
Higher Education and Development

Introduction

You have seen in the first two units of this block, aims of higher education and interaction of higher education with society. In the previous unit, you have seen how higher education has evolved through the changing historical contexts in India. A discussion on the retrospect and prospect of higher education, however, will not be complete without examining the relationship between higher education and development. This is what is attempted in the present unit. But, this is not an easy task. The major hitch is that 'development' as a concept may be defined in a variety of ways depending on this historical and socio-economic position of a society. Therefore, an entire section in this unit is devoted to a discussion on the various perspectives in which 'development' is understood. What follows this is an articulation of the relationship between education and development as viewed from various angles. Finally, there is a section discussing the role higher education plays in development with special reference to countries like India.

Learning outcomes

This unit is meant to create an appreciation in you about the crucial role that higher education plays in national development.

After working through this unit, you will be able to

- distinguish between growth, modernization and development;
- differentiate between the definitions of development as formulated within various paradigms;
- interpret the relationship between education and development;
- analyse the relationship between education and development in the Indian context;
- evaluate the role of higher education in development in terms of its involvement in the knowledge enterprise, human resource development and in the generation of leadership and social criticism.

What is 'Development'?

When one talks about development of a society or a nation, what precisely does one mean? 'Development' seems to connote different things to different people. The terms 'development' is at times used to denote economic growth, and at times to mean

imbibing modern values and attitudes. It is also used sometimes to describe a society moving towards greater equality and social justice. Each of these connotations of development seems to be derived from a certain theory or an ideology. Thus, whenever one talks about social or national development, one seems to make a set of theoretical and ideological assumptions. Therefore, in order to understand development, we may, first of all, analyse the theoretical and ideological assumptions underlying it. Such an analysis is attempted in the section below.

Paradigms of development

There exist several perspectives of viewing development. When analysed, these perspectives seem to cluster around the following main paradigms. These paradigms represent widely different views of development and they are being presented below. However, it must be stated here that it would be quite simplistic to view these different views of development as mutually exclusive, or as opposing paradigms. The plurality of concepts of development is also related to historical factors.

Becoming modern

After World War II, the USA found itself alone at the top of the world power structure. It was the only nation on either side of the war that had its infrastructure of roads, bridges, buildings, and banks intact. It had a near monopoly on new technology and the industry in place to produce goods that would sell for a high price around the world. But without functioning economies to buy these products, the growth of the US economy was limited. Therefore after the end of the war, the US had the following concerns to grapple with

- i) aiding the recovery of Europe and Asia;
- ii) fear of social unrest that could result from widespread poverty in a world of modernity and late-twentieth-century prosperity;
- iii) containing Communism and debunking it as a path to development as compared to Capitalism.

As a response to the emerging situation, theories about development were generated in the 1950s and 1960s in the USA as a solution to poverty and underdevelopment. Development experts and "modernization theorists" in their attempt to analyse the lack of development of poor countries felt that poorer nations are poor because they lack big capital, technology, and modern social organization and values.

Modernisation theorists explored the process of development and offered a composite portrait of what it means to be "modern". In modernization theory dualistic schema, societies go from being one type of society (traditional or undeveloped) to another type of society (modern, or developed). Although different disciplines produced their own species of these theories, they all set up dichotomies and perceived development as progressing from point A to point B along a single trajectory. All these authors saw modernization as a process; a social, psychological, economic, cultural, political and even a biological sequence of changes. So what does modernization theory suggest nations should do to become more "developed"? Although the major thrust of modernization implied that nations should focus on changing their internal society by rationalizing it, many also believed that "developed" countries could play a pivotal role assisting and guiding the modernization of later developers.

After two decades of dominance in development circles, modernization theory came under attack from several angles. First, it was seen to be ahistorical: modernization theory failed to make distinctions between countries, regions, structural conditions, or

specific historical experiences. For example, modernization theorists did not address the fact that these poorer regions exhibited not one situation of poverty or one type of society, but multiple "pre-modernities". Many of the countries that would be classified as "undeveloped" in fact already had "modern" industries, educational systems or the other "precursors" that were thought necessary for modernity. Modernization theorists also contend that modern values and behaviour by individuals necessarily lead to socio-economic development at the societal level. However, as argued (Portes) this causal linkage does not necessarily hold because a society is not simply the sum total of individuals within it. Finally, a critique was lodged that the term "modernization" was only a euphemism for "Americanisation". The field was therefore labeled ethnocentric and pro-capitalist. Amongst the main proponents of the modernization theory were W.W. Rostow, Samuel Huntington, Daniel Lerner and McClelland.

Dependency theorists

Beginning in the late 1950s, harsh refutation of the modernisationists' ideas came from a steadily growing group of scholars and planners in Latin America. There emerged a theory that as a result of colonial and later neocolonial relationships the "Third World" had been kept in a subordinate position to Europe, serving merely as a source for cheap raw materials and as a market for its more expensive manufacturers. Dependency theorists paid special attention to exploring the savage inequalities in poor nations, tying them to colonial histories of those regions and to current economic and political systems of exclusion and repression of the masses. While dependency theory was already influencing policy in Latin America with economists like Samir Amin, Alain de Janvry and Carlos Garramón, it was not until the 1960s that authors like Andre Gunder Frank "popularized" the theory and development scholars in the rich countries began to take note.

Dependency theory presented the world as consisting of two poles: wealthy countries are the "center" of the global capitalist system, and poor countries are its "satellite" or "periphery". Peripheral countries have low wages, enforced by coercive regimes that undermine independent labour unions and social movements. The center exploits them for cheap labour, cheap minerals and fertile tropical soils. Therefore the poor and wealthy countries are parts of the same whole (that whole being the global capitalist system), not similar entities at different stages of development (as modernization would have had us believe). For dependency theorists, underdevelopment in the periphery is the direct result of development in the center and vice versa. Within this broad framework, other strands also existed explaining situations of dependency in different ways. Amongst the critiques of dependency theory is that it failed as a theory of development. It is alleged that the highly descriptive nature of dependency theory does not have much explanatory power. Furthermore, after dependency theory's initial splash in the development theory arena, many analysts sought to move beyond the rather crude dichotomy of core-periphery and to engage in more rigorous attention to the impact of historical circumstances.

From Development to Globalization

From the earliest social theorists all the way through the dependency theorists of the 1950s and 1960s, the literature on social change and development was largely associated with industrialization and the gaps between wealthier and poorer nations. Since then, understandings about what leads to development have been questioned. Development is now perceived very differently – building factories and infrastructure no longer is seen as raising well being for a nation or its people. Rather power in the world is increasingly linked to control over information, technology and international

banking institutions. Secondly, instead of perceiving the world as a division between the poor versus rich nations, the world is now being seen as a interdependent and integrated entity.

The term '**globalisation**' can be understood as a set of processes that increasingly make the parts of the world interdependently integrated. Although the world has long had important international linkages, globalisation refers to integration where firms are interdependent production is linked on a global scale, there is a dramatic increase in visible and invisible trade and national economies are linked. Beyond this increase in trade and globally organized production, for some globalisation means also the control of decision making by a new "largely accountable political and economic elite" or more explicitly, the "Wall Street, US Treasury – IMF/ World Bank Complex".

Debt has played an important part in the globalisation process. The poorer nations took on heavy debts in the 1960s and 1970s to try to build their industrial sectors and infrastructures to catch up with the core nations. Loans allowed these poor nations to finally do some development planning- building roads, airports, new capitals, dams, and oil refineries. But the rates for their loans were often adjustable, an increase in US interest rates exponentially increased the total debt burden of these countries. In 1982 Mexico and then Brazil could not pay their debts and soon the list of defaulting nations grew. To continue to get the money they needed to pay even just the interest they owed, these nations had to secure more loans and usually it was only multinational agencies like the World Bank and IMF that agreed to lend to them. In exchange for these loans, the heavily indebted nations had to submit to a sweeping programme of cuts in food, housing and transport subsidies, privatization of state run companies and lowering tariff barriers to force local industries to face global competition. These sweeping reforms called **Structural Adjustment Programmes** have been the subject of two decades of bitter debate, protests, riots and even rebellions across the Third World. Cutting government intervention in the economy, changing political and economic structures, and acting to stabilize macroeconomic indicators are more broadly called "neoliberalism".

Parallel to the economic arguments that some profound change is occurring in the world, **postmodernist** thought has emerged. Modernism held that there was a concrete reality and progress that could be described with the scientific and rational approaches of western society. Postmodernism responded that other cultures were equally valid and that scientific / linear thought was not the only way to truth, because no single truth exists. This brought into question the idea that the development process is dependent on increased rationalization. Further more, this means that no single form of social organization can provide a template of what it means to be "developed" or even "rational". Another way in which postmoderists confronted the conventional wisdom of development theory was by their argument that in our age it is not the economy that determines culture, but that culture drives economic change.

Development in the Indian context

The above discussion clearly serves to demonstrate the serious divergence of views even in the basic definition of development, and how these views are based on different interpretations of world history and social dynamics. We must therefore realize that there is no universally agreed definition of development and that there are no clear-cut prescriptions to follow to attain development.

One thing is however clear that development involves something more than economic growth. Development is taken to mean growth plus change: there are essential qualitative dimensions in the development process that extend beyond the growth or expansion of an economy through a simple widening process. There is also a vital

distinction between initiating development and the more difficult task of sustaining development over the long run.

Although the increase in the real income per head can be adopted as the primary goal, it is common to interpret development in terms of a number of subgoals or particular categories of the overall primary objective. Thus the alleviation of poverty and the diminution of economic inequality are generally stated objectives of development plans. A few of the many possible other subgoals may be, the specification of a minimum level of consumption, a certain composition to the consumption stream, and a maximum level of unemployment that will be tolerated; the avoidance of market disparities in the prosperity and growth of different regions within a country; and the diversification of the economy. Now, beyond equitable development, sustainable development that lasts without making future generations worse off through environmental damage is another challenge. Owing to this variety of policy objectives, the emphasis on various dimensions of development will vary at different times and in different countries.

A word of caution is in place here. We should beware of interpreting development as economic development only. **Economic welfare is but a part of social welfare**, and even if in the course of a country's development all the conditions necessary to promote economic welfare have been satisfied, this need not mean that social welfare has also been promoted. The process of development has a profound impact on social institutions, habits and beliefs, and it is likely to introduce a number of sources of tension and discord. Some aspects of human welfare might suffer if relations that were once personal become impersonal, the structure and functions of the family change, the stability in one's way of life is disrupted and the support and assurance of traditional values disappear. Tensions also arise when the inequalities of income distribution, both among individuals and among regions in the developing country, tend to increase; when development creates "open unemployment" as well as employment; and when the pressures of excessive urbanization occur. Taking cognizance of these factors, the attempt, now increasingly is to focus on the quality of the development process. This involves renewed emphasis on reducing the incidence of poverty – on giving more attention to improving the lives of the poorest of the world's poor.

From the point of view of a country like India, the view that development involves not just economic growth and not going the same way as the West did, looks quite valid. As for India, development seems to make sense only if it means economic growth coupled with equitable distribution of wealth, social justice, and improvement of certain objective parameters of living standards such as health (reducing infantile mortality, raising life expectancy), clothing, shelter and literacy. This ideal has been embodied in the Preamble to the Constitution which summarises the aims and objects of the Constitution:

"WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVERIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship
EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote them all;
FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation.

Keeping in view India's democratic polity and socialistic aspirations, one expects development to cater to the entire population on the basis of its full participation in the process of development. All this presupposes a change in political consciousness and a qualitative transformation in economic production and distribution relations. A country with a huge section of its population living under the poverty line; two-thirds of it illiterate; strong prevalent prejudices based on gender, caste, community and

language and such a diverse population has to live in peace and amity, would be threatened by discontent and instability if it were not to have a development perspective ensuring social and economic justice to all.

In delimiting the nature of poverty, a serious problem in the Indian context, Amartya Sen has stated that

poverty is not just a matter of being relatively poorer than others in the society, but of not having some basic opportunities of material well-being – the failure to have certain minimum “capabilities”. The criteria of minimum capabilities are “absolute” not in the sense that they must not vary from society to society or over time but people’s deprivations are judged absolutely, and not simply in comparison with the deprivations of others in that society. If a person is seen as poor because he is unable to satisfy his hunger, then that diagnosis of poverty cannot be altered merely by the fact that others too may also be hungry A person’s advantage is judged in this approach by his capabilities, viz., what he can or cannot do, can or cannot be. The relevant capabilities are of many different kinds (e.g. being free from hunger, from undernourishment, participating in communal life; being adequately sheltered; being free to travel to see friends; and so on). The ranking of “capability vectors” can be used to rank people’s advantages vis a vis others. But in the context of poverty analysis, it is a question of setting certain absolute standards of minimum material capabilities relevant for that society. Anyone failing to reach that absolute level would then be classified as poor, no matter what his relative position is vis a vis others. Poverty, in this view, is not ultimately a matter of incomes at all, it is one of a failure to achieve certain minimum capabilities. The distinction is important since the conversion of real incomes into actual capabilities varies with social circumstances and personal features. (1985:669-70).

In any case, development in the context of a country like India seems more to be a process and not a state or a finished enterprise. One major dimension of this process is education. We will therefore devote the next section to an analysis of the relationship between education and development.

Self-assessment

1. *Discuss the different perspectives on development. What is your own understanding of the term?*

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2. *How will you define development in Indian context?*

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Education and development

Just as there is no universal agreement about the definition of development, there is none about the role of education. But expecting universal agreement about anything is unrealistic, particularly where the points of view concern very potent, political

concepts. What view we take of development will colour our social and economic policies and plans. Similarly, one view of education may presage sticking to the status quo, and the other may impel us to organize and support education in an entirely different way. The paradigms of development described above suggest almost conflicting views as to the role of education.

Apart from the problems of role ascription to education, education cannot of its own achieve the desired societal goals without additional structural supports. One of the major fallacies of the theories of education and development has been their overdeterministic nature. An underlying assumption is the belief that formal education can both manipulate and be manipulated in order to attain specified educational goals. Educational goals are only partially determined by educational factors such as teacher quality or curricula. Considerable impact on these presumed outcomes is actually exercised by both home background, peer groups and structural features of society itself. Education is hardly the single determining factor in the attainment of educational, much less development goals. Further, issues related to education and development cannot be resolved without taking into account the role of the State. However one chooses to view the State, it seems inevitable that the State is never neutral, irrespective of the type of economy or level of development. The goals of both education and development in any country are inherently political. The issue that needs to be addressed is what kind of education is appropriate for what kind of development or "under what conditions" and "for what purpose" are the education and development strategies to be implemented.

Higher education and development

Many of the functions of education with respect to development relate to higher education. Higher education is not merely at the apex of the education system, it is also the level which prepares personnel for all other levels of education and expertise for a great variety of jobs that have to be manned in the social, economic and cultural sectors. In addition to being at the frontier of knowledge, it plays a crucial role in the generation of new knowledge. Therefore, the relation between higher education and development is a crucial one. And this is the main theme of this unit. We will examine in this section the crucial role that higher education plays in working towards economic growth, self-reliance in the scientific and technological know-how that is basic to it, development and mobilization of human resources that is a prerequisite to the above, and also the role of higher education in providing leadership and social criticism. The section is divided into three subsections each concerning one aspect of the link between higher education and development.

Higher education in the knowledge business

In India, all the institutions of higher education put together, constitute the most important partner in the knowledge business. Through the undergraduate and post-graduate programmes, the practitioners of this enterprise are being systematically prepared, and through the research activities that the faculty undertakes, the higher education system directly takes up knowledge generation. In a country like India, there is a heavy dependence on the institutions of higher education for self-reliance on know-how so crucial to development. Not only that the universities themselves undertake research, but also, they provide the trained manpower for research and development institutions, both in the public and private sectors of industry.

The entire knowledge business has undergone tremendous changes during the past forty years. This is a global phenomenon. First of all, the volume of this business has increased drastically. Within the university system itself, there is considerable expansion

in research infrastructure and the number of people involved in it. In terms of research coverage, newer areas are being brought under the purview of research. And research concerns are related both to basic and applicational aspects.

The lapse of time between discovery and its application is decreasing progressively. Photography was first conceived of in 1727, but there was a lag of 112 years before the camera appeared on the market in 1839. The early experiments and corresponding theory of radio waves were established around 1867, but it was after 35 years, in 1902, that it was applied in the invention of radio. Nuclear reactor was thought of in 1932, and in ten years, in 1942, the first one was made. The transistor which was invented in 1948 took just three years for being put as a device to be used in radio and communication. When it comes to micro-electronics or biotechnology, and many other new other areas, the lag between discovery and application has reduced even further. For instance, every few months or even every few weeks, we hear of new discoveries and new applications in computers. This trend indicates tremendous pressure from the field of application on the knowledge generation enterprise. Research by the universities, and the faculty which is capable of doing it are in great demand from industry, agriculture, health, defence and so on.

The scenario described above is bewildering. There is a fierce competition in research and development among countries and industrial houses. Higher education institutions are under pressure to undertake more and more research, and to interact with other research agencies to make research more fruitful from a practical point of view. This crucial mediation by the universities ensures, to a large extent, the sharing of research facilities and data among professionals, and also provide a value content to the entire business of knowledge generation, bringing into context the broader ethical issues of ecology, peace and human well-being.

Every young nation today attaches priority to the development of certain minimum capabilities in the area of science and technology, industry and defence, and self-sufficiency in certain basic commodities such as food, medicine, building and clothing material and energy. Such self-reliance reduces vulnerability of a nation to international pressure in the matter of crucial decisions pertaining to economic development and even national security. Another driving force behind the policies of many developing nations is "their desire to change as rapidly as possible of raw materials and markets for other people's finished products" and to pursue a path of rapid industrialization.

The changing scenario in developing countries is that of greater dependence of the economy on knowledge-based industries and knowledge-oriented employment. The narrowing gap between theory and practice which was discussed earlier is clearly visible in the agricultural sector, where the results of research done in the labs have to be taken to the land so as to produce all the grain, or oil seeds or cotton that is needed. Thus, more and more responsibility gets vested in the higher education institutions in providing the two crucial factors for development: knowledge and human resources.

In India, the State takes a tremendous lot of initiative in the knowledge business; it has established many premier research institutions, more than 40 of them under the aegis of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), and more than 30 under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. This has definitely given a fillip to scientific and technological research in the country. However, this policy, has to some extent, deprived the universities of resources for scientific research. The best products of the university system tend to abandon the universities and join these well-equipped research institutions. Even though the universities because of their inherent strength derived from fresh young minds and free atmosphere still produce, for each rupee spent, much original and useful research, their pre-eminence has been taken away, much to the loss of the country. This has been observed by an Indian scientist as eminent as Dr. George Sudarshan (Sudarshan and Mahajan, 1989). This has been wrongly justified

sometimes by stating that the primary function of the university is teaching and not research. This, however, is not a very sound argument. It must be recognized that only in those universities where outstanding research takes place can there be outstanding teaching.

Higher education for human resource development

There is a considerable opinion which is opposed to tying education and development together because it considers that if education and development are linked together, human and material growth will be imagined somewhat like construction enterprises in domains of different nature. This school is also opposed to discussing the trade-offs between investment in material and human capital. In other words, it opposes the view of education as a means to make people adjuncts to economic growth. The other school in this context, recognizes educational investment in human capital next to plant capacity raw materials and credit, as a major factor for economic growth.

That India now has one of the largest scientific manpower in the world is not a mean achievement. And this is entirely due to the expansion in higher education undertaken ever since Independence. The higher education sector till 1947 had not been geared quantitatively as well as qualitatively to cater to the human resource requirements of a developing economy; it had been conceived of on the basis of the economic reality which accompanied colonialism. After Independence, the first major rethinking about the educational structure and content was at the university education stage, through the University Education Commission appointed in 1948. This emphasis on higher education was deliberate. The main reason for this was the acute need for trained manpower for almost every sector of national development.

The initial phase was marked by large scale expansion. This emphasis on quantity was understandable; it was meant to meet the manpower requirement of the various sectors of national development. However, this had two consequences. One, there was an alleged drop in quality of higher education. And two, there was some disproportionality in the development of manpower between various sectors. Coupled with this have been the problems facing the Indian economy and the resultant erratic way of its expansion. A third related problem has been the inadequate manpower projection and manpower planning. All these have resulted in a certain amount of dysfunctionality between the output of higher education and the intake of the job market, in other words, unemployment of the educated.

There is a strong feeling that the legacy of colonial higher education still influences Indian universities. One way in which this manifests itself is in the fact that the education programmes offered by the Indian universities are not specifically designed to the development needs and processes of India of today and tomorrow. Very many crucial sectors of development are relatively underemphasized. There is still a clear bias towards elitism and liberal arts and other general courses. Certain crucial sectors of development such as rural health and rural technology are not sufficiently catered to by the present programmes of higher education.

Higher education for leadership and social criticism

Development as we found earlier, is not entirely economic growth. Attaining a certain level of social justice and a certain level of social and political consciousness supportive of a structural transformation in economic, social and political institutions are also important dimensions of development. Even for economic growth, there needs to be a certain change in the attitudes and values of people. With the present knowledge revolution, the most crucial faculty which ought to be developed in every one is the

ability to learn. It is not an exaggeration to describe the present society as a learning society. The most important demand that development makes on people is probably to learn, to adapt and to grow.

Higher education is expected to generate a climate in the society conducive to the development of the above mentioned attitudes, values and abilities. This is a very difficult task. It can be accomplished only if the academia comes forward from its back bench and collaboration with other professional groups and communities such as those in the Press, the Bar and other professionals involved in development.

All major social changes have originated in the minds of people. In fact such people provide leadership to the society at certain junctures. By and large, such people are the products of the universities. The university community will be able to respond to a call for leadership at such junctures only if it consistently endeavours to refine its own social sensitivity and disciplines itself to view social phenomena objectively. A democracy owes its dynamism essentially to two professional communities, one, the academics and two, the journalists. The universities role of social criticism, therefore, can never be over-emphasised.

The university community develops this ability of acting as a watch-dog for the society by nurturing within itself a climate in which both dissent and discipline coexist. In a country like India, where there are only seven graduates in a thousand population, it is only natural that the university community comprising both teachers and students is viewed as catalyst for development.

Self-assessment

3. *On the basis of the discussion in the previous section, write a short note on how higher education relates to knowledge based industry and knowledge based employment in contemporary societies.*

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4. *In the light of what we have discussed in the subsection on human resource development, what is your reaction to the statement that "education as manpower qualification is an enterprise by which people, are disciplined for competent performance at work which remains meaningless to them"?*

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5. *How is the leadership and social criticism function of higher education crucial in development? Give examples from the Indian scene after Independence in this regard.*

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Summary

In the preceding sections of this unit, we have attempted to examine the various theoretical perspectives which are important in the evaluation of the role of education in the development of both Capitalist and Socialist societies. We have also discussed the relationship between education and development, though establishing one is not an

easy task. Education in general, and higher education in particular, cannot of its own, achieve the societal goals without additional supports. Moreover, in any given context, the contribution of education to the attainment of development goals depends on the overlap between educational goals and the goals of the State. What is important therefore is a need for a better understanding of and planning for, the relationship between educational process and the attainment of national development objectives.

Unit-end activities

1. "The role of education in development is powerfully, even painfully, political" What is meant by this statement?
2. John K. Galbraith in his book, '**The Industrial State**' remarks that, 'Modern higher education is of course extensively accommodated to the needs of the industrial system'. In the light of the discussion in this unit, write a case in favour or against this statement.
3. What do you think development would mean in the context of India? What role will education play in this? Write your answer in about 400 words.

Points for discussion

1. Education has a series of roles to play in different types of development in differing situations. Discuss what is meant by the statement.
2. The aims and objectives of the Indian State have been summarized in the Preamble to the Indian Constitution. Juxtapose the development of education in India against these objectives and point out its achievements and the shortcomings.

Suggested readings

Allahar, Anton L. (1995) *Sociology and the Periphery: Theories and Issues*. Toronto: Garamond.

Brohman, John (1996) *Popular Development*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.

Carnoy, Martin (1983) "Education and Theories of the State", *Education and Society*, 1(2): 3-25.

Galtung, Johan (1976) "Towards new indicators of development", *FUTURES*, (June): 261-26.