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Some Possible Effects of World War II on the Social Studies Curriculum

Murry R. Nelson
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Abstract

Conventional wisdom about curriculum holds that change occurs slowly after extensive design and planning that includes active participation of teachers. A survey of the professional literature, curriculum guides, textbook advertisements, and newspaper articles from the World War II era suggests that, under some conditions, change can be imposed and occur rapidly. Textbooks on air power reached the market quickly for new courses, offerings in German declined dramatically, and courses in preflight, radio, and electricity appeared. In social studies, geography and selected aspects of democratic heritage in United States history were emphasized at the expense of ancient history. Despite some calls for indoctrination of democracy as a faith, educational commissions stressed global awareness, international cooperation, and interdependence of nations as important goals for the social studies. Subsequent events beyond the chronological scope of this paper resulted in some regression in the decade after the war, but curricular changes during World War II foreshadowed some contemporary curricular emphases in social studies.

This paper considers the response of social studies educators to the crisis of World War II and the effect of the war on the social studies curriculum. Many contentions offered in this paper should be taken cautiously. With few systematic surveys of wartime curriculum and a more than forty-year gap, one must rely on assertions of practice made in journal articles, curriculum described in journal articles, curriculum guides or excerpts from them, newspaper articles which often contain sweeping generalizations, and advertisements for textbooks in the war years. It should also be noted that great variety was prevalent across the country so contentions are made with these caveats intact.

The war came quickly and it appears to have shocked educators into swift action. Despite England's early entry (1939) into World War II, the schools seem to have spent little time, other than in problems of democracy or current events courses, on the study of the war and the ramifications thereof. Judging by textbook advertisements and articles in social studies journals,
the war in Europe was not given specific attention in the curriculum prior to World War II.

During the spring and summer of 1942 initial changes were proposed in school programs around the country. According to a *New York Times* article:

The schools will become armed service preparatory schools. Courses have been rewritten with the assistance of Army and Navy leaders . . . The rise of democracy and the fight for freedom will be stressed in the history classes . . . Perhaps the greatest emphasis will be placed on the importance of air power. (Fine, 1942)

Fine's articles discussed changes in American schools. In Monument, CO High School, for instance, students learned "how health, geography, history, physical training and other school subjects can tie in directly with the war activities" (Fine, 1942). Reports received from five systems in varying sections of the United States said high school students would play a definite role in the war effort. Examples from Santa Barbara, CA, East Orange, NJ, and New York, were also offered.

During the coming year we can expect to see the schools become even more closely allied to the national war program. However, the educators realize that this is but an emergency situation, and one that will be replaced when peace is here again. (Fine, 1942)

The concept of air power that the New York City schools was to emphasize was a new and unique aspect, and the topic swiftly entered the school curriculum. Teachers College sponsored and developed a 16 volume Air Age Education Series published by Macmillan. One volume that speaks directly to our topic was *Social Studies for the Air Age* (Bartlett, 1942), written by a social studies department head from Garden City, NY. The book had nine chapters dealing with the history of flight and flight issues of the present and future.

Other textbook companies also had air power texts or series. McGraw-Hill had advertisements for its *Wings for America* text in 1943 issues of *The Social Studies* while 1942 and 1943 issues carried advertisements for the Air Age Education Series from Allyn and Bacon. Similarly the *Journal of the National Education Association* carried advertisements for Allyn and Bacon's series from 1942 to 1944, for Macmillan's series in 1943 and 1944, and for Nystrom's maps for teaching air age geography. In addition, a full-page ad for *Air Age Education Research* appeared in the October, 1944, *Journal of the National Education Association*. The ad notes that, "our periodical, 'Air Age Education News,' will keep you informed. Please write for a free copy."

A survey of 79 schools in the fall of 1942, published in 1943, confirmed the swift rise of air age courses. Of the 94 new courses added to the cur-
riculum since the war began, 77% were of a mathematical or technical nature with preflight the most popular (33 courses), and electricity and radio a distant second with 12 courses (Wright, 1943). In addition, 39 courses had a change of emphasis to the war, with 27 focusing on aviation or navigation and 12 including emphasis on the meaning of democracy. Amidst all this, 15 courses had been dropped, predominantly foreign language, mostly German. A slight rise in Spanish courses, however, illustrated the new interest in Latin America in world affairs.

Most proposed curricular changes were at the high school or junior high school level. Jersild (1942) believed that children's understanding of the larger war issues was not vital until the end of elementary school or the beginning of junior high school. Rather, the elementary school should provide a psychological outlet for dealing with anger, fear, loyalty, and the value of participation.

In December, 1942, Francis English, Superintendent of Schools in Fulton, MO, offered some ideas on altering a social studies program for wartime. He recommended teaching democracy as a faith and buttressing that faith by emphasizing democracy's strength and problems, not its shortcomings (English, 1942, p. 67). English called for new units and materials, particularly on Latin America, Canada, and the Pacific. Recognizing that some things would have to leave the curriculum, English asserted, "Sure it will force us to use the surgeon's knife on some of the things we have in our courses now but they will surely stand it" (p. 69). Finally, English said schools must teach respect for leadership. "Democracy is the last best hope of the world. The case can be proved for it and we do not have to apologize for its shortcomings" (p. 71).

This zealous nationalism was tempered by other educators. A conference was held at Teachers College in December, 1942, titled The Present Educational Programs and the War Situation giving approaches and guides to wartime teaching. Hunt stated that:

The main responsibility of social studies instruction is the same in peace as in war: to develop citizens informed about the world in which they live, possessed of as much understanding of that world as they can be aided to achieve, and disposed to participate in its affairs as effectively as they are able. (1943, p. 465)

Despite that constancy, Hunt went on to propose new elements of study including the other Americas (South and Central), the Far East, Russia, the Near East and Africa. He saw as crucial a push to make teaching materials on these areas available as quickly as possible. Overall, geography warranted much more attention.

The position of geography in the elementary school needs to be reconsidered, and clearly the policy of ignoring geography in high school
Hunt issued a call for the study of the world at war including aims of the war, world geography, wartime responsibilities of citizens, the study of allies and enemies, and the place of youth in society. These suggestions were for the short term, but some of Hunt's more permanent ideas are reflected in today's concern for global and consumer education. These include teaching the principles of peace, the history and possibilities of international organizations, consumer economics, and programs to promote human welfare and security.

In the Teachers College conference closing session, Caswell summarized the results. He made four general points: that education needed to provide trained personnel for the Army, that education must keep working to win the peace, that interest groups are still looking for a slice of the curriculum, and that no solution has been offered on what to "eliminate from an already crowded curriculum to make room for these new activities" (Caswell, 1943, pp. 275-278).

Caswell saw schools as responding in one of three ways to the war: (1) school as usual, (2) no changes until Washington outlines it and orders it into operation, (3) schools study the needs presented by the war situation and seek to meet those needs in their programs (Caswell, 1943, p. 278). This latter view he believed was most common and reinforced Fine's view in the New York Times article cited.

A long run view was suggested for curricular change initiated by the war. Reflecting the influence of the Eight-Year Study, Caswell (1943) believed that "mechanical restrictions on schools arising from college entrance requirements, and typical plans of school organization are more easily modified now than at any previous period" (p. 279).

A lengthy Guides for Action Emerging From the Conference included curricular suggestions emphasizing that curriculum changes should not represent mere additions to an already overcrowded program. Instead they included more functional teaching of some material now in the curriculum (e.g., functional geography), an introduction of new units and courses (e.g., map making, preflight aeronautics, radio code), and a critical review of the actual functioning of all courses in meeting the demands made upon citizens of a democracy (Caswell, 1943, pp. 288-289).

Some educators believed that the war and its study would have an upsetting effect on pupils. Cronbach (1942) addressed that concern, contending that students had great confidence in the war effort, that they tended toward the exaggerative in the destructive force of war, that they were confused over economic problems such as savings, shortages, rationing, and taxes, as well as being fearful of the loss of freedom. Cronbach offered solutions for dealing with this dilemma of reconciling war with freedom and saw the social studies teacher as the key to interpreting the war to all pupils.
The group who can do most to build confidence and loyalty are the social studies teachers. Discussion has a therapeutic value, especially when such highly emotionalized topics as fear of death are brought out into the open for calm consideration. (Cronbach, 1942, p. 303)

Cronbach believed that the social studies should develop student confidence, thereby aiding the morale of an important generation.

The Wartime Policies Commission of the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) considered what Cronbach and others said and offered their views on what schools should be teaching. Among the recommendations for the elementary school were to provide opportunities for community service, expand and improve the teaching of cultural geography, and “emphasize ideals of freedom and equality for which we are fighting and enrich artistic, literary and musical experiences . . . to provide a release for wartime emotion” (Wartime Policies Commission, 1943, p. 29). In advocating curricular change the commission noted that “the program for education in wartime is not in some respects a program that we would favor in peace” (p. 7). Regarding citizenship education, it was believed that, “we might need, for the duration, to condense some ancient and medieval history in order to have more time for the study of geography, of recent American and world history and of such current economic trends and problems as rationing, price control, inflation and taxation” (p. 27).

The commission proposed seven principles for teaching democratic citizenship, some of which were more farsighted than the limited view of winning the war. They focused on winning the war, having faith in the future, and developing plans for world order, international cooperation, and human freedom.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) also had a commission on wartime policy which included Charles Beard, Erling Hunt, A. C. Krey, Mary Kelty, I. James Quillen, Hilda Taba, Edgar Wesley, and Howard Wilson (chairman) among others. The group stated that one of its goals was, “energetic and total support for the conduct of far-flung war and for the making of a just and lasting peace” (Commission on Wartime Policy, NCSS, 1943).

The commission asserted that the current crisis demanded changes in the social studies program. In studying the world at war, topics that ought to be included were the American traditions and institutions that we were fighting to preserve and extend; causes, aims, and issues of the war; world geography, including its relation to war strategy and to economic foundation of a lasting peace; the United Nations and techniques for cooperation; the nations and people with which we are at war; peace plans and objectives on a world scale; and the problems of reconstruction.

Specific recommendations by the commission included emphasis in U.S. history on the study of dramatic key episodes in our development, such as
the Mayflower Compact, Bill of Rights, Monroe Doctrine, Emancipation Proclamation, free public schools, and the social security act. It also included more biographical study of men and women whose lives have personified the democratic tradition, and attention to the history and practice of basic civil liberties. Many of these recommendations show a marked Deweyan influence and reflect the writings of Rugg in his social studies curriculum (Rugg, 1936).

Both content and attitudes were to be represented with new areas of emphasis. Most importantly, a sense of globalness was strongly urged. This was reflected in the emphasis areas that included: how nations have sought peace; the history of China, India, Russia, and the British Commonwealth of Nations; and U.S. history courses with special attention to heritage of minority groups in the U.S.

The topics listed above reveal a foresight not evident in curriculum for at least twenty years hence. It seems likely that the key ideas — globalness, non-western histories and non-western cultures were largely ignored, or these same recommendations would not be promulgated 40 years later. Most certainly, recommendations about minority study were ignored. Instead, it took a 1945 race riot in Detroit to stimulate educators to initiate and develop human relations curricula (Nelson, 1977). The commission had largely foreseen that problems might occur when hatred of Germans and Japanese waned. Diffusion was sought under the section headed, Racial and National Hatreds Must Be Attacked. Ways to do this included getting minority community members into school as resource people, analyzing race relations, particularly those of the Nazis, studying ethics and moralities of great religions, and continued study of literature, language, music or art of those with whom we are at war (Wartime Policies Commission of NCSS, p. 8). These sensitive human concerns would be supplemented with increased geographic study, including social geography, better map use, aviation geography, and an emphasis on natural resources critical to modern industrial life and military activity.

Many of these recommendations were adopted by schools in whole or part. Vitcha (1943) described wartime social studies at one Cleveland junior high school. Units there included Wartime Geography, The Airplane and Global War, The Four Freedoms, Wartime Morale and Conservation, The United Nations, Our Armed Forces, Wartime Economics, and Post-War Problems: Foreign and Domestic.

More concrete development of the recommendations for the social studies in wartime was needed. NCSS commissioned two volumes to do this. One, Wartime Social Studies in the Secondary School by Hunt was publicized, but apparently never produced. The other, Wartime Social Studies in the Elementary School, by Chase appeared in September, 1943. The volume contained 51 pages of rationale, recommendations, and actual school practices. Many of the comments parallel earlier statements by other
groups or parties. Chase, for example, notes that “The tensions of war have emphasized the necessity of increased attention to intercultural education” (1943, p. 2).

The value of the Chase publication was that it made useful suggestions for teacher implementation and understanding. Under international cooperation and the proposed united nations organization, the following student activities were suggested: (1) dictator research, (2) mock united nations assembly, (3) compile pictures of modern weapons, (4) list war radio programs, (5) construct world maps of coal, oil, iron, copper, and other reserves, (6) make or find German or Japanese expansion maps, and (7) make lists of United States peacetime imports and where they are from. Teacher suggestions included: (1) read a weekly news magazine regularly, (2) learn about new weapons, strategies and equipment of the war, (3) avoid an “America is the only way” attitude, and (4) avoid developing the notion that America should decide what the other countries should do after the war.

Sample units from around the country were presented, including content on war production, war costs, war price control, war rationing, war conservation and war services. Examples of such curricula were drawn from guides and units in areas all across the country including Portland, OR, the Rhode Island Department of Education, the Iowa Department of Public Instruction, the Cleveland, OH, Schools, the Department of Public Instruction in North Carolina, and the Oregon Department of Education.

The second section of the book is concerned with the world after the war and with democratic living which must be planned and practiced carefully since, “lip service alone will not build a better democracy” (Chase, 1943, p. 18). A checklist of skills and techniques required for democratic action included cooperation, discussion, abiding by will of the majority, choosing leaders wisely, participating in school government, following a leader, serving as a leader, serving on committees, recognizing rights and property of others, and thinking critically. Sections three and four were global in scope. The task of intercultural understanding was seen as threefold: (1) “to preserve the rich heritage of music, arts, crafts, folklore, tradition, literature . . . which every immigrant group has brought with it to American shores, (2) to interpret to minority groups the prevailing pattern of Anglo-Saxon culture, and (3) to build for our nation a greater unity within itself by making every group aware of its contribution to our way of life” (Chase, 1943, p. 31).

In section four, The World Wide Setting of Modern Life, Chase notes that, “We have fallen short of the ‘one world’ concept. Now in the approaching ‘air age’ we cannot fail, for, if we do, disaster will eventually catch up with us” (p. 41). Curriculum changes were proposed, and were in place in some schools. These included teaching the united nations (i.e., nations united) rather than a general study of various peoples. “Reeder points out how inadequate is a child’s understanding of the world when he studies
it by taking up the location, surface features, soil and climate, products and industries, and people and government of each country separately” (Chase, 1943, p. 43).

In closing Chase advises that:

The world-wide point of view cannot be taught in a week, nor a year for that matter . . . The teacher must be so convinced of the necessity of having all pupils, by the time they reach the end of the sixth grade, have some realization and understanding of the world-wide setting of modern life that she introduces at every opportunity either in present course-of-study or other forms of organization or in special units of work, the concepts, content and materials that will strengthen the development of a true world citizenship. (Chase, 1943, p. 51)

The belief that curriculum change must go through years of design and planning to become part of the program seems to be untrue. In a time of crisis that inspires unity, curriculum can change at short notice. Faced with a world crisis the schools and, more specifically, the social studies provided materials and ideas for studying about World War II. The war effort, in various forms, was viewed as an accepted part of the school's function. The publishers provided materials to study the war on land, sea and air from various points of view—politically, economically, and historically. The advertisements in *The Social Studies* and the *Journal of the National Education Association* support this contention. Chase’s (1943) volume details many of the curriculum efforts on war study in schools across the United States. The 1942 annual meeting of the National Council of the Social Studies was entitled Social Education in Wartime and After and more than half the sessions or panels were dedicated to this theme.

Much of the reaction to the war crisis was calm and judicious thought and behavior. The planning of the NCSS and NEA-AASA policies commissions was farsighted, realistic, and deliberate. Schools were asked at short notice to aid in a substantive manner in the war effort. The men and women in the field seemed to have responded admirably.

References


Justice, Social Studies, and the
Subjectivity/Structure Problem

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Abstract

The claim that social studies education ought to promote justice is not uncommon in social studies curriculum materials, plans, and commentary. With few exceptions, however, justice is treated without attention to theory, history, or social context. Lacking this foundation, its promotion has tended to be hollow and innocent. This paper engages that problem at the point where justice, ontogeny, and ideology intersect. Justice is analyzed from two theoretical traditions: cognitive developmentalism and historical materialism. The viability of the developmental conception of justice when located in historical-materialist theory is then assessed. Finally, the tension between the subjectivism of the former and the structural determination of the latter is examined.

Simone de Beauvoir tells us in The Ethics of Ambiguity, "It is in knowledge of the genuine conditions of our life that we must draw our strength to live and our reason for acting" (1948, p. 9). At the heart of these conditions is a tragic ambiguity: We experience ourselves as sovereign subjects, pure internality asserted against the all-around, yet also as objects "crushed by the dark weight of things" (1948, p. 7). Hegel denied this fundamental contradiction, Marx ignored it, and Kierkegaard and Sartre asserted it, bringing it forward as our ground. It is on this ground, on the irreducibility of this particular ambiguity, that the present inquiry was undertaken.

The inquiry focuses on a central attribute of civic virtue—justice, and by justice I will mean fairness. Opened for critical examination is the idea of justice in social studies education. As this is a subject of some breadth, I will have to narrow the present focus considerably and have chosen to concentrate on the point where justice, ontogeny, and ideology intersect. I will proceed by analyzing three conceptions of justice, one from cognitive developmental psychology and two from materialist, or socialist, theory, and will locate the analysis in the question, How might a conception of justice contribute to human betterment? My interest is a transformative justice capable of moving society beyond the wasteland (Rozak, 1972) to forms of
living together that are caring, lively, and fair—that are free, as Habermas termed it, from "ideologically frozen relations of dependence" (1971, p. 310).

The first section is devoted entirely to cognitive developmentalism, particularly Kohlberg's (in press) theory of the development of a sense of justice. I will highlight the foundation of Kohlberg's work in Piagetian equilibrium theory and the similarities between Kohlberg's and Rawls' (1958, 1971) conceptions of justice. This should provide an understanding of what Kohlberg means by justice, as well as the procedure for reaching just decisions that is implicit in his theory. The second section is an analysis of the idea of justice from the vantage point of historical materialism. Here I will not presuppose that justice is a meaningful category for either social studies or social transformation, but rather will consider that it may be an illusory concern that does more harm than good. Third, I will consider the viability of the Kohlberg/Rawls conception of justice from the vantage point of historical-materialist theory. In the conclusion, I will examine the paradox that emerges from the preceding sections—that of justice considered as a psychological state in developed individuals and, at the same time, an expression of the way a society is organized.

Cognitive Developmentalism

Plato tells us that justice is latent in the soul. It follows that what is already there can be drawn out and need not (actually, cannot) be imposed from without. Dewey echoed Plato, claiming "The aim of education is growth or development, both intellectual and moral" (1916), and Piaget, Kohlberg, and Gilligan have extended and qualified that tradition within the discourse of cognitive developmental psychology. Kohlberg claims that his crosscultural and longitudinal studies provide evidence "for the Socratic view of a universal conception of justice proceeding through developmental levels" (in press). What is this conception of justice? We will understand it first implicitly by examining Kohlberg's theory of cognitive moral development; that is, we will derive it from Kohlberg's stage-wise description of the natural evolution of a sense of justice. Then we will understand it explicitly by examining the decision-making method employed at the highest level of development in Kohlberg's scheme and by comparing it to the method of moral reasoning employed in Rawls' original position.

Behaviorism, social learning theory, and cognitive-developmental psychology each have explanations for the occurrence of just persons, but those of the latter are cogent for three reasons. First, as Kohlberg notes (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972), cognitive developmentalism overcomes what was heretofore a dichotomy between biological maturationist theory (e.g., Hall, 1901) and behaviorist theory (e.g., Skinner, 1971) by asserting a dialectical, or interactive, model of human development. This model considers human learning a function of increased epistemic integrity resulting
from the interaction of person and environment. Second, cognitive developmental theorists, notably Piaget and Kohlberg, have displayed sensitivity to the distinction between scientific inquiry and ethics as a field of study. Piaget did not develop a theory of education or a curriculum design, and Kohlberg is careful to distinguish between his theory of moral development and his theory of moral education. Behaviorists, Skinner in particular, have been more inclined to commit the naturalistic fallacy—inferring the ought from the is (Kohlberg, 1971). Third, cognitive developmental psychology rejects ethical relativism, or the view that value claims are culture-bound and cannot be compared or reconciled by any rational means (Brandt, 1961).

Piaget's ontogenetic theory of equilibrium laid the foundation for Kohlberg's later work. Piaget's well-known theory holds that one's way of knowing develops hierarchically through an invariant sequence of stages. No one skips a stage, but development can be arrested at any stage. Each stage is a qualitatively distinct, integrated thought system, and each, he reasoned, is more complex, inclusive, and thus more powerful than preceding stages. Upward stage movement occurs as one constructs a satisfactory response to the experience of disequilibrium. The interaction of organism and environment engenders all manner of intellectual conflict from which the only satisfying escape is further cognitive development: the way out of the present disequilibrium is the construction of a new way of knowing within which the conflict dissolves. As one's way of making sense of the world thus evolves, both knower and known develop. All is formative. The subject-object duality continually shifts so that objects, whether toys, rocks, parents, or friends, are known anew by a new knower—an evolving self (Kegan, 1982).

The evolution of knower/known incorporates both the physical and social worlds, a point illustrated vividly in Siegel's (1977) study of children's reactions to the assassination of Martin Luther King. Children ranging in age from eight to sixteen years were asked, "When the killer is found, how do you think he should be treated?" Older children thought the killer should receive a fair trial and be punished according to the law, while younger children thought the killer should receive specific, usually extralegal punishment. For example, the killer should be "turned over to the Negroes and let them take care of him," "Let Mrs. King kill him," and "Dr. King was killed by him so the same thing should happen to him." In response to questions like, "Why do you think Dr. King was shot?" and "What made the person do it?" the older children more often gave answers indicating abstract political thinking (e.g., "He was killed because he tried to do something for the Negroes"), while the younger, concrete-operational thinkers more often personalized the shooting (e.g., "He hated King" or "Because a riot might have went on in his neighborhood and wrecked his home, and he thought Dr. King started it"). Specific punishments and personal motives are con-
From Logical to Ethical Judgment

Siegel's study adumbrates the relationship of cognitive developmental stage to a developing sense of fairness. Kohlberg's imaginative theory of moral reasoning is an extension and qualification of Piaget's dialectical, stage-wise conception of intellectual development. As an individual's reasoning about the physical world evolves, Kohlberg argues, so does one's capacity for reasoning about the world of people and relationships and, in particular, fairness (Kohlberg, Levine, & Hewer, 1984a, 1984b). Before we can regularly consider others' perspectives in our reasoning about issues of fairness, our mode of perception and judgment must have been developed beyond egocentricity; we must be capable intellectually of accommodating the other as another subject. In Piaget's terms, the transcendence of unabashed egocentrism requires the set of intellections called concrete operational thought central to which is reciprocity, or the ability to see two dimensions of a problem simultaneously. So, the concrete stage makes possible an advance from justice-as-obedience to justice-as-equal exchange. Further cognitive development, from concrete to formal operations, permits yet another qualitative advance in our sense of justice from simple to ideal reciprocity (Kohlberg, 1971). This entails imagining yourself in another's role and considering what you would want from that perspective as represented in the colloquialisms “putting yourself in the other fellow's shoes” and “seeing where someone else is coming from.” With the advent of the intellectual capacity for ideal reciprocity, the Golden Rule is for the first time comprehensible not as an admonition to treat others as they treat you (simple reciprocity) but to treat them as you would want to be treated if you were they.

Kohlberg's research indicates that at each cognitive stage individuals have a distinct conception of right and wrong embedded in a distinct capacity for role-taking, or taking the perspective of others. In brief, at stage 2, I can take the perspective of one other, but only in the limited sense of fair exchange. Here, two wrongs can indeed make a right, and “What's in it for me?” is compelling logic. At stage 3, I can imagine (and consequently worry about) what my friends think of me, and family ties and ethnic identification can be consuming. At stage 4, I can take the perspective of an altogether abstract, experientially nonexistent group such as my country, but not until my reasoning has developed to the fifth and sixth stages am I capable of universalizing my perspective, identifying with people everywhere, and acquiring a truly global perspective. Packed within my developing capacity for role-taking, my sense of justice expands and is qualified with it. Fixated at stage 4 reasoning, I will not likely conceive two types of law as did King (1963): just and unjust. Instead, I might espouse a law-and-order idea of justice: Rather than deriving my conception of law from the
right, I will derive my conception of the right from the law—extant law. My idea of justice will be entangled therefore in the status quo, be it just or unjust. Consequently, an interest in moving the law forward toward justice, let alone a commitment to envisioning quite different forms of society that might advance the common good, could not likely arise because I am confined to maintaining conventions without the additional transcendent capacity to interrogate their assumptions and contrast them with alternatives.

Fairness in the Kohlbergian view is thus an intellectual attainment, not an inculcated attitude. That the school should engage heterogeneous groups of students in democratic discussions of dilemmas they are facing is the central proposition of Kohlberg's intervention theory. Rather than turning to that subject, however, as many have (e.g., Reimer, Paolitto, & Hersh, 1983; Rosenzweig, 1982), I am concerned here to examine further the conception of justice per se. My approach will be to compare the decision-making method employed at the highest level of Kohlberg's system with the initial fair choice situation in Rawls' theory of justice.

**Justice as Reversibility**

Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1971) develops his earlier paper titled, *Justice as Fairness* (1958), and lays out an account of social justice based on a novel approach to social contract theory. Common to contract theories is positing an initial choice situation, a state of nature, as a means by which ideal social arrangements, given human nature, might be determined. Rawls criticizes Locke's and Rousseau's states as flawed initial fair-choice situations that would not necessarily engender fairness in the arrangements agreed to therein. Rawls then advances an initial situation, which he calls the original position, that maximizes the likelihood of fair agreements. In his original position, decisions are rendered behind a veil of ignorance that prevents participants from knowing the roles they occupy, including their advantages and disadvantages, once the veil is lifted. The veil, then, forces impartiality into the discourse since the discussants do not know if they will be strong or weak; captain or corporal; able or disabled; Moonie, Baptist, or Shiite Moslem. A decision made under such circumstances is more likely to be fair because participants choose in such a manner that they can live with the choice after the veil is lifted and they find themselves in a particular situation.

Kohlberg calls this justice as reversibility (1979). He points out correctly that while Kant's categorical imperative (act only as you would want everyone to act in the same situation; let your behavior be a model for all) exemplifies universalizability, it is not, as Kant had hoped, sufficient for generating substantive principles for evaluating or prescribing social arrangements or in working out fair resolutions to specific interpersonal dilemmas. Rawls' method is, as Kohlberg notes, more complete, exemplifying not only universalizability but also the idea of reversibility. Reversibility is the criterion of justice implied by the Golden Rule: You cannot figure out
what is really the right thing to do until you consider being on the receiving end of your actions; that is, "it's right if it's still right when you put yourself in the other's place" (Kohlberg, 1979, p. 258). Reversibility requires dialogue and impartiality as conditions for working out social justice; universalizability does not. Kohlberg spells out Rawls' meaning as ideal role-taking or moral musical chairs. This means "going around the circle of perspectives involved in a moral dilemma (a dilemma in which principles conflict) to test one's claims of right or duty until only the equilibrated or reversible claims survive" (p. 262). Claims that are not reversible are dropped from further consideration.

Rawls' cake cutting example, a favorite of Kohlberg, illustrates reversibility at work. The just citizen put in the role of cake cutter would cut it knowing that he or she would ask another person to distribute the pieces, thus placing oneself on the receiving end of any indiscretions in the cutting. Were the cake cutter to cut in a way that was self-benefiting, one would have to do so knowing that the distribution would be blind. Knowing this, it would make no sense to be unfair in the cutting. To the contrary, it would make sense to be fair.

Returning to Piaget's equilibrium theory, we see that reversibility is the formal quality of equilibrium in logic, again illustrating the complementarity between reasoning about issues of fairness and cognitive stage development. As Kohlberg reads Piaget, a stage of logic is an integrated set of logical operations or

...a group of reversible transformations of ideas, classes or numbers which maintain certain relations invariant. Moral reasoning or justice in Piaget's theory represents decisions which are not "distorted" or changed as one shifts from one person's point of view or perspective to another's. (Kohlberg, 1979, p. 264)

As the logic of equilibrium develops in stage-wise fashion, so does the capacity for taking the perspective of others with less egocentric distortion. An ethnocentric statement (like the one legions of social studies teachers have heard, Why don't those Hindus get smart and eat their cattle?) displays cultural egocentricity. It reveals no endeavor to engage the other as subject, to take the perspective of the other. It reveals no attempt to see how the smart thing to do might be defined from the vantage point of the hungry Hindus. Nevertheless, cultural egocentricity makes complete sense from the cognitive confines of a lower developmental stage.

**Historical Materialism**

It is important to expose this line of thinking, compelling as it is, to substantive opposition. It is important especially to counter psychological theories with sociostructural theories so as to inform the au courant fascination with psychoindividualistic explanations. These typically lack a critical
sociological treatment of knowledge, which is to say they evidence little awareness of the interaction of knowledge, history, human interests, and material conditions (e.g., Horkheimer, 1972). Consequently, I will critique the Kohlberg/Rawls conception of justice from a materialist and historical—Marxist—perspective. Three criticisms will be sketched wherein two Marxisms (moral and amoral) will become evident. Then, I will show that the Kohlberg/Rawls conception remains viable and useful, although only partial, in light of this critique.

At first glance, Marxism appears imbued with an abiding concern for justice. Its central concern with exploitation and its consequence, alienation, certainly does not seem a morally neutral stance. Moreover, Marx's view that the full and free development of every individual and the absolute elaboration of what lies within are the ruling principles of ideal socialism seems obviously to be moral discourse (Marx, 1965, p. 592). And, it appears clear that Marxism's prognosis of an inevitable socialist transformation of society was not merely put forward as objectively inevitable, but desirable. Hampshire captures this moral concern undergirding Marxism:

For me socialism is not so much a theory as a set of moral injunctions, which seem to me clearly right and rationally justifiable; first, that the elimination of poverty ought to be the first priority of government after defense; secondly, that as great inequalities in wealth between different social groups lead to inequalities in power and in freedom of action, they are generally unjust and need to be redressed by governmental action; thirdly, that democratically elected governments ought to ensure that primary and basic human needs are given priority within the economic system, even if this involves some loss in the aggregate of goods and services which would otherwise be available. (1977, p. 359)

So a Marxist critique of Kohlberg would not, it would seem, oppose moral theorizing per se since moral theorizing lies at the heart of Marx's work as well. But, according to many in the school we might call classical or scientific Marxism, such is not the case.

A materialist science of society, the most prominent of which is Marx's, holds that objective material conditions account for the persistence and transformation of social arrangements, or structures. In Capital, Marx is explicit:

It is the ultimate aim of this work to lay bare the economic law of motion of modern society. . . . Here individuals are dealt with only in so far as they are personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class-interests. My standpoint . . . can less than any other make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them. (1965, p. 10)
This is no denigration of the value of individuals, as Marx is often misunderstood to sponsor. Rather, it is analytic social theory. Marx asserted matter-of-factly that individuals are constituted by the objective, class conditions of their lives and, further, that to know those conditions—the underlying social structures—is to know the people who live them and are their embodiments. Subjectivity, then, can be deduced from material conditions. Individuals, in this view, are epiphenomena: personifications of undergirding relations of production, expressions of the economic base. Studying epiphenomena as though they were the source, while ignoring the source (material structures), is the very sort of illusory activity with which materialist critics, including but certainly not limited to Marx, charge modern social scientists (see Habermas, 1971; Wexler, 1983).

Now here is the point. Moralities, too, are in this view epiphenomenal. Conceptions of justice and, indeed, the whole of moral theorizing is necessarily a chimera. We think otherwise, that morality is fundamental to personal and social transformation, only because ideology, taken to mean the false beliefs arising in society that legitimize current arrangements as sensible and good (Mannheim, 1936), requires that we think otherwise. Marx has been popularly misunderstood in the West as having spoken against the individual and against morality, when in actuality he wrote as a social scientist endeavoring to describe the bases for both. In his view, impoverished human relations, including today's common offenses to persons and property, prejudice against women and minorities of color, despair, greed—all of these exist as ontological expressions of a distorted social structure and are not, then, moral problems to be overcome through individual moral development. Similarly, the way out of Plato's cave is not to be derived by scrutinizing ever more closely and cleverly, let alone striving to change, the shadows on the cave wall. What is needed instead is careful scrutiny of how ideology functions to make the shadows appear real and reasonable, lodging them in everyday life and common sense where they are accepted as natural and escape critique. Marx accused fellow socialists of being preoccupied with justice and, in particular, with the just distribution of resources when they ought instead to have been concerned with the causes of these effects in underlying conditions of production. This materialist science needs no moral theory since its purpose is to reveal and explain social structure and its effects, one of which is moral theorizing.

A second, related socialist criticism of moral theorizing is that, in addition to being epiphenomenal, it is dangerous. Moral hierarchies carry with them the potential for the repression of those who fall short of the hierarchy's moral ideal. Collier (1981), a scientific socialist, argues that Stalinism is a case in point. Stalin was morally indignant at social conditions that impeded the rise of a just society. The carnage justified on behalf of that moral righteousness is well known. Other examples can be cited, from the Crusades to Pol Pot's Kmer Rouge. The latter exterminated literally count-
less numbers of so-called corrupt individuals who failed to exemplify in one way or another the moral ideals of that revolution.

But one might feel compelled to argue, is it not immorality, rather than morality, that accounts for these abominations? Collier thinks not, defending scientific socialism's amorality as a check against the passions of moral madness.

Marx does not appeal to a particular privileged subset of human motives, nor does he appeal to an unrealized ideal of human excellence: he relies, for the motivating force of his ideas, on desires that existing individuals already have. (1981, p. 132)

In this vein, it was in *The German Ideology* that Marx said:

Communism is not for us . . . an ideal to which reality [will] have to adjust itself [but] . . . the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of the movement result from the now existing premise. (Quoted in Collier, 1981, p. 140)

Scientific socialism, then, takes morality to task not only for being epiphenomenal but for opening the door to red terror, then white terror, to the Klan and the Kmer Rouge, to impassioned school bus bombers around the world.

Further developing this basic amoral although clearly humanitarian position, Tucker (1969) and Wood (1972–73) have argued that while it is true that Marx roundly condemned capitalist structures for being inherently exploitive of labor, he did not condemn them on moral ground. He never called them unjust or unfair and never criticized them for abrogating workers' rights. This apparent paradox can be understood, according to Tucker and Wood, by seeing that Marx did have a theory of justice, but one that was radically historical. That is, justice is always to be understood as an appendage of a particular social formation and, more specifically, an expression of its particular mode of production. Justice under feudalism is feudalist justice, justice under capitalism is capitalist justice, justice under socialism is socialist justice, and so on. Garnering evidence for this view, Wood points out that Marx thought slavery was unjust in capitalist societies since it violated capitalism's own standards, but that the exploitation of labor's surplus value was not unjust, since this appropriation functionally defines capitalism. Using one social formation's moral principles to judge another's is a mistake, for doing so fails to grasp the materialist underpinning of justice and the historical, economic laws of motion that are the focus of attention in scientific socialism. Consequently, the Tucker and Wood position directly counters the concept of universalizability by positing that all conceptions of justice are structurally derived and by reminding us that social structures are historical formations, not timeless entities.

What we have here is a compelling line of critique that would reject the
theorizing of Kohlberg and Rawls not by contesting its particular conception of morality and justice, as so many have done (e.g., Gibbs, 1979; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984; Sullivan, 1977), but by drawing a line around the whole concern and calling it false consciousness: much ado about nothing. The activity of civic virtue, of knowing and doing the common good, is a fine activity as far as it goes, but it fails to go very far. It fails to extend beyond the economic base of which it is a consequence. To summarize, justice is at best a trivial concern and at worst dangerous, ahistorical ideology that obscures rather than discloses real injustice. It might tell us whether Heinz should steal the drug that could save his wife, but it fails to inform us that capitalism has stolen the common good and, with it, the sense of vision needed to reinvent society.

A third criticism of the Kohlberg conception of justice, beyond the claims that it is epiphenomenal and ahistorical, is the charge that it is individualistic—that it promotes a disconnectedness among persons and a disinterested autonomy that is woefully steeped in abstractions. An examination of the original position appears to bear out much of this criticism. Behind the veil of ignorance, individuals will presumably work out principles of justice and specific agreements that are rational to individuals considering their own interests, whatever they may be once the veil is lifted. Their principles and agreements, then, may well protect individual rights and factional rights, but they attenuate simple caring for one another and concern for common interest. Consequently, civic virtue in the original position might not be civic at all but a Byzantine marketplace where all parties look out for themselves in a sort of gambler's game of distributive justice played with blindfolds.

This is essentially Wolff's (1965) critique of pluralism. While its virtue is tolerance, it functions ideologically to protect a few interests from one another and, together, from the dispossessed. Meanwhile, it is able to ignore the dispossessed and problems of the common good. Pluralism is thus “fatally blind to the evils which afflict the entire body politic, and as a theory of society it obstructs consideration of precisely the sorts of thoroughgoing social revisions which may be needed to remedy those evils” (1965, p. 52).

Historical—Materialist Theory

These criticisms are of some moment as they make us question the theoretical and historical viability of civic virtue, defined as knowing and doing the common good, and with it justice, defined as fairness, as an ideal for social studies education. That is, each criticism serves well the discussion of justice in social studies education by advancing key historical and theoretical questions into a field that generally suffers from historical and theoretical forgetfulness, or what Jacoby (1975) called social amnesia. What remains to be seen is the capability of the Kohlbergian conception of justice
to remain viable when located in historical-materialist theory, and that is the subject of this section.

The first criticism asked, Isn't the study and development of a conception of justice tertiary and, worse, distracting from the primary task of determining how material forces determine everyday life? This is the line of criticism that equates morality with mystifying ideology. It should be noted first that this is an argument against the development of a theory of justice only if we assume that the theory developed is not itself a material force. But this is not the case. As a form of practice, theory is indeed a material force just as is ideology. And if ideology is a material force functioning conservatively to endorse the status quo by making it appear natural and moral, then a theory of justice can function critically as a countervailing force that interrogates ideology, disclosing just how it is implicated in current arrangements (Reiman, 1981).

Moreover, this criticism denies its own normative discourse. Reiman (1981) has argued effectively in a discussion of Rawls' theory that while scientific Marxists might insist that the advent of socialist society is inevitable and its desirability a tertiary and even dangerous concern, in fact the purpose of developing Marxian theory was and is not merely to describe history, but to affect it—to enable individuals to comprehend their mystification in the cave so that they might then turn toward the sun. In other words, so that they might act on theory and thus affect the material world. Individuals are not only determined personifications of the economic base; they are also agents who act. Of course, their actions are in good measure determined structurally and their choices confined largely thereby to predetermined options, but they do act and they do choose. To fail to see this is to misconstrue causes as effects and to consider humans objects, as did Althusser (1979) in his extreme proclamation that the base is determinant in the last instance, when they are also subjects in their world: agents mediating structure. Moreover, if individuals are to act on history, they must know more than the material forces creating it and more than the means of transformation. They must also be able to evaluate the common good, for this enables them to choose whether to act for transformation and which transformation to act for.

Countering this argument, Teitelman (1978) asks us to consider a man with a clock that has stopped working. The knowledge of where he ought to set the hands is useless until he knows what has caused the clock to stop and fix it. Finding out the correct time before he has a workable remedy is premature. (Reiman, 1981, pp. 309-310)

But, Reiman replies correctly, "You can't know if you have fixed the clock if you don't know the correct time" (1981, p. 310). Here is the point both Collier and Teitelman seem to have missed. Neither Stalin nor the Kmer Rouge knew the correct time. It was not their sense of justice that engen-
dered their cruelties. It was their poorly developed sense of justice. Lacking a transformative axiology and in its place having only scientific laws of history to guide action encourages elitism and the very sort of party dictatorship to which many socialist movements have fallen. When esoteric laws are reified and revered, then the many must submit to the few who claim to divine them. Conversely, an axiology by which the common good can be envisioned by everyone plays a central role in the democratic construction of a better world and can serve as a vantage point by which social movements and present or proposed social arrangements can be evaluated.

The second criticism asked, "Won't a so-called universal conception of justice actually serve as just another piece of the ideological platform that sustains the status quo? It will be remembered that Marx condemned capitalism as inherently exploitive and alienating, but he did not base his critique on a universal conception of justice. Rather, his conception of human nature was materialist and historical. Consequently, the developmental theory of civic virtue associated with Socrates, Dewey, Piaget, and Kohlberg, with its specification of universalizability as a defining attribute of a fully developed sense of justice, is necessarily both nonmaterialist and ahistorical. It glosses over the historically specific social conditions in which it occurs and by which it is determined; consequently, a temporary, ideologically distorted and exploitive view of justice masquerades as eternal truth.

The problem with this criticism, when applied to the Kohlberg/Rawls conception of justice, is that it fails to grasp that universalizability as conceived by Kohlberg and Rawls does have the capacity to transcend ideology. Again relying on Reiman's analysis, we see that the decision-making conditions in Rawls' original position constitute "a method for arguing around ideology" (1981, p. 308). Participants in the initial, fair choice situation (1) have the benefit of correct information about society, human nature and technology, and (2) behind the veil of ignorance, they are free from the perception-distorting ideology found in a particular society. This method is not foolproof, of course, and exploitive arrangements could foreseeably be generated; that is, in applying the method, participants may be insufficiently rigorous and permit ideology to undermine their reasoning. But, Reiman observes,

This amounts only to the recognition that the method is a procedure for argument, not a substitute for argument. It tells us what we must argue in order to argue that social relations are or are not exploitive and, relatively, what we must argue to show that theories of justice are ideological covers for exploitive social relations. (1981, p. 308)

Consequently, the principles generated by the participants could be ahistorical if the knowledge about social reality possessed by them in the original position was ahistorical, but then it would not be correct knowledge, and
correct knowledge is a necessary condition of the original position. However, recognizing that all knowledge admits of degrees of error (a qualification no more paralyzing to this subject than to any), the arrangements chosen in the original position will be just given the current development of knowledge (Reiman, 1981). This criticism, then, falls of its own weight. No decision about just social arrangements, including the resolution of dilemmas, could possibly be historical if by historical we mean relative to present material conditions and possibilities yet somehow transcendent of current knowledge, which is itself a material condition. Rawls' original position, therefore, with its assumption that participants "know the general facts about human society" (1971, p. 138) and its attributes of universalizability and reversibility, may very well produce principles that are historical.

The third criticism asks, Isn't the Kohlberg/Rawls conception of justice individualistic? This criticism is addressed by the above discussion. Let me add that the Kohlberg/Rawls conception, far from promoting radical disinterestedness, is relational. The sense of justice is inherently interactive. It is developed not apart from but through and as a result of the committed interaction of subjects in specific situations. Fair decisions are thus worked out dialogically, not egocentrically, and with what Kant called an enlarged mentality that cannot operate except intimately among persons intending to understand a situation as the others in it do.

**Justice as Paradox**

I have undertaken this critique of the method of justice found at the highest level of Kohlberg's theory of moral development for two reasons. The foremost aim was to bring forward the notion of justice in social studies curriculum deliberation. But I wanted at the same time to expose justice as problematic. Like all understandings, a conception of justice is constructed, and its construction is a social event entangled in history and human interests. Second, I wanted to investigate the extent to which the particular conception of justice advanced by Kohlberg and his associates is able to avoid ready appropriation by whatever the present social organization happens to be—that is, is able to avoid degeneration to mere ideology. The point is this: A conception of justice that is to be constitutive of an ideal citizen type should be thoroughly capable of discerning injustices not merely at the surface of social life, in interpersonal and factional affairs, but in the underlying modes of relating that generate social life. In short, a conception of justice must be thoroughgoing and critical. This requires that it transcend the spell cast by ideology so that injustices that are legitimized by ideology might be revealed. Returning to de Beauvoir (1948, p. 91), a conception of justice ought to promote efforts to surpass the given towards an open future. Justice so conceived is necessary, although clearly not sufficient (Noddings, 1984), to the broader search for the virtuous citizen and the common good. Its particular contribution to that search is its capacity for
recognizing patterns of domination, of unfairness, that may be lodged comfortably in everyday life and for proposing alternative ways of living together.

In my judgment, Kohlberg's theory of the development of a sense of justice, as well as the particular conception of justice found at the highest level of development in his scheme, remain viable, if partial, when subjected to historical-materialist analysis. In the theory of development we have a compelling explanation of the role of intelligence in deontological reasoning, and it is supported by an empirical base of considerable depth and breadth. Further, Kohlberg's conception of justice as reversibility, which in many respects parallels Rawls' method in the original position, describes a democratic, or what Habermas would call a symmetrical, discussion that not only helps resolve interpersonal dilemmas fairly, e.g., Heinz's dilemma, but also can contribute to the larger task of interrogating the fairness of present and proposed social organization. However, what the historical-materialist analysis makes quite clear is that both the theory of development and the conception of justice are hollow when history and the crushing weight of social structure are forgotten, and when a developed sense of justice is not applied to a critique of the status quo. Without these connections, even a developed sense of justice is destined, under the weight of present conditions, to be reserved for the relatively trivial dilemmas of our private lives while the public sphere continues its demise.

More important, however, than determining the extent to which Kohlbergian theory is strengthened by socialist critique is the broader endeavor of which this analysis is a part: to comprehend individuation, particularly the development of fairness, in its social context. So, we must return now to the fundamental contradiction on which the notion of justice becomes most problematic: On the one hand, there is individual cognition which, given the necessary conditions of development, appears to evolve toward the advanced intellections needed for principled thinking and the capacity for taking others' perspectives in dialogues about mutual problems. On the other hand is social reality—the structures of relating within which the individual individuates and, consequently, of which subjectivity is a distillation.

This subjectivity/structure tension cannot be eased without peril. The classical Marxist argument considers justice epiphenomenal. While not untrue, the argument is reductionist. It denies the tension and, consequently, contributes little to an understanding of how humans might judge one social formation against another and thereby move society toward the common good. It ignores, if you will, the objective reality of subjectivity and fails to account for the variation in individual's abilities to, returning to Reiman's analogy, tell the correct time. Similarly, the subjectivist position, also not untrue, is also reductionist. Today it enjoys free reign in a Zeitgeist that Jacoby labels a “cult of subjectivity” (1975, p. 119): a world of choices, will, luck and merit, or their lack. This is just the sort of common sense needed
and generated by market economies. Despite its popularity, the subjectivist argument that human autonomy is free to evolve and express itself in infinite ways, and that certain ways are central to social transformation, denies the fact that most ways are determined by patterns of relating already established among a people long before an individual comes along. The subjectivist argument, then, denies the objective reality of a historically specific social world in which subjectivity, including a sense of justice, is formed and animated. With this denial, the argument degenerates to a vulgar acquisitive individualism that heralds log cabin-to-White House mythology while conveniently turning its attention from the cooling out function of supposedly meritocratic institutions, like schools (see Goffman, 1952; Parker, 1985). The product of social amnesia, the extreme subjectivist argument forgets to think back and through history. It is thus protected from the dialectical tension but at the expense of missing altogether the politics of experience.

The list of ills, from the present rash of serial murders to the dissolution of communal life, the madness of commercialism, and the myriad dominations of class, gender, and ethnicity, cannot be understood exclusively as a crisis in individual moral development nor an expression of a flawed social order. To reject the either/or approach is to reject the passivity of dichotomous classifying for the activity of theorizing. The either/or approach can do little more than advocate one side of the tension as an antidote for the other. Just as thoughtlessly, it might press for a happy medium between the two. This false dichotomy paralyzes both the person and the public. Neither sphere can then contribute to the construction of forms of living together that permit the full flowering of individuals and communities. But theorizing is capable of holding the subject/structure tension dialectically. Theorizing draws, as Lasch (1984) notes, on the Aristotelian idea of phronesis, or practical reason, which connects the moral character of the citizen to the good of the polis by making the pursuit of the latter a character-building activity for the former. So accustomed is the modern citizen to separating these two that moral questions tend to be considered personal matters and thus are driven out of the public realm. Meanwhile, public life is devoted to instrumental questions—to techne. To seek virtue and with it justice is to understand that the individual and the community must be known simultaneously. While not an easy task, steeped in ambiguity, it seems the only reasonable alternative to the perilous forgetfulness of either pole. “In an age that has forgotten history,” Lasch reminds us, “theory has to begin in remembrance” (1975, p. vii).

References


The Conception of Problem and the Role of Inquiry in Social Education

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Abstract

A persistent issue in teaching social studies is whether teacher or students select problems to be studied. Alternative conceptions of the meaning of problem influence the decision. Dewey rejected the position of positivism that problems simply emerge from the data, but his followers sometimes confused his positions on research in social science and problems as subjects of study in schoolrooms, particularly those child-centered theorists who saw the only legitimate problems as those posed by children. Earlier liberal critiques of positivist approaches are followed now by those of neoliberals and radicals. Neoliberals note failure to consider poetic, artistic, and other types of systematic thinking. Radicals or critical theorists stress concern about omission of problems for consideration that arise from political and social conditions, often because these problems are unrecognized or rejected as threatening to capitalistic interests. The various doctrinaire approaches have little appeal to most social studies educators. This paper proposes that the issue is not whether students or teachers select problems for study, but rather the distinction between competing problematics and their allied social problems.

One perennially contested issue in the teaching of social problems in the schools centers on whether the teacher should select the problem to be studied or allow students to choose. The traditional question has been to what extent social studies teachers ought to indoctrinate students. The prior questions of what constitutes the meaning of problem in the context of the social education classroom and what agenda competing notions of problem and problem solving may set for social education curricula and methods are left unresolved. It is possible to discover the bearings alternative conceptions of problem may have on social education through the analysis of three prevailing postures in social education theory: traditional (positivist), liberal/neoliberal, and radical. The consequence of such an analysis should be a more powerful understanding of the problem in social education today.

The Rejection of Positivism

The legacy of logical positivism has been amply detailed by historians and philosophers of science, and only a brief summary is in order here: Originat-
ing in Vienna at the turn of the century, the logical positivists had come to exercise a considerable influence by the thirties, when they began to disintegrate as a group. Many of these Vienna Circle philosophers moved to America and Great Britain. The major tenets of logical positivism and later logical empiricism were: a rejection of metaphysics as meaningless; a commitment to using the scientific method; a rejection of idealist or realist conceptions of truth; a concern for the logical character of language; and a desire to clear up the traditional problems of philosophy by desolving them. While logical positivism itself did not affect social education thinking regarding problems and problem solving, the popular interpretations of logical positivism did. The positivist paradigm in social education holds that there is a distinct separation between fact and value; that the role of social inquiry is like that of the natural sciences; that social problems exist independently of the observer; and that the only knowledge worthwhile is empirically verifiable.

The positivist paradigm is perhaps at its most dangerous when it is least understood. Thus, it is common to find social educators talking of testing, observations, and problems as if these were matters of an independent science, free from the value position of the inquirers. The realm of values teaching has felt this from such diverse programs as values clarification and Kohlbergian moral education. The wedge that is driven between expert and initiate tends to prolong and enlarge the assumptions that positivism fosters. Well-crafted experiments, data collection, and even ethnographic field research have felt the positivist explosion. The latest trend, naturalistic inquiry, is an effort to root positivistic inquiry in the domain of human valuing by introducing checks for investigator values and bias, and proposing that inquiry is still intersubjectively verifiable (Maxcy, Stanley, & Hickman, 1984).

There have been two responses to positivism in its strong as well as the variety of weaker versions: early 20th century liberal (and recent neoliberal) and radical. These labels are overly simplistic and it is increasingly the case that scholars are arguing they fail to reflect the true state of the art. Lasch (1984) rejects traditional political labels such as radical and conservative for failing to depict current debates, particularly with reference to survival, preferring instead categories such as the party of superego and the party of ego. Historically, in the first half of the 20th century the debate over positivism tended to be viewed from either a liberal position (of say, John Dewey) or from a radical stance of someone like George Counts (1934), Harold Rugg (1947) or Theodore Brameld (1971). More recently, neoliberals have come to criticize earlier liberals, while those who now espouse radicalism have a wider spectrum of affiliations when their theories are examined relative to specific curricular or research questions. The present essay will retain traditional nomenclature: liberal, neoliberal, and radical.

It therefore is not surprising that, in much of what passes as social edu-
cation theory dealing with the use of problems and problem solving in social education classrooms, there can be forced ambiguity. The contributions of John Dewey to the current debate comprise one such area of misunderstanding (Stanley & Maxcy, 1984). Scholars have failed to distinguish what Dewey said regarding problems and problem solving in the sciences from what he suggested were the functions social problems were to fulfill in the classroom. While Dewey was critical of the traditional positivist notion that research problems simply emerged from the data, some social educators take Dewey's own posture toward problem solving to be positivistic. In part, Dewey merits criticism for giving this impression, at least in part because many of his writings on science were laudatory. (His own version of pragmatism he called instrumentalism, which further confused the distinction between social and naturalistic science.) However, a careful reading of Dewey's work reveals that he held to two fundamentally distinct views on problem and problem solving (Dewey, 1933, 1938, 1944). On the one hand he wished social scientists to adopt the methods of the physical scientist in their work; on the other, he proposed that teachers in the classroom serve as guides in social problem inquiry. Unfortunately, Dewey's devotion to scientific method has been misread as a positivistic injunction that problems be seen as the sole property of elite scientists working in laboratories (Maxcy & Stanley, 1984).

Beyond this misunderstanding of the dichotomy between problems in laboratories and problems in schoolrooms, there was a very real misunderstanding of Dewey's laboratory notion of problem and problem solving. Perhaps more than any other liberal in the first half of the 20th century, Dewey represents the classical desire to see problems as central to scientific laboratory work. However in both classrooms and laboratories, Dewey believed that a prior condition for any problem was a problematic. He wrote:

The unsettled or indeterminate situation might have been called a problematic situation. This name would have been, however, proleptic and anticipatory. The indeterminate situation becomes problematic in the very process of being subjected to inquiry. The undeterminate situation comes into existence from existential causes just as does, say, the organic imbalance of hunger. There is nothing intellectual or cognitive in the existence of such situations, although they are the necessary condition of cognitive operations or inquiry. In themselves they are pre-cognitive . . . (Dewey, 1938, pp. 107–108)

Dewey goes on to say that a problem is not a task to be performed which a person puts upon himself, or one that is set for him by others, like a so-called arithmetical problem in school work. He argues: “A problem represents the partial transformation by inquiry of a problematic situation into a determinate situation. It is a familiar and significant saying that a problem well put is half-solved,” (Dewey, 1938, p. 108). And once a problem is well
stated, much has gone on that leads to the solution, he adds. From this we cannot assume that Dewey collapsed problem solving in science with that of problem solving in schoolrooms. Moreover, he distinguishes between a problematic situation and a problem. The former is rough and ill-defined; the latter more narrow and specified.

The inquiry into social problems as a particular species of problematic, Dewey found dominated by two attitudes. At one end of the spectrum were persons occupied with administration or management of practical affairs, who assume that problems are already determined and set; all that was needed was the best method to solve them. Habermas (1973) more recently has talked of the enslavement of modern public administration to delivering the goods, rarely if ever raising questions as to whether a particular policy is worth operationalizing in the first place. The stress is laid on finding methods and techniques of analytic observation and comparison, so that the problematic situation may be resolved into distinct problems. At the other end of the spectrum were those who argue that the facts are out there and need only to be observed, assembled, and arranged in order to produce meaningful generalizations. Here the stress is not on the process or technique, but automatic and operationalized specification. The so-called data-driven models for inquiry fit this latter category today and seem to proliferate where data are translated to mean statistics.

Dewey's solution to this dichotomy was to push for a better understanding of the meaning of problem:

A genuine problem is one set by existential problematic situations. In social inquiry, genuine problems are set only by actual social situations which are themselves conflicting and confused. Social conflicts and confusions exist in fact before problems for inquiry exist. The latter are intellectualization in inquiry of these practical troubles and difficulties. The intellectual determinations can be tested and warranted only by doing something about the problematic existential situations out of which they arise, so as to transform it in the direction of an ordered situation. The connection of social inquiry, as to social data and as to conceptual generalizations, with practice is intrinsic not external. Any problem of scientific inquiry that does not grow out of actual (or 'practical') social conditions is factitious; it is arbitrarily set by the inquirer instead of being objectively produced and controlled. . . . In fine problems with which inquiry into social subject-matter is concerned most, if they satisfy the conditions of scientific method, (1) grow out of actual social tensions, needs, 'troubles'; (2) have their subject-matter determined by the conditions that are material means of bringing about a unified situation, and (3) be related to some hypothesis, which is a plan and policy for existential resolution of the conflicting social situation. (Dewey, 1938, pp. 498–499)
Failure to treat problems in this manner would result in hardly more than a form of intellectual busy work, Dewey reasoned. Whatever is observed can only be understood in terms of projected results of action. Here Dewey at once put to rest the argument of the positivists that the deployment of scientific method would end conflict and confusion, while simultaneously alerting reformers to the necessity of seeing social problems as practical social situations and consequences. Dewey went to great lengths to tag the social problem to a real social indeterminacy.

But all of this was to see some kind of link-up of scientific method with social science problematic and problems. When Dewey talked of curricular problems, he did not conceive of students as social scientists per se. He argued instead that teachers were to aid students in helping phrase social problems on their own terms. Dewey wrote of the "necessity of situations and problems that are vitally real to students" (1933, pp. 227-228). The teacher was to be well educated in the knowledge domain to be taught, but also sensitive to the attitudes and postures of students so as to monitor their thinking processes. This facilitation was heavy-handed insofar as the teacher had to steer children clear of dead-end methods and illogical thinking (Dewey, 1933, 273-279).

It was clear to Dewey that the student was not necessarily the one to conceive of an educative problem for study in the classroom. The teacher might well select the problems. However, Dewey was concerned that such problems be connected with the student's present experience, be within their capacity, and arouse in the learner a search for new knowledge and ideas. Where some contemporary theorists in social education go astray (e.g., Barth & Shermis, 1979) is in misreading Dewey's injunction that the problem arouse something in the learner. Dewey did not say that the problem must be the student's own to prompt such arousal. Students could very well be moved to inquire by a teacher-selected problem.

The followers of Dewey derived differing educational directives from his formulations. What problem meant in educational terms took on new categorical meanings that have impacted on the present polarities in social education theory. One group of Dewey disciples focused on the primacy of incidental learning. Here learning was taken to be a means to an end, and not the end itself. Students were to see the connection between the project or task and what was studied in school. The purpose of problem solving, given this view, was to give children the opportunity to try out in practical projects whatever meanings emerged from the course of problem solving. A second group of Dewey followers stressed that subject matter was essential during certain periods of the child's development. Students were to master these subject matters and modes of thinking in order to do future intellectual work. The disciplinary studies were not clearly demarcated, but these theorists believed that rigorous and progressive undertakings were essential for the child (Childs, 1956).
It is important to see that while Dewey served as an intellectual father of problem-solving strategies in social education, he must be understood as talking on two levels. First, he is speaking to social scientists whom he would have adopt the problem-solving approaches of the hard scientists. Here his advice serves to free the inquirers from the dictates of authoritarianism. Second, when he is talking about problem solving in the elementary and secondary school social education classroom, his advice is quite different. Children are not to be conceived of as miniscientists. Students are not expected to discover worthwhile social problems on their own. The teacher provides a vital role in helping children either by dictating problems for study or by helping refine those the students may originate themselves. Students were to learn the problem-solving skills through the orchestrated activities provided by the teacher.

Thus, current debates regarding the use of problems and problem solving in social education have been confused where social education theorists have taken Dewey's recommendations for adult social scientists and applied them to the child in the classroom. The picture has been further muddied by followers of Dewey who seek to adopt a child-centered philosophy in which the only legitimate problems are those the children pose themselves, versus the subject-matter theorists who see the teacher inducting the children into worthwhile problem areas and teaching them problem-solving strategies.

**Neoliberal and Radical Critiques**

Today, critics of the Deweyite problem-solving tradition fall into two camps: neoliberal and radical. The neoliberals have raised a number of interesting questions that strike to the heart of the scientific method and problem-solving assumptions within older style Deweyite liberalism. "What of the attempts to assimilate all reflective thought to the problem-solving mode?" they ask. Social education approaches that restrict reflective activities to simple and gross sociological problems approaches seem to abort other types of thinking that have at least as strong a claim to instructional worthwhileness. The narrower focus on certain social problems tends to rule out poetic, artistic and other kinds of systematic thinking. Certain difficulties emerge for Deweyite problem-solving strategies, when we discover that children may work long and hard only to discover that they have been laboring on a pseudoproblem. While genuine thinking goes on it is not always in response to a problem at all. Thus, we are left with the difficult task of trying to sort out genuine from pseudoproblems and real inquiry from daydreams, discomforts, and myth-making.

Scheffler (1968) suggests that the emphasis on initial problematic contexts of the learner even from a methodological point of view seems to underplay certain important educational values. Foremost among these is the creation of new problems for the learner, the introduction of unsettled situations where none existed before. The inquirer does not approach educational
tasks within the limits of problems solely, but also with standards of relative importance of problems. Such standards are used as guides for the creation of perceptions that are broader than those of the learner, Scheffler argues (1968, pp. 108-110). He goes on to point out that there is a real difficulty for Dewey's educational liberalism in our culture. We are increasingly distracted from and find it easier to avoid significant problems and to focus on narrow and personal problems instead. Thus, problem solving alone will not do it, for what we require is a broad and alert perception of significant difficulties we face (Scheffler, 1968, p. 109).

It may be argued, as the radical empiricist Feyerabend (1978) does with respect to normal science, that the actual development of institutions, ideas, practices, etc., often does not start from a problem at all. Rather, the inquiry begins with some "... irrelevant activity, such as playing, which, as a side effect, leads to developments which later on can be interpreted as solutions to unrealized problems ..." (Feyerabend, 1978, pp. 175-176). If, as Feyerabend indicates, "... science is much more 'sloppy' and 'irrational' that its methodological image ...", then social education is even more sloppy and irrational (p. 179). Given Feyerabend's view, the emphasis on problems and problem solving in the social education classroom is overdone.

Child's (1956) characterization of the prostitution of Dewey's true version of problem solving omits a third group of Dewey followers, loosely labeled radicals, who in the 1930s and thereafter came to argue that scientific methods ought to be employed by children in the schools to deal with social problems, with such problems being identified by society as problems. Given this view, championed by Counts and others, social education problems neither arose from child interest, nor from teacher imposition, but from the dictates of society. Today, radical social education thinkers like the critical theorists wish to argue that in fact schools and teachers often overlook these real problems, with the result that the vital questions never get asked. Given the radical viewpoint, a revolution in thinking is required wherein the positivist notions of science are overhauled along with the liberal pluralistic view of problems arising out of so-called democratic social contexts.

Popkewitz (1984) sees current radical thought as drawing upon two differing strands of the Western intellectual tradition: (1) Marxist criticisms of capitalism and (2) liberal sociology of knowledge responses to Marxian analysis. In part the critical theory viewpoint seeks to understand the assumptions and bearings of rapid technological change, the role of mass communications, and the development of institutions as they impact on private and personal lives. The critical sciences are interested in the political implications of societal arrangements, the demystification of patterns of knowledge, and social conditions that prompt domination and restrict human possibilities (Popkewitz, 1984, p. 17).
Radical social philosophers of education conceive of the problematic not only as questions regarding social inquiry but also of questions not asked, as well as the relationship between these two modes. For a critical pedagogy to emerge, it would be necessary to explore the ways in which traditional positivist and liberal social education theorists like Dewey represented certain interests as they set the agenda of so-called social problems (Giroux, 1983, p. 48). A rich distillate of this radical view is that it offers new ways to see concrete social problems of quite different types within the schooling context. Attention to matters of hegemony, for example, allow Apple (1978) to provide a richer interpretation of curriculum. The political and economic aspects of schooling become primary, while social questions of abortion, equal access to schooling, etc., are derivative (Apple, 1979).

Finally, the radical critique does not stop at understanding. There is a normative call for teacher reform as well. Giroux (1983) is aware that critical theory must inform both culture at large and the teacher in the classroom. We cannot expect children in social education classrooms to perceive social problems as functions of hegemony or capitalism, unless the teacher comes to see them as such. The radicalization of the teaching profession would yield the reform of the educational system, it is believed. The radical teacher, who has a radical vision, has thus the responsibility of presenting the proper social problems to the students in the class, those problems the teacher sees as reflecting the deeper ills of the social system. Hence, we come full circle with the call for indoctrination of social problems and the use of rational scientific methods to solve them. In the end, the far right and the far left come together at the schoolhouse door.

The Concept of the Problematic: Conclusions and Recommendations

As we have noted, the most popular way to view the issue of social problems teaching is to polarize social problem origination between students and teachers. Does the student arrive at his or her own social problem in order to legitimate inquiry? Or, does the teacher set the social problem because the child is immature, unacquainted with the literature, or too unskilled to recognize the social problem as a problem? To avoid the charge of imposition or indoctrination, social educators have sought to allow students to select their own social problems for study. However, the student-centered approach systematically fails to take advantage of the funded knowledge that the social scientist (and the teacher) may provide in social problem characterizations. Both of these approaches have been criticized by radicals because they avoid the introduction of deeper level problems of capitalism and hegemony.

The current difficulty in social education theorizing is one of being placed between the posture of giving lip service to a liberal Deweyite view of problem and problem solving, and adopting a radical posture that overthrows Deweyite liberalism in favor of anarchy, romanticism and extreme sub-
jectivism; or rejecting liberalism in favor of a neopositivism. Neither option seems particularly attractive to the social educator. Moreover, the social educator choosing some version of Deweyite liberalism runs the risk of epistemological relativism; choosing the more phenomenological approach yields either an anarchistic or romantic vision, or the scientific approach of the radicals leading to an academic authoritarianism as doctrinaire as positivism. There is a way out of this impasse, however.

First, we must recognize that what has passed as problem solving or the problems approach in social education has rested on a naive notion of what role problems play in inquiry versus learning. Following Dewey, it is essential to sort out problems as they operate in scientific laboratory work or as used by social scientists in university settings, from problems utilized in elementary and secondary school social education classrooms. Clearly, in the latter situation, problems have a pedagogical importance, in the sense that they ought to teach children something in the process of being worked on in the classroom. One would almost be warranted in saying that problems in a social education classroom are artificial since they are extracted from the society-at-large for the purpose of teaching children something about that society. This pedagogical responsibility seems to have limitations as well. For example, it is questionable whether working on problems in a social education classroom ought to aid in character development as some Deweyites argued, or whether they ought to lead to a commitment to social action as others have reasoned. Raup, Axtelle, Benne, and Smith (1943, pp. 270–271) wrote, “No educational program can be adequate for the discipline of the character for practical deliberation which does not provide generously for situations in which the learner is thus challenged to personal commitment.” This is not to say that children should not develop character and/or commitment, but rather that it is bordering on indoctrination and revolutionary incubation to call for them to come away from problemsolving activities with readymade characters, willing to chart or take a course of action. The list of reasons why this methodological position is dangerous is lengthy, but the artificiality of problem selection and use in classrooms should indicate the potential harm such views would have for character development and social action.

It would be equally naive to allow social education problems to originate in purely personal terms. Social education must stress the social nature of problems. The followers of Dewey who wished to move away from child-centered inquiry were correct in arguing that problems that were the child’s own could very well be meaningless to others in the classroom. Moreover, what is to be accomplished by treating each child’s whims, feelings, and emotional ups and downs as serious academic issues in need of collective solution? The teacher has the responsibility for keeping the class on larger, more fundamental questions, and personal problems have little to add to the larger curricular mission of the school or funded learning for the future. In addition, it is unlikely that the child learns more about problem solving
as he or she deals with personal problems than would be gathered from more socially oriented problematic inquiry. The personalistic concern for pupil problems as the only viable construct for social education classroom learning fails to satisfy any of the criteria for serious academic inquiry and seems to reveal the current deeper concern for narcissism.

All of this is not to say that pupils may not provide input into the casting of the social problems to be investigated in the classroom. Rather, it points to the difficulties attached to originating problems in pupil experiences solely. Social education takes place within the social context of the school, with social problems arising out of a social problematic, as Dewey called it. It is the nature of this problematic context and precisely how problems are set within it that is currently at stake in social education theorizing. Here the radicals are correct in pointing out that the larger ideological context (the problematic), is ignored as teachers go about setting forth problems to be studied. However, what the radicals fail to acknowledge is the fact that there are plural problematics and that choosing a particular problematic tends to insulate inquiry and problem solving against other problematics. The ideological view that capitalism is at fault should be set against the problematic that declares we must look at feminist concerns as primary. To some extent problematics may overlap, but they may be quite distinct as well. For example, from an historic point of view the problems of female inequality antedate capitalism. Hence, a Marxist critique may be one of a number of problematic characterizations that can warrant a problem-setting and problem-solving curricular program.

Thus, a social education philosophy ought to treat the larger problematic context if it is to do an adequate job of depicting problem treatment, teaching and problem-solving strategies of the program. The development, acquisition and criticism of problem meanings in social education shifts the burden from one of justifying the locus of problem origination to the rational characterization of problems in the context in which they are set forth.

Understanding the problematic entails an understanding of such matters as: (1) the basic metaphysical and ontological commitments of participants in a society; (2) the kinds of relations that exist between basic entities in the society; (3) a grasp of what counts as an explanation; (4) knowing what general laws govern the situation; and (5) knowing the methods and methodology of inquiry. The problematic thus makes sense of the problems studied as well as those not deemed worthy of study. It sets the limits around the domain of problem inquiry and problem solving (Althusser & Balibar, 1970, p. 41).

While the traditional positivist position sought to overlook the problematic, the liberal accepted the fundamental contextual conditions that enabled it, and the radical seeks to overhaul those conditions. Both the liberal and radical take the problematic seriously. If the difficulty is one of
understanding, then the fundamental task facing problem selection and
problem solving is epistemological. Therefore, we are confronted with the
matter of finding a perspective from which to view the problematic and con-
sequent problems that is not contaminated and is conceptually adequate,
sufficiently powerful to regulate problem-solving processes. The liberal and
neoliberal accept the notion of objective science and human rationality pro-
viding such a secure view; this they share with the positivist. The radical
focuses on self-understanding or cultural action as preferred discourses to
begin the search for a platform upon which to rest. Any neutral explication
of problem in social education carries in with it some new problematic, and
the nest of assumptions outlined above. Granted the impossibility of exiting
this relativist position, what counts as an adequate social problem? The
answer to this question can only be that social problems are relative to the
social problematic from which they are logically distilled. By introducing
this pluralistic and relativistic element to this discussion of theorizing about
social problems and problem solving, the best elements of the liberal, neo-
liberal and radical positions can be preserved, while providing a more
powerful and meaningful conception of social problem for the classroom.

A new paradigmatic position may be constructed, therefore, that pos-
sesses the best of all the theoretical positions discussed in the foregoing:
Social problems may be seen as derived by teachers from social problematic
contexts, with such problems being subject to student revision and reinter-
pretation, with the goal of seeking solutions rather than building character
or yielding action upon the part of students. Moreover, such problems are
subject to problem-solving methods that grow out of the problems and the
problematic, with the aim of promoting the development of thinking skills.
It is admitted that differing problematics will provide differing fundamental
answers as to: (1) the basic metaphysical and ontological commitments of
participants in a society; (2) the kinds of relations that exist between basic
entities in the society; (3) what counts as an explanation; (4) the general laws
governing the situation; and (5) the methods and methodology of inquiry.
However, this in turn is seen as fundamental to problematic inquiry and
knowledge.

Hence, the debate concerning the role of problems and problem solving
in social education has focused on the wrong players and issues. Rather
than being a matter of indoctrination of social problems by the teacher ver-
sus the free selection of social problems by students, the primary issue ought
to be seen as revolving around the distinction between competing alternative
problematics and their allied social problems. Attention must be focused on
the larger problematic frameworks with their competing assumptions. What
we have termed the problematic is increasingly being called into question by
radicals and neoliberals alike. If debate is to enhance our understanding of
the problem of problem in social education, it must attend to this new
ground.
References


An Alternative to Abandoning the Social Studies

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Abstract

An alternative is developed to Egan's (1983) proposal for the abandonment of the social studies. This alternative is based on an examination of the distinctive character of the social studies, which revealed that the social studies lacks integrity as a separate field in its own right. An examination of the reasons why the social studies lacks this integrity provided insights for the development of a proposal for modification. The lack of a limiting function inherent in statements of aims that have been advanced as criteria for selecting content may have been the main source of disorder in attempts to specify social studies content. Since social studies aims fail to provide constraints, it is proposed that the social sciences be used to provide constraints on these aims. To this end descriptions of examples of the scholarly parameters of selected social sciences have been advanced, and the statements of aims have been reformulated to make them consistent with and attainable within these parameters.

The nature of the social studies has been a subject of debate throughout most of this century, but this dialogue seems to have done little to clarify the boundaries of this field of study. In the name of citizenship education the social studies has taken on functions that have been primarily the domain of the home, the church, and the government. Within the field an uneasy truce has existed between the demands of citizenship education and the demands of scholarly content.

Egan aroused much controversy by claiming that the social studies "has not worked, does not work, and cannot work" (1983, p. 190). He views the educative value of the social science disciplines to be eroded when they become handmaidens to the socializing purposes reflected in the statements of aims for the social studies (1983, pp. 198–203). This is the main argument underlying his proposal for abandonment of the social studies. While I agree with his basic premise, I am not prepared to accept it as a basis for abandonment. Criticism can also lead to modification. What I attempt to do in this paper is to develop an alternative to Egan's proposal for abandonment.
The purpose of this investigation was two-fold: (1) to determine whether the works of selected social studies scholars reveal the distinctive character of the social studies, and (2) to derive implications which provide the basis for a proposal for modification of the social studies. The term *distinctive character* is used here to refer to the subject matter that makes one field of study different and distinctive from another (Silva, 1976, pp. 442-443).

Throughout its history the social studies has been associated with the social sciences. The social sciences, including history, geography, economics, sociology, political science, anthropology, and psychology, have been its primary source of content. Mainly in the last two decades, speakers for the social studies came to view its content as broader than that of the social sciences. Apart from the disciplines from which it draws, the social studies may not have a separate domain. To determine whether the social studies should be recognized as a field of study in its own right, its relationship to the social sciences and to the other disciplines from which it draws its content was examined. This investigation included an examination of the aims for the social studies, and was limited to those aims that have been advanced as criteria for selecting content. Silva (1976, p. 443) claims that a field of study can gain distinctiveness by developing criteria for borrowing content and by using these criteria as a basis for converting the content of other fields and disciplines into its own content, with criteria being statements that set limits or boundaries on the content to be borrowed. Aims for the social studies that have been advanced as criteria for selecting content were examined to determine whether they serve as a basis for converting the content of the social sciences and of other fields into the content of the social studies. Aims for instruction were excluded from consideration because they were not pertinent to this investigation. They do not provide a basis for determining the parameters of a field of study.

The review of the literature on social studies was not intended to be all-inclusive or exhaustive. The review was limited to the works of major committees and commissions on the social studies and of selected scholars that were pertinent to the question of the distinctive character of the social studies as a field of study. Excluded from consideration were the works of a number of notable social studies scholars that address instruction in the social studies, a rationale for the social studies, or the history of the social studies independent of a view of its distinctive character. Also excluded were the works of social studies scholars that fall within a particular view of the substance of the social studies but are not recognized as formulations of that view.

The works of selected scholars in the social studies that are pertinent to the question of the distinctive character of the social studies can be grouped into two categories: (1) positions that view the social studies as a field separate from the social sciences; and (2) positions that equate the social studies with the social sciences. The debate regarding the question of the
distinctive character of the social studies revolves around the relationship between the social studies and the social sciences. This two-camp division is a useful device for capturing the different orientations to treat this question. From this examination of the integrity of the social studies as a field of study emerged inferences which served as a basis for a proposal for modification. While the aims for the social studies examined failed to serve as criteria for selecting content, this does not constitute an argument for their abandonment. This proposal describes an approach to modifying these statements of aims to bring them in line with the scholarly integrity of the disciplines through which they are to be achieved. Since this study revealed that these statements of aims failed to set limits on the content of the social studies, those limits must be sought elsewhere. In the content of this proposal, the disciplines through which the aims for the social studies are to be achieved have been limited to the traditional and primary source of content for the social studies, namely, the social sciences.

The preoccupation of the social studies with statements of aims is synonymous with its preoccupation with citizenship education. These aims reflect divergent perceptions of approaches to achieving good citizenship. In the name of citizenship education the social studies has promised more than it can deliver. Testimony to this view was provided by a survey of civic education in ten nations. This survey revealed that "nowhere has the system proved capable of producing the ideal goal of a well-informed citizenry, with democratic attitudes and values, supportive of government policies and interested in civic affairs" (Torney, Oppenheim, & Farnen, 1975, p. 21). This problem points to the need to bring the statements of aims for the social studies in line with what is realistically attainable through the content of the social studies. To this end a description of the scholarly parameters of selected social sciences has been presented, and each statement of aim has been modified to make it consistent with and realistically attainable within the scholarly parameters of a selected social science discipline.

Each statement of aim was treated separately. The distinctive character of a particular social science discipline to which the substance of this aim seemed pertinent was described. No attempt was made to determine if this view captures the theorizing in that discipline, the magnitude of this question necessarily placing it outside the scope of this study. This description of the distinctive character of a selected social science discipline was followed by a modification of the statement of aim by eliminating its socializing dimension and reformulating its intellectual dimension to bring it in line with the scholarly parameters of this discipline.

Social Studies as Separate from the Social Sciences

Several scholars and commissions have made a concerted effort to establish the social studies as a field separate from, but closely related to, the social sciences. A number of attempts have been made to develop criteria
for selecting content from the social studies. Here we have an opportunity to examine the capability of statements of aims for the social studies to serve as criteria for selecting content.

The Committee on Social Studies of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, whose report is credited with giving official sanction to the social studies (United States Bureau of Education, 1916), claimed to differentiate the social studies from other studies on the basis of social content (1916, p. 9). The basis for selection was to be the pupil’s “immediate need of such mental and social nourishment and training as will enable him to adjust himself to his present social environment and conditions” (1916, p. 11). Mental nourishment the social sciences claim to produce; social nourishment they disclaim. While selected social sciences provide insight into the process of social adjustment, they do not claim to bring about improvement in this area. No direct correlation between the study of the social sciences and the process of social adjustment has been established. There is more to the process of social adjustment than knowledge of the social sciences. If the relationship between knowledge of the social sciences and the process of social adjustment is unclear, then this aim does not provide a basis for determining the content to be borrowed from the social sciences. Therefore, this aim does not meet the requirements of a criterion that sets limits for converting the content of the social sciences into the content of the social studies.

Engle (1960) proposed that decision-making should afford a structure for the social studies (p. 301). He identified selectivity as one of the features that distinguishes the social studies from the social sciences, the basis for selection being the process of decision-making in which the citizen engages (p. 301). His description of this process as dealing with “public and private matters of social concern” (p. 301) is too general to provide boundaries. Having failed to limit the decision-making process, the relationship between this process and the content of the social sciences cannot be determined. This statement of aim is so vague that it does not provide a basis for determining which of the social sciences is relevant to the social studies, much less the content within them which is relevant. Furthermore, Engle’s argument that the process of decision-making involves more than knowledge of the social sciences (1960, p. 301) contributes to the ambiguity of the relationship between the statement of aim and the content of the social sciences. This aim is not capable of setting limits on the content to be borrowed from the social sciences, and, therefore, it cannot serve as a criterion for selecting content.

A committee of the National Council for the Social Studies (1962) recommended that the goal of developing “desirable socio-civic and personal behavior” (1962, p. 10) be used as a criterion for determining the content from the social sciences to be included in the social studies. The committee did not address the problem of agreement on the traits that characterize
desirable socio-civic and personal behavior in a pluralistic society nor the relationship between such behavior and knowledge of the social sciences. Their failure to set limits on the process of developing desirable socio-civic and personal behavior makes it impossible to determine the relationship between this process and the content of the social sciences. On the basis of this process we cannot determine what content from the social sciences is to be included and excluded. The vagueness of this statement of aim precludes its serving as a criterion for selecting content. Further, the committee's argument that the development of desirable socio-civic and personal behavior "grows out of the values, ideals, beliefs, and attitudes which people hold" (p. 316) suggests that this process involves more than knowledge of the social sciences, and the argument contributes further to the ambiguity of its relationship to the social sciences.

Johnson (1969) identified improvement in value judgments as the chief aim of the social studies (1969, p. 10). Revision of the social studies was to be achieved by using this aim "to draw upon and draw together" data from the social sciences into the "synthesis" of knowledge which constitutes the social studies (1969, p. 11). Johnson did not address the question of why the aim of improving value judgments falls within the domain of the social studies. Unless value judgments are specified and made amenable to validation, the relationship between value judgments and knowledge of any discipline cannot be determined. The social sciences look at value judgments from a descriptive point of view and therefore do not constitute a basis for the justification of value judgments. Further, improvement in value judgments requires something more than knowledge of any discipline. If justification of value judgments is the function knowledge serves in relation to improving value judgments, and if this function does not fall within the domain of the social sciences, then it can be argued that the aim of improving value judgments is incompatible with the content of the social sciences. An aim that is incompatible with the domain of content from which it is to draw cannot serve as a basis for setting limits on the content to be borrowed from that domain. The vagueness of this statement of aim combines with its incompatibility with the content of the social sciences to prevent it from serving as a criterion for selecting the content from the social sciences that is to constitute the social studies.

Massialas and Cox's (1966) effort to differentiate the social studies from the social sciences did not involve an attempt to specify criteria for selecting content. They argue that reflective inquiry constitutes a beginning description of "the emerging field of social studies" (1966, p. 64). The social sciences are to provide the facts, the evidence, the hypotheses, and the generalizations for use in inquiry in the social studies (1966, p. 65). Their claim that the social sciences provide limitations for inquiry in the social studies (1966, p. 65) is cancelled by their failure to specify criteria for selecting the content of the social sciences that is to serve as the substance of inquiry.

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Without the specification of criteria for selecting content, there is no basis of differentiating the social studies from the social sciences.

These attempts to establish the social studies as a field of study that borrows its scholarly content exclusively from the social sciences, but which at the same time is different and distinct from the social sciences, are judged as unsuccessful. A clear recognition that more was being asked of the social sciences than they had to offer precipitated the development of more recent proposals to make the social studies a broader field than the social sciences. Engle (1971) and the National Council for the Social Studies (1971, 1979) were major speakers for this view. While each admitted that the content of the social sciences was neither necessary nor sufficient for achieving the aims for the social studies, each maintained that part of the content of the social studies was to be borrowed from the social sciences. This is the view of the social studies that is dominant in the social studies literature in the 1970s and 1980s.

Engle (1971) departed from his previous position that the content of the social studies was to be drawn exclusively from the social sciences. He argued that the social studies is a broader field than the social sciences in that it attempts "to fuse scientific knowledge with ethical, philosophical, religious, and social considerations which arise in the process of decision-making as practiced by the citizen" (1971, p. 282). Within this framework he probed the parameters of the social studies. As in 1960 he used the process of decision-making in which the citizen engages as a basis for selecting content. In his quest for the content that has a contribution to make to the grounding of beliefs that underlie the decision-making process, he found it necessary to include content from all of the social sciences, literature, the so-called serious arts, religion, philosophy, ethics, and the experiences of youth outside of school (1971, p. 288).

Here again we see problems associated with attempts to use decision making in which the citizen engages as a basis for selecting content. Engle's description of this process as dealing with "social goals and the means of their attainment" (1971, p. 286) is so broad and vague that it is incapable of providing limits for determining social studies content to be included or excluded. His claim that the information that is relevant to the decision-making process must be decided by the citizen (1971, p. 284) further compromises the limiting function of the decision-making process by making it subjective. Finally, his view of the democratic ideology as a given in the social studies enterprise (1971, p. 285) requires the use of the content of the social sciences and the humanities in a manner that is not compatible with the scholarly orientations of these disciplines. They claim neither to advocate nor oppose a particular political ideology.

While Engle's 1971 position constitutes an advance beyond his 1960 position by accommodating the evaluational dimension as well as the factual
dimension of the decision-making process, problems with the use of this process as a basis for selecting content hampered his attempt to formulate parameters for the social studies.

According to the National Council for the Social Studies, (1971, 1979) the content of the social studies was to be drawn from “the social sciences, the humanities, the natural sciences, the communications media, and the perceptions of students . . .” (1971, p. 857; 1979, p. 263). The dual purposes of functioning “rationally and humanely” (1971, p. 857; 1979, p. 263) were to be used as the criteria for selecting content. Functioning rationally is basic to the pursuit of knowledge in any discipline or field of study, and would exclude no body of scholarly content from the social studies. Functioning humanely is addressed by the humanities and the social sciences, but it is understanding or explanation of humaneness and not improved humane conduct that these disciplines claim to produce. No direct correlation between knowledge and functioning humanely has been established. The authors’ claim that knowledge is to be used in conjunction with “thinking, valuing, and social participation” (1971, p. 857; 1979, p. 263) indicates that they do not view knowledge as a sufficient basis for functioning rationally and humanely. If functioning rationally excludes no body of scholarly content for the social studies and if the relationship between knowledge and humane functioning is not clear, the dual purposes of functioning rationally and humanely do not serve as criteria which provide a basis for setting limits on the content to be included in the social studies. The boundaries of the social studies remain unclear.

Excluded from consideration were the works of such prominent social studies scholars as Hunt and Metcalf (1955) and Oliver and Shaver (1966) that address aims for instruction as opposed to aims as criteria for converting the content of the social sciences and other fields into the content of the social studies.

Hunt and Metcalf claimed that “the foremost aim of instruction in the social studies is to help students examine reflectively issues in closed areas of American culture” (1955, p. 223). They looked at content in the context of the teaching learning process rather than as the substance that gives the social studies its distinctive character. They describe content as “the data of acts of reflective thought” (1955, p. 214), and while this content is likely to “cut across traditional subject-matter boundaries” (1955, p. 226), it could also be taught within the standard subjects that constitute the social studies.

Oliver and Shaver (1966) developed a jurisprudential framework for teaching public issues in the high school. They claimed that the central aim of the jurisprudential approach to teaching the social studies is “the clarification of evaluative and legal issues” (1966, p. 115). They argue that “the essence of jurisprudential teaching is the nature of the discourse the teacher chooses to have with his students” (1966, p. 239) and that this type of teach-
ing can be used "within the context of the scope and sequence of practically any social studies program (1966, p. 239). Therefore, this position too fails to address the distinctive character of the social studies.

**Social Studies as Social Sciences**

There is a considerable body of literature that does not attempt to treat the social studies as a field of study in its own right. A number of scholars equate the social studies with the social sciences.

The Commission on the Social Studies (Beard, 1932) used the terms social studies and social science interchangeably, but later, in their *Conclusions and Recommendations* (American Historical Association, 1934) the commission made no reference to the social studies as such. This part of the report instead addressed social science and instruction in social science. The Commissioners describe both the social studies and the social sciences as dealing with human affairs (Beard, 1932, pp. 13-18). They maintained that the tendency of the social studies to cut across the boundaries of the social science disciplines was not to be interpreted to mean that a new "social science had been created, a synthesis transcending the disciplines themselves" (Beard, 1932, pp. 20-21). Rather, they equated the content of the social studies with that of the social sciences.

Wesley (1942) admitted to being heavily influenced by the reports of this Commission on the Social Studies. Like that body, he equated the content of the social studies with that of the social sciences. This was evident in his claim that the two "do not differ in kind; they differ only in level of difficulty" (1942, p. 21). He identified the subject matter of both to be human relationships (1942, p. 6). He described the social studies as "those portions or aspects of the social sciences that have been selected and adapted for use in the schools or in other instructional situations" (1942, p. 25). The difference between the two is not substantive in character.

In the 1960s, as a part of a general curriculum reform movement, the primacy of the social sciences was reasserted. Keller (1964) went so far as to call for the elimination of the term social studies altogether. Having failed to identify substantive differences between the social studies and the social sciences, he thought it appropriate to replace the term social studies with history and the social sciences (1964, p. 41). Berelson (1962) suggested that reform ought to be in the direction of emphasizing the best available knowledge from the social sciences as a means to the end of producing responsible citizenship (1962, p. 6). Given that he regarded the pursuit of knowledge of the social sciences for its own sake to provide a fundamental intellectual preparation which is the best preparation for citizenship, he clearly equated the substance of the social studies with that of the social sciences. Bernstein (1965, p. 79) added further support to the trend to equate the social studies with the social sciences by advocating the delineation of the "structural perspectives" of the various social sciences and the organization of these per-
spectives into an "integrated social studies curriculum" for the secondary school. He argued that each of the social sciences has "a significant and unique perspective to bring to bear on an examination of society" (1965, p. 30).

Citizenship education, when it was addressed, was seen as a by-product of knowledge of the social sciences. The assumed association between citizenship education and knowledge of the social sciences was not subjected to systematic examination.

Fenton's (1967) work on the new social studies and that of Morrissett and Stevens (1971) on social sciences in the schools fell within the position that equates the social studies with the social sciences. Instead of formulating a view of this position, they addressed the question of a rationale for offering the social sciences in the social studies program (Fenton, 1967, p. 6; Morrissett & Stevens, 1971, p. 4).

Barth and Shermis (1970) and Barr, Barth, and Shermis (1977) identified three competing traditions within the social studies which describe different modes of selecting content. These traditions are social studies as citizenship transmission, as social science, and as reflective inquiry (Barth & Shermis, 1970, p. 744; Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, p. 59).

In the tradition of the social studies as citizenship transmission, content was described in a number of ways. First, the content "either is based on tradition or is selected and organized by an authority . . ." (Barth & Shermis, 1970, p. 746). The authors did not identify the content based on tradition. In the more recently created branches of the social sciences they relied on the consensus of authorities. In this case they recommended topics that reflect the conceptual structure of the social sciences (Barth & Shermis, 1970, p. 745). Later, content was described as the knowledge, assumptions, and beliefs that characterize different conceptions of citizenship that teachers wish students to share (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, pp. 59–61). In this case content was to be subjectively determined by the teacher. Finally, content was limited to American history. It was to provide the knowledge and appreciation of our heritage that is an indispensable ingredient in preparing good citizens (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1978, pp. 49–50). In the context of this tradition, content to facilitate the preparation of good citizenship was either subjectively determined by the teacher on the basis of a conception of good citizenship or it was drawn from history or the more recently created branches of the social sciences. In the case where the content of citizenship transmission was not subjectively determined, this tradition reflects the view of scholars who regarded the content of the social studies to be drawn from the social sciences. It also reflects their attempts to use statements of aims relating to citizenship education as criteria for selecting the content that is to constitute the social studies.

In the context of the tradition of social studies as social science, emphasis was placed either on knowledge of the products of social science research or
on the mode of inquiry of a particular social science (Barth & Shermis, 1970, p. 748; Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, p. 63). The authors admitted that emphasis on knowledge for its own sake makes the relationship between the social sciences and citizenship education ambiguous. This tradition reflects the works of the speakers for the social studies who equate the social studies with the social sciences.

Reflective inquiry is the tradition in which social studies is described as citizenship preparation, with citizenship defined as a process of making decisions in a socio-political context (Barth & Shermis, 1970, p. 750; Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, p. 64). Content was identified as the “data of inquiry” (Barth & Shermis, 1970, p. 750). Only those problems “identified by students as their problems” (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977, p. 66) warrant consideration. The subjective nature of the selection process was evident from the authors’ claim that “content is based upon whatever students consider to be in their best self-interest” (Barth & Shermis, 1970, p. 750) and that it was to be decided on the basis of the student’s “perception of relevant facts and values” (Barth & Shermis, 1970, p. 750). If the content of this position were to emerge as a part of the teaching-learning process, and if the selection process was subjective in character, then this position did not provide a basis for determining the content that is to constitute the field called social studies. Works of scholars that fall within this tradition are more properly classified as falling within the area of instruction.

As was true in the case of views of the social studies addressed in this paper, this examination of the traditions within the social studies failed to reveal that the social studies can claim recognition as a field of study in its own right.

Conclusions

Social studies scholars are divided on the question of whether the social studies has a distinctive character. They either view the social studies as a field separate from the social sciences or equate the social studies with the social sciences. Scholars who hold the position that the social studies is a field separate from the social sciences viewed the content of the social studies to be drawn from social sciences and other fields, but failed to specify criteria that constrain the selection of content for social studies. Their descriptions of the social studies did not reveal its distinctive character.

Statements of aims in social studies for citizenship education posed problems as criteria for selecting content. These aims tended to be stated in such broad, general and vague terms that their specifications did not provide a basis for determining the social studies content to be included or excluded. No direct correlation was established between these aims and the scholarly knowledge through which they were to be achieved. It was evident that the achievement of these aims involved more than knowledge of the social sciences and, in some cases, other fields. The failure of scholars in the social
studies to provide a basis for determining the relationship between these statements of aims and the knowledge through which they were to be achieved further compromised their capacity to set limits on the content to be borrowed. Thus, these statements of aims failed to serve as criteria for selecting content, and did not provide a basis for establishing the social studies as a field separate from the social sciences.

A failure to determine the relationship between the aims of social studies as citizenship education and the knowledge through which aims are to be achieved was also evident in the positions that equate the social studies with the social sciences. Citizenship education, when it was addressed, was viewed as a by-product of knowledge of the social sciences, with an association between citizenship education and knowledge of the social sciences assumed. This assumed association was not subjected to systematic examination. The relationship between aims of social studies and scholarly content continues to be an unresolved problem.

A Proposal for Modification

Aims of the social studies tend to be stated so broadly that they fail to provide a focus or direction for the scholarly content of the social studies. Their broadness reflects a failure to differentiate between the educative function of school and that of other social institutions. Egan (1983) captured the problem of the lack of a limiting function in these statements of aims when he suggested that "even the most modest statements of aims . . . promise the world, or worlds" (1983, p. 195). Broad aims have been a source of disorder in the social studies, prompting Egan and some other scholars to call for the elimination of the social studies. Attractive as this argument may be from a scholarly vantage point, it is not realistic. The proponents for the social studies are unlikely to give up their right to make demands on social content in the name of citizenship education.

To bring some order to the social studies, it is proposed that we modify its statements of aims to bring them in line with the scholarly orientations of disciplines through which they are to be achieved. In this proposal for modification, the disciplines through which the aims for the social studies are to be achieved have been limited to history and the social sciences. Throughout its history the social studies has been associated with history and the social sciences, and they have been its traditional and primary source of content. However, this represents only one way of looking at the scholarly content of the social studies. Alternative proposals could be developed to incorporate other disciplines. Scholarship limits the content of a school subject, and these proposed limits at least have the merit of reflecting the scholarly tradition of the social studies.

The distinctive character of history and the social sciences, serves as a basis for constraining the aims for the social studies. This requires that the aims for the social studies be converted into aims for each of the separate
disciplines that constitute the content of the social studies. Once the scholarly integrity of each social science discipline has been determined, program developers will have the information needed to modify these statements of aims.

It is not the function of history and the social science disciplines to prepare a child to fit into his role as a citizen in a democratic society and to share the beliefs and values of that society. Through the scholarly orientations of the social sciences, the role of a citizen in a democratic society can be described, explained, and criticized. The scholarly function of these disciplines requires a degree of objectivity and detachment that is at variance with attempts to socialize the child to the beliefs and values of a democratic citizen. Through this approach to modification, the socializing aspects of the statements of aims for the social studies that are at variance with the scholarly orientations of the social science disciplines will be eliminated and their intellectual aspects will be reformulated. The revised statements of aims will then be capable of providing a focus for the substance of selected social sciences.

To illustrate this approach to modification, each statement of aim has been treated separately. In each case the proposal for modification gives a brief description of the distinctive character of a particular discipline to which the substance of this aim seems pertinent. Next, an example of how content related to the statement of aim under consideration is to be handled in the context of this discipline is presented. Aspects of this aim that are consistent with the scholarly orientation of the discipline under consideration have been retained while those that are inconsistent have been eliminated. The statement of aim is revised to bring it in line with the scholarly parameters of this discipline. The fact that only one modification was advanced for each aim is not to be interpreted to mean that this is the only modification that this approach permits, but it is one that is consistent with and realistically attainable within the scholarly parameters of the discipline through which it is to be pursued. A number of modifications that are equally appropriate may be formulated.

In this study no attempt was made to determine the extent to which each description of the distinctive character of a social science discipline captures the theorizing in that discipline. However, on-going study of this question is critical to the integrity of this approach to modification.

_The student's immediate need for social adjustment_ (United States Bureau of Education, 1916, p. 11). The question of social adjustment lends itself to being addressed from a sociological point of view. According to Durkheim, the subject matter of sociology is social facts which he described as "ways of acting, thinking, and feeling, external to the individual, and endowed with a power of coercion, by reason of which they control him" (Simpson, 1963, p. 25). The realm of the social refers to "either the political
society as a whole or some one of the partial groups it includes, such as religious denominations, political, literary, and occupational associations, etc." (1963, p. 25).

Consistent with this orientation, sociology addresses social norms as the basis of social control. What constitutes social adjustment can be described as whether a person's behavior conforms to acceptable norms for that behavior in a given society. Sociology does not claim to be of help in the process of improving social adjustment, but it does provide insight into what constitutes social adjustment in a given society. Given what can and what cannot be accomplished within the scholarly parameters of Durkheim's view of sociology, the statement of aim advanced in the report of the Committee on Social Studies (United States Bureau of Education, 1916) can be modified to read: to describe a basis for determining what constitutes social adjustment in a given society.

The process of decision-making in which the citizen engages (Engle, 1960, 1971). If some limits are put on the process of decision making by the citizen, and if this process is given an intellectual focus, then it can be converted into statements of aim that are attainable through the social sciences. Since this statement of aim has been advanced twice by Engle (1960, p. 301; 1971, p. 282) as a basis for selecting the content of the social studies, we have taken the liberty of providing two examples of its modification: first, in the context of political science and, second, in the context of economics. Easton (1965) uses systems theory as a framework for the analysis of political life. Political life is viewed as a system of interrelated activities. According to Easton, the boundaries of a political system are determined by the "interactions through which values are authoritatively allocated for a society . . . " (1965, p. 21). Through the study of political activity within the framework of this orientation to political science, the student can develop an understanding of how political decision-making is initiated by demands fed into a political system; how support is marshalled for such demands; how in the course of the conversion process demands are dropped, modified, or transformed into binding decisions; and how feedback which influences subsequent demands and support is provided by these decisions. Consistent with this orientation to political science, Engle's statement of aim can be modified to read: to describe and explain the political decision-making process in which the citizen engages.

If the realm of decision-making is economic, then it can be examined from the point of view of economic theory. A description of the subject matter of economics, if it is to capture the distinctive character of that discipline, should emanate from the basic propositions that characterize the prevailing schools of thought within economics. An examination of the similarities and differences between and among the basic propositions that characterize the Classical, Neo-classical, and Keynesian schools of thought re-
vealed one fundamental point of agreement (MacIsaac, 1980). Each school of thought addresses the interaction of the forces of supply and demand, but each addresses it differently. It can therefore be argued that the interaction of the forces of supply and demand constitutes a core argument which captures the subject matter of economic theorizing. Propositions and questions that stem from this core argument could constitute appropriate content for the school economics program.

Keynes' (1936) general theory emphasizes the impact of demand on supply and the role of the government intervention in influencing the interaction of these two forces. Selected aspects of Keynes' theorizing, such as the effect of demand on employment, the impact of expectations on investment, and the factors that determine propensity to consume, provide content for probing the question of the interaction of the forces of supply and demand. While reservations may be expressed about the difficulty of some aspects of Keynes' theorizing, it needs to be noted that there are also some aspects of his work that are readily understandable in their original form or in a simplified form. Such a study could provide considerable insight into the economic decision-making process. In the context of this orientation to economics, Engle's statement of aim could be modified to read: to examine the impact of government intervention on the economic decision-making process in which the citizen engages.

The goal of developing desirable socio-civic and personal behavior (National Council for the Social Studies, 1962, p. 10). Social scientists do not claim that their disciplines will necessarily produce either kind of behavior. However, the question of what constitutes desirable socio-civic behavior lends itself to being addressed from the vantage point of political science. The term personal behavior, as it is used here, is so vague that it does not provide a focus for the substance of any particular social science discipline.

Within the framework of Easton's (1965) view of the scholarly parameters of political science, desirable socio-civic behavior can be examined for its impact on support for the political system. Support is treated as a basic part of the activities which in interaction constitute Easton's political system. If the political system is to function effectively, the political authorities must be able to make decisions, or to get them accepted as binding, and to make them operational without the extensive use of coercion (1965, p. 153). The persistence of the system is, therefore, dependent on support for the authorities, the rules and structure for decision-making, and the political community. An understanding of what constitutes direct and diffuse support for a political system on the part of its members could serve as a basis for determining what constitutes appropriate socio-civic behavior within a given political system. Consistent with the scholarly orientation of political science, the goal of developing desirable socio-civic
behavior could be modified to read: to develop a basis for determining what constitutes appropriate socio-civic behavior in a given political system.

*Improvement in value judgments* (Johnson, 1969, p. 10). Contrary to Johnson's claim, this aim for the social studies does not lend itself to being achieved through the content of the social sciences (1969, p. 11) or, for that matter, any other discipline. No discipline claims to provide knowledge that necessarily leads to an improvement in value judgments. There are, however, aspects of value judgments that lend themselves to being addressed in a disciplinary perspective. The process of justifying value judgments has a normative orientation and, therefore, belongs to the domain of philosophy. There are other dimensions of questions pertaining to value judgments that lend themselves to being treated from the vantage point of the social sciences. In the context of Durkheim's view of the scholarly parameters of sociology, values can be addressed from a descriptive point of view. In this perspective values function as a belief system imposed upon us from without. The norms which act as mechanisms of social control in a given society reflect values that are basic to that society. The individual can be helped to gain insight into the impact of values on personal behavior by examining the relationship between the basic values of his society and norms of behavior which serve as social conventions to which he is expected to conform in that society. Within the scholarly framework of sociology the aim of improving value judgments can be modified to read: to examine the relationship between the basic values of a given society and the norms which act as mechanisms of social control in that society.

*Functioning rationally and humanely* (National Council for the Social Studies, 1971, 1979). Functioning rationally is synonymous with the basic intellectual activities which are to be encouraged through the study of every discipline. What constitutes rational functioning varies somewhat from discipline to discipline. Within the parameters of this proposal for modification the treatment of any topic within the scholarly framework of the particular discipline through which it can be addressed would achieve this aim of the social studies. From this it follows that each of our modifications in the statements of aims for the social studies meets this requirement.

Functioning humanely is an activity no discipline claims to produce. However, insight into man's worst failures and some of his highest attainments in this area can be gained through the study of history, which provides ample documentation of man's inhumanity to man. While man's inhumanity to man is a value-laden issue, the task of the historian is not to make value judgments, but to describe the value judgments historical figures made in the past and to examine how these value judgments influenced their actions.

Let us take, by way of example, the grievances that contributed to the
overthrow of the Old Regime in France in 1789. Class antagonisms were fueled by the economic and social inequalities of the Old Regime. The misery among city dwellers of the lower classes resulting from an acute shortage of grain, sharp rises in food prices, and widespread unemployment helped to explain why they supported the revolt in 1789. The peasants had grown restive under the burden of feudal and manorial obligations in the forms of fees, dues, and payments in kind to the landlords, tithes to the clergy, and taxes to the king. The upper class in the Third Estate had made considerable economic gains but resented the remaining restrictions imposed upon them by the other two estates. The expression of grievances was fueled by the ideas and ideals of the intellectuals who were highly critical of the existing social and political order (Breunig, 1977, pp. 1-7). Clearly, man's inhumanity to man is reflected in the inequalities of the Old Regime.

Since debate regarding what constitutes the scholarly parameters of history often revolves around either the Idealist or Positivist point of view, such an event could be examined in the context of either of these positions. Each represents a different approach to dealing with past human events of a particular nature. In the Idealist approach emphasis is placed on developing an understanding of an event by discovering "the thought in the mind of the person by whose agency the event came about" (Collingwood, 1946, p. 214) through a process of reenactment. Within the scholarly framework of this position, the thoughts of prominent intellectuals, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, as they are recorded in the documents salvaged by historians, could be used to develop an understanding of how their ideas and ideals fueled the expression of grievances by the members of the Third Estate.

In the Positivist approach emphasis is on the use of generalizations and laws borrowed from the social sciences in attempts to explain such events. The major speakers for the Positivist position tend to agree that a wholesale assimilation of historical explanation to scientific explanation is not warranted. Patrick Gardiner (1952), a major spokesman for this view, referred to the use of generalizations of a loose or porous character to provide indications . . . of the sorts of factors which, under certain circumstances, we expect to find correlated with other sorts of factors (1952, p. 93). In the context of this position emphasis could be placed on how the events that brought the end of the Old Regime were fueled by the political, economic, and social inequalities inflicted on members of the Third Estate.

The overthrow of the Old Regime in France in 1789 is just one of many events of Modern European history which illustrate man's inhumanity to man. Conversely, there are many events of modern European history that illustrate humanity. Therefore, in the context of history questions pertaining to functioning humanely could be captured in this statement of aim: to describe how man's humanity or inhumanity to his fellow man is reflected in the major events of modern European history.

By modifying statements of aims that have been advanced as criteria for
selecting the content of the social studies in order to make them consistent with and attainable through history and selected social sciences we were able to mediate between the demands made on the social studies in the name of citizenship education and the scholarly orientations of the disciplines through which these demands are to be achieved. By eliminating the socializing dimensions of these statements of aims that are inconsistent with the scholarly orientation of the social science disciplines and by reformulating the substance of their intellectual dimensions to reflect the distinctive character of selected social sciences, I have created statements of aims that provide a focus for the content of the social studies. In this approach to modification the content of the social studies takes on an instrumental character. It accommodates external demands on the social science disciplines without violating their scholarly integrity.

References


Reform in Teacher Education: Perceptions of Secondary Social Studies Teachers

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Abstract

A survey of 139 secondary social studies teachers and 96 secondary school supervising principals was conducted to determine their perceptions of the instructional problems of teachers. Teachers and principals judged the difficulty levels experienced by teachers for 10 selected instructional problem areas, using a Likert-type scale. Medians and ranks were calculated for each problem area. The Mann-Whitney U nonparametric procedure was employed to determine the significance of the difference in perception of difficulty between the two groups for each instructional problem area. The instructional problem areas identified as causing the most concern involved areas of professional rather than subject matter competencies.

Recent studies and reports have focused attention on teacher quality as a factor in improving public schools in America. This examination often includes scrutiny of teacher education since colleges and universities have responsibility for preparing teachers for the nation’s schools. Various proposals have emerged, including recommendations to strengthen the preparation of teachers in the subject they teach and to increase academic requirements for entry into teacher education programs. A related theme emphasized by some reports is the reduction of professional education requirements in teacher education programs. Some reform efforts have suggested the elimination of professional education preparation at the undergraduate level (Cooperman & Klogholz, 1985).

One of the most frequent reform themes for secondary level teacher education has been to increase requirements for the academic majors selected by students. The Carnegie Commission Report may be viewed as an example of this kind of recommendation. The report describes inadequate programs in teacher education and recommends revision of professional preparation and strengthening the academic major of the teacher candidate (Boyer, 1983). Lack of preparation in the teaching field and overprepara-
tion in professional education seem to be primary concerns of the current body of teacher education reformers. Both of these positions are worthy of further investigation.

While knowledge of subject matter is considered an important characteristic of social studies teachers, other competencies are also important. For example, a position statement of the National Council for the Social Studies identifies a number of competencies for social studies teachers (Standards, 1984). Classroom management and discipline, teaching methods, evaluating skills, questioning and discussion skills, as well as knowledge of subject matter are included as major categories in the paper. These same areas appear in other studies as well.

Berryman and Schneider (1984) gathered information from a national sample of social studies supervisors on the effectiveness of beginning social studies teachers as a means of evaluating teacher preparation programs. Their study revealed that supervisors consistently identified a cluster of competencies they regarded as serious deficiencies in beginning teachers. The deficient competencies were selecting objectives, test construction, communication skills, questioning and discussion leadership, and teaching strategies. All of these areas are normally included in the professional education component of the beginning teacher's collegiate curriculum.

Opinions of experienced social studies teachers who supervise interns were sampled by McMann and McMann (1984) for insights into the competencies needed by beginning teachers. They found that the supervising teachers rated knowledge of subject matter and teaching procedures as equally important in teacher preparation. These two areas were viewed as "... interdependent abilities rather than two distinct abilities. That is, one does not exist without the other" (McMann & McMann, p. 39). They also found interpersonal relations, maintaining classroom order and responsible work habits as important teacher characteristics. These are topics one would expect to find in a teacher education curriculum.

One data source often overlooked in compiling reform recommendations is classroom social studies teachers themselves. Do their perceptions of problems faced in today’s high school classroom agree with the authors of the numerous works on reforming American education? Do they agree that increasing subject matter competence is a major factor in improving their practice? What are the problems they identify as crucial in their social studies classes?

Purpose

This study examined the instructional problems and concerns of social studies teachers and their principals as a basis for improving preservice and inservice teacher education programs. Identification of these teachers’ and principals’ concerns should be of vital interest to teacher educators as well as local school leaders with responsibility for inservice education.
Teachers and their supervising principals were surveyed to determine:
1. The instructional problems reported by secondary social studies teachers.
2. The instructional problems of secondary social studies teachers reported by their supervising principals.
3. The differences in perceptions of instructional problems between the groups.

Subjects
Subjects in this study included secondary social studies teachers (grades 9-12) and their supervising principals (principals, assistant principals and curriculum supervisors) from an urban school system in the southeastern United States. A survey was administered to 138 of the 151 social studies teachers in the system and to 96 of 101 of their supervising principals. The sample represented 91% of the population of teachers and 95% of principals.

Procedure
An extensive review of the literature was conducted to identify the most common instructional problems of classroom teachers (Adams, 1982; Adams & Murtray, 1980; Bartholomew, 1974, 1976; Cruickshank, 1974). These problem areas were arranged randomly on a survey instrument and administered to secondary social studies teachers and their principals during the spring of 1985. The survey instrument included the following randomly ordered items:
1. Discipline, classroom control.
2. Selecting and using appropriate teaching methods.
3. Selecting appropriate subject matter.
4. Motivation, getting students interested.
5. Interaction, communication with students.
6. Testing, grading, and promotion of students.
7. Knowledge of subject matter to be taught.
8. Organizing and managing the classroom.
10. Providing for individual differences among students.

Teachers were asked to rate the level of difficulty they experience for each instructional problem area, using a Likert-type scale with 1 as No Difficulty and 5 as Great Difficulty. Supervising principals were asked to rate the difficulty of the instructional problem areas for each teacher under their supervision, using the same scale. At the time of this study, the principals were required by school district policy to complete a minimum of four evaluations of classroom instruction annually for each teacher under their supervision. The response of the groups were tabulated and organized for analysis.
Analysis, Results, and Discussion

The data in Table 1 present the rankings of instructional problems reported by 138 secondary social studies teachers and 96 supervising principals. The ranks were determined by calculating the median of the responses of each group to each instructional problem area.

The data indicate that teachers and principals viewed the instructional problems of teachers in much the same way for four of the top five instructional problem areas. Ranking was in one-to-one correspondence for the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Area</th>
<th>Teachers N = 138</th>
<th>Supervising Principals N = 96</th>
<th>Mann Whitney</th>
<th>P Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top Five</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Motivation, getting students interested</td>
<td>2.323 1</td>
<td>2.540 1</td>
<td>5728.0</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10) Providing for individual differences among students</td>
<td>2.035 2</td>
<td>2.367 2</td>
<td>5206.0</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Discipline, classroom control</td>
<td>1.486 3</td>
<td>2.011 5</td>
<td>4597.5</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Testing, grading and promotion of students</td>
<td>1.432 4</td>
<td>2.014 4</td>
<td>4739.5</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Selecting and using</td>
<td>1.396 5</td>
<td>1.755 8</td>
<td>5319.0</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottom Five</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Development and use of instructional materials</td>
<td>1.362 6</td>
<td>1.837 6</td>
<td>4841.0</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Interaction, communication with students</td>
<td>1.312 7</td>
<td>1.827 7</td>
<td>4618.5</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Organizing and managing the classroom</td>
<td>1.226 8</td>
<td>2.065 3</td>
<td>2642.0</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Selecting appropriate subject matter</td>
<td>1.102 9</td>
<td>1.206 10</td>
<td>5733.0</td>
<td>.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Knowledge of subject</td>
<td>1.043 10</td>
<td>1.238 9</td>
<td>5014.5</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significant at the .05 level
top two problem areas. The groups perceived Motivation, Getting Students Interested as the number one problem of teachers. Providing For Individual Differences Among Students was ranked second. The greatest disparity in perception concerned Selecting and Using Appropriate Teaching Methods. Teachers ranked this problem area fifth, while principals ranked it eighth.

Teachers and principals also agreed concerning the bottom five instructional problem areas. Both groups reported Selecting Appropriate Subject Matter and Knowledge of Subject Matter to be Taught as areas of least concern. The greatest difference in perception involved Organizing and Managing the Classroom. Teachers ranked this problem area eighth while principals ranked it fourth.

In addition to rankings, the significance of the differences in perception of difficulty between the two groups was tested for each instructional problem area. The Likert scale used in the study generated ordinal data. For that reason, the Mann-Whitney U test, one of the most powerful nonparametric procedures, was used for the tests of significance. An Alpha level of .05 was selected for the test of the null hypotheses.

Teachers and their supervising principals differed significantly in their perception of the level of difficulty for nine of the instructional problem areas. In each case, principals viewed teachers as having more difficulty than teachers reported for themselves. The greatest difference in perception of difficulty for the top five problem areas involved Testing, Grading and Promotion of Students. Among the bottom five problems, the greatest difference involved Organizing and Managing the Classroom.

**Conclusions**

Secondary social studies teachers participating in this study were not perceived as having undue difficulty with the instructional problem areas surveyed. The instructional problems identified as causing the most concern, however, involved areas of professional knowledge and skill. Motivation, Getting Students Interested and Providing for Individual Differences Among Students were ranked as the top two concerns by the teachers and principals. Discipline, Classroom Control was ranked third by teachers; principals ranked the area fifth.

Secondary social studies teachers and principals perceived knowledge and selection of subject matter to be the areas of least difficulty for teachers. The difficulty levels reported for these instructional problem areas approached the No Difficulty level on the five-point Likert-type scale used in the study. In the judgment of the teachers and principals, knowledge and selection of subject matter are not weaknesses of teachers.

Findings from this study are similar to those from the studies previously cited. Teachers tend to identify areas such as motivation, classroom management, discipline and teaching methods as more important problems than knowledge of subject matter. Supervisors of teachers agree with these
findings in their assessments. Both groups apparently believe that secondary social studies teachers are sufficiently well prepared in their subject area to teach successfully at the secondary school level.

The major problems perceived by teachers in secondary classrooms are problems associated with content from professional courses in the teacher education curriculum. Given that secondary social studies teachers perceive themselves as having fewer problems related to subject matter than to professional skills, recommendations to strengthen subject matter competencies to the neglect of professional skills should be viewed with caution. This conclusion seems consistent with results reported in the research literature over the past forty years that call for balance between subject matter content and professional studies in the education of teachers. The disparity between what is found from research on perceived strengths and weaknesses of teachers and what is proposed through the current educational reform movement suggests that additional study aimed at resolving these differences be undertaken before revising existing teacher education programs. Perhaps joint studies involving critics and classroom teachers might yield useful insights into this timely and perplexing problem.

References


Social Studies Educators and Their Beliefs: Preliminary Data from Indiana Colleges and Universities

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Abstract

A preliminary inquiry was conducted into social studies educators' background, career patterns, social-political perspectives, educational views, and professional aims and accomplishments. Subjects were limited to social studies educators in Indiana. These white and mostly Christian, midwestern origin, Anglo-Saxon, upwardly mobile males with a doctoral degree from a major university had relatively little coursework in social sciences but widely varied areas of concentration in graduate study. Nearly half ranked quantitative aspects as the least desirable parts of graduate study. They appeared to be democratic, humane, nonmaterialistic, and rather critical of social studies teachers, students, and textbooks, but nevertheless enculturated into patterns of existing society. It is difficult to see how those who are uncomfortable with social sciences and their inquiry methods and who seem to be comfortably bound up in the social structure can produce teachers critically aware enough of cultural inconsistencies to produce students who think critically.

Social studies educators have inquired systematically into a wide variety of topics that pertain to their field. For example, considerable attention has been given to public school teachers, teaching strategies, the underlying social philosophy of young people, and the transmission of culturally important values. However, social studies educators seldom have asked questions about themselves. During the last ten years no article on the social characteristics, values or perspectives of social studies educators has appeared in the research journals of the profession, i.e., Theory and Research in Social Education, Social Studies and Journal of Social Studies Research. A search of standard references on doctoral dissertations produced during the decade found none on the characteristics of social studies educators.

The following reports the results of a preliminary inquiry into social studies educators' background characteristics, career patterns, social-political perspectives, views about social studies curriculum materials and...
beliefs about their professional aims and accomplishments. The data were collected as a first step toward identifying social and social psychological qualities that are widely shared by members of the profession. They also were gathered to suggest characteristics which influence the promotion of a distinctive social orientation which might be transmitted in the social studies.

**Subjects**

Respondents were drawn from a list of professors who teach social studies methods courses in Indiana. The list was provided by the Indiana Council for the Social Studies and was prepared from their College and University Assembly membership roster. Each of the 40 persons on the list was sent a questionnaire entitled A Study of the Beliefs of Social Studies Educators, and each was requested to participate in the study. The 25 who returned their completed questionnaires are the subjects of this study.

The small sample size restricts our ability to generalize from our findings. It also limits the utility of quantitative presentations beyond the specification of mean scores and percentages. Therefore, our conclusions are impressionistic. Nevertheless, the data reveal patterns that suggest interesting hypotheses.

**Instrument**

A questionnaire was constructed to gather data suggesting answers to nine interrelated questions about social studies educators.

1. **Do they share certain background characteristics?** Eight items identified characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity and religion.
2. **Do they have in common certain early socialization experiences?** Six items dealt with parents' education and occupation.
3. **Do they have similar educational backgrounds?** Twelve items asked about undergraduate and graduate institutions attended, majors and concentrations. Respondents also were asked to evaluate their college and university experiences.
4. **Do they have similar career histories?** Respondents were asked to list, in chronological order, all of the positions—omitting temporary jobs such as summer employment—which they have held from the receipt of their undergraduate degree to the present.
5. **Do they have approximately similar value orientations?** The questionnaire contained two independent measures of general social values: Rokeach (1968), 12 items; Inglehart (1979), 4 items.
6. **Do they share a more-or-less distinctive view of the American political system?** The widely used Campbell, Gurin and Miller (1954) measure was employed to indicate sense of citizen obligation. Their perception of the distribution of power in America was elicited by their choice between two contrasting depictions of the structure of power at the national level. One conveyed the pluralist image emphasizing that, while
it is true that not all groups have equal power, power in the United States is as equally distributed as possible in the context of an advanced industrial nation (Rose, 1967). The alternative paragraph emphasized that almost all important political decisions are made by a few individuals, such as corporate leaders and government advisors, who are not elected by the public (Domhoff, 1967).

7. Do they have a common perception of the curriculum materials with which they work? Five items developed by Barr, Shermis and Barth (1978) were used to assess respondents attitudes toward social studies textbooks.

8. Do they share a common perspective on the goals of the social studies? The 15 item scale developed by Shermis and Barth (1985) was employed.

9. Do they tend to share common opinions about the accomplishments of programs of social studies education? Two open-ended questions were used: (1) In your judgment, what do you think of the products we turn out, that is, teachers of social studies? (2) What is your judgment of the products of social studies teachers, that is, students in elementary, middle, junior and senior high schools?

Findings

Background characteristics

All 25 respondents were white males in the age range 33–65 with a mean age of 49.7 years. Eight (32%) specified an ethnic background. Eight different Christian denominations were identified as the religion of choice, with no denomination overrepresented. Only 5 (20%) had lived at age 16 in an urban center of over 100,000 population. Most of their parents (19 fathers and 22 mothers) did not graduate from college; only 8 fathers (32%) and 3 mothers (12%) were employed in professional, technical, managerial or administrative occupations.

The respondents were educated primarily in the midwest as undergraduates (84%) and in graduate school (80%). Eight (32%) received undergraduate degrees from a major university, public or private, while 20 (80%) received graduate degrees from a major university. Nine (36%) graduated from a smaller private college; only 1 (4%) completed graduate study in a college of this type. A doctoral degree was held by 20 (80%), 13 with a Ph.D. and 7 with an Ed.D. The remaining 5 (20%) held a graduate degree below doctoral level. A majority (19; 76%) had taught in public, private or military schools prior to college or university teaching. For most, college teaching represented upward mobility as compared with parents and with respondents' earlier careers.

Educational experiences

The open-ended question concerning what respondents liked most about their undergraduate education produced a clear pattern. The three qualities
most liked were small classes and the opportunity to interact with faculty, exposure to new ideas, including interaction with students from different backgrounds, and liberal arts courses. The open-ended question about what respondents liked least in their undergraduate programs did not elicit any distinctive patterns. Complaints included items such as irrelevant courses and large, impersonal classes—features of undergraduate education likely to be listed as undesirable by most college graduates.

Each subject listed three areas of concentration in the graduate program completed. The 75 responses produced a highly varied list, ranging from journalism to art, philosophy, English, business administration and elementary education. No specific area was statistically overrepresented. However, what was noteworthy was the infrequency with which the social sciences (12%)—here understood to include anthropology, economics, political science, psychology and sociology—appeared on the list.

When asked what they liked most about their graduate programs, respondents were consistent with 19 (76%) spontaneously mentioning intellectual stimulation, new ideas, probing ideas deeply and the like. While they were free to list as many qualities as they wished and to be as general or specific in their statements of choice as they wanted, features other than the intellectual challenge of graduate education, such as specific courses or the acquisition of certain skills, were mentioned only six times.

There was also a clear pattern of response to the open-ended question about their judgment of the least desirable components of their graduate education. Almost half, 11 (44%) specified courses involving the manipulation of quantitative data; e.g., tests and measurement, econometrics, finance, and statistics. The remaining responses included the usual litany of graduate student complaints—too many required courses, impersonality of some classes and exploitation of graduate students by university administration and faculty.

### Social and Political Orientations

As a point of departure we used two independent measures for determining their general social values (Rokeach, 1968; Inglehart, 1979). In the Rokeach measure subjects are presented with a list of twelve values in alphabetical order which “many people say are important to them.” Respondents are asked to indicate the relative importance of each of the values to themselves personally by rank ordering 1, 2, 3, etc. as most important, next most important, etc. Scores for each value were averaged, with lower scores representing higher value priority. In order of the importance assigned by the social science educators in our study, the values were: (1) a meaningful life (2.79), (2) a world at peace (4.21), (3) freedom (4.62), (4) friendship (4.75), (5) respect for others (5.09), (6) wisdom (5.43), (7) equality (6.21), (8) respect from others (6.96), (9) maturity (7.29), (10) salvation (7.86), (11) comfort (8.61), and (12) security (9.22).

The Inglehart measure asked: “If you had a choice among the following
four things, which are the two that seem most desirable to you: (1) maintaining order in the nation; (2) giving people more say in political decisions; (3) fighting rising prices; (4) protecting freedom of speech?” According to Inglehart, the order and prices responses indicate acquisition values while more say and freedom of speech responses are chosen by those with a post-bourgeois perspective. Responses to this item expressed a nearly unanimous pattern. There were only four selections of order and only one selection of prices responses.

Taken together, the independent measures of values unambiguously suggest that our subjects place remarkably little emphasis on the materialistic values often said to dominate American culture. Rather, they seem far more concerned with the meaning they derive from their work, their social relationships in the context of a peaceful and democratic society, and a sense of citizen obligation. Finally, 80% endorsed the pluralist idea that power in America is as equally distributed as possible in the context of an advanced industrial nation rather than the elitist position that important political decisions in America are made by a few individuals while citizens’ groups generally have little effect on the outcome of political issues.

**Views of the Social Studies**

Respondents were asked an open-ended question about the primary role of the social studies. While this question elicited a fairly wide range of answers, four occurred with greater frequency than the rest. In order of frequency mentioned these answers were: (1) to prepare students to participate responsibly and competently as citizens of a democratic society; (2) to provide students with insights into problems facing American society and the world; (3) to help students become independent, free-thinking adults; and (4) to transmit our cultural heritage, identifying our progress and our problems.

What role do social studies educators believe the social sciences should have in the social studies education curriculum? Only 6 in our sample (24%) agreed that the proper source of curriculum for the social studies is those problems identified by the social sciences. Again, only 10 (40%) agreed that students should develop a faith in the objective procedures of the social sciences. Nevertheless, the majority, 14 (56%), felt that students should acquire rigorous analytic skills and these come from mastery of the knowledge gathering techniques of the social sciences. There was greater agreement on the part of 16 (64%) that it is important for students to learn the concepts and methods of the various social science disciplines. We shall discuss this rather ambivalent orientation toward the social sciences in a later section of this paper.

An open-ended question asked the social studies educators to judge the products they turn out, that is, teachers of social studies. Here answers were not so diverse. While being careful to note that there is considerable individual variation, the consensus view was clearly that students tend to be
mediocre, somewhat deficient, and rather ordinary. However, students were not seen as completely ineffective. Several respondents remarked that while their knowledge of content is often terribly limited, their caring is frequently great. Another commented that "(They) do quite well, considering their salaries and lack of support for provocative, analytic programs."

Given this unenthusiastic view of their own students and former students, it is not surprising that social studies educators also express some displeasure when asked about the products of social studies teachers, that is, students in elementary, middle, junior and senior high schools. Many respondents prefaced their remarks about the social studies education of school children with two observations. First, there is an enormous range of variation among the students. Second, today's school children are probably better than previous generations but are capable of doing much more than they are required.

The educators' specific concerns about the students, in order of frequency mentioned, included their lack of self-reliance, lack of critical skills, and failure to see the relevance of social studies for their own lives. In regard to this last point, several of our respondents commented that most school children today see the social studies as little more than memorization of specific facts.

Respondents' disappointment in school students' apparent lack of appreciation of the social studies was not seen as solely, or even primarily, the result of inadequate role performance of social studies classroom teachers. One of the teachers' major resources, the social studies text, was seen as a major culprit. Our sample of social studies educators tended to disagree with all of five positive statements about social studies textbooks. Social studies textbooks are fair and objective in their treatment (8; 32%); Social studies textbooks are scholarly and accurate (4; 16%); Social studies textbooks are up-to-date (7; 28%); Social studies textbooks promote critical thought and awareness of problems (5; 20%); and Social studies textbooks reflect the realities of a multicultural and pluralistic society (4; 16%) all received mostly negative responses.

**Interpretations**

Our findings may or may not be representative. Among other conditions influencing them may be a two tier structure among social studies educators, both nationwide and in our own sample. It may be that one tier comes from solid academic backgrounds, earned Ph.D.s from large state universities and participates professionally at high levels. Another tier may have graduated from small, academically weak institutions, does not hold a doctorate, is assigned a heavy teaching load with wide variety of courses, and does little in the way of research or publishing. What characterizes one tier may be inaccurate for the other. In any event, our data should be inter-
interpreted cautiously. They can nevertheless provide some basis for a few disturbing questions and one conclusion. First, what is the conclusion?

The rather clear-cut value patterns in our data indicate that social studies educators in our sample are nonmaterialistic, somewhat liberal, humane, democratic, egalitarian, altruistic and committed to the values of cultural pluralism. Even a cursory glance at the last 75 years or so of the history of the social studies movement reveals a set of values which seem to be congruent with what we see among our sample of educators. One can find in this century constant exhortation for social studies teachers to commit themselves to improving citizenship, which in our society implies an orientation having to do with democratic values and critical thought, with critical thinking usually taken to be the application of the scientific method.

If enhancing critical thought and improving democratic citizenship and participation are, in fact, the normative values in the field, it is to be expected that most of those who are attracted to the field would share them. It is, then, no surprise that the individual value hierarchies found here are congruent with that of the institutionalized hierarchy found in the field.

The clear tendency of our sample to be white, male, Christian, Anglo-Saxon, middleaged, middlewestern and upwardly mobile in both intergenerational and career terms, raises at least two related questions. Are such individuals likely to be thoroughly enculturated into the patterns of their society? And if they are, how likely is it that they will be fully capable of enabling their students to be critical of the unresolved cultural conflicts within our society?

To be critical within the context of social studies can refer to many phenomena. It may relate to being skeptical as opposed to gullible, to identifying inconsistent, unproven or false premises, to questioning facts or to challenging discrepant information. From the Hunt/Metcalf (1968) point of view in the reflective inquiry position, it signifies questioning the structure of existing social institutions and dominant cultural beliefs and values of one's own society. Hunt and Metcalf point out that most social studies teaching leaves students incapable of perceiving the problems or inconsistencies of either institutions or cultural beliefs. An updated list of inconsistent cultural premises, patterned after their 1968 edition of *Teaching High School Social Studies* perhaps would include the following:

Women are the intellectual and moral equivalent of men—but they should be happy with the traditional family and sex roles.

This is a land of unlimited opportunity where anyone can get as far as he or she wishes—but not in my neighborhood.

Our natural resources are precious and fragile things which must be preserved and protected—but oil and mineral resources are necessary to create jobs and make us energy independent.
Life from the moment of conception is sacred—but those who commit atrocious crimes should be executed.

It is important to give business the freedom needed to pursue individual objectives—but we have seen how business, and especially large corporations, are given to creating unsafe workplaces, dumping toxic chemicals hither and yon producing products that don't work and in addition may be dangerous.

Historically, social studies teachers have tended not to raise such issues with their students. Woodward (1985) quotes statistics to indicate that as much as 90% of classroom time is structured by instructional materials, especially textbooks. Shaver, Helburn and Davis (1979) also conclude that the most typical teaching arrangement continues to be one teacher in a room with 30 children using a single textbook. Since the time that Beal (1936) wrote about academic freedom—or more precisely the lack of it—critics have regularly discovered that teachers tend to keep one eye cocked to the community and regularly engage in self- or student-censorship in order to avoid dealing with matters which may be considered too controversial. The combination of teacher timidity and almost compulsive systematic coverage of the textbook has guaranteed that in the vast majority of social studies classrooms, live, meaningful and important social problems will not be considered.

Perhaps one reason for textbook dominance is that teachers, social studies educators, have avoided confronting these very issues as well. There is a cogent reason why social studies educators are unlikely to do so. Long ago, Mannheim (1936) observed that human thought is situationally relative. People are least likely to question those institutional structures within which they live and which serve their shared interests.

Our data suggest that social studies educators, for the most part, have benefitted from the social structure of our society. The data show that our sample has tended to be upwardly mobile, both in career and intergenerational terms. The responses suggest to us that many social studies educators take the position that our society, with all of its flaws and shortcomings, may be better than any other, that over the years and especially in this century, it has proven itself sensitive to inequities (e.g., poverty, powerlessness, class discrimination, and racial, religious and ethnic bigotry) and is gradually improving. With continuing effort, we should in the future come even closer to our goals. Such an ideology clearly underlies citizenship transmission. It would appear to be the frame of reference of many social studies teachers (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1978; Shermis & Barth, 1985). It well may be equally the position of many social studies educators.

We must raise a question about the antipathy of our respondents toward quantitative courses. This may be related to their lukewarm attitudes toward social science courses. Our respondents did not enroll, either in their undergraduate or graduate careers, in many social science courses. More-
over, social sciences have increasingly moved toward quantitative measurement. Those who tend to feel uncomfortable with such an orientation can also be expected to find themselves increasingly handicapped in understanding analysis and interpretation of social science data. This raises a problem.

Inherent in the social science enterprise is a concern for critical thought at two levels. First, the epistemology within any social science demands critical awareness of all aspects of the knowledge-gathering process. To be inducted into any science requires one to ask interminable questions about the meaning, extent and limitation of any given knowledge claim. Second, inherent in the social sciences is a pervasive disinclination to accept traditional beliefs, popular explanations and culturally sanctioned perceptions. Awareness of how institutions develop and how the social structure functions ordinarily makes individuals less rather than more prone to accept the conventional wisdom.

It is difficult to see how those teachers of the social studies who are uncomfortable with social science and its inquiry methods or who have rather limited understanding of the concepts, data and conclusions of social science can enable their students to develop much critical awareness of the problems and inconsistencies of American culture. While the data of the social studies clearly derives from more than the social sciences, (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1978) the ineluctable fact is that a rich repository of data and generalizations about our society and those of others has come from the social sciences. It would seem that not to possess some part of the storehouse of such knowledge is to be as uncritical and accepting as the general populace. And if such is the case, it is difficult to see how students of those who are short on social science knowledge will develop the allegedly desirable critical perspective.

If this analysis is correct, it would explain, in part, the widely noted lack of change among social studies teachers. It might explain why, despite 75 years of research into social problems and book after book on critical thought, there is so little of either in the social studies. Before one can engage in critical thought one must, as Dewey (1933, 1938) said, wrest the problem from the ground of existence. If one is predisposed not to perceive the problem, whether because of unfamiliarity with social science methods and content or because one is inextricably bound up in the social structure, it is unlikely that one's students or the students of one's students will be able to do.

References


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College and University Faculty Assembly of NCSS
67th Annual Meeting
National Council for the Social Studies
November 13-17, 1987
Dallas, Texas

(Deadline for Receipt of Proposals: February 9, 1987)

THE SOCIAL STUDIES
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CUFA encourages the presentation of a wide variety of scholarly papers reporting investigations in all aspects of social studies education including the meeting theme of Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century. Historical, philosophical, experimental, and evaluative studies as well as critical reviews, particularly those presentations which focus on translating research findings into classroom practice are welcomed.

Applications can be obtained from:

Gloria Contreras
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Austin, Texas 78712
Editor

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The College and University Faculty Assembly (CUFA) of the National Council for the Social Studies welcomes nominations or applications for editor of Theory and Research in Social Education. The editor, who must be a CUFA member, is appointed for a three year term. The new editor's term begins August 1, 1987 and includes responsibility for the 1988, 1989, and 1990 volumes of the journal.

The editor assumes full authority and responsibility for publication of Theory and Research in Social Education. The editor also sits as an ex officio member of the CUFA Executive Board, attending their meetings. He or she nominates an Associate Editor usually from his or her institution, and members of the Editorial Board.

Candidates will be considered in relation to the following criteria:

Known to the social studies academic community for high quality scholarship in the field;

Ability to secure, edit, and publish scholarly manuscripts;

Ability to manage time and resources effectively;

Commitment to promoting the aims of CUFA and the development of theory and quality research in social education

In addition, candidates must provide evidence of institutional support, in the form of a letter from his or her unit administrator, considering:

Released time from teaching or other obligations;

Secretarial support;

Other resources (e.g., graduate assistant, supplies, phone and mailing, duplication).

Nominations should be submitted prior to April 30, 1987. The deadline for completed applications, including a letter explaining intent and qualifications, four copies of vitae, and letter of institutional support, is May 20, 1987. Send all correspondence and address inquiries to: Thomas Popkewitz, TRSE Search Committee Chairperson, School of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison, WI 53706 (608-263-7343).