A POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ADULT EDUCATION IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: A CRITIQUE OF MAINSTREAM ADULT EDUCATION MODELS IN CANADA, MEXICO AND TANZANIA*

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Abstract

There are two striking features of mainstream adult education models. First, they are based on a conspicuous ideology of liberal individualism—although sometimes at the service of political legitimation and control. Second, for many teachers and policy makers adult education is an area apparently detached from the realm of values and devoid of ideological confrontations. This article reviews evidence from research on adult education and skill upgrading programs inspired by conventional, mainstream adult education in Tanzania, Mexico and the province of Alberta in Canada. Three mainstream adult education models are identified: a therapeutical model in Alberta, a recruitment model in Mexico and a forced modernization model in Tanzania. A central feature of all three models is the lack of a participatory rationale.

Résumé

Il existe deux traits frappants aux modèles courants de l'enseignement des adultes. D'abord, il sont basés sur une idéologie apparente d'individualisme libéral—bien que quelque fois au service de la légitimation et du contrôle politique. Puis, pour beaucoup d'enseignants/es et de responsables de ligne de conduite l'enseignement des adultes est un domain apparemment détaché du domaine des valeurs et dépourvu des confrontations idéologiques. Cet article examine l'évidence à partir des recherches sur l'enseignement des adultes et des programmes d'amélioration des habiletés inspirés par des modèles courants de l'enseignement des adultes conventionnels en Tanzanie, au Mexique et dans la province d l'Alberta au Canada. Trois modèles courants de l'enseignement des adultes sont identifiés: un modèle thérapeutique en Alberta un modèle de recruitement au Mexique et un modéle de modernisation forcé en Tanzanie. Un trait central aux trois modèles est le manque d'une analyse raisonnée participatoire.

The State and Adult Education

This research employs a state-institutional approach to adult education and literacy training.[1] It does not address non-formal educational policies, programs

and practices that are initiated, financed, implemented, supervised and evaluated by agencies from the international system, or by non-government organizations.[2]

Rather than attempting a complete and systematic picture of the overall process of policy making in adult education, we concentrated on the different social actors (policy-makers, teachers and learners), their expectations and value orientations, and the interactions (contradictions, conflicts, basic agreements) among them. The study of this interaction does not involve a role-status or a psychological-attitudinal approach. Instead, we focused on the actors' world view (e.g., behavioural ethics, language patterns and narratives) as three sharply differentiated "cultural capitals." On the basis of previous empirical research, we anticipated that the different social actors in adult education would have opposing value orientations, but there would also be contrasting cultural capitals interacting in the same set of institutions and programs. The underlying assumption is that personal goals and the values of individuals (actors) in different roles in adult education, as well as alternative cultural capitals, make a difference in the way the system is organized and operates. Although the study has the limitation that it was not designed as an historical-chronological analysis, it offers a provocative analytical perspective due to our focus on the state, political economy and the institutional configurations of adult education programs as the locus where social actors interact.

At an abstract level, understanding the role and nature of the state, its position in the world system and its functions in supporting or enhancing capital accumulation and political legitimation seem to be analytical preconditions to understanding educational policy formation.[3]

The notion of the state employed here is "the totality of the political authority in a given society (governmental or otherwise) regardless of the level—national, subnational, or local—at which it may operate."[4] Thus, it has been argued elsewhere that:

> Political authority implies the capacity to impose a political voluntarism-elaborated on the basis of the perceptions of the fundamental determinants for the continuation of the accumulation of capital and the imperatives of the political legitimation of the nation-state—by means of a system of decisions in a social formation that is highly heterogeneous and characterized by very contradictory interests. In analytical terms, therefore, the state can be considered as a pact of domination and as a self-regulated administrative system that constitutes itself in an arena of struggle—and at the same time is an important actor—in the confrontation between alternative political projects.[5]

Adult education and literacy training have usually been co-opted by the state and employed as instruments of social legitimation and the extension of state authority.[6] A number of issues intervene in adult education policies and programs, including the patterns of selectivity of state action, and the modes, means and methods of state intervention.[7] However, it is not the purpose of this

article to discuss adult policy formation,[8] but to explore the models of adult education being pursued in the different societies, the predominant rationalities used in justifying the adoption or implementation of a given model and some of the key values or system of meanings underlining those models and/or rationalities. A state-institutional approach to adult education research is based on a political economy perspective, which provides the rationale for comparisons.

It is important to emphasize that this is a conceptual and comparative article with evidence from three very different countries with different cultures, histories and traditions. This article indicates the increasing world dominance of technocratic/rational approaches, paradigms, modes of thinking and action that conceal a drive for power and the reproduction of inequities rather than their reduction. Yet, while the models we have identified are useful for comparative discussion, like most models they can be rather mechanical. These models, like any synthesis of complex realities, could be open to charges that they simplify histories and cultures of resistance and critiques within each country, region and program. Theoretically, even our notion of development, looking at "stages," "levels" or "positions" in the world system, could be challenged, arguing that it is too mechanistic and linear, leaving out deeper historical and cultural analysis. Even the notion of "political culture" used here as an heuristic rather than a normative theoretical device can be considered inadequate for a grasp of the cultural and political sophistication of adult learners, teachers and policy makers. We argue that the measures of political culture incorporated in our analysis are suggestive of patterns of understanding and systems of meanings. While these measures of political culture serve to outline key features of an actor's political and cultural thinking, they cannot fully encompass people's intellectual, cultural and political understanding or people's political actions. While we are aware of the limitations of political economy approaches, even combined with political culture perspectives, we believe that work of this kind is required if cultures of resistance and critiques leading to a progressive and democratic change are to be achieved. In this regard, we hope that this article provides a useful approach and method for analysis of other programs and countries, and has potential for further development.

A Political Economy Perspective:
Canada, Mexico and Tanzania as Research Sites

In terms of socio-economic development, participation in the world economy, political system and prevailing ideology, the three countries are quite different. It could be said loosely that in terms of economic development and growth, Canada is in one extreme, Tanzania in the other extreme and Mexico somewhere in between[9] (see some indicators in Table 1). However, an important factor to be stressed is the difference not only in socio-economic development but in terms of national autonomy: to a greater extent, Canada is a major player in the world system while Mexico and Tanzania are still dependent societies—a situation that does not preclude capitalist development, but in which such development is, to borrow the fortunate phrase of Peter Evans, dependent-development.

Table 1: A Comparison of Some Basic Indicators

Indicators	Canada	Mexico	Tanzania
GNP per capita (US dollars)	13,680.0	2,080.0	290.0
Life expectancy (years)	76.3	65.4	53.7
Illiteracy rate (%)	7.0	8.0	53.7
Educational expenditure (%)	8.2	6.4	15.3
Radio receivers (per 1000 inhabitants)	825.0	173.0	29.0
TV sets (per 1000 inhabitants)	481.0	108.0	--

Source: *Third World Guide, 1989-1990: Facts-Figures-Opinions*. (Montevideo: Third World Editions, 1990).

From the perspective of socio-economic development, these countries represent different stages, levels or socio-economic situations. Canada, with a GNP per capita of $13,680 and a life expectancy of 76.3 years, is considered a developed country. Mexico, with a GNP per capita of $2,080 and a life expectancy of 65.4 years, is characterized as a developing country. Finally, with a GNP per capita of only $290 and a life expectancy of 53.7 years, Tanzania is considered a least developed country—one of the poorest 25 countries in the world.

The classification by UNCTAD characterizes Canada as a developed market economy, Mexico as a major petroleum exporter and Tanzania among the least developed economies.[10] Taking into account Wallerstein's World system approach,[11] these countries also have different positions within the world capitalist system: a central or core state (Canada), a semi-peripheral state (Mexico) and a peripheral state (Tanzania).

In political terms, Canada has a welfare state, a parliamentary democracy, pluralist party competition and a federal system based on provincial autonomy in many welfare areas, including education, housing and health. Mexico has a peculiar political structure resulting from the first social revolution of this century, where the state has developed corporatist features[12] but at the same time has many characteristics of a liberal parliamentary democracy. The party in power has ruled the country for the last sixty years, but allowing political competition in the parliament, the government of three (small) provinces to an opposition party and private control of the mass media. Finally, Tanzania has a strong corporatist structure and a one-party political system with the Chama Cha Mapinduzi as the ruling party.[13] Political parties other than the official one are forbidden. Access to information is controlled by the state. Newspapers and radio stations are controlled by the state.

Prevailing ideologies in these countries are related to the aforementioned political and economic structures. In the case of Canada, the society's prevailing ideology can be seen as individual liberalism. In Mexico, the federal government's prevailing ideology is shaped both by a blend of its corporatist cultural and political experiences and (Mexican) liberalism.[14] The prevailing ideology in Tanzania is shaped by corporatism, resulting in a sort of Fabian-socialist model known as "Ujamaa," which may be translated as "communal socialism" for self-reliance.[15] While in Tanzania the prevailing ideology may be labelled as a "closed," highly coercive state corporatism, the Mexican state operates in a relatively more "open" societal corporatism.

Despite the particular history of each society, all of them have experienced important changes in adult education policies. Within Canada, the province of Alberta is at the forefront of adult education experiences. Although it represents only 10 percent of the Canadian population, the province apparently trains 25 percent of Canada's tradesmen.[16] In the national study conducted by the Southam news organization, Alberta ranks second-best in literacy training and is clearly one of the best in terms of resources devoted to adult education.[17] In academic programs, but especially in career development, the province is continuously evaluating the outcomes of programs applied in countries with similar characteristics, particularly European nations and the U.S.. By comparing its own programs with other programs, argue Alberta's policy makers, the adult education system in Alberta integrates the best elements of different experiences, improving its efforts year by year.[18]

In 1944 Mexico undertook one of the first successful mass literacy campaigns of this century with the result that 1.5 million people were literate, setting an example for campaigns to be carried out in Latin America. The involvement of Jaime Torres Bodet—the mastermind of the Mexican campaign—in the founding of UNESCO probably influenced the earlier orientation of the institution towards supporting literacy training, and it became one of the main advocates for literacy training in the world system. In the 1980s, Mexico developed a highly sophisticated adult education system, being one of the first countries to produce books specifically for bilingual literacy training of its indigenous adult population.[19]

Tanzania's mass literacy campaign was one of the most successful experiments in literacy training in the World Experimental Plan for Literacy carried out by UNESCO,[20] and its ongoing series of campaigns, despite mixed reviews, is considered among the most efficient in the world.[21] The speeches and writings of Tanzania's former president, Julius Nyerere, have been highly influential in international circles, particularly for linking education (particularly adult education) to self-reliant economic and social development.[22]

In the context of the Commonwealth Association for the Education and Training of Adults (CAETA), Paul Fordam and a number of adult educators argue that Tanzania

> ...was the first African country to mount a successful literacy campaign, and the first country to do so before aiming for universal primary education; it is the only country in Africa to create a large cadre of generalist adult educators, mainly, but not exclusively as part of the literacy programs of the early 1970s; these achievements were followed very rapidly by a decision to try and achieve universal primary education by 1977.[23]

Common Policy Patterns

A central concern of this comparative study was to relate the characteristics of each state and its position within the world capitalist system to adult education policies and practices. The character of the state was related to the predominant ideologies in society and the prevailing philosophy in adult education. The latter was explored through the analysis of the values, perceptions and expectations expressed by the

main actors in adult education, namely policy makers, adult educators and adult learners.

It is interesting to note that, despite important social, political and ideological differences in Alberta (Canada), Mexico and Tanzania reflected in the organization of their adult education programs, some common patterns were observed.

There is a clear social distance between policy makers, on the one hand, and teachers and learners, on the other. This social distance can be attributed, especially in the cases of Mexico and Tanzania, to differences of income and schooling. Tanzanian policy makers receive an average income equivalent to fifteen times the national minimum salary, while Mexican policy makers receive five times the national minimum salary. Teachers, on the other hand, receive 1 to 3 times the minimum salary in Tanzania and 0.25 to 3 times the minimum salary in Mexico. Learners in Tanzania receive an average of 0.25 of a minimum salary, and 70 percent of learners in Mexico receive no income at all. In Canada, income distribution among the three groups is less uneven. The difference between policy makers and teachers is minimal, since both groups receive between 3 and 4 times the minimum salary, and seniority for income purposes is important. Learners, however, receive on average approximately half of a minimum salary, but in many cases they earn their living through students' allowances, training allowances and the like.

In Tanzania, the income gap between policy makers and teachers is the greatest of the three countries. However, in the three countries policy makers do not differ so much from teachers and learners in terms of their parents' occupation and education.[24] Many parents of Canadian policy makers have working class occupations, and 40 percent of teachers' parents are blue collar workers. Although parents of Mexican policy makers have a more heterogeneous social origin, 50 percent of teachers' parents were peasants (of the 28.4 million Mexicans who in 1992 resided in rural areas, 6.3 million worked in agricultural activities) and 22 percent have blue collar occupations. Finally, most Tanzanian policy makers' parents have a middle class background, while 90 percent of Tanzanian teachers' parents were either peasants, craftsmen or blue collar workers. Learners' social origins were consistent across the board: 56 percent of Canadian learners, 66 percent of Mexican learners and 87 percent of Tanzanian learners have blue collar or peasant parents. Since few parents of policy makers or teachers have performed occupational professional roles, and considering that almost no policy makers' or teachers' parents have been educated beyond high school, policy makers, teachers and adults in adult education seem to share similar social origins.

Interestingly enough, teachers of both academic and skill upgrading programs in all three countries have virtually no pre-service training in adult education. Similarly, adult learners, as measured by income, schooling and parents' socio-economic status, belong to the poorest population groups in the three societies.

The characteristics of adult learners vary according to the program in which they are enrolled. In all three countries, skill upgrading students are predominantly male, on average younger and with higher socio-economic background, cultural capital,

political culture, work experience, expectations and aspirations than academic upgrading students. Academic upgrading programs, on the other hand, have more females and senior people whose socio-economic status, political culture, aspirations and expectations are lower than the sample average. Gender differentiation varies per country; while in Alberta, Canada, distribution of students by gender follows the demographic distribution of the population, in Mexico and Tanzania learners are predominantly women. In general terms, skill upgrading programs tend to have male teachers, while female teachers tend to work in academic upgrading programs, although in Canada the picture is a little more balanced than in the other two countries. Policy making in all three countries is an activity almost exclusively commanded by men.

Actors across the board are not very critical about their own performance in the programs nor about the efficiency of the programs in achieving the proclaimed goals. With a few exceptions, and with different degrees of elaboration, the three actors share the view that the programs are working properly, and efficiency is seldom questioned. This view is complemented by an apolitical perception of the role of adult education.

At the level of policy makers' language, it is technically aseptic. In Alberta, particularly, the rationale for adult education is raceless, genderless and stateless. Aseptic, non-controversial language is used, with a great deal of borrowing from organizational theory, and educational administration behaviourist-oriented theory. Key categories used in their administrative language are inspired by system theories, human capital and functionalist paradigms.[25]

In the context of vertical organizational structures in the three countries, programs are considered trouble-free. For policy makers, if a problem is found in a given program, teachers and students are more likely to be blamed. Policy makers have seldom questioned their own performance. Policy makers, showing a patronizing and paternalistic attitude, tend to systematically underestimate learners' knowledge and concerns. For instance, a Tanzanian policy maker, arguing the importance of adult education in socializing people in the new values of the system, emphasized that "It is important for the people to understand our policy of socialism and rural development. They should also learn the political systems of other countries in order to compare them with our system and see how our system is better than other systems." These are indeed curious remarks. Learners, as the "common people" in the semantics of the sentence, are "outside" the policy of socialism and rural development in the country. Thus, learners might not be at all clear about the virtues of Tanzania's socialist system, which in the view of this policy maker, is far better than other political systems. Parallel concerns—with different ideological orientation—are found in statements by Albertan and Mexican policy makers.[26]

Teachers tend not to see shortcomings in programs and, when they do, students are the first to be blamed for them. When lack of support from policy makers is perceived, some teachers welcome this lack, of involvement from the upper levels of management. A Canadian teacher, satisfied with policy makers' lack of knowledge

about her work in education programs, commented that "I make the decision on what to teach and how to teach since in essence my decisions are the curriculum."

Adult learners are even less likely than policy makers and instructors to identify problems within the programs. They are grateful for the opportunity to learn, accepting it as charity, and everything seems to be fine. Adult learners also participate in the process of "blaming the victim"; given the organizational structure, like in a self-fulfilling prophesy, they tend to blame themselves for any learning problem they might encounter.

Taking into account indicators of political culture in the three countries,[27] the political culture of learners seems not very sophisticated. However, differences in knowledge and information are present since political culture seems to be more sophisticated among urban, male, older and skill upgrading students.[28]

Teaching methods are based on traditional techniques such as lecturing by the teacher. Group work and collaborative approaches were barely implemented in the classrooms. In the three countries the perceptions of teachers and students vary along program lines. Academic upgrading and literacy training teachers tend, in a much higher proportion than skill upgrading teachers, to think that their students are not able to cope well with their studies. Quantitative and in-depth interviews clearly indicate that students with higher attendance, work satisfaction, expectations and aspirations, and a more refined political culture are those enrolled in skill upgrading programs and living in urban areas. Factors such as gender, work experience and years of schooling seem to have a more limited influence in forming those expectations and aspirations.

Main Policy Differences

A first distinction to be made is that in Alberta, Canada, learners are full-time students. In addition, a great number of them receive financial support from the state. In the other two countries, learners do not receive any financial support, and the majority are part-time students. In Canada the social distance between instructors and learners (measured by indicators such as income, political culture, schooling, perception of the program's goals, etc.) is wider than in Mexico and Tanzania.

Teachers' institutional profiles differ in the three countries. In Alberta, adult education programs have very low job turnover and employ professional, university-educated teachers who have worked in adult education for an average of more than 8 years. Mexican adult educators are usually volunteers who earn a symbolic remuneration. They have little experience in educational matters, having worked on average only two years in adult education, with high rates of absenteeism and job turnover. As one Mexican teacher said ironically: "the state pretends that it pays us, and we pretend that we work." In Tanzania instructors are usually school teachers in regular day schooling, and who supplement their income by teaching adults in the evening. They have no training for teaching adults, but given the lack of other occupational opportunities, there is very little job turnover.

One of the main responsibilities of the teacher in Mexico is to recruit students and incorporate them into the programs. Many teachers recruit their own groups of students and receive a small honoraria. Since payment varies according to the numbers of students and groups enrolled, enlisting students for literacy training courses is a priority for teachers. This system leads sometimes to corruption and the "inflation" of enrolment figures or the creation of "phantom" groups.

While in all three countries adult education attempts to integrate the adults—who are perceived as "marginals" or "left behind"—into mainstream society, the characteristics of the process vary by country. In Mexico and Tanzania the emphasis is placed on massive integration of the adults into the political and economic projects of the state. In Alberta, Canada, an economic rationale—to prepare qualified personnel for the needs of industry—is combined with a culture of professionalism developed by highly credentialized teachers. This, combined with the low cost of the studies, given government allowances and fellowships, usually results in a highly selective process, with adults filling lengthy waiting lists, particularly at times of economic recession, to access the system as students—obviously a much better prospect than being unemployed.

Teachers' views also differ. While in Mexico they relate adult education to the ideas of social justice, community development, national integration and economic growth of the nation, and in Tanzania they also add to the above the notions of socialism and self-reliance, Canadian teachers emphasize a liberal-individualist perspective, pointing out their contribution to the preparation of individuals for their smooth integration into the market, increasing learners' abilities, work ethics and labour skills.

Mexico's and Tanzania's curricula are usually prescribed by central agencies in charge of adult education and tend to have a national (centralized) orientation. Although in Canada adult education institutions seem to be as hierarchically organized and perhaps as bureaucratic or more so than the Tanzanian and Mexican ones, highly credentialized teachers enjoy relative autonomy to select—or even produce—their own instructional content and strategy. This, again, probably relates to the dominant political philosophy, which is based in the notion of liberal-individualism, and the teachers' culture of professionalism—and hence a corporatist behaviour, in the Gramscian sense.[29]

There is an association between state apparatuses, prevailing ideology and adult education models in all three societies. Indeed, taking into account the views (including perceptions, aspirations and rationalization of their action) of the three actors, three models of thinking and implementing adult education were identified. These models were not identified a priori in our research design, but emerged from concrete empirical study as "grounded theory."[30]

For lack of better labels and according to the most salient aspects, they may be named as the Canadian therapeutical model, the Mexican recruitment model and the Tanzanian forced modernization model (see Table 2).

Table 2: Policy Models

Policy Rationale	Therapeutic Model Alberta, Canada	Recruitment Model Mexico	Forced Modernization Model Tanzania
Dominant philosophy of the state	Liberal individualism	Inclusionary corporatism	"Ujamaa" socialism
Main rationale of adult education programs	Employability of labour force	Cultural modernization of disenfranchised populations, increasing political control	Increasing cash crop production and preventing rural-urban migration
Policy rationale	Supply-side economics	Ideological political projects	Legitimization of the political party
Main need addressed	Individual deficit and business needs	Constitutional mandate	Rural-urban migration
Enrolment procedure	Adult's initiative	Teachers' initiative	The party's initiative
Enrolment policy	Selective (criteria of professionalism)	Massive (invitation)	Massive (coercion)
Structure of Programs	Fairly decentralized	Fairly centralized	Highly centralized
Document's rhetoric	Functionality of adult education	Education for social justice	Education for self-reliance
View of the Adult			
Benefit to adult in academic upgrading	Cultural and economic	Daily life activities	Political, economic and cultural
Perception of the adult	As an individual acting freely in labour markets	As part of a deprived group	As part of a nation
What is the problem of the adult?	Low self-esteem	Socially "left behind"	Low rural productivity oriented to self-consumption rather than cash crops

Table 2: Policy Models (Continued)

	Therapeutic Model Alberta, Canada	Recruitment Model Mexico	Forced Modernization Model Tanzania
View of the Adult			
Main benefit for adults (teachers' and policy makers' perspectives)	Confidence and self-esteem	General knowledge	Self-employment and cash-production
Means of integrating the marginalized adult into society	Labour market	Political system	Economic strategy
Teachers (Instructors)			
Academic upgrading of literacy instructors	Professional with academic credentials	Volunteer para-professional instructor	Regular school teacher
Teacher's job stability	Low job turnover	High job turnover	Low job turnover
Content selected by	Teacher	Prescribed by Institute of Adult Education (INEA)	Prescribed by Adult Education Agencies with close monitoring by the party
Teacher's rhetoric	Personal development	Community development	National development
Teacher's qualifications	University level	Virtually none	Post-secondary teacher's training
Teacher's motivation	Highly motivated professional with good salary	Motivated para-professional with symbolic income	Overworked and poorly paid teacher

Source: Elaborated with information from Carlos Alberto Torres et al. Adult Education Policy Implementation in Canada, Mexico, and Tanzania, Final Report. (Edmonton, Alberta: 1992).

Canadian Therapeutical Model

The Canadian state is a welfare state, a socio-political structure that through welfare policies offers the protection of minimum standards of income, nutrition, health, housing and education, which are assured to every citizen as a political right rather than as a charity.[31] A therapeutical model of adult education is based on a "clinical approach" to deal with social problems that have emerged in welfare states.[32] A clinical approach treats social problems as social pathologies. In so far as "social deviance," lack of adaptation and resistance practices are seen as a series of pathologies, there is a tendency in this approach towards the maintenance of the status quo. Deviation from the dominant social norms constitutes failed or incomplete socialization. Such a treatment of social problems usually ignores a range of relevant factors accounted for by a political economy. In trying to explain education in the context of economic development, and therefore the relationships between poverty, unemployment and education, a political economy approach will include income distribution patterns, state prices, wages and inflation, state policies or issues of equality of educational opportunities as powerful predictors (variables) in explaining social problems.[33] The "victim-blaming" thrust of deficit models that seem to underlay therapeutical models of policy making overlooks the material underpinnings of any theory of cultural deprivation, and most of the policy recommendations are based on methodological individualism—i.e., having the individual as the unit of analysis, following rational choice theory and centering on purposive rational agents who act with a set of preferences in the context of institutional and environmental constraints.

In the therapeutical model prevailing in Alberta, policy makers and teachers interviewed were not concerned with the organization and mobilization of minorities, the empowerment of disadvantaged groups, affirmative action policies or progressive politics. One may wonder whether this finding is a function of the sampling—public institutions operating under the constraints of a populist-conservative political party—or whether this is indicative of a trend in the Canadian public sector in general. Albertan (and perhaps most Canadian) policy makers share a basic instrumental rationality based on a technocratic perception of the social world, a social world that can be manipulated at will.

Technocratic thinking constructs a model of the world with a system of categories that come to expect certain relationships and behaviour to occur according to certain laws. Technocratic thinking also assumes that social problems can be solved through technical measures, which implies adequate planning and available resources.[34] Thus, adult education is seen as helping to solve problems of unemployment, work efficiency and adult marginality. Teachers and students are constituent elements in the model designed by policy makers, without much autonomy on their own.

In Habermas' terminology, the therapeutical model is closer to a technical guiding-knowledge interest than to a practical or to an emancipatory one.[35] A technical guiding-interest focuses on the notion of work and control of the environment and in effective planning and forecasting. The problem of poverty is usually a result of individual deficits, and sometimes even genetic or social deviance explanations are given.

In short, the therapeutical model is based on a doctor-patient relationship in which the role of the expert is to find the exact nature of the training to be provided to the individual, counting on a system of highly elaborated referral institutional agencies that are used to treat the patient.

Mexican Recruitment Model

The Mexican "recruitment" model operates in the framework of a corporatist state and a nationalist ideology emerging from the powerful symbolism of the Mexican Revolution (1910-1917). Corporatism refers to a process of structuring interest representation through a particular set of policies and institutional arrangements that (a) emphasize co-operation rather than competition at the leadership level, and (b) use social control through carefully articulated mobilization of the masses. In the context of an "inclusionary corporatist"[36] form of state in Mexico, a recruitment model operates in adult education. Inclusionary corporatism refers to a state that aims to incorporate salient working class groups and marginal forms of labour into the economic and political model. The capacity of the state to recruit disenfranchised population becomes a centrepiece in the strategy of political control. Unlike Tanzania, in Mexico this recruitment is not performed exclusively by the political party but by a large set of governmental institutions and mass organizations.

In this model, education is understood as a service offered by the state, with the main function of guaranteeing to the population access to the basic culture of the nation, prescribed as a constitutional mandate. A key characteristic of this model is that the pattern of incorporation of adults into the programs relies on government agencies rather than on the free initiative of the individual. In this model, the clientele is considered a segment of the population that has been left behind as a result of socio-economic inequalities originated in dysfunctionalities of the socio-economic model. Since the core of the discourse is to promote social equality, the notion of adult education as an opportunity for a second chance and the construction of a massive system are fundamental. Indeed, the main rationale is to offer a second opportunity to those who have failed to enter schooling or have dropped out. To engage the large numbers of adult educators that Mexico needs—estimates in the early 1980s were roughly 7 million illiterates and 15 million adults who had not completed primary or secondary education—the system relies on volunteers and recruitment strategies based on the people resorting to adult education to fulfil civic requirements (i.e., military service, unpaid social service for university students). In fact, only 7 percent of Mexican teachers joined the program because they were interested in the intrinsic characteristics of the job. The operation of a massive system of adult education, with its rationale of political legitimation of the state, puts more emphasis on achieving quantitative outcomes than on developing innovative learning processes to enhance the quality of education.[37]

As a result of corporatism, the Mexican adult education system is a highly centralized, pyramidal structure. The contents are established by centralized agencies of the state and are compulsory for the entire nation. The rhetoric of social solidarity and the ideology of the revolution permeate most of the official documents and are constantly present among Mexican teachers' arguments. For example, half of the

teachers declared that they opted to join the program trying "to help" poor people. In addition, the notion of attaining community development was widely mentioned. One of the purposes of the system seems to be the integration of a marginal population into the accepted political norms. Teachers have limited education, and few opportunities for on-the-job training are provided by the institution. Since contents are nationally and centrally defined, the curriculum does not address the needs and interests of specific groups, including provincial (state) or regional peculiarities, ethnic, gender or class demands, or economic activity needs. The system relies more on teachers' motivation than on qualifications which, in the long run may eventually result in low-quality education. Moreover, even teachers' enthusiasm does not seem to last for a long time in light of low wages. This situation is reflected in high teacher absenteeism, lack of punctuality and high job turnover.

Tanzanian Forced Modernization Model

In Tanzania, some of the features of the Mexican model are developed in a much greater dimension in the context of a subtly coercive state that does not tolerate open dissent. In addition, due to the political economy of the country, the resources available for educational innovations are scarce. The main goal of adult education is to stimulate higher production of export crops such as coffee or cotton which constitute a major source of foreign currency for the country. In fact, policy makers' rationale is that adult education should contribute to limiting peasants' production for self-consumption, encouraging cash crop production instead. In their view, adult programs will incorporate marginal groups into a market economy, increasing at the same time the government's revenues. Finally, policy makers claim that a productive peasantry will be more reluctant to migrate to the cities.

The rationale of adult learners, however, is exactly the reverse of official rhetoric: learners think that a job in urban areas is the only way to escape from rural poverty and try to use adult education (particularly the education offered in the Folk Development Colleges) as a way out of rural life. These differences in the agendas of policy makers and learners result in a top-down policy model. Participation of learners in the programs is not voluntary or spontaneous; on the contrary, the state and the party make a great effort to enrol people in the programs. Consequently, the pressure for the establishment of adult education programs resulted not from people's demands, but from the state political-economy rationale for development; thus the character of a "forced modernization" model.

Tanzanian policy makers constitute an elite in the country, having a high commitment to the party, a nationalist feeling and a sincere belief that the programs are doing a real benefit for the masses. They perceive learners, as in Canada or Mexico, as lacking basic information and cognitive skills—reinforcing a paternalistic attitude. Policy makers practice virtually no self-criticism. Indeed, policy makers do not consider that the programs might have little benefit for the people. However, a statement made by an adult learner in the district of Mlali is in stark contrast:

> I enrolled in literacy classes because I wanted to get employment, to educate myself and to fight against ignorance.... We have been reading in the literacy

classes and now we no longer see its benefit. We have been dealing with the same things all the time—books, exercise books, paper, pencil and those so-called tests which simply embarrass people. You will see somebody holding a pencil without knowing where to start. Thank God, literacy training is no more.[38]

As in Mexican adult basic education and literacy training, teachers in Tanzania are poorly educated and scarcely remunerated. Skill upgrading teachers, on the contrary, have a much higher status and are better paid. Interestingly enough, the income gap between policy makers and the other two groups in this self-proclaimed socialist society is higher compared to the Canadian and Mexican capitalist societies. Although policy makers and teachers emphasize that the program increases the practice of better farming techniques in modern agriculture and leads to raising political consciousness, only a few students agreed with that.[39]

For adult basic education and literacy training (ABELT) students, the main benefit of the program is to attain social prestige and achieve cultural development, while for skill upgrading students it is mainly job opportunity. In ABELT programs, a gap between government discourse and resource allocation may be observed. Although the government theoretically assigns a great importance to literacy, very few resources are allocated to it. Classes are held in primary school buildings, party offices and other public buildings. There is no training in adult education matters. Classes are taught by primary school teachers, who are induced to do it as part of their workload, or by volunteers who unsuccessfully try to use it as a way of getting selected for admission to a teachers' college. Since the scarce resources are not efficiently used and are often wasted, both teachers and students seem to be increasingly reluctant to attend ABELT programs. Teachers are not selected on account of their interest, experience or qualifications.

Programs initiated from above are in danger of not meeting the needs of learners. This is perhaps more obvious in (though not necessarily more true of) Tanzania than the other two cases. It is also ironic that it occurs in a system in which the party claims to be close to the people and to act on behalf of the people. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that, for many, the Tanzanian government has built a facade of well-running adult education programs in order to continue receiving foreign aid, especially from Scandinavian countries.[40]

Non-Participatory Models and Rationalities in Adult Education

Three models sharing a non-participatory rationale have been identified in this comparison of adult education policy implementation in Canada, Mexico and Tanzania. In the Canadian therapeutical model, the state is a benefactor, and the problems of poverty and illiteracy are either the result of temporary economic dislocations, which may be adjusted through market mechanisms, or the result of individual deficits in skills or attitudes, which may be addressed through instructional means. The role of the experts is to determine the nature of the training to be given to the individuals in order to integrate them into the job market as soon as possible. Teachers are professionals and enjoy great autonomy.

In the Mexican recruitment model, emphasis is stressed on a constant and active attraction of a large number of learners to adult education programs. The rationale seems to be the incorporation of a disenfranchised clientele into the dominant political model. Teachers are mainly volunteers and follow textbooks designed by central agencies. In this model, the main concern is not the quality of learning, but the recruitment and massive control of large numbers of people who otherwise could remain outside the corporatist channels of policy participation.

Finally, in Tanzania's "forced modernization" model, the emphasis is on capital accumulation through the implementation of modern agriculture techniques and therefore more Tanzanian integration into the world market economy. Such a model is resisted both by women who produce for home consumption and by young men whose main interest is to get employment in urban areas, thus leaving the rural enclaves.

The three models exhibit common traits that are surprising, considering the diversities of living conditions, state structures and political philosophies prevailing in each society. First is the importance attached to a technocratic rationale, and the apolitical and uncritical view of adult education programs prevailing among teachers and policy makers. Aseptic, non-controversial language is used, borrowing concepts from organizational theory and educational administration. Central dimensions in policy formation such as social class differentials, gender and ethnic or racial discrimination remain subdued in the narratives of policy makers.

In addition, these are classless models. That is, the class character of the programs, the class characteristics of the learners and the class orientation of the job training never surface in the arguments advanced by policy makers and teachers. Nor is it part of the learners' intellectual understanding of their own practice.

A genderless approach prevails in the three models. While in some societies (such as Mexico and Tanzania) women are the bulk of the adult education clientele, the specific needs of women are never taken into account, and the lack of a feminist approach in policy making and adult learning and teaching—or the absence of women employed in the higher echelons of policy making—is never explained.

It could be argued that, in non-participatory models, social and political issues and issues that may bring conflict into adult education are ignored or perceived exclusively as problems to be fixed through technical measures.

A second common trait is that in all three societies adult education has a non-participative model; it is a clear instrument of the state, contributing to legitimation and accumulation practices, neglecting emancipatory practices that could empower socially subordinate groups.

Third, in all these models literacy training is marginal and irrelevant, isolated from productive work or skill upgrading and is considered a second-class education, with little impact on the living conditions of the poor.

Fourth, in the absence of participatory organizational structures and practices, a top-down decision-making system prevails. Despite the operation of three different

models oriented by fairly different political and philosophical values, in all of them there are few opportunities for learner (or community) participation in decision making. On the other hand, particularly in Mexico and Tanzania but to a lesser extent in Alberta, due to their social, political and organizational characteristics, adult learners have no power to express their demands and no strategy to help them in this process.

Fifth, teachers by and large have no training in adult education. In Canada highly professional teachers have a patronizing and paternalistic attitude, while in Mexico and Tanzania, para-professional or poorly trained teachers display high rates of turnover and absenteeism, which in turn leads to students dropping out.

Last, but not least, there is evidence that in Canada, Mexico and Tanzania adult education programs are organized on a two-track system: a more prestigious one, that of skill upgrading programs, and a residual and marginal one composed of adult basic education and literacy training programs. These two-track systems—along with non-participative, top-down policy and organizational structures based on a technocratic rationale, the apolitical and uncritical views of teachers and policy makers and the lack of concern for forms of class, gender and race discrimination—instead of reducing existing inequalities, may reinforce and foster them.

Notes

[1]   This article reports research findings of a major research project. Supported by a generous grant from the International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada, we studied adult education policy implementation in Canada—especially the province of Alberta—Mexico and Tanzania. This study was conducted between 1987 and 1991 by three research groups co-ordinated internationally by Carlos Alberto Torres. A description of the theoretical framework, as well as the different adult education systems studied in Canada, Mexico and Tanzania, can be found in the special issue of the *Alberta Journal of Educational Research* 34, no. 2 (1988). Fifty policy makers, 155 adult education teachers and 447 adult learners were interviewed. Policy makers and teachers were interviewed using structured, in-depth interviews; and students were surveyed twice, at the beginning of the programs in 1988-89 and a year later. Only public programs in adult education and literacy training were selected, including Alberta Vocational Centres and Community Vocational Colleges, seven different public programs in Mexico and Folk Development Colleges and adult literacy programs from the Institute of Adult Education in Tanzania. Rural and urban programs were studied in northern and central Alberta, in the Federal District (Mexico City) and a rural district outside Mexico City, and in a rural municipality and the urban area of Dar-Es-Salaam in Tanzania. Three other papers report in detail empirical data and theoretical analysis of the original study: Carlos Alberto Torres, "Adult Education and Instrumental Rationality: A Critique" (*International Journal of Educational Development*, 14, no. 2, 1993); Carlos Alberto Torres and Daniel Schugurensky, "The Politics of Adult Education in Comparative Perspective: Models, Rationalities, and Adult Education Policy Implementation in Canada, Mexico and Tanzania" (*Comparative Education*, 30, no. 2, June 1994); and Carlos Alberto Torres and Daniel Schugurensky, "A Therapeutical Model of Adult Education, Skills and Academic Upgrading Programs in the Province of Alberta" (Los Angeles: University of California, 1993).

[2]   Two types of programs were studied in the three research settings: academic upgrading programs (consisting of literacy training and adult basic education) and skill upgrading programs (consisting of programs oriented to learning specific trades or practical skills).

[3]   See C.A. Torres, *The Politics of Nonformal Education in Latin America* (New York: Praeger, 1990); D. Morales-Gómez and C.A. Torres, *The State Corporatist Policies and Educational Policy*

Making in Mexico (New York: Praeger, 1990) and Martin Carnoy and Joel Samoff (eds.), *Education and Social Transformation in the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

4 Hans N. Weiler, "Legalization, Expertise, and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy," *Comparative Education Review* 27, no. 2, p. 259.

5 Torres, *The Politics of Nonformal Education*, pp. 128-29.

6 John Bock and George Papagianis (eds.), *Nonformal Education and National Development* (New York: Praeger, 1983), p. 339; Torres, *The Politics of Nonformal Education*, p. 21; Carlos Rodrigues Brandão, "Los caminos cruzados: Formas de pensar y realizar educación en América Latina," *Revista de Educación de Adultos* 2, no. 2, pp. 28-41.

7 Claus Offe, "Political Authority and Class Structures—An Analysis of Late Capitalist Societies," *International Journal of Sociology* 2, no. 1 (1972), pp. 73-108; Claus Offe, "Notes on the Laws of Motion of Reformist State Policies," mimeographed (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975); C.A. Torres, "Public Policy Formation and the Mexican Corporatist State: A Study of Adult Education Policy and Planning in Mexico (1970-1982)" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University School of Education-SIDEC, 1984).

8 A framework to study adult education as public policy has been advanced elsewhere that argues that it is necessary to inquire about policy formation in the light of the following dimensions: (1) the main actors of policy formation, including the bureaucracy, administrative agents, and social constituencies and clienteles; (2) in terms of organizational studies, the main systemic elements found within a given setting or educational policy formation; (3) the main institutional phases, stages, and/or units of policy formation, that is, the levels of policy planning, policymaking, policy operation, and even policy outcome; (4) the intellectual, institutional, and ideological atmosphere in which those decisions are made (the policy framework). Additionally, it can be argued that those dimensions are offset or shaped by the general framework of organizational rules, which are, in turn, laid down and superimposed in an organization-structure. Finally, it is important to identify the production rules of public policy with which to understand educational relationships between the political society and the civil society at a particular point in time. Torres, *The Politics of Nonformal Education*, p. 124.

9 Daniel A. Morales-Gómez and Carlos Alberto Torres, *The State Corporatist Policies and Educational Policy Making in Mexico* (New York: Praeger, 1990).

10 UNCTAD, *Handbook of International Trade and Development Statistics* (New York: 1987); UNCTAD, *Handbook of International Trade and Development Statistics, Supplement 1987* (New York: 1987); UNCTAD, *The Least Developed Countries* (New York: United Nations, 1985).

11 See Carlos A. Torres, "An Analytical Framework for Adult Education in Alberta," *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research* 34, no. 3 (1988): 269-86.

12 A discussion of the corporatist features of Mexico can be found in Miguel Basañez, *La lucha por la hegemonía en México (1968-1980)* (Mexico: Siglo XXI Editores, 1981); Arnaldo Córdova, *La ideología de la Revolución Mexicana. La formación del nuevo régimen* (Mexico: Ediciones ERA, 1973); Nora Hamilton, *The Limits of State Autonomy: Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982); Carlos Alberto Torres, "The Mexican State and Democracy: The Ambiguities of Corporatism," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 2, no. 4 (1988): 563-86 and Morales-Gómez and Torres, *State Corporatist Policies*.

13 A very good discussion of the relationships between the political system, economic development and education in Tanzania can be found in Joel Samoff, "From Lighting a Torch on Kilimanjaro to Surviving in a Shantytown: Education and Financial Crisis in Tanzania," mimeographed (UNESCO-ILO Task Force on Austerity, Adjustment and Human Resources, 1992). It is relevant to note that the Tanzanian National Assembly recently passed legislation preparing the way for multi-party politics, although the new constitution maintains the commitment to socialism and UJAMAA.

14 As for the notion of liberalism in Mexico, see Reyes Heroles, *El Liberalismo en México*, 2 vols. (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1980).

[15] Jeff Unsicker, "Adult Education, Socialism and International Aid in Tanzania: The Political Economy of the Folk Development Colleges" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1987).

[16] Interview with Director of Manpower and Planning, Government of Alberta.

[17] Southam News, *Illiteracy in Canada* (Ottawa: Southam Reports, 1987).

[18] This view of a very successful system of adult education and literacy training in Alberta is pervasive among policy makers and teachers, as reported in our interviews with the eleven key policy makers in the field and with fifty teachers. It should be noted that for convenience this article refers to Canada in general, but the study focused on a small section of adult education, omitting other important Canadian experiences.

[19] Bilingual literacy training became a priority of the Mexican state in 1987; primers for bilingual literacy (in Spanish and in thirteen of the fifty-two indigenous languages spoken in the country) were organized and produced.

[20] Harban S. Bhola, *Campaigning for Literacy: Eight National Experiences of the Twentieth Century* (Paris: UNESCO, 1984); Carlos A. Torres (ed.), *Ensayos sobre la Educación de los Adultos en America Latina* (Mexico: Centro de Estudios Educativos, 1982) and Philipe R. Fletcher, "National Educational Systems as State Agencies of Legitimation" (Paper delivered at the Western Regional Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, Stanford University, October 22-24, 1984).

[21] See Bhola, *Campaigning for Literacy*; Agñeta Lind and Anton Johnson, "Adult Literacy in the Third World: A Review of Objectives and Strategies," Institute of International Education, SIDA Education Division, document no. 32 (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 1986).

[22] Because of his contributions to the field of adult education, Tanzanian First President J.K. Nyerere was invited to be first honourary Chairperson of the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE), based in Toronto. Paulo Freire was invited to be its second one. A few years later, former Mexican president Luis Echeverría, who enacted the first law of adult education in the country in 1974, was also appointed to the same position.

[23] Y. Bwatwa, P. Fordham, J. Fox and V. Mlekwa, *Adult Education: The Tanzanian Experience* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. vii.

[24] See Carlos Alberto Torres and Daniel Schugurensky, "Adult Education Policy Implementation in Canada, Mexico and Tanzania" (Paper delivered at the Literacy Conference, October 9-12, Edmonton, Alberta), esp. pp. 8-9. (1991)

[25] See Carlos A. Torres, "Policy-Makers View and Policy-Rationales in Alberta," in C.A. Torres et al., *Adult Education Policy-Implementation in Canada, Mexico and Tanzania: Final Report*, vol. 1, mimeographed (University of Alberta, 1991), pp. 115-48.

[26] See Susan Street, "Adult Education in Mexico: Policymakers Theorize 'The New Adult'," *New Education* 12, no. 2 (1990), pp. 58-69.

[27] "The concept of political culture has been used to identify the complex of ideological norms, values and propositions, as well as theories and scientific instruments, obtained by any agent through a systematic or nonsystematic process of political socialization." Jose Angel Pescador and Carlos Alberto Torres, *Educación y Poder Politico en México* (Mexico: UTHEA, 1985), p. 112. See also Street, "Adult Education in Mexico," p. 68; and Torres and Schugurensky, Adult Education Policy Implementation in Canada, Mexico and Tanzania."

[28] Learners' political culture was measured using a variety of indicators, such as basic information on national and provincial politics (e.g., names of leaders and their political party affiliation), knowledge and opinion on national problems and possible solutions, civic participation (e.g., voting, membership in organizations) and access to information (e.g., newspapers, television).

[29] Gramsci defines the economic-corporative phase of a social group as an historical phase in which a given group (or class) tries to defend its best corporate-economic interests without aspiring to a position of leadership in the political and social arena. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971), p. xiii.

[30] Grounded theory was originally developed by B.G. Glasser and A.L. Strauss in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Chicago: Aldine, 1967). From a perspective of symbolic interactionism it appears as an alternative to logic-deductive theory, where "facts" are verified and hypotheses tested. See Gordon G. Darkenwald, "Field Research and Grounded Theory," in Huey B. Long, Roger Hiemstra and Associates, *Changing Approaches to Studying Adult Education* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1980), pp. 63-77.

[31] Harold Wilensky, *The Welfare State and Equality: Structural and Ideological Roots of Public Expenditure* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975) and *The New Corporatism: Centralization and the Welfare State* (Beverly Hills: SAGE, 1976). It has been argued that the welfare state is a particular form of the democratic liberal state in industrialized societies. Yet welfare regimes may take place not only within liberal but also corporatist and social-democratic states. Its origins have been associated with the industrial and financial reconstitution of the post-Depression era in the United States and Europe, based on a "social pact" between employers and labour. A striking feature of the welfare state is the new role of the state in the economy and the enlarged public expenditure using fiscal resources in productive and non-productive sectors of the economy. See Theda Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: Neo-Marxist Theories of the State and the Case of the New Deal," *Politics and Society* 10, no. 2 (1980), pp. 155-201.

[32] U.S. historian Sol Cohen has argued that a clinical model assumes that "personality maladjustments are the cause of individual mental disorder and social problems of all sorts [and] ... the school is the strategic agency to prevent, or detect and 'adjust' problems in children's personality development, and finally, the personality development of children must take priority over any other educational objective." Sol Cohen, "The Mental Hygiene Movement, the Development of Personality and the School: The Medicalization of American Education," *History of Education Quarterly* (1983, summer): 124.

[33] A good discussion of the political economy of education can be found in Martin Carnoy, "Education, Economy, and the State," in *Cultural and Economic Reproduction in Education*, ed. Michael Apple (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), pp. 79-126.

[34] Henry Levin, "The Limits of Educational Planning," in *Educational Planning and Social Change*, ed. H.N. Weiler (Paris; UNESCO-IIEP, 1980), pp. 15-47.

[35] One of the most consistent explanations and applications of Habermas' guiding-knowledge interests to adult education can be found in Jack Mezirow, "A Critical Theory of Adult Education" in *Education for Adults*, ed. M. Tight, 2 vols. (London: Croom Helm, 1983).

[36] See Alfred Stephan, *The State and Society: Peru in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).

[37] Ibid. See Torres, *The Politics of Nonformal Education*, pp. 107-38.

[38] Victor Mlekwa, "Literacy Training, the State and Development in Tanzania: A Study of Policy and Performance, 1967-1989" (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Alberta, Edmonton, 1990).

[39] Ibid.

[40] Suleman Sumra, "Country Report: Tanzania," in Torres et al., *Adult Education Policy-Implementation*, pp. 708-18.