1. Introduction

One of the most important and most neglected problems in the field of education concerns its structural relations with other social institutions and the factors leading to change in them. No major nineteenth-century sociologist gave more than cursory attention to the historical relationships between formal educational institutions and other social processes. While a skeletal approach to the problem can be constructed from scattered insights in the work of both Marx and Weber, theorists like Mannheim and Durkheim tended to treat contemporary education prescriptively, as a function in the process of social integration, rather than analytically. In the twentieth century, the macroscopic study of educational systems is still the weakest part of the sociology of education. Research in this field concentrates almost exclusively on contemporary institutional relations in advanced economies (or on the quickest ways to copy them). Furthermore, such limitations in the historical perspective of studies preclude the development of a theory of institutional change. It is a small step from accentuating the importance of education in the structure of technological society to the assumption that 'industrialism gives rise to – or at least justifies – the sociology of education as a specialised field of study'.[1]

The complexity of the multiple integrations between education and other institutions in advanced industrial societies is of course undeniable, but three related assumptions made from it can be challenged. Firstly, certain sociologists have established a strict pre- and post-industrial dichotomy corresponding to simple and complex structural relations involving education. This is clear in Floud and Halsey's descriptive statement that 'the relationship between education and social structure remains in principle relatively simple until the onset of industrialism'.[2] Secondly, it is frequently assumed that some aspect of the industrialisation process itself accounts for the transition from simplicity to complexity. The same authors point to the widespread nature

of this approach when discussing the changing role of colleges and universities – 'The staple of sociological analysis here is the dialectical interplay of a distinctive corporate organisation with the rationalising pressures of advancing industrialism.'[3] In other words, a general theory of structural change is advanced although the specific agency responsible for effecting the integration of education with the economy can be and has been interpreted variously – technological need for skills, changing cultural values, class conflict, etc. Thirdly, since integration with the economy involved removing education from the control of the church, the processes of industrialisation and institutional secularisation are necessarily viewed as concurrent.[4] Such an approach may stress 'the secularising potency of capitalistic industrial rationalisation',[5] but might only stress its influence on institutions, not on the wider culture.

It is these three assumptions, held under a variety of theoretical guises and implicit rather than explicit in many studies, that the present work seeks to query through comparative analysis. Educational change in England and France recommended itself for study of structural relations on several distinct grounds. Firstly, in both countries (as in the rest of eighteenth-century Europe), education was a semi-integrated institution articulated only with the church and sharing many common features – curriculum, goals, input and output. Secondly, their dissimilar rates of industrialisation and institutional secularisation represent differential changes in social structure whose relationship to education is problematic. Finally, their emerging educational systems indicated different institutional relationships in the two societies, during the nineteenth century.

It is our contention that no adequate theory can be developed to cover these two countries which accepts any of the three assumptions outlined above. Any general theory of institutional change must be compatible with the diversity of structural relations involving education during the first part of the nineteenth century. The occurrence of change in a social institution can be primarily attributed either to factors external to the given society, to antecedent historical events or to forces present within the contemporary social structure – or to a conjunction of these elements. In the case of both England and France, external influences appear to have had a negligible impact on educational change during this period. In the main they can be classed as intervening variables, capable of delaying certain developments and accelerating others. For example, the Napoleonic wars whose financial

repercussions inhibited government investment in the Imperial University, conceded in theory but postponed in practice. Similarly the diffusion of foreign pedagogical ideas and practices hastened the implementation of existing policies. Thus imitation of the Lancastrian method in France during the Restoration stimulated the growth of state primary schooling. In such cases, external forces merely affected the pace of change, not its direction.

On the other hand, historical antecedents in the field of education appear to have been very similar in the two countries. In the eighteenth century, English and French education was integrated with the same social institutions – primarily with established religion and accessorily with the prevailing system of social stratification. In each country the church exercised an unchallenged domination over education, was the major owner of school buildings and, in so far as teacher-training existed, its only provider. As established churches, whose educational role was sanctioned by the state, they both possessed limited legal constraints to reinforce their domination. Hence the major dissimilarities between Anglican and Catholic education can be related to the differences in religious dogma of the two churches. The similarities however tended to outweigh the differences.

Thus in terms of organisation, both sets of establishments were voluntaristic, while their administration was local and their financing private. In structure, both were integrated only at the secondary and higher level. Since the two teaching professions were clerical, their members were partially trained in the main subjects taught. Pupil selection at the various levels of instruction mirrored the prevailing system of social stratification in each country. Although curricula were not formally standardised in either, they hardly diverged from a catechismal pattern in primary and a classical one in secondary and higher education. In England and France, the goal of the instruction given was predominantly religious and its conceptual framework was traditionalistic. Thus a high degree of structural similarity prevailed between English and French education towards the close of the eighteenth century. Hence subsequent educational changes and the growing disparities between the two countries in this field cannot be attributed to antecedent integration of education with other social institutions or to major differences between the two former dominant groups.

Therefore the main source of change in both countries in the early nineteenth century seems likely to be found in factors pertaining to

their contemporary social structures. During this period the previous integration of education with the established churches was steadily eroded to be replaced by new institutional relationships. In this context, two sociological theories will be considered firstly in terms of their ability to account for change in educational institutions in general and, secondly, for the specific development of these institutions in England and France during the period considered. It is hoped to show that the interpretative weaknesses characterising theories of institutional adaptation to changing social needs and of institutional reflection of socio-economic conflict are related to endorsement of at least some of the assumptions outlined earlier.

STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM AND EDUCATION

Structural-functionalist explanations of the development of educational institutions depend more or less explicitly upon the end assigned to the process of education. This end can be described in shorthand as 'cultural transmission' or in longhand as socialisation and instruction for future roles. Education 'functions to internalize in its pupils both the commitments and capacities for successful performance of their future adult roles, and . . . functions to allocate these human resources within the role-structure of the adult society'.[6] Two assumptions are implicit in this approach: firstly, that education is made up of two components, the cognitive and the moral; secondly, that all educative societies possess a system of well-defined roles and expectations, with norms governing them. A correspondence is thus being posited between the functions of education and the structure of society; successful educational socialisation will ensure cultural unity and social order. 'Preparation for, and regulation of, social life determines the content of education. Schools are agencies of socialisation operating alongside the family, religion, the social services and the local community.'[7] While it is only in primitive societies that this correspondence is perfect, that is to say free from conflict, clashes of values occurring in modern educational systems are not construed as causes of change, which is attributed to an adaptive response to changing social needs – such value conflict may be indicative of imminent change, but it is symptomatic, not deterministic. The influence of educationalists and pressure groups is thus dismissed unless their ideas were congruent with the requirements of their contemporary social structure. Historically

the growth and specialization of schools was, therefore, a response to social needs. The form which education took was influenced by the educationalists, but within the limits set by the existing social framework. Frequently the ideas of pioneers have only been influential after their death, once social conditions have changed in a direction which has made them relevant.[8]

Thus the selective mechanism determining educational change is located in the broad and undefined area of social needs. While all European countries underwent the same type of social change involved by industrialisation, they nevertheless developed several distinct patterns of educational institutions. The structural–functionalist theory can only offer two explanations for this diversity of educational development. On the one hand, it can be argued that the social changes brought about by industrialisation in each country implied similar social needs, which were met by functionally alternative adaptations in various countries. However, arguments in terms of a range of functional alternatives do not allow one to assert that this range is finite. They do not themselves invalidate the proposition that *any* educational system devoting more attention to scientific or technical subjects would have failed to fulfil the 'needs' of industrial society. In fact, if the possibility of an infinite range of alternatives is admitted or at least cannot be denied, the theory is deprived of all explanatory power. If the only statement made is that with more industry in society there will be more science in schools, this is better reduced to a causal, but unoriginal, proposition. On the other hand, an alternative functionalist argument could be that social needs are distinct from those of industry. However, since the whole concept of 'need' is undefined, their deterministic influence on educational development can only be detected *ex post*. This deprives the theory of predictive potential.

While social needs remain undefined, some mechanisms for their transmission to educational institutions are asserted while others are denied. The possibility of transmission by the agency of individuals or groups is rejected. The influence of individual educationalists is discounted since their ideas are ignored by society unless they coincide with its needs. Similarly, pressure groups are alleged to be deprived of influence on education unless their aims coincide with these needs. If neither individual nor group action is held to account for educational change, some other mechanism must be posited which guides legislation. This is generally considered to be the dominant norms and values of society at a given time. Thus for some, schools are 'the agencies for preserving and handing on culture, [which] tend to reflect the para-

mount values of the society they serve. An industrial society develops
its own values, although these are frequently opposed by residues from
the non-industrial past'.[9] To Turner, who is most explicit on this
theme, the agency responsible for this reflection is the 'organising folk
norm'.

Such organizing norms do not correspond perfectly with the objective charac-
teristics of the societies in which they exist, nor are they completely independent of
them. Out of the complex interplay of social and economic conditions and ideologies,
the people in a society come to develop a highly simplified conception of the way
in which events take place. This conception of the 'natural' becomes what 'ought'
to be – and in turn imposes a strain towards consistency upon relevant aspects of
the society. Thus, the norm reacts upon the objective conditions to which it refers
and has ramifying effects upon directly and indirectly related features of the
society.[10]

While dealing specifically with the relation between such organising
folk norms and modes of upward mobility, Turner is positing a more
general process by which such norms directly affect the school system.
Though avowedly unconcerned with the origins of educational systems,
the essay in seeking to account for educational continuity has never-
theless to admit the possibility of change. In so far as one organising
norm presides in a society,

there will be a constant strain to shape the educational system into conformity
with that norm. These strains will operate in two fashions: directly, through
blinding people to alternatives and through colouring their judgements of what are
successful and unsuccessful solutions to recurring educational problems; and
indirectly, through the functional interrelationships between school systems and
other aspects of the class structure, systems of social control and many features of
the social structure.[11]

Thus continuity in an educational system is attributed to the continuity
of an organising folk norm and conversely educational change can
presumably be said to reflect a change in the content of this norm.
    Apart from the obvious indefiniteness of the concept 'folk norm',
there is a fundamental objection to positing the necessary ascendancy
of any one norm in a society at a given time. While Turner himself
acknowledges the plurality of norms in any society and the existence
of contradictions between them, he argues that 'predominant norms
usually compete with less ascendant norms engendered by changes
and inconsistencies in the underlying social structure'.[12] However, to
posit educational continuity – as he does for England from the nine-
teenth century onwards – implies that the ascendancy of one set of

norms is continuous. The two forms of supportive evidence are inconclusive: firstly, that critics of an educational system do not transcend the predominant norm on which it is based and, secondly, that the functional interrelationships between school enrolment and social class largely prevent the occurrence of conflict in education. Since one can point to the presence of profound philosophical criticism and to the existence of bitter social conflict over education during that period, the whole concept of norm ascendancy in terms of a generally accepted set of evaluations is untenable. When one considers Turner's central case of 'sponsored mobility', this appears an excellent description not of social unanimity, but of the social control of one group over the educational opportunities of others. The fact that it was in the interest of the educationally dominant group to propagate the tenet that education and leadership were the prerogatives of the well-born does not confirm the existence of such a folk norm. On the contrary, the efforts required and displayed to instil this view in the other sections of society witness to its non-universality. The only sense in which ideas of sponsored mobility in education could be said to be ascendant was that they alone were reflected in legislation, whereas all competing views could only find expression through substitutive activities – the foundation of separate institutions. This relates ascendancy to social control rather than to value consensus. Turner's theory can only account for educational conflict between ideas, groups or institutions, if these are regarded as a mere legacy of the past, or as 'inconsistencies in the underlying social structure', or as the temporary characteristics of a transition period.

Structural functionalism and educational development in England and France

The postulate of institutional adaptation to 'needs' of the social structure requires restating before its assessment is possible. Concentrating upon the large process of industrialisation, attempts have been made to formulate the specific requirements of institutional adaptation which it 'imposes' upon education.

An industrial, urban society has the following characteristics:
1. Rapidly changing productive techniques, requiring an advanced division of labour in large-scale organisations.
2. A class and prestige structure, resulting from the new relationships between occupations, accompanied by a new distribution of power.

3. Values which are increasingly rational and materialistic.
4. An acceptance of change as normal.

Each of these influences the schools which are a vital part of this industrial system.[13]

Accordingly, education becomes more concerned with training, occupational structure with qualifications, curricula with science and teaching with research. The thesis of institutional adaptation has now been reformulated as the testable proposition that – 'The greater the extent to which society A possesses the attributes, x, of an industrial society, the greater the probability that its educational system will display y characteristics.' A comparison of England and France in either 1800 or 1850, employing a multiplicity of indices – percentage of manpower engaged in industry, contribution of industrial production to G.N.P., number or size of factories – shows England to have been the outstanding leader in industrialisation. Contrary to the prediction, however, it is France whose educational institutions bear the characteristics attributed to industrial society – specialised training for the professions and administration, social mobility through school achievement, a rationalistic educational philosophy and an incorporation of recent scientific developments in these curricula. England's industrial 'needs' were not immediately satisfied by educational institutions, remaining largely unchanged from the eighteenth century. Institutional adaptation to structural requirements is clearly far from being automatic. It remains to be seen whether any of the postulated reasons for delayed or non-adaptation apply in this case. It should be remarked that while these may account for British delayed adaptation, they are logically incapable of explaining the industrial 'pre-adaptation' of French educational institutions.

The mechanism leading to adaptation, the organising folk norm, should possess two characteristics in relation to educational development in England and France. Since such evolution was consistently different throughout the period considered, two dissimilar value systems should be identifiable in the two countries and each should be consistently 'ascendant'. While no precise criteria for the identification of organising norms have been provided, the fact that England during this period experienced very few educational reforms, while the French system was completely reorganised, is presumably taken as evidence of the existence of norms whose respective effects on institutions were conservative and reformist. Already the adaptive nature of such norms has been severely challenged with reference to industrialisation, but this does not in itself constitute a denial of the *influence*

of norms on educational development – only a denial of their *adaptive* influence. However, to point to conservatism or to reform of an institution is to describe the legislation applied to it; it may be necessary, but it is not sufficient evidence for the existence of organising folk norms. Any attempt to investigate the values guiding French educational legislation reveals normative diversity rather than consistency. While some provisions reappear in both revolutionary and Napoleonic laws, for example the provision of scholarships for deserving primary-school pupils to proceed to secondary establishments, they depend upon different values – the revolutionaries wished to equalise educational opportunity and Napoleon to maximise state efficiency by encouraging merit. In neither case could the philosophical assumptions behind those provisions be considered as an ascendant organising norm – they were never sufficiently widespread to be considered popular norms rather than official policies, nor sufficiently devoid of vocal and often successful opposition to be called 'ascendant'. Similarly, the minimal educational legislation in England merely testifies to enduring clerical domination, not to the philosophical ascendance of 'sponsorship' values – the conflict between educational ideologies was as rich in England as in France. Therefore in neither country can one identify the continuous impact of an ascendant norm since both underwent constant normative conflict. Hence the presence or absence of institutional change cannot be related to norm ascendancy. This is not to deny that norms and values influence educational development, but merely to reject them as its exclusive determinants.

Value conflict is, however, only one of many recurrent conflicts which characterised English and French education during this period, including that between groups and classes, within politics and over legislation. As previously indicated, three possible accounts have been offered which would render conflict peripheral rather than central to institutional development. These correspond to the location of conflict in the past–the partial endurance of superseded 'traditions'; in the present structural discontinuities of society; and in the future – contemporary disaccord representing a period of transition to a new equilibrium. All three are also employed to explain slow institutional adaptation. Frequently the 'religious difficulty', an obstacle to educational reform in both its English and French versions, has been represented as a clash between 'traditional' and 'dominant' values which time has solved. Essentially this account seems to confuse present evaluations of historical institutions and ideas with an objective

analysis of their influence at the time and since. The churches continue to function as interest groups influencing institutional development after their ideological supremacy has been challenged. Their prestige may be considered traditional; their influence must always be empirically assessed in the present and its effects are not self-evident. The deposition of a group from a previous position of institutional domination does not spell its ultimate decline. The group will continue for as long as adherence to it offers either objective or subjective advantages to its members. As an interest group it will interact with others; while it is unlikely to dominate social institutions, it is still capable of influencing them.

The second and third accounts – structural discontinuities and periods of transition – may be considered together, since while they are logically distinguishable, the distinction is impossible in practice. If profound conflict represents cultural discontinuities leading to the imposition of contradictory demands upon and expectations of a particular institution, one would anticipate no legislative consistency in the provisions governing education. More seriously the intensity and endurance of educational conflict in England and France involves positing a lasting state of cultural discontinuity from the late eighteenth century onwards, showing little sign of a resolution in the twentieth. The argument that such conflicts represented the vanguard of transition movements to a new state of institutional adaptation would seem, unless restricting itself to *post hoc* explanations, to confuse trends with laws. Thus the concept of functional adaptation fails to adequately explain the differences between educational development in England and France during the period considered.

MARXISM – CONFLICT THEORY OF EDUCATION

The Marxist theory accounting for the development of educational institutions can briefly be summarised in 3 interrelated propositions:
  (1) educational institutions and ideas are part of the superstructure which reflects the economic infrastructure;
  (2) therefore educational ideals and philosophies reflect economic interests;
  (3) since economic conflict is represented by conflict between classes, so educational conflict is merely an aspect of the general class conflict.
Superficially this interpretation appears to provide a more adequate