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The effects of school participation upon an individual's identity.

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THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL PARTICIPATION UPON AN
INDIVIDUAL'S IDENTITY

A Dissertation

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THE EFFECTS OF SCHOOL PARTICIPATION UPON AN
INDIVIDUAL'S IDENTITY

A Dissertation Presented

By

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Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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Major Subject Education

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C H A P T E R I

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Introduction

An individual's conception of himself is socially constructed as a result of the process of socialization where (i) he learns and incorporates the standards and beliefs concerning what constitutes a 'normal' and 'abnormal' identity, (ii) he learns the particular identity he possesses, and (iii) he learns the consequences of possessing such an identity (Goffman, 1963). An individual enters new situations with a view of himself derived from the social relationships he has encountered outside of the situation and acquires new dimensions of self identity as a result of his participation. He must reconcile the view of himself derived from his previous social relationships with those implicit in this new social milieu.

Discontinuity between the standards and beliefs of one social system and another becomes the occasion for changes in the individual's identity. To the degree that the expectations the new system holds for the individual vary from those the individual has experienced elsewhere, his view of himself may be altered. Whatever identity the individual brings to the social system, if the manner in which he is expected to behave deviates from that to which

he is accustomed, his identity will undergo change. And the more radical the differences, the more dramatic the change in identity experienced by the individual (Spradley, 1970).

Problem

Because participation in the social system of the school occurs early in an individual's life, occupies a significant portion of the period during which the greatest amount of socialization occurs (Davis, 1940), and consists of processes which are different from those of other social systems in which socialization occurs (Dreeben, 1968), it should be a salient determinant of an individual's identity. This investigation concentrates on the dynamic relationship between the identity of the individual and the processes which define the nature of his participation in the social system of the school.

Hypothesis

We are hypothesizing a relationship which may be summarized as $S \rightarrow P \rightarrow I$; that is, the structure of school processes influences a particular pattern of participation which in turn influences a student's identity. Differences in the structure of school processes should determine different patterns of participation from which an individual

should derive different principles concerning his identity. Thus, $S_1 \rightarrow P_1 \rightarrow I_1$, and $S_2 \rightarrow P_2 \rightarrow I_2$ (Dreeben, 1967; Deutsch, 1954).

Review of the Literature

There are a number of studies (Goffman, 1961; Spradley, 1970; Blatt, 1966, 1970) from which one might draw inferences concerning the consequences for an individual's identity from his participation in social systems. These fail to be of specific value to educators because they do not focus directly upon the problems of identity, nor do they develop a viable model of the variables affecting participation in social systems. Furthermore, they do not deal directly with the school setting.

Dreeben's (1967) analysis of the social structure of the school and its relationship to the acquisition of norms supports the view that individuals are likely to derive principals concerning their identities from their participation in school. Though others (Brookover, et al, 1967; Staines, 1963) have demonstrated that the self is present in, and an outcome of, all learning, Dreeben's analysis of normative acquisition provides evidence that:

...schools and classrooms within them have a characteristic pattern of organizational properties different from those of other agencies in which socialization takes place and...that what children learn derives as

much from the nature of their experiences in the school setting as from what they are taught (1967:211).

This suggests the efficacy of a more comprehensive view of the effect of schooling on identity, one that goes beyond consideration of the formal teaching-learning process.

Both Blatt (1970) and Goffman (1961) support this position in their analyses of the social situations of mental patients.

Built right into the social arrangements of an organization, then, is a thoroughly embracing conception of the member - and not merely a conception of him qua member, but behind this a conception of him qua human being (Goffman, 1961:180).

And Goffman's work (1961) dramatically suggests that any social systems model used for the analysis of the effects of an organization on an individual's conception of himself might profitably investigate the characteristics of total institutions because "...they are the forcing houses for changing persons; each is a natural experiment on what can be done to the self" (1961:12). While he artfully illustrates the encompassing tendencies of the prison and mental hospital and their effect on the self, his delineation of the characteristics of total institutions lacks the theoretical precision necessary to the investigation of the effects of participation in the school system on an

individual's identity. Though there has been no systematic analysis of the school as a total institution, the applicability of such a view is supported by sociologists concerned with education.

The school social system is similar in many respects to 'closed' social systems that are sometimes characterized as total institutions. Such institutions are separated from the larger society to a significant degree and carry out their functions with limited interaction with outside organizations (Brookover and Erickson, 1969:80).

Indeed it is possible to infer from Harp and Richer's (1969) review of the research literature in the sociology of education that such an investigation would be a contribution to the field. They argue that the absence of systematic comparative studies of educational organizations and studies of the relationship between educational institutions and other societal institutions has impeded the development of the sociology of education.

Method of Investigation

The principal methods of investigation are theoretical and analytical. The former accrues from the necessity of developing a viable model of the variables affecting participation in social systems and their effect upon an individual's identity. The latter results from the necessity of logically testing the applicability of the

model to the analysis of the effects of participation in the school social system upon an individual's identity. Should the model prove applicable on the logical level, a brief statement indicating avenues of empirical validation of the model will be offered as well as a statement of possible implications.

C H A P T E R I I

A MODEL FOR THE ANALYSIS OF THE EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION
IN SOCIAL SYSTEMS UPON AN INDIVIDUAL'S IDENTITY

Introduction

Models appear to be fundamental vehicles which permit us to transport ourselves from the very lowest common sense levels to the more abstract levels, and back again, by combining formal and metaphoric dimensions of a phenomenon to achieve a more complete understanding. Models permit us to order elements in such a way "that one sees relationships that were not evident before, groupings that were before not present, ways of putting things together not before within reach" (Bruner, 1965:19). Through the use of metaphor, one may connect domains of experience which were previously separate (Bruner, 1965). Thus by manipulating the formal aspects of particular phenomena and representing them metaphorically one can discover connections that were previously unsuspected.

Basic Concepts

To illustrate the force of this view, the basic concepts - environment, input, process, output, and feedback - will be applied to the social system. The continuous interrelationship between these concepts is illustrated in

Figure 1.

Figure 1: Basic System Concepts

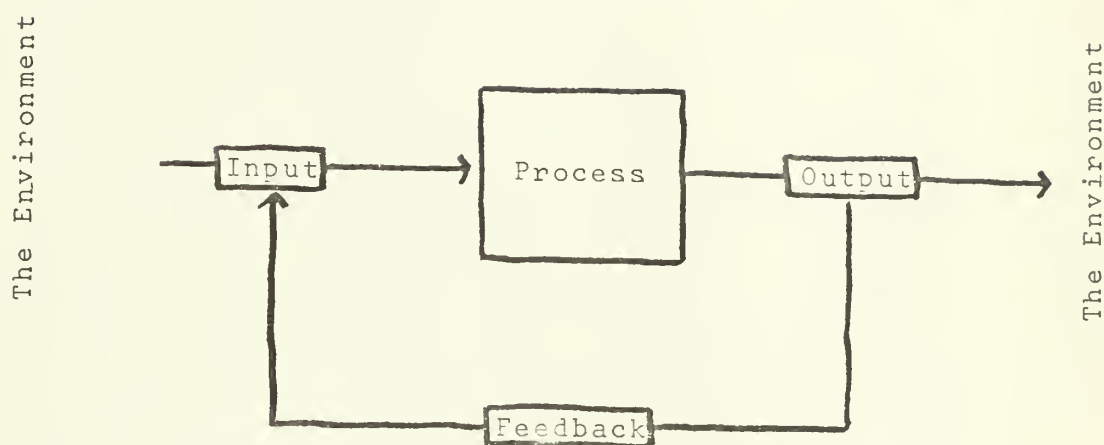


Figure 1 can be described as follows: A system is a set of elements in interrelation which are dependent upon an environment for energy, personnel, information and material. Certain quantities and types of these elements enter the system as inputs and are acted upon by some process(es). At the time these elements re-enter the environment, they are called outputs. As part of the environment, outputs may become new inputs available for processing; this phenomenon is called feedback. In applying these concepts to the social system, we shall develop a model of the interrelationship of these concepts which will illustrate how the social system affects an individual's identity.

The Environment

Along with the basic characteristic of unity among elements, social systems are bounded entities; that is, they may be more or less open or closed to the natural and social environments in which they exist depending upon the extent to which they exchange individuals, materials, energy, or information with other systems. While the boundaries of real social systems are always partially open to the environment, the degree of openness or closure is variable. Though it is generally agreed that "the social scientist constructing a social system model is free to give his model whatever degree of openness or closure he thinks most useful for the problem at hand" (Olsen, 1968: 230), in this study that prerogative is rejected. One of the central features of this paper is to illustrate the relationship between the degree of openness or closure to the functioning of a social system and the attendant consequences for the development of an individual's identity.

In their attempt to survive in an environment which supports other systems with similar functions, systems are forced to compete with one another for materials, energy, information, and personnel. From the point of view of the system however there must be restrictions placed upon the type and quantity of personnel, material, energy, and information exchanged. Too much, too little, or the wrong

kind of input or output may affect the system in adverse ways. Information, and its transmission, are the essential ingredients in the process where meaning is exchanged and support and resources received or denied. The lack of competition that frequently accompanies a public mandate for the continued operation of a system may separate it from the larger society as it carries out its functions with limited interaction with systems outside of its boundaries (Brookover and Erickson, 1969). Such institutions, called total or closed systems, are frequently characterized by a restricted flow of formally structured information which takes a long time for transmission between the system and its environment, or vice versa.

A restricted flow of formally structured information which takes a long time for transmission severely curtails the system's ability to decrease entropy - the general trend of events toward maximum disorder and the levelling down of differences (Bertalanffy, 1968).

...in a closed feedback mechanism information can only decrease, never increase, i.e., information can be transformed into 'noise', but not vice versa.

An open system may 'actively' tend toward a state of higher organization, i.e., it may pass from a lower to a higher state of order owing to conditions in the system. A feedback mechanism can 'reactively' reach a state of higher organization owing to 'learning', i.e., information fed into the system

(Bertalanffy, 1968:150).

The applicability of the concept entropy to living systems which are partially open and information theory is controversial and has not received enough attention to permit a precise theoretical statement of relationship. While it is outside the scope of this investigation to develop such a theory, the view that closed social systems tend toward increasing entropy is of general heuristic utility. A more precise way of viewing the relationship at this time is in terms of the system's capacity to be responsive to its environment and - as we shall see later - its participants.

The responsiveness of a group of individuals to the needs and interests of others is predicated upon the extent to which they share common definitions of the situations confronting them. The less information one group has about another, the more time it takes to get the information. The less comprehensible the information is, the less likely it is that the groups will share common definitions of situations. Without shared definitions of the situations which confront them, it is impossible for groups to develop responsive and coordinated action. Under such conditions personal and social disorganization seem likely.

Where the flow of information between a system and its environment is restricted, demands, events, or changes in one setting do not influence either policy or practice

in the other. When change is rapid, as it is in our society, and information restricted, the component norms of the system and its environment are likely to be in conflict. For individuals who participate in the system and its environment, the more restricted the flow of information, the more likely it is that they will experience conflict between the component norms of the two settings.

Every social system that the individual enters represents new patterns of behavior to be learned at the same time he is participating in the activities for which the system was established. While it is true that new learning is demanded, the 'presentation of self' (Goffman, 1959) that an individual participant in a total social system must learn is not only different from the way in which he presented himself outside the system; it is in conflict with his presentation of self outside the system. Isolated or closed social systems act upon individuals in such a way that their identities as human beings are altered to fit the needs which the system defines the individuals as possessing.

Total systems anticipate expected behavior and secure themselves from unexpected behavior by limiting the individual's opportunities for seeking alternative "ways of being". They accomplish this through programming all

aspects of his participation in the system. The more an individual must acquire a presentation of self in conflict with the way in which he would present himself were he not a participant, the greater the reduction in his autonomy. The postures, mannerisms, gestures, and dress with which the individual communicates his identity and asserts his autonomy to others or conceals it from them are eroded or changed as required by the social system.

If the individual does not feel himself to be autonomous this means that he can experience neither his separateness from, nor his relatedness to, the other in the usual way. A lack of sense of autonomy implies that one feels one's being to be bound up in the other, or that the other is bound up in oneself, in a sense that transgresses the actual possibilities within the structure of human relatedness. It means that a feeling that one is in a position of ontological dependency on the other (i.e. dependent on the other for one's very being), is substituted for a sense of relatedness and attachment to him based on genuine mutuality. Utter detachment and isolation are regarded as the only alternative to a clam or vampire-like attachment in which the other person's life-blood is necessary for one's own survival, and yet is a threat to one's survival. Therefore, the polarity is between complete isolation or complete merging of identity rather than between separateness and relatedness. The individual oscillates perpetually, between the two extremes, each equally unfeasible. He comes to live rather like those mechanical toys which have a positive tropism that impels them towards a stimulus until they reach a specific point, whereupon a built-in negative tropism directs them away until the positive tropism takes over again, this oscillation being repeated ad infinitum (Laing, 1965:52-53).

The more his former identity - or his identity outside the system - is eroded or changed by his participation in the system, the more vulnerable he is to the system's definition of him as a human being.

Because they experience conflict between the component norms of the environment and the system, and because the norms of the system attack basic aspects of their identity and autonomy as human beings, individuals in total systems are not likely to opt for participation. It becomes necessary, therefore, to make their participation compulsory and restrict their mobility back into the environment once their participation has been secured.

Restricted access to the environment during the time he is a participant in the social system prevents the individual from taking part in events which typically occur in the surrounding environment. In so far as the events from which his participation is restricted are necessary for his physiological and social maintenance as a human being, they must of necessity be provided by the social system. Thus, the more complete the isolation, the more maintenance functions (e.g. providing for lunch, recreation, rest, and health care) will be performed. Because resources are scarce, the more of them devoted to maintenance functions, the less available they are to the treatment functions for which the system was designed.

Inputs and Outputs

In social system analysis, the operation of a particular configuration of processes upon social entities is generally of prime concern. It is implicit in the preceding discussion that the human input is a basic ingredient of the model we are constructing here. The human input available to the social system varies with respect to sex, age, ethnicity, socio-economic and socio-cultural background, various needs and aptitudes and a host of similarly complex variables. In this paper, it is clear that the focus is upon the individuals' identity:

...ways in which the individual reacts to himself, how he perceives himself, thinks of and values himself, and how he attempts through various actions and attitudes to enhance or defend himself (King, 1968:85).

There are five principal components of an individual's identity with which we are concerned - his needs for control, meaning, consistency, social interaction, and self-esteem. Because we are hypothesizing change in these components as a result of the individual's participation in the social system, the outputs upon which we will focus relate directly to the inputs and may be described in terms of alienation. We are saying that the less responsive the system is to the individual's needs, the more alienated he is likely to be. The sociological and

psychological aspects of alienation are seen here to be intertwined; the social system is identified as potentially alienating and its participants as being potentially alienated. A causal relationship is implied. We will view alienation as based in the structure of the social system and as having consequence for the individual (Israel, 1971). Alienation is seen to be a potential aspect of individual identity arising from the influence of the social system on the participation of its members.

The genesis of the process of identity formation and development is found at that point when the human organism recognizes his separateness from the environment and others in it. At that point the individual becomes a participant in the process of social interaction where meaning, function, and social control are exchanged. Recognition of one's separateness gives rise to the ability of exercising control over the environment. Increasing ability to control one's environment and others in it accompanies the increasing recognition of one's separateness from these other elements. To lose control over the productions of outcomes affecting one's self or one's environment - to lose the ability to choose the goals toward which one will strive or the means of achieving the goals - attacks a basic dimension of identity and leads to feelings of powerlessness - expectations held by the individual that

his own behavior cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes he seeks (Seeman, 1959). The greater the reduction in the individual's control, the greater his feelings of powerlessness.

Action, thought, and feeling occur simultaneously within the human organism and combine to form units which are integrated into larger patterns and have meaning for the individual. Because they are located in time and space and have meaning, it is possible for the individual to make predictions about the outcomes of his own behavior on the basis of prior experience - thoughts, feelings, and actions. Under normal circumstances

...men tend to see themselves in terms of some kind of career line including the past and the future. Acts are integrated into larger units. Because men live in a temporal perspective and are able to survey their acts retrospectively and prospectively, they can organize and plan a series of acts that cover a long period of time (Shibutani, 1961: 225).

When the individual is forced to think, feel, or act in ways which have no meaning for him, his identity is being attacked and he is likely to feel that he is unable to make satisfactory predictions about the outcomes of his own behavior (Seeman, 1959). The more an individual is forced to think, feel, or act in meaningless ways, the more likely it is that he will feel that he is unable to make

satisfactory predictions about the outcomes of his own behavior.

Because individuals approach one another to validate assumptions about their own identity, an individual's identity will be more or less well integrated depending upon the consistency of the responses he receives from one social situation to the next (Rosenberg, 1965):

To the extent that the society in which one lives is stable and well-organized, the pursuit of a clearly defined career is greatly facilitated. But when participating in societies in which the component group norms are not mutually consistent, it becomes progressively more difficult for any man to integrate his various images into a single unit. When the differences are too great, a man may suffer from inner conflicts, and at times the pain may become so acute that he may suffer dissociation (Shibutani, 1961:246).

Dissociation or malintegration of identity may manifest itself in three different forms - self estrangement, normlessness, or isolation.

Self-estrangement is a variety of alienation which occurs when the individual feels himself to be set apart from himself (Fromm, 1955). Generally, the individual will experience himself as disembodied or as presenting a self required in a situation without that presentation actually being the definition he holds of his identity (Laing, 1965:66-93). The greater the difference between the component norms of two settings in which an individual

participates, the greater the likelihood of his experiencing self-estrangement.

Normlessness (means rejection) and isolation (goal rejection) are likely outcomes of prolonged and enforced participation in a system whose component norms conflict with those of the environment. By rejecting means and/or goals, the individual may negate the assumptions that the institution has about the kind of person he is supposed to be.

Because he learns what identity he possessed from the responses of others to him (Cooley, 1922), social interaction is absolutely essential to the formation of an individual's identity. Successful interaction is predicated upon the degree to which interactants share common definitions of the situation and upon the mutuality of their expectations for one another's behavior. The less individuals share common definitions of the situation, and/or the less mutual the expectations individuals have for one another's behavior, the less willing or able they will be to engage in social interaction and, thus, the less clearly defined their identities will be.

One's identity is subject to reduction or enhancement as a consequence of one's perception of the discrepancy between what one is and what one may become. When the individual voluntarily selects a standard to be

applied to himself, such knowledge is likely to motivate change in behavior in a positive direction. When the individual must involuntarily adopt a standard to be applied to himself the outcomes are unlikely to be as favorable. Self-denigration can be thought of as a form of alienation from self occurring when one is repeatedly forced to apply an ideal standard to oneself only to discover those aspects of one's identity which fall short of the standard and are, thus, evidence of a defective identity. The more one is forced to apply a standard to oneself the more likely it is that he will discover those aspects of his identity which fall short of the standard.

Our concern with input and output stresses the notion that individuals are developing or emergent beings possessing some "identity" whose substance changes through the positions he adopts or are adopted for him. That is, the development of one's identity is a dynamic and complex process involving the individual's participation in social systems. It is hypothesized that open systems promote the development of integrated identities and that closed systems promote mal-integrated or alienated identities.

Processes

The specific processes with which this analysis is concerned emanate from the system's need to adapt to the

exigencies imposed by its external environment and the internal requirements these impose upon it in its attempt to persist over an extended period of time. Social systems are people-processing systems composed of individuals whose participation is secured as a result of recruitment from the environment (the recruitment process). In order to accomplish the tasks imposed upon it (the production process), it must: identify the relevant member qualities or states to be changed (the identification or labelling process); allocate members possessing certain attributes to particular treatments in the production process so that changes may be effected (the allocation process); monitor the performance of members in the production process in order to ascertain the degree to which the changes have occurred (the evaluation process); and it must certify that the desired changes have occurred (the certification process). To insure that the behavior of members will be directed toward the system's tasks, the system exercises control over this behavior (the social control process).

Feedback

Social systems are feedback systems. The output of the social system, as part of the environment, may provide feedback in the form of information, energy, material and personnel which affect inputs. The extent to which the

outputs of a social system provide feedback to the system may vary; the system may restrict output to the environment in much the same way that it restricts input. Existence in a non-competitive environment permits greater regulation of inputs and outputs by the system than would be the case in a competitive environment. Though the system may be in conflict with its environment, non-competitiveness allows for maintenance of low visibility. The recognition of the conflict is frequently confined to those individuals who participate in the system and its environment.

Summary

In the preceding pages we constructed a theoretical model of the effects of participation in social systems upon an individual's identity. The following points summarize the argument:

1. Individuals are developing or emergent beings who possess an identity (characterized by needs for control, meaning, consistency, social interaction, and self-esteem) whose substance changes in either a positive or negative direction through the social positions he adopts or are adopted for him.
2. Without shared definitions of the situations which confront them, it is impossible for social systems, and

individuals within them, to develop responsive and coordinated action.

3. The lack of competition that frequently accompanies a public mandate for the continued operation of a social system separates it from the larger society as it carries out its functions with limited interaction with systems outside of its boundaries.
4. When interaction is limited, demands, events, or changes in one setting do not influence either practice or policy in the other.
5. When change is rapid and interaction limited, the component norms of the system and its environment are likely to be in conflict.
6. Incompatibility between component norms has the greatest effect upon those individuals who participate in both settings; these individuals are likely to experience considerable personal and social disorganization.

C H A P T E R I I I
THE EFFECTS OF PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL SYSTEMS UPON
AN INDIVIDUAL'S IDENTITY: A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS
OF THE SCHOOL AS A CLOSED SOCIAL SYSTEM

Introduction

In the preceding chapter a theory of the effects of participation in social systems upon an individual's identity was advanced. It was indicated that social systems exhibit variability with respect to being open or closed to the socio-cultural environments in which they exist depending upon such things as the amount, rate, and structure of input and output exchanged, and the degree of normative congruity between the system and its environment. It was argued that these variables influence such system processes as recruitment, identification and allocation. Because these processes influence how individuals participate in the system and the patterns of participation determine the principles that they derive about their own identities, the degree to which the system is open or closed to its environment should materially affect the kind of identities individuals will manifest as a result of their participation. This chapter is a logical evaluation of the applicability of the theory to the Canadian and American public school.

An Overview

The claim that public schools have failed to be responsive to the needs and interests of the individuals they are supposed to serve has received considerable support in the professional and semi-professional literature devoted to education during the past fifteen years. A persistent theme in that literature has been that the Canadian and American public school has been unresponsive to society's need for (i) a more equitable distribution of opportunity (Porter, 1965; Coleman, 1966), (ii) a more humanistic person (Nordstrom, FriedenberG and Gold, 1967; Weinstein and Fantini, 1971), and (iii) a more informed citizenry (Hodgetts, 1968; Hess and Torney, 1967). In light of the fact that all social systems must adapt to the presence and pressure of systems outside their boundaries, the apparent failure of the public school to achieve these goals seems a paradox: How does a system which consistently ignores the demands, events, changes taking place in its environment survive for so long a period of time?

A partial answer to the question is that the public schools of North America enjoy a relatively unique position among social institutions; they operate with a quasi public mandate in a non-competitive environment. When systems exist in an environment that supports other systems

with similar functions, they are forced to compete with one another in order to survive. The lack of competition that frequently accompanies a public mandate for the continued operation of an institution such as the public school separates it from the larger society and permits it to carry out its functions with limited interaction with systems outside of its boundaries.

Although Mort (1941, 1960) and Miles (1964) studied the question of adaptability to change, it was not until late 1960's that educators (Kozol, 1967; Holt, 1968, 1969; Postman and Weingarten, 1969) became sensitive to the problem of the separation between the public school and its socio-cultural environment. Even though it was recognized, the prevailing belief was that such a separation only affected minority group or low income children:

By the time a child enters school he has already developed an individual and cultural identity; for minority group and low income children, this identity has been viewed as a disadvantage..... Educators have assumed that one instructional system could be applied to all children....and that the success of all children could only be measured in terms of their adaptability to the uniform standards implicit in this system. The inability of the 'disadvantaged' student to profit from even such special arrangements as the various compensatory education programs may be due to the actual irrelevance which the curriculum and instruction had to their lives as well as to the alienation of these children and their parents from the procedures of the school (Lopate, et al., 1970:147).

Fantini and Weinstein (1968) challenged the educational community to discard its view of the disadvantaged and see that "...our standard system of educating children is inadequate for all children...." It took the statements of the students themselves to awaken the educational community to the pervasiveness of the problem:

School is a separate little world in itself, set up with its own conditions and its own rules for living and learning together, and it is really, really difficult to relate education to the way life is outside (Kris, quoted in U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1971:6).

Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether it is possible to attribute the alienation of students to their participation in the social system of the public school. Should we find that alienation results from their participation in the school, it remains to be seen whether alienation emanates from a significant separation of the school from its socio-cultural environment.

Recruitment

The first step in exploring the relationship between identity and participation in the school social system is to determine how individuals become participants in this social system. Though every social system recruits and attempts to sustain participation, the way in which these processes are carried out depends on the nature of the

particular social system.

In his description of voluntary and compulsory associations Weber (1962) uses the recruitment process to distinguish between different kinds of social systems:

A voluntary association (club) is a corporate group based on voluntary agreement, whose statutes are valid only for members who have joined it in person. A compulsory association (institution) is a corporate group whose statutes can be imposed successfully within a specified jurisdiction on every individual behavior that conforms to certain distinct criteria (115).

Legally sanctioned compulsory participation is the prime characteristic of school recruitment in the United States and Canada as well as a salient feature of total institutions. It greatly facilitates the changes in behavior brought about by the school by creating obligatory changes in status and role for the individual while he is a participant and later as a result of equipping him morally and technically for the adult society. The school is the medium through which the society makes or fails to make the young into its own image.

Because individuals approach one another, in part, to validate assumptions about their own identity, the consequences of obligatory or compulsory participation may be different from the consequences of voluntary participa-

tion. Voluntary participation in social systems permits individuals with conflicting assumptions about one another's identities to withdraw their participation. When participation is obligatory such a possibility does not exist; the social system encompasses the individual for a specific period of time during which it may make demands upon him for a particular "presentation of self".

In closed systems the flow of information between it and its environment is restricted. Events occurring in the environment do not influence the closed system, when change is rapid, as it is in our society, and information restricted, the component norms of the system and its environment are likely to be in conflict. The students, with participation in both the closed school and the environment, are likely to feel they are required to acquire ways of presenting themselves in school that are contradictory to the ways they present themselves outside of school.

Prior to entering school, the child can manage certain aspects of his identity by participating in or withdrawing from activities. The boundaries between himself and others are in large part under his control. But in school he is highly visible both to his peers and to the teacher. Any characteristic - dress, manners, behavior - which distinguishes him from others is

immediately available to others as an object, whether benign or deprecatory, to use in their interaction with him. His mere presence conveys social information over which he has little control; - his "informational preserve regarding self" (Goffman, 1961) is open to violation, and his identity is open to manipulation and stigmatization. The longer the individual participates in the system, the more likely it is that he will accept its view of what constitutes a "normal" identity as valid, even though that view conflicts with that of the environment.

Compulsory participation, as an index of system closure, implies a certain degree of inconsistency between the responses an individual receives from the school and the responses he receives from social systems (e.g. the home) external to it. The theory suggests that: when an individual encounters differences between the component norms of the social systems in which he participates, compulsory participation in such social systems may magnify the likelihood of self-estrangement by preventing the individual from reducing the conflict by leaving the field.

Social Control

The school exercises control over its members to insure that their energy and behavior will be directed toward system goals, particularly when the realization of

system goals (i.e. moral and technical socialization) is requisite to the persistence of the school as a functional subsystem of the larger social system. Social control in school, as in other social systems, involves a system of structured authority through which the staff enforces a body of rules. The structure of authority through which the school achieves control over its members follows the bureaucratic mode described by Bidwell (1965) and is of the echelon kind: Any member of the staff class has certain rights to discipline any member of the inmate class (Goffman, 1961). The body of rules in a social system may be diffuse or specific. That is, it may pertain to many categories of events or relatively few categories of events. Any rule or body of rules may be clear or ambiguous depending upon the extent to which the (i) prescribed or proscribed action, (ii) temporal/spatial context, (iii) individual(s), and (iv) sanctions applying are stated in terms which both inmates and staff are capable of understanding.

In total or closed schools, regimentation, routinization, rigid scheduling and formal rules are the basic facts of the institutional life of students and a fundamental means of social control. These characteristics pervade all aspects of life in total social systems. In scheduling the full day's activities for the individual,

the total social system anticipates expected behavior and secures itself from unexpected behavior by limiting the individual's opportunity for seeking alternative "ways of being". By prescribing a particular presentation of self and proscribing others, the total or closed system reduces the individual's capacity for autonomous action.

For example, by the time a child is 4 or 5 years old he has gained a certain amount of autonomy with respect to performing toilet functions of which both he and his parents are proud. However, this autonomy is curtailed by the schools' requirements for deference to its internal work schedule. Students must ask permission of the teacher to perform a function previously performed autonomously. And, in some institutions, students are required to subject their evacuation to regimentation in the form of waiting until an appointed time and/or performing toilet functions in the company of many of one's peers.

A radical and/or prolonged reduction in autonomy attacks the individual's sense of self and may lead him to question whether, indeed, he is capable of producing the outcomes he seeks. The theory suggests that we would find a disproportionate number of individuals manifesting powerlessness in total or closed systems than we would find in open systems.

In addition to regimentation of evacuation, several

other forms of regimentation are required by the structural make-up of the closed school. Students move from class to class at the same time as all, or nearly all, other students. In some schools they move in a manner which is prescribed by explicit rules and facilitated by specific physical structures such as "UP" and "DOWN" staircases and painted "traffic" lines down the center of halls. In other words, the participant in a closed system is (i) in the immediate company of a large number of similarly situated individuals, (ii) who are all doing approximately the same things (iii) at the same time, and (iv) are receiving uniform treatment, (v) from a body of officials, (vi) whose actions are governed by a system of formal rules (Bidwell, 1965).

The supervision of the movement of students in blocks creates a change in role focus for the teacher from his instructional posture to a posture of surveillance. This shift in role focus causes students, who outside the school are subjected to the authority of a single immediate superior (father, mother, employer), to be subjected to echelon authority where any teacher may discipline any student. Combined, these features create a condition "where one person's infraction is likely to stand out in relief against the visible, constantly examined compliance of the others" (Goffman, 1961):

Today, during lunch, as every day, escaping students were caught by the hundreds by that sly, watchful group of teachers whose sole purpose seems to be that of catching escapees as they cross the streets on the way to corner stores. At times it seems that the regulation prohibiting street crossing is perpetuated only so that these teachers will have something to keep themselves occupied (Divoky, 1969:45).

The school's control over behavior can be, like prisons and mental institutions, almost total; curtailing one's autonomy not only through formal rulings and enforced activities, but through scheduling and spatially segregating the day's activities. Hence, bells ring indicating both the beginning and termination of school activities. There is a high degree of differentiation with respect to behavior in specific locales. There are detention halls, study halls, playgrounds, cafeterias and libraries which are staffed not only in terms of their service function (e.g., dieticians and cooks in the cafeteria and librarians in the library) but also staffed to insure that appropriate student behavior is achieved and maintained. School yards, playgrounds, cafeterias, study and detention halls are patrolled by teachers or, in some cases, para-professionals. School rules frequently prescribe that unused classrooms be locked; and, in some locales, it is an offense to have students (even of high school age) unattended in certain locales or to permit a student to possess or use a key to

a classroom. Schools often employ student monitors (trustees perform similar functions in prisons) to check and validate "passes" permitting or denying access to and from one place to another while classes are in progress in order to maintain internal decorum and security. In essence, scheduling and spatially segregating the day's activities constitutes another source of tension between the "home" life and "institutional" life of the student.

The individual's opportunities for seeking alternatives to the behavior-programming built into the total social system are limited by his visibility and the obligation to request permission to perform functions which generally, he can perform on his own. Students in such social systems must acquire ways of presenting themselves which are in conflict with the way in which they would present themselves were they not participants. These "ways of being" are governed by diffuse regulations which tend to be ambiguously stated:

High personal standards of courtesy, decency, morality, clean language, honesty, and wholesome relationships with others shall be maintained. Respect for real and personal property, pride in one's work, and achievement within one's ability shall be expected of all students (Palo Alto Unified School District, 1967-68).

Under such a condition individuals live with some anxiety about breaking the rules because "in total institutions

staying out of trouble is likely to require persistent conscious effort" (Goffman, 1961).

When rules are ambiguous, the probability of integrating the action demanded into a larger pattern of behavior is low because, in a system of echelon authority, the multiplicity of interpretations for any action increases directly with the number of staff members with whom the student comes in contact. The theory suggests that, under such circumstances, in closed systems, when a student has been repeatedly confronted with failure to comply with a body of ambiguous rules, he is likely to feel that he is unable to make satisfactory predictions about the future outcomes of his own behavior. Over the long run closed systems are likely to manifest a greater degree and amount of normlessness and isolation than open systems because ambiguous rules are difficult to internalize. When a student has internalized a normative framework of one social system (e.g., the home) which conflicts with another he is unable to internalize, it is likely that he may reject the prescribed norms for achieving the goals of the latter, or reject the goals, or he may reject both the norms and the goals.

Total social systems, then, act upon individuals in such a way that one's identity as a human being is altered to fit the needs of its internal structure. The postures,

mannerisms, gestures and dress with which the individual communicates his identity to others or conceals it from them are eroded or changed as required by the programming of activity in the total social system:

I am now in English class and have just been informed that I am getting a zero for the day because I committed the number one sin, wearing blue jeans. I cannot imagine how wearing these infamous pants would have any effect on my work in school, the teachers or anything else. I'm reaching a point of manic depression, everything that's happening seems unreal. Entering my third hour class I started to regain my senses. The hour goes well, and God sends the lunch bell.

After an hour of freedom the last place I wanted to go was back, but I have to graduate to get out. It's really sickening to think about how high a goal finishing school is, when people want to get out instead of getting a diploma.

It is now fifth hour. I was only half-way into the room before the teacher kindly remarked, "Look, class, a real live farmer." Obviously referring to the hideous blue jeans I was wearing, of course. My tensions are rising to a mild state of hysteria. Sixth hour has now begun and I am glad to see we have a substitute teacher. After a few of her comments I'm not quite sure. During the first five minutes of class I've had my seat changed three times, my best and only guess is the fact that I asked the girl next to me for a pen. At this time I was getting disgusted and was about to tell the teacher what I thought of her methods. My better judgement decided against it since the least infraction of the rules would put me out of school as I am 18. The rest of the hour remained calm (The Open Door, quoted in Divoky, 1969:20).

The author ends with a post-script - "I am not a degenerate,

bum, or communist" - that reveals his awareness of, and susceptibility to, the labelling process that occurs in school and underpinned by sets of assumptions concerning the social, economic, and political worthiness of certain human beings.

Identification

Since school represents a new set of relationships to the student, significantly new kinds of learning - apart from those prescribed by its public mandate - occur. Part of the institutional practice of social systems is the definition of its members as members and the identification of the relevant member qualities or states to be changed. From these practices additional new learnings about self result.

When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed....Information about the individual helps to define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him (Goffman, 1951:1).

Each social system establishes ways in which persons may be categorized (identified) so that it is possible to determine (i) whether the individual possesses the attributes

qualifying him for membership in the system, and (ii) what relevant member qualities or states need to be changed in order to accomplish system goals. In some social systems, these categories constitute expectations or demands for the way in which a participant must present himself. Through the process of labelling by others, particularly by others who hold power over one's life, one learns new self-definitions (Spradley, 1970; Goffman, 1961).

From the point of view of the total institution and its staff, the student is expected to place himself at their disposal so that they may fulfill their function.

All pupils shall comply with the regulations, pursue the required course of study, and submit to the authority of the teachers of the schools (Section 10609, Education Code, State of California).

"In telling him what he should do and why he should do this, the organization presumably tells him all that he may be" (Goffman, 1961), at least within the boundaries of the system.

Total institutions tend to be task oriented rather than client oriented and, thus, depend upon a predefined range of information which emphasizes the uniformity among clients and their needs. Social information and the standards by which it is judged is limited by the bases of identification upon which the institution is dependent.

As a routine part of admission to mental hospitals and penal institutions, for example, "facts about the inmate's social statuses and past behavior - especially discreditable facts - are collected and recorded in a dossier available to staff" (Goffman, 1961). Schools collect similar information about students at admission and at frequent regular intervals as the student and his dossier are passed from grade to grade and school to school. Record keeping and transmitting - legitimate aspects of the identification and allocation processes - often produce situations in which an individual student's reputation precedes him. For the teacher, a student's reputation is his identity, at least, his "identity" as far as it is known to the institution. Thus, it is difficult for the student to impress upon staff an identity other than that reputation. In this way, new audiences of teachers may learn facts about the student which bear no particular relation to his behavior in the new situation, yet which convey social information about him over which he has no control. Self-denigration is a likely outcome of participation in a closed system that requires an individual to present and judge himself according to criteria over which he has no control.

The information made available through the processes of identification are easily transformed into empowered

social standings supported by the internal structure of the school. The grade level designation which appears on the binding of books of elementary school children (e.g., the number of footprints or squares) may be analagous to the shoulder patch of ethnic identification worn by individuals in concentration camps. Both are easily decoded symbols of social standing relevant only within the confines of a social system which values "bluebirds" more highly than "brown bears" or "Aryans" more highly than "Jews".

...the emotions aroused in schooling derive from events in which the pupils' sense of self-respect is either supported or threatened, and that school classrooms, permitting the public exposure and judgement of performance against a reasonably fixed reference point (age-adapted tasks), are organized so that the pupil's sense of personal adequacy, or self-respect becomes the leverage for sanctioning (Dreeben, 1967:220).

When the designations which exist to facilitate categorization for treatment (e.g., "educationally disadvantaged") are translated into the hierarchy of empowered social standings, they constitute a means by which aspects of one's identity may be held up before him as evidence of some defect. If one is seen as "normal", his energies are directed to maintaining that view. If one is seen as "abnormal", his energies may be directed to changing that view, concealing it from others who might use it to stigmatize him, or he may decide, in defiant despair, to

commit himself to that perception.

Those with whom one typically associates stand as articulators of the social processes affecting the individual's view of self. To share with others no particularly visible attribute apart from the common designation of 'slow learner' or 'socially maladjusted' provides no other alternative than to internalize the designation as an explanation of the common treatment received by all members. Hence, apparently meaningless terms such as 'bluebird' or 'brown bear' become reasons for assembling in a common event and take on significance or salience for the individual and his view of himself, each individual substantiating and reinforcing the defective character and social status of every other.

Allocation

Whenever individuals are assembled within complex institutions such as the school, those invested with the authority for acting upon them have found it expedient to classify (label) and assign them to a treatment. The basic definition the individual has of himself at first gives way to the institutional view of him as student and, as time goes on, to more specific kinds of designations about the kind of student he is. If the individual is a "slow student", he is assigned to a particular class or

or group; if he is a particularly "bright student" he is "promoted" to another grade. He becomes an object that may be moved from place to place within the system.

The description of a student as a thing or object gives rise to different theories concerning him (it) than would be the case were the student described as a human being. Different theories give rise to different sets of action: "The initial way we see a thing determines all our subsequent dealings with it" (Laing, 1965).

One's relationship to an organism is different from one's relations to a person. One's description of the other as organism is as different from one's description of the other as person as the description of side of vase is from profile of face; similarly, one's theory of the other as organism is remote from any theory of the other as person. One acts toward an organism differently from the way one acts towards a person (Laing, 1965:21).

The process of allocation has implications for the way in which one may come to define himself; for "...to move one's body in response to a polite request, let alone a command, is partly to grant the legitimacy of the other's line of action" (Goffman, 1961). To allow oneself to be assigned to a particular class is to grant in part the institutional definition of one's identity. And the more one is forced to apply a standard to oneself, the more likely it is that he will discover those aspects of his identity which fall short of the standard.

From the point of view of the closed system, eliciting information from and about the individual enables it to shape and code him into an object which can be handled with routine procedures. Since most school procedures are routine, pre-defined, and generally designed to accommodate large numbers of individuals, categorization of students is dependent upon attributes (e.g., intelligence and ability scores) which are incomplete and error ridden. To the extent that the individual is identified and treated on the basis of such attributes, closed systems not only ignore, but also derogate previous bases self-identification.

When the allocation process is viewed within the context of the system's attempt to relate itself to its environment, the implications for the way in which the individual may regard himself extend beyond those already mentioned. In many American and Canadian public schools, these processes impose socially structured limitations upon the individual's (i) access to the means for achievement of life goals and (ii) ability to engage in routine interaction with his peers.

Access to the means for achievement of one's life goals is structured by the social system of the school as a consequence of its attempt to relate itself to its environment:

Complex societies have the common problem of training and motivating men for diverse kinds of work and social functions. Much of this necessary training and motivating falls into the hands of education as it becomes a separate institution. The educational system must also select and sort, somehow choosing who is to be trained and later distributed to the various occupations. In doing so, education defines the 'life chances' of individuals and groups, their opportunity to reap reward, achieve status, and live preferred styles of life (Clark, 1962:44).

The acquisition of certain adult social roles is differentially available according, presumably, to one's ability. The degree to which a person can achieve his life goals is dependent upon his ability and the opportunities and resources available to him for the attainment of particular social statuses. Goslin observes that:

As the child progresses through the educational system, the decisions that must be made about the kinds of training he may select and the opportunities for advancement open to him are, for the most part left to the schoolIt is in this process that the school probably exerts its greatest influence on the allocation of status (Goslin, 1965:10). (emphasis supplied)

The theory suggests that students in closed schools are more likely to exhibit powerlessness than their counterparts in schools which are more open because in the former (i) they are categorized and consequently treated on the basis of criteria which are not under their direct and immediate control, and/or (ii) the process itself is one

over which they have little control.

Each subcultural category (e.g., occupational, ethnic, religious) imposes a different social structure and value system upon its members. When schools, through the allocation process, lead individuals to occupy diverse subcultural roles, a widening gulf develops between individuals occupying different subcultural social statuses or positions. This means that schooling may make mutual understanding and communication more difficult rather than less (Clark, 1962):

...The general manner in which the speakers of a language conceive the world is determined, or at least influenced, by the grammatical categories of their language. This manner of conceiving includes... culturally shared cognitive structures, value systems, and such psychological processes as individual perception, degree and accuracy of recall, choice of alternative principles of classification...and so forth (Greenberg, 1964:377).

Categorization of the individual as a member in commercial, technical, or academic groups and the concomitant training constitute pathways to different subcultural positions and, thus, different definitions of situations.

The presence or absence of inter-track mobility and the presence of common opportunities for interpersonal contact between individuals of different tracks mediates this process. The opportunity to be in the physical

presence of others under conditions of equal status contact is salient in developing common definitions of situations upon which interpersonal relationships are founded.

However, in total social systems, it is likely that the attributes qualifying the student for particular kinds of treatment in the system will be translated into a hierarchy of empowered social standing among students and between students and staff. Thus, students of different treatment groups in closed systems will be less willing or able to engage in social interaction than will students of different treatment groups in open systems. In total or closed schools, tracking, grouping, and/or streaming are sources of normative isolation that limit the amount of social interaction between students of different treatment groups.

Production

The productions of trained manpower, citizens, and cultural agents - the central task of the public school - is difficult to accomplish because (i) "... socialization of children and adolescents for adult roles is massive and complex;" and (ii) "the school system is responsible for a uniform product of a certain quality" (Bidwell, 1965).

...since students are to be socialized to adult life, the central activities of this role are not directly relevant to the immediate interests or lives of its encumbrants. From the point of view of the

student, participation in these activities is likely to be foreign to his own preferences, yet he cannot opt for or against participation (Bidwell, 1965:973).

While Bidwell's comment on relevance is generally true, he overlooks the possibility that the process - or more specifically the curricula to which students are exposed - may achieve another form of relevance by attempting to use the student's present needs, interests, and experiences as a staging point for instruction (Fantini and Weinstein, 1968).

Because closed schools tend to be task oriented rather than client oriented and depend upon a predefined range of information which emphasizes the uniformity among clients and their needs, their curricula tend to be standardized and sequential. Standardized curricula, designed to accommodate a common range of experience, are frequently sequential making staff at any given level dependent upon staff at the preceding level for their attainment of uniform outcomes. Subtle differences in the experience, needs, and interests of students - the things which define their unique identities and aptitudes - are lost in seeking a single common treatment. Since students are expected to change their behavior to conform with the uniform criteria set down by the curricula, their unique needs and experiences are, from the point of view

of the closed school, irrelevant to the performance of a given task.

Routinization and irrelevance come to characterize the participation of students in the production process of the closed school. However, if the process is to succeed, the universalistic and affectively neutral posture of the teachers - imposed by standardization and sequentiality - must be supplemented with more particularistic and affective concern.

Though the teacher role as such is inflexible, it is supportable either for the individual teacher or his students only by virtue of a rapid alteration with it of supplementary or even contradictory roles. Thus one softens the incidence of his authority by allowing certain indications of a dignified personal interest, of a kindliness with reserve, to seep through his countenance. One alternates the roles of the kindly adult, the mildly amused adult, and the fatherly individual with the teaching role (Waller, 1967:326).

The rapid alternations in a teacher's role behavior cause problems for the student in a closed system. He may not be sure what behavior to expect from his teachers nor what behavior is expected from him. Closed schools should manifest a wider gap between students and staff than open schools because the less mutual the expectations individuals have for one another's behavior, the less willing or able they will be to engage in social interaction. The closed system is confronted with a dilemma: its character

dictates uniform, universalistic, and affectively neutral curricula which can succeed only if it is tempered with particularistic and affective concern on the part of the teacher. However, the conflict between curricular content and instructional method produces an ambiguous social situation for students which will likely cause them to become distant from the teachers and, hence, reduce the likelihood of achieving the system's goals.

Performance Evaluation and Certification

The school exists to serve several functional necessities of the larger social system of which it is a part. In this sense, the school is a sub-system of the environment in which it exists. As presently constituted, the school plays an important part in fulfilling the requirement faced by society of training, motivating (socializing), certifying, and placing individuals in the structure of the social system. As an agent of society, the school is concerned with (i) instilling in the individual the desire to fill certain social positions (moral socialization); and (ii) equipping the individual with the skills requisite for performing the duties of the social position which he will fill (technical socialization).

Since the society is an environment to which the school is related, the measurable attainment of these goals

by the school is not only possible, but, from the point of view of the social order, necessary. From the point of view of the system, the evaluation of student performance and the certification of minimum levels of competence is necessary evidence of the degree to which it has successfully fulfilled its tasks. A good portion of the system's time and energy is devoted to providing evidence of its success and rationalizing its failures in so far as the latter are visible.

The treatment group to which one is allocated is unintentionally a form of feedback to him regarding the kind of person he is perceived to be. A more systematic and intentional form of feedback concerning self occurs as a result of the social system's attempt to monitor the performance of the individual in the production process and to certify his competence. In addition to providing data for decisions concerning his reallocation to other treatments and his suitability for future work or schooling performance evaluation and certification are intended to encourage the individual's continued and cooperative participation in processes which make demands on his time and energy.

One critical problem of early elementary schooling is for teachers to establish grades as sanctions; and to the extent that pupils do not learn to accept them as such, grades cannot serve to reward

good performance and punish poor. Secondary schools operate on the assumption - not always correct - that pupils have already come to accept the sanctioning quality of grades (Dreeben, 1967:218).

Though compulsory attendance obviates the necessity of appealing to students for membership or providing externally relevant incentives to sustain this membership, public schools indirectly admit their limited claims upon the individual by providing such 'incentives' as grades, gold stars, tokens that may be exchanged for real goods, and certificates of accomplishment. When a social system

offers external incentives and openly admits to having a limited claim on the loyalty, the time, and the spirit of the participant, then the participant who accepts this - whatever he does with his reward and wherever he suggests his heart really lies - is tacitly accepting a view of what will motivate him, and hence a view of his identity (Goffman, 1961:180).

Graduating from school becomes a "deadly serious affair" for the student requiring him to "learn to take the long view"; in other words,

...to view the school as a kind of con-game, the object of which is not the immediate pleasure of playing...but rather to manipulate the system into granting a stamp of approval, to get, in other words, the right outcome, to be certified as a 'proper product' (Green, 1968:158).

To present one's self as a "con-man" is to manifest a

presentation of self that is not a true definition of self. This is self estrangement, as defined earlier, and results from the normative tension between the environment and the system.

The full meaning for the inmate of being 'in' or 'on the inside' does not exist apart from the special meaning to him of 'getting out' or 'getting on the outside'. In this sense, total institutions do not really look for cultural victory. They create and sustain a particular kind of tension between the home world and the institutional world and use this persistent tension as strategic leverage in the management of men (Goffman, 1961:13).

The tension between "home" and "institutional worlds" created by the social system of the school requires that the individual become disembodied or estranged from self. He must obtain the authorized ends of participation (graduation) in the social system without permitting its assumptions, about what he should do or be, to become his own.

Summary

The applicability of a theory to a particular phenomenon can be logically evaluated according to two criteria: (i) the extent to which it illuminates constituent elements of the phenomenon and the relationships among them that were previously unknown or unclear, and (ii) the extent to which it is capable of generating hypotheses

which are internally consistent. The preceding seems to indicate that theory developed in Chapter Two fulfills both criteria in the Canadian and American context.

The empirical validation of the theory remains to be performed and, indeed, is likely to require the persistent effort of a large number of individuals over an extended period of time. While it is outside the scope of this work to perform such investigations, the implications for research and the further development of the theory are sufficiently important to warrant more detailed attention here than is normally the case in documents of this type. Thus, the following chapter is devoted to some of these considerations.

The function of the research that may surround the theory is to test out the chains of "if-then" relationships that it embodies. However "...all of our scientifically reliable data has only the meaning you and I...choose to assign it" (Fesler, 1965:10-11). For this reason, the implications for education that this investigator perceives as emanating from the substantiation of the theory are discussed at length in Chapter Five.

C H A P T E R I V
IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH

Introduction

The theory and propositions contained in the preceding chapters were developed from the external perspective of the sociologist. Schools have been discussed as social systems which may be more or less open or closed and which may contribute to producing participants with identities which may be described as more or less alienated or integrated. However, the sociologist is not free to view the world with impartiality. In a frequently quoted passage, Whorf explains the dilemma of those who wish to analyze social phenomena:

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face...We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significance as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it this way - an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language (B. L. Whorf, quoted in Bram, 1955:24).

We have employed the language of sociology in creating a symbolic construction - a theory. We must determine, however, whether this symbolic construction (i) accurately reflects reality as it is experienced and described by

individuals in the situation, and (ii) adequately explains the reality the individuals experience and describe.

Approaches to Research

The value of a social theory can never be fully realized unless we are willing to test whether the individuals with whom we are concerned actually experience and describe reality in the same ways the theorist says they do. In a review of the literature in anthropology and education, Sindell (1969) points out that most studies are biased toward studying reality as it is perceived by adults and that they rarely take into account the students' own expressions of their feelings, attitudes, and values. In as much as the theory developed in Chapter II purports to predict the ways in which the individuals perceive and respond to their participation in school, it seems necessary to discover the correspondence between the theory and the students' own perceptions and responses. Because the way in which a question is asked determines, in part, and limits the answer, were we to ask students how they perceive and respond to their participation in school, they might give answers we "expect" to questions that may never have occurred to them.

An important step in the validation of the propositions contained in this document is, then, to investigate

the school and its environment from the ethnographic perspective. Ethnography, the study of the way of life of a people, permits the examination of the way in which children and adolescents perceive and respond to their social experience. The problem of the research would focus on the question: Do restrictions upon the exchange of information between a school and its environment affect and change the way in which children and adolescents perceive and respond to their social experience inside and outside of school? The study would involve a micro-ethnographic comparison of students participating in an "open" school and its environment with students participating in a "closed" school and its environment. Because the selection of "open" and "closed" schools is crucial, considerable time and attention should be devoted to the task.

The theory postulated in the second chapter indicates that closed systems are separate from the larger society and carry out their functions with limited interaction with systems outside their boundaries. The principal feature of such systems upon which we have focussed has been the degree of information exchange between the system and its environment. Such institutions would be characterized by a restricted flow of formally structured information which takes a long time for trans-

mission between the system and its environment or vice versa. Unfortunately, information theory has not been developed to the point where the concepts information capacity, rate, redundancy and noise can be applied to the empirical analysis of social systems. Until we have ways of measuring these concepts in social settings, we will have to rely on less precise indices. The following are likely to be of value to the empirical investigation of restrictions upon information exchange between social systems such as public schools and their environments.

Who constitutes a legitimate visitor to the school? If the institution makes distinctions concerning who may or may not visit the school, such distinctions are likely to reveal the system's perception of who does and does not constitute a legitimate audience for information about what goes on inside the system. What are the conditions under which one may legitimately visit the school? Distinctions concerning the time one may visit the school reveal the type of information the system deems it appropriate for individuals to have. Radical limitations of an individual's access to particular types of information occur when he must make an appointment for his visit, or must visit after school, or only during a particular time period such as "open school week," "open house," or some similar occasion. Restrictions placed on the mobility of the visitor

during the time of his visit may indicate the system's view of what should and should not be seen occurring. And the restrictions governing visitor-student and visitor-staff interaction may indicate what constitutes legitimate means of gathering and validating information.

While it is important to determine what constitutes a legitimate visitor to the school, the conditions under which one may visit the school, and the restrictions governing visitor-other interactions, one should not overlook the actual frequency of visits. It should be possible to develop a number of empirical measures of the frequency of visitations, and these should be indicative of openness or closure. For example, we might ask students: "During the past year or two, has your mother, father, or legal guardian visited school during the time classes were in session?" (after McElhinney, et al, 1970). Controlling for socio-economic background and other confounding variables, we would compare the distribution of the responses of students by school. A school which reveals a disproportionate distribution of students in categories A and B is more "open" than one where there is a disproportionate distribution in category C.

TABLE 1: SCHOOL BY PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES
TO SCHOOL VISITATION QUESTION

Responses to school visitation question	SCHOOL	
	School X	School Y
A. Yes, my mother or father visited at least once in the past two years	40	10
B. My mother or father visited school, but not during class time	30	40
C. I don't remember that my mother or father ever visited school at all during the last two years	30	50
	TOTAL %	
	100%	100%

From the table above, one would conclude that School X is more "open" than School Y.

In the investigation of information exchange, one need not confine his attention to visitors. Restrictions upon the exchange of information may be revealed by the presence or absence of public telephones which students may use and the requirements governing their use; the conditions under which students may leave and re-enter school during the time it is in progress; and whether it is necessary for students to obtain prior approval of material to be published in the "student newspaper". Restrictions

upon the exchange of information may also be revealed by the curricula and instructional methods. Schools where pupils are involved in community projects or whose community resource people are used are likely to exhibit less restriction over information exchange than schools where these practices do not occur. Thus, one might ask teachers in various schools to check the appropriate categories for the following practices:

Practice: Involving pupils in community projects

- A. I have heard of this practice
- B. I have considered trying this practice
- C. I have tried it but do not use it
regularly
- D. I use this practice regularly

Practice: Using local citizens as resource personnel

- A. I have heard of this practice
- B. I have considered trying this practice
- C. I have tried it but do not use it
regularly
- D. I use this practice regularly

If the investigator is attentive to the demands, events, and changes in the school and its socio-cultural environment, he can seek to determine the permeability of

the boundary between the system and its environment with respect to any one item or all depending upon his interest. There are, in short, a variety of ways of determining the amount, kind and rate of information exchange between the system and its environment and vice versa.

Employing the indices discussed above, it should be possible to select one "open" and one "closed" school in areas which approximate one another in socio-economic, racial, ethnic, and ecological criteria. Indeed, in some areas, it may even be possible to select "open" and "closed" schools which recruit from a relatively homogeneous population. Employing the method developed by Burnett (1968) it should be possible to make comparisons of the events which occur in the "open" and the "closed" schools and their respective environments in terms of the location of the events in time and space; the people, objects, actions, and interactions which the events comprise; and their sequence of occurrence. If control has been adequate, it should be possible to relate differences between events in "open" and "closed" schools and their environments to the restrictions placed upon information exchange. The differences between events in "open" and "closed" schools should reveal the normative conflicts between closed systems and their environments that were predicted in the theory and analysis. Burnett's method of event analysis

should yield data which indicate that the patterning of events in "closed" schools conflicts with the patterning of events in the surrounding environment to a greater extent than do the events in "open" schools. In short, we would expect to find that schooling in "closed" systems requires a presentation of self that is in conflict with the way individuals typically present themselves while they are not participants to a far greater extent than does schooling in "open" systems.

Should the investigation yield the differences predicted, another step is called for - the systematic comparison of the ways in which students in those schools organize their knowledge of themselves. The central problem of the research would be the question: Do the ways in which individuals define themselves and those with whom they interact differ if they are participants in "closed" or "open" schools, and to what events in their school experience do we attribute those differences? It should be possible to construct a folk taxonomy of the way in which participants in the two settings define their own identities.

...social groups are apt to characterize individuals in terms of crucial 'axes of life', or lines of interests, problems, and concerns which the group faces, and then attach distinctive names to the resulting types or typical social roles. By so doing, the group provides itself

with a sort of shorthand which compresses the variegated range of its experience into a manageable framework...The activities of group members are no longer an undifferentiated stream of events; rather, they have been analyzed, classified, given labels; and these labels supply an evaluation and interpretation of experiences as well as a set of convenient names (Sykes, 1959:85-86).

We know that teachers have a rich vocabulary of terms they apply to students, "disadvantaged," "deprived," "emotionally disturbed," and "retarded" for example. We also know that students frequently develop similarly rich vocabularies for referring to one another and themselves, "occy" (occupational student), "retard," "asskisser," "brown-noser," "big man on campus," and "jock" for example. The theory suggests that there will be differences in the ways in which individuals think, feel, and act regarding themselves and others depending upon whether they participate in "closed" or "open" schools. We are suggesting that these differences will be revealed in the labels that students apply to themselves or permit to be applied to themselves. Sindell (1969) suggests that this aspect of the problem is amenable to analysis using the methods of cognitive anthropology developed by Frake, Goodenough, and Black and Metzger (all in Tyler, 1969). The sequential use of the Burnett and cognitive anthropological methodologies should make it possible to causally relate

differences in the "open" and "closed" settings to the ways in which individuals define their own identities and the identities of those with whom they participate.

Summary

The elaborate methods and considerable time required for the above investigations are necessary to determine the correspondence between the theory offered and the reality as it is experienced by the individuals in the situation. Only if we are willing to assume some minimal level of congruence, is it possible to validate specific features of social theory. To enter into a social setting with predefined measures of dependent and independent variables to which individuals in the setting respond one must be willing to assume that the ways in which individuals perceive reality can be determined on the basis of a priori assumptions.

C H A P T E R V
IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATION

During the 1920's the Lynds (1956) went to Middletown "...to study synchronously the interwoven trends that are the life of a small American city;" a city marked by "the absence of any outstanding peculiarities or acute local problems which would mark it off from the mid-channel sort of American community." More than forty years have passed since their classic study was published. Though Middletown has undoubtedly changed in many respects, the Lynds' description of the public school is, in general, as accurate today as it was when it was written.

The school, like the factory, is a thoroughly regimented world. Immovable seats in orderly rows fix the sphere of activity of each child. For all, from the timid six-year-old entering for the first time to the most assured high school senior, the general routine is much the same. Bells divide the day into periods. For the six-year-olds the periods are short (fifteen to twenty-five minutes) and varied; in some they leave their seats, play games, and act out make-believe stories, although in "recitation periods" all movement is prohibited. As they grow older the taboo upon physical activity becomes stricter, until by the third or fourth year practically all movement is forbidden except the marching from one set of seats to another between periods, a brief interval of prescribed exercise daily, and periods of manual training or home economics once or twice a week. There are 'study-periods' in which children learn 'lessons' from 'textbooks' prescribed by the state and 'recitation-periods' in which they tell an adult teacher what the

book has said; one hears children reciting the battles of the Civil War in one recitation period, the rivers of Africa in another, the 'parts of speech' in a third; the method is much the same. With high school come some differences; more 'vocational' and 'laboratory' work varies the periods. But here again the less-textbook-recitation method is the chief characteristic of education. For nearly an hour a teacher asks questions and pupils answer, then a bell rings, on the instant books bang, powder and mirrors come out, there is a buzz of talk and laughter as all the urgent business of living resumes momentarily for the children, notes and 'dates' are exchanged, five minutes pass, another bell, gradual sliding into seats, a final giggle, a last vanity case snapped shut, 'In our last lesson we had just finished'...and another class is begun (Lynd and Lynd, 1956:188).

The problem of the American and Canadian school lies in the fact that descriptions of school life which were written more than forty years ago remain accurate despite the enormous and unprecedented social change that has occurred in the environment surrounding the public school during the same period. The Canadian and American public school is normatively isolated from almost every other major social institution.

The component norms of school and society are not mutually consistent. Schooling stands as a major instrument of alienation for the individual by ignoring his needs as well as his previous basis of self-identification, withholding from him control over the decision-making processes affecting his choice of life goals and the means of

achieving them, providing him with narrowly defined technical training which splits him off from his fellow man, and by requiring him to present a self in the school situation without that presentation actually being the definition he holds of his identity. The way in which school processes affect the participation of individual students contains the essential components for social disintegration: (i) the dislocation of an individual's sequence of activity through enforced participation in normatively meaningless events, and (ii) the subversion of interpersonal relationships through social isolation (McHugh, 1966).

The moment a child is born he begins to be affected by processes which will determine what he will become. In the broadest sense these processes may be conceived as comprising what we call socialization. Though socialization is necessary for the functioning of society there need not be a commitment to the methods or goals traditionally employed by the society in the socialization of its members.

We tend to pass on to our children - most often unconsciously - those values which we as parents and educators hold. When we do question the processes by which we transmit our values, we almost always concentrate on what is formally taught. Few of us seriously question the learning that occurs as a result of participation in social experiences, though as much is learned from such

participation as is learned from what is formally taught. If the foregoing analysis is at all accurate, our failure to question not only the processes which affect the participation of individuals in school but the assumptions which underly them is likely to lead to social disintegration.

The prime assumption underlying our present system of schooling is that effective socialization for participation in our society involves the acquisition and internalization of a broad set of principles which can be taught to youth who will later - as adults - put them into practice. Our own social experiences provide sufficient evidence to support the conclusion that our view of the individual's role in society and, hence, the school preparation we provide is in large measure responsible for many of the problems we face.

Our society exhibits extreme variation in terms of the tasks, constraints, and opportunities for social participation available to the individual and these elements are changing at an exponential rate. Schools which define their mission in terms of the individual's capacity to fulfill the adult role in which he finds himself must be content with not only providing a limited array of learning opportunities which will be inapplicable given the present rate of change in our society but content with a view of

of one's role in society which ignores an increasingly important dimension - the individual's own definition of how he chooses to participate.

The "schools" described in the preceding chapter have been predicated on the view of role defined as the set of structurally given demands associated with a particular position (e.g., student, worker, citizen, parent) within a particular social structure. While this view of role is useful for descriptive or analytic purposes, it is inappropriate as a model for schooling. Teachers operating under this model are generally called upon to interpret the role students will play as an adult from such data as current manpower needs, the current civic-culture or some supposed microcosm of it, the traditions and norms of the group of individuals who now occupy the role of adult - though constantly changing and frequently inexplicit. Defined in this way, an adult role is thrust upon the individual when he leaves school and is something not particularly amenable to change. From the standpoint of schooling, teaching involves the communication of prescriptions and proscriptions governing the actions of the individual when he becomes a full (i.e. adult) member of the society. Learning becomes the internalization of these prescriptions and proscriptions. Since the application of the principles is deferred, learning is a passive endeavor.

Another view of role, concerns the individual's own definition of what he is to do, his orientation toward action. The individual is concerned not only with a conception of how someone in a particular position should think and act, but also with how he would think and act should he decide to occupy that position. Thus, in this definition, role is a dynamic phenomenon which occurs within the individual rather than something external which acts upon him. This, then, is an argument for the reconceptualization of schooling in terms of this humanistic definition of role.

Such a reconceptualization will require a radical departure from our present perception of children and adolescents as pathological. Generally, we find individuals who are social or psychological risks in institutions - prisons and mental hospitals - where the role prescriptions are quite narrowly and specifically defined; where the choices that inmates are permitted to make are quite limited. Children and adolescents have been forced to participate in a social system which delineates their roles almost totally.

There is a huge circular effect at work in the system, by which a boy or a girl who is going to be teacher...is taught to accept the competitive academic and social system through twelve years of schooling, then given another four years of the same kind of thing in college, a little practice in

teaching at the same kind of school the student attended for twelve years, and is fed back into the machine at the age of twenty-two to keep it going as before (Taylor, 1970:21).

The role of children and adolescents in school allow them no opportunity for choice. If our system of schooling is to have value as an agent of socialization, it must foster rather than limit an individual's ability to choose; it must increase his repertoire of skills for deciding who he is and what he wishes to become. In short, it must provide individuals with the following opportunities:

1. To identify and assess their own goals and behavior.
2. To test the congruence between their goals and actions and to discover dissatisfaction.
3. To determine pathways to change in collaboration with their peers and other trusted individuals.
4. To practice, apply, and assess the effectiveness of their new goal of behavior.

The first opportunity - to identify and assess goals and behavior - places the school as the focal point for the individual's immediate participation in the social structure and as an important staging point (along with the home) for his continuing participation in the social structure. In schools where this opportunity is present there are no arbitrary distinctions or boundaries between the institutional world of the school and the "real" world or between immediate and deferred participation. One's

participation is assumed. The school is nothing more or less than a laboratory where critical skills are developed and applied to real events occurring in the experience of the individual.

The second opportunity - to test the congruence between goals and actions and to discover dissatisfaction - expands the laboratory notion. In schools where this opportunity is operating, individuals are raising hypotheses about their own participation, applying criteria to their own experience and testing the relationships they hypothesize. Though hypotheses may be disconfirmed, the individual does not fail; he may experience dissatisfaction with his procedures for experimentation or his participation, but these are elements over which he exercises control. The individual can change.

In schools which provide the third opportunity - to determine pathways to change in collaboration with peers and other trusted individuals - individuals are not split off from one another in narrow unilateral development. Through negotiation and collaboration, individuals expand the range of significant others to whom they relate and from whom they may receive support, technical advice and feedback.

In schools which provide the last opportunity - to practice, apply and assess the effectiveness of new goals

or behavior - change becomes both legitimate and safe. Where the expressed norm of the school is change, change is legitimate and uniqueness respected. Because change is under the direct and immediate control of the individual, change is safe - proceeding only as far or as fast as the individual is prepared to go.

These opportunities are in opposition to the principle we presently hold that when responsibility is demonstrated, freedom will be granted. These opportunities assume both responsibility and freedom. The limits upon any reconstruction of our system of schooling will be dependent upon the answer we are willing to give to the following question: To what extent are we willing to permit children and adolescents to define for themselves their own bases of participation in society?

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