

WILEY



A • M • E • R • I • C • A • N
A N T H R O P O L O G I C A L
A S S O C I A T I O N

A Social Anthropology of Education: The Case of Chiapas

Author(s): John C. Kelley

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Nov., 1977), pp. 210-220

Published by: [Wiley](#) on behalf of the [American Anthropological Association](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3216262>

Accessed: 13/12/2012 00:37

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Wiley and American Anthropological Association are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

A SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF EDUCATION: THE CASE OF CHIAPAS

John C. Kelley*

In this study the author examines the utility of social anthropological theory for the analysis of education. The framework is equilibrium and processual analysis as developed by the British "school" of social anthropology. After discussing the most relevant literature, the author proceeds to apply this structural approach to the case of Chiapas and analyzes schools in two ecological zones within this state: the piedmont region of the Pacific Coast known as the Soconusco, and the highland Altos zone. This analysis is based on extensive fieldwork in the area over a two-year period. The study also discusses the manner in which educational policy is shaped by the national and political structure by using concepts from political anthropology. The author concludes that the national educational system has failed to introduce major sociocultural change in the Altos region because it is not congruent with Indian allocation of time and resources and because the Indian mode of production must be transformed in order to produce sociocultural change. This stands in clear contrast with the Soconusco region where schools are valued as a resource and regarded as effective political institutions. The conservatism of the Indians in the Altos region and the openness to change in the Soconusco are outcomes of different systems of adaptation within different ecological settings. The Mexican case is often considered as an example of a revolutionary mode of education. In the case of the Soconusco, education did in fact for a period of time promote and secure the restructuring of society, albeit as part of a more general process of transformation. Patterns of stratification, ethnic identity and cultural patterns did change as a result of agrarian reform; education as an institution reflected and promoted the process of change. In the case of the Altos de Chiapas, education has not been revolutionary in nature but reflects and helps to perpetuate the existing ethnic differentiation and economic stratification of the region. The educational system has had little impact on the majority of Indian children and manages to siphon off the few students who do become acculturated. EDUCATION, MEXICO, SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY, SOCIAL CHANGE.

This essay examines the utility of social anthropological theory for the analysis of education. Two foci of research in education may be isolated: the school in its sociocultural milieu and the classroom within the school. The emphasis here is on the relation of the school to other social institutions, yet it is argued that the two units of study can be handled within a unitary frame of theory. This framework is the equilibrium and processual analysis developed by the British "school" of social anthropology.

In a recent review of anthropological approaches to education, Sindell summarizes the analytical framework utilized:

One studies the culturally and socially conditioned values, attitudes, cognitive styles, self conceptions, role expectations, and modes of interpersonal interaction which pupils, teachers, and administrators bring with them into the school from their various backgrounds. One also investigates the shared perceptions, values, and rituals from which student, staff, and school subcultures arise (Sindell 1970:593-594).

This idealist research strategy, with its emphasis on values and expectations, dominates the ethnography of schools and classrooms reviewed by Sindell. Studies of schools within a culture (King 1967, Modiano 1973) stress the clash

of opposing cultural value systems within the classroom.

The central theme examined here is that anthropological research in education must move beyond an idealist strategy and adopt a structural approach which analyzes the content and the structure of social relations. The dynamics of classroom interaction and the relation of the school to its sociocultural milieu can be understood more fully by utilizing models developed in social anthropological research. These are briefly reviewed in the following discussion, and a case study using this approach is presented to illustrate their utility in the analysis of schools.

One method for studying social systems uses the equilibrium model (Gluckman 1968). A social institution is said to have a built-in time scale called its structural duration. In its analysis "the emphasis is on the manner in which the institution would operate through time if internal contradictions or external intruding events did not interfere with its passage through its structural duration"

* Research Associate
Program in Anthropology and Education
Box 45, Teachers College, Columbia University,
New York, NY 10027

(Gluckman 1968:219). In this type of analysis, often called static or structuralist analysis, the emphasis is on how rules and customs will work out within an institution as if it were in equilibrium (Leach 1954:ix). In social anthropology this kind of analysis was developed by Radcliffe-Brown and his students.

A more recent trend has been the emphasis on models of social change. Partly as a reaction to the static analyses of their predecessors and partly as a reflection of the nature of the social systems studied, social anthropologists began to develop processual forms of analysis (Swartz 1968:Intro.). In this kind of analysis, variously known as processual or dynamic, the emphasis is on meticulous description of the events of social change within a given social system and the explanation of these events.

A comprehensive research strategy views the social system as an entity that must be analyzed in both frames of theory, i.e., in an equilibrium and a processual analysis. Barth's essay on social change suggests looking at social behavior as allocations of time and resources (Barth 1967:661). A complete analysis of a social institution shows how behavior is allocated in an "as if" system and then introduces the events in a process of change. For example, a family system can only be analyzed in a developmental cycle of four generations (its structural duration) by working out the implications of rules derived at one point in time; the family system is then analyzed processually by introducing the events of change that affect it.

An example of this approach is Barth's analysis of Fur households. At a given point in time,

Fur household organization is one where each adult individual is an economic unit for himself. . . . Husband and wife have certain customary obligations toward each other. . . . But each of the two cultivates separate fields . . . (Barth 1967:665).

Barth describes some Fur households which become nomadic pastoralists like the surrounding Baggara Arabs; household organization changes to a joint system with joint grain stores and sexual specialization of cooperative household activities. One possible explanation is that such Fur households are acculturated to the Baggara Arab way of life. However, other Fur households have taken up fruit-growing in irrigated orchards; they also have changed to joint households. The changes in the social institution of the household are analyzed as a result of changed allocation of time and resources, which itself results from changes in forms of subsistence. The analysis moves from an equilibrium view of a Fur household to a dynamic analysis of changes to joint household organization (Barth 1967:665-667).

The unifying concept in equilibrium and dynamic analysis is, then, a view of social behavior as allocation of time and resources. Neither values, nor customs, nor structures are the determinants of social systems. Social structures and social values result from the manner in which groups or individuals allocate their time and resources. Naturally, existing structures and values act as constraints on behavioral allocations.

The unit of study in social anthropology is redefined in the comprehensive research strategy. Gluckman's analysis of Zulu politics in the context of the South African nation demonstrated the necessity of analyzing factors external to the community being analyzed (Gluckman 1958). Epstein has shown how urban Africans use different structural alternatives in different situations (Epstein 1958). In work disputes laborers relied on the unions or the courts; these same persons utilized "traditional" tribal means to settle domestic disputes. Epstein uses the concept "social field"

to show the existence of more than one structure in one environment at a given time.

Swartz defines the concepts of political field and arena to define the unit of study in analyzing a social system. The field is composed of the "actors directly involved in the processes being studied": the contents of this field included the values, meanings, resources, and relationships employed by these participants. The arena is a "social and cultural area which is adjacent to the field in both space and time" (Swartz 1968:Intro.). The persons in the arena are drawn into the field situationally.

Thus, the ethnographer of the school or the classroom defines his unit of study situationally. If one is studying classroom behavior, the field is the classroom and the arena is the school and its sociocultural milieu. Similarly, the school can be seen as the field and its milieu as the arena; the choices are made by the particular behavior one is interested in explaining. Logically, a complete analysis takes both foci into account.

The behavior that occurs within one's unit of study is analyzed as patterns of allocation of time and resources. Within the classroom field, one views students' allocations and the constraints (structural or cultural) which are placed upon them. Classroom behavior can be analyzed as an equilibrium system, as if a set of rules were followed in a given period of time. This static analysis is followed by a dynamic analysis which introduces the actual events of change.

SCHOOLS AND THE SOCIOCULTURAL MILIEU

The specific framework of analysis which is most relevant to studying schools in their sociocultural milieu is that developed in political anthropology. Swartz defines politics as "the events which are involved in the determination and implementation of public goals and/or the differential distribution of power within the group or groups being considered" (Swartz 1968:Intro.). The ethnographer of education, of course, selects those events which are concerned with schools.

Power, in its broadest sense, means control over resources (see Nicholas 1965:52). Power differentials within the sociocultural milieu of the school are determined by the way in which resources are allocated. These affect the formulation and implementation of educational goals. This encompasses the school as a political field and its milieu as the arena, and the ways in which they interrelate situationally. The emphasis can be placed either on the internal aspects of school politics or on the external aspects; but neither makes much sense without the other. They are both parts of a single process of educational events.

A detailed framework has been developed by Bailey in his analyses of local-level politics in Orissa, India. He defines a political structure as a "set of rules regulating competition"; this structure with the natural and cultural environment constitutes the political system. A political structure may have many substructures, which are activity-determined. The structure is constituted by five categories of rules—(1) prize rules, that define the goal to be pursued; (2) personnel rules, that "specify who is eligible to compete for prizes"; (3) leadership rules, about the "composition of competing teams"; (4) competition rules, about how competition should take place; and (5) control rules, a set of rules to be followed when a rule has been broken (Bailey 1969:19). Bailey's concept "structure" implies neither the permanence nor rigidity of earlier equilibrium analysis. Rather, it stresses adaptive modifications made by actors

within the structure and the possibilities of disappearance or radical change. The approach includes both regularity and conflict, static structures and dynamic processes.

The rules of politics, for Bailey, have two levels—the normative and the pragmatic. The first consists of “publicly acceptable values,” and the second contains “practical instructions on how to win” (Bailey 1969:4). This distinction is mirrored in Swartz’s distinction between legitimacy and coercion in the exercise of power. Legitimacy is “support which attaches to an object through a symbolic exchange between those who give the support and its recipients,” while coercion is support “given in exchange for a highly specific benefit” (Swartz 1968:Intro.). Thus, legitimacy is a normative exchange while “specific benefits” follow pragmatic rules.

Bailey further develops the personnel and leadership aspects of his schema. The personnel of a political structure are categorized into (1) the political community, the “widest group in which competition for valued ends is controlled”; (2) the political elite, those “within the community entitled to compete for honour and power”; and (3) the political teams, or those who are active in politics (Bailey 1969:25). Within the political structure one often finds factions, which is one way of organizing leadership and teams. Factions are groups organized for political competition, with a core of supporters and their leader(s) (Bailey 1969:51-53).

The following example briefly analyzes College X; it is illustrative only, not based on systematic fieldwork but on a short period of participant-observation. The college is located in an urban community, financed by city funds. Its sociocultural milieu is a lower- and lower-middle-class neighborhood in a large city. This is referred to by school administrators and faculty as “the community.” It is necessary to understand the distribution of power within this “community” in order to analyze its relation with the college.

One event can be looked at to define the personnel of this community. The normative rule of membership in this community is residence in a certain geographical area. But the events that led to the college’s original location in this area demonstrate a pragmatic rule of leadership within that area. The local Chamber of Commerce had an interest in developing the cultural and commercial potential of the area; they argued successfully through the urban political structure that the college should be located in the area in order to enhance the process of urban renewal. Following the establishment of the college, this group of businessmen developed plans for office towers, cultural establishments, and other forms of urban redevelopment. The events surrounding the college’s location in the neighborhood, then, show that the pragmatic rule of leadership within the school’s “community” includes these businessmen. Thus, present-day references to the “community” have the advantage of simultaneously subscribing to a publicly acceptable value which says that colleges should be serving disadvantaged neighborhoods and referring to the pragmatic relation of the college to the local businessmen.

The ambiguity in the reference to “community” is successfully used within the college political structure to influence the allocation of college resources. Thus, one can readily elicit a prize rule within the college which says that “the college must serve the community.” But reference to this rule may obscure pragmatic goals being sought by actors within the community; a pragmatic rule of competition is to seek one’s goals by referring to the “needs of the community.” For example, one of the prizes sought by every academic department within the college is lines

for new faculty members. The members of the academic department will acknowledge a normative prize rule which says that departmental activities should serve the academic purposes of its members, e.g., biologists should teach biology, etc. The college administration urges departments to “serve the community,” a goal which has been resisted by some departments as violating academic objectives of the college. However, these departments found that they could further a pragmatic goal of expanding their membership by invoking the normative rule of “serving the community” while not violating their commitment to academic objectives. All of this was possible because of the ambiguity of the “community.” Social work instructors define the community as hospitals, welfare centers, organizations of the elderly, etc.; by adding a member who could teach courses in community organization, they could “serve the community.” Sociologists could define the community as a collection of institutions; someone who could guide research into local institutions could “serve the community” by analyzing these institutions while giving students experience in fieldwork. Anthropologists could initiate a program in local archaeology because they were “serving the community” by describing its historical roots; an archaeologist could teach field methods to college students in the process.

Thus, the analysis of the political structure of the college can proceed by analyzing certain events and their relation to the “community.” A normative prize rule of the departments is to provide students with a solid academic education; a pragmatic goal is to expand departmental membership. A normative goal is “to serve the community”; a pragmatic rule of competition within the college is to invoke this normative goal to justify the adding of new faculty members. The actors within the political structure may or may not understand the various levels of meaning in this political process; nevertheless, it is the task of the school ethnographer to describe it.

It is often objected that such analysis does not deal with the educational mission of the school, therefore it is not relevant to the ethnography of education. These internal political decisions may be interesting, but not relevant to education. It should be clear from the foregoing example that the allocation of teaching positions is at the heart of the educational process; the academic direction of the school is determined by the personnel that it has. Therefore, they become relevant to the analysis of a school’s educational task.

Another example, taken from this college, serves to illustrate the analytic utility of analyzing factions and the rules of competition that govern decision-making. The college has a senate which includes student, faculty, and administration. A normative rule of competition is that all members of the senate are equal in the power to make decisions. A major goal of senate meetings is to determine the college curriculum; this task is entrusted to a senate committee composed of students, faculty, and administrators who prepare a report that is voted by the senate. The committee has traditionally been chaired by a faculty member. During one year, a student was elected chairman of the committee. One faction of faculty members, not yet content with the normative rule of student membership, was privately dismayed. When the committee report was brought forth, this faction argued for rejection of sections of the report under the normative rule that certain guidelines had not been followed. A faction composed of students and some faculty members argued for acceptance of the report; when the vote was taken, this faction prevailed. The faculty members who voted with the students were berated by their colleagues for not voting the “faculty line”; the normative rule

of competition is that all members of the senate are equal in status, and that they vote as senators and not according to other statuses, but this event revealed the pragmatic rule that competition takes place between a student and a faculty faction. Again, the analysis of this event, incompletely developed here, shows the normative and pragmatic nature of decision-making as regards the school curriculum.

It would be possible to analyze all aspects of college activity in this vein; these examples are illustrative, in order to show the potential power of anthropological theory in analyzing education in a college. School political structure, the relation of the school to its sociocultural milieu, and the interconnection of these two in the field of local-level politics are enabled by utilizing Bailey's comprehensive schema of analysis. It is proposed here that an analysis of the allocation of time and resources in the school will further our understanding of schools, and that to accomplish this it is necessary to view the school in its sociocultural milieu. The structure and process of relationships between actors in the school-community arena must be analyzed as well as the values and attitudes they maintain. Furthermore, the manipulation of cultural values to achieve certain ends must be understood.

SCHOOLS IN CHIAPAS: A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOLS IN THEIR SOCIOCULTURAL MILIEU

To demonstrate the utility of a Barthian view of social behavior in analyzing schools in their sociocultural milieu, a comparison of two regions in the state of Chiapas, Mexico, follows. The piedmont region of the Pacific coast known as the Soconusco will be compared to the highland *Altos* zone. Modiano has recently studied education in the highlands; her data and conclusions will be reanalyzed by contrast to my own from the Soconusco.

The Soconusco is characterized by three distinct ecological zones: the swampy coastal lowlands, the fertile piedmont of the volcanic chain of the Sierra Madre del Sur, and the highland mountainsides. The piedmont is the site of one of the oldest ruins of Maya civilization, a complex known as Rosario Izapa. At the time of the Spanish conquest it was the southernmost tributary province of the Aztec empire, prized for its cacao beans and quetzal feathers. The Crown of Spain reserved it for royal tribute, refusing at one time the petition of Don Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra to receive it as his *encomienda* (fiefdom). The province supplied chocolate to the King's table for the 300 years of colonial rule.

Analysis of archival data shows that by 1870 the province was in the backwaters of the Mexican national economy, no longer providing the cacao riches it had so long supplied to one or another ruling elite. The descendants of the Spanish *conquistadores* lived in a few ranches on the plain between the coastal swamps and the densely forested piedmont. These ranches had a mixed economy, with agriculture for subsistence and cattle for export.

The descendants of the aboriginal Maya population, speaking the derivative Mam, lived in communities located in the cloud-covered fastnesses of the mountain peaks. Their subsistence economy was based on swidden agriculture, with a pattern of land use that encompassed the piedmont and the "cold land" where the villages were located. This pattern persists in the microenvironmental adaptations of some villages in the *Altos*.¹

The social system of the Soconusco in the 1870s embodied the contrasts of lowland/highland, *hacienda*/swidden, Indian/*ladino*. The *ladinos*, as the sons of Spain were called by Indians, occasionally hired Indian labor or

bought Indian corn. The Indians sometimes bought *ladino* salt or other commodities. The nature and extent of interethnic relations are hidden by the paucity of the historical record. Whatever they were, the onslaught of coffee in the last third of the 19th century created a fundamental transformation.

From 1870 to 1910, the Soconusco was the scene of an enormous coffee boom whose extent is revealed by two facts: (1) production of coffee rose from 2,000 kg in 1871 to 10,120,000 kg in 1910, and (2) all the available land between 500 and 2,000 m above sea level was occupied by coffee plantations. The boom resulted from the influx of British, German, American, and European investors attracted by the policies of the *porfirista* regime in Mexico: cheap land and a guarantee of cheap labor. The land was obtained by the simple expedient of declaring the piedmont *terreno baldio*, or unused land; as no legal titles were registered for the area, it was turned over to the English Land Colonization Co. for sale to investors. No matter that Indians grew corn on the land; let them become laborers on the plantations so they do not "idle their days away."²

This economic revolution transformed Soconusco society. Some Indian villagers became permanent resident peons on the plantations; plantation records show that one permanent laborer was needed for every three hectares of land. The four-month harvest period tripled the demand for labor, so that plantations needed a large migratory labor force to draw upon which would not need to be maintained during the nonharvest months. Plantation records show that slightly more than 80 percent of harvest laborers were recruited from highland Soconusco villages. As plantations multiplied, the recruiting arm of the plantation grew longer until villages in the interior, located up to a week's walk away, were supplying labor.

The new relation of Indian to *ladino*, as the white capitalists were called by extension, has been characterized as a benign symbiosis in which the calendar of maize-production correlated with that of coffee to allow yearly circular migration without disruption of either. This view ignores the essential causal feature in the new allocation of Indian time, which is the displacement of highland villagers from their swidden land. This destroyed the subsistence economy and forced the Indian, willy-nilly, to the alternative of plantation labor. This was not a dual economy either, but one complex social system encompassing *ladino* plantation owners, resident peons, and highland villagers-cum-migrant laborers.

Some cultural attributes of the laboring population persisted while others disappeared or changed. The visible indicators of Indian ethnicity in the region were language, dress, diet, and agricultural technology. Indian villages in the highland areas even today have distinctive clothing woven from the wool of local sheep; the diet is the trinity of Mesoamerican foods—corn, beans, and squash; the agricultural tool, a digging stick. The persistence of these elements was pointed out by Pozas in his study of Chamula migrants (1952).

The plantation resident peons soon began to adopt factory clothing, the plantation diet, and the technology of coffee production with its hoes, machetes, pruning shears, and axes. This change can be viewed as the adoption of certain customs in the traditional acculturation mode of analysis. Yet this leaves the problem of explaining the nonacculturation of migrants exposed to these "traits" for four months a year. It would seem useful to look at the changed pattern of allocation of time and resources by the plantation residents, who work full-time for the plantation

in exchange for housing, a weekly supply of corn, and plantation scrip that must be spent in the company store. The plantation worker devoted all his labor to the production of coffee and had neither the time nor the resources to invest in production of wool or subsistence crops. The migrants continued to cultivate subsistence crops and herd sheep, thereby investing time and resources in the pre-plantation diet and dress.

Our primary concern here is with the relation of education to sociocultural change following the second decade of the 20th century. The brief description of the Soconusco prior to 1910 delineates the main outlines of the social system into which schools were introduced. While there was no armed fighting in the piedmont during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), the effects of this major social movement were felt in three ways by the plantation peons. First, the system of debt peonage which had bound particular workers to particular plantations was modified by the elimination of "debt books"; nonetheless, other mechanisms of peon bondage were retained. Secondly, free and universal primary education for all Mexicans was mandated by the postrevolutionary Constitution; any population center with more than 20 school-age children would be required to have a school. Third, agrarian reform legislation eventually brought about the expropriation of coffee lands from plantation owners and its granting to former peons.

The education and agrarian changes were both resources introduced by the national political structure into the local political environment. Schools were installed in most plantations in the mid-1920s; the government required plantation owners to underwrite the costs of building and maintaining the school with its teacher. Schools were much slower to penetrate the rural areas of the highlands in the Soconusco. Agrarian reforms were introduced during the second half of the 1930s and were inextricably linked to the educational reforms. The following analysis takes up the case of one particular plantation in the Soconusco region, known as the "Finca San Jeronimo," as exemplary of changes in the region.

This plantation was one of eight large coffee plantations in the municipality of Union Juarez. In 1928, it had 570 hectares of land, 150 resident laborers, and one schoolteacher. The school was supported by the plantation owner, although he was assigned by the state Ministry of Education. There were two categories of laborers: managerial employees and field hands. The managerial employees were mostly poor *ladinos* from highland and coastal towns; the field hands were all recruited from highland villages. Informants nowadays differentiate these two categories by remarking that field hands were *descalzos* (barefoot) and the managers wore shoes.

The plantation school was, theoretically, open to all resident children; the normative rule of membership in the school was that all children on the plantation were equally welcome to, and expected to, attend. In fact, there were very few female students, and there were different average lengths of stay for the male children. The sons of field hands rarely stayed in school after age eight or nine; the sons of managers usually finished primary school in their early teens. Sons of field hands, now in their 50's, recall that they were embarrassed to go to school without shoes, that it was difficult to afford the necessary supplies, and by

the time they were old enough to wield a machete they were forced by necessity to work in the fields and supplement the family income. The pragmatic rule of school attendance, then, was that few women ever attended and few male field hands completed a school career. This differential access to the innovation of schooling was a result of the existing plantation political structure; an innovation that was supposed to be equally available to all children was in fact utilized differentially by different categories of children.

The relation of the school as an institution to other institutions in plantation society is of fundamental significance in understanding the agrarian reform changes that took place between 1938 and 1942. The school was the organizational focus for agrarian reform activities carried out by plantation workers. The schoolteacher took on the role of broker between workers and government; he was the advisor to workers in the formulation of petitions and the interpreter of national agrarian policy to the workers. The following incident illustrates this aspect of the school's role:

An official of the national agrarian reform bureaucracy came to the plantation during 1939 to formulate the final petition for expropriation of land. Legal title to 226 hectares of land was provisionally given to 106 workers who had signed the petition. After occupying the land for two weeks, they were dispossessed by some legal maneuvers of the plantation owner. In early 1940, legal title was regained by the workers but they were reluctant to execute it because of the sanctions suffered after their earlier brief possession. In this situation, the following event took place, as described by a participant: "In the last days of March it was seen that the coffee groves were burning in the section of land that had been expropriated. There was a teacher named Zoila Reyes who was very brave; she wore a gun and pants. She told us that it was our land, were we going to let the *patron* burn it? So we all went to put the fire out. She went with us and by three in the morning we had done it. The next week we assembled in the schoolhouse and decided to take the land by force. That night we all got ready. Since we didn't have rifles we loaded our muskets with ramrods. That is how we started working our land, on the 11th of April.

Most informants recall vividly the key role played by the schoolteacher in this event, providing the impetus for the workers to take possession of that portion of land which was legally theirs.

The schoolteacher's role here can only be understood in relation to national and regional political structure. The president of Mexico from 1934 to 1940 was Lazaro Cardenas, whose economic policies were the most radically socialist of postrevolutionary regimes. The agrarian reform program legislated in 1917 did not become a reality in the cash-crop areas of Mexico until his term. National education became politicized during his regime; teacher training schools were openly socialist, with a conception of the teacher's role which was much broader than the introduction of literacy in Mexico's rural areas.

In the Soconusco region, the resources of the national government were mobilized to break the political and economic dominance of the region by the coffee planters. Teachers on plantations throughout the area assisted the agrarian bureaucrats by translating the reform program to plantation workers. The incident just described is one specific manifestation of this process; teachers are even now feared by plantation owners on occasion as introducers of "socialist" ideas.

The teacher's role as broker was not without risks, as the following case shows:

On the occasion of the second anniversary of their possession of land, the *ejidatarios* (ex-workers now holding expropriated land) met in a three-day celebration for which the teacher loaned the school building and cancelled classes. As a result, that week the plantation owner filed a formal complaint to the state education authorities saying that the school had been closed without authorization, that the teacher had allowed a "communist" red and black flag to "desecrate" the school flagstaff, and that the teacher allowed gambling and dancing to take place in the school building. A few months hence, the school teacher left the plantation at the behest of the education department.

One sees here the continued identification of the school-teacher with the agrarian reform program, the opposition of the plantation owner, a conflict over control of the classrooms, and the relation of the local political structure to the state educational institutions. The transfer of the teacher reflects a shift in national politics for the 1941-46 regime, characterized as a shift to the "right" by political historians. The local school as an institution reflects the structure of national politics, successfully allying itself with the agrarian movement during the Cardenas regime but restrained from doing so in the following term.

The agrarian reforms carried out in the Soconusco were the most fundamental social changes since the establishment of coffee plantations in the late 19th century. Almost 50 percent of coffee land was expropriated and made into *ejidos*, independent agrarian reform communities owned by exworkers. This redistribution of the most important resource in the area has determined the main contours of the contemporary sociopolitical system. The educational institution became the principal link between the *ejido* and the encapsulating political structure.

At San Jeronimo, specifically, the *ejidatarios* built a new village located a mile away from the plantation center. The first public building was a school, which grew from a one-room wooden structure with one teacher in 1944 to a six-room block-and-cement building with three teachers in 1952. The *ejido* paid for the building and for teachers' houses; as a result, they were successful in a petition to the state to make this an "*escuela de concentracion*"—a six-grade primary school serving the four neighboring *ejidos*. By 1962 there were six full-time teachers paid by the state residing in *ejido*-financed housing and teaching in locally financed schoolrooms. In 1963 the *ejido* began to support a secondary school, the first in a municipality of 16,000 inhabitants. This school is now incorporated into the state system, which means that half its cost is underwritten by the state treasury. This secondary school is a source of prestige for the *ejido*, as it is the only one in 100 *ejidos* to have its own.

The growth of the school as an institution parallels the development of the *ejido*. This particular *ejido* is known as a "model" in the Soconusco for its cooperative political structure and its economic prosperity. Its prosperity has enabled it to invest in the school, which has encouraged corresponding state investment, which has brought prestige to the community, and which enables *ejido* politicians to get more state patronage.

A wide range of sociocultural changes have followed the events of the late 1930s. The basic change was the creation of a class of peasant farmers with a yearly income that is three to six times greater than that of maize farmers in the highland villages. Ethnic and class differences on the plantation have been submerged and in some areas erased by the *ejido*; the sons of managers and field hands are now virtually indistinguishable. The plantation field hand is remembered as a barefoot Indian who spoke Spanish badly, in contrast to the literate *ejidatario* who had shoes

and could read and write. "Barefootedness," for whatever historical causes, is the most widely acknowledged emic indicator of ethnic status. The wearing of shoes is a barometer of social change. The shod, literate *mexicano* has replaced both the *indios* and *ladinos* of yesteryear.

The existence of a school in the Soconusco *ejidos* has cultural, political, and social implications. Schools are prized by local communities not only for the literacy they impart but for the prestige they provide. The normative rule is that all *ejidos* with 20 children will have schools of their own; in the contemporary political structure of the state, they are a relatively scarce resource, as shown by the following case.

To demonstrate clearly and unambiguously the necessity of understanding the political structure within which a school is located, I will analyze the case of *ejido* San Rafael, which is located to the north of San Jeronimo. A lengthy description of the events in this case will provide the data for an analysis of the school as an institution among other social institutions. Fundamentally, this case has to do with the disparity between the normative rule of "free and universal education" for all rural Mexicans and the pragmatic rules of competition for school resources.

In 1942 Prof. Martiniano Rosales arrived at the *ejido* San Rafael to found an *escuela comunal*, a school supported by the community. At the time, he had a post in a nearby state school. In 1951 Martiniano came to teach at the San Rafael elementary school with the financial support of the community. Between then and 1955 he attempted to "federalize" the school, that is, to get designation for it as a federal school financed by federal funds. This attempt was unsuccessful. From 1955 to 1970 the *escuela comunal* operated sporadically with various teachers, closed as often as it was open.

In April 1970 Martiniano again attempted to get federal designation for the school. The federal district school inspector told him that with a census of prospective pupils, a blueprint of the existing school building, and plans for a new one, a federal school project would be approved. The Inspector promised to visit San Rafael on May 5 to receive these documents; when his visit didn't materialize, Martiniano sent the documents to the Inspector via the *ejido* president, who obtained a receipt for the documents.

On September 23, 1971, Martiniano visited the Inspector to inquire about the school. The inspector said that teachers were not made of clay for him to produce on demand. Martiniano reminded him of his 1970 promise; the Inspector said he needed certain documents such as a pupil census. Martiniano reminded the Inspector that these had been delivered more than a year earlier; when the Inspector denied this Martiniano produced the receipt.

After this incident there was a meeting of the San Rafael Parent's Association at which Martiniano suggested that the Inspector required a monetary "gratification" (bribe) to act on the request. On October 11, 1971, the National Director of Primary Schools visited the *ejido* Once de Abril. Martiniano was there for the occasion intending to present his request for a school directly to the National Director. When the entourage arrived with the Inspector, the Inspector's first action was to call Martiniano aside and inform him that the "problem" had been resolved and there would be a federal teacher at San Rafael within a week.

On October 19 a young female teacher fresh from Normal school arrived at the Inspector's office for assignment; she was sent to San Rafael, which could be reached only by a three-hour walk. She chose not to take the assignment. The President of the San Rafael Parent's Association visited the Inspector, who told him that the teacher had not wanted to go into the "bush" and had "pulled strings" to get reassigned to an urban school in Mexico City.

On October 29 the Parent's Association sent a telegram to the President of Mexico saying that for 30 years the *ejido* had supported an *escuela comunal* and now wanted a federal teacher. A telegram was also sent to the National Director of

the Education Department informing him that the assigned teacher had not shown up and requesting a replacement.

On Monday, November 1, the president of the *ejido* went to the state capital to the offices of the Education Department to try to resolve the problem; he returned and waited all day Tuesday and on Wednesday finally obtained an interview in the appropriate office. A state official consequently sent an order to the Inspector to assign another teacher, but was informed that a replacement had already been assigned. The *ejido* president was given a document with the teacher's name.

The following Friday the *ejido* president visited the Inspector, who demanded to know why the *ejido* was defaming him with suggestions that he required a bribe. The president showed him the document with the replacement's name. The Inspector reported that the young man had in fact come and had been assigned by the Inspector, that he had gone as far as the footpath and returned, and that it was not the Inspector's business to insure the arrival of the teacher at his post.

By November 15, the *ejido* San Rafael had a federal teacher and the primary school was officially opened.

This case provides a dramatic series of incidents which show the interplay of various political institutions concerned with rural primary education in Mexico. As Gluckman's case study of Zulu politics, it can be used to demonstrate various aspects of the sociocultural system. The following analysis shows the various pragmatic strategies of actors in the case, and how the school and schoolteacher are a resource whose allocation is the subject of competition between various institutions in the sociocultural milieu.

A brief description of the federal educational bureaucracy will place the roles of some of the actors in their structural context. The *Secretaria de Educacion Publica* has headquarters in Mexico City and is responsible for the vast educational system of the nation. Under the Director of the SEP are various assistant directors responsible for certain categories of SEP activity. One of these is Ernesto Guajardo Salinas, the National Director of Primary Schools; he paid the visit to the *Once de Abril* in October of 1971. At the state capital there is a branch of the federal bureaucracy that administers all Federal school programs in the state. Some 23 districts in the state are headed by Inspectors, who implement Federal policy at the local level. The Inspector's role is analogous to that of a District Superintendent in the United States.

The district here described includes two municipalities; it has 2 town schools and 18 village schools, most of which are on *ejidos*. Article 123 of the Mexican Constitution stipulates that any population center with 20 or more pupils must have an elementary school. Current educational policy in this area of Chiapas is that the federal government supports teachers for rural schools, while the local community supplies a building and living quarters. In the 1958-1964 Presidential period, there was a nationwide school building program in which the federal government supplied prefabricated schools to any local community that would provide land and labor to construct them. This program is no longer in effect, and it didn't reach this particular district. In Bailey's terms, the educational bureaucracy is part of the encapsulating political structure. One of the normative prize rules in this structure is that there is "free and universal education" in all communities with more than 20 students. The case shows how the federal bureaucracy must be manipulated to achieve implementation of this rule.

Insofar as it affects the outcome of the case, the local political structure must be described and analyzed. There is a president of the *Comisariado Ejidal* (*ejido* executive committee) whose duties are to preside at *ejido* as-

semblies, to represent the *ejido* in transactions with outside agencies, and to supervise the operations of the local credit society. In actual practice, the role of the president as credit intermediary provides him with political power greater than that prescribed by agrarian legislation. Any *ejido* that wishes to have its own school must organize a *Sociedad de Padres de Familia* or Parent's Association.

San Rafael has a factional political structure that operates within the context of the legal charter of organization. These factions compete for control of *ejido* offices and credit power. The first faction in San Rafael is led by Martiniano and his son Ruperto; the *ejido* president during the time of this case was an adherent of this faction. One of the leaders of the second faction is Eusebio Grajales, the President of the Parent's Association. At the moment, the first faction has control of the most important political institutions in the *ejido*. The activities of Martiniano and the Parent's Association president must be understood in the context of factional competition.

Martiniano Rosales is a representative of a class of pioneering rural teacher-entrepreneurs in Chiapas. During the late 1930s and 1940s the demand for teachers far outstripped the supply of normal school graduates, especially in remote rural areas. Many individuals parlayed a third-grade education into teaching careers during this period, yet these positions became increasingly insecure as more qualified teachers appeared on the scene. Martiniano had held office as municipal president from 1948 to 1950 in the municipality in which San Rafael is located. From this position of political power he had obtained control of a parcel of *ejido* land in San Rafael, where he settled in 1951. He had lost his post as teacher in a nearby school in early 1951 as a result of a political dispute that found him on the losing side, with the Inspector of Schools on the winning side. Since then he has lived in San Rafael, working for some time as a teacher but more recently as a credit inspector for the local government bank. His attempts from 1951 to 1955 to achieve federal status for his school were also meant to ensure a federal salary for himself.

Thus, the first period of San Rafael's school can only be analyzed with reference to other political institutions and personnel. It was founded by a teacher-entrepreneur who wished to turn it into a sinecure for himself; it was the role of this teacher as municipal politician that enabled him to introduce himself to the community and his alliance with a losing political faction at the state level that stymied his early efforts to achieve federal status for the school. This last point is a result of the fact that the local Inspector who was his political rival was the bureaucrat whose assistance was needed in the effort to achieve federal status.

Martiniano's renewed effort in 1970 came about because of a campaign visit by a Senatorial candidate to a nearby *ejido*. The campaign was not one to garner votes, as he was a designee of Mexico's official party—the PRI. Rather, these tours are the occasions on which local politicians can present their requests for patronage before the Senator. The Inspector (by now a different individual) accompanies the Senatorial candidate on the tours, in order to deal with educational requests.

The Inspector's promise to Martiniano on the occasion of this tour can be explained by analyzing a complex set of circumstances. After the election takes place, a shift in the entire patronage network of the nation and the state will take place. Some bureaucrats will ascend, others will stay in the same position, and some will lose their posts. The fate of bureaucrats in any of the federal departments is tied to the political fortunes of their allies in elective posts. The Senator on this tour will represent this area of Chiapas on the National Senate; he will exercise much influence

on the appointment of bureaucrats in his district. For the Inspector to retain his post, he must be "in" with the Senator; by providing public support and assistance on the electoral tour the Inspector attempts to cement a link with the Senatorial candidate. He must show that he is able to deal with educational problems efficiently while the candidate is present; thus, his promise to Martiniano to solve San Rafael's lack of a teacher. Not surprisingly, Martiniano is aware of these circumstances and presents his request at this opportune moment.

The bureaucratic requirements for establishing a school are normatively very simple—to demonstrate that the conditions of Article 123 can be met. The fact that San Rafael, with an average population of 50 school children, has for years not had a school shows that there are other mechanisms in operation. That the promised school did not materialize within the 16 months that followed the Senator's visit is one example of the hazards of the existing system for handling political requests. The Inspector may promise anything while the Senator is around, but promptly forget it in his absence. Not infrequently rural politicians wait for promised visits that don't materialize, as is the case in the Inspector's May 5 non-visit.

A renewed attempt to get a schoolteacher in September of 1971 was also related to local-level political maneuvering. The President of the municipality in which San Rafael is located had obtained a September 27 audience with the state governor; he invited over local politicians to accompany him to the capital and present requests to the governor. Thus, one *ejido* was requesting a feeder branch to the highway, two were seeking state assistance in construction of a park, and two were seeking establishment of schools. Martiniano was given a letter commissioning him as the *ejido* president's representative to the governor for requests of a school, a basketball court, and a drainage system. These patronage requests were approved by the governor at the meeting, with agreements for community assistance.

It was after the governor's promise and after his visit to the reluctant state inspector in September that Martiniano suggested at a meeting of San Rafael's Parent's Association that the Inspector needed a "*gratificación*" (bribe) to induce him to act. In fact, the year before the neighboring *ejido* of *Desenlace* had paid \$5,000 (400 U.S. dollars) to the Inspector after which they were assigned a teacher. This was known to San Rafael politicians and to the director of the school at the Once de Abril who was assisting Martiniano in his efforts. Thus, Martiniano was acting on known precedent when he suggested the necessity of an emolument for the Inspector.

The following incident in this case was brought on by the unrelated visit of Guajardo, the SEP Primary Schools Director. This is one of some infrequent inspections to remote areas made by such a high-level bureaucrat. It presented an unparalleled opportunity for Martiniano to present his request to a very powerful bureaucrat. Consequently he arrived at the meeting place very early; prior to the arrival of Guajardo I overheard him planning with the local school director the best method of obtaining a private interview with Guajardo. They agreed that Martiniano would have that opportunity during a small banquet to be presented by the school to the officials.

I observed and photographed the occasion of Guajardo's visit. Analysis of the photographs demonstrates a complex sequence of events. While the visiting dignitaries were lining up to do honors to the flag, Martiniano began to walk toward Guajardo; he was intercepted by the Inspector who motioned to him to join him on the rostrum, where they had a brief whispered conversation. In a later

interview I discovered that the Inspector had informed him that the problem was resolved. Thus, the Inspector accomplished several goals with this maneuver. He prevented Martiniano from bypassing him to see his superior. He prevented his superior from learning of a problem that might demonstrate the Inspector's incompetence or inefficiency. By asking him to come by his side at the flag ceremony, the Inspector would make observers assume that Martiniano was an ally of his.

A week after Guajardo's visit, the designated teacher arrived and left without announcing herself at San Rafael, because she preferred not to take a post in the "bush." The seniority system operating in this and other districts leaves the more undesirable posts in small, isolated communities to junior teachers and the positions in town schools to the most senior teachers. There is a scale of increasing status and desirability for teaching posts. San Rafael would be at the bottom of the scale not only because of its remoteness but because the newness of the school meant that there would not be a system of reciprocal obligations established between teacher and village. That is, the new teacher would have to struggle to build up the provision of services by the village (firewood, maid, and other gifts); these perquisites of the teaching position would already exist in an established school. The small size of San Rafael would also make it difficult for the teacher to carry out educational projects which build up status and become the basis for promotion. In essence, as one teacher put it to me, San Rafael "has no possibilities."

The strategy of sending telegrams to the President of Mexico and the Director of the SEP may seem unwarranted for such a small problem. It might be interpreted as an example of the ideology of *caudillismo* that makes followers seek direct access to the top leader for the smallest problem. In fact, it is used as a device to put pressure on local level bureaucrats and to prove to one's own political constituents that one is attempting to solve a problem. In fact, at a meeting of the local Parent's Association its president read this telegram with an explicit explanation that this was to show he had been at work on the case. Eusebio, the association president, was a political rival of Martiniano's in the local community; he was responding to suggestions that he had done nothing while Martiniano was busily struggling to get a school teacher.

The next major incident in the case came as a result of the *ejido* president's trip to the state capital to hear the annual governor's report. He took advantage of the trip to seek an appointment with the state education officials to request a replacement for the no-show teacher. When he was informed that the replacement had been assigned, he returned to San Rafael.

The following account of the *ejido* president's meeting with the Inspector on the Friday after his return is taken from his report to an assembly at San Rafael:

He (the inspector) got very mad and treated me badly, asking me who I thought I was. Somebody told him that here in a meeting we had said that we were going to send money to the Inspector to get our teacher, so the Inspector said to me "What do I need your money for?" I didn't say anything, just gave him the document with the replacement's name. He said that this boy had come a week ago but walked as far as San Jeronimo and came back because he didn't like the looks of it. The Inspector said, "I saw him a few days later here in the streets of town but didn't say anything to him because that is not what I am here for; later I asked somebody who told me that the boy had left, so therefore I have no teacher to give you." The Inspector just is trying to deceive me. I asked him

who told him about the money and he said he would tell me later; therefore I don't know who is spreading this gossip.

The Inspector told me that the *ejido* Desenlace waited two years to get its teacher so we can wait too; when they got their teacher, the Inspector said, they "left me an envelope which I later opened and found 800 pesos in. I hurried out into the street and shouted where is the man from Desenlace, so that I could return the money. But he was gone. I put it in their folder and next time they came I tried to return it but they begged me not to, that it was for my beers. To avoid offending them I had to take the money."

The president's account of the Inspector's money story was greeted with great merriment by his audience; one person remarked aloud that "what the Inspector wants is money." Yet the pattern of presenting emoluments for a bureaucrats "beers" is widespread as a political tactic; all sorts of governmental matters are expedited in this way. The *ejido* San Rafael decided at this meeting to resort to this tactic; two weeks later they had their teacher.

This case shows the various strategies employed by local politicians of the *ejido* San Rafael in their attempt to obtain a teacher. Pressure from the encapsulating political environment was brought to bear on the Inspector during the visit of a Senatorial candidate and during a visit from a national educational bureaucrat. Finally, *ejido* politicians seek to enlist the assistance of the state governor and of state educational officials. The obstacles posed by the failure of two assigned teachers to occupy their posts are overcome by more political maneuvering and finally by the use of monetary inducement with the Inspector.

The case clearly demonstrates the close relation of school politics to other local, state and national political institutions. Educational policy and action cannot be analyzed *sui generis*, but only in its relation to the other institutions in the sociocultural milieu. The normative rule of schooling for every community with over 20 children is violated for a long period of time. It requires complex political maneuvers by local politicians to obtain a teacher. This teacher becomes a resource that is sought by the local politicians, controlled at the local level by the Inspector, and for which the local politicians must enlist the aid of other political institutions.

The importance of utilizing social anthropological theory in the analysis of this case is that one must understand the structure of politics as well as its content. One must understand that local politicians not only value education as a thing in itself, but are motivated to obtain a teacher for their village in order to provide a service for their own constituents; thus, the two factions are sometimes at cross purposes in the negotiation for a teacher as they both wish to claim credit for trying to get a teacher. One must also understand the structure of the educational bureaucracy and its relation to other political institutions in order to explain the events attendant upon the visits of Senators and educational bureaucrats alike.

The analysis up to this point has dealt with various aspects of education and change in the Soconusco piedmont. In summary, a combination of ecological and economic factors resulted in the creation of coffee plantations, which transformed one segment of the Indian population into a working proletariat and embraced a larger segment of that population as seasonal migrants. Similarly fundamental changes were introduced with the redistribution of resources in the agrarian reforms, which transformed plantation proletariat and managers into a rural, "mexican" *ejidatario* class of peasant-farmers. The school as an institution responded to and facilitated structural and cultural changes after agrarian reform, but was itself an epiphenomenon of the national political movements.

Schools were and are resources which accomplish various functions which cannot be analyzed without reference to the wider sociocultural milieu.

The contrast of the Soconusco with the highlands of the interior of the state, the *Altos de Chiapas* region, is especially instructive. The two regions are contiguous geographically and have been closely linked economically since the turn of the century. The *Altos* region is one of contemporary Mexico's most sharply ethnically differentiated areas. Around a metropolitan center inhabited by *ladinos* are 20 Indian communities, with distinctive dress, dialect, and demeanor. This area has been extensively and intensively studied by Mexican and American anthropologists for the past three decades. An excellent analytical survey was done by Stavenhagen, to which the reader is referred for a detailed analysis. The following account briefly describes it in order to facilitate the contrasting analysis of education in the *Altos* and the Soconusco regions.

The Indian villages are dispersed settlements of swidden maize growers. A mixed subsistence economy supplements the maize with beans, some vegetable crops, and sheep husbandry. These villages are linked to the metropolis of San Cristobal through economic exchanges; Indians sell corn and vegetables in the market and purchase trade goods at *ladino* stores. In addition, there is some craft specialization in some of the communities; thus, the village of Amatenango specializes in the production of pottery, the village of Zinacantan specializes in the production of anthropological informants, the village of Tenejapa produces cloth.

Various analytical schema have been applied to the *Altos* region. Local *ladinos* view the system as one where two races, the Maya and the Spanish, live side by side. The traditional anthropological view sees the two ethnic groups coexisting in a symbiotic way. Another anthropological model sees it as a rural-urban dichotomy. Stavenhagen reviews these approaches and argues in favor of a model of class relations for the entire area.

The analysis of the region's class system rests on the overriding difference between *ladinos* as market producers and Indians who produce primarily for subsistence and for the maintenance of traditional politico-religious ceremonies. The *ladinos* accumulate capital, Indians invest in subsistence and ceremonial. The *ladino* is most often an employer of labor while the Indian most often offers his own labor for wages.

There is a historical continuity in the dominance of the *ladino* metropolis over the periphery of the *Altos* region. The city of San Cristobal as market center was the instrument of the Spanish colonial regime's dominance and remains the instrument of domination in what has been called the "internal colonialism" of Mexico.

Stavenhagen reviews the dynamics of interethnic stratification through various periods. In colonial society, the Indian was part of a labor reserve for *haciendas* and *encomiendas*. Ethnic discrimination, political dependence, social inferiority, residential segregation, economic subjugation, and juridical incapacity are all part of the constellation of attributes of the Indian's colonial situation. Class separation and antagonism was sharpened with the advent of Soconusco coffee plantations as more and more of the Indian communities of the *Altos* were drawn into the labor pool. This process was halted or ameliorated in some instances with the agrarian reform program. Indian communities that had lost their territorial bases to the plantations in the highlands were in some cases able to regain them during the 1930s. However,

some communities fared more poorly than others, viz., the contrast of Chamula and Zinacantan.

The traditional approach to sociocultural change in these Indian communities is to analyze acculturation or *ladinization*, the adoption of *ladino* cultural elements by the Indians. Utilizing this framework, it becomes difficult to explain the persistent conservatism of the Indian, his rejection of *ladino* culture despite continued contact with it. Pozas explains this phenomenon for migrant Indian laborers by their unfavorable exposition to *ladino* culture; that is, the Indian is used and abused by *ladino* employers and merchants and thus unlikely to accept cultural elements that they introduce. Yet, in fact, there is a selective acceptance of certain aspects of *ladino* culture.

If one shifts the analytical focus, abandoning an acculturation model, the problem can be seen as a process of allocation of time and resources to certain ends. The Indian devotes his time and resources primarily to the production of maize, within an ecological setting that permits swidden maize agriculture and for the most part precludes such fundamental innovations as the plow. The Indian invests his labor in sheep husbandry and the growing of vegetable crops. A great number of Indian customs can be understood only in relation to these activities and the regional market system. Thus, the decision to wear Indian or *ladino* clothing is not fundamentally a symbolic act, but an outcome of the investment of Indian resources in sheep husbandry and the making of wool for Indian clothes. The Indian invests his time and resources in the production of his own dress; the alternative of selling his wool and purchasing factory clothes would involve an economic loss for the Indian. Clothing is the emic indicator *par excellence* of ethnic status; yet it must be viewed as a correlate of the Indian mode of production. Cultural elements are accepted or rejected not by a superorganic whim or by symbolic choice but according to their utility within this framework of resource allocation.

In the Soconusco piedmont, the introduction of plantations radically altered the economic and ecological bases of Indian highland villages. There has been no equivalent transformation of the *Altos* region. This fundamental ecological and economic contrast must be kept in mind in a comparison of the two regions.

What can be said about the role of education in the Indian villages of the *Altos de Chiapas*? The ideology of education in Mexico's Indian areas has often been characterized as one of *indigenismo*, which celebrates the Indian as the true basis of rural society. At the core of this ideology is the belief in a simple agrarian economy with linkage of the primitive and modern. The curriculum of Indian schools is seen as one that should stress agriculture, crafts, the native language, and other skills that would improve the positions of Indians. Education would be an aspect of a social reform program whose goal it is to incorporate the Indian into the nation. As Ramon Eduardo Diaz has pointed out, proponents of this ideology have only held power in Mexico during the Cardenas regime. Schools run by the national education department have for the most part attempted to mexicanize the Indian, utilizing Spanish as a medium of instruction and imparting traditional academic skills. Some schools in the *Altos* region are run by the INI (Bureau of Indian Affairs) with instruction in the native language.

A recent anthropological analysis by Modiano attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of Indian schools in the *Altos* region, in their attempts to introduce cultural change. As she puts it:

The avowed purpose of the schools is to Mexicanize the Indians, to bring them into the mainstream of national life. In

prevailing Highland terms this means giving them the *ladino* orientation and sense of identification with Mexican life. It also means giving them *ladino* skills for relating effectively to the national culture (Modiano 1973:136).

In her answer to the question of the Indian's response to schools, Modiano analyzes the style of Indian education with its values and attitudes; these are contrasted with the attitudes toward education of the national school-teachers and school system. She isolates two factors in the Indian style of education:

... (1) With sufficient practice at tasks that are an intrinsic part of the family's activities, the child is expected to become accustomed to his work, and (2) children are given considerable leeway, even encouragement, to explore the world around them. . . . This attitude toward education contrasts strongly with *ladino* styles of child rearing and education . . . expect(ing) children to learn from intrinsically meaningless tasks (and) . . . includ(ing) them as passive observers . . . (Modiano 1973:137).

Modiano concludes that this difference explains why little acculturation takes place in the schools and that only those who leave home take any major steps toward acculturation.

The principal difficulty with Modiano's analysis is that it views social behavior as an outcome of customs or cultural values, rather than the outcome of a system of allocation of time and resources. Indians allocate their time and resources to the household and village mixed subsistence economy. Indians introduce their children to tasks that are "an intrinsic part of the family's activities" not because this is a cherished value in their style of education but because child labor is an important aspect of the family resource allocation. The child does important tasks because he has an important role in the household economy and not merely because Indians think this is how children learn. The lack of acculturation is a result of the permanence of the Indian mode of production; thus, the fact that Indians must leave their homes and villages entirely to become "Mexicans" shows that this is a fundamental transformation, not a piecemeal adoption of customs.

This critique of Modiano's analysis is supported by her assessment of the Indian's view of the school as a means of acquiring literacy and a knowledge of Spanish as a means of self-defense. These skills are seen to be useful in commercial dealings with *ladinos*. Thus, to the extent that schools enhance the Indian's ability to deal with merchants, they are able to attract and maintain pupils.

To summarize: the national educational system has failed to introduce major sociocultural change in the *Altos* region because it is not congruent with Indian allocation of time and resources and because the Indian mode of production must be transformed in order to produce sociocultural change. This stands in clear contrast to the Soconusco region. I argue that given a common national educational system in both regions, the variable that explains the difference in sociocultural changes is the ecological and economic contrast of plantation and swidden systems of production. This illustrates our introductory assertion that the educational system should be analyzed in its structural relation to the sociocultural milieu. Schools are valued as a resource and as effective political institutions in the Soconusco, as the analysis showed; the limited value of schools for *Altos* Indians is explained by the Indian mode of production.

The introductory assertion in this paper was that education must be analyzed with a theoretical framework from social anthropology, which takes into account the structure of social relations as well as their content. A perspec-

tive which sees social systems as the aggregate pattern of time and resource allocation has been applied to two ecological zones in Chiapas, in an attempt to explain the relation of the educational system to sociocultural change. It is not argued that cultural values have no bearing on social and educational change, but that explanatory primacy rests in the pattern of resource allocation within a specific ecological framework.

Both the Soconusco and the *Altos de Chiapas* have had primary education since the late 1920s. Yet the economic, social and ideological aspects of the culture of the Indians from the *Altos* area remains essentially unchanged. While it may seem that the explanation lies in the incompatibility of opposing value systems from education and indigenous systems, I have attempted by comparison and through the use of a social anthropological framework to show otherwise. The conservatism of the Indians and the openness to change in the Soconusco are outcomes of different systems of adaptation within different ecological settings.

Yet the analysis does not simply try to explain differences between regions. In the case of the Soconusco, I have tried to analyze the relation of education to other social institutions by using various concepts from social anthropology; I have also tried to show how educational policy is shaped by the national and local political structure, by using concepts from political anthropology. Prior to the initiatives for agrarian reform, education had little effect on the plantations. The alliance of education to the agrarian reform program resulted from the dependence of both on the national political system. Educational resources were deployed strategically by the Cardenas regime to assist in the agrarian reform program. In the post-Cardenas reaction, plantation owners were able to reassert some control over local education. Contemporary educational policy is intimately linked to the local-level political structure, as the analysis of San Rafael's case shows. The education system in the Soconusco has been shaped by the changing sociocultural milieu through these historical periods.

In his cogent analysis of education and social stratification in Bolivia, Comitas points out that there are two functions that education may assume in society:

The first and most significant function (of education) is to maintain and facilitate the existing social order. . . . In a number of relatively rare cases, the function of education is revolutionary in nature—to promote and secure the restructuring of a given society.

The Mexican case is often considered an instance of the latter, revolutionary mode of education. In the case of the Soconusco, education did in fact for a period of time "promote and secure the restructuring of . . . society," albeit as part of a more general process of transformation. Patterns of stratification, ethnic identity, and cultural patterns did change as a result of agrarian reform; education as an institution reflected and promoted the process of change. In the case of the *Altos de Chiapas*, education has not been revolutionary in nature but reflects and helps to perpetuate the existing ethnic differentiation and economic stratification of the region. The educational system has little impact on the majority of Indian children and manages to siphon off the few students who do become "acculturated."

This paper suggests that the changes in the social system of two rural regions of Chiapas result from the interaction of the local ecological system and national influences.

Education is analyzed as one aspect of a national policy which has shifted from one historical era to another. In the contemporary period, education mirrors the structure of national, local and regional politics. It remains to be shown how the content of national educational policy is used to shape and manipulate the ideology of individuals in those regions of Mexico where education has effectively taken root in the local social system. This is perhaps the true function of the present educational system.

ENDNOTES

¹ The village of Zinacantan has corn land in "hot" country as well as the "cold" country where the village is located. Some Zinacantecos travel back and forth through the year tending both areas. See Cancian 1965.

² One planter's view of the Indian's purported idleness is shown in the following statement from a government report of 1871: "It cannot be denied that there are many men in the pueblos of this department who should be wage laborers, but they spend their time uselessly caring for 10 *cuerdas* of corn, one of banana, and fed with weeds they then sleep in peace, under the guarantee given them by the first part of the article 5 of the 1857 Constitution of the Republic."

REFERENCES

- Bailey, F. G.
1969 *Stratagems and Spoils*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Barth, Fredrik
1967 The Study of Social Change. *American Anthropologist* 69:661-669.
- Cancian, Frank
1965 *Economics and Prestige in a Maya Community*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Comitas, Lambros
1967 Education and Social Stratification in Contemporary Bolivia. *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences* 29:935-948.
- Diaz, Ramon Eduardo
1958 Mexico: Indianismo and the Rural School. *Harvard Educational Review* 28:105-119.
- Epstein, A. L.
1958 *Politics in an Urban African Community*. Manchester University Press.
- Gluckman, Max
1958 Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand. Rhodes Livingston Paper No. 28.
- King, Alfred Richard
1967 *The School at Mopass: A Problem of Identity*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Modiano, Nancy
1973 *Indian Education in the Chiapas Highlands*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Nicholas, Ralph
1965 *Factions: A Comparative Analysis*. A.S.A. Monograph #2. London: Tavistock Press.
- Pozas, Ricardo
1952 Las Plantaciones de Cafe y el Cambio Sociocultural del Indio. *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Antropologicos* 13:31-48.
- Sindell, Peter
1969 Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Education. *Review of Educational Research* 39:593-605.
- Stavenhagen, Rodolfo
1970 Classes, Colonialism, and Acculturation. In *Masses in Latin America*. I. L. Horowitz, ed. New York: Oxford.
- Swartz, Marc
1968 *Local Level Politics*. Chicago: Aldine.