930s, received substantial recognition by the 1940s, was amplified throughout the 1950s but by the 1960s was challenged as philosophically and methodologically inadequate.

If one asks, Why ought this second stage be of interest to social studies educators? the answer we believe, is because it reveals quite clearly that thinking about the difficulties besetting the human race is apparently so intellectually cumbersome that the best minds with the best of motivation stumbled along, unable so much as to agree upon a definition of what they were about. The phrase "unable so much as to agree" does not suggest that there was something wrong with sociologists who could not reach consensus on the basics. Rather it suggests that there is something about the defining process which poses an almost insurmountable intellectual barrier. A definition is actually an effort to say something valid and meaningful about all characteristics within a class. To attempt to define what all social problems have in common required the thinking of hundreds of scholars for well over a third of a century. And even then, it proved to be inadequate. Once more, the lesson was lost on social studies teachers who, rather than appreciate the complexities involved in thinking about social phenomena, preferred instead to let the official curriculum or the class text do all the thinking for them. Instead of observing and methodically classifying social problems, social studies teachers accepted the word of the textbook writer; if the writer pronounced Crime or Prostitution a problem so did the teacher. And the teacher insisted that crime and prostitution were exactly the kind of problem defined by the writer. All of which is to say that while sociologists were fretting and wondering about the nature and meaning of social problems, teachers were doing nothing of the sort.

The Third Stage: Saving the Souls of Sociologists

Writing a few years ago, two sociologists delivered an extremely sharp, even devastating judgment: "There is no adequate definition of social problems within sociology, and there is not and never has been a sociology of social problems." (Spector and Kituse, 1977, p. 1) One is compelled to wonder why, after more than three quar-
ters of a century, do two sociologists assert that there is not a definition, not even a viable sociology of social problems? The answer to this question — assuming that the two are not merely guilty of hyperbole — requires a brief overview of the history of sociology of the last twenty-five or thirty years.

First, as we have said, the definition coined in the 1930s survives to the present. But, as we shall discuss in a moment, it had political as well as distinctly intellectual functions. That is, it had the effect of temporarily calming a conflict between different factions of the American Sociological Association that had been simmering for many years. In “What Is A Social Problem?” (Shermis and Barth, 1978) we cite evidence to suggest that two groups of sociologists had contended for many years. Theoreticians, scholars and researchers approached social problems from quite a different perspective than social workers, reformers and what one source calls “ex-clerics.” The definition of a social problem as a departure from a social norm in effect papered over the conflict between these two groups. But not for long.

By the 1960s we saw an end to the relative calm of the Eisenhower years, marked by relative affluence, a lack of vigorous criticism and a feeling that every day in every way our society was growing better and better. When the Indochinese war reached its apogee in the mid 1960s, we became aware that the social issues of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s had not died, been solved or faded away. We discovered that there were still many who lived as Roosevelt described them in 1933 — “ill fed, ill housed and ill clothed.” We also faced the crisis of our cities, violent opposition to the Vietnamese war, the resurgence of the civil rights movement, a sexual “revolution” and what appeared to be a “drug epidemic.” Perhaps even more substantial, many began to criticize what appeared to be an economy that predisposed toward mindless consumption — and the imminent danger of depleted physical resources. In short, it appeared to some that the affluence and economic prosperity of the late 1940s and 1950s had simply obscured temporarily severe structural conflicts and unresolved issues.

The thrusting of unresolved conflicts so sharply into the lives of all of us — academic sociologists included — generated some fundamental questions about the definition of the social problem that had been coined in the 1930s. Prompted by black activists, some began to say, “The problem of poverty and racial prejudice is not the problem of poor blacks. It is the problem of a racist society that oppresses and exploits blacks and other minorities.” Rhetoric aside, the significance of the restatement was to force attention on the meanings of such terms as “objective,” “condition,” “influential number,” and “departure.” Let us summarize the challenges to the definition that arose in the 1960s.

1. What is the meaning of “condition” in the definition of a social problem as a “condition” which departs from the important social norm? Are “conditions” objective phenomena or reducible to a value judgment?
2. If reducible to a value judgment, who is making the judgment? That is, who are the definers of social problems? Do we need to know the credentials of the definers? Are they bona fide social scientists who presumably have the expertise to make judgments? And does this rule out those who are not social scientists?

3. Are all social problems the "same" or can one talk intelligibly about departures from social norms which truly threaten cherished values but which are not so defined by a large or influential segment of the populace? And what, by the way, is an "influential" or "important" segment? Can one conceivably talk about segments of the population which are objectively speaking enormously disadvantaged but who are not accounted "important."

4. What is the ultimate end or purpose of the sociologists' labors? Are sociologists scientists who require no more external rationale for their labors than do entomologists or musical historians? Do sociologists study social problems because this contributes to the development of theory in the discipline? Or do sociologists study problems because in some sense they are responsible for a solution?

In the process of researching the monograph from which this article is extracted, the authors exchanged correspondence with and interviewed two colleagues, both sociologists of social problems.12 We particularly wanted to focus on the shifting emphasis away from a social problem as a departure to a social problem as a creation, a construct. We asked Professor Robert Perruci to comment on this.13 His answer:

What we (the authors of a text on social problems) did was to look at this definition and say, 'That is nonsense. There is no way one can use that definition without imposing, without making a judgment... (about) what a 'significant number of people' is, about what a 'violation' is...'

If this is granted, then, what are the implications for a problem definer? Speaking to the question in the context of a discussion of poverty as a social problem, Perruci says:

Poverty exists before people define it as a social problem. Something can exist as a condition objectively speaking. But before one can label it as a problem one must state some set of standards about what constitutes a healthy society.

At this point, we began speaking of the question, What does it mean to "state some set of standards"? Perruci indicated at length that this requires an individual to a) project a model of a good society, b) specify his own values and assumptions, and c) indicate what and how something is thought to deviate from a cherished value.

Perruci illustrates this by arguing that it makes just as much sense to say that "The problem is the secondary school" and not as is usually the case, "The problem is dropouts from secondary schools." In effect, then, one can define a social problem any way one wishes — provided he goes through the process described above. To shift the emphasis from a problem as a departure to the problem as a human construct has the additional effect of allowing minorities or the poor to nominate
a problem, i.e., to place an item on the social agenda for examination and remediation.

In brief, the history of the last twenty or so years saw a series of challenges to the accepted definition of the 1930s of a social problem as a departure from an important social norm. Following heated exchanges on such questions as What is objective and what subjective? What part is played by the values of the definer? What is the political role of any definition? Of what does an alleged deviation consist? Many sociologists of social problems decided that the seemingly objective and scientific definition of the 1930s created as many problems and issues as what it had been designed to replace. Honesty, intellectual precision and certain humane assumptions, therefore led not to a new definition as much as an emphasis on the process by which any definition is reached.

Implications for Social Studies

We began this article by asserting that of all the paradoxes that plague the social studies, the most distressing are those that deal with problem, problem solving and social problems. Although it is a truism that social studies ought to teach a mode of problem solving, and although it is a platitude to claim that the social studies curriculum should deal with social problems, research on the matter suggests that neither was or is the case. There is no defensible approach to social problems and no systematic mode of social problem analysis. And the problem upon which problem solving is thought to be based has been replaced by topics and subjects that have been traditionally taught but were renamed to conform to the new intellectual fashion. Let us deal with both claims, beginning with a look at the treatment of social problems in the social studies.

An examination of social studies curriculum and practices suggests that practitioners approach social problems in ways consistent with what sociologists were doing in the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. Books called Problems of Democracy or Social Problems, for instance, are essentially compilations which breathe life into Professor Fuller's charge that texts

...make no effort to orient the problems discussed to a systematic framework of sociological theory. Each problem is considered more or less at random with reference to heterogeneous factual materials... No attention is given to interrelationships or classification of problems.

The courses, therefore, are a smorgasbord of labels such as Crime, Alcoholism, Poverty, Drug Addiction, Prostitution, much as we saw in texts written sixty, seventy or eighty years ago. Presentation assumes that something, e.g., pre-marital sexual intercourse or pot smoking is a "deviation" and the task is simply to persuade students to this effect. There is usually no historical context for any problem so that students rarely make the connection between something called discrimination against black Americans and the Reconstruction peri-
od. The latter is "covered" in U.S. History and the former in Social Problems class. Thus, there are few "interrelationships," because teachers neither know how nor are predisposed to seek connections between our economic system, poverty and racial discrimination. Thus, the selection of data is so inherently biased that, for instance, "Crime" is reduced to crimes of violence or crimes committed by the lower class, with a concomitant embarrassingly inadequate treatment of white collar crime. Teachers tend to confine themselves to social problems which are traditionally labeled as such and to mix statistical description and denunciation in equal measure. We have rarely seen students invited or even permitted to interpret the problem on their own terms. In conclusion, social studies teachers are approximately fifty to seventy-five years behind the state of the art. The proclaiming and identifying of social problems, with editorial lament, has little in common either with scholarship or the goals of social studies. Which gets us around to the nub of the question: What do we find objectionable about the entire process? What are the practical consequences of calling the confusion and inept practices associated with social problems and problem solving to the attention of the profession?

First, please recall the discussion on pages two and three concerning the rationale for the study of social problems. If a problem is not identified, if individuals are not encouraged to own or internalize a problem, there cannot be subsequent problem-solving thought. Dewey's suggestion that a problem must first be identified before hypothesizing, data-gathering, inferences, analysis, evaluation, etc., can take place is probably still valid. To tell students that, for example, Crime or Prejudice is a problem simply bypasses the first and essential stage. Without problem identification there is little point in talking about problem solving.

Second, if there is no problem solving, there is no integration. If one does not select and appraise data from a wide variety of sources, there is no sense in which integration — in the original sense of the term as employing data from a wide variety of sources — can meaningfully be used. The integration that social studies founding fathers discussed is akin to the notion of philosophical reconstruction. One reconstructs an outlook, that is, one processes knowledge and values in an attempt to come to a more adequate and harmonious understanding both of one's beliefs about the world and the world itself. There are other senses in which one can use the term integration, but the sense in which we use it conforms closely to the official rationale of the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS). In a number of publications the National Council maintained that the way in which social studies goals are reached include gaining knowledge, processing information, appraising values and becoming committed to civic participation.

Third, if there is no integration of knowledge, students do not gain in the skills of decision-making. If one assumes that decision-making is the rationale for social studies — the "heart of social studies" as
Professor Shirley Engle maintained — and if social studies does not deal with decision-making, there is no sense in which one can meaningfully talk about reaching the goals of the social studies. There is ample evidence that the social studies do not even teach lower level knowledge skills successfully and it therefore seems extremely unlikely that it is teaching higher level application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation skills with any notable degree of success.

In short, we contend that the consequences of operating without theoretical guidance for problem solving, problem identification and selection of social problems is a curriculum that is devoid of problems. That is, unless one sides with the Queen of Hearts, who, had she been a social studies teacher, would shriek, "A problem is what I say it is, no more and no less." Without problem solving, without integration, without decision-making skills, there is no warrant to believe that the social studies is developing competence in what is taken to be its supreme goal: preparing citizens to rule themselves in a complex and shifting environment.

Those who may not be familiar with the research literature of the last 45 or 50 years on teaching practices within the social studies may also not be aware that the generalizations we have made about the absence of problem solving are supported by abundant evidence. Simply the most recent summary of evidence is the article by Shaver, Davis and Helburn, whose not very optimistic conclusions include the following:

"... materials from the federally-funded New Social Studies projects of the 1960s and 1970s are not being selected for classroom use..."

"The dominant instructional tool continues to be the conventional textbook..."

"There is little interdisciplinary teaching, and little attention to societal issues."

"The 'knowing' expected of students is largely information-oriented."

"Students generally find social studies content and modes of instruction uninteresting."

"... Implicitly, content and classroom interactions are typically used to teach students to accept authority and to have them learn 'important truths' about our history and government."

Ergo

If sociologists in the last twenty-five years have a valid point, it seems defensible to recommend that certain outdated and self-defeating practices cease. Specifically, compilations of unrelated problems, laced with dollops of moral indignation have little to do with the state of the art. Curriculum projects, textbooks, teaching techniques, etc., proceed on the assumption that if one tells people what a problem is, it is OK to call that problem solving. This is neither theo-
retically defensible nor practicable. First, students, should be permitted to define the social problems of their choice. If we can use an analogue of Perruci’s example, it is not necessarily the case that the problem is pot smoking. One may just as validly define the problem as the inability to handle pleasure in a society in which Puritanism and self-repression are still the hallmarks. Or one may define the problem as the need for young people to narcotize themselves regularly because facing insoluble problems, boredom, and unstimulating environments and dead-end jobs requires one to seek oblivion daily. One may, however, just as readily define the problem as the inability of young people to handle their lives with the courage, morality and self-control of their ancestors. The point is that one may define the problem as one wishes — provided one goes through the process of specifying assumptions, delineating values and indicating the nature of a healthy society. To those who argue that letting a bunch of kids define a problem any way they want is an invitation to chaos, the answer is: requiring students to specify their assumptions and the nature of a deviation from a social norm is the best, the most intellectually respectable and the safest thing that they can do.

Second, there needs to be some closer consonance between the social problems within our society and the problem solving process in the classroom. This statement would ordinarily fall between a self-evident truth and a crashing platitude were it not for one thing: there is and never has been any consonance between what takes place in classrooms and what goes on outside. The practice of naming a social problem and requiring kids to read elaborate, if misleading descriptions, and then giving them a true-false multiple-choice test on Friday has nothing to do with “integrating data from a wide variety of sources.” If there is to be integration — gaining knowledge and processing information, to use the NCSS phrase — we shall simply have to adopt a completely different set of practices.

Two more final questions need to be considered. First, what would be the consequences of a problem solving social studies curriculum based on problem defined as “an internalized barrier, a blockage to one’s goal structure which generates puzzlement and confusion and which must be removed by thinking:” (This is a condensed statement of John Dewey’s approach.) The answer is: a social studies curriculum which made extensive use of problems defined as both social and personal in nature and which can be determined by teachers to possess the criteria of a personal-social problem. e.g., there is much ignorance and misinformation, a high degree of emotionality, interpersonal conflict, illogic, irrationality and intrapersonal conflict. Secondly, what prevents teachers from immediately making use of such an orientation to social studies? The answer apparently is that a sine qua non is teachers who have both a conception of “problem” and a philosophy and methodology to enable them to employ problem solving. But as Beale pointed out 45 years ago
The majority of teachers do not know what a controversial subject is . . . The vast majority share the views and prejudices and ideals of the community out of which they have sprung and in the midst of which they teach. The vast majority of teachers have never done enough thinking to work out an explicit social philosophy.17

It is long past time for social studies people to think seriously about the role of problem-solving in classrooms. It is long past the time when social studies teachers can safely ignore the scholarly methods of the social sciences. We can do a variety of things. We can ignore our half century old goals concerning citizenship, decision-making, integration of knowledge, training for self-rule, complexity, etc. We can declare these statements to be rhetorical, ritualistic nonsense. Or we can overhaul our practices and actually do what the social studies founders said we should be doing sixty years ago.

FOOTNOTES

1From material extracted from "Social Studies Goals: The Twentieth Century Perspective," a chapter in a work on social studies edited by Professor Charles Berryman of University of Georgia at Athen, Georgia, to be published in 1979.
2From the authors' "What is a Social Problem? How Do Sociologists Define the Term," an unpublished manuscript, 1978, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, 54 pages.
3John Dewey, How We Think. See also his Logic The Theory of Inquiry and Essays in Experimental Logic. The former was designed for teachers and the latter two for his colleagues in philosophy.
4The various meanings of problem are described in the authors' "We All Know What a Problem Is. Don't We?" Peabody Journal of Education. 55 (April, 1978) 287-297. All scholarly disciplines entertain problems which are usually the enduring puzzles that exercise fascination for researchers decade after decade. Anthropologists have always found the origins of the human race to be absorbing. From the earliest findings in the Neander Valley, through Peking Man to the present excavations in Olduvai Gorge by the Leakey family, the question, When did anthropoids turn into homo sapiens? has attracted physical anthropologists, archaeologists, paleontologists, etc. We call these "disciplinary problems" for every discipline organizes its research around attempts to shed light on the persistent, intractable unknown. To the question, What evidence is there that teachers do not deal with social problems? we quote from what is only the most recent treatment of the subject. In an article by three researchers, the authors say, "Teachers tend to devote their attention to different aspects of teaching than do professors and curriculum developers. They are not particularly interested in debates about such matters as pedagogical styles, different ways of organizing curricula, social science-social studies distinctions, and on textbook biases. Rather teachers' concerns center on classroom management and socializa-
tion — the matters that must be handled to survive each day and to gain and maintain respect in a social system made up of other teachers, administrators, parents and students.” See James P. Shaver, O. L. Davis, Jr., and Suzanne W. Helburn, “The Status of Social Studies Education: Impressions from Three NSF Studies,” Social Education 39 (February, 1975) 150-153. In short, problem-solving is the concern of professors, curriculum people and theorists. It is not and never has been the concern of classroom teachers.

5Shermis’ “The Social Studies Teacher as Transmitter of Culture,” a paper given to the Philosophy of Education Society, March, 1975, Kansas City, Missouri, deals with the proposition that social studies teachers have tended to accept goals of problem-solving, citizenship, democracy, etc., only at the verbal level, that no attempt was made to translate these into curriculum. This paper also argues that “... the process of socialization is both far more thorough and far more subtle than we had imagined. In a sense, the Transmitter, as a product himself of the socialization process, now has a vested interest — although an unconscious vested interest — in the culture.” Thus, under the guise of problem solving or even simply of transmitting a neutral body of facts, social studies teachers tend most often to be concerned with inculcation, indoctrination or persuasion.

6Michael Lybarger, Edgewood College, Madison, Wisconsin, is now completing his doctoral research on this subject. He presented an interim report to the Foundations of the Social Studies Special Interest Group of the National Council for the Social Studies at Houston, Texas, November 25, 1978.

7The author is Richard C. Fuller, “Sociological Theory and Social Problems,” Social Forces 15 (October-May, 1937) p. 496. Fuller and Richard R. Myers were probably two of the most significant forces in creating a viable and useful definition of the term social problem.


9The obviously ambivalent judgment — very flawed but nevertheless interesting — is our attempt to teeter between two very different evaluations. On the one hand, the single-causal approach was full of methodological flaws which gave birth to overgeneralizations and distortions. However, the intellectual effort put into the task certainly must command our respect.

10This was hardly unique with Frank, for Dewey, Mead and others had recourse to the same concept in many of their works. Dewey’s Reconstruction in Philosophy, Human Nature and Conduct and many
other works are profound attempts to explain the continuance of behavior into a present in which it is dysfunctional.


13 In an interview at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, May 19, 1978.

14 A squib in a recent televised news story described the following: physicians, pharmacists and medical technologists are accused of ripping off Medicare and Medicaid to the tune of $5,000,000,000. That is five billion dollars. The news story indicated that there are not enough H.E.W. personnel to investigate. Had "welfare chiselers" made that kind of hit on the taxpayers, there would have been screaming headlines, angry editorials, television commentators white with anger and all the rest. We saw none of this. We suggest that the social problems texts, in their skewed treatment of crime, are essentially following the self-imposed middle-class oriented blinders of the rest of society.

15 In another work, "Social Studies Goals: The Twentieth Century Perspective," the authors attempt to amplify on three meanings of integration. In addition to the notion of philosophical reconstruction which requires integration of facts, values, attitudes, etc., there are two others. Social science integration — at least in curriculum construction — involves 1. identifying a concept, 2. labeling the concept according to its origins in a particular social science and 3. suggesting ways by which the teacher can help students understand it. The integration of Citizenship Transmission is, as we have described it on page three: the use of information of all kinds from any source for the single purpose of indoctrinating or driving home a moral point. These judgments are hardly without refutation made by social studies educators, social scientists, philosophers and others concerned with educational foundations. For instance, the authors are taken severely to task by Irving Morrisett, "Citizenship, Social Studies and the Academician," Social Education 43 (January, 1979) 12-17.


17 The Beale work (with a complete citation in the Reference section) contains an excellent discussion of forces impeding problem-solving in the social studies. It is somewhat disconcerting to read this work
and realize that it was written 43 years ago. The authors' works, Defining the Social Studies and The Nature of the Social Studies, op. cit., is a brief summary and analysis of the problems discussed in this article. Finally, for what is still perhaps the definitive work on Deweyan problem solving in the social studies, see Maurice P. Hunt and Lawrence Metcalf, Teaching High School Social Studies. (New York: Harper and Row, Second Edition, 1968), Part II, Method and the Social Studies.

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Shermis, S. Samuel and Barth, James L. "What Is a Social Problem? How Do Sociologists Define the Term?" unpublished manuscript (West Lafayette, Indiana, Purdue University, 1978).


The belief that schooling can be defined as the sum of its official course offerings is a naive one. Yet, such an implicit belief served as the theme of the social studies curriculum development reform movement of the 1960s and early 1970s. Developers believed that if they changed the curriculum of the nation's schools, the school's ills would be remedied (Silberman, 1970; Spring, 1976). In recent years, however, numerous reasons have been offered to explain the seeming inability of the reform movement to penetrate the traditional patterns of instruction in the schools. Inadequate teacher preparation and curriculum materials which overestimated the perceived capabilities of students represent the more familiar, albeit uncritical, explanations offered by educators. Now, some of them lend uncritical support for the "back to basics" movement in social studies education, assuming once again that new curriculum materials will provide an answer to the question of how to bring about change in social studies education. Attend to the cognitive needs and capabilities of students, they argue, and the failures of the recent reform movement will be overcome (Lyons, 1976; Brodinsky, 1977).

Unfortunately, such recommendations are based heavily on structural-functional educational models of curriculum theory (Pinar, 1978) which fails to perceive the purpose of social education beyond its limited explicit instructional outcomes. Further, there is a failure to recognize the complex, intimate relationship between the institution of the school and the nation's economic and political institutions. Once the relationship between schooling and the larger society is recognized, questions about the nature and meaning of the schooling experience can be viewed from a theoretical perspective capable of illuminating the often ignored relationship between school knowledge and social control. By viewing schools within the context of the larger society, social studies developers can begin to focus on the tacit teaching that goes on in schools and help to uncover the ideological messages embedded in both the content of the formal curriculum and the social relations of the classroom encounter.

It is only recently that some educators have begun to raise questions which point to the need for a thorough study of the interconnections between ideology, instruction, and curriculum (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Bernstein, 1977; Young, 1976). For instance, Michael Apple argues that we need to:

... examine critically not just “how a student acquires more knowledge” (the dominant question in our efficiency minded field) but “why and how particular aspects of the collective culture are presented in school as objective, factual knowledge.” How concretely may official knowledge represent ideological configurations of the dominant interests in a society? How do schools legitimate these limited and partial standards of knowing as unquestioned truths? These questions must be asked of at least three areas of school life: 1) How the basic day-to-day regularities of schools contribute to students learning these ideologies; 2) how the specific forms of curricular knowledge reflect these configurations; and 3) how these ideologies are reflected in the fundamental perspectives educators themselves employ to order, guide, and give meaning to their own activity (Apple, 1975, pp. 210-211).

If educators such as Apple, Bourdieu, and Bernstein are correct, and we think they are, then social studies developers will have to build their pedagogical models upon a theoretical framework which situates schools within a socio-political context. As such, the main assertion of this paper is that if social studies developers seek to change classroom life through various intervention strategies, then they will have to comprehend the school as an agent of socialization. Furthermore, they will have to identify those structural properties at the core of the schooling process which link it to comparable properties in the workplace and other socio-political spheres. In brief, they will have to approach their task systemically rather than in the traditional fragmented fashion which assumes incorrectly that the classroom can become a vehicle for helping each student to develop his/her full potential as a critical thinker and responsible participant in the democratic process by changing only the content and methodology of the school’s official social studies curricula.

We believe that a major task for social studies educators is to identify those social processes which work against the ethical and political purpose of schooling in a democratic society and construct new elements which provide the underpinning for new social studies programs. Initially, developers will have to understand the contradictions between the official curriculum, namely the explicit cognitive and affective goals of formal instruction and the “hidden curriculum (Dreeben, 1968; Jackson, 1968; Overly, 1970; Apple, 1971; Apple & King, 1977),” namely the unstated norms, values and beliefs that are transmitted to students through the underlying structure of meaning in both the formal content as well as the social relations of school and classroom life (Giroux, forthcoming). Most importantly, they will
have to recognize the function of a hidden curriculum and its capacity for undermining the goals of social education.

Social studies developers will have to shift their attention from a technical, ahistorical, view of schooling to a socio-political perspective which focuses on the relationship between schooling and the idea of justice. The goals of social education should be redefined and understood as an extension of ethics directed toward "the arena of excellence and responsibility where by acting together, men (and women) can become truly free." (Stern and Yarbrough, 1978, p. 380) Thus, social studies developers will have to answer anew the question: "What is learned in school?" Fortunately, a few educators writing out of a number of different theoretical traditions have already taken up the challenge.

Traditions in Educational Theory

Three different traditions in educational theory have helped to illuminate the socializing role of schools and the meaning and structure of the hidden curriculum. They are 1) a structural-functional view of schooling; 2) a phenomenological view characteristic of the "new" sociology of education; and 3) a radical critical view, often associated with the neo-Marxist analysis of educational theory and practice. Each of these views share distinctly different theoretical assumptions concerning the meaning of knowledge, classroom social relationships, and the political and cultural nature of schooling. While we have based our analysis of the hidden curriculum on assumptions and insights drawn from all three traditions, we believe that the structural-functional and phenomenological approaches suffer from serious deficiencies. The neo-Marxist position, it seems to us, provides the most insightful and comprehensive model for a more progressive approach for understanding the nature of schooling and developing an emancipatory program for social education. Before examining the specific contributions that these three traditions have made to the notion of the hidden curriculum and the socializing role of schools, a general overview of some of their basic assumptions will be provided.

The structural-functionalist approach has as one of its primary interests how social norms and values are transmitted within the context of the schools. Relying primarily upon a positivist sociological model, this approach has highlighted how schools socialize students to accept unquestionably a set of beliefs, rules, and dispositions as fundamental to the functioning of the larger society. For the structural-functionalists, the school provides a valuable service in training students to uphold commitments and to learn skills required by society (Parsons, 1959; Dreeben, 1968). The value of this approach is threefold: 1) it makes clear that schools do not exist in precious isolation, removed from the interests of the larger society; 2) it spells out specific norms and structural properties of the hidden curriculum; and 3) it raises questions about the specifically historical character of meaning and social control in schools (Apple, 1977).
While insightful in many respects, the structural-functional model is marred by a number of theoretical shortcomings which characterize its basic assumptions. Rejecting the notion that growth develops from conflict, it stresses consensus and stability rather than movement. As a result, it downplays the notions of social conflict and competing socio-economic interests. Moreover, it represents an apolitical posture that sees as unproblematic the basic beliefs, values, and structural socio-economic arrangements characteristic of American society (Kara-bel and Halsey, 1977, p. 3). Consequently, the structural-functionalist position defines students in reductionist behavioral terms as products of socialization. By defining students as passive recipients, conflict is explained mainly as a function of faulty socialization, the causes of which usually lie in institutions outside of the classroom or school or in the individual as deviant. As such, in the structural-functional view the school appears to exist happily beyond the imperatives and influence of class and power. Similarly, knowledge is appreciated for its instrumental market value. Finally, in the structural-functional model, students accept social conformity and lose the ability to make meaning for themselves.

The social phenomenological approach to educational theory, often called the new sociology, moves far beyond the structural-functionalist position in its approach to the study of schooling. The new sociology focuses critically on a number of assumptions about classroom interactions and social encounters. For the new sociologists any valid theory of socialization has to be seen as "a theory of the construction of social reality, if not of a particular historical social order (O'Neill, 1973, p. 65)." They posit a model of socialization in which meaning is made interactively. That is, meaning is "given" by situations but also created by students as they interact in classrooms. Moreover, the social construction of meaning by both teachers and students raises anew questions about the objective nature of knowledge itself. For the new sociologists, the principles governing the organization, distribution, and evaluation of knowledge are not absolute and objective; instead, they are socio-historical constructs forged by active human beings creating rather than simply existing in the world.

In this approach, the view of students as actors with a fixed identity is replaced by a more dynamic model of student behavior. The new sociologists focus on the participation of students in defining and redefining their worlds. Thus the focus of classroom studies with the rise of the new sociology has shifted from an exclusive emphasis on institutional behavior to a focus on students' interactions with language, social relations, and categories of meaning. The proponents of the new sociology have provided a new dimension to the study of the relationship between socialization and the school curriculum (Young, 1971; Keddie, 1973; Jenks, 1977; Eggleston, 1977). The new sociology raises to a new level of discussion the relationship between the distribution of power and knowledge. It requires social studies curriculum developers to make problematic many of the truisms that char-
acterized the selection, organization, and distribution of knowledge and pedagogical styles inherent in curriculum development. In one sense, the new sociology has stripped the school curriculum of its innocence.

But the new sociology is not without its flaws, flaws that undermine its ability to resolve the very problems it identified. The most thoughtful critique lodged against the new sociology is that it represents a form of subjective idealism (Sharp and Greene, 1975; Sarup, 1978). Allegedly, at its core the new sociology lacks an adequate theory of social change and consciousness. While it helps educators to uncover the ways in which knowledge is defined and imposed, it fails to provide criteria for measuring the value of different forms of classroom knowledge. By endorsing the value and relevance of students' intentionality, the new sociology has succumbed to a notion of cultural relativity. It lacks a theoretical construct to explain the role ideology plays in the construction of knowledge by students. It fails to account for the fact that the way students perceive the external world does not always correspond to the actual structure and content of that world. Subjective perceptions are dialectically related to the social world and do not simply "mirror" it. To ignore this, as the new sociology proponents have, is to fall prey to a distorted subjectivism. Sharp and Greene have captured this position cogently.

The social world is more than the mere constellations of meaning. Although we can accept that the knowing subject acts in the world on the basis of his understanding, that there is always a subjective factor which enters into knowledge of the world, it does not follow from this that the world possesses the character which the knowing subject bestows upon it, that the objects which we know in the social world are mere subjective creations capable of being differently constituted in an infinite variety of ways. The phenomenologist appears to be putting forward what we could argue is an extreme form of subjective idealism. Where the external objective world is merely a constitution of the creative consciousness, the subject-object dualism disappears in the triumph of the constituting subject. (Sharp and Greene, 1975, p. 21.)

In the final analysis, the new sociology fails in spite of its desire for radical change and fundamental egalitarianism. Its failure lies in its inability to illuminate how social and political structures function to mask reality and promote ideological hegemony (Gramsci, 1971; Entwistle, 1978). Thus, this position not only fails to explain how different varieties of classroom meanings, knowledge, and experiences arise, it also fails to explain how they are able to sustain themselves. By focusing exclusively on the micro-level of schooling, on studies of classroom interaction, the new sociology falls short of illustrating how socio-political arrangements influence and constrain individual and collective efforts to construct knowledge and meaning. These arrangements probably play an important role in influencing the very texture of classroom life.
A third position is a neo-Marxist approach to socialization and social change. While this position is not without its own flaws, its value lies in being able to move beyond the apolitical view of the functionalist position as well as the subjective idealism of the new sociology. At the core of the neo-Marxist approach is a recognition of the relationship between economic and cultural reproduction. Moreover, inherent in this perspective is an intersection of theory, ideology, and social practice. Schools are viewed in this approach as agents of ideological control which function to reproduce and to maintain dominant beliefs, values, and norms. This is not meant to suggest that schools are merely factories which process students and "mirror" the interests of the larger society; such a perspective is clearly mechanistic and reductionist (LaBrecque, 1978). The neo-Marxist position points out that schools in corresponding ways are linked to the principles and processes governing the workplace. The cutting edge of this perspective is its insistence on connecting macro forces in the larger society to micro analysis such as classroom studies.

The neo-Marxist approach more clearly than the other two approaches identified in this paper illuminates how social reproduction is linked to classroom social relationships and how the construction of knowledge is related to the notion of false consciousness. While stressing the importance of a student's subjective role in constituting meaning for himself, neo-Marxists are equally concerned with the way in which social and economic conditions constrain and distort social construction of meaning, particularly as mediated through the hidden curriculum. Not only do classroom studies have to be linked to the study of the larger society, they have to be connected to a notion of justice, one that is capable of articulating how certain unjust social structures can be identified and replaced.

School Knowledge and Classroom Relations

While the neo-Marxist perspective provides an important focus on the ideological nature of the process of schooling and the larger social order, it has done little to explicate in specific terms the kinds of knowledge and classroom social relationships that have been used to reproduce the reified consciousness that maintains the cultural and economic interests of a stratified society. This is where the structural functionalists and new sociology adherents have made valuable contributions to the study of curriculum and social education. By drawing on the insights within a new Marxist framework, we can begin to answer the fundamental question of "What is learned in schools?"

In response to the question, Robert Dreeben (1968) points out that the student learns more than simply instructional knowledge and skills, and that the traditional view of schooling as being "primarily cognitive in nature is at best only partially tenable (Dreeben, 1968, p. 24)." Stephen Arons reinforces this view by calling school "a social environment from which a child may learn much more than what is
in the formal curriculum (Arons, 1976, p. 98).” Implicit in this analysis of the school and classroom as a socializing agent is an important pedagogical premise. The premise is that any curriculum designed to introduce positive changes in classrooms will fail, unless such a proposal is rooted in an understanding of those socio-political forces that strongly influence the very texture of day-to-day classroom pedagogical practices.

Since it is not entirely clear to social studies educators that schools are indeed socio-political institutions, a case must first be made to validate the position that schools are inextricably linked to other social agencies and institutions within American society. Ralph Tyler (1949) highlights the social function of schools by pointing out that all educational philosophies are essentially an outgrowth of one of two possible theoretical perspectives. He claims that a statement of educational philosophy can be built upon one of the following questions: "Should the schools develop young people to fit into present society as it is, or does the school have a revolutionary mission to develop young people who will seek to improve the society (Tyler, 1949, p. 35)?"

Tyler's point about educational philosophy is important for a number of reasons. First, it reinforces the notion that schools have a socio-political function and cannot exist independently of the society in which they operate. Second, Tyler recognizes that underlying every educational program designed to intervene in the structure of the schools there lies a theoretical frame of reference. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator, argues both points in his claim that,

There is no such thing as a neutral educational process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or, it becomes the 'practice of freedom' — the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (Freire, 1973, p. 15).

Whether they realize it or not, social studies educators work in the service of one of the two positions outlined by Tyler (1949) and Freire (1973).

An examination of schooling and its sociological ties to the family and the workplace can illuminate the social and political functions of schools. While a number of sociologists convincingly point out that schools no longer assume the role of a surrogate family, they do perform a socializing function that the social structure of the family cannot satisfy. For instance, comparing the functions of the family to those of the school, Robert Dreeben (1968) argues that the structural properties of the family, while satisfying specific affective needs of children, cannot adequately socialize them to function in the adult world. According to him, schooling demands the formation of social relationships that are more time-bound, more diverse, less dependent, and less emotive than those of the family. Unlike the family,
schools separate performance from emotional expression, and per-
form what is considered their most explicit purpose, "Imparting the
skills, information, and beliefs each child will eventually need as an
adult member of society (Dreeben, 1968, p. 13).”

He argues that schools do more than provide instruction. They pro-
vide norms, or principles of conduct, which are learned through the
varied social experiences in schools that influence students’ lives. 
Though Dreeben ignores the political nature of these social experi-
ences, he does mention four important norms that students learn: in-
dependence, achievement, universalism, and specificity.

Worth noting is Dreeben’s failure to mention in specific ideologi-
cal terms the cultural values that support and give meaning to these
norms. Two examples will suffice. Independence is defined as “hand-
tling tasks with which under different circumstances, one can rightfully
expect the help of others (Dreeben, 1968, p. 66).” Achievement is de-
efined so as to assure pupils of the gratification of “winning and losing,”
and while not stated by Dreeben, justifies extrinsic rewards and the
notion that someone must always come in last.

That students learn more than cognitive skills is illuminated further
in Bernstein’s analysis which brings into sharp focus some of the fea-
tures of the political nature of schooling. His analysis argues that
students learn values and norms that would produce “good” industrial
workers. Students internalize values which stress a respect for author-
ity, punctuality, cleanliness, docility, and conformity. What the stu-
dents learn from the formally sanctioned content of the curriculum
is much less important than what they learn from the ideological
assumptions embedded in the school’s three message systems: the
system of curriculum; the system of classroom pedagogical styles;
and the system of evaluation (Bernstein, 1977). In describing what
students learn from the school’s hidden curriculum, Stanley Arono-
witz (1973) provides a capsule view of the socializing processes that
operate within these "message" systems:

Indeed, the child learns in school . . . The child learns that the
teacher is the authoritative person in the classroom, but that she
is subordinate to a principal. Thus the structure of society can be
learned through understanding the hierarchy of power within the
structure of the school. Similarly, the working class child learns
its role in society. On the side, school impresses students as a whole
with their powerlessness since they are without the knowledge re-
quired to become citizens and workers. On the other, the hierarchy
of occupations and classes is reproduced by the hierarchy of grade
levels and tracks within grades. Promotion to successive grades
is the reward for having mastered the approved political and social
behavior as well as the prescribed ‘cognitive’ material. But within
grades, particularly in large urban schools, further distinctions
among students are made on the basis of imputed intelligence and
that in turn is determined by the probable ability of children to suc-
cceed in terms of standards set by the educational system (Arono-
witz, 1973, p. 75).
Writers such as Dreeben (1968) and Aronowitz (1973) have helped to make it clear that the school functions as an agency of socialization within a network of larger institutions. Yet, with few exceptions, the political role of the school and how that role affects educational objectives, methods, content, and organizational structures has not been adequately illuminated by social studies educators (Apple, 1971; Giroux & Penna, 1977).

While commenting on the consequences of ignoring the political nature of education, Jerome Bruner (1973) candidly indicates that educators can no longer strike a fictional posture of neutrality and objectivity.

A theory of instruction is a political theory in the power sense that it derives from consensus concerning the distribution of power within the society — who shall be educated and to fulfill what roles? In the very same sense, pedagogical theory must surely derive from a conception of economics, for where there is a division of labor within the society and an exchange of goods and services for wealth and prestige, then how people are educated and in what number and with what constraints on the use of resources are all relevant issues. The psychologist or educator who formulates pedagogical theory without regard to the political, economic, and social setting of the educational process courts triviality and merits being ignored in the community and in the classroom (Bruner, 1973, p. 115).

As mentioned previously, a serious approach to social studies educational change would have to begin with an examination of the contradictions that exist between the school’s hidden curriculum and official curriculum. Any approach to social studies curriculum development that ignores the existence of the hidden curriculum runs the risk of not only being incomplete, but also insignificant. For the heart of the school’s function is not to be found simply in the daily dispensing of information by teachers, but also “in the social relations of the educational encounter (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 265).”

School Curriculum Organization

But before any study of classroom social relations is put forth, it must be made clear that the content of what is taught in social studies classes plays a vital role in the political socialization of students. For instance, studies by Apple (1971), Anyon (1978), and Popkewitz (1977), have pointed out that what counts as “objective” knowledge in social studies textbooks, in fact, often represents a one-sided and theoretically distorted view of the subject under study. Knowledge is often accepted as truth legitimizing a specific view of the world that is either questionable or patently false. The selection, organization, and distribution of social studies knowledge is hidden from the realm of ideology (Apple, 1971; Popkewitz, 1977). In addition to its overt and covert messages, the way knowledge is selected and organized represents a priori assumptions by the educator about its value and legitimacy. In the final analysis, these are ideological considerations that struc-
ture the students' perception of the world. If the fragile ideological nature of these considerations are not made clear to students, then they will learn more about social conformity than critical inquiry. To break through the "hidden curriculum" of knowledge, social studies educators must help students understand that knowledge is not only variable and linked to human interest but also must be examined in regards to its claims to validity. Popkewitz has succinctly focused in on this issue for social studies educators with his claim.

Constructing curriculum requires that educators give attention to the social disciplines as a human product whose meanings are transmitted in social processes. Instruction should give serious attention to the conflicting views of the world these crafts generate, the social location and the social contexts of inquiry. To plan for children's study of ideas, educators are compelled to inquire into the nature and character of the discourse found in history, sociology, or anthropology. What problems does each deal with? What modes of thought exist? What are its paradigmatic tasks? What limitations are placed on the knowledge of their findings? Instruction should be concerned with the different perspectives of phenomena that are within each discipline and how these men and women come to know what they know (Popkewitz, 1977, p. 58).

Moreover, it follows that equal weight must be given in any analysis of the hidden curriculum to the organizational structures that influence and govern teacher-student interactions within the classroom. For these suggest an ideological character that is no less compelling than curriculum content in the socialization process at work in the classroom encounter. Though distinctly apolitical in nature, Philip Jackson's (1968) work represents one of the more sophisticated attempts to analyze the social processes that give shape to another dimension of the hidden curriculum. Unlike the official curriculum, with its stated cognitive and affective objectives, the hidden curriculum in this case is rooted in those organizational aspects of classroom life which are not commonly perceived by either students or teachers. According to Jackson, elements of the hidden curriculum are shaped by three key analytical concepts: crowds, praise, and power.

In short, working in classrooms means learning to live in crowds. Coupled with the prevailing values of the educational system, this has profound implications for the social education established in the schools. Equally significant is the fact that schools are evaluative settings, and what a student learns is not only how to be evaluated, but how to evaluate himself and others as well. Finally, schools are marked by a basic, concrete division between the powerful (teachers) and the powerless (students). As Jackson (1968) points out, what this means "in three major ways, then — as members of crowds, as potential recipients of praise or reproof, and as pawns of institutional authorities — students are confronted with aspects of reality that at least during their childhood years are relatively confined to the hours spent in the classroom (Jackson, 1968, p. 16)."
In more specific terms, especially those that highlight student-teacher interactions, Jackson's analysis of the hidden curriculum proves to be particularly instructive. Learning to live in crowds affects students in a number of important ways. Students have to learn constantly to wait to use resources, with the ultimate outcome being that they learn to postpone or give up desires. In spite of the constant interruptions in the classroom, students have to learn to be quiet. Though students work in groups with other people whom they eventually get to know, they have to learn how to be isolated in a crowd. For Jackson, the quintessential virtue learned by students under these conditions is patience (i.e., not a patience rooted in mediated restraint, but one that is rooted in an unwarranted submission to authority). "They must also, to some extent, learn to suffer in silence. They are expected to bear with equanimity, in other words, the continued delay, denial and interruption of their personal wishes and desires (Jackson, 1968, p. 18)."

Praise and power in the classroom are inextricably connected to one another. While students may find themselves in a position occasionally in which they can evaluate each other, the unquestioned source of praise and reproof is the teacher. Though the administration of positive and negative sanctions is the teacher's most visible symbol of power, the real significance of his or her role lies in the network of social relationships and values that are reproduced with the use of that authority. The nature of the hidden curriculum is nowhere more clearly revealed than in the system of evaluation. The potential effect of evaluation comes into sharp focus where one recognizes that what is taught and evaluated in the classroom is both academic and nonacademic, and includes in the latter institutional adjustment and specific personal qualities.

In fact, some notable studies have been made that support the above hypothesis, Bowles and Gintis (1976), after reviewing a number of studies that link personality traits, attitudes, and behavioral attributes to school grades, reached the following conclusions:

Students are rewarded for exhibiting discipline, subordinacy, intellectually as opposed to emotionally oriented behavior, and hard work independent from intrinsic task motivation. Moreover, these traits are rewarded independently of any effect of 'proper demeanor' on scholastic achievement (Bowles and Gintis, 1976, p. 40).

In addition, they point out that students who are rated high in citizenship (i.e., conformity to the social order of the school), also rated "significantly below average on measures of creativity and mental flexibility (Bowles and Gintis, 1976, p. 41)." Viewed from the student's perspective, the classroom becomes a miniature workplace in which time, space, content, and structure are fixed by others. Rewards are extrinsic, and all social interaction between teachers and students are mediated by hierarchically organized structures. The underlying message, learned in this context points less to schools . . . helping
students to think critically about the world in which they live, than it does to schools acting as agents of social control.

Teachers obviously play a vital role in maintaining the structure of schools and transmitting the values needed to support the larger social order (Keddie, 1971; Sharp and Greene, 1975). Lortie's (1975) study of teachers indicates that they generally are unable to offset the conservative pedagogical influences accepted by them during their pre-college and college schooling. He also claims that "recruitment resources foster a conservative outlook among entrants... they appeal strongly to young people who are favorably disposed toward the existing system of schools (Lortie, 1975, p. 54)." Lortie's study also found that one of the most severe shortcomings of teachers was their subjective, idiosyncratic approach to teaching. Lacking a thought-out theoretical framework from which to develop a methodology and content, teachers lacked significant criteria to shape, guide, or evaluate their own work. But more importantly, they pass their distrust of theory on to their students and help in perpetuating intellectual passivity.

As mentioned before, at the heart of the social educational encounter is a hidden curriculum whose values shape and influence practically every aspect of the student's educational experience. But this should not suggest that the hidden curriculum is so powerful that there is little hope for educational reform. Instead, the hidden curriculum should be seen not as an impassable boundary, but as providing a possible direction for focusing educational change. For instance, while social studies developers alone cannot eliminate the hidden curriculum, they can identify its organizational structure and the political assumptions upon which it rests. By doing so, they can develop a pedagogy, curriculum materials, and classroom structural properties which offset the most undemocratic features of the traditional hidden curriculum. In doing so, a first but significant step will be made to help teachers and students reach beyond the classroom experience and tentatively move toward changing those institutional arrangements.

**Democratic Conditions and Collection Action**

Before changes in social education and in social studies development can be undertaken, however, social studies educators will have to develop very specific classroom processes designed to promote values and beliefs which encourage democratic, critical modes of student-teacher participation and interaction. That the traditional hidden curriculum of schooling is inimical to the stated aims of the official curriculum, is a fact that no longer escapes astute social analysis (Illich, 1973; Bernstein, 1976). Instead of preparing students to enter the society with skills that will allow them to reflect critically upon and intervene in the world in order to change it, schools act as conservative forces which, for the most part, socialize students to conform to the status quo. The structure, organization and content of contemporary schooling serve to equip students with the personality
requisites desired in the bureaucratically structured, hierarchically organized work force. As Philip Jackson (1968) has pointed out:

So far as their power structure is concerned, classrooms are not too dissimilar from factories and offices, those ubiquitous organizations in which so many of our adult life is spent. Thus, schools might really be called a preparation for life, but, not in the usual sense in which educators employ that term (Jackson, 1968, p. 33).

The remaining section of this paper will identify an alternative set of values and classroom social processes. In our view, these alternatives represent a basis for formulating a collectivist and democratic social education, stripped of egoistic individualism and alienating social relationships. These values and processes should be used by social studies educators in developing a content and pedagogy which link theory and practice and restore to students and teachers an awareness of the social and personal importance of active participation and critical thinking. While the values will be enumerated at the outset, the classroom processes will be illuminated through an analysis of the specific features that in our judgment should characterize social education.

The values and social processes which provide the theoretical underpinning for social education include developing in students a respect for moral commitment, group solidarity and social responsibility. In addition, a non-authoritarian individualism should be fostered, one that maintains a balance with group cooperation and social awareness. Every effort should be made to give students an awareness of the necessity of developing choices of their own, and to act on those choices with an understanding of situational constraints. The educational process itself will be open to examination in relation to its links to the larger society.

Students should experience social studies as an apprenticeship in the milieu of social action, or as Freire (1978) has stated, students should be taught the practice of thinking about practice. One way of doing this is to view and evaluate each learning experience, whenever possible, with respect to its connections with the larger social-economic totality. Moreover, it is important that students not only think about both the content and practice of critical communication but recognize as well the importance of translating the outcome of these experiences into concrete action. For example, it is folly in our view to engage students in topics of political and social inequality in the classroom and in the larger political world and to ignore the realities and pernicious effects of economic and income inequality on the quality of life of substantial numbers of people in schools, communities, and nations. Even when linkage to the larger reality is made, a failure to address and to implement the practical will not provide students with the learning implied in Freire’s appeal. In other words, it is important that social studies educators provide students with the opportunity to grasp the dynamic dialectic between critical consciousness and social action. There is a need then to integrate critical aware-
ness, social processes, and social practice in such a way that what is made clear to students is not simply how the forces of social control work but also how they can be overcome. Students should be able to recognize the truth value of Marx’s eleventh thesis on Feuerbach “. . . the philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is, to change it.” (Arthur, 1972)

Many liberal social studies educators accept these values and social processes and attempt to develop content-based curriculum which translates them into practice. But, in effect, liberals strip these values and social processes of their radical content by situating them within the framework of social adjustment rather than social and political emancipation. The liberal philosophic stance with its emphasis on progress through social melioration, the value of meritocracy and the professional expert, and the viability of a mass education system dedicated to serving the needs of the industrial order fails to penetrate and utilize the radical cutting edge of the values and social processes we support. Elizabeth Cagan captures the contradiction between liberal thought and radical values and social practices in her comment:

While liberal reformers intend to use education to promote equality, community, and humanistic social interaction, they do not confront those aspects of the schools which pull in the opposite direction. Their blindness to these contradictions may stem from their class position: as middle-class reformers they are unwilling to advocate the kind of egalitarianism which is necessary for a true human community. Reforms in pedagogical technique have been instituted, but the . . . (hidden curriculum) . . . remain(s) in effect. This hidden curriculum promotes competitiveness, individualism, and authoritarianism (Cagan, 1978, p. 261).

The social processes of most classrooms militate against students developing a sense of community. As in the larger societal order, competition and individual striving are at the core of American schooling. In ideological terms, collectivity and social solidarity represent powerful structural threats to the ethos of capitalism. This ethos is built not only upon the atomization and division of labor but the fragmentation of consciousness and social relationships (Braverman, 1974; Ewen, 1976). Whatever virtues about collectivity that are brought to the public’s attention exist solely in form and not in substance. Both in and out of schools, self-interest represents the criterion for acting on and entering into social relationships. The structure of schooling reproduces the ethos of privatization and the moral posture of selfishness at almost every level of the formal and hidden curricula. Whether gently supporting the philosophy of “do your own thing” or maintaining pedagogical structures which undermine collective action, the message coming from most classrooms is one that enshrines the self at the expense of the group. The hidden message is one that supports alienation (Slater, 1970; Cagan, 1978).

The classroom scenario that fosters this unbridled notion of individualism is a familiar one. Students traditionally sit in rows star-
ing at the back of each others' heads and at the teacher who faces them in symbolic, authoritarian fashion, or in a large semi-circle with teacher and student space rigidly proscribed. Events in the classroom are governed by a rigid time schedule imposed by a system of bells and reinforced by cues from teachers while the class is in session. Instruction and, hopefully, some formal learning usually begins and ends because it is the correct predetermined time, not because a cognitive process has been stimulated into action.

Implementation

A number of social processes help to undermine the authoritarian effects of the hidden curriculum in the classroom. Our terminology will be familiar to all social studies developers, liberals among them will espouse the immediate instructional goals, but only reconstructionists will accept the long range implications of these processes for life in classrooms, schools, and larger social/political institutions.

The pedagogical foundation for democratic processes in the classroom can be established by eliminating the pernicious practice of "tracking" students. This tradition in schools of grouping students according to "abilities" and perceived performance is of dubious instructional value. The justification for this practice is based on traditional genetic theories which have been systematically refuted on intellectual and ethical grounds (Daniels, 1973; Berger, 1978; Biggs, 1978). A more heterogeneous class provides a better opportunity for flexibility to be manifested. For instance, in the heterogeneous classroom, students who qualitatively perform faster than other students could be given the opportunity to function as peers acting as individual or group leaders for other students. In such a situation, students can act collectively in the process of learning and teaching. As such, knowledge becomes the vehicle for dialogue and analysis as well as the basis for new classroom social relationships. Moreover, not only are more progressive social relationships developed in this context, but traditional notions of learning and achievement are now made problematic. It must be stressed that social education should be based on a notion of achievement that is at odds with traditional genetic theories of intelligence which serve as the theoretical base to support tracking.

With the elimination of tracking, power is further diffused in a classroom so individuals in both peer and group-leadership roles are able to assume leadership positions formerly reserved for the teacher alone. In other words, with the breakdown of rigid, hierarchical roles and rules, which Basil Bernstein has called strong framing, both students and teachers can explore democratic relationships rarely developed in the traditional classroom (Bernstein, 1977, pp. 88-89). These new relationships will also allow teachers to set the groundwork for breaking down the cellular structure exposed by Dan Lortie's study. The cellular structure refers to the failure of teachers to mutually adapt their task and actions. Most teachers do not share
pedagogical strategies; and thus, they lack any cohesiveness in their professional interpersonal relationships (Lortie, 1975). By sharing their power and roles, teachers will be in a better position to break through the provincialism and narrow socialization that prevents them from sharing and examining their theory and practice of pedagogy with both students and colleagues.

Another important change that such courses should perpetuate centers around the issue of authority and grades. Extrinsic rewards should be minimized whenever possible, and students should be given the opportunity to experience roles that will enable them to direct the learning process, independently of the behavior usually associated with an emphasis on grades as rewards. Social relationships in the traditional classroom are based upon power relations inextricably linked to the teacher's allotment and distribution of grades. Grades become in many cases the ultimate discipline instruments by which the teacher imposes his desired values, behavior patterns and beliefs upon students (Bowles and Gintis, 1976). Dialogical grading eliminates this pernicious practice since it allows students to gain some control over the distribution of grades and thereby weakens the traditional correspondence between grades and authority. We refer to such grading as dialogical because it involves a dialogue between students and teachers over the criteria, function, and consequences of the system of evaluation. The use of the term is in fact an extension of Freire's emphasis on the role of dialogue in clarifying and democratizing social relationships (Freire, 1973).

While opportunities for dialogue with teachers and peers should be encouraged, they are not conducive to large group settings. In small groups, students should evaluate and test the logic in each other's work. The importance of group work to social education rests on a number of crucial assumptions. Group work represents one of the most effective ways to demystify the traditional, manipulative role of the teacher; moreover, it provides students with social contexts which stress social responsibility and group solidarity.

Group interaction provides students with the experiences that they need in order to realize that they can learn from one another. Only by diffusing authority along horizontal lines will students be able to share and appreciate the importance of learning collectively. Crucial to such a process is the element of dialogue. Through group dialogue, the norms of cooperation and sociability offset the traditional hidden curriculum's emphasis on competition and excessive individualism. In addition, the process of group instruction provides students with the opportunity for experiencing, rather than simply hearing about, the dynamics of participatory democracy.

In short, developing an awareness that is nurtured in a shared task to democratize classroom relationships is imperative for students if they are to overcome the lack of community reminiscent of the traditional classroom and the larger social order. The group encounter provides the social basis for the development of such a con-
sciousness. Under such conditions, social relations of education marked by dominance, subordination, and an uncritical respect for authority can be effectively minimized.

Social relations marked by reciprocity and communality are not the only by-products of the group component. Another important feature centers around giving students the opportunity to serve an apprenticeship in teaching. By evaluating each other’s work, acting as peer-leaders, participating in and leading discussions, students learn that teaching is not based on intuitive and imitative pedagogical approaches. Instead, by establishing a close working relationship with teachers and peers, students are given the chance to understand that an analytical, codified body of experience is the central element in any pedagogy. This helps both students and teachers to recognize that behind any pedagogy are values, beliefs, and assumptions informed by a particular world-view. Most students see teaching in terms of individual personalities rather than the result of a thought-out set of socially constructed pedagogical axioms (Lortie, 1975). By using this course of action, both students and teachers are provided with a “particular” framework for teaching that highlights the theoretical underpinnings of classroom pedagogy.

The concept of time in schools restricts the development of healthy social and intellectual relationships among students and teachers. Reminiscent of life in factories with its production schedules and hierarchic work relationships, the daily routine of most classrooms acts as a brake upon participation and democratic processes. Modified self-pacing is a classroom process that is more compatible with the view that aptitude is the amount of time required by the students to develop a critical comprehension and resolution of the task under study.

It is imperative that students be given the opportunity to work alone and in groups at a comfortable learning pace so as to be able to quickly develop a learning style that enables them to move beyond the fragmented and atheoretical pedagogies that now characterize American education (Aronowitz, 1977). The flexible use of a mode of self-paced learning should eliminate these practices.

Self pacing is important for other reasons. The delay and denial characteristic of most conventional classrooms can be offset by freeing teachers and students to respond to each other almost immediately. Students need not wait to get feedback and communication about their work. This militates against students giving up or postponing their desire to learn or to share and analyze what they have learned with other students. Modified self-pacing allows students to work alone or with other students at a comfortable pace, within reasonable bounds mutually agreed upon by teachers and students. Under this format, the clock ceases to shape the pace and character of the class, and the tyranny of a rigid time schedule gives way to a schedule governed by reciprocal exchanges. Moreover, since students have a measure of control over their work, grades, and time, this
eliminates pitting students against one another and reinforces the notion that learning is essentially a shared phenomenon.

In political terms, the self-pacing and peer leader features inveigh against the myth of considering the teacher as the indispensable expert, alone qualified to define and distribute knowledge (Illich, 1971). Moreover, with the use of peers and modified self-pacing, democratic classroom relationships are developed and the one-dimensionality of traditional classroom social relationships gives way to the possibility of infinitely richer classroom social encounters. These classroom social encounters are reciprocally humanizing and are mediated through an emancipatory conceptual framework.

The peer leader and self-paced features represent two social processes that significantly offset some of the organizational and structural properties of the traditional classroom. In most traditional classrooms, students work in an isolated and independent fashion. This is usually rationalized by educators on the grounds that it fosters independence. In part, this is true, but it fosters a type of independence that precludes the development of social relationships among age peers and adults that promote opportunities to share and work in an interdependent fashion. Moreover, its function appears to be more ideological than rational, and represents a strong pedagogical component in upholding the division of labor characteristic of the larger society. In any case, the traditional notion of independence does not strike a balance between developing one’s specific talents and sharing tasks with other students. The self-paced and peer features smoothly reconcile this contradiction. Students not only are given ample opportunity to explore their talents and interests at a pace they can control, they also can share their interests with other people. They get help from both the classroom leaders and from their peers.

Conclusion

This paper provides the groundwork for a new thrust in the task of identifying the dynamics and ideological assumptions underlying specific patterns of socialization in social studies classrooms. By identifying the social processes of classroom and school life which make these patterns operative and highlighting the normative nature of social studies knowledge, it attempts to clarify the dichotomy between the goals of social studies developers and the process of schooling. In our judgment, the recognition of this dichotomy between the official and hidden curriculum will compel social studies educators to develop a new theoretical perspective about the dynamics of educational change, one that penetrates the functional relationships that exist between the institutions of the schools, the workplace and the political world. In so doing, they will begin to uncover those social processes in all socio-political institutions including the classroom which militate against the creation of a democratic, social education.
Further enumeration and elucidation of those processes as well as the search for interconnections among them will become the necessary prerequisites for educators planning to intervene into the educational process.

For the message is a clear one. Social studies educators will run the risk of repeated failure unless they develop a structural foundation that will counter the social processes and values of the hidden curriculum. If social solidarity, individual growth, and dedication to social action are to emerge from social education, the hidden curriculum will have to be either eliminated or minimized as much as possible. There is little room in social education for tracking and social sorting, hierarchical social relationships, the correspondence between evaluation and power, and the fragmented and isolated interpersonal dynamics of the classroom encounter, all of which characterize the hidden curriculum. These classroom processes will have to be replaced by democratic social processes and values which take into consideration the reciprocal interaction of goals, pedagogy, content, and structure.

The above task will not be an easy one; the changes to be made will be difficult and often frustrating but nonetheless necessary. Educational reformers can no longer operate within the limited confines of traditional educational theory and practice. It should be clear that social education is normative and political in essence, and at its best can be both emancipatory and reflective. By stepping outside the traditional parameters of educational theory and practice, we can view schooling as inextricably linked to a web of larger socio-economic and political arrangements. And by analyzing the nature of the relationship between schools and the dominant society in political and normative terms we can counter a hidden curriculum defined through the ideology of traditional classroom social processes. If social education is in Kant's words to be used to educate students for a better society, social studies educators will even have to go further than democratizing their schools and classrooms. They will have to do more than help develop changes in student consciousness; they will have to help implement the rationale for reconstructing a new social order whose institutional arrangements, in the final analysis, will provide the basis for a truly humanizing education.

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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SOCIALIZATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES TEXTBOOKS: A REACTION

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In a recent article, Jean Anyon (1978) argued that "the unrealistic nature of social studies texts has a social function . . . to foster in students an acceptance of the legitimacy of on-going social institutions . . ." as "part of the overall process of socialization which occurs in schools" (p. 40). She pointed to "the powerful nexus of social forces in which schools operate" and suggested that "knowledge which 'counts' as social studies knowledge will tend to be that knowledge which provides formal justification for, and legitimation of, prevailing institutional arrangements, and forms of conduct and beliefs" (p. 40). Anyon illustrated her arguments by reference to analyses of social studies textbooks by herself and others.

The major thrust of Anyon's article is well-taken. In fact, recent evidence (Stake & Easley, 1978, Ch. 12, 16) indicates that socialization is not foisted on unwilling teachers by textbooks authors and publishers. Teachers — secondary as well as elementary; science and mathematics as well as social studies — accept the socialization function of prompting "American values". Not only are elementary social studies textbooks slanted to promote a positive view of American history and our government, but secondary school studies teachers use textbook content for that end, too.

The socialization efforts of teachers fit the sociological and anthropological view that the transmission and perpetuation of the society's values is an inevitable part of the school's role. Whether consciously or intuitively, teachers seem to sense that such socialization is, along with the teaching of formal school subjects, part of society's mandate to its formal educational institution. In contrast, the social studies "intelligensia" — the university professors and others who attempt to provide intellectual leadership for the field — have tended to ignore or reject teachers' socialization goals, treating efforts to accomplish them as, at best, a necessary evil. The "leadership" bias has been, instead, toward critical thinking and inquiry — an orientation which, of course, implies another socialization agenda. That discrepancy in point of view, along with others, has affected adversely the capacity of professors and curriculum developers, even school supervisory personnel, to assist social studies teachers in their efforts to improve instruction. It may even in part account for the low level of use of the


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reform-oriented New Social Studies materials of the 1960s (Shaver, Davis & Helburn, 1978). Moreover, a utopian view of social studies that does not take into account the legitimate nonrational citizenship education duties of the school has provided a dysfunctional basis for research aimed at influencing practice in social studies education (Shaver, 1978).

The Meaning and Use of "Mindlessness"

Unfortunately, Anyon’s discussion of the socialization role of elementary social studies textbooks is diluted by her misinterpretation and misapplication of the notion of “mindlessness” in education. Anyon (p. 40) alluded to my use of the term “mindlessness” in my National Council for the Social Studies presidential address (Shaver, 1977). And, she indicated, incorrectly, that I argued “that such unfortunate aspects of the social studies (as the “overly positive view of the benevolence and accountability of political authority” presented in elementary social studies texts) can be traced to ‘mindlessness’ and a lack of attention to educational thought and practice”. She goes on to say:

In Shaver's view, the unrealistic nature of elementary social studies textbooks would illustrate thoughtlessness and failure: The books “fail” to provide students with the tools for critical thought or informed participation in democratic society — the books are, in other words, somewhat dysfunctional. (p 40)
I did not refer to elementary social studies textbooks in the presidential address. Moreover, Anyon's comments about that address, as well as other parts of her article, indicate a lack of understanding of “mindlessness” as used there.

“Mindlessness” as I defined it (p. 30, relying on Silberman, 1970, to whom Anyon also refers), involves the thoughtless use of method and/or content without examination of the underlying assumptions and the potential outcomes that may impact the achievement of one’s purposes. The concept of mindlessness, therefore, does not speak to the validity of any particular educational practice, but to the existence or nonexistence of rational justification for the practice. The “mindlessness” question, for example, is not whether social studies texts present an “overly positive” view of American political and economic institutions, but whether that presentation has been carefully justified by the authors and publishers of the texts and by the teachers who teach from them. Of course, the existence of a logically sound rationale for an educational practice, such as using textbooks geared toward socialization, does not assure that everyone will agree with the practice. Legitimate differences in empirical, value, and logical assumptions can lead to divergent educational positions, none of which is necessarily mindless.

A lack of understanding that mindlessness refers to a process rather than to a product is indicated by Anyon’s summary of her article;
The view that has been expressed here is that the alleged naivete, the lack of "realism" and the overly positive loading to social studies textbooks should not be traced to "mindlessness" or lack of critical attention. (p. 50)

Moreover, her article does not provide the basis for such a summary claim. Anyon has presented a persuasive argument that elementary studies textbooks do emphasize socialization, in the sense of acceptance of societal institutions at the expense of dissent and critical participation. However, she failed to deal with or explain the reasons for this emphasis in terms of the decision-making processes of the textbooks authors and publishers and the teachers who use the books.

She seems to accept some implicitly legitimate societal imperative for the use of social studies textbooks as socialization tools. For instance, at one point, after noting that "there is no inherent reason, for example, why writing letters to the editor is — by itself — more 'logical' than putting up wall posters" and then making the same point about monogamy and individual ownership of property, she noted:

For this reason prevailing practices of the social institutions must be integrated into a cognitive whole, and given justification. And, like patriotism, the sense of the acceptability of prevailing institutional practices must be fostered in the young and maintained in adults. Such attitudes and beliefs must be developed over time. (p. 42. Italics mine.)

And, at another point, she suggests that social studies knowledge is part of the larger social process whereby U.S. institutions are legitimated — whereby prevailing arrangements and forms of social participation are provided cognitive meaning and normative status. The social function of the texts is not, as is often argued by educators, to provide an arena for the development of critical thought on social matters, but to foster an acceptance of the legitimacy of prevailing institutions. Thus, the texts may be expected to take an evaluative stance, and to avoid the inclusion of material that might "tarnish" the image of political or economic arrangements. (p. 50. Italics hers.)

Such comments, which seem to rest on the unthinking acceptance of some implied injunction, shed no light on whether the development and use of social studies textbooks are mindless. The questions to be asked to get at that are, for example, Is the orientation of the textbooks a conscious, rationally justified one? Are the teachers who use the texts aware of the socialization orientation and have they explicated and examined the assumptions underlying their use of the materials? If the answers to such questions are positive, then the orientation and use of the textbooks may be subject to dispute by persons who make different assumptions or who challenge the logic of the authors, publishers, or teachers, but mindlessness would not be the charge. If, on the contrary, the texts are written, published, and used in the classroom without attention to educational purpose and to their potential effects.
on purpose, mindlessness prevails — regardless of the social utility that someone else may be able to discern in the textbooks. Again, mindlessness speaks to a process of justification, not to the outcome. Similar curricula or instructional methods may be mindless or carefully justified.

Do the Texts Reflect Mindlessness?

Despite her statement that "the alleged naivete, the lack of ‘realism’ and the overly positive loading to social studies textbooks should not be traced to ‘mindlessness or lack of critical attention” (p. 50), Anyon seems to believe otherwise. After pointing out that the textbooks are "highly ‘politicized’", with the information in them "selected from a store of socially available knowledge and points of view" (p. 51), Anyon noted that one implication of such selection is that the textbook content expresses a point of view that may unwittingly (italics mine) favor the interests of certain social groups and hinder the interests of other groups . . . give tacit approval to the arrangements of power (italics hers) . . . (that) in turn legitimates the activities of the powerful groups . . . , give tacit approval and legitimation to the decision-making activities of those who have power . . . , tacitly withhold approval from those who might benefit from a change in the distribution of decision-making power. (p. 51)

A second implication, according to Anyon, is that the textbook content may tacitly sanction an attitude of social quiescence (italics hers) . . . (with disagreement channeled) into “safe” political behaviors. (p. 51)

And, she said:

I (Anyon) would argue that an unintended consequence (italics mine) of this attitude is the sanction of the position of suffering of those in society who do not share equally in the distribution of political and economic power. (p. 51)

Anyon does not make clear her meaning for the word “tacit”, but in the context of other words such as “unwittingly” and “unintended,” the overall impression conveyed is not only that the textbooks are silent about the implications she notes, but that there is a lack of thought about these implications as well. This interpretation is confirmed by her assertion that her analysis of "what ‘counts’ as school knowledge” indicates that, in reality, the school "operates within a set of social forces and political and economic interests which may provide everyday educational knowledge and practice with unintended meanings and possible consequences” (pp. 51-2. (Italics mine.) The intimation is that the "unintended meanings and possible consequences” have not been addressed in the preparation and/or use of the textbooks.

All of this sounds very much like a condemnation for mindlessness — lack of thought about " . . . purpose, and about the ways in which techniques, content, and organization fulfill or alter purpose” (Silberman, 1970, p. 379). Indeed, Anyon’s call for further analyses such as hers
because of the possible consequences of the socialization orientation of textbooks “for those in society who do not (italics hers) have power” (p. 52) also suggests strongly that she believes the textbooks are inadequately justified. So does her suggestion that an important task for educational researchers ought to be to investigate school curriculum, pedagogy and pupil evaluation with the intention of illuminating the social ties and explicating possible meanings. (p. 52)

In contradiction to her own claim, Anyon seems to argue that the positive orientations of elementary social studies textbooks toward our nation’s institutions are mindless in nature.

**Conclusion**

Anyon’s emphasis on the socialization role of the school, and of textbooks in particular, is certainly important. Social studies leaders have too long developed curricula and proposed teaching methods based on an idealistic view of rational societal decision-making. At the same time, I regret her confused and potentially confusing use of the concept of mindlessness, and her apparent misunderstanding of my use of the term.

In a final sentence Anyon commented, “educators cannot rely on explanations which attribute school problems to professional ‘mindlessness’” (p. 52). This statement appears to be a linkage back to her introductory remarks about my NCSS presidential address, and I wonder what she means by “rely on explanations”. Certainly, the point of my address was not to explain, in the sense of providing a final answer. It was, I thought rather clearly, to urge social studies educators toward greater analysis, including attention to the non-rational components of citizenship education. It is important for social studies educators to recognize that the schools have fundamental socialization functions that are often, but no always, conducted mindlessly, and that part of the mindlessness of the profession is the failure on the part of social studies leaders to consider the legitimacy of that socialization role and to reflect — as Anyon’s article can help us to do — on the morally warranted directions, extent, and means of socialization.

The contradiction between the democratic commitment to citizen rationality and influence, on the one hand, and the need for nonrational commitments as basis for societal cohesion and tranquility (as well as for rationality itself, Weisskopf, 1978, p. 41), on the other, has not been addressed adequately by those who produce and write textbooks, or by those who write about the purposes and methods of social studies education. Anyon’s article takes us a step in the direction of facing such fundamental questions. Hopefully, her confused use of the concept of mindlessness will not dilute her important message. Socialization is a legitimate societal expectation of the schools, but the possible negative consequences of instilling some beliefs and attitudes must be considered seriously.
REFERENCES


In the opening paragraphs of an article in which I argue that positively slanted social studies knowledge is an example of educational legitimation of prevailing political and economic arrangements, I refer to the concept of educator ‘mindlessness,’ or lack of critical thought (Anyon, 1978). I suggest that this concept does not represent a productive point of view from which to discuss educational matters such as unrealistic social studies knowledge. I argue that I will adopt a more socially explanatory framework. In a response to that article, James Shaver (Shaver, 1979) states that the strength of my argument is unfortunately “diluted” by an apparent “misinterpretation” of the term mindlessness (Shaver, 1979, p. 2). While my reference to the term mindlessness was primarily a stylistic device with which to begin the discussion, Shaver’s point is interesting, and somewhat suggestive. That is, his remark hints at a problematic that I may have assumed by the choice of mindlessness as a straw issue but did not state or make explicit in the paper. That problematic is the relative contribution of individuals, and of social ‘structures,’ to the form and content of education in society.

In the brief essay that follows, I propose to clarify the premises of my original argument, to describe a social assumption that appears to me to be embedded in the concept of educator “mindlessness,” and to identify the utility and limitations of both views.

Social Structure

It is often argued that schools are agencies of socialization. I believe that this is true of formal educational institutions in all societies. The point is rather obvious, however, and can be made in order to introduce a more interesting argument: What is important about school socialization is what school practices and assumptions it entails, and, conversely, what those school assumptions and practices reveal about the society in which the schools are embedded. Thus, in my analysis of the political and economic content of elementary social studies textbooks I identified textbook statements used to define and describe U.S. political and economic institutions; I then attempted to show, by an analysis of what was emphasized, missing and distorted in these statements that the textbook definitions were not socially ‘neutral,’ but were rationalizations and justifications of prevailing arrangements of power and distribution. Therefore, I argued, the
statements have as possible consequences the confirmation in learner's consciousness of the legitimacy of existing inequalities and institutional privileges. Among the exigencies of providing support for — of socializing children to — prevailing political and economic arrangements, is the societal need to legitimate and make 'sense' of those which are potentially unpalatable.

Conversely, by identifying and analyzing textbook omissions, distortions and rationalizations, one reveals the workings of society. The rationalizations, omissions and distortions in school materials, I argued, are not random or desultory, nor are they merely a consequence of author 'bias.' Such textbook misrepresentations, rather, identify deep characteristics of the economic and political order: through them one highlights those arrangements that must be justified in order to secure support and future participation in social institutions. By using textbooks as social products in this way, one illuminates the conjunctures of social interest, political and economic power and school knowledge.

One premise of this and similar arguments (see, for example, Sharp and Green, 1975; Bernstein, 1977; and Bourdieu and Passerson, 1977) is a concern — implicit or explicit — with social 'structure.' It is argued that school knowledge represents in ideal (or ideological) form the material (socio-logical) configurations of interaction and opportunity that characterize the social order. From this point of view one might look historically at social products such as school curriculum (or, say, methods of evaluation) and attempt to describe them in terms of their expression of relationships that are rooted in long-range social developments. School knowledge is seen as not only reflecting and resulting from, but as contributing to the historical developments.

Another premise of the argument as I perceive it is that social 'structure,' although clearly a human concept, an abstraction or organizing principle, is not merely that — as Lévi-Strauss, for example, has supposed. Rather, social structures embody empirical relationships and patterns of reward, constraint, meaning and opportunity that characterize and delimit individual action, belief and social choice. They provide the social context. While individuals may be said to 'make' their own history, this construction takes place within real boundaries of external forces and limitations. Moreover, these boundaries are not always perceived by individuals, who often remain unaware of constraining social or ideological influences. Thus, in western society there is free choice that is nevertheless limited by institutional restrictions, socially approved beliefs, and available political and economic options — all of which may converge to produce, for example, legal and occupational constraints on overt behavior.

Additionally, in this approach to the study of education, it is often argued that the form of schooling in society is dependent upon the socio-structural base for its dominant principles of organization and content. This material base consists of structures of the mode of production, of the relations of social and economic power and distribution, of patterns of social and economic development, and of the or-
ganization of the work force and the dynamics of class interaction. These characteristics of the socio-economic order generate underlying 'grammars' which provide meaning to sequences of school activity, and which, furthermore, provide the social imperative to what 'counts' as educational knowledge.3

While underlying characteristics of social organization are thus seen as determining the general form and content of schooling in a society, it should also be noted that there are contradictions, discrepancies and areas of independence and autonomy which also characterize the relationship between education and the socio-economic order (see, e.g., Bernstein, 1977; MacDonald, 1977). These areas of conflict affect education as a reproducer of the work force and as a reproducer of the social arrangements of power and production. They may emerge as disjunctions, for example, between school output ('too many' liberal arts students) and the input required by the economy (workers with scientific or technical skills) (MacDonald, 1977).

Another discrepancy is apparent in occasional disjunctures of the social relations of some educational environments and future work environments (e.g., between educational environments that are participatory, negotiated and relatively free, as in some open classrooms, and work situations to be encountered later which may be tightly controlled, routinized and fragmentary (Bernstein, 1977).)

Thus, while schooling may be broadly determined by social patterns and contexts, it is also somewhat autonomous. However, in western society, perhaps especially in the U.S., schooling is often viewed as if it were primarily or entirely autonomous — as if it were a complex of neutral or 'objective' social institutions. The educational literature, for example, is dotted with slogans calling for 'humanistic education,' and for education that 'meets the needs of the individual.' The prevailing technical goals of education are assumed to be the creations of educators, rather than as economically and socially contingent types. Thus, schooling is often not revealed in its underlying forms — as conditional upon structural configurations of society — but is perceived in its phenomenal forms only, as the product of choices of autonomous individuals.

Educator "Mindlessness"

It is in this context of the surface and deep realities of schooling and society that educator 'mindlessness' can be situated and its social assumptions examined. In 1970 Charles Silberman popularized the view that the reason schools teach what they do, and often fail in their efforts to, say, 'humanize,' individualize or meet the needs of students, is because of educator 'mindlessness.' Schools often 'fail' because teachers, administrators, etc., do not anticipate possible outcomes of what they do. Mindlessness involves lack of thought about "... purposes, and about the ways in which techniques, content and organization fulfill or alter purpose" (Silberman, 1970, p. 379. Cited by Shaver, 1979, p. 6).
Now it is true and important that—just as "in a forest there is no 'sound' unless there are ears to hear it," schools would not exist without persons. Or, to return to the present topic, socio-structural priorities and exigencies are realized through human activity. The concept of potential 'mindlessness' speaks to individual activity in society, and rightfully identifies the individual as an important element of analysis.

However, embedded in this view is an assumption that, it seems to me, prevents social understanding on the part of educators (or others) and thereby vitiates efforts to effect substantial change in school "techniques, content and organization." The concept, for example, when used to explain school failure, de-focalizes the complex of social forces and economic and political interests in which education is embedded. The concept, by focusing on individuals, trivializes the constraints and sanctions that impinge on educators as social actors; it mystifies the contributions of history, and of society and culture to schooling. Educational institutions are thus reified, appearing both timeless and eternal, and yet changeable by mere individual cogitation. The power of individuals is at once conflated, and deflected from those paths down which it might travel the farthest. The historical possibility that schools do more or less as they are 'supposed' to is precluded. Extra-educational institutional impingements (e.g., juridico-economic priorities and distributions) are—incidentally—legitimated and absolved.

Just as the concept places undue power on educators, it also places undue blame on them. Educators, especially school practitioners are, I would argue, very often the 'victims' (as are students) of hierarchies and contexts that support some choices and make other choices very difficult. These barriers to free choice are, moreover, not always surmountable if one expects to maintain one's position in the institutional hierarchy.

This concept of individual culpability, which flows easily from arguments that give explanatory priority to individuals, is implicit in much contemporary educational research. It is embedded, for example, in educational evaluation and psychological findings that attribute to 'lack of student interest,' 'low ability,' 'different or 'deficient' family language or culture, or to teacher indifference, what may in fact be economically compatible failure to provide all groups or social classes successful pedagogy and/or 'complete personal development.'

A less familiar consequence of the concept of individual culpability is its incidental (and also economically compatible?) misrepresentation and disguise of the power of social structure and ideology on school form and content—through its underlying assumption that educational choices are primarily autonomous, and not the exercise of options often occurring within a rather narrow range of available social and cultural possibilities. In order to provide an example of this explanatory limitation of this view, an attribute of schooling that can be examined as a 'critical case' will now be discussed.

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Social Studies Knowledge as a ‘Critical Case’

A critical case may be considered a phenomenon to be explained or accounted for, whose successful exegesis will affect the perceived utility or explanatory power of a paradigm or point of view. Quotation marks appear around my usage of the term because the following ‘exegesis’ is only partial.

In the attempt to account for the form and content of education in society, one can take as a critical case how and why schools of a certain period teach what they do. (This is, it seems to me, essentially what Durkheim did in his discussion of the evolution of secondary education in France. By certain well-chosen examples, he contrasted his own historicist view of the development of education with the view popular in his own time that to determine what should be done in education one need look only to the future, not to the past. Perhaps his clearest case is his analysis of French Jesuit and Classical pedagogy and curriculum as an effort to resist perceived cultural threats to the French Catholic Church (Durkheim, 1977).

The phenomenon chosen as a ‘critical case’ here is the thematic content of school social studies in the U.S. in this century. It will be suggested that major themes or general organizing principles of this content can be explained by applying the argument that powerful interests and contingencies embedded in socio-economic arrangements and histories will define school knowledge. The curriculum selections of individual educators are thus viewed as normally occurring within broad social and historical parameters; the choices of educators are in this sense more ‘complicitous’ than explanatory. Through the compliance of individuals, that is, socio-structural principles will be realized in social studies curricula; through educational activity that supports and ‘carries out’ the political, economic and other institutional requirements, sanctions and beliefs, societal imperatives will materialize in school settings.

It appears to me that school social studies knowledge in this country in the present century has exhibited at least the following major themes:

1) A focus on constitutional and other legal manifestations of political democracy. (In civics and in history, the governmental process, its political leaders and events are emphasized.)

2) A valuing of social harmony, orderly change via reform, social compromise, political consensus and progress. (Indeed, social progress is very often described as having resulted from the utilization of existing methods of political participation and consensus (e.g., voting in elections).)

3) An emphasis on individual freedom and individual opportunity that accompany political democracy — e.g., the free press, freedom of religion and speech.

4) A focus on the economic freedom, opportunity and progress provided by “the American economy.” This is accompanied by a silent
theme of avoiding the everyday realities of industrial work, economic participation or actual patterns of ownership and distribution. (The "American" economy is detached from its historical roots and contemporary European manifestations. Economic freedom is described as the freedom to own property, to work where one wants at the job one wants, and in recent decades, in the freedom to choose from a plethora of consumer goods; it is also (since World War II) manifest in descriptions of international power and prestige 'free enterprise' has brought the U.S.)

5) Intense nationalism and national chauvanism or patriotism — i.e., Americanism. (This Americanism is often manifest in social studies curriculum by attributing numbers one through four above to 'unique' characteristics of U.S. political and economic institutions. It is also sometimes represented by what are often called 'middle-class values' — attitudes that might otherwise be seen simply as those which support the economic and political order: industry and hard work, efficiency, personal cleanliness and propriety; and personal accountability to society — or to some order higher than oneself (such as the nation, or in earlier textbooks, to God, or moral principle). One might compare these attitudes to values of dissent, ethnic and social class identification, or institutional and social culpability and responsibility for all members of society.)

These themes in social studies knowledge can be distilled into seven Key Words: Individual, Freedom, Opportunity, America, Democracy, Industry, Progress. I would argue that these words — and the curriculum organizing principles they represent — can best be understood as ideological representations and legitimations of political, juridical and economic relationships of power and resource in the U.S. The perquisites inherent in these relationships constrain what will 'count' as social science curriculum selections of fact, concept and value.

To firmly attach these principles to their material base, one needs to take an historical view of the development of western society: from feudalism and monarchy to mercantilism and the free laborer (the former peasant, freed from the bonds of the land and the landed gentry; free to migrate to the city, to seek employment or merchant status); to the rise of the merchant and the mobile 'middle classes,' and of nation states. During these changes in economic and social relationships were generated compatible and supporting notions of individual political and juridical freedom, e.g., political democracy, which codified and protected the new conceptions of freedom to work and to own property and the political rights of citizenship and participation in government. More recently, several key economic themes can be attached to the development in this country of large-scale, highly efficient industry, and the concomitant necessity (in a competitive profit economy based on political consent), for an accepting — and actively consuming — public.

Our key ideas can be seen as modern equivalents to the principle of 'divine right' of monarchs, as analogues to the expressions of social
responsibility of lords to landed serfs, or perhaps as functionally similar to visions of eternal damnation promised heretics by the medieval church. In a shorter, more recent time-span, our key educational ideas correspond to religious catechisms in the ‘textbooks’ of Puritan New England (see Smith, 1967); to textbook descriptions of the “sub-human Negro race” during decades of a slave economy (see Elson, 1965); and to the curriculum themes of ‘class struggle,’ ‘revolution’ and ‘workers’ state’ that one sees in curriculum materials in contemporary socialistic societies (see, for example, Bragin, 1975; Chen, 1978; Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1973; and Votey, 1978).

Within these broad socio-structural and ideological parameters, every-day curriculum choices in this country can be seen as 1) applications of the principles or themes to ‘local conditions;’ 2) expatiations; 3) individual permutations and/or variations of the themes. (The rather wide latitude available in western society regarding individual permutations and variations of dominant cultural themes contributes much to the popular view that there are no ideological parameters or boundaries constraining our thought. For a similar analysis regarding artistic expression in societies, see Bourdieu, 1971). In any case, cultural themes and key educational curriculum ideas are connected to material social arrangements, and to changes in these arrangements. They are ideas that are thus not only structurally related to the mode of production, ownership and distribution, but to social groups that are empowered by this mode. And they may result in social legitimation of same. Social studies content, then, rather than being ‘selected’ by teachers from an infinite store of equally possible choices, is largely imposed by the ideological and material constraints of society.

A Continuing Problematic and the Power of Individuals

I have argued the case that broad themes of social studies knowledge represent, primarily, the ideological representations of socio-structural forces and configurations, and only secondarily the choices of educators. Schools and school knowledge are like they are because society is like it is.

However, this view is not without its own problematic. If social structure and the broad sweep of history impose educational choices and the form of education in society, then how do educational and social change occur? What is the motive force of history? Indeed, to return to our original problematic in somewhat altered form, what is the role of individuals vis a vis new social structures, and whence comes the ‘power’ of individuals who have no obvious social clout? Once again, while the concept of critical thought versus individual ‘mindlessness’ may not be explanatory, it is certainly suggestive.

That is, since social structures can only be imposed by the every-day compliance of individuals, we can look to ‘enlightened’ individuals to resist this imposition and to create the conditions that will foster
social change. For it will be through individual activity — although, I would argue, individual activity undertaken collectively — that new or altered socio-structural relationships will be produced. (While I have argued that there are social structures, and there are important historical forces, and that the general form of schooling in society will depend on these, I have not argued or meant to imply historical inevitability to society or social development. I would argue, to the contrary, that there is no such pre-determination.)

Changes in the structural arrangements of economy and resource in societies have almost always entailed substantial shifts in power. (Changes from a slave economy in the southern U.S., for example, involved the abdication of absolute power of whites over blacks.) Social changes are a result of activity by those who desire and support such changes; they do not just ‘happen.’ One problem, then, is to ‘raise the consciousness’ of those without power in society — e.g., contemporary minorities, women or the poor — to make them aware of their social and historical location, and of the ideological attributes of knowledge and beliefs that may have been made available to them. One can contribute to social change by revealing to such individuals their situation of ‘oppression’ — as Paulo Freire has already suggested (Freire, 1971). It could be argued that power for those who do not have it in our time resides in their collective resistance to domination.4

However, within the present view the problematic of sorting out the contribution of individuals and social structures to society and to change is not resolved. I have, for example, peremptorily discounted the possibility of historical “laws of development,” but have not accounted for the genesis of social structure — nor, indeed, for the possible ideological basis of the belief in social structure. And it would not be easy to show how the liberation expected from personal ‘enlightenment’ or a ‘critical’ education differs significantly from what would be proposed by simple permutation of various social themes described above as ‘merely’ ideological (and thus suited to the preservation of prevailing political and economic arrangements). Moreover, it is not clear how the key ideas of culture and of social science originate. Do they merely ‘rise’ as ephemeral mists, from a somewhat murky base of matter? — which is rather implied in the present argument. Or, are they perhaps the ideas that have gained dominance as a result of struggles past and present between social groups competing for the opportunity to disseminate their own world views and desired meanings?

Acknowledging, however, the limitations of my own ‘structural’ as well as other ‘individualistic’ views, (and recommending further discussion among educators to increase awareness of the importance of such issues) I can suggest on the basis of my argument several activities for educators who would, through their work, increase the power of individuals and groups to resist social imperatives and to
wring fundamental changes in social, cultural and educational “tech-
niques, content and organization.”

In one’s professional activity, with students and by contributions
to the professional literature, one can attempt to increase popular
understanding of society and of society in history. One can make
available information and analyses that de-mystify the complex of
social forces in which social institutions such as schools are embedded.
One can illuminate the ideological consequences of educational con-
tingency on material concerns. In this way one counters educator
‘mindlessness’ and explanations based on mindlessness — for these
accounts merely confirm the legitimacy of, and thereby contribute
to the perpetuation of prevailing unequal economic and social re-
lationships and distributions. One can, by making available alterna-
tive analyses, begin to reveal the workings of society. One contributes
to dialogue that is ‘truly’ critical by bringing into public conscious-
ness underlying social realities that are not readily apparent, and
by subjecting these to inquiry and to political scrutiny. By revealing
society, by thus increasing social understanding, educators can en-
hance others’ ability to recognize activity that will improve both
society and education. For example, to this end it becomes important
to identify the implications of the failure of educational institutions
to remedy for blacks, women and increasing numbers of white male
workers, limited access to occupational opportunity. This, of course,
is to point to the failure of education to equalize unequal economic
structures of priority and allocation. One then argues that in order
to prevent unequal political and economic allocations, more (or even
different) education will not suffice. We must, in addition, go to the
root of the problem and eliminate unfair economic and political prac-
tice.

By questioning, thus, the efficacy of educational solutions to eco-
nomic distress, one encourages more direct attempts to produce equal
structural arrangements of political and economic power and re-
source. One contributes, in this way, to social conditions that would
make equal public schooling a logical possibility.

Notes

1Lévi-Strauss argues that the term social structure has nothing
to do with empirical reality:

Passing now to the task of defining “social structure,” there is a
point which should be cleared up immediately. The term “social
structure” has nothing to do with empirical reality but with models
which are built up after it. This should help one to clarify
the difference between two concepts which are so close to each
other that they have often been confused, namely, those of social
structure and social relations. It will be enough to state at this
time that social relations consist of the raw materials out of which
the models making up the social structure are built, while social
structure can, by no means, be reduced to the ensemble of the social relations to be described in a given society. Therefore, social structure cannot claim a field of its own among others in the social studies. It is rather a method to be applied to any kind of social studies, similar to the structural analysis current in other disciplines . . . [A social] structure consists of a model meeting with several requirements . . . (Lévi-Strauss, 1967, p. 271).

2For recent philosophical expression of this view, see Marcuse (1968), Schroyer (1975), and Gouldner (1976).

3For expressions of this argument see the work previously referred to of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977), Bernstein (1977), and Sharp and Green (1975); see also Bowles and Gintis (1976).

4I would remark at this point that the domination of some by others appears so far (in various forms) in all modern societies: socialistic as well as capitalistic.

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Theory and Research in Social Education is designed to stimulate and communicate systematic research and thinking in social education. The purpose is to foster the creation and exchange of ideas and research findings that will expand knowledge about purposes, conditions, and effects of schooling and education about society and social relations.

Conceptualizations and research from all of the social sciences, philosophy, history and the arts are needed in clarifying thinking and practice in social education. Manuscripts are welcomed on topics such as those that follow:

- Purposes of social education;
- Models, theories, and related frameworks concerning the development, diffusion, and adoption of curricular materials;
- Instructional strategies;
- The relation of the social sciences, philosophy, history and/or the arts to social education;
- The politics, economics, sociology, social psychology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and/or the history of social education;
- Alternative social organizations and utilizations of the school for social education;
- Comparative studies of alternative models of social education;
- Models of and research on alternative schemas for student participation and social action;
- Relationship of different pre- and in-service patterns of teacher training to social education;
- Models of the utilization of objectives in social education and related research findings;
- Implications of learning theory, child development research, socialization and political socialization research for the purposes and practice of social education;
- The relationship of different independent, explanatory variables to educational achievements in the area of learning about society and social relations;
The social organization, climate, cohesion of schools and other school characteristics as independent, explanatory variables predicting to general educational achievement.

Form for Submission of Manuscripts

In order to facilitate the processing of manuscripts, authors are asked to follow the procedures noted below:

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2. Four copies of each manuscript should be submitted. This will speed up the reviewing process and guard against loss of manuscripts.

3. Everything should be double-spaced including footnotes and references.

4. Since manuscripts will be sent out anonymously for reviewing and due to the fact that the abstracts will be published, the author's name and affiliations along with an abstract of approximately 100 words in length not exceeding 125 words should appear on a separate covering page. Information identifying the author, position, and institutional affiliation should appear on a separate page.

5. No responsibility is assumed for loss or injury to manuscripts submitted for publication.

Manuscript Style

1. When citations are made, the author's name, publication date, and page (where necessary) should be enclosed in parentheses and located directly in the text. The complete reference will be included in a "References" section at the end of the article. For example, "Another problem arises if inductive methods are used to teach a generalization. The generalization may be reified, treated as a fact, when all generalizations, empirical or theoretical, are, as Popper argues, only corroborated for the time being (Popper, 1959)."

2. Do not cite references by means of footnotes.

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5. Each table should be placed on a separate page and placed in a separate section at the end of the manuscript. Arabic numbers should be used for numbering tables; they should be numbered consecutively throughout the manuscript. Show where they belong in the text by the following note:

Table One About Here

6. Figures should be submitted in their final form. Use India ink and place them on separate pages in a separate section at the end of the manuscript. Number them and locate them in the text in the same way as tables.

7. Send Manuscripts To:

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