

Adult Education as Socialization: Implications for Personal and Social Change

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The process of education, including many forms of adult education, inevitably involves the adoption and possibly the transmission of certain explicit or implicit values. Efforts to distance adult education from youth education, in theory and in practice, have meant that important concepts from socialization theory and curriculum theory have been largely ignored by adult educators. In this paper, this gap is bridged through a synthesis of the ideas of Brim, Berger and Luckmann, and Bourdieu. As well, the utility of these ideas is discussed with regard to an issue of supreme importance to adult educators: the relationship between adult education and social change.

Le processus d'éducation ne se fait pas sans transmission explicite ou implicite de valeurs. Dans un souci de prendre ses distances face à la pédagogie, l'andragogie tend à minimiser l'importance de certains concepts propres aux théories de socialisation et aux théories du curriculum. Cet article a pour but de rappeler les liens établis par Brim, Berger, Luckmann et Bourdieu entre éducation et socialisation. Parce qu'elles soulignent le rapport entre l'éducation des adultes et le changement social, ces pensées pourront s'avérer d'une grande importance pour ceux qui sont engagés dans le domaine de l'andragogie.

Many different views are held by adult educators regarding approaches to social change. The history of adult education is one of an idealistic tradition ranging over diverse philosophies and ideological orientations (Elias & Merriam, 1980). The often conflicting and disparate perceptions may be related to an adult educator's basic system of beliefs and values. The implication here is that one's system of beliefs and values influences one's stance on solutions to social problems, one's approach to teaching-learning, and, ultimately, one's view on the relationship between education and social change.

The purpose of this paper is to identify certain concepts from adult socialization theory and curriculum theory and to discuss their utility for the way we think about the education of adults, particularly in relation to social change.

The basic childhood socialization model of learning to fulfill the requirements of the roles a person is likely to occupy in adult life, be they in society at large or

in particular contexts, is well known (Ginsberg & Opper, 1969; Piaget & Inhelder, 1972; and Weiner & Eckland, 1972). Ideologically, socialization all too frequently has been dismissed in recent theorizing as a conservative concept derived from a consensus view of society. It is argued, *inter alia*, that socialization focuses on the individual's adjustment to society, to the exclusion of any analysis of the ideological basis of that to which one is being asked to adjust. Here the point will be argued that, far from excluding such a perspective, concepts from socialization theory, properly used, can contribute to the analysis of ideology in adult education.

Role Socialization

Brim (1966) attempted to present some probable changes in the context of socialization as the individual progresses from childhood to adulthood. Central to his analysis is the process of role socialization which he regards as the most important aspect of adult socialization. He identifies the three elements a person requires to perform satisfactorily in a role (a) knowledge of the role expectations, (b) ability to meet these expectations, and (c) instruction to produce the necessary behavior. Each of these elements can, in turn, be extended by distinguishing between their behavioral and value dimensions, thus yielding the following typology:

	Behavior	Values
Knowledge	A	B
Ability	C	D
Motivation	E	F

Cells A and B indicate that the adult knows what behavior is expected and what the end or object of this behavior is; C and D indicate that he or she is able to carry out the behavior and to hold supportive values; while E and F suggest motivation to behave appropriately and to pursue the socially desired objectives. Brim's suggestion concerning adult socialization, that the predominant concern is with the behavioral rather than value cells, could be said to be the underlying rationale for both voluntary and involuntary kinds of adult education. For example, one assumes that adults who enroll voluntarily in literacy, pre-marriage, or professional development courses are sufficiently convinced of the value of the behavior being formed and encouraged that they do not think to question it. The same might be said for the professional mandated by legislation to upgrade his or her skills on a regular basis. Whether voluntary or involuntary, much of adult education operates within a value context that is both implicit and taken-for-granted. The implications of this are elaborated below.

Constructing and Maintaining Reality

The sense in which adult socialization involves the maintenance and reaffirmation of earlier socialization is developed in the work of Berger and Luckmann (1973). In their scheme, socialization refers to the process by which the adult "takes

over" the world in which others live and by which he or she internalizes its meaning and sense of social structure. Whatever the success of primary socialization, society must develop procedures of reality-maintenance to ensure that the reality as apprehended in individual consciousness is congruent with what is institutionally defined. This need is particularly obvious in the modern pluralist society where so many alternative and competing definitions of social reality vie for recognition and internalization.

The two types of reality-maintenance mentioned by Berger and Luckmann are relevant to the education of adults. Routine maintenance is achieved by the daily flow of life as the place of work, leisure, and family is reaffirmed. Crisis maintenance involves a more explicit approach and is demanded whenever there is a danger of the institutionalized reality being undermined: It may be necessary to discredit the conveyors of the alternative reality, to limit social contact or exposure, or to provide educational courses. It could be argued that much of what passes for adult education involves routine maintenance of reality in that the assumptions and objectives underlying many courses exist against the "background of a world that is silently taken-for-granted" (Berger and Luckmann, p. 172). Theoretically, reality-maintenance is likely to be most pronounced in social science courses which fail to transcend their cultural location by omitting to analyze this background of a taken-for-granted world. It is in this sense that many adult education courses which claim social neutrality and proclaim the intention of "telling it like it is" rather than as it "ought to be" are implicitly ideological in their maintenance of the institutionalized reality.

More obvious is the role of adult education when it is invoked in crisis maintenance. Threats to established definitions of good music, responsible worker behavior, or what it means to be a member of a particular religion, nation, or politico-economic system, tend, in reaction, to heighten the advocacy of a range of courses on aesthetic, social, economic, and political topics. Though more obvious than routine maintenance, crisis maintenance is less striking than re-socialization, as in English courses for immigrants, for instance, where meanings and definitions of childhood socialization are sometimes required to be unlearned and replaced with those of the new culture.

Cultural Violence, Misrecognition, and Legitimation

A further process by which congruence is maintained between subjective and institutionalized definitions of reality is to be found in Bourdieu and Passeron (1977). Here, Bourdieu outlines a theory of cultural violence which he defines as the imposition of an arbitrary cultural system by an arbitrary power. While there are many influences on Bourdieu's thinking, a central theme is derived from a Marxist analysis of culture — the contention that the ruling ideas of any age are those of the ruling class. Bourdieu extends this by arguing that the position of the ruling class is strengthened by the failure to recognize the underlying power relations in the transmission (imposition) of this culture. As an agent of this

transmission, the educational system is seen to contribute its own peculiar force to this misrecognition, thus adding to the legitimacy (in Weber's sense of morally changed, rightful, or natural status) of the ideas.

Unfortunately, neither Bourdieu nor others (see Apple, 1979; Sharp & Green, 1975; Sarup, 1978; Carnoy & Levin, 1985) writing on curriculum theory from a critical perspective, have deemed it necessary to include adult education in their analyses. Efforts, deliberate or otherwise, to distance adult education from schooling have thus meant that developments in curriculum theory are not reflected in recent theoretical work in adult education. Exceptions to this would be the work of Griffin (1983), Jarvis (1985), Gelpi (1984), and Langenbach (1988).

North American adult educators have tended to avoid using the term curriculum mainly due to its close affinity to the K-12 system, the process of schooling, and the socio-political ramifications thereof. Instead, the terms program or program development, which often subsume the notion of curriculum, are much more widely accepted and used in scholarly discourse. As Boone (1985) writes, the term program refers to "the individual and collective efforts of the adult education organization, its adult educators, and its client systems in planning, designing and implementing, and evaluating and accounting for planned educational programs" (p. x). Regardless of one's choice of terms, the legitimacy of a curriculum perspective in adult education becomes apparent when considering Apple's (1979) contention that one of the primary concerns of curriculum as a field of study is the task of creating access to knowledge. If creating access to knowledge is what studying the curriculum is all about, then adult educators, no less than students of the K-12 system, should benefit from knowing more about the values and beliefs inherent in the curriculum of programs designed specifically for adults.

While Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) do not deal specifically with it, adult education, as viewed in terms of reality-maintenance, would seem essential for the continued success of the cultural imposition he speaks of. Indeed, in Bourdieu's system, there is a striking failure to consider the implications of either inadequate cultural imposition or competing cultural or sub-cultural systems. If Bourdieu's thinking were to be extended to include such predictable threats to the arbitrary culture of the dominant class, it would be easy to view adult education as a potential remedial device: An ethnocentric (in the sense of being unreflective and culture bound) social science course in the guise of neutral ideology would confirm the misrecognition of the power relations and social interests involved in the unexplored meanings. Thus, according to Bourdieu's scheme, the more successfully we proclaim the neutrality of cultural transmission or reaffirmation in adult education, the more entrenched is this misrecognition and the more effective the legitimation of the cultural system.

Adult Education and the Problem of Social Change

The issue of the social functions of adult education has given rise, as one might predict, to sharply divergent viewpoints. On the one hand there are those

who claim that a significant function of adult education is to promote social change or to service the needs of bodies already set on such a course (e.g., Lovett, 1975; Thompson, 1980). On the other hand, there are those who repudiate social change as an aim, arguing that the knowledge transmitted in adult education is in itself "morally, socially, and politically neutral" (Paterson, 1979). By conceptually refining what we mean by socialization in adult education, these concepts from Brim, Berger and Luckmann, and Bourdieu and Passeron provide a basis for discussion among such opposing views.

A useful approach is to extend Brim's typology by incorporating an awareness of the socially-located nature of this context and of the social interests involved. For instance, Cells A and B, which imply knowledge of the roles one is expected to fulfill and the values which underpin them, are very important features of any adult education course involving social analysis. Yet failure to analyze the interests involved in these values and in what the indigenous culture defines as appropriate worker, family, or citizen behavior is to adopt an ethnocentric stance as defined above, as well as in the sense that it serves to maintain a particular view of society. This must be considered implicitly ideological. I would interpret Cell D not as an emotional conditioning supportive of particular behavior but rather as the cultivation of an openness of mind, as an assault on prejudices, stereotypes, and rationalizations, be they favorable to either left or right. It is unlikely that adult education courses in general will contribute much in this regard, which, at its deepest level, is the domain of encounter groups and therapy. The most that can be hoped for is that adults will come to appreciate the social location of their beliefs and values and come to some level of realization of how their consciousness has been formed. As an activity of adult education, I see Cells E and F as the basis of much that is problematic in the debate on social change. While it is one thing to encourage adults to adopt the role of "cultural stranger," to stand outside their culture as it were, and to work towards the objective of being emotionally capable of adhering to a cognitively-deduced position, it constitutes a serious ideological departure to attempt to use adult education, however implicitly, as a motivating device in relation to either action or objective, particularly insofar as they impinge on the social and political context. While it may be possible to neutralize or modify socialization forces in regard to knowledge and ability, it is substantially more difficult to alter behavior when it is culturally reinforced. Whereas knowledge and ability form a part of an incremental learning process, motivation involves a choice between alternatives: One can extend continuously one's knowledge of the cultural relativity of, for instance, sex role behavior, and one can develop the ability to behave appropriately as male or female in contrasting cultures, but motivation to act and to feel as a male necessarily involves a corresponding motivation not to act as a female.

In discussing the function of adult education in social change, the failure to distinguish between facilitating social reflection on the one hand and motivation to act and feel on the other has been heightened by the uncritical application of

Paulo Freire's writings to Western adult education. While activities encompassed in our interpretations of Cells A, B, C, and D, generating an understanding of one's cultural location and freeing adults from emotional dependence on those who have power over them appear at the base of Freire's philosophy of adult education, his approach to motivation is more ambivalent. Freire (1972) repeatedly rejects attempts to direct the actions of workers by imposing programs from above, no matter how well-intentioned, as an anti-dialogical process involving cultural invasion. Yet in speaking of oppressed and oppressor, his labelling of his pedagogy as radical betrays a view of reality inconsistent with his contention that the revolutionary's role is to "liberate, and be liberated, with the people — not to win them over" (Freire, 1972, p. 67). Is there any meaningful place in this scheme for adults who conclude after conscientization programs that they are neither oppressed nor dehumanized? Whatever the validity of Freire's assumptions in the context in which he is writing, they become much more a matter of debate in Western society where monopoly capitalism as it is presently practiced is acceptable to those who view it in contractual rather than exploitive terms. It is not at all obvious to my mind that the reflection that I have argued for will lead to either conservatism or radicalism. Yet a feature of the application of Freire's ideas to Western adult education has been the support of a belief that analysis of one's social and economic condition is necessarily an ideologically radical exercise.

Conclusion

I have argued that concepts from adult socialization theory, by helping to clarify different varieties of personal change, can contribute to our understanding of the problem of ideology in adult education. Brim's conceptualization of the context of role socialization highlights the recognition that much of adult education takes place in a context in which the values underpinning role behavior are taken for granted. Thus, if we incorporate Berger and Luckmann's view of socialization, many forms of adult education provision can be said to contribute to the maintenance of institutionalized norms, though this would be more pronounced where courses proclaimed as social analysis fail to transcend their cultural location. The idea that an adult education activity, whether formal or nonformal, voluntary or involuntary, which fails to encourage reflection on the social and cultural context, is, in its own manner, ideological, in that it serves to maintain the status quo, assumes further force in Bourdieu's linking of the nonrecognition of the power relations in cultural imposition with the entrenchment of the culture of one's consciousness. In the debate on the social functions of adult education, these writers also have much to contribute, for instance, in the conceptual clarification and extension of the writings of Freire touched on above.

An implicit theme in this paper, and one that needs further development, is the existence of strata of ideologies in adult education thought and practice. Examples might include the changing normative justifications underlying the transition from routine to crisis strategies of reality-maintenance and from imparting knowledge

to motivation. And even within motivation, while I have drawn attention to motivation in relation to socially and politically relevant areas, the very act of publicizing adult education provision, encouraging adults to choose education over leisure, is itself an attempt at motivation based on implicit definitions of human nature and human activity. I doubt if it is possible for the provision of adult education to be value-free and I see little future for a debate in black-and-white terms. What we urgently need to explore are the varieties and degrees of ideology in adult education. Having made them explicit, we need to permit them to be open for debate among all those involved in the experience of adult education.

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