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Carlos Alberto Torres: Research Plan.

The State, Social Movements, and Educational Policies in Latin America: A Study of Municipal Policies in São Paulo, Brazil.

During the past fifteen years my work has been guided by the following question: How, in the field of nonformal education, are educational policies related to the overall process of political legitimation and capital accumulation developed by the state in Latin America? Under the broad rubric of Latin American education, my conceptual and empirical analysis has focused in particular on three issues:

• First, the need to understand through a political sociology of (nonformal) education why a given educational policy is created, planned, constructed, and implemented; who are the most relevant actors in its formulation and operationalization; and what are the fundamental, systemic, and organizational processes involved from its origins to the implementation and evaluation of the policy.

• Second, the need to understand and analyze the specific characteristics of the dependent state in Latin America insofar as they apply to educational policy formation. That is to say, how the nature and legitimacy needs of the dependent state conditions the nature of policy formation in nonformal education settings

• Third, to identify and analyze what alternatives, if any, have been developed in Latin America from perspectives other than compensatory legitimation--e.g. alternatives to state policy making in nonformal education. From a Critical Theory perspective, this issue relates to the work of Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, his proposal for a pedagogy of the oppressed as emancipatory education, and his contribution to the alternative paradigm of popular education in Latin America, and internationally.

The capitalist state in Latin America is usually defined as a dependent-development or a conditioned state. The work of the Stanford group in the early eighties, primarily through the contributions of Martin Carnoy, Joel Samoff, Henry Levin, and some graduate students such as myself at the time, have helped to identify the institutional identity of the state as crucial in understanding the role education has played in development and social change. In Latin America, the political practice of the capitalist state seems oriented (a) to foster individualization, socialization, fragmentation, and reintegration of disciplined individuals into the labor force by separating workers from their means of production; (b) to elaborate, promote, and enforce the law; c) to consolidate the nation and the internal market; and (d) to create an ideology that separates knowledge and power. Needless to say, Authoritarian States have exacerbated some of these functions while neglecting others. The role of the conditioned state has not substantially changed with the process of re-democratization in the Southern Cone. However, the fiscal crisis of the state, combined with the external debt, and the conditionalities imposed by structural adjustment policies have reduced significantly the administrative and perhaps political latitude of the State.

The basic tenet of this analysis is that the nature of educational change is related to the nature of the state, more so in dependent-development societies. The notion of compensatory legitimation refers to the democratic state's need to cope with a deficit of legitimation in the overall system. This crisis of legitimation has several sources. One of the most important is the disparity between growing social demands on welfare policies and diminishing fiscal revenues to meet those demands. To confront the crisis of legitimation, the democratic state calls upon scientific and technical knowledge and expertise, increasing policies of participation, and legalization of educational policies with a growing role for the judicial system in education. Therefore, education as compensatory legitimation implies that the State may use educational policies as a substitute for political rights and for increased material consumption while, simultaneously, creating a system of legitimacy beliefs which will assure the loyalty of its citizens.

In my previous work on Mexico,<sup>1</sup> I have shown that nonformal education has been usually co-opted by the State and employed as an instrument of social legitimation and the extension of state authority, more than as a tool for self-reliance of individuals and communities in the poor segments of the Latin American societies. In addition, I have argued that the evaluation of nonformal education in Latin America will show that the cognitive, economic and social individual returns of adult education programs are very limited. Compensatory legitimation is an attempt to incorporate disenfranchised populations within structures of corporatist political representation, using low-cost educational alternatives (such as adult education and literacy training) offered as a proxy instead of real improvement in their quality of life, social mobility or income. I have extensively documented that equality, quality and relevance in respect of adult education provision remained outside the main goals of adult education reform in Mexico and many Latin American countries. Thus, is there any possible alternative to nonformal education as compensatory legitimation and extension of state authority? The

<sup>1</sup> See Daniel A Morales-Gómez and Carlos Alberto Torres The State, Corporatist Politics, and Educational Policy Making in Mexico. (New York, Praeger, 1990).

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answer to this question entails a study of the possible contribution of social movements to state's policies in designing popular education projects.

Popular education arose from a political and social analysis of the living conditions of the poor and their outstanding problems (such as unemployment, malnourishment, poor health), and attempted to engage the poor in individual and collective awareness of those conditions. Second, this strategy base their educational practices on collective and individual previous experiences (as previous knowledge) and stressed work in groups rather than individualistic approaches. Third, the notion of education provided by these projects is related to the concrete skills or abilities that they try to instill in the poor (i.e. literacy or numeracy), and these projects strive to arouse pride, a sense of dignity, personal confidence, and self-reliance among the participants. Finally, these projects can be originated by governments, as in Colombia and Dominican Republic, with projects related to integrated rural development, or, as in Nicaragua, with the collective of popular education; and they may be directed toward adults as well as children. A number of grass-roots organizations and social movements have undertaken popular education projects in Latin America.

Grass-roots organizations are often defined in Latin America as local and private community-base organizations, working to provide democratic leadership, and trying to improve the economic opportunity for poor sectors through job creation, the provision of education and health care, or the development of productive micro-enterprises. Social Movements refers to an outcome of conflictual actions and collective behavior. For French sociologist Alan Touraine, there is a type of conflictual action which can be best characterized as defensive collective behavior. For instance, many grass-roots organizations and NGO's trying to ameliorate the impact of unemployment, lack of housing, limited health or educational infrastructure in a community can easily be classified as collective defensive behavior or engaged in vindicating actions. Touraine discusses a second type of conflict where conflicts modify decision-making. In this case, those conflicts become social struggles. If conflictual actions resulting from social struggles seek to change the social relations of power in cultural actions, ethical values, science or production, they may become a social movement.<sup>2</sup> Thus the feminist movement, the ecology movement, the peace movement or the anti-nuclear movement are examples of social movements.

In Latin America and Brazil, social movements include the ecclesiastical base communities, neighborhood associations, the feminist movement and ecological associations.<sup>3</sup> If we understand for politics a struggle for power, these social movements should not be unilaterally or exclusively interpreted in political terms; they also represent cultural and moral practices centered on the construction of collective identities and spaces. They originate around certain demands and specific social relations, becoming increasingly autonomous from the traditional institutions of political representation of interests. This is so, argue proponents of social movement theory, because workers do not any longer find their identity exclusively in their relationships with the means and relations of production, but also as consumers, residents in a particular neighborhood, members of a church, ethnic or cultural organization, and participants in the political system.<sup>4</sup> Many social movements have undertaken popular education projects, and the experience of the municipality of São Paulo is a case in point.

In this research, I am studying literacy training policy formulation in the Municipality of São Paulo, Brazil during the socialist administration of the Workers' Party or Partido dos Trabalhadores during the period 1989-1992. Paulo Freire was appointed Secretary of Education in 1989, and he resigned to this position at the beginning of June, 1991. During his tenure, Secretary of Education Freire implemented drastic changes in municipal education, including a comprehensive curriculum reform at the K-8 grades, new models of school management through the implementation of Schools Councils--including teachers, principals, parents, and government officials--and the launching of the Movement of Literacy Training

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<sup>2</sup> Alan Touraine, The Voice and the Eye. An Analysis of Social Movements (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

<sup>3</sup> Scott Mainwaring, and Eduardo Viola "New Social Movements, pp. 17-54; David Slater, ed., New Social Movements and the State in Latin America (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1985); Elizabeth Jelin, "Movimientos sociales en Argentina: Una introducción a su estudio." Cuestión de Estado 1 (1), September 1987, pp. 28-37; Carlos R. Brandão, Lutar com a Palavra (Rio de Janeiro, Graal, 1982).

<sup>4</sup> Ernesto Laclau, "New Social Movements and the Plurality of the Social" in New Social Movements and the State in Latin America, ed. David Slater, (Amsterdam: CEDLA, 1985), pp. 27-42.

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(MOVA) built on participative planning and delivery with support from nongovernment organizations or social movements. A fundamental principle of literacy training and educational policy formation in São Paulo is the articulation between the public sector and social movements, following a model of popular public schooling.

Popular public schooling is an educational model based on democratic-socialist principles that attempts to challenge the need for growing privatization of public services, arguing instead for increasing investment in public education, improving access and quality of education (democratização do acesso), improving the cost-benefit ratio of schooling, while at the same time linking school effectiveness with educational and social needs of working class children and youth. Finally, by relating public schooling with popular movements, this project emphasizes a democratic control of resources, planning and implementation of autonomous schooling (democratização do gestão) against an authoritarian (and/or technocratic) centralization of educational planning, policy-making and implementation.

A new literacy campaign, Movement of Literacy Training or MOVA-São Paulo was announced in October, 1989, and launched in January 1990. The organization of MOVA was implemented through an agreement between a democratic-popular administration and a number of social movements concerned with many critical issues including the struggle for land tenure and housing, health, and education in the city of São Paulo. The social movements signed individual contracts with the Secretary of Education. There are 49 social movements that have signed agreements with MOVA. By the time Freire resigned as Secretary of Education on May 27, 1991, MOVA had 640 classrooms of literacy training, with 29,000 students.

This relationship between the so-called "popular municipal administrations"<sup>5</sup> and social movements is not easy. There are major challenges. The social movements argue that their participation should not preclude the state investing in the type of activity (be it adult education or schooling) in which the social movements are collaborating. For social movements, the challenge is to enter into a partnership with the state without being co-opted, thus, preserving their political and pedagogical autonomy while achieving higher levels of organization and social practice.

A particular focus of my analysis is contrasting the rhetoric with the realities of day-to-day policymaking in São Paulo. Thus, a key empirical question is whether the proclaimed articulation between public policies and social movement has been achieved. In addition, central issues for the study of the literacy campaign are the following: What are the socio-political and economic objectives of the campaign? What is the organizational model followed in the campaign? How does it relate to previous experiences inspired in Freire's conscientization model? How is the curriculum designed? What methodology has been implemented? How is the evaluation of the campaign organized? How is the campaign financed? What is the role of educational research in the campaign? Finally, what indications can be obtained from the results of the campaign in terms of economic, political, and cultural returns of literacy training for the adult learners?

A central proposition of my analysis is that the state is an arena for struggle for competition between political-economic forces and educational projects. More investigation is needed on the relationships between educational reform implemented at a municipal level, the role of social movements, and conflicts and contradictions of policy formation in Brazil. It is fundamental to know whether the educational reform happening in São Paulo, based on a partnership between the state and social movements has improved the quality of educational opportunity and quality of education in public schooling, struggling at the same time against school and social discrimination based on gender, class and race.

My methodological model combines ethnographic, non-participant observation with interviews, survey research and discourse analysis. I have travelled periodically to Brazil since 1988 conducting a number of interviews, some of them videotaped, with government officials—including Freire himself—community leaders, politicians, parents, and students. I have followed closely the process of policy making and implementation for the last three years, and I have been presenting papers in different academic conferences. A number of articles and two books will be produced in the next three years.

One book will analyze the experience of the Municipality of São Paulo to show the possibilities and limits of popular education in Latin America, and particularly whether it is possible to establish a partnership between social movements and the State in producing innovative, self-reliant models of adult education rather than compensatory legitimation. I envision a second book as a major work that will consolidate and expand my perspective on Paulo Freire's political philosophy of education, with a systematic, biographical, historical, analytical and theoretical analyses of Freire's

<sup>5</sup> Proposta. Experiências em educação popular. Federação de órgãos para assistência social e educacional, FASE-Rio de Janeiro, Nº 45, August 1990, pp. 5-37.

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contribution to critical pedagogy and models of emancipatory education. To that end, I have collected and analyzed over a thirteen year period, more than 2,500 documents of experiences and writings on Freire's method and political philosophy in the world, including Latin America, the U.S. Canada, Western Europe and Africa. Likewise, I have collected, tape-recorded or videotaped, more than 100 hours of conversations with Freire. I plan to use this unique information as part of the biographical sections of this book<sup>6</sup>.

A Guggenheim Fellowship will allow me to conclude the first manuscript on The State, Social Movements and Educational Policies in Brazil.

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<sup>6</sup> I have written jointly with Moacir Gadotti the preface to Freire's new book in French and Portuguese, entitled Education dans la Ville (Paris, Athica, 1991).