

**Education and
National Development:
A Comparative Perspective**

**Ingemar Fägerlind
and
Lawrence J. Saha**

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Education and National Development

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A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

by

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Preface

THE idea for this book grew out of our collaboration in the evaluation of a doctoral program in Education and Development at the University of Stockholm in 1977, where Saha was on leave from the Australian National University. In the course of our evaluation, it became clear to both of us that writings in the area of education and development were in disarray, particularly when it came to specifying an ordered body of literature which represented the "state of the art". There were, and continue to be, numerous books, articles, reports and other materials on various aspects of education as related to social change and development. However, there was little coherence or unity in these materials, and knowledge about education and development seemed to be fragmented.

We decided at that time that what was needed in this highly important field which cut across so many disciplines was a work which would consolidate, synthesize and contribute to our knowledge in this area. After several years of planning and collecting materials at each of our respective institutions, we began writing the present work in April 1980, when Fägerlind was on leave at the Australian National University, and continued it from a distance and through several meetings at one or the other of our respective institutions. Over two years later our efforts have come to fruition in the form of the work presented here. However, rather than see this book as the end of our thinking about education and development, we regard it as the beginning, and only a first step in unravelling this theoretically challenging and empirically changing subject.

One of the challenging aspects of the study of education and development is its broad interdisciplinary nature and its link with both theory and practice. Theory and research in the academic disciplines of anthropology, economics, sociology and political science have all made valuable contributions to various aspects of our understanding of education's place in the change and development of societies. Educators, policy-makers, government officials and other organizational personnel have made and continue to

make decisions which assume a specific relationship between education and national development objectives. Research in the academic disciplines has often been thorough, but highly compartmentalized. It is impossible to deny that the returns to educational investment, or the modernizing effects of the school experience on attitudes, values and beliefs have not been extensively researched, even across many different societal contexts. What we felt was lacking in the field, however, was a broader and more coherent view of how the economic, social and political aspects of societies as a whole affected and were affected by education. We felt, for example, that the extreme forms of optimism and skepticism about education's contribution to development objectives which began to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s, were due in part to a failure to understand the importance of the societal context within which education and development are related. Our conviction that efforts to use education to promote change in particular directions could be both highly successful or doomed to failure motivated us to think more carefully about the complexity of the relationship and how it works.

To one extent, our purpose is reflected in the theme of this book. At the time that we began our collaboration, two phrases were commonly used to designate policies, programs and general thinking about the subject: "Education *for* Development" and "Development Education". We rejected both of these, and virtually from the outset have preferred to use the phrase "Education *and* Development". Our reasons were not due to academic pedantry, but what we felt were misleading connotations in the two labels. In the first place, both phrases seemed to have normative overtones in that they implied the search for prescriptive guidelines in the use of education for specific purposes. Our concern, however, has been more neutral and has focused on the manner in which education and development are related. Furthermore, to speak of "Education *for* Development", we felt, begged the question about the possibility that education could, in given contexts, completely undermine development objectives. While we were in agreement that education programs could indeed promote development objectives in some contexts, in others it could not, no matter how careful the program or generous the financial support might be. We further rejected the second phrase "Development Education" because we felt its connotation was specialized and not sufficiently related to our subject matter. In recent years it has become common to design school curricula to educate young students to be sensitive and knowledgeable about certain aspects of life and its environment. Thus we have witnessed the emergence of subjects such as drug and sex education, environ-

ment education, and population education, to name just a few. In our view, "Development Education" though not intended, could have the same connotation, that is as a school curriculum designed to teach about change and development, possibly with a focus on the Third World. Although we doubt that this is the meaning actually imputed to the phrase, it contains an ambiguity which we would like to avoid. Thus we have chosen "Education and Development" because we feel that its neutrality leaves open the possibility that education may have positive or negative effects on development objectives.

Our conviction that the field of education and development required consolidation led us to structure our work into four sections, roughly indicating theory, empirical research, practice and new directions. In Part 1 of this book we examine the theoretical underpinnings of the subject area. In Chapters 1 and 2 we pursue two main objectives, the first to show that theories of social change and development have been around for a long time and date back to the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, and secondly, that most thinking about education and development today makes important assumptions which can be related to already existing theories. By starting our work with discussions of theory, we hope to challenge the notion that research and practice in the field need not be atheoretical, and that in fact the field needs a theoretical foundation upon which to build in future research and practice.

In Part 2 we focus our attention on what we think are the three most important dimensions of development, at least with respect to current theory and research: the economic, the social and the political. Perhaps more than in any other section of our work, we focus our attention on the state of current research in each of these areas and attempt to evaluate the extent to which, and in what manner, education is related to change and development. Thus for each dimension we identify major theoretical underpinnings to current research and show the directions further research should take to expand our knowledge.

In Part 3 we turn our attention to practice and examine educational reform and the importance of evaluation. There is a growing documentation of educational reform histories in both developed and developing societies. For example, the history of the expansion of mass comprehensive education in the United Kingdom has been well documented, as have attempts to change society through education in the less developed societies. The People's Republic of China and Cuba are two well-documented examples. However, in Chapter 6 we have given considerable attention to reforms in Sweden, primarily because the reforms have been occurring longer than in most other countries, since the 16th century, and have also been well documented.

The complex relationship between education and the economic, social and political forces of society are clearly visible in the story of Swedish education. While we do not suggest that the Swedish example is directly applicable to other developed and less developed societies of today, we do feel that the complexity of educational relationships with other societal dimensions can be generalized with profit. In Chapter 7 we discuss the importance of evaluation of all education policies, and discuss various kinds of evaluation strategies as related to the attainment of educational goals. We strongly feel that one of the reasons why there is confusion in the area of education and development is that too little evaluation of educational processes in society has occurred. We conclude this chapter with three examples of evaluation research, from the United States, Australia and the Third World generally, which use widely differing research strategies.

In our final section of the book, Part 4, we introduce our own model of education and development. In Chapter 8 we examine the types of education and development strategies found in both capitalist and socialist societies, and developed and less developed societies. We argue that it is essential to recognize the particular permutations of economic, social and political dimensions to understand how education works in each societal context. Furthermore, we contend that an educational strategy which does not take into account the total societal context in attempts to further development goals runs the risk of minimal success, if not total failure. Finally in Chapter 9 we identify and discuss aspects of the question of education and development which merit future attention. We are convinced that much better understanding is required about the power of education to accomplish learning goals before we can understand its contribution to development. Secondly, we feel that too little attention has been given to the potentially disruptive effects of educational expansion. The facts of educational expansion throughout the world have been well documented, but there is little understanding of the contradictions that it brings about in society. Finally, we are certain that no understanding of the relationship between education and development can be complete without more knowledge about the role of the State in the adoption and attainment of educational and development goals. By the State we do not mean the political dimension of society which was the focus of attention in Chapter 5. The State is more than the patterns of political behavior and the recruitment and training of elites in society. The State refers to the power of government, and the characteristics which pertain to the exercise of that power in affecting the other social institutions of society, including

the economic, social and political. The relationship between education and development is not only part of a dialectic process with other dimensions of society, but is directly affected by the characteristics of the State.

In a work as broad as we have attempted here, there will be readers who will disagree with us on our choice of topics or emphasis. Having summarized the plan of our book, it may be useful now to mention what we have specifically not intended to accomplish. To begin with, our work is not intended to provide a thorough analysis and critique of any particular theory or theorist of change and development. The reader who is seeking an in-depth discussion of human capital or dependency theory, or explanations of Marx or Lenin on socialist industrialization, will not find it here. We have, we think, been generous with our documentation and the interested reader is invited and encouraged to pursue these topics further. We do think that they are extremely important, but space did not permit coverage of each of the important individuals or topics which we have identified.

In addition, it is important to recognize that we have not intended to provide a thorough exposition of capitalist and socialist theories of society, particularly industrialization and development. Nor have we intended to mention every country or every program in education and/or development in our discussions. Our choice of case studies was based on their perceived (by us) importance for influencing and stimulating our own and the ideas of our readers, and also for their ability to illustrate the principles and processes we have tried to stress throughout this book.

Our prefatory comments would not be complete without our acknowledgements to the individuals and institutions who have assisted us with this work. The person to whom we owe our deepest gratitude is Torsten Husén, whose constant encouragement and ideas convinced us that there was much which was needed to be said about the topic of education and development. At various stages of our work, the helpful comments and interests of C. Arnold Anderson, Leonard Broom and Martin Carnoy kept us alert to possible improvements in our conceptualization and organization of ideas. Beryl Rawson provided us with useful information on literacy and schooling in ancient Greece and Rome, and Michal Bron, recently from Poland, made thorough and valuable comments on Chapter 8. Likewise, students at our respective institutions, exposed to some of the ideas and chapters, provided us with much needed feedback particularly about our tendency to obfuscate rather than explicate. In the course of our work, we relied heavily upon the library resources of many institu-

tions other than our own, in particular the Scandinavian Institute of African Studies and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Uppsala, the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) in Stockholm, and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) in Paris.

Our respective universities, with the support of Torsten Husén at Stockholm and Jerzy Zubrzycki and Bill Ramson at the Australian National University, deserve our appreciation for making possible several exchange working visits during which some chapters were drafted and ideas were thrashed out face-to-face. Part of the cost of this project has been provided through grants from the Swedish Research Council of Social Science and the Arts, and the Wallenberg Foundation, to whom we are grateful. Pergamon Press, through its managing editor Barbara Barrett, has helped with many publication decisions.

Finally we owe our gratitude to Birgitta Horn in Stockholm and Sandra Kruck in Canberra for laboriously typing the first drafts of most chapters. However, special thanks are due to Bari Hall, whose typing, word-processing skills and untiring efforts both in Canberra and Stockholm, made possible the completion of revisions and the final draft by the designated submission date. While all the above deserve much credit for getting us this far in our pursuits, we absolve them from any deficiencies in our work. However, if our thinking about education and development has been correct, our efforts represent but a beginning and first step in understanding this fascinating and important subject, and we invite our colleagues to join us in pursuing further its challenge in theoretical and research efforts and policy formation.

Our work has been a collaborative one, and the ordering of the authors' names on the title page is strictly alphabetical and should not be interpreted in any other way.

Lawrence J. Saha
Ingemar Fägerlind

Stockholm, 6 August 1982

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PART 1

Conceptions of Societal Development