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Explaining the Origins and Expansion of Mass Education

JOHN BOLI, FRANCISCO O. RAMIREZ, AND JOHN W. MEYER

The prevalence of mass education is a striking feature of the modern world. Education has spread rapidly in the last 2 centuries, becoming a compulsory, essentially universal institution. It has even expanded greatly in the poorest countries. Unesco estimates that about 75 percent of the children of primary school age in the world are enrolled in something called a school (1980 data).¹ For the developing countries, the mean figure reported is 68 percent. Although the richer countries have long since reached virtually universal enrollment, the fervor for education in the poor countries may be even stronger.² Mass education is clearly no longer the prerogative of boys: the World Bank reports that elementary enrollment ratios for girls are as high as those for boys in developed countries, and they are only slightly lower than the ratios for boys in developing countries.³ In both rich and poor countries, secondary education has expanded to the point where it is obviously to be considered a mass form of education as well. The day is not far off when at least some type of secondary schooling will be widely available in countries where it was completely absent a few decades ago.

Another way to gauge the universality of education is by the fact that about 19 percent of the world's population are students, nearly all of them in mass educational institutions. For most people, education may be the most important element of their social status, and their educational background will have a greater direct impact on their overall life chances than any other element but nationality.

In the first part of this article, we consider a number of lines of explanation of the rise of mass education that have emerged over the past 2 decades. Two general sociological themes characterize these theories. First, there has been a tendency to see vertical or lateral social differentiation

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¹ Unesco, *Statistical Yearbook* (Louvain: Unesco, 1955-83).

² D. Hansen and A. Haller, "Status Attainment of Costa Rican Males: A Cross-cultural Test of a Model," *Rural Sociology* 38 (1973): 266-67; Stephen Heyneman, "Influences on Academic Achievement: A Comparison of Results from Uganda and More Industrialized Societies," *Sociology of Education* 49 (1976): 200-211.

³ World Bank, *Education: Sector Policy Paper* (Washington, D.C.: IBRD, 1980).

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as the core feature of modern society. The relations of complex interdependence among social units, whether seen as reciprocal and mutually beneficial or as asymmetric and exploitative, are believed to be the root of all other features of modernity. Lines of reasoning employing this theme attempt to explain such modern rituals of mass solidarity as democracy, universalistic cultural and religious movements, and mass education. On the right, mass education is explained as a means of resolving the strains of differentiation, with emphasis on the lateral dimension, whereas on the left it is explained as a means of legitimating vertical differentiation.

Second, there has been a reductionist tendency that overemphasizes the importance of interest groups as central social actors. As particular groups or classes arise and gain power, they build institutions such as mass education for their own purposes. The expansion of education is therefore directly related to the strength of the dominant group vis-à-vis its competition and to the particular problems it must solve to control its local situation. Explaining the rise of mass education involves analyzing the power relations of interest groups in society.

We argue that these two themes generate misleading analyses of mass education and themselves face serious theoretical and empirical difficulties in dealing with the highly institutionalized and universalistic aspects of mass education. Viewing education as a creature of differentiation understates its strong linkages with the integrating institutions of Western political and religious universalism and overlooks the importance and autonomy of these institutions as driving historical forces. At the same time, the reductionist stress on interest groups or classes as causal forces ignores the generality of the institutional level at which mass education developed. Education has been generated by worldwide social movements in modern history, and a satisfactory explanation of its origins must take into account the very broad ideological and institutional pressures that have been at work.

Our own analysis, developed in the second part of the article, stresses the modern reconstruction of the individual and the expanded linkages between the individual and newly emerging, more inclusive social units—the rationalized society and the rational state. We see mass education as an outcome of the religious, economic, and political processes that expand and secularize the organization and ideological rules of individual membership in these larger units.

In the third part, we outline several lines of empirical research that derive from our analysis, with applications to both the formative period of mass education (the nineteenth century) and to the rapid expansion of education in the twentieth century. We develop a series of hypotheses specifying the particular aspects of modern political, economic, and religious

mobilization that should be most strongly related to the formation and expansion of educational systems. We emphasize that our arguments are of very general applicability: we believe that they hold for Third World countries as much as for the developed West. Even though such countries are characterized by a good deal of traditional social organization, extreme social inequality, and relative lack of autonomy due to their subordination to the developed countries, they are nonetheless enthusiastically engaged in the same progress-oriented societal project as their richer counterparts. If anything, our arguments apply with even greater force to the Third World than to European countries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when they were at comparable levels of economic development, because education has become increasingly closely linked to the national project and is now a virtually indispensable element of national development.

Core Elements of Mass Education

The emphasis on social differentiation and inequality as determinants of mass education fails to appreciate some of the central features of mass education as an institution.⁴ We distinguish three primary institutional features, which constitute an umbrella of claims under which all modern systems of mass education have emerged and expanded. As institutional claims, they are, of course, often at variance with what researchers studying particular schools or national systems actually observe; institutional ideology is never fully realized in practice. But the striking thing about modern mass education is that everywhere in the world the same interpretive scheme underlies the observed reality. Even in the most remote peasant villages, administrators, teachers, pupils, and parents invoke these institutional rules and struggle to construct schools that conform to them.

1. Mass education is institutionally chartered to be universal, standardized, and rationalized.⁵ This element always characterizes educational ideology; in practice, it is a goal that is usually sought but not always obtained. Education is a mass institution in the sense that it incorporates everyone, cutting across such lines of differentiation as ethnicity, region, class, and gender. This characteristic is often taken for granted, because in many countries it is observable as empirical fact: all, or nearly all, children attend elementary schools that are supposed to be similar in

⁴ Francisco O. Ramirez and John W. Meyer, "Comparative Education: Synthesis and Agenda," in *The State of Sociology: Problems and Prospects*, ed. James Short (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1981); "Comparative Education: The Social Construction of the Modern World System," *Annual Review of Sociology* 6 (1980): 369–99.

⁵ Francisco O. Ramirez and John Boli, "Global Patterns of Educational Institutionalization," in *Comparative Education*, ed. Philip Altbach, Robert Arnove, and Gail Kelly (New York: Macmillan, 1982).

cultural content, purposes, structure, funding, and general control.⁶ In some countries, the same can be said of secondary schooling. Even where higher status people send their children to distinctive elementary schools, these schools differ from the mass institutions more in the resources they have available than in their general aspirations or curricula.

Explanations viewing mass education as the creation of interest groups or classes have difficulties with this general fact. They can readily account for a variety of uses of schooling but not so easily for the extraordinary standardization and universalism of the institution. Very elaborate but unconvincing arguments have been developed to explain why a standardized and homogeneous institution “really” (i.e., behind the scenes) arises to prop up a differentiated division of labor.⁷ For some, the universalism of mass education is an obfuscating plot; for others, it is a response to “situational strain,” a fuzzy concept indeed.

2. Mass education is very highly institutionalized at a very general collective level.⁸ It is remarkably homogeneous in aspiration throughout the world, and this uniformity has led to increasingly homogeneous organizational forms as well. Note how easy it is for Unesco to assemble data on the prevalence of education, precisely because educational systems everywhere are built to conform at least nominally to world-institutionalized standard models. This sweepingly institutional, or ideological, element has characterized education for perhaps 2 centuries.⁹ Mass education has arisen not as a practical device to deal with particular local problems or group conflicts but as a general system expressing principles of broad meaning and validity. It developed out of comprehensive religious structures, as well as broad national regulations and laws. It encompasses the most central aspects of human life: the nature of God and moral action, the laws of the natural world, and so on.

Many current theories about mass education also wrestle uneasily with this element. They could explain the emergence of school systems in limited areas designed to provide specific advantages for particular groups, but they have difficulty explaining the broad ideological mission of education. This mission deals with the most general aspects of social reality, especially when it is so similarly defined across localities, regions, and even countries that are so radically different from one another.

⁶ Alex Inkeles and Larry Sirowy, “Convergent and Divergent Trends in National Educational Systems,” *Social Forces* 62 (December 1983): 303–33.

⁷ Joel Spring, *Education and the Rise of the Corporate State* (Boston: Beacon, 1972).

⁸ John W. Meyer, “The Effects of Education as an Institution,” *American Journal of Sociology* 83 (September 1977): 340–63.

⁹ Yehudi Cohen, “The State System, Schooling, and Cognitive and Motivational Patterns,” in *Social Forces and Schooling*, ed. N. Shimorhara and A. Scrupski (New York: McKay, 1979); and “Schools and Civilization States,” in *The Social Sciences and the Comparative Study of Educational Systems*, ed. J. Fischer (Scranton, Pa.: International Textbook, 1970).

3. Mass education is institutionally chartered to conduct the socialization of the individual as the central social unit.¹⁰ Although education is supposed to be homogeneous and standardized, the formal values and rituals it promotes celebrate the competence, capacities, and responsibility of the individual member of society. Even the most statist or collectivist modern systems have this individualist character in the sense that they also define the individual as the central unit of action, stress the importance of proper socialization, and view collective progress as the result of the competence and commitment of progressive individuals. More traditional educational forms aim less to socialize individuals as distinct social entities than to redefine their social identity through highly ritualized methods and rote instruction, which affect not the individual but his relationship to corporate social entities.

Given the diversity of modern political systems in so many respects, it is surprising how consistently educational systems attempt to build collective society by enhancing individual development. The individual is to know, to understand, to explain, to choose, and ultimately to become an effective person capable of making suitable choices and engaging in proper action. The rituals of mass education celebrate the reality of individual choice and responsibility, not the immersion of individuals in corporate groups such as castes, classes, extended families, and so on. Again, many theories cannot come to terms with this element. They can explain rituals of complete passivity for the masses, but they are mute with respect to the heavy stress on individual competence, initiative, and responsibility.¹¹

Explanations of Mass Education

Any theory of the origins and expansion of mass education must deal with the core ideological elements of the institution: its highly institutionalized structure, its explicit incorporation of all members of society, its dramatic stress on individual action, and its homogeneous and universalized rationalistic frame. Seen in this light, mass education is clearly linked to a complex of other modern institutions that structure society as a rational project and extend its boundaries to include control of the individual's behavior and worldview. These include religious ideologies that emphasize the individual's relation to transcendental authority (God, history, the universe) as a matter of personal faith and action; political legitimations of authority relations that build on both the sovereignty of

¹⁰ John Boli and Francisco O. Ramirez, "World Culture and the Institutional Development of Mass Education," in *Handbook of Theory and Research in the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1984).

¹¹ See the critique of Bowles and Gintis (n. 17 below) in Christopher J. Hurn, *The Limits and Possibilities of Schooling* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1978), pp. 76–80.

the individual actor (e.g., as voter) and on the rights and obligations of the individual (as subject or citizen); and economic market systems that make assumptions about individual capacities and motivations in both production and consumption. Contemporary polities systematically assume that social institutions have this general modern character, even though there is considerable variation in the specific types of institutions emphasized.

The argument we develop in the next section views mass education as a secular procedure for constructing the individual—the central actor of modern institutions of religious, political, and economic organization. We argue that mass education expands where institutional forms emphasizing the individual dominate. This type of causal link has often been discussed: with respect to mass education and the citizen-based nation-state, by Merriam and Bendix; with respect to religious and economic individualism, by Weber and McClelland.¹² But these discussions have tended to be cynical about the institution of individualism rather than analytical about its relation to inequality and differentiation. Disappointed theorists consider free democracy as sustaining inequality, the lawful bureaucratic state as oppressive, the free religion of disciplined Puritans as coercive, and the economy of free exchange as generating much inequality. This is all true, but it is a mistake to ignore the power of such structures as institutions that form the basis of modern society.

Perceiving a mismatch between individualist ideals and social practice, modern theories of the rise of mass education turn to the other main dimension of modernization, the increasingly differentiated division of labor. Rather than straightforwardly explain the rise of mass education as depending on the expansion of the universalistic institutions of individual membership in society, many theorists have tried to present these institutions (and, hence, education) as epiphenomenal reflections of social differentiation.

Education and Differentiation

Clearly, modern societies are highly differentiated. They are made up of many different, interdependent roles and groups. As organizational structures, they are differentiated even at the individual level, so that for better or worse every individual occupies a structurally unique position in society. The conception of society as a network of highly differentiated roles has so much power over modern social scientific imagination that any other conception of what is central in modern society seems idealistic and naive.

¹² C. Merriam, *The Making of Citizens* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931); Reinhard Bendix, *Nation-Building and Citizenship* (New York: Wiley, 1964); Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Scribner's, 1958); David McClelland, "Does Education Accelerate Economic Growth?" *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 14 (1966): 257–78.

But how does differentiation explain the construction and expansion of homogeneous mass education? It is easy enough to explain how a sorting process in secondary schools or universities could arise to allocate individuals among stratified occupational positions. How does a long period of homogeneous mass education serve the same ends?

Several theoretical approaches address the problem; some make fairly direct links between social differentiation and mass education, and others specify more indirect links.¹³ Both types start with a society composed of different roles and interests and try to account for the development of a combination of interests that will push society down the road toward mass education. Highly functionalistic, these explanations suppose that forces or interests located in differentiated society produce education to make society work better. In mainstream versions, society works better for the general good;¹⁴ in more critical (leftist) versions, society works to sustain the position of dominant groups.¹⁵ In either view, mass education somehow makes the differentiated role system work more smoothly. What is the connection?

In some theories, the proposed link is a direct connection between education and the cognitive or normative base "needed" for members of a complex society to play their different parts successfully. Individuals need to understand the diverse roles generated by an urbanized, industrialized society and the power relations among them, or they will not be able to fit into the structure. Hence, education is necessary to provide the cognitive skills required by the modern system. If individuals approve of the roles and power relations, "internalizing the values" of the differentiated society, their willing participation in the structure will be all the more certain.¹⁶ Thus the imputed functional requirement of differentiated society for cognitive or moral competence creates a need for mass schooling to provide knowledge of the structure and adherence to the norms that support the structure. The connection between differentiation and education is generated by a need for a common cultural base in society.

More indirect links between differentiation and education are posited in social control theories. Here the strains engendered by social complexity threaten to fragment modern society, and social control becomes problematic. Mass education arises as a mechanism for legitimating the structure

¹³ Spring; Remi Clignet, *Liberty and Equality in the Educational Process* (New York: Wiley, 1974).

¹⁴ Émile Durkheim, *L'Évolution pédagogique en France* (Paris: Alcan, 1938), vol. 2; Talcott Parsons, "The School Class as a Social System," *Harvard Educational Review* 20, no. 4 (1957): 297–318; S. N. Eisenstadt, *From Generation to Generation* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1956).

¹⁵ Pierre Bourdieu and J. C. Passeron, *La Reproduction culturelle* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1970); Basil Bernstein, *Class, Codes, and Control*, 3 vols. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971–75).

¹⁶ Robert Dreeben, *On What Is Learned in School* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1968); Alex Inkeles and David Smith, *Becoming Modern: Individual Change in Six Developing Countries* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975); Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963).

of society; it becomes an essential device of social control, providing a normative base legitimating the differentiated system (mainstream version) or a mystification constructed by dominant elites to legitimize their power (critical version). Education props up the authority structure with theories of formal equality (political rights, universal suffrage, freedom of economic consumption, etc.) that are sustained by schools and a variety of other institutions. It emphasizes equality in a very unequal society either by providing "equality of opportunity" as the appropriate social response to inequality (mainstream version) or by maintaining the illusion of equality where true equality is impossible (critical version). It is generated not by a direct need for cognitive or moral integration but by a more indirect need for legitimation to support the differentiated order or the ruling elites.¹⁷

The heat of the political disputes between mainstream and critical theorists obscures the fact that, with regard to education, their arguments are virtually identical. In both lines of analysis, mass education helps meet the functional need for integration of the increasingly differentiated system, providing a unifying culture of universalistic equality.¹⁸ There are differences in tone: the critical Left speaks more about vertical differentiation ("class structure") as a source of strain; the mainstream Right draws greater attention to the Durkheimian concern about education as a remedy for excessive lateral differentiation ("division of labor"). Similarly, the Left emphasizes the immediate group or personal interests of the elites advocating mass education, whereas the Right emphasizes more systemic purposes or problems. But the predictions of the two perspectives with respect to education are hard to distinguish.

Too many questions are raised by such theories, even apart from the obvious problems that plague all functionalist explanations, whether of the Left or the Right. If the elites have enough power to build a system of social control through mass education, why do they need the system? If they wish to generate a system that integrates society through obfuscation, why do they design it so to enhance the membership and institutional importance of the otherwise dispossessed? If the structural features of mass education are so epiphenomenal and illusory, why does the educational system operate so hegemonically? How can such massive false consciousness be maintained?

Many of these same questions are troublesome for another variety of explanation that at least has the virtue of avoiding a functionalist approach to the problem. In what has come to be known as "conflict" theory, the

¹⁷ Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (New York: Basic, 1976); Michael B. Katz, *Class, Bureaucracy, and Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America* (New York: Praeger, 1975); Spring (n. 7 above).

¹⁸ For alternative critiques, see Randall Collins, "Functional and Conflict Theories of Educational Stratification," *American Sociological Review* 36 (1971): 1002–19; and Margaret S. Archer, "The Neglect of the Educational System by Bernstein and Bourdieu," *European Journal of Sociology* (in press).

central notion is that mass education arises as a result of competition among status groups for social dominance.¹⁹ Education is the modern arena of two aspects of status group competition: in the first, groups compete for education because it facilitates occupational and social success; in the second, groups compete to use education for their own purposes, knowing that dominant groups can structure educational curricula to insure the hegemony of their own cultural values. In this perspective, then, social differentiation produces competing status groups that try to dominate education for their own purposes.

Like the other perspectives, conflict theory is unable to answer a number of crucial questions regarding the rise of mass education. Why does education become the arena of competition in the first place? Why do groups that are capable of controlling society and imposing their values on others bother with a set of institutional rules stressing universalistic equality and individual competence rather than straightforward dominance and hierarchy (as has usually been the case in the past)? All these theories have a peculiar and unspoken premise: dominant groups (or the differentiated order) cannot survive in the modern world without propagating a myth of equality; elites are just strong enough to keep it a myth but not strong enough to dispense with it. The theories also rely heavily on the supposition that false consciousness can be massively imposed and maintained, even in the face of very severe inequality.

In fact, all these theoretical lines beg the crucial questions surrounding mass education. Why is it so universalistic? Why does it so greatly emphasize the individual as the primary social construct and make of that individual the locus of social value and competence? Why does it stress equality in such unequal social structures?

Problems of Evidence

The most telling failure of the modern attempt to connect mass education with social differentiation is empirical, however, not theoretical. Certainly, mass education is the creature of a modern system of which urbanization, economic development, and industrialization—the organizational concomitants of differentiation—are central components. But just as certainly, differentiation as such is not closely associated empirically with the origins and expansion of mass education.

First, the evidence is consistently negative on the direct connection between differentiation and education. Mass education in Europe, Japan, and the United States commonly preceded industrialization and extensive urbanization.²⁰ Within Europe, the early industrializers were not the first

¹⁹ Randall Collins, *The Credential Society: A Historical Sociology of Education and Stratification* (New York: Academic Press, 1979); Hurn.

²⁰ Bendix; Ronald Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964); C. F. Kaestle and M. A. Vinovskis, *Education and Social Change: Nineteenth Century Massachusetts—*

to embrace the ideology of mass education and begin to construct universal school systems: Prussia, Austria, and Denmark were ahead of France and England,²¹ and Scotland has had higher educational enrollment rates than England throughout the modern period.²² Furthermore, regional analyses fail to show a connection between urbanization or industrialization and the expansion of enrollments.²³ Within the United States, the less industrialized western states moved more rapidly to create and expand mass education than had the eastern states,²⁴ and analyses of the nineteenth century find no effect of urbanization on educational enrollments.²⁵ In cross-national analyses of the contemporary world, industrialization is found to be poorly related to the growth of mass education as well.²⁶ Hence industrialization and urbanization are not central causal factors directly generating mass education at all.

Second, empirical analyses do not support the social control or status group conflict theories any better. Such theories predict greater educational expansion in cities, where the need for social control is stronger, but urbanization is not related to increasing enrollments. They also predict that immigration rates should be closely associated with the expansion of education because immigrants are prime targets of social control efforts. The evidence, however, is negative on this point for the United States; in cross-national studies, educational expansion has been shown to be unrelated to ethnic fragmentation.²⁷

On reflection, the evidentiary failure of these theories makes a good deal of sense. If dominant groups, faced with social control problems, had the power to construct massive educational systems to legitimate themselves, why would they bother? Would not direct subordination of the unruly orders be a more probable and effective alternative? In fact, of course, social systems facing problems of disorder, labor unrest, or failure of social control mechanisms have not resorted to education. They have relied on straightforward repression. In extreme instances, this is obvious: in the American South, the education of slaves was strictly for-

Quantitative Studies, Final Research Report, Project no. 3-0825 (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1976).

²¹ Boli and Ramirez (n. 10 above).

²² Peter Flora, *State, Economy, and Society in Western Europe: 1815–1975*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1983).

²³ John Craig and Norman Spear, "The Diffusion of Schooling in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Toward a Model" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Social Science History Association, Columbus, Ohio, 1978).

²⁴ John G. Richardson, "Historical Sequences and the Origins of Common Schooling in the American States," in Richardson, ed. (see n. 10 above).

²⁵ John W. Meyer, David Tyack, Joane P. Nagel, and Audri Gordon, "Public Education as Nation-Building in America," *American Journal of Sociology* 85 (1979): 591–613.

²⁶ John W. Meyer, Francisco O. Ramirez, Richard Rubinson, and John Boli-Bennett, "The World Educational Revolution, 1950–1970," *Sociology of Education* 50 (October 1977): 242–58.

²⁷ John Ralph and Richard Rubinson, "Immigration and the Expansion of Schooling in the United States: 1890–1970," *American Sociological Review* 45:943–55; Meyer et al. (n. 26 above).

bidden, not encouraged, and slaves were controlled through physical punishment. In less extreme examples, repression has still been the standard approach to social control.

For example, in most European countries, early urbanization generated a variety of labor control methods that were plainly repressive. Expanding the educational opportunities of the disorderly or potentially disorderly classes was unthinkable until late in the nineteenth century.²⁸ Even then, the educational improvement of the lower classes was not generally proposed when maintaining order was seen as most problematic. In times of internal disorder, repression was the usual response. Today, repression rather than rapid educational expansion remains the favored response to politically threatening situations, as in colonial societies or southern Africa. There are no empirical analyses showing that political instability results in educational expansion.

Theoretical Reconsideration

Before proceeding to our own argument, we present some general considerations. First, it makes sense to see the differentiating institutions of the Western system as dialectical counterparts of the integrating institutions.²⁹ The two sides of this dualism constitute a single cultural frame. The political, religious, and economic institutions that integrate the individual into society cannot simply be ignored or treated as epiphenomena; they are not just mystifications that hide the inequalities of the differentiated system. Since the twelfth century, the legal and ideological bases of Western political and economic differentiation have been rooted in integrative ideological soil, including a universalistic doctrine of the individual and a fundamental commitment to equality; empirically, educational ideology as expressed in official documents is still linked closely to doctrines of equality today.³⁰ One need not believe in equality as an established fact to see the profound effects of these doctrines on religion, law, the economy, and political structures.

Second, it is these institutions of integration that are especially relevant to the origins and expansion of mass education. Education flourishes where these institutions are strong. It is more weakly associated with differentiating social forces. Indeed, we argue below that organizational differentiation in and of itself may be negatively related to mass education, in that an institution such as education that enhances and equalizes the status of individuals is more difficult to establish in a highly differentiated

²⁸ See Donald K. Jones, *The Making of the Education System, 1851–81* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977).

²⁹ See Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: Verso, 1974).

³⁰ Walter Ullmann, *The Individual and Society in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1966); Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050–1200* (London: SPCK, 1972).

system. The failure to find positive effects of differentiation in the postwar period suggests that this line of thinking may prove very fruitful.

Third, the package of institutional elements that constitute modern society contains somewhat varied contents in different societies; some dimensions of modernity vary more or less independently of other dimensions. For example, the purest examples of modern political egalitarianism and individualism are to be found in rural areas of the American North and West, not in areas of maximum industrial concentration. As we shall argue, mass education accompanies not differentiation per se but universalistic individualism. The nature of the process by which mass education develops is determined by the particular way in which the individual is bound to the social collectivity.

Creating Members of the Rational Society and Modern State

Instead of seeing differentiation as the crucial factor leading to mass education, it is more useful to look at the other central aspect of modern society: its structures of universalistic integration. Modernization involves the construction of rules of political and economic inequality, to be sure, but it also involves legal and cultural principles of equality—principles that are even more heavily emphasized, and in greater detail, in Third World countries than in European nations. There is considerable disagreement about which of these aspects is primary and about what are the consequences of each for long-term societal development. But the key point, often overlooked or denied by theorists for various ideological reasons, is that modern society contains both highly differentiated roles and binding common cultures, both highly fragmented images of action and sweeping assertions of common human identity.

In our view, mass education is produced by the social construction of the main institutions of the rationalized, universalistic worldview that developed in the modern period—the citizen-based nation and state, the new religious outlook, and the economic system rooted in individual action (originally in markets, now more commonly in organizations such as those found in contemporary socialist countries). Mass education arose primarily as a means of transforming individuals into members of these new institutional frames that emerged in Europe after the Middle Ages. The nature of society was redefined; society became a rational, purposive project devoted to achieving the new secular ends of progress and human equality.³¹ The project was defined in the new institutional frames to include individual members of society as essential components—loci of sovereignty and loyalty, production and consumption, faith and obedience. Thus the individual

³¹ See Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Basic, 1980).

must be made rational, purposive, and empowered to act with autonomy and competence in the new universalistic system.³²

In the emerging society built around individual membership, theories of socialization developed and became central.³³ In the new view, the unformed, the parochial, or even the morally defective child could be molded in desired ways if its environmental experiences were controlled in a rational and purposive manner. Such deliberate socialization was necessary because all of the virtuous goals of society increasingly were seen as attainable only to the extent that individual members of society embodied the corresponding personal virtues. Because society was held to be essentially a collection of individuals, the success or failure of its effort to realize progress and justice was dependent on the nature of the socialization experiences encountered by the individual.³⁴

Such a view—that mass education is part of the effort to construct the universalistic and rationalized society, incorporating individuals and their actions—fits well with the distinctive features of mass education we have noted above. Mass education is too all-encompassing and homogeneous to be explained by the division of labor. It is too highly institutionalized in political and religious collectivities of too broad a purview to be seen as a simple reflection of local interest relations. Finally, it focuses too much on the individual as chooser and actor to be conceived as a simple instrument of passivity and labor control in a differentiated society. This is true even in socialist and Third World countries, for their educational programs assume individual competence and responsibility as much as those of the developed West.

It is important to see that, in modern history, all this has been a highly institutional and ideological business. It is not simply an accidental by-product of social changes that happened to occur in one or another locality. Both the differentiating and the integrating aspects of the modern system were pursued as rationalizing projects by all sorts of elites mobilizing their societies for improvement. The political, economic, and cultural aspects of individualism were inherent in these projects and eagerly pursued by mobilizing elites, and it is individualism that gave rise to visions of the necessity of mass education. Of course, it is precisely this project-oriented, or ideological, character of the institutions of individualism that generates the great gulf between doctrine and reality. Just as the rules of the market

³² John W. Meyer, John Boli, and George M. Thomas, "Rationalization and Ontology in the Evolving World System" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Pacific Sociological Association, Portland, Oregon, March 1981).

³³ Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (New York: Vintage, 1962); Bernard Jolibert, *L'Enfance au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 1981); John Sommerville, *The Rise and Fall of Childhood* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1982).

³⁴ Francisco O. Ramirez and John Boli, "The Political Construction of Mass Schooling: European Origins and Worldwide Institutionalization," mimeographed (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University, Department of Sociology, 1984).

economy or democratic regime are rhetorically invoked most loudly where they are weakest,³⁵ the ideological bases of mass education are often most solemnly celebrated where they are least put into practice. Nonetheless, in the educational arena both the doctrines and organized school systems depicted in theory are coming to be universal.

Two Forms of Educational Construction of the Modern Individual

In the broadest sense, mass education arises as a purposive project to construct the modern polity, reconstructing individuals in accordance with collective religious, political, and economic goods and purposes. Because the modern polity takes different forms, the route to mass education involves somewhat different paths in different societies. One crucial distinction is whether the polity of progress-oriented individuals under construction is linked to the state apparatus or to less central societal structures.

Consider the case in which the effort to construct a rationalized society is grounded on a conception of individuals as members of networks of institutions and relations that together constitute the societal unit. There is no (or only a weak) formal central authority structure that is empowered to act on behalf of society as a whole. In this case, education is built around a model of *creating societal members*. Education is engendered by the effort to create properly socialized members of the rational society who have the capacity and disposition to join in the struggle for progress as workers, innovators, consumers, organizers, and committed members of the political community. Given the goals of progress and equality, this model depicts education as a process of mass mobilization linking individuals to a pervasive "civic culture" that has broad moral authority in the dispersed institutions of society. Social movements generated by this overarching institutional nexus create organizations to socialize children in a common experiential frame. The form and content of the educational system, although highly decentralized, varies little from region to region because the rational model of society is so thoroughly institutionalized in the civic culture.³⁶

This is a fair and succinct description of the line of development followed in the United States. Education developed from movements motivated by religious, political, and economic visions of a progressive future, but these were not vested primarily in the state.³⁷ In fact, in this model of development, mass education generally precedes the adoption of formal state rules about education. The United States has long had the most expanded educational system in the world, but it still has no

³⁵ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda* (New York: Knopf, 1965).

³⁶ John W. Meyer, "Myths of Socialization and Personality" (paper presented at the Conference on Reconstructing Individualism at the Center for the Humanities, Stanford University, February 1984).

³⁷ David Tyack, *The One Best System* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).

national rule of compulsory mass education; in this respect, it is almost unique.

The model of creating societal members has dominated educational development in only a few places; in most countries, modernization has centered less on society as the locus of the modern polity and more on the state organization itself. Here we have the model of education as *creating members of the nation-state*. The nation-state, along with the individual, has been a primary generator of social mobilization throughout modern history. It is now entirely dominant as an organizational form, having defeated or incorporated alternatives. Like the individual, the nation-state is seen in modern ideology as a rational, purposive actor, organizing society toward progress and competitive success in the larger interstate system. The state incorporates the individual through the institution of citizenship, which both grants participatory rights in political, economic, and cultural arenas and imposes strong obligations to participate in state-directed national development.³⁸

In this model, education becomes the vehicle for creating citizens. It instills loyalty to the state and acceptance of the obligations to vote, go to war, pay taxes, and so on. It also equips citizens with the skills and worldview required for them to be able to contribute productively to national success. The state promotes a *mass* educational system in order to transform all individuals into members of the national polity, and it supports a *uniform* system to build devotion to a common set of purposes, symbols, and assumptions about proper conduct in the social arena.³⁹

The dominant form of expansion of mass education in Western Europe took this route, the creation of nation-state members. To American eyes, this style of development looks “top-down” because the rules of mass education devolve from the organizational center of society represented by the state. In a broad sense, however, the “creation of societal members” model also involves top-down mobilization, because universalistic patterns that are institutionalized at a very general level are imposed on individuals. The latter model involves stronger assertions of individual sovereignty and autonomy, whereas the former locates authority in society more explicitly at the top, whence it is delegated downward to the individual. In this case, the individual’s duties are as explicit and compelling as his or her rights, if not more so.

The contrast between the two models comes out most clearly if we see the construction of mass education as involving two distinct social processes. There is, of course, the expansion of schools as organizational

³⁸ T. H. Marshall, *Class, Citizenship, and Social Development* (New York: Doubleday, 1964); Bendix (see n. 12 above).

³⁹ Francisco O. Ramirez and Richard Rubinson, “Creating Members: The Political Incorporation and Expansion of Public Education,” in *National Development and the World System*, ed. John W. Meyer and Michael T. Hannan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

entities. One can envision a rough scale with the establishment of nationwide networks of schools at the low end; universal enrollment and, later, universal attendance as intermediate steps; and universal attendance for a specified number of years at the high end. The other process involves not the organization of schools but the clarity and elaboration of the rules of mass education, which are given their fullest expression in the laws of the state. Here the scale has rules requiring the construction of schools and training of teachers at the low end; compulsory enrollment and attendance for all children as intermediate steps; and detailed rules specifying the levels, sequences, curricula, and administration of the educational enterprise at the top.

Our two models of educational construction differ in their implications for the organizational expansion of education as distinguished from the institutional rules and laws binding education into society. The model of creating members of the nation-state leads above all to the adoption of institutional rules of compulsory education; the system of schools and enforced attendance of students would expand later as a consequence. The model of creating members of the modern society (the "liberal democracy" model) entails the expansion of the system of schools and pupil attendance more than the creation of legal institutional rhetoric concerning mass education. Ultimately, either form of structural modernization leads to mass education, but the route traveled and the degree of state involvement and state adoption of formal rules varies considerably.

Let us flesh out this analysis with several examples before developing it as a set of research hypotheses. Although the United States represents the purest example of the model of creating societal members, this model also dominated in England. In these countries, educational enrollments expanded considerably ahead of the establishment of formal rules instituting compulsory primary education. Schools were established on a voluntary basis, often by religious organizations, and state support of education was limited and indirect until relatively late.⁴⁰

By contrast, in countries such as Prussia and Denmark, the state took the leading role in establishing mass education; voluntary organizations played almost no role at all. In these countries, institutional commitments to compulsory education preceded the construction of school systems by well over a century, and it seems unlikely (though early statistics are not available) that primary enrollments in Prussia and Denmark encompassed as large a proportion of children as those in the United States until the late nineteenth century.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Meyer and Hannan, eds.

⁴¹ Ramirez and Boli (n. 5 above); John Craig, "The Expansion of Education," *Review of Research in Education* 9 (1981): 151-210.

As these examples reveal, the adoption of institutional rules calling for compulsory mass education tends to be linked more with the location of social authority in the state, whereas the construction of a mass system of schools is linked more with the location of social authority in the individual. In any given country, of course, authority is divided between the state and the individual, and there is considerable variation in the nature of this division. Thus there is great variation in the date of adoption of compulsory education rules and in the rate of construction of mass schooling systems across countries. It is important to remember, however, that both forms of the new model of society devoted to the rationalized pursuit of progress lead to mass education. We can summarize this argument in three general propositions:

I. The penetration of society by any rational, purposive model of social organization leads to both the adoption of institutional rules of compulsory education and the construction of a mass system of schools to create members of the new model of society.

II. Social forces that incorporate the individual into the collectivity as a member of the rational society lead to the construction of mass systems of schools, but they have less impact on the adoption of central institutional (state) rules of compulsory mass schooling.

III. Social forces that incorporate the individual into the collectivity as a member of the nation-state lead to the adoption of national rules making education universal and compulsory, but they have less direct impact on the construction of mass systems of schools.

The first proposition implies that both the institutional rules and the organizational structures of mass education are generated by the expansion of the rationalized societal model. In other words, relative to other societal forms ("traditional," "primitive," "medieval" societies), the rationalized progress-oriented form of social organization is far more likely to generate mass education. The second and third propositions summarize the implications of the two models ("ideal types," in Weber's language) as different processes whereby educational development proceeds.

Research Agenda

Broadly comparative explanations of mass education often fail to specify the empirical implications of their central arguments and the research directions to be pursued in testing these hypotheses. The literature is replete with apologies for this shortcoming: lack of adequate data, problems of data comparability, lack of fit between variables and indicators, conceptual and methodological problems in sorting out the effects of intercorrelated independent variables, and so on. There are serious difficulties in all

comparative investigations,⁴² but the increasing availability of comparative historical data on mass education (including considerable information on non-European countries)⁴³ and the development of more powerful analytic models⁴⁴ make these problems more tractable. In the following subsections, we want to show how our theoretical argument can be evaluated with the resources currently available.

Our research agenda requires investigation of two dependent variables: (1) the establishment of national educational rules and agencies creating modern systems of mass schooling and (2) the organizational expansion of primary and secondary educational enrollments. The former can be measured by determining the date of (a) the adoption of compulsory primary education rules, (b) the establishment of national educational ministries or bureaus, and (c) national unification of primary and secondary school systems. Organizational expansion can be measured by computing the size of primary and secondary enrollments relative to the appropriate age groups. Information on institutional rules can be found in a number of comparative educational histories;⁴⁵ more systematic information on enrollments is reported by Flora, Mitchell, and Banks.⁴⁶ For the more recently independent nations, the same information is reported in the *World Survey of Education Handbook* and in the *Unesco Statistical Yearbook*.⁴⁷ The central research issue is determining how the independent variables indicated in our theoretical argument affect the likelihood of founding a national system of mass education and of expanding primary (and later, secondary) enrollment ratios.

Reorganization of a Society

Our three propositions identify the general conditions under which educational development occurs. From the first we derive three hypotheses:

i) *The institutionalization of the national exchange economy leads to the adoption of mass education rules and the expansion of mass educational enrollments.*—An exchange economy is institutionalized to the extent that production factors are unrestrained by traditional norms defining and regulating economic relations; where legal or religious structures sustain relative market freedom

⁴² Morris Zelditch, Jr., "Intelligible Comparisons," in *Comparative Methods in Sociology*, ed. Ivan Villier (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

⁴³ Flora (n. 22 above); B. R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics, 1750–1970* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975); Arthur S. Banks, *Cross-national Time-Series Data Archive* (Binghamton: State University of New York at Binghamton, Center for Comparative Political Research, 1975).

⁴⁴ Nancy Brandon Tuma and Michael T. Hannan, *Social Dynamics: Models and Methods* (New York: Academic Press, 1984).

⁴⁵ See, e.g., Margaret S. Archer, *Social Origins of Educational Systems* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1979); Edward Reisner, *Nationalism and Education since 1789* (New York: Macmillan, 1922).

⁴⁶ Flora (n. 22 above); Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics, 1750–1970*; B. R. Mitchell, *International Historical Statistics*, 2 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Banks.

⁴⁷ Unesco, *World Survey of Education Handbook* (Geneva: United Nations, 1955–71), vols. 1–5; Unesco, *Statistical Yearbook* (n. 1 above).

in labor, land, commodities, and capital, mass education is more likely. Conversely, restrictions regarding the mobility of peasants, the sale of land, or the circulation of money should have negative effects on educational development. The pervasiveness of structures of economic individualism should be distinguished from other factors that have received more attention in studies of the impact of differentiation on education, particularly industrialization and urbanization. From our perspective, mass education is neither a functionalist mechanism of social integration nor a repressive social control apparatus generated by internal disorder and conflict. We therefore do not expect the more urbanized and industrialized societies to expand educational systems more rapidly than other societies when other factors are held constant.

The greater speed with which Scandinavian countries founded mass schooling in the nineteenth century illustrates the distinction between these two sets of economic factors: relatively greater market freedom in these countries contributed to their national commitment to mass education, even though they were less industrialized and urbanized than other European countries.⁴⁸ Today, strongly entrenched caste or tribalist principles, if restrictive of market freedom, can be expected to hinder the creation and growth of mass education, controlling for the level of urbanization or industrialization (see below).

ii) *The political rationalization of society leads to mass educational rules and enrollments.*—Political rationalization consists of both the expansion of state authority and power in society⁴⁹ and the expansion of citizenship links between the state and the individual.⁵⁰ Both state formation and nation building involve a sweeping reconstruction of the social order; collective and individual authority cease to be derived from nature or custom and instead become positive instruments in the quest for progress. The rights and powers of states and individuals cease to be mere immunities from traditional obligations and become action opportunities for attaining new goals and affirming new values.

Indicators of the expansion of state authority include constitutional powers,⁵¹ fiscal powers,⁵² size of the public bureaucracy,⁵³ and the presence

⁴⁸ Arnold Heidenheimer, "Education and Social Security Entitlements in Europe and America," in *The Development of Welfare States in Europe and America*, ed. Peter Flora and Arnold Heidenheimer (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction, 1981).

⁴⁹ Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1968).

⁵⁰ Marshall (see n. 38 above); Bendix (see n. 12 above).

⁵¹ John Boli-Bennett, "The Ideology of Expanding State Authority in National Constitutions, 1870–1970," in Meyer and Hannan, eds. (see n. 39 above).

⁵² Flora (n. 22 above); Charles L. Taylor and M. C. Hudson, *World Handbook of Political and Social Indicators*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Interuniversity Consortium for Political Research, 1971).

⁵³ Flora (n. 22 above); Banks (see n. 43 above).

or absence of military conscription.⁵⁴ Indicators of citizenship rights include franchise rights,⁵⁵ civil liberties, and social welfare rights;⁵⁶ similar indicators are also available in Boli-Bennett's work.⁵⁷

iii) *The institutionalization of individualist cultural ideology leads to mass educational rules and enrollments.*—The triumph of mass education presupposes cultural universalism, emphasizing the primacy of the individual and a strong link between individual growth and national development. Uniform socialization of the masses is in the national interest only if it is assumed that all properly socialized individuals will make positive contributions to national success. Since Weber, many have argued that there is a strong link between Protestantism and individualism; this argument squares with the common observation that mass education developed most rapidly in Protestant countries.⁵⁸ But religious individualism is more likely to become a national project to create a standardized "new man" if such religious sentiment is organizationally rooted in a national church. We thus expect that the establishment of a national church stressing the ultimate authority of the individual should make educational development proceed faster. (Data on the presence or absence of an individualistic national church can be obtained from such sources as the *World Christian Encyclopedia*.)⁵⁹

These three hypotheses stress one common idea: the reorganization of society around a rational purposive model that emphasizes economic, political, and cultural individualism generates mass educational rules and enrollments. In this process, mass education is assigned a central role, linking beliefs in the efficacy of organized socialization and the importance of childhood learning experiences for adult capacities to the optimistic assumption that reconstituted individuals will further national development and progress.

Forces That Delegitimize or Inhibit

What we have said so far builds on the idea that newly legitimated structural and cultural elements promote mass education. Conversely, mass education is also boosted by forces that delegitimize prior structural arrangements and cultural recipes:

⁵⁴ Devi Prasad and Tony Smythe, *Conscription: A World Survey* (London: War Resisters' International, 1968).

⁵⁵ Tom Mackie and Richard Rose, *The International Almanac of Electoral History* (London: Macmillan, 1974).

⁵⁶ Flora (n. 22 above); Harold Wilensky, *The Welfare State and Equality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975).

⁵⁷ John Boli-Bennett, "The Expansion of Nation-States, 1870–1970" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1976).

⁵⁸ William Boyd and Edmund J. King, *The History of Western Education*, 11th ed. (London: Black, 1975).

⁵⁹ David Barrett, *World Christian Encyclopedia* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1982).

iv) *External challenges to the integrity of the national polity delegitimize older social institutions and create opportunities for new groups (often linked to the state) to promote efforts of national mobilization, thereby leading to mass educational rules and enrollments.*—External challenges often come in the form of national failure in the competitive interstate system, such as the military setbacks that stimulated mass education efforts in Prussia in 1807 and France in 1871; a systematic analysis of the effects of military victory or defeat on education can be undertaken using warfare data such as that compiled by Wright.⁶⁰ Similarly, a decline in the economic dominance of a given country in the world system may lead to a greater affirmation of the national commitment to education, as we have recently witnessed with the sober rhetoric of “a nation at risk” in the United States.⁶¹ A corollary of this hypothesis is that more successful competitors are more likely to delay the adoption of educational ideologies and organizational forms. The relatively slow and incomplete adoption of national educational systems in England and the United States in the nineteenth century illustrates this aspect.

Our theoretical argument also suggests a number of factors that will inhibit both rules and enrollments. These factors represent alternative social organizational forms that are based on units other than the individual. Intermediate corporate groups are the fundamental social units and individual membership in society or the state is not at issue. We therefore hypothesize the following:

v) *Mass educational development is inhibited by plantation economic organization and industrial economic organization where the structure emphasizes intermediate groups rather than the individual; religious organizational forms that emphasize liturgical ritual and church mediation between the individual and God; and corporatist or feudal political organization, where intermediate groups (estates, syndicates, families) are considered primary elements of society.*—This set of hypotheses implies that Catholic countries, for example, will be slower than Protestant countries to develop mass education. It is important to remember, however, that Catholic countries today are nevertheless far more involved in mass education than any country in earlier times, before the rational, purposive model of societal development came to dominate social ideology. After the Counter-Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution, Catholic polities increasingly took a modern rationalistic form, as in nineteenth-century Latin America. Similarly, modern polities that retain traditional elements in their authority structures (e.g., tribalism in African nations and other ethnic cleavages in a number of countries) are

⁶⁰ Quincy Wright, *The Study of War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942).

⁶¹ National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1983).

likely to have less expanded educational systems than more purely individualistic polities but much more expanded schooling than premodern polities.

This fifth set of hypotheses is central, for they distinguish our argument most clearly from the predictions of other lines of reasoning. Future research that supports or rejects them will be most telling for the perspective we have developed.

Promotion of a Nation

Our second and third propositions distinguish social forces that are especially likely to lead to the adoption of educational rules from those that more strongly affect educational enrollments. As specifications of the first of these propositions, we identify two sets of factors that promote nation building and the creation of members of the rational society but do not promote state formation and citizenship ideologies.

vi) *Market economy rules and political ideologies that delegitimize political collectivities above the level of the individual, or that legitimate only a universalist collectivity without a corresponding organizational structure, increase educational enrollments but delay the adoption of institutional rules.*—Examples relevant to this hypothesis include the rather pure forms of laissez-faire economic thinking that characterized Britain and the United States in the early nineteenth century⁶² and the highly atomized view of the individual (now known as libertarianism) that was prevalent in the United States at the same time.⁶³ Where no national center is legitimated, membership in the state becomes meaningless and national compulsory education almost a heresy, although formal schooling is an eminently reasonable activity to prepare for participation in the rational society.

vii) *Individualistic religious movements not structured as national churches increase educational enrollments but hinder the adoption of national educational rules.*—Individualist Protestant sects emphasize the authority of individuals to work out their own salvation with God. Literacy becomes a broad requirement of Christians because each individual is to know the Word of God personally.⁶⁴ Movements reflecting such an orientation generate schools and pupils but not a centralized structure of rules and agencies. Social consensus on the value of mass education, rather than mandatory national law, is the goal and fulfillment of such movements. They flourish in “redeemer” nations such as the American Christian nation “under God,” as distinct from models such as the Prussian or Scandinavian Lutheran nations that centralize authority.

⁶² Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon, 1944).

⁶³ C. B. MacPherson, *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁶⁴ Carlo Cipolla, *Literacy and Development in the West* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969).

Further Research Considerations

Two further research considerations are important. First, both forms of mass educational development are sensitive to forces that lie beyond the territorial boundaries of national markets, states, and cultures. Cohen's pioneering work is based on the premise that a civilizational network encompassing a number of national subunits is a prerequisite for the ideological success and organizational expansion of education.⁶⁵ As the system of national societies becomes more highly integrated, world standards of national development built on models of the mobilizing, progress-oriented society emerge. These standards strongly promote mass educational rules and enrollments. This line of analysis leads to two hypotheses:

viii) *Increasing integration of the world structure promotes educational development.*—A variety of forces internal to society, including the state itself, respond to world standards of appropriate nation-state structure,⁶⁶ individual citizenship rights,⁶⁷ and the need for mass education to link individuals to national purposes and goals.⁶⁸ The adoption of compulsory education itself becomes increasingly compulsory as the number of countries joining the ranks increases: the lag between date of independence and date of enactment of compulsory education laws or constitutional provisions has decreased dramatically over the last century.⁶⁹ The same type of thinking should apply to enrollments: enrollments in countries with given properties should increase more rapidly, the more expanded the educational systems in other countries are. This assertion can be tested by comparing educational enrollment growth rates at such historical periods as the end of the nineteenth century, the interwar period, and the postwar period. The extraordinary growth of enrollments in poor countries since the 1950s should turn out to be higher than growth rates for countries at comparable levels of development in earlier periods.⁷⁰

ix) *Educational development is directly related to the degree of national linkage to the world system.*—Nations that are most strongly tied to the world system are subject to the greatest pressures to conform to world standards. They therefore are more likely to engage in educational expansion. Measures of linkage to the world system include such indicators as trade, treaties,

⁶⁵ Cohen, "The State System," and "Schools and Civilization States" (see n. 9 above).

⁶⁶ John W. Meyer, "The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State," in *Studies of the Modern World-System*, ed. Albert Bergesen (New York: Academic Press, 1980).

⁶⁷ John W. Meyer, Christopher Chase-Dunn, and John Boli-Bennett, "Convergence and Divergence in Development," *Annual Review of Sociology* 1 (1975): 223–46.

⁶⁸ John Boli-Bennett and John W. Meyer, "The Ideology of Childhood and the State: Rules Distinguishing Children in National Constitutions, 1870–1970," *American Sociological Review* 43 (December 1978): 797–812.

⁶⁹ Ramirez and Boli (see n. 5 above).

⁷⁰ Meyer et al. (n. 26 above).

diplomatic representation, and memberships in international organizations.⁷¹

Since 1900, there has been a great rise in the level of integration of the world system. Average national linkage to the world system has increased, and there has been a corresponding increase in the degree of world consensus regarding the necessity of mass education (see the "Educational Sector" reports of the World Bank).⁷² We therefore expect that internal economic, political, and cultural factors are more weakly related to the adoption of compulsory education and the expansion of school enrollments recently than in earlier periods. Today, not even economic dependency can bar the growth of primary education; all nation-states seem to be marching to the beat of a common drummer.⁷³ Even the historically more libertarian states have moved toward a greater role for the state in education—however beleaguered, a Department of Education is still active in the United States, and in Great Britain the power of local educational authorities has declined relative to that of the national ministry.⁷⁴

Relating the Dependent Variables

Finally, we should say a word about the relationship between mass education rules and educational enrollments, our two dependent variables of interest. We predict that rules have positive, but perhaps small, effects on enrollments. They signal a national commitment to building schools, and even though they do not guarantee that the requisite resources will be forthcoming, they probably increase the share of available resources allocated by the state to education. On the other hand, the expansion of enrollments may well inhibit the adoption of compulsory rules to some extent when such enrollments are grounded in a form of social organization that bypasses the national state (as in the United States). In brief, where the creation of members of the rational society is well advanced, it becomes more difficult for the state to create members of the national polity. Or,

x) *The adoption of national educational rules expands educational enrollments.*

xi) *The expansion of educational enrollments in the absence of national educational rules inhibits the adoption of such rules.*

Conclusion

Figure 1 summarizes the empirical implications of our central argument. Our theory of the rationalization of individual and collective authority,

⁷¹ See David Snyder and Edward Kick, "Structural Position in the World System and Economic Growth, 1955–70: A Multiple-Network Analysis of Transactional Interactions," *American Journal of Sociology* 84 (1979): 1096–1126.

⁷² World Bank (n. 3 above).

⁷³ Alan Sica and Harland Prechel, "National Political-Economic Dependency in the Global Economy and Educational Development," *Comparative Education Review* 25 (1981): 384–401.

⁷⁴ H. Perkin, "British Society and Higher Education," Yale Higher Education Research Group Working Paper no. 20 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, Institute for Sociological and Political Studies, 1977).

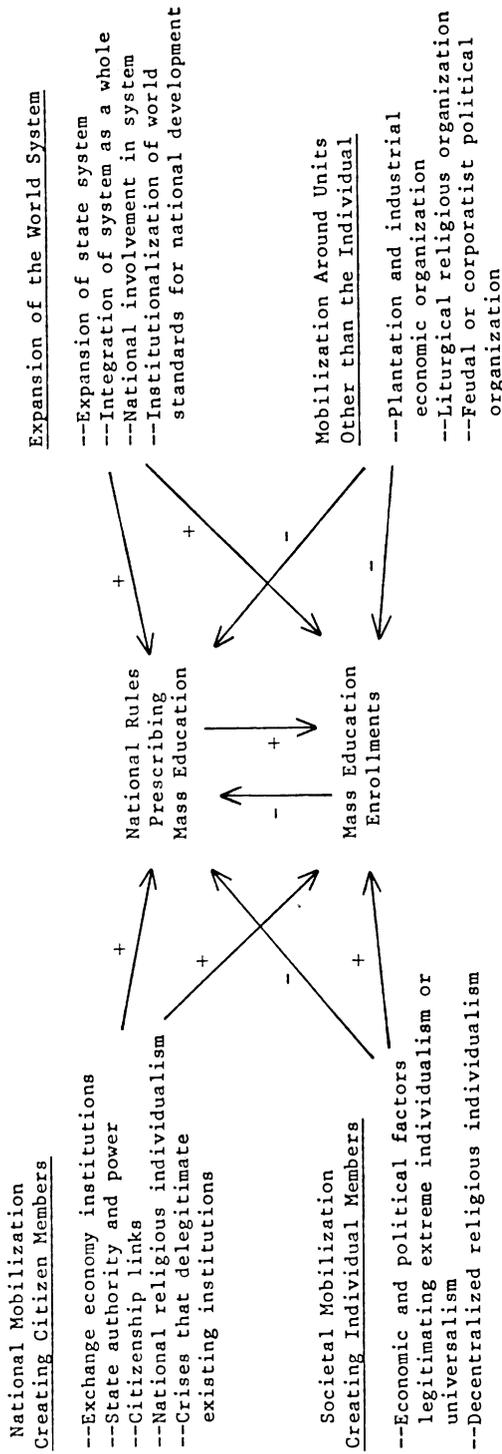


FIG. 1.—Summary of theoretical arguments on the factors affecting national educational rules and enrollments

the incorporation of individuals, and the rise and expansion of mass education poses a clear alternative to other contemporary theories of education that emphasize processes of differentiation or the reproduction of inequalities. We have shown that these theories ignore the universal and institutional character of mass education and tend to take for granted what most needs to be explained, that is, the fact that everywhere individuals are being reconstituted as active, purposive members of the rational society or national state. Our theoretical framework opens the way to understanding why mass education has become a central project for achieving social progress and national success in the world of competing nation-states.