Joseph Zajda
Editor

Decentralisation and Privatisation in Education

The Role of the State

Springer

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DEDICATION

TO REA, NIKOLAI AND DOROTHY

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PREFACE

Decentralisation and Privatisation in Education explores the ambivalent and problematic relationship between the State, privatisation, and decentralisation in education globally. Using a number of diverse paradigms, ranging from critical theory to globalisation, the authors, by focusing on privatisation, marketisation and decentralisation, will attempt to examine critically both the reasons and outcomes of education reforms, policy change and transformation and provide a more informed critique on the Western-driven models of accountability, quality and school effectiveness. We want to demonstrate that claims of advantages in 'efficiency' brought about by *privatisation* in education are not always supported empirically as proposed by proponents.

The book examines the overall interplay between privatisation, decentralisation and the role of the state. The authors draw upon recent studies in the areas of decentralisation, privatisation and the role of the state in education. By referring to Bourdieu's call for critical policy analysts to engage in a 'critical sociology' of their own contexts of practice, and poststructuralist and postmodernist pedagogy, this collection of book chapters demonstrate how central discourses surrounding the debate of privatisation, decentralisation and the role of the state are formed in the contexts of dominant ideology, power, and culturally and historically derived perceptions and practices. The authors discuss the newly constructed and re-invented imperatives of privatisation, decentralisation and marketisation and show how they may well be operating as an educational model of a new global 'master narrative'—playing a hegemonic role within the framework of economic, political and cultural hybrids of globalization.

Education and the state

The importance of the role of the state in public education has been aptly discussed by Martin Carnoy and others. Understanding the role of the state is a precondition of understanding schools as a site for the production of knowledge, skills, morals, and behaviors; as a site for reproduction; and as a site for contestation or resistance (Morrow and Torres, 1994). The state is likely to change its focus during the era of globalization of education. It can be argued that in the global economy it may be necessary to grant the necessary freedom to national educational systems so that they can become globally more competitive. The state, despite the resurgence of market ideology and the related reconfiguration of political power, remains important in contemporary education politics and policy debates

Privatisation and education

Recent market-driven education reforms designed to give a freer choice of schools (also linked to privatisation) to parents and pupils, or diversity of supply in schooling are problematic. School choice and school markets have many

imperfections, including the perception that a 'good' education is related to 'access to the best jobs', that will confer social status, position, and privilege. As Hirsch (1995) observes, school choice can bring 'harm to some people created by the action of others', especially when the rules for choosing schools, and introducing greater autonomy at the school level 'fail to produce desired results' (Hirsch: 255-6). The application of market principles to schooling, especially in private schools, and school choice in general, seems to reflect the new trend of concentration of cultural capital and educational privilege among the children of the privileged few. Hence, Pierre Bourdieu's (*cultural capital* and *distinction* concepts are particularly relevant in the increasingly consumerist and market-oriented schooling in the global culture.

The international experience of trends in the higher education sector brings the following new phenomenon: the growth in private universities worldwide - and in some unlikely places. In China, for instance, in 1998 there were 1,236 private HE institutions, only15 years after private education had been legalised. These institutions are showing that government funding is not required and that the private sector is ready and waiting to have its share of the higher education sector. Some of these new private universities are traditional universities, who had to re-invent themselves. But the new phenomenon is the rise of the *for-profit* university. A key feature of these for-profit universities is they seem to be very greedy for international expansion, and have access to the investment to match their desires.

Decentralisation and education

Decentralisation in education can be discussed in terms of the benefits and pitfalls and the political implications and obstacles, especially vis-à-vis different groups within the government bureaucracy, parents, students, teachers, national teacher unions and the State. The specific issues raised by decentralisation in education include the nature of decision making process and structure, political implications and level of financing. In the Latin American decentralisation in education is fundamentally a question of the distribution of power among various groups in the society. Decentralisation involves the necessary transfer of power and decision-making process for policy, planning, administration and resource allocation from central authorities to municipal and school-based management structures. The widely accepted four main arguments for advancing decentralisation policy are:

- increasing the autonomy of schools
- increasing power
- enhancing efficiency
- improving the quality of learning.

There is some doubt, however, whether schools are able to cope adequately with this increased autonomy. In other words, do schools have sufficient decision-making or policy-making capacities? The Western-driven model of excellence, quality and accountability is defining the teleological goal of the privatisation, marketization and decentralisation of education around the world. We hope to

show that this may have some serious implications for educational policy, particularly the issues of equality, equity and educational outcomes in the global economy. The encouragement of greater school autonomy and competition among schools may accentuate disparities between educational outcomes and academic achievement.

While privatisation and decentralisation trends appear to be democratic, a characteristic of open societies—by providing the key players with an opportunity of participation and ownership in educational transformation and social change, they also reflect the managerial and conservative culture of efficiency and profit-driven organisations. Educational institutions, by developing effective business and industry partnerships, mirror the preferred competency standards dictated by profit-driven corporations. However, as Levin (1978) argued, there is a basic incompatibility between the 'reproduction needs' of Western European economies requiring highly unequal educational outcomes, and the egalitarian spirit of school reforms designed to promote greater equality (p.436). This argument has even greater validity for various countries attempting to re-define and re-position their respective educational systems for the global economy, and ignore the growing gap between the rich and the poor in the global culture.

Current education policy trends in some countries indicate that critical policy issues and options, in terms of recently defined 'strategic challenge' and 'deliverable goals' (OECD 2001: 139) have shifted from the human capital and supply-determined (economic planning models based on enrolments, inputs and outputs, and the market forces) to a multi-dimensional model of policy analysis. The latter, in responding to the power of 'private actors', (Plank and Sykes 1999: 390) remains sensitive to the political and cultural environment of the school and society (Zajda 2002: 86).

Despite the egalitarian spirit of the reform, and trends towards privatisation, decentralisation and marketisation in educational institutions, ambivalent legacies, and critical education and policy issues continue, by and large, to remain the same, and are 'still on the policy agenda' (Zajda 2002: 87). They include, among other things, the 'stubborn issue of inequality' (Coombs 1982: 153), first examined in 1957 by Kandel with reference to schooling in the West (Kandel 1957: 2), and which is still with us (Jennings 2000: 113) and the prospect of widening inequalities in education, in part due to market-oriented schooling, and 'substantial tolerance on inequalities and exclusion' (OECD 2001: 126).

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DECENTRALISATION AND PRIVATISATION IN EDUCATION: THE ROLE OF THE STATE

JOSEPH ZAJDA

Abstract – This chapter critically examines the overall interplay between privatisation, decentralisation and the role of the State. It draws upon recent studies in the areas of decentralisation, privatisation and the role of the State in education in the global economy and culture. The chapter explores conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches applicable in the research of the State, privatisation, and decentralisation in education globally. It demonstrates the neo-liberal ideological imperatives of privatisation and decentralisation, and illustrates the way the relationship between the State and education policy affects current models and trends in privatisation and decentralisation of schooling. The dominant discourses and debates pertaining to the newly constructed and re-invented Grand Narratives of privatisation and decentralisation in education are critiqued. The chapter shows the way they may well be operating as an educational model of a new global 'master narrative' – playing a hegemonic role within the framework of economic, political and cultural hybrids of globalisation and localisation.

The Role of the State in education

An ambivalent relationship exists between the State and education. The importance of the role of the State in public education has been aptly discussed by numerous scholars, including Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976), Martin Carnoy (1984, 1989), Michael Apple (1979), Henry Giroux (1989), Carlos Torres (1989, 1998), Mark Ginsburg (1991), Beatrice Avalos (1996), Nelly Stromquist (2002), Henry Levin (1978, 2001), Mark Bray (1999), Holger Daun (2002), Zajda (2005) and others. Understanding the multi-faceted role of the State in education and society is a precondition for critically analysing educational institutions as a site for the production and reproduction of knowledge, ideology, skills, morals, and behaviours, and as an arena for contestation or resistance (see Morrow and Torres 1994).

The role of the State in shaping and controlling education and curriculum is a paradoxical one. On one hand, the concept of the 'nation-state' necessitates the centralisation of certain functions, including the provisions for mass education. Current educational policy reforms designed to achieve competitiveness and diversity by means of standardised curricula, national standards and standardised assessment (see Daun 2002: 115) also suggests an increasing centralisation. On the other, the State-defined policies of educational restructuring in response to demands for equity, participation and diversity, have the effect of encouraging decentralisation of schooling. In examining differential effects of state intervention in education in the Nordic countries Jonasson (2003) views the role of the State in the policy and schooling nexus as a very 'complex' one, which, he argues, can be either 'proactive or reactive':

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> It can be directive in both a positive an a negative way, enhancing or promoting certain types of education . . . But it can also be reactive or facilitatory, in the sense of responding to the existing trends or tendencies and thereby allowing these to take their own course (Jonasson 2003: 162).

Klees (1999) believes that discussion of “liberalism, libertarianism, liberty, and freedom” have, in practice, served to legitimate different types of State intervention and that the ‘key feature’ of neo-liberalism in educational policy is to preserve inequality:

> From a critical standpoint, two decades of privatization policies are mechanisms to retain the advantages of national and global capital by further stratification, with hardly a meritocratic pretence to serve as a cover to legitimate greater inequality. In practice, there is hardly even the cover of efficiency rhetoric. . . . The key feature of neo-liberalism is not its “commitment to a regulatory state” . . . but how it has engineered and legitimated a departure from decades of a regulatory welfare state that had been fought for and developed to curb the worst excesses of capitalism's inherent need for inequality (Klees 1999).

Some have argued that the processes of decentalisation and privatisation in education have also been influenced by external institutional actors, notably the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Furthermore, under the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) – a process that begun in 1994, which was aimed at a multilateral agreement over the “liberalization of trading in services” (Robertson, Bonal and Dale 2002: 473) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) these processes can make educational institutions more vulnerable to foreign penetration, and, as such, education can only be fully and indefinitely exempted from GATS rules if it is organised as a public monopoly. GATS and other external actors, notably the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, not only define the neo-liberal form of economic and cultural globalisation, but also can determine the shape and the direction of education reform in a given country. According to Robertson, Bonal and Dale, there are possible cultural implication of GATS for national education systems. As a result of GATS and its constraints – in the form of cultural imperialism of global commodification of science, knowledge, and technology – nation-states are likely to lose their power and control to exercise a “considerable capacity to direct these outcomes in ways that they might previously have done” (Robertson, Bonal and Dale 2002: 494).

Carnoy (1989), and Torres (1989) suggest that one of the key issues in the changing role of the State is the unresolved contradiction between its need for capitalist accumulation and the legitimacy of the capitalist system itself. Using their correspondence model Bowles and Gintis examined the emergent contradictions between the educational system, the State and the “new conditions of economic life”, especially a fundamental contradiction between the two dominant

capitalist objectives for education – the "augmentation of labour power", and the "reproduction of the conditions for its exploitation" (Bowles and Gintis 1976: 202-3).

Following the cultural reproduction thesis of Bowles and Gintis (1976), Bourdieu (1977), Bernstein (1961 1971) and others, Apple suggests that the State, through the control of education, facilitates social reproduction of legitimate culture, knowledge and skills tied up to economic inequality: it does this by means of socialisation and the "hidden curriculum" (Apple 1979: 40). Bourdieu argued that cultural reproduction of the economic power relationship that defines social stratification is legitimated by the hierarchical education system:

> By making social hierarchies and the reproduction of these hierarchies appear to be based upon the hierarchy of "gifts", merits, or skills established and ratified by its sanctions . . . the education system fulfils a function of legitimation which is more and more necessary for the perpetuation of the "social order" … and ruthless affirmation of the power relations (Bourdieu 1977: 496).

This control of cultural and social reproduction in education is reinforced by hegemony and the control of meaning. As Apple explains:

> And the unequal social world that educators live in is represented by the reification, the commodification, of the language they use. Cultural control, hence, as both Gramsci and Williams noted, acts as an important reproductive force (Apple 1979: 154).

Similarly, Carnoy (1989) argues that the State, through education as part of the state apparatus, contributes to the reproduction of the class structure and helps reproduce capitalist relations by its "ideological legitimation" of the knowledge-power relation, and by equally legitimising "business ideology" by transforming self-serving economic and social views into technocratic "facts" (Carnoy 1989: 8-9). As Morrow and Torres (1999) explain later, in order to address this contradiction, the State is forced to increase its institutional functions, a "process especially evident in the field of education" (Morrow and Torres: 1999: 94). Daun (2002), on the other hand, argues that while State policies have become "more homogeneous", differences in the outcomes have emerged due to decentralisation – as evident in local adaptation and the degree of implementation of educational policy.

In some countries, the State has been a principal agent of nation-building (e.g. the new post-Soviet Russia, China, Japan, Korea, Chile, and Zimbabwe). Research on the role of the State in the politics of globalisation-driven and market-oriented reforms shows that governments which grant potential challengers certain "political privileges" (access to policy-making, and control over spending), stand a greater chance of obtaining "cooperation of those actors" (Corrales 1999: 19). It has been argued that the State is committed to consolidating its power base and the status quo by 'deepening the effects of mass education' and socialisation for its

own legitimacy (Fuller 1991). Yet, the shift from the welfare model of education to the neo-liberal model of schooling, described by Morrow and Torres (2000) as a "hegemonic policy discourse" promoted "state withdrawal, privatization, and localization". Neo-liberalism in education policy has also often been associated with structural adjustment policies (SAP). Geo-JaJa and Mangum (2002a: 97; 2003: 315) conclude that SAP has failed to "restore economic prosperity", or "raise education quality" in Africa.

The State and control in education

Turner (1996) argues that the State, as in the case of England, had become much more "interventionist" to the extent of detailed control over the curriculum, over the qualification of teachers, and that the Secretary of State decides "what is good literature to read and music to appreciate, as well as when history stops" (Turner 1996: 14). The control is exercised though both "quangos" – non-accountable bodies of political appointees and through a standard model of "language of measurements" (Turner 1996: 15). This new quality control in education (like ''thought'' control) is maintained by the standardised language of assessment which defines key competencies, or what can be described as a language of vocational control and preparation. Turner details the State's control of education in terms of the performance indicators, the standardised assessment, and the league tables:

> The State, regulating the market, insists upon a standardised curriculum and standardised assessment so that rational choices can be exercised. Thus, there is central control, a standard model, and limited choice within a regulated market. . . . No longer can every child count, as those, who handicap the school within the market, come to be excluded (Turner 1996: 15).

To this, we can also add the State's desire to achieve a greater efficiency in cost saving, global competitiveness, technological supremacy, social change and accountability. The State's manifest control over the curriculum can be partly linked with its teleological goals of economic growth, nation-development and nation-building. Jansen argues that the relationship between the State, education and curriculum is a site of contestation because it embodies "the values, norms, objectives, interests, priorities, and directions of the State and other powerful sectors of society" (Jansen 1991: 76).

On the basis of education and policy paradigm shifts during the 1980s to decentralised curricula in some countries, Beatrice Avalos-Bevan (1996: 59) suggests that the tightening of the control of the State over the curriculum was prompted by the need to "return to basics", and "improve standards". These slogans represented the policy rhetoric of neo-liberalism, or the "new global hegemonic discourse and practice of the right" (Klees 1999). There are many reasons for this – at the macro-political and macro-economic levels such a policy shift can be linked to global "economic competitiveness" and "self-sustained domestic development" (Corrales 1999: 3). Corrales explains that one of the

reasons why the State shows interest in education reform is due to "growing consensus on the link between education reform and the economic interests of nations" – where improving the quality of education is seen as the fundamental ingredient of global economic competitiveness. As it has been in the past, it is one of the most popular strategies to address perceived serious macro-economic problems in society such as inflation and unemployment.

The State is likely to change and adapt its economic, technological and political focus in the global culture. Daun argues that the Keynesian approach applied to the political economy from the 1930s has been eroded by forces of globalisation (Daun 2002: 34) and that human capital theory is now increasingly combined with studies of the formation of social capital (2002: 37). It can be argued that in the global economy it may be important to grant to national educational systems the necessary freedom so that they can become globally more competitive. The State, despite the resurgence of market ideology and the related reconfiguration of political power, remains a key player in contemporary education politics and policy debates. However, it is important to consider the way the Western-driven model of excellence, quality and accountability is defining the teleological educational goals of the privatisation and decentralisation around the world. In particular its impact on developing nations in general and individuals from lower SES strata in particular, are significant. This may have some serious implications for educational policy, particularly the issues of equality, equity and educational outcomes in the global economy. The encouragement of greater school autonomy and competition among schools may have the effect of accentuating disparities between educational outcomes and academic achievement.

Privatisation in education

Defining privatisation in education

Calls for market-based solutions to the reform of education around the world facilitated both privatisation and decentralisation. Privatisation, is relatively new and multi-layered construct, since the word *privatise* first appeared in a dictionary in 1983 (Savas, 1987: 3). The concept of privatisation itself is contested and the issues bearing on it are complex, with the term ''privatisation" having potential links to different sorts of educational governance and policy issues. Butler (1991) defines privatisation as "shifting of a function, either in whole or in part, from the public sector to the private sector" (Butler, 1991: 17). Consequently, ''private education" can be defined as any type of educational provision not funded or controlled by state authorities, including for-profit and not-for-profit entities.

Privatisation represents a "broader process of devolution of responsibility for social provisions" and refers to a "shift from publicly to privately produced goods and services" Its goal is to "downsize" or "rightsize" government (Murphy 1996: 19), to raise additional revenue and to increase profits. With its enticing *leitmotif* of enhancing the efficiency it seeks to promote investment, productivity, savings, and growth for the State and the economy. Cookson (1999) argues that proponents of educational privatisation promote a "theory of laissez-faire capitalism" based on

competition, choice and individual accountability (http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/articles/ac161.htm).

If macro-societal goals of privatisation are concerned with both qualitatively and quantitatively affecting the economic and social spheres of society, then micro-societal goals focus is on improving the efficiency at the local level by offering greater flexibility, better quality, more effective accountability, greater consumer choice and enhanced citizen participation. The market-based approach to education, using such significant factors as community, equity, efficiency and marketisation (see Plank and Sykes 2003: x-xii), has challenged the ideology of standardised and state-centred public provision of schooling. Benveniste, Carnoy, and Rothstein explain that the appeal of privatisation and private for-profit companies as the market solution to social problems in the USA during the 1990s, was based on the premise that they could do a better job for ‘‘such low costs” (Benveniste, Carnoy and Rothstein 2003: 191).

Difficult to precisely define, privatisation in education was one of the outcomes of neo-liberal and economic rationalist calls for market-based solutions to the reform of education. Depending on the perspective chosen, privatisation can be constructed as an example of globalisation or "policy borrowing". Both are useful in explaining the market forces "behind specific examples of privatisation" and more importantly, to evaluate the effects of privatisation there is a need to understand the specific milieu under which it occurs:

> Privatisation cannot be labelled "good" or "bad" . . . What is important is the ways in which the state and others have acted to structure the privatisation process and the ways in which schools can subsequently operate (Walford 2001: 179).

Levin notes that privatisation of education takes many forms, and that the most common interpretation is "the establishment of schools operated by non-government authorities, whether for-profit or not-for-profit" (Levin 2001: 5). He also reminds us that privatisation in the United States has a long history and can be traced to Adam Smith's (1776) classic *The Wealth of Nations*, where Smith divided the public purposes of education (Levin 2001: 5).

Political and economic dimensions of privatisation in education

Privatisation and the 'Failing health of schooling' metaphor

Murphy sees the metaphor of "the failing health of education" as one of the most critical macro-societal issues. Policymakers used the metaphor as the basis for their calls for improvement. He argues that a particularly "hospitable climate" for privatisation of schooling was facilitated by the three factors dominating the "environment in which schools are embedded":

- the perceived crisis in the economy
- the changing social fabric of the nation

- the evolution to post-industrial perspectives on politics and organisations (Murphy 1996: 137-8).

This use of the "failing health of education" metaphor is reminiscent of Cohen's (1972) notion of "moral panic" where a person, group, or in this case, condition "emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests" (Cohen 1972: 9). "Socially accredited experts", in this case the education policymakers, both diagnose and offer suitable solutions. Murphy (1996) argues that privatisation gained the momentum when the outcomes of education reform efforts intended to "address the crisis in student performance" by "enhancing the capacity and productivity of the public sector" proved to be disappointing (Murphy 1996: 168).

Forces fueling privatisation in education

The most serious challenge by the proponents of privatisation is based on the perception that the organisational constraints and "rigidities of bureaucracy" make schools "almost impenetrable by citizens" (Candoli 1991, quoted in Murphy 1996) and, which also impede the ability of parents and citizens to govern and reform schools effectively. The attack on the State's monopoly of public schooling continues to be based on accountability, efficiency and quality (see also Samoff 1990b). Some reform advocates have claimed that the existing organisational structures of schools are insufficiently flexible to meet the needs of students in a post-industrial society (Sizer 1984; Brown 1992, quoted in Murphy 1996). Others have argued that public schools were inefficient, and in their present form they were "obsolete and unsustainable" (see Murphy 1996: 165). Forces fueling privatisation in education were based on both the rational and emotional rhetoric of a "transformed governance for consumers" in terms of *choice* (in selecting a school), *voice* (in school governance), *partnership* (in enhanced parental role in the education of their children, and *membership* (in the school community). These factors provided legitimacy to the "grassroots political and competitive economic arguments" that supported the calls for more "locally controlled organisations" and "market-anchored conceptions of schooling" (Murphy 1996: 165). In reality, in some countries, as in the case of Canada, "privatisation" in education resulted in increasing private (including corporate) contributions and increased "informal family and community fundraising efforts" in an attempt to offset decreases in education funding Haojing Cheng and Brian DeLany (1999) provide evidence that private schooling in China has resulted in a new dimension of social stratification, where values of "quality, efficiency and equity" are likely to be traded-off for power, wealth and status in the increasingly stratified Chinese society:

> In the increasingly stratified Chinese society most parents want to provide their children with leverage over other children so family resources are transferred to elite private schools. As a result, private schools have to cater to the needs of wealthy parents who expect their children to outperform their peers . . . because it is parent-initiated, private schools are considered bottom-up

> rather than top-down reform, as is often the case in the public sector . . . The shifted values in educational reform in both public and private sectors suggest that equity of education is irrelevant (Cheng and Delany 1999, http://www.tc.columbia.edu/cice/articles/ac161.htm, accessed January 2, 2004).

The above indicates that some of the more aggressive neo-liberal education policy initiatives to reinvent education and to overcome the "dependency culture" (Martin 1993: 48) are based on marketisation and privatisation – the belief that market-based approaches to conducting the business of education and the implementation of privatisation will "greatly facilitate" educational transformation (Murphy 1996: 161). The argument for privatisation is based on the rigidities of state/public bureaucracies, inefficiency, and the need for a greater access to power and control by all stakeholders.

Privatisation and implications for equality of education

The application of market principles to schooling, especially in private schools, and school choice in general, seems to reflect the new trend of concentration of cultural capital and educational privilege among the children of the privileged few. Hence, Pierre Bourdieu's cultural *capital* and *distinction* concepts are particularly relevant in the increasingly consumerist, meritocratic and market-oriented schooling in the global culture. Recent studies comparing achievement differences in private and public schools (Levin 2001; Turner 1996; Plank and Syke 2003; Benveniste, Carnoy and Rothstein 2003; Zajda 2003) show that the differences are at best small:

> . . . there is enormous variation among both private and public schools. Many private schools do worse than public schools . . . Being public does not necessarily mean lower quantity . . . Thus, despite the claims that private education is better than public, the achievement comparisons among secondary school students . . . do not provide convincing evidence that private schools do anything different to induce more learning than do public schools (Benveniste, Carnoy, and Rothstein 2003: 46-7).

Some scholars (eg. Daun 2003; Zajda 2003) have argued that the market forces of decentralisation and privatisation introduced during the 1990s in some countries – due to the neo-liberal and political participation discourses– have threatened to undermine the equality of educational opportunity. Similar arguments to Daun's findings in the case of Sweden are applicable to decentralisation and privatisation of schooling in Russia and the Eastern Europe between 1992 and 2003. Geo-JaJa and Mangum (2002), from an African perspective, demonstrate that privatisation and cost-sharing promoted by the Economic and Social Action Program (ESAP) placed a disproportionate economic burden for children's education on poor parents, "who often have many children" (Geo-JaJa and Mangum 2002: 20).

Decentralisation and education

Decentralisation in education can be defined as the process of delegating power and responsibility concerning the distribution and the use of resources (e.g., finance, human resources, and curriculum) by the central government to local schools. The discourses of decentralisation potentially challenge the ubiquitous and central role of the state in education. One of the key issues in decentralisation is the necessity to understand who controls and who ought to control education, in terms of administration, financing and curriculum planning. Another issue in decentralisation in education has to do with "which of the many functions in the system to decentralise" (King 1998: 4). It has been demonstrated by Bray (1999), Hanson (1995), King (1998), and Zajda (2003) that there is no total political and administrative decentralisation, since all policy decisions concerning finance, personnel and staffing retain varying degrees of centralisation and decentralisation. Hence, the real policy issue is one of finding the necessary balance between centralisation and decentralisation.

Over the last few decades, there has been a "preoccupation with decentralisation" in the discourses of education policy reform over such matters as the quality and standards of education, particularly among the developing nations of Latin America, South Asia, and Eastern Europe. Neo-liberal policies, which advocated decentralised and privatised school systems, claimed the following virtues: (1) being democratic, efficient, and accountable; (2) being more responsive to the community and to local needs; (3) being able to empowering teachers, parents, and others in the education community while improving the effectiveness of school reform; and (4) being able to improve school quality and increase funds available for teachers' salaries through competition (Astiz, Wiseman and Baker 2002: 70).

Politico-economic and administrative aspects of decentralisation

Concern with decentralisation in its various dimensions, namely the political, economic, and administrative aspects of social policy, can be traced to the 1960s. By the 1970s it had become a tool in countries like the UK, the USA, France and elsewhere for the decentralisation of welfare bodies to local units (Hanson 1995). In Tanzania, decentralisation was closely linked with Nyerere's educational ideology of self-reliance. Decentralisation in education, perceived as a new education policy panacea, began to be widely implemented during the 1980s. Various models of decentralisation in education focused on decentralisation of power and knowledge, political/administrative decentralisation, and the transfer of "decision-making process" concerning the distribution of finances and resources to local bodies (Winkler 1991). In the 1980s and 1990s economic globalisation, as a new policy direction of the neo-conservative thought and of neo-liberalism reached the status of a new worldwide hegemonic stance. What Morrow and Torres refer to as the "hegemonic policy discourse" (Morrow and Torres 2000: 52) resulted was a major paradigm shift in policy – the erosion of a national welfare state model in

favour of a neo-liberal model characterised by state withdrawal, privatisation, and localisation. The specific issues raised by decentralisation in education include

- the nature of decision-making process and structure
- political implications
- level of financing

In Latin America decentralisation in education is fundamentally a question of the distribution of power among various groups in the society. Decentralisation involves the necessary transfer of power and decision-making process for policy, planning, administration and resource allocation from central authorities to municipal and school-based management structures. The five most commonly accepted arguments for advancing decentralisation policy are:

- increasing the autonomy of schools – more flexibility and more accountability
- increasing power
- enhancing efficiency
- improving the quality of learning
- states attempting to increase their legitimacy, in order to neutralise or "atomise" conflict in society

The centralisation versus decentralisation debate also refers to power and control of school curricula – the issue of defining selecting and implementing curricular content and the use of relevant school-based assessment instruments. Astiz, Wiseman, and Baker, (2002) argue that control over the content of school curricula and methods of "curricular implementation within classrooms" is one of the key features of decentralising reforms globally.

The degree of power and control over the content of school curricula and its classroom implementation also identify relevant strategies of decentralisation in education. Some recent studies have focused on the link between globalisation, education policy and curriculum implementation. One of the key issues is to determine to what degree globalisation has influenced the spread of reforms for decentralising school governance and the consequences for implementation of curricula in classrooms across nations. Astiz, Wiseman, and Baker (2002) have argued that curricular governance and implementation are indicators of a "mixing" of centralized and decentralized models of curricular administration in national education systems. Similar evidence is provided by Zajda (2003) and others with reference to intra-regional fiscal decentralisation in education within the Russian Federation.

Models of decentralisation in education

Hicks (1961) and Rondinelli (1984) distinguished between different modes of decentralisation along the following three dimension: *deconcentration* – spatial relocation of decision making – i.e. the transfer of some administrative responsibility

or authority to lower levels *within* central government ministries or agencies; *delegation* – assignment of specific decision making authority – i.e. the transfer of managerial responsibility for specifically defined functions to local governments, and *devolution* – transfer of responsibility for governing, understood more broadly – i.e. the creation or strengthening, financially or legally, of sub-national units of governments, whose activities are substantially *outside* the direct control of central government.

Weiler (1993), on the other hand, divides decentralisation into three models: 'redistributive', 'effectiveness' and 'learning cultures' models. His 'redistributive model' deals with top-down distribution of power, the 'effectiveness model' focuses on financial aspects and cost effectiveness of decentralisation, and 'learning culture' model addresses cultural diversity, and curricula adaptability to local needs. It could be argued that decentralisation in some countries seems to have been responsible for an inverse relationship between devolution of power and regional inequalities – when centralization decreased, regional inequalities increased. Samoff (1990b: 11) argued that when local autonomy in education was enhanced, efforts to reduce regional inequalities were undermined. He illustrated this with the case of the 'bush schools' in Kilimanjaro, in Tanzania. These private secondary schools proliferated in the mid-1970s as government schools were increasingly unable to meet the demand for secondary schooling. Whilst these schools expanded educational opportunities in Tanzania, the initiatives 'generally served to thwart national redistributive and equalisation policies' (p.11). Samoff noted that the representatives of relatively disadvantaged regions preferred greater centralisation, whilst Kilimanjaro leaders seeking to limit redistribution advocated local autonomy.

Similar contradictions between the rhetoric and reality of decentralisation in education were demonstrated by experiences of some states in the USA. Evidence suggested, according to Klugman (1994), 'that substantial disparities can arise in a decentralised system'. She cited the example of the New York State Constitution that requires the state legislature to 'provide for the maintenance and support of a system of free common schools, wherein all the children of this state may be educated'. Here, local taxes constituted about 45% of the total school finances. In Long Island, expenditure per pupil in 1991 was $5178 in the poorer districts, compared to $10 529 in the wealthy districts of Great Neck, a wealthier district (*NYT*, 16/5/91), received only $360 per pupil, compared to Roosevelt's $2576. Even if the wealthier districts received no funding at all, they could raise more funds compared with the poorer schools. Decentralisation appeared to have resulted 'in large inequities in school funding'(http://hdr.undp.org/docs/publications/ocational_papers/oc13e.htm).

Arenas (2004: 21) argues that decentralisation in education, and the dual role of the State in the decentralisation/centralisation process, which is ideological in essence, produced visible and pronounced inequality in education:

> Governments worldwide have embarked on educational decentralisation for reasons of political convenience and ideology. In terms of ideology, decentralisation receives support from a variety of philosophies that are often at odds

> with each other in terms of mechanisms and purposes. In this ideological battle, neoliberalism clearly dominates high-level macroeconomic decisions, manifested by the gradual strengthening of market strategies that privatise both the provision and finance of the service. One of the effects of this policy is to affect negatively poor families through user fees (despite the availability of scholarships). At the same time, there has been a parallel centralisation process of curricular and assessment standards that prevents schools from experimenting with alternative subject matter, pedagogies, and assessments that might make schools vastly improved places for learning and might bring together the school and the local community (an important exception has been the worldwide introduction of heritage languages in school curricula). In other words, these dual and opposing processes are increasing the gap between the rich and poor and worsening the school experiences of children worldwide.

Rationales for decentralisation in education

Rationales for decentralisation in education have been essentially ideological, political, economic and administrative (Lauglo and McLean 1985: 9). Tilak (1989) argued that decentralisation in education was essentially ideologically motivated:

> … essentially all basic policy decisions in education are political in character. Resource allocation is not exempt … In short, the model that best explains allocation of resources by the centre to the states for education may be a political model (Tilak 1989: 476).

Daun (2003: 92) maintains that the State, under the pressure of "the market forces" and "neo-liberal discourse", encouraged "decentralisation in education", as in the case of Sweden. In the UK, the combination of "free market rhetoric" and "consumer protection regulation" led the government to introduce educational reforms which decentralised decisions relating to financial issues while at the same time centralising decisions relating to the curriculum (Turner 2003: 3). The main reasons cited for decentralisation include the deepening of the democratic process at the local level, and an improvement in the quality, access, and efficiency in the delivery of schooling. Ironically, similar reasons have been used in defence of centralisation (see Hanson 1995; Carnoy 1999; Zajda 2003).

Decentralisation, or the "distribution of educational power" and a "transfer of control of education from national to local bodies" (McLean and Lauglo 1985: 1-3) can be discussed in terms of the benefits and pitfalls and the political implications and obstacles, especially vis-à-vis different groups within the government bureaucracy, parents, students, teachers, national teacher unions and the State. In his critical article "Decentralisation: Panacea or Red Herring?" Hurst (1985) argues that that there is little reason to believe that the benefits associated with decentralisation are "likely to accrue", and that the "inherent weaknesses" in public bureaucracies, be they centralised or decentralised, are prevalent and the crucial problem is the absence of motivational factors, or the "lack of incentives provided for its employees to work efficiently for the public good" (Hurst 1985: 79, 85).

Reduced costs have also been put forward as an important rationale for decentralisation of education (Winkler 1991). Yet the support for greater decentralisation on the grounds of cost saving appears to be more theoretical than empirical. Some researchers have concluded that in the field of education there is only slight evidence that these policies work, and on the contrary, that there are many experiences which demonstrate that decentralising policies do not increase administrative efficiency (Bray 1999; Carnoy 1999; Daun 2002; Zajda 2003). The fact that there are "political, administrative and technical obstacles" to efficient policy implementation at the centre is not a convincing argument for decentralisation, since as Lyons (1985) explains the "factors which militate against efficiency may be found to exist even more at the sub-national level" (Lyons 1985: 85).

Global marketisation of education and global social stratification

Privatisation and decentralisation: equity and equality issues

The Western-driven model of excellence, quality and success is defining the teleological goal of the "marketisation" of education around the world. This has serious implications for educational policy. The encouragement of greater school autonomy and competition among schools may, as Tan argues, exacerbate not only the "disparities between schools in terms of educational outcomes but also social inequalities" (Tan 1998: 47). This is particularly relevant to the Russian Federation and other transitional economies experiencing the effects of globalisation and decentralisation in education (Zajda 2003: 76). In short, increasing competition among schools and the structural constraints determining parental choice is a reinforcement of social stratification:

> The intense inter-school competition and the introduction of annual school league tables has led schools to become increasingly academically selective in a bid to maintain or improve their ranking positions. There is a growing stratification of schools . . . there is a danger the marketization of education will intensify social stratification as well . . . Although the government is aware of the potential political fallout from the public controversy over social inequalities, it shows no sign of reversing the trend towards the marketization of education. If anything it is likely to further encourage competition among schools (Tan 1998: 50-60).

While privatisation and decentralisation trends in education appear to be democratic and a feature of open societies by providing the key players with an opportunity of participation and ownership in educational transformation and social change, they also reflect the managerial and conservative culture of efficiency and profit-driven organisations – characteristics of neo-liberal ideology in the economics of education. By developing effective business and industry partnerships educational institutions may come to mirror the preferred competency standards in knowledge as dictated by greedy and profit-driven corporations. In

such circumstances educational institutions fall victim to the neo-liberal rhetoric of the reproductive needs of global economies.

However, as Levin (1978) argued, there is a basic incompatibility between the "reproduction needs" of Western European economies which require highly unequal educational outcomes, and the egalitarian spirit of school reforms designed to promote greater equality (Levin 1978: 436). This argument has even greater validity in the 21st century for those countries attempting to re-define and re-position their respective educational systems for the global economy, while ignoring the growing gap between the rich and the poor in the global culture.

In evaluating the relationship between the State, globalisation and curriculum in South Africa, Jansen et al. (1999) find the education reform rhetoric rather hollow:

> The South African state, on the other hand, promulgates a high-profile discourse about the redistributional qualities of educational policy focused on a romantic view of the future. Yet, whether it is school choice under a restorational banner, or outcomes based education under a redistributional flag, the mechanisms of markets, regulation, and policy borrowing together produce the same policy effects in different parts of the world system. The sub-title to Murray Edelman's 1977 work, Political Language, comes to mind: Words that Succeed and Policies that Fail (Jansen et al. 1999).

Jansen provides an example of how the introduction of "outcomes based education" into Grade 1 classrooms in South Africa "enabled white schools to meet the resource demands" of the new curriculum package, while "black schools fell further behind" given their low capacity for managing such complex innovations (Jansen et al. 1999). Klees points out that the "inequality in family incomes" has risen dramatically since 1970s and that income inequality continues to grow:

> In fact, the gap between the rich and the poor in the United States is the widest of any OECD country. So who benefits? The answer is obvious, the companies that start school franchises. Today, scores of educational management organizations are publicly traded. Education, Wall Street assures us, is big business…(Klees 1999)

Klees questions the idea the market-based education policies can solve our social problems, which he calls "ludicrous", that and advocates a necessary collective responsibility globally:

> … to survive on this planet with billions of people in the twenty-first century requires a level of global sensitivity and coordination rarely even discussed …. To survive well and equitably requires assuming collective responsibility for our future, not leaving it to some quasi-religious pursuit of "free markets". Given the new global hegemonic discourse and practice of the right, we

> sometimes forget the many examples of and potential for transformation that are around us. As Michael Apple's work has reminded us for decades, we must contest that hegemony and nurture these alternatives (Klees 1999).

In a similar fashion, Cookson rejects the theory of "choice and markets" in education, as completely at odds (it favours the few, who are privileged and excludes many) with the existing social stratification and inequality in the USA:

> Like the flat earth theory, simple primitive market theory assumes a world that can appear in theory to be correct, but may crumble when confronted by fact. The flat earth theory was disproved by sailing over the horizon; the power of markets to create a just distribution of real and symbolic resources is also testable. So let's sail over the horizon! (Cookson 1999).

The hegemonic role of "cultural essentialism" in legitimating global economic arrangements (eg structural adjustment policies, or SAP) is also questioned. Geo-JaJa and Mangum argue that the quality-driven rhetoric of education reform, in order to be authentic, needs a dramatic and radical equality/equity-based policy shift. Such a policy reversal involving participation from "all citizens and stakeholders" is clearly difficult to achieve:

> . . . a significant challenge to education reform is the need for a fundamental change in the philosophy of the World Bank and IMF as external stakeholders in that they will have to give up some degree of ownership and control…Tinkering with education structures, curriculum content … without addressing the existence of SAPs "inducement" functions … will not resolve the problems of education inadequacies in Africa (Geo-JaJa and Mangum 2003: 311).

These newly re-invented and constructed imperatives in educational policy, with reference to decentralisation and privatisation, may well have come to operate as a global "master narrative" – playing a hegemonic policy discourse role within the framework of economic, political and cultural hybrids of globalisation (see Green 1997; Samoff 1990a).

Evaluation

It has been argued that the concepts of decentralisation, improved school management, privatisation, and outcomes-based curriculum reforms have "largely come from Northern, often World Bank, ideologies" (Watson 2000: 140). Despite the rhetoric of cooperation and partnership in education reforms – especially in the discourse of privatisation and decentralisation of schooling, in reality economic and political pressures and policies are keeping many developing countries in the state of symbiotic dependency. In short, privatisation and decentralisation policy

initiatives in education should be viewed in the context of an economic recession, budget cuts, and shrinking funds for the public sector.

Important equity questions are raised by dentralisation/decentralisation, diversity/uniformity and curriculum standardisation issues (Zajda 2003: 73-76). Assuming that we accept that there is a need for greater diversity of schooling, what is the extent of widening social inequality? Will the spirit of egalitarian ethos (with much more equal and equitable outcomes) prevail, or will it drown in the ocean of global inequality? The questions that arise from recently defined "strategic challenge" and "deliverable goals" (OECD 2001: 139) framework centre more on the issue of equality, or egalitarianism, rather than meritocracy in education. Specifically, one can refer to the different cultural, economic and political environments, which affect the nature and quality of schooling.

Diversity and uniformity need to be considered with reference to equality of opportunity. New evidence suggests that these have been ignored in the market-driven neo-liberal and neo-conservative policy drive for privatisation and decentralisation in education. For instance, having examined the impact of SAP on Africa, Geo-JaJa and Mangum conclude that such policies make it difficult for sub-Saharan Africa to provide quality education for all. Together with globalisation and marketisation of education they have created a "fourth world" (Geo-JaJa 2002b: 24).

In terms of the "strategic challenge" and "deliverable goals" framework current trends in some countries indicate that critical policy issues and options have shifted from the human capital and supply-determined (economic planning models based on enrolments, inputs and outputs, and the market forces) to a multi-dimensional model of policy analysis. The latter, in responding to the power of "private actors" (Plank and Sykes 1999: 390), remains sensitive to the political and cultural environment of the school and society (Zajda 2002: 86).

The chapters that follow in this volume critically evaluate some of these issues and their future implications for both policy makers and educators. They suggest policy solutions in resolving some of the paradoxes and dilemmas of the problematic and ambivalent relationship between the State, democracy and the market forces of globalisation. The authors focus on particular nations, examining both the effects of decentralisation and privatisation in education and the politics surrounding the reform efforts in Europe, North America, Latin America and Asia. One of the reasons for selecting these regions, especially Asia and Latin America, was to test the assumptions that decentralisation and school autonomy are likely to produce educational improvement, and that competition between private and public schools results in improved public school performance. The other reason was to learn from the experiences of certain countries that have gone through decentralisation processes during the last three decades, and are now "expanding central and state government help" to municipalities, and "re-centralising educational improvements efforts" as in the case of Chile (Carnoy 1999: 55). Carnoy argues that while the Latin-American experience suggests that decentralisation may "evoke educational improvement at the local level", provided that educational spending and central government expertises are increased, the widely held assumption that "more autonomy will spontaneously produce

improvement" is not supported in practice (Carnoy 1999: 56). Carnoy also shows that the data from Chile suggests that the oft-mentioned claim that competition between private and public schools results in improved academic performance has not been validated. The Latin-American experience suggests that educational policies defining decentralisation and privatisation have produced both positive and negative outcomes. Similarly, privatisation and decentralisation in education in other regions seemed to have reinforced social stratification and inequality.

In Part I, the authors offer a global perspective on privatization and decentralization. Adam Davidson-Harden and Suzanne Majhanovich (University of Western Ontario) in "Privatisation in Education in Canada: A Survey of Trends" consider the globalising processes of commodification and marketisation, to argue that the neo-liberal policy discourses in education, which define and shape privatisation, also affect public education systems and equity issues. They find that neo-liberal education restructuring is likely to contribute to further widening of educational inequality, and, like Klees (1999), Apple (2000), Torres (1998), Stromquist (2002) and other progressivist educators invite us to resist neo-liberalism in the market-driven privatisation and decentralisation in education.

Macleans A. Geo-JaJa (Brigham Young University) in "Decentralisation and Privatisation of Education in Africa: Which one for Nigeria?" critiques the process of decentralisation and privatisation in Nigeria. The author, by reviewing the impact of decentralisation and privatisation on education, shows that they have not led to desired outcomes, such as reductions in drop-out and completion rates and an acceptable gender equity ratio. By drawing on experiences of other nations, the author suggests that both decentralisation and privatisation in education have created a new dimension of educational inequality in Nigeria, for the process has excluded school age children from lower SES groups, whose parents are unable to afford market prices for basic education.

Holger Daun (University of Stockholm) in "Privatisation, Decentralisation and Governance in Education in the Czech Republic, England, France, Germany", focuses on privatisation and centralisation/decentralisation discourses, to provide a comparative analysis of restructuring in education in the Czech Republic, England, France, Germany and Sweden. He finds that some education and policy convergence has taken place, with decentralisation being the most radical in Sweden and the Czech Republic. More importantly he finds no evidence of direct relationship between academic achievement and changing school governance.

David Turner (University of Glamorgan) in "Privatisation, Decentralisation, and Education in the United Kingdom: The Role of the State" provides a very useful overview of centralisation/decentralisation policy initiatives in the UK. Driven by the rhetoric of the "Free Market" model, the government also introduced certain elements of market regulation in the shape of quasi-governmental organisations (quangos) to act as market regulators. One of the paradoxes of the State and its decentralisation policies is that it dictates the context of education reform. Even local decisions on policy, administration and curriculum matters are made in a context which is "set centrally". It is the case of the State engineering a centrally defined and controlled decentralisation process in education. Turner points out the difficulties and paradoxes which exist in analysing educational

systems in terms of simple and linear dichotomies which depict the State and private organizations, and the ambivalent centralisation/decentralisation nexus

In Part II, the authors focus on privatisation and decentralisation in Asia and South Africa. M. V. Mukundan and Mark Bray (University of Hong Kong) in “The Decentralisation of Education in Kerala State, India: Rhetoric and Reality”, in attempting to explain patterns of tradition, continuity and change, look at the history of decentralisation of governance in schools in Kerala State, India. Having examined decentralisation discourses, the authors turn their attention to the outcomes of the 1996 reform of the People’s Campaign for Centralised Planning (PCDP). They focus on educational decentralisation experiences of Kannur District within Kerala State, which are typical of the state as a whole. By pointing out some of the tensions in the implementation of the decentralisation, the authors help to explain the “rhetoric-reality” gap. They find that parents, due to the tyranny of tradition, are reluctant to embrace educational innovations. This combined with other factors made decentralisation difficult to achieve.

Christopher Bjork (Vassar College) in “Decentralisation in Education, Institutional Culture and Teacher Autononomy in Indonesia” provides a very timely evaluation of centralisation/decentralisation policy initiatives and problems associated with decentralisation. As one of the most centralised nations in Asia, Indonesia was pushed towards educational decentralisation in order to steer the state away from the authoritarian rule that characterised the New Order era. Bjork finds that the implementation of decentralisation policies in schools was prevented by political, cultural, and administrative obstacles. He argues that teachers in particular experience status-incongruence. On one hand they are loyal to the State and traditional authority, but on the other they are forced to re-invent themselves as “autonomous” educators.

David Gamage (University of Newcastle) and Pacharapimon Sooksomchitra (the Rajabhat Suan Dusit University, Bangkok) in “Decentralisation and School-Based Management in Thailand” report a success story in the introduction and institutionalisation of decentralisation and school-based management (SBM) with community participation in Thailand. Their paper is based on an empirical survey of 1000 school board members from Bangkok, provincial and rural areas, followed by 45 interviews with all relevant stakeholders. The findings of this study show overwhelming support for the reform process and the vast majority of the participants stated that this was the type of reforms that the Thai system needed. Most of the principals were ready to be team players while providing leadership to the school communities but felt that they were facing many new challenges in leading and managing self-governing schools.

In the last three chapters that follow, the authors focus on critical issues surrounding the privatisation and centralisation/decentralisation debate in Latin America. Ernesto Schiefelbein (Chile) in “The Politics of Decentralisation in Latin America” offers a comparative and critical analysis of decentralisation outcomes in Latin America. He argues that, based on the findings so far, there is no compelling evidence that decentralisation has contributed towards the improvement of efficiency and quality in education. He writes that “autonomous school programs” have not generated worthwhile and significant improvements in students’ academic

achievement. However, he believes that decentralisation could be successful if combined with effective strategies, such as improved initial teacher training, systematic induction of new teachers, and well-tested curriculum material.

Alberto Arenas (University of Arizona), on the other hand, in his comparative study "Privatisation and Vouchers in Colombia and Chile" focuses on vouchers in Colombia and Chile as one instance of decentralisation and privatisation. He discusses the voucher model of school financing in Colombia and Chile. With reference to educational quality, financing and accountability, he evaluates the success and weaknesses of vouchers, and finds no evidence that vouchers result in better quality education or greater equity.

Carlos Ornelas (the Metropolitan University, Mexico City) in "The Politics of Privatisation, Decentralisation and Education Reform in Mexico" shows that the new rhetoric and the vision of education to 2025 remains loyal to the past. In view of the country's long and entrenched tradition of corporatism, some global trends have not affected Mexico. Privatisation has not been an explicit goal of the state and decentralisation of schooling has not been very effective.

Conclusion

In this introductory chapter we have noted a very complex interplay between privatisation, decentralisation and the role of the State in education and policy. We have also reviewed dominant discourses and debates pertaining to the newly constructed and re-invented Grand Narratives of privatisation and decentralisation in policy and education. The chapter demonstrate the problematic nature of current education reforms and the role of the state in educational governance. Policy paradigm shifts vacillate between the linear-in nature neo-liberal models, parading as a 'hegemonic policy discourse' of conservative thinking and a multi-dimensional and multilevel frameworks of policy analysis, which identify the impact of supra-national, national and sub-national forces on education and society The pragmatic value of such paradigm shifts, from conservative/neolibereal to critical theory models is that they address what Arnove & Torres (1999) call the dialectic of the global and the local and the discourse of the unequal distribution of socially valued commodities.

Having analysed aspects of privatisation and decentralisation in the Mexican education system Ornelas concludes, rather pessimistically, that the supranational policy ideals to restructure the responsibilities of the State have demonstrated that public participation in the education reform has been the matter of rhetoric rather than a public policy. Similarly, Bray and Mukundan suggest that the rhetoric of decentralisation in education, in this case, in Kerala State, India, has not matched the reality. Their strongest policy message is that even in India – a society of high levels of educating and strong tradition of participation, decentralisation is difficult to achieve. Among the obstacles they note "technical competence" at the local level and the attitudes of actors who were "unconvinced that decentralisation was desirable in the first place. Bjork reaches similar conclusions in his evaluation of decentralisation in Indonesia. He notes the inherent tensions between decentralisation in schooling and the norms and values defining Indonesian civil

service culture which continue to inhibit the successful implantation of genuine decentralisation in education.

Despite the seemingly egalitarian spirit of the reform, and in view of the market forces dictating privatisation, decentralisation and marketisation in educational institutions, ambivalent legacies of the past, and unresolved critical education and policy issues continue, by and large, to remain the same, and are “still on the policy agenda” (Zajda 2002: 87). They include, among other things, the “stubborn issue of inequality” (Coombs 1982: 153), first examined in a comparative context in 1957 by (Kandel 1957: 2) with reference to schooling in the West. Similarly Carnoy (1999) argues that while decentralisation and school autonomy may result in some educational improvement, decentralisation reforms tended to *increase inequality* in educational performance between “the poorer states (municipalities) and the richer ones” (Carnoy 1999: 55-56).

Cultural reproduction of inequality in education, so eloquently discussed by Bowles and Gintis (1976) in their classic text *Schooling in Capitalist America*, like the ghost from the past, has come to haunt us again. Some scholars believe that the spectre of inequality is still with us today (Jennings 2000: 113). The prospect of widening economic and social inequality and corresponding “inequalities in education” (Zajda 2002: 86), in part due to globalisation and market-oriented schooling – depicted as “substantial tolerance of inequalities and exclusion” (OECD 2001: 126) – is the new reality of globalisation, privatisation and decentralisation in education.

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PRIVATISATION IN EDUCATION IN CANADA: A SURVEY OF TRENDS

ADAM DAVIDSON-HARDEN AND SUZANNE MAJHANOVICH

Abstract – The construct of 'neo-liberalism' well defines privatisation within a global convergence of educational policy discourses and practices. This study analyses initiatives for and processes of privatisation in Canadian education from K–12 to post-secondary levels. In considering how privatisation is affecting public education systems in Canada, the authors focus on the commodification and marketisation of education. They also examine issues of equity and the viability of universally accessible and publicly funded education systems. Finally, the study highlights two main interrelated trends: the intrusion of market discourse into education at all levels on one hand and on the other a growing tension between contrasting conceptions of education as a tradable commodity and as a social right.

Zusammenfassung – PRIVATISIERUNG DER BILDUNG IN KANADA: EIN ÜBERBLICK ÜBER DIE TRENDS – Das Gedankengebäude des ‚Neoliberalismus' bietet eine treffende Erklärung der Privatisierung im Rahmen einer globalen Annäherung der Bildungsdiskurse und -praktiken. Die vorliegende Studie analysiert Privatisierungsinitiativen und Privatisierungsverfahren im kanadischen Bildungssystem vom Kindergarten- und Schullevel bis zur Ebene der außerschulischen Bildungsanstalten. Die Autoren richten ihre Aufmerksamkeit darauf, in welcher Weise die Privatisierung das öffentliche Bildungssystem Kanadas beeinflusst, und konzentrieren sich dabei besonders auf die Tatsache, dass Bildung zur Ware gemacht und vermarktet wird. Sie untersuchen auch die Chancengleichheit und Lebensfähigkeit eines allgemein zugänglichen und öffentlich geförderten Erziehungssystems. Zuletzt beleuchtet die Studie zwei zusammenhängende Haupttrends: Die zunehmende Vermarktung der Bildung auf allen Ebenen einerseits und die wachsende Spannung zwischen gegensätzlichen Bildungskonzepten andererseits: Hier Bildung als Handelsware, dort als Recht der Gesellschaft.

Résumé – PRIVATISATION DE L'ÉDUCATION AU CANADA : ANALYSE DE TENDANCES – La pensée « néolibéraliste » définit bien la privatisation dans le cadre d'une convergence générale des discours et des pratiques en politique éducative. Cette étude analyse les initiatives en faveur de la privatisation de l'éducation au Canada ainsi que les démarches empruntées, du jardin d'enfants à la 12e année scolaire jusqu'à l'enseignement supérieur. En analysant les conséquences de la privatisation sur le système de l'enseignement public canadien, les auteurs traitent la question de la marchandisation et de la commercialisation de l'éducation. Ils abordent également l'équité et la viabilité des systèmes éducatifs d'accès universel et financés par l'État. Enfin, ils signalent deux grandes tendances imbriquées : d'un côté l'intrusion du débat mercantile à tous les niveaux de l'éducation, de l'autre une tension croissante entre les conceptions contrastées de l'éducation, produit commercialisable et droit social.

Resumen – PRIVATIZACIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN EN CANADÁ: ESTUDIO DE TENDENCIAS – El pensamiento 'neoliberal' define muy bien la privatización

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dentro de una convergencia global de discursos políticos y prácticos sobre política educativa. Este trabajo analiza las iniciativas a favor de la privatización y los procesos de privatización en la educación canadiense, desde la enseñanza primaria hasta los niveles post-secundarios. Al considerar cómo la privatización está afectando a los sistemas de educación pública en Canadá, los autores se concentran en la mercantilización y comercialización de la enseñanza. También examinan temas como la viabilidad de sistemas educativos accesibles para toda la población y financiada por el erario público. Finalmente, el estudio realza dos tendencias principales e interrelacionadas: la intrusión del discurso del mercado todos los niveles de la educación por una parte, y por otra parte una creciente tensión entre conceptos opuestos de la educación, entendida como producto comercializable y también como derecho social.

Резюме – ПРИВАТИЗАЦИЯ В КАНАДСКОЙ СИСТЕМЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ: ОБЗОР ОСНОВНЫХ ТЕНДЕНЦИЙ – Концепция «неолиберализма» дает точное определение процессу приватизации внутри глобального сближения теории и практики в образовательной политике. В данном исследовании анализируются инициативы и процессы приватизации в канадском образовании от уровня K12 до послешкольного уровня. Авторы статьи, рассматривая, какое влияние оказывает приватизация на систему государственного образования в Канаде, фокусируют внимание на изменениях образовательной системы в свете ее интеграции в рыночную модель экономики. Они также изучают вопросы социальной справедливости и жизнеспособности общедоступных государственных образовательных программ. В конечном итоге данное исследование позволяет выявить две основные взаимосвязанные между собой тенденции: активное вторжение рыночных отношений в систему образования на всех уровнях, а с другой стороны, растущее напряжение между контрастирующими концепциями образования, которое выступает как объект товарноденежных отношений и как социальное право.

Privatisation Issues in Education in Canada

Across the world, whether at the behest of international debt-brokering agencies or at the whim of ideological and corporate-linked governments, communities continue to deal with increasing trends of marketisation and privatisation of education. According to one's perspective and interests, such initiatives may embody positive moves toward 'innovation' in education through private provision, competition and 'school choice', or alternatively dangerous incursions of market forms and mechanisms into formerly publicly funded and controlled services. As a global backdrop to these debates and tensions, controversy around the movement for 'free trade' pushed by global corporations as well as governments of richer countries continues to build, with growing concern mounting in every corner of civil society. This study analyses the current state of privatisation initiatives and processes in Canadian education, from K–12 to post-secondary levels. Our goal in this context is to clarify and comprehend how

privatisation is affecting public education systems in Canada, with a focus on processes of commodification of education under neoliberal education and social policy trends, as well as on considerations of equity and the viability of universally accessible, publicly funded education systems at these levels.

Of course, this single contribution cannot attempt to cover in any comprehensive sense issues of privatisation in Canadian education. For one, the authors are not educational economists: our aim here is not to present a fine-grained quantitative analysis of these issues, but to set changes of privatisation in a broader context, in order to reflect and gain perspective on these shifts from a conceptual standpoint. It is necessary within this context, of course, to include relevant data concerning these issues from the Canadian setting. In addition, and as evidenced by in-depth work on the topic, the conception of privatisation itself is contested and the issues bearing on it are complex, with the term 'privatisation' having potential links to different sorts of educational governance and policy issues. 'Private education' may refer in the broad sense to any type of educational provision not funded or controlled by state authorities, including for-profit and not-for-profit entities. Our focus, as mentioned above, is to look at imperatives and trends of privatisation and neoliberalism in terms of equity, specifically, in privatisation-related developments compared to the existence and viability of various publicly funded and controlled education systems of Canada's provinces and territories. Along these lines, what distinguishes private forms of education from public in the context of this study principally are their differences in terms of accessibility. In Canada's confederated system, responsibilities for education fall mainly under provincial jurisdiction.[1] Canada has no national standard or federal coordinating agency for education, as many other countries have. All provinces maintain diverse systems of publicly funded and universally accessible education, from K–12 up to post-secondary programs. Tuition at post-secondary institutions is controlled via provincial regulations, while education at K–12 public schools is universal and tuition-free, a result of achievements in social legislation made under an expansionist and Keynesian welfare-state model.

However, these surface attributes belie the reality of the impact of neoliberal restructuring efforts, including deep federal-government cuts in transfer funding implemented in the 1990s. Those years in particular saw a series of crises envelop public-education systems across the country, as *per-capita* spending has not in the main kept pace with the rising costs of education. These dynamics have been unfolding in a time when corresponding ideologically driven provincial policies have converged with ongoing and recurrent issues in public education systems at the K–12 level to create pressure and momentum for different sorts of educational privatisation in the form of public-funding arrangements for private education. The dynamics include growing discussion and debate of such measures as educational voucher systems as well as private educational-institution tax credits, both of which will

be discussed here with reference to the Canadian context. In addition, in certain provinces these dynamics have their corollary in the post-secondary sector, where recent provincial legislation has enabled the creation of private universities. This phenomenon, coupled with dwindling provincial support for operating budgets at public post-secondary institutions, has seen pressure on these institutions to move toward reliance on increases in tuition to cover operating and other expenses. Meanwhile, increasing private (including corporate) contributions and presence relating to university governance is mirrored in a different way at the K–12 level, where informal family and community fundraising efforts have increased in an attempt to offset decreases in education funding. These and other related issues concerning aspects of 'privatisation' in Canadian education will be elaborated in further sections of the study below.

Neoliberalism as an Analytical Construct and Framework for Understanding Privatisation

At this juncture, it is appropriate to pause and clarify our conceptual terminology as well as theoretical approach. Three presentations of issues of the conception of privatisation – one from a Canadian government agency, one from a Canadian 'pro-privatisation' private-sector non-governmental organisation (NGO), and another from a leading scholar in the area of 'educational privatisation' – make for an interesting point of departure toward this clarification. In an article for the *Bank of Canada Review*, under a subheading titled 'privatizing public services', two authors (Levac and Wooldridge 1997: 34–35) from the Bank's financial markets department put forward privatisation in the following way:

> Government employment increased significantly during the 1960s and 1970s, in tandem with an expansion of the public sector's participation in the economy and rising government spending on goods and services. However, faced with deteriorating fiscal positions in the 1980s and 1990s, governments not only streamlined their bureaucracies but also began hiring private firms to provide a wide range of public services. When contracting out services, the government usually finances and provides the framework for the delivery of the service, but private organizations, acting as agents of the government, operate and manage the service …
>
> Formal contractual arrangements with private provisioners of public services are expected to reduce government expenditures by encouraging efficient service delivery and by giving governments more flexibility to adjust service delivery to public needs. However, the key to raising efficiency and lowering the cost of service provision is competition, not privatization per se. For straightforward, directly delivered services – such as janitorial services or garbage collection – a competitive bidding process may ensure that private firms deliver the desired service efficiently and effectively because firms want their contracts to be renewed. Yet, if it is difficult to measure the quality of the end product, such as the appropriateness and excellence of patient care, the fiscal benefits arising from potential efficiency

> gains may be partially or completely offset by monitoring costs. In particular, where measurement is a problem, a larger public management or administrative group may be needed to ensure that a private firm adheres to the terms of its contract. Furthermore, emphasizing measured performance could distort the delivery of some services or undermine the quality of the end product. For instance, it may be difficult to specify contractual conditions that provide the proper incentives both to deliver a superior education and to minimize the costs of instruction.

It is interesting to note here that the authors touch on – albeit briefly and superficially – some of the problematics facing a potential privatisation of schooling. One can appreciate from this excerpt the general thrust of their observation that privatisation initiatives are embarked upon in order to facilitate a reduction of state expenditures, as a means to the end of reducing states' direct involvement in provision and delivery of various public services. Although privatisation efforts in Canada have been focused on much larger-scale transferences of ownership away from government levels toward private ownership and management (e.g., oil resources, railways, telecommunications), we see here that there is increasing acknowledgement that public services of various sorts are not seen as exempt from potential privatisation efforts. The same paper identifies different potential areas of privatisation which have been experimented with since the time of its publication in Canada, including prison operation and management as well as various health care services.

Further focusing this type of definition and discussion is a document comprising part of the website for an NGO called the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships (CCPPP 2003). The notion of 'public-private partnerships' or 'P3s' represents an area of contemporary efforts toward privatisation in various areas including social services.[2] In the context of a description of the organisation's mandate and aims, a 'spectrum of privatisation' is presented below (Figure 1).

This type of representation provides a picture of how the aims of privatisation presented by Levac and Wooldridge (1997) can be elaborated to include as many different 'degrees' of privatisation as possible, toward lessening of direct state involvement.

The first two sources' discussions of privatisation are useful in terms of clarifying how privatisation is seen from the perspective of governments as well as key policy-players such as the actors behind the CCPPP. To extend from this presentation of privatisation toward more critical standpoints on these types of processes, Levin's conceptual framework for understanding privatisation in education is useful. Levin (2001) proposes four principal criteria which underpin any debates around privatisation measures in education, with a focus on K–12 education. These are: freedom to choose (among alternatives to public education systems), efficiency (relating to the argument that privately controlled education will *de facto* make better use of similar resources than publicly controlled education), equity (referring to the concern that differential economic means affect access to education along the lines of social

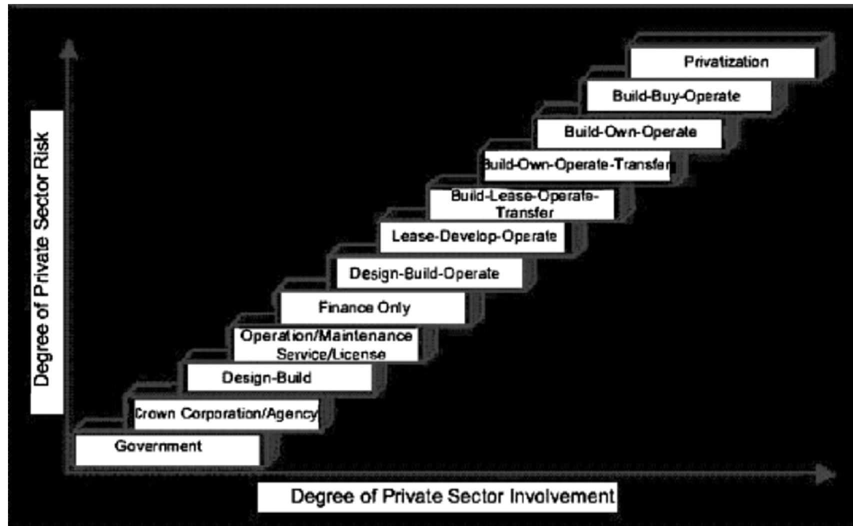


Figure 1. CCPPP's spectrum of public-private partnerships
Source: Robertson, McGrane and Shaker 2003: 9

class, race and gender), and finally social cohesion (pitting notions of the 'good' of parents and particular students' preferences versus common goods derived from universal public education). In addition to these criteria, Levin (8–10) acknowledges three different 'instruments' for embarking upon educational privatisation plans: finance, regulation and support services.

Other scholarship has discussed theoretical approaches to the contested grounds of definitions of privatisation as it affects education, as well as carried out detailed analysis of the effects of privatisation-related restructuring in different contexts. In the K–12 area, the work by Murphy et al. (1998) represents such an effort. In addition, other sources of literature internationally have sought to deal with privatisation issues in the context of different terminologies and debates. For instance, the works of Whitty et al. (1998; cf. Whitty and Power 2000), Bowe et al. (1995; cf. Ball 1998), as well as Lauder and Hughes (1999) – to name a few examples – have sought to document trends of marketisation and privatisation in the K–12 education systems comparatively, drawing on cases from the United Kingdom in comparison with shifts in the United States and other countries, including New Zealand, which have longer histories with such dynamics, arguably, than does Canada. Canadian examples of scholarship on the subject have dealt with educational restructuring in some of the 'leading' provinces in this area; an example would be the works edited by Harrison and Kachur (2000), as well as Taylor (2001).

This body of literature represents a great effort on the part of leading scholars to address how these types of shifts have affected systems of public education and impacted on citizens of various countries in terms of accessibility

to education in terms of social class. We see the present study as part of this network and tradition of research. In the post-secondary area, and also pertaining to themes of marketisation and privatisation, other literature looking at the Canadian (and international) context(s) has examined the expansion of 'enterprise culture' and the increasing behaviour of universities along business lines (Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Newson 1998; Smyth 1999; Fisher and Rubenson 2000; Fisher and Atkinson-Grosjean 2002; Torres and Schugurensky 2002) also referred to as 'corporatisation' of education (Turk 2000) or as the trend to 'managerialism' (Currie and Newson 2000; Peters et al. 2000).

Taking such perspectives and approaches into account and building from them, we identify privatisation processes in Canada's provincial education systems – as well as globally – as a constituent trend within policy discourses and practices reflecting neoliberalism. We use neoliberalism as both an analytical construct and framework in this context. 'Neoliberalism' is understood here as a set of social and economic policy imperatives which have stressed the increasing employment and shift toward the use of market mechanisms as modes of governance in capitalist societies. In states where neoliberalism has gained influence and had a strong impact, patterns of state intervention have shifted from intervention toward establishing and maintaining social programs for the common good of all citizens toward intervention aimed at fostering the growth and viability of business interests in various sectors, justified through a discourse of 'economic competitiveness'.

These shifts have included the de-emphasis, in both wealthy and poorer states, of state involvement in funding and providing social services of various sorts, and a shift correspondingly toward state encouragement and inclusion of private actors and organisations in the delivery of such services. As such, neoliberalism is not simply an abstract conception or discourse but a tangible political and economic strategy representing the interests of real actors in these societies. Following the insights of Marx's political economy, we recognise that corporate or business elements in capitalist societies continue to seek opportunities to expand into previously untapped areas for profit-making, particularly in a time of declining or saturated investment and profit opportunities in existing investment areas (Teeple 2000).

Aspects of the welfare state, including the social institutions and programs which stand as political achievements in Canada, such as our public healthcare and education systems, are coming more and more under scrutiny from interested business and governmental leaders with the aim of 'deregulating', marketising and privatising such services.[3] These aims at regional and local levels correlate to efforts played out at the supranational level through international trade agreements which seek to facilitate and entrench such neoliberal dynamics. Robertson et al. (2002) have referred to these types of dynamics as attempts at different scales (local–regional–national–supranational) to 're-territorialize' social and economic spaces in line with the interests of those who seek further opportunities for profit-making.

Given our understanding of neoliberalism, it is our contention that the policy discourse and political strategy of privatisation – a constituent trend in neoliberalism – is impacting on Canadian K–12 and post-secondary public education systems in two principal and interrelated ways. First, within the sphere of the growth of private enterprise and corporations' increasing interest in profiting from participation in delivering 'educational services,' these forces increasingly pit different conceptions of rights against one another. Namely, the idea of the primacy of corporate or property rights is being pitted increasingly against an idea of universal human rights, including a right to education as agreed upon in various international conventions.[4] A dynamic corresponding to this rising tension is the assertion one hand that education ought to be viewed as a commodity like any other in a market economy, or alternatively as a social right or entitlement as understood in the context of the welfare-state model.

In a broader sense, these tensions reflect debates and controversies over how the individual is viewed or framed in a capitalist society equipped with welfare-state programs. Individuals can be seen as citizens with legitimate social rights articulated and enforced by relevant legislation, even as they are consumers whose economic 'rights' or powers are limited by their varying wealth and resources. Second, discourses of neoliberal market mechanisms in education – emphasising the introduction and expansion of 'quasi-market' mechanisms such as choice and competition – are leaving their mark on Canadian education systems at all levels. The idea that individuals ought to be able to exercise their particular preferences and direct funds toward whatever education is desirable for them (or their children) is here contrasted with the idea that a universally accessible public education system ought to exist which is available to any regardless (relatively speaking) of economic means.

Having set out with an explanation of how we employ neoliberalism as an analytical framework and construct in this discussion, we must emphasise that the debate around privatisation of education is by no means strictly 'academic' and therefore our discussion must tend toward the Canadian actors around these debates. Toward this end, throughout this study organisations, researchers and various provincial and federal-government units and sources will be cited as their work relates to issues of privatisation of education in Canada. As in other countries, Canada has an active lobby presence consisting of policy advocates and think-tanks which advocate measures of choice and competition in education systems. The Fraser and C. D. Howe institutes[5] are examples of policy-advocacy organisations which operate along these lines.

On the other side of the debate, organisations which raise critical questions about the direction and character of neoliberal education restructuring and policy in Canada include most teacher unions and federations as well as other public-sector unions,[6] as well as, notably, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), a policy research and advocacy centre based in Ottawa. The CCPA has been a leader among non-governmental organisation

globally in putting forward research which questions the neoliberal consequences embodied in international trade agreements which stand to affect public education, such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Certain leading education scholars have also been at the fore in terms of putting forward critiques and appraisals of neoliberal education-restructuring initiatives, including Apple (2001) and Giroux (1999) in the United States as well as Bruno-Jofré and Henley (2002) and Kachur (2003) in the Canadian context, to name a few.

Having set out our theoretical and analytical framework, our discussion of the current state of privatisation in Canada will proceed by first looking at the state of affairs in Canada in terms of issues and actors in privatisation processes. Toward this end, the remainder of this discussion will look at specific initiatives and current realities with respect to privatisation initiatives in primary and secondary as well as post-secondary education in a broad survey style. Placed in the context of the aforementioned presentation of our understanding of neoliberalism, we offer this discussion as a contribution to the understanding of the current state of privatisation trends in Canadian education.

Forms of Privatisation of Education in Canada

Primary and Secondary Education

As a context for policy trends toward various types of privatisation initiatives in Canadian education, education indicators for the country as a whole show– particularly during the 1990s – an overall decrease in both K–12 and post-secondary education funding *per capita* (Statistics Canada and CMEC 1999: 20). The study from which these data have been cited looked to develop a set of pan-Canadian education indicators allowing researchers to track trends in changes to Canada's education systems. As stated reasons for appreciating these *per-capita* decreases in education funding across Canada, the study mentions changing fiscal policy, including a focus on federal- and provincial-government deficit reductions (Statistics Canada and CMEC 1999).[7]

These types of social-spending cuts, roundly criticised and challenged in various quarters as excuses for the 'trimming of the welfare state' as per neoliberal social-policy aims, have indeed figured prominently in the dynamics of reduced funding for both schools and universities in Canada in recent years. For example, federal transfer grants to the provinces for both health and education were drastically cut back during an initiative to change the format of federal transfer funds to the provinces for these sectors during the 1990s. As separate transfer grants were merged into one source of 'block funding' (the 'Canada Health and Social Transfer' [CHST]) in 1995, aggregate funding for the transfer was cut in constant 1998 dollars relative to the amounts of the previous two grants in 1994/95, amounting to a cut of over $5 billion (Mendelson 1998).

It is highly interesting to us to note that this cut – and concomitant shift to a model of 'block' social transfer funding – was made under the supervision of then-finance minister Paul Martin.[8] This was a policy move which had been advocated for Canada by teams from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Halifax Initiative 2003). Along with the World Bank, the IMF has been responsible for the administration of so-called 'structural adjustment' loans and programs administered in poorer countries, policy programs which have enforced the curtailing of social spending in whichever states they are operating (Chossudovsky 1998).

Bearing this context of decreasing funding in mind, the following brief outline of trends toward privatisation in Canadian education shows an interesting neoliberal trend toward government funding decreases as well as legislative encouragement and facilitation of private provision and participation in education systems, with significant movement coming from certain provinces. All provincial education ministries in Canada are bound by commitments articulated through the country's constitution, including commitments made in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. These make specific reference to minority-language educational rights in French and English, as well as stipulating education to be provided through public funding. In addition, four provinces at the K–12 level fund both 'secular' public school-boards and 'separate' Roman Catholic school-boards, as per a requirement in section 93 of the Constitution Act, 1982, to respect and keep in place minority educational systems in place at the time of confederation. Two provinces (Quebec and Newfoundland) have successfully reversed this obligation to fund Catholic education publicly by securing a constitutional amendment of their 'terms of union' in the confederation which Canada represents. Appendix 1 ('Public Schools and Publicly Funded Private Schools, By Province and Territory') is adapted from a recent book analysing issues of privatisation in education in the context of the dynamics of international trade agreements on services. It sums up current dynamics of public education as well as publicly funded private education in Canada. Currently, five provinces in Canada maintain arrangements whereby different forms of private schooling may be approved to receive public funding.[9]

In terms of the general state of public-education funding (meaning public-education systems supported by provincial expenditure and tax revenues), it is interesting to note that some of the most noted shortfalls in funding have been reported from provinces with the most 'busy' recent history of developing charter school and private school tax credit programs in recent times. These provinces include Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. Ontario and Alberta make interesting examples of these trends. Mackenzie (2002) has shown how, accounting for changes in enrolment and inflation factors, a shift in education-funding mechanisms in Ontario in 1997 led to the cutting of nearly $1.2 billion from Ontario's K–12 education system.

This shift represents perhaps the most dramatic example of cuts to education across Canada during the 1990s. At the same time, the same government in Ontario introduced a legislative framework in 2001, later modified in 2003, which introduced and increased tax credits available to Ontario parents with students in independent private schools[10] (see Appendix 1). Ontario had earlier been embarrassed by a United Nations Human Rights Commission ruling which – as a result of a complaint lodged by an Ontario citizen – deemed the province's system of denominational-school funding inequitable and discriminatory in 1996 (Johnston and Swift 2000).

Meanwhile, also in a context of decreased funding (particularly during the 1990s and under the Conservative Klein government (Neu 2000; Peters 2000), Alberta has led the way so far in regulations providing for public funding of independent 'charter' schools, which in effect have been placed in a position of competition with public schools. Kachur (2000) has argued that this type of development reflects neoliberal thinking inasmuch as alternatives to public education are touted while public systems themselves are left increasingly under-funded.

This type of development concomitantly reflects a shift toward the figuring of the parent and student as education 'consumers' who ought to be offered a choice between public and private avenues for education, with both receiving public support. Since charter schools are not prevented from charging tuition, whereas public-education systems are premised on the idea of universal and free access, this development reflects a move toward social stratification in access to education, as it does in other countries. Statistics Canada (2001) has documented the trend of declining numbers of students from wealthy families (with an income of over $100,000) attending public schools, with a simultaneous rise in attendance by such pupils in private institutions.

Total enrolment in private schools at the K–12 level has increased since the 1970s, with 6% current enrolment in private schools as a percentage of total K–12 enrolment (Canadian Council for Social Development, CCSD 1999). The process of funding private education with public dollars has been questioned along similar lines for contributing to the erosion of public education in terms of goals of accessibility and social cohesion (Paquette 2002). Data from the 1990s show that concurrently average family income in Canada has declined and poverty levels – particularly child-poverty levels – have increased (CCSD 1999). The aforementioned private schools tax-credit debate and initiative in Ontario is another example of the introduction of a 'marketized' vision of education provision and consumption in the province with similar attendant controversies and implications.

In the K–12 area, two additional sets of interrelated 'privatisation dynamics' which also deserve mention impact on matters of social equity as well as the 'marketisation' of the public sphere. These also relate to decreases in public-education funding. First, private fundraising in different arenas at the local level has evolved – particularly over the past 10 years or so – to the

extent that existing inequalities of resources between school districts populated by different families with different socioeconomic status have been further exacerbated. Second, the development of 'public-private partnerships' (P3s) as a current modality of privatisation of public spheres has also been shown to have an impact – albeit problematic and challenged – on public-school systems and public/government involvement in education. As regards the first dynamic, pressure on governments to rely less on property-tax revenues and a move to centralise and cut back provincial funding has built alongside disturbing trends in 'private' funding for public education at the operational level.

Weiner (2003) of the CTF cites some disturbing examples of these trends, which represent a growing reliance of communities and teachers on commercial interests for funding of basic educational supplies in the K–12 arena. As one example, Weiner (5) cites a study of teachers which found their average personal expenditure toward teaching activities was $593 per year. In another example concerning parent-led fundraising cited in the same presentation, it was found that fundraising activities centred in the Vancouver (British Columbia) Parent Advisory Council generated from $500 to $35,000, depending on the location of the school and the socioeconomic composition of its community and families. Weiner also mentions the Toronto-based public education advocacy group People for Education's report that approximately $20 million is raised annually in schools through vending machine sales and corporate donations (6).

Finally, a further example of fundraising in schools is the growing phenomenon of school-boards attempting to attract international students to pay for Canadian secondary-school programs to be taken here in Canada or abroad. An OECD study on the issue reported that worldwide this 'industry' generated $30 billion annually, as well as millions in Canada alone (Weiner 2003: 10). Since such programs for school-boards in Canada charge tuition (sometimes over $10,000 per year), such a service is increasingly a lucrative one for participating boards and schools. A Canadian association – the 'Canadian Education Centre Networks'[11] (CECN) – charges fees to school-boards in turn for their representation in the CECN's marketing efforts at various international fairs (Grieshaber-Otto and Sanger 2002: 52–56). These types of dynamics could have serious ongoing consequences for Canadian education and privatisation by their relation to international trade regimes involving Canada. This matter will be discussed in a distinct section below.

Unfortunately, as in the post-secondary sector, this paucity of examples reflects just the 'tip of the iceberg' in terms of growing commercialism and private fundraising in schools in a context of dwindling public-education funding. Many related studies documenting similar trends have been conducted by prominent Canadian educational researchers based in the CCPA.[12] For those encouraged by such trends, so-called P3 initiatives represent another possible significant avenue in terms of privatisation dynamics in

Canadian education. One of the most prominent examples of P3 initiatives in education can be found in Nova Scotia, whose Liberal government in the late 1990s pledged to construct 55 schools which were to be privately financed, owned and run and subsequently leased back to the public for school use (Meek 2001).

These experiments with the private financing and ownership of school buildings arguably resulted in the defeat of the government which initiated the plan[13] because of skyrocketing costs to the public. However, despite much negative press for P3 initiatives resulting from this debacle in Nova Scotia, interest and discussion remains high in the area of possible P3s in education as well as other sectors (Grieshaber-Otto and Sanger 2002: 56; Robertson 2002; Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) 2003; Mehra 2003).

Privatisation Dynamics in the Post-Secondary Education Sector

As a matter of consequence, universities have also suffered the results of the aggregate cuts through transition to the CHST in federal social transfer payments to the provinces.[14] As one pronounced example of this trend, a report commissioned by the Council of Ontario Universities (COU 2000) shows that over the period from 1995 to 2000, Ontario ranked 58th out of 60 jurisdictions in terms of percentage change in support for university operating expenses. The study examined areas with comparable institutions across the United States and the rest of Canada. Related and connected dynamics of declining provincial share of university operating funding (Melchers 2001) have seen universities turn increasingly to students to shoulder increasing costs.

Across Canada today, university tuition has more than doubled on average since 1990 (Doherty-Delorme and Shaker 2000; Statistics Canada 2003), and consequent student debt upon graduation from a first undergraduate degree has risen from approximately $8,700 in 1990 to $28,000 in the year 2000. 'Deregulation', or the relaxation of provincial regulations on tuition levels in certain programs[15] both in colleges and universities, has contributed to this massive increase both in tuition and student debt (as two sides of the same coin). Consequently, Canadian researchers have pointed out some of the critical negative consequences in terms of social inequity and access to post-secondary education as a result of these developments (Quirke 2001), just as researchers have analysed these effects in the K–12 sector as different sorts of costs of education have increased.

Many of the same privatisation dynamics at work in the K–12 area are reflected in the post-secondary sector, although most commentators acknowledge – including globally and comparatively – that post-secondary education is far more advanced in terms of the impact of privatisation processes, including increasing commercialism of both research and university operations, as well as corporate presence on university boards. Additionally, while for-profit private education has not gained a foothold in Canadian K–12

education as of yet due to preventative legislation, private universities which are founded on such a basis exist today in the country.

Somewhat disconcerting is the recent announcement about the 'transformation' of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) from primarily a *granting* to a *knowledge* council. Presumably the subtle change in mission statement is to encourage more research collaboration (with the private sector?) and to focus on the impact and utilisation of the knowledge produced. Although this may be an innocuous evolution, it does evoke ominous echoes of the 'bizspeak' agendas of neoliberals and implies that research projects without potential practical utilitarian payoffs may no longer be eligible.

Several for-profit post-secondary education institutions as well as other for-profit tutorial-services groups have set up operations in Canada, with three of the most prominent being well-established previously as 'edupreneurial' money-makers in the United States. Sylvan Learning Systems operates offices throughout Canada providing tutorial and private education programs. The Apollo Group, under its 'University of Phoenix' moniker, has established a campus in Vancouver and offers primarily online education programs. Additionally, DeVry has setup campuses in Toronto and Calgary under the name of 'DeVry Institute of Technology'.

Several Canadian for-profit and not-for-profit universities have also come on the scene in recent years, due to enabling legislation. Unexus (now known as Lansbridge), a Toronto-owned and Fredericton, New Brunswick-based Canadian private online university-initiative specialising in business MBA degrees is one such example of a profit-motivated institution with exporting ambitions, with operations and partnerships with Indian training companies focusing on computers (Dopp 2001). The CCPA has led the way in documenting these types of privatisation trends in post-secondary education in Canada. Shaker (1999), for example, cites the introduction of for-profit PSE institutions into Canada in recent times, such as the DeVry institute, ITI Education Corporation and International Business Schools. Recently, endeavours to further privatise delivery of post-secondary education have taken the form of the P3 initiatives and directions mentioned above.

Privatisation and International Trade Regimes

As alluded to earlier, different types of privatisation processes at work in the various levels and jurisdictions of Canadian K–12 and post-secondary education have been shown to be implicated in a variety of trade regimes involving Canada. Such regimes, from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) as well as the proposed GATS of the WTO, seek to transform 'services' economics such that different spheres of educational provision will be encompassed and

governed by international trade rules. As such regimes seek to 'liberalize' trade in education, commercial practices conducted under the auspices of public governance – such as those already discussed with respect to schoolboards – could be found susceptible to trade challenges and sanctions through the dispute settlement mechanisms of the various regimes.

In the case of the proposed GATS, for example, this could result because of the so-called 'governmental authority' exclusion and rules regarding modes 1 and 2 of the agreement ('cross-border supply' and 'consumption abroad', respectively).[16] Under NAFTA and similar articles and measures included in the proposed FTAA, protection for investors is taken to the extent that any efforts on the part of governments to amend or change existing privatisation measures could be fraught with difficulty. The much-criticised chapter 11 of NAFTA – that concerning investment – stipulates that 'expropriation' of private investments in any sector, including different types of social services, could result in forced payments of compensation to the affected investors. Perhaps the most powerful aspect of NAFTA and the proposed FTAA is also part of its dispute-settlement process. In these agreements/regimes, as opposed to the GATS, complaints may be brought directly from affected investors against the countries in question (the so-called 'investor-to-state' dispute settlement mechanism). Such grievances are decided through secretive and supra-national dispute-settlement tribunals which are not accountable to citizens.

Mechanisms of trade regimes such as these and in the GATS (as well as other WTO constituent agreements, and various bilateral trade agreements) have been roundly criticised as means to attack various government policies and legislation as 'barriers to trade' in various respects. With respect to education, the field remains wide open for investors to attempt to leverage further commodification and privatisation of education through trade regimes. While Annex II of the NAFTA includes reservations from Canada regarding the protection of social services, critics agree that NAFTA and the proposed FTAA could continue to pose a threat of entrenching privatisation measures in public sectors which currently exist as well as facilitate private investment in increasing layers of what is currently the sphere of public services (CCPA and HSA 2001; Sinclair 2003a).

To date, no dispute has been brought under either the NAFTA or the GATS affecting trade in education services;[17] however, while this is encouraging, we would argue that citizens valuing publicly funded education must be vigilant in calling into question the significant powers of such trade regimes in facilitating neoliberal aims for education.

The fact that private (i.e., commercial/for-profit) educational companies operating in Canada have not attempted to use GATS or NAFTA rules to leverage funds or compensation from government authorities as of yet does not exclude the possibility that such rules could be used for this purpose. Similarly, the fact that federal-government authorities in Canada have asserted that education is 'off the table' at the present time in trade negotiations,

at least in terms of the GATS (Government of Canada 2002), should not in the least mollify critics of these processes.

As Weiner (2002) and others have noted, privatisation trends in Canadian education have continued apace despite lack of significant progress in officially 'liberalizing' trade in education services as per the aims of the GATS or the proposed services chapter of the FTAA. Different Canadian players – from 'edupreneurs' seeking to tap inter-provincial as well as international export markets to citizens valuing equitably accessible public education – stand to either win or lose from the continuing march toward increasing privatisation of education. This process continues to gain steam, despite ambiguity over whether or not these trends will be amplified and strengthened through supra-national legal mechanisms such as those embodied in international trade regimes.

Conclusion

Fervour over the growing 'education industry' continues to be played out by those with the most vested interests in encouraging these processes. As Canadian critics in the NGO-sector have pointed out, 'edupreneurs' are not content to sit by while an estimated $2 trillion annual industry goes 'untapped' (Guttman 2000). Indeed, the Government of Canada's own website concerning the 'education industry' (Industry Canada 2001) maintains a buoyant (whether blind or deliberate) sort of enthusiasm about the economic potentials of this 'growing sector'.

These characterisations of education – blind as they are to issues of social equity and cohesion, educational access or even efficiency – continue to beg a response. In the face of neoliberal education restructuring, including such privatisation processes as discussed here, the increasing view of education as a commodity, and further retrenchment in general of welfare-state achievements, we would emphasise that as citizens and scholars it is possible to stem the tide through solidarity. Statements produced by critical groups such as the Hemispheric Social Alliance (CCPA and HSA 2001; HSE 2001) as well as the 'joint declaration' from a global alliance of educational organisations (representing post-secondary education-related federations from Europe, Canada and the United States) (AUCC et al. 2001) concerning international trade agreements represent positive steps. The latter statement included a statement of principle against further commodification of education and as such embodies a struggle against a neoliberal agenda for education.

However, as commentators and stakeholders such as Weiner (2002, 2003) point out, those who question the idea of further marketisation and privatisation in education, whether in Canada or anywhere else, would do well not to focus their gaze so narrowly as to miss the complexity of manoeuvres which characterise this agenda. In addition to the usual 'watchers' of the system in the education system workers' federations and

unions, critical non-governmental organisations and policy groups continue to play a leading role in accounting for governmental as well as supranational ongoing efforts to further privatise and marketise education. As educational researchers and scholars with a critical interest in this field, it is our responsibility – if united in our critique – to maintain solidarity with such groups and with the very idea of the social rights of all citizens in order to continue this struggle and contestation.

Notes

1. The Federal Government of Canada is involved (via constitutional mechanisms) to an extent in both Military/Defence-related education as well as education related to Status Aboriginal peoples.
2. It is interesting to note on this topic that the Government of Canada maintains a website dedicated explicitly to encouraging and disseminating information related to P3 initiatives. This website can be found at http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/ce01373e.html
3. Bourdieu (1998) characterised this shift as a weakening of the left and strengthening of the right hands of the state.
4. Grieshaber-Otto and Sanger (2002: 11–14) recognise that a fundamental tension continues to mount over commitments to education embodied in international conventions such as Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the trend toward 'liberalisation' of 'trade in education services', where education is conceived of principally as a commodity.
5. http://www.fraserinstitute.ca; http://www.cdhowe.org.
6. Some of the prominent unions and federations representing workers in the Canadian K–12 and post-secondary education systems include (in no particular order): the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) and constituent K–12 federations representing elementary and secondary teachers across Canada; The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT); and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). All maintain websites with information relating to privatisation of education in Canada.
7. A more detailed breakdown of the average *per-capita* decrease in funding in recent times is included in a table from this study, reproduced as Appendix 2, '*Per-capita* expenditures on education in constant 1998 dollars (thousands), Canada and jurisdictions, 1988–1989 to 1998–1999'.
8. Martin was elected Prime Minister on 28 June 2004.
9. The study by Paquette (2002) is a comprehensive and detailed analysis of funding provisions and regulations concerning public funding of private schools in these provinces.
10. The measure – deemed the 'equity in education tax credit' – was initially facilitated by Bill 45 (of the same title) and expanded through the 'Right Choices for Equity in Education Act' in 2003; it was always controversial and is expected to be quashed by the newly elected Liberal government of Ontario.
11. http://www.cecnetwork.org.
12. See http://www.policyalternatives.ca/eduproj/edultd.html.
13. Robertson et al. (2003: 16–17) report in their recounting of the Nova Scotia P3-schools case that school construction and operation ended up on average costing $1 million more per school than would have been the case if the schools had been

built and financed in the conventional fashion, that is, from the public purse rather than in 'partnership' with private investors. Growing public outrage over what became a scandal led to the eventual defeat of the Liberal government in Nova Scotia in 1999. However, the authors note that the province is still bound by 39 contracts with P3 developers.

14. A CAUT study (1999) shows the vivid link between cuts in CHST transfer levels and declining provincial expenditures for post-secondary education particularly during the 1990s as well as cumulatively back to the early 1980s.
15. These have included professional university-based programs such as Medicine, Dentistry, Law and Business as well as college-based specialty programs of various sorts.
16. The 'governmental authority' exception of the GATS (article I.3) stipulates that services "provided in the exercise of governmental authority" are exempt from GATS rules, with the limitation on this exception being that such services must not be applied on a "commercial basis", or "supplied … in competition with one or more service suppliers" (Sinclair and Grieshaber-Otto 2002: 18).
17. Nine cases involving Canada have been brought to date before NAFTA. One involved a complaint brought by Ethyl Corp., which claimed damages of $250 million from the Canadian government for its banning of a suspected neurotoxin additive to gasoline called MMT; the Canadian government settled and paid $13 million to the company (Sinclair 2003b).

Appendices

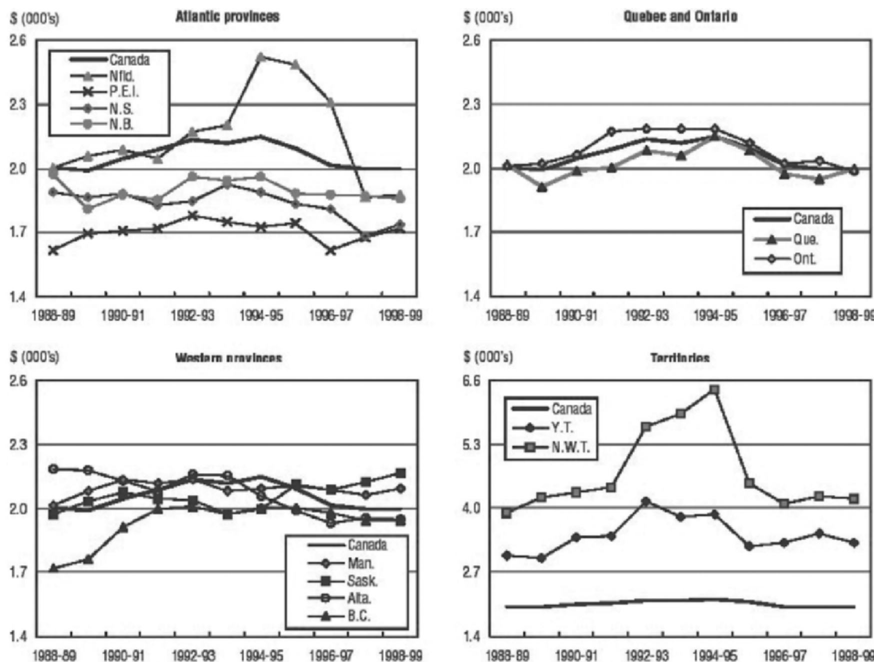
Appendix 1. 'Public Schools and Publicly Funded Private Schools, By Province and Territory' (adapted from Grieshaber-Otto and Sanger 2002, with updated data from Paquette (2002), Robson and Hepburn (2002), Treff and Perry (2002))

	Public school systems	Publicly funded private schooling
Newfoundland and Labrador	Ten non-denominational boards and 1 province-wide Francophone board fully funded from provincial revenue.	None
Prince Edward Island	Three regional school-boards, no separate school system; funded from provincial revenue plus a uniform provincial property tax.	None
Nova Scotia	Seven school-boards, 6 regional boards, and 1 Francophone-Acadian board financed from provincial and municipal government revenues; federal responsibility for Aboriginal education was transferred to Mi'kmaq reserve communities, which administer schools through a provincial council.	None

New Brunswick	Dual English and French systems, each with a single province-wide board. Schools are administered through 9 Anglophone and 5 Francophone districts. Full provincial funding for public education.	None
Quebec	Separate English- and French-language school boards, 72 in total. Funded from provincial revenue.	Funding for designated private schools of about $3,200 per student (50% of public school grants).
Ontario	Seventy-two district school-boards, including 12 francophone school-boards. 37 school authorities responsible for isolated and hospital schools. Funded by a combination of provincial revenue and local property taxes (with uniform rates set by the province).	None. Income tax credit subsidises students' private school tuition (max: $7,000), rising from a maximum of 10%/$700 in 2002 to 50%/$3,500 by 2006. Cost estimated at $300 million by 2006.
Manitoba	Thirty-seven local school boards No separate system or linguistic boards Funded from provincial revenue, including a provincial property tax.	Provincial funding to private schools which implement the provincial curriculum, hire certified teachers, and meet other criteria. Some public services shared with private schools.
Saskatchewan	Eighty-nine school divisions, including public, Roman Catholic and Francophone. Public and separate divisions are funded from provincial revenue and a local property tax. Francophone divisions do not have access to local property taxes, and receive federal as well as provincial grants.	Provincial funding for students at some private vocational schools.
Alberta	Seventy-four school authorities: 42 public, 17 separate, 5 Francophone, and 10 charter schools Funded equally from provincial-government revenue and a pooled property tax fund (separate schools can opt out of pooled system and collect property taxes only from local residents).	Provincial support for private schools which employ certified teachers and teach an approved curriculum. Support was $2,433 per student (60% of basic instruction grant for public schools).
British Columbia	Fifty-nine local school-boards and 1 Francophone education	About 300 private schools receive public funding from the province.

	authority. Funded from provincial revenue and a pooled property tax.	Private schools receive a per-pupil grant based on the operating costs of local public schools. Private schools which follow the B.C. curriculum receive slightly more funding per student.
Yukon	Twenty-eight public schools administered but the territorial Department of Education. A French language school-board was established in 1996. Fully funded from territorial government revenue.	None
Northwest Territories	Thirty-three school divisions, including both public and separate (Roman Catholic) systems in Yellowknife. Yellowknife schools funded partially by a local property tax. Outside Yellowknife all schools fully funded from territorial government revenue.	None
Nunavut		

Appendix 2. '*Per-capita* expenditures on education in constant 1998 dollars (thousands), Canada and jurisdictions, 1988–1989 to 1998–1999' (Statistics Canada and CMEC 1999: 55)



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DECENTRALISATION AND PRIVATISATION OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA: WHICH ONE FOR NIGERIA?

MACLEANS A. GEO-JAJA

Abstract – Arguing that the politicisation of decentralisation appreciably reduces educational quality and efficient resource allocation and negatively affects matters of equity in and delivery of education, the present study provides a critique of decentralisation and privatisation in education in Africa with special reference to Nigeria. On the basis of the experiences of other nations, the author suggests that both decentralisation and privatisation in education – especially the introduction of user fees – have created a new dimension of educational inequality in Nigeria as well. In this case, it can be seen that indicators of efficiency declined significantly in line with negative trends in national-government appropriations to sub-national governments and the education sector. The author concludes that no linkage can be asserted to exist between decentralisation and educational improvement.

Zusammenfassung – DEZENTRALISIERUNG UND PRIVATISIERUNG DER BILDUNG IN AFRIKA: WELCHE OPTION FÜR NIGERIA? – Mit dem Argument, dass die politische Ideologisierung der Dezentralisierung in beträchtlichem Ausmaß die Bildungsqualität und die effiziente Zuteilung von Ressourcen reduziert sowie die Chancengleichheit im Bildungssystem und die Zuteilung von Bildung negativ beeinflusst, kritisiert die vorliegende Studie die Dezentralisierung und Privatisierung der Bildung in Afrika mit einem speziellen Bezug auf Nigeria. Auf der Basis von Erfahrungen anderer Nationen zeigt der Autor, dass sowohl die Dezentralisierung als auch die Privatisierung in der Bildung – insbesondere die Einführung von Gebühren für Schüler und Studenten – auch in Nigeria eine neue Dimension der Ungleichheit in der Bildung geschaffen hat. In diesem Falle kann man erkennen, dass sich die Indikatoren für Effizienz bedeutend verschlechtern, und zwar in Übereinstimmung mit negativen Trends bei der Zuteilung, die die nationale Regierung den regionalen Regierungen und dem Bildungssektor gewährt. Der Autor zieht den Schluss, man könne behaupten, dass es überhaupt keine Verbindung zwischen Dezentralisierung und der Verbesserung der Bildung gäbe.

Résumé – DÉCENTRALISATION ET PRIVATISATION DE L'ÉDUCATION EN AFRIQUE: QUELLE OPTION POUR LE NIGERIA? – En soutenant que la politisation de la décentralisation réduit sensiblement la qualité de l'éducation ainsi que l'efficacité dans l'affectation des ressources, et produit un effet négatif sur l'équité et sur les prestations éducatives, la présente étude fait la critique de la décentralisation et de la privatisation de l'éducation en Afrique, en citant l'exemple particulier du Nigeria. À partir d'expériences tirées d'autres nations, l'auteur constate que la décentralisation et la privatisation de l'éducation, et notamment l'introduction de frais de scolarité, ont créé une nouvelle dimension de l'inégalité dans ce secteur, également au Nigeria. Dans ce pays, un recul important des indicateurs de l'efficacité a été constaté, parallèlement aux tendances négatives quant aux dotations de la part

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du gouvernement national aux gouvernements sous-nationaux et au secteur éducatif. L'auteur conclut qu'aucun lien ne peut être établi entre la décentralisation et une amélioration de l'éducation.

Resumen – DESCENTRALIZACIÓN Y PRIVATIZACIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN EN ÁFRICA: ¿CUÁL ES LA OPCIÓN PARA NIGERIA? – Con la argumentación de que la politización de la descentralización reduce considerablemente la calidad de la educación y la eficiencia en la asignación de recursos, ejerciendo una influencia negativa sobre la equidad y las prestaciones de la educación, este estudio ofrece una crítica de la descentralización y privatización de la educación en África, haciendo referencia especial a Nigeria. Sobre la base de las experiencias ganadas en otras naciones, el autor sugiere que tanto la descentralización como la privatización de la educación, y en particular, la introducción de cuotas escolares, también han creado una nueva dimensión de desigualdad educativa en Nigeria. En este caso, se puede comprobar que los indicadores de eficiencia bajaron considerablemente, a la par de tendencias negativas en la asignación de recursos, por parte del gobierno nacional, a los gobiernos subnacionales y al sector educativo. Como conclusión, el autor sostiene que no se puede comprobar ninguna relación entre la descentralización y una mejora de la educación.

Резюме – ДЕЦЕНТРАЛИЗАЦИЯ И ПРИВАТИЗАЦИЯ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В АФРИКЕ: КАКОЙ ВАРИАНТ ПОДХОДИТ ДЛЯ НИГЕРИИ? – Обсуждая вопрос о том, что политизация децентрализации значительно снижает качество образования и эффективное распределение ресурсов, а также оказывает негативное влияние на проблему социальной справедливости и предоставление образовательных услуг. Данное исследование критически рассматривает вопросы децентрализации и приватизации в образовании в Африке, уделяя особое внимание Нигерии. Исходя из опыта других стран, автор статьи предполагает, что как децентрализация, так и приватизация в образовании, в частности введение оплаты для пользователей, также создают новое измерение образовательного неравенства в Нигерии. В таком случае можно наблюдать, как значительно снизились показатели эффективности, связанные с негативными тенденциями узурпации национальными правительствами образовательного сектора. Автор статьи приходит к выводу, что нельзя утверждать о наличии связи между децентрализацией и улучшением образования.

Global Decentralisation and Privatisation of Education: The Causes and Consequences

> Public intervention in education can reduce inequality, open opportunities for the poor and disadvantaged, compensate for market failure in lending for education, and make information about the benefits of education more generally available. But public spending on education is often inefficient when it is misallocated among competing uses; it is inequitable when qualified potential students are unable to enroll in institutions because educational opportunities are lacking or because of their inability to pay (Burnett 1996: 217).

Publicly provided education in many parts of the world has been undergoing a largely abortive process of decentralisation and privatisation. National governments seek to impose upon regional and local governments the

responsibility to provide and support education, claiming that providing education closer to home will enhance the quality of the outcomes. However, what the national governments delegate to local governments more often is the financial responsibility to pay for education, keeping at the national level control of the scope of the educational offerings and the requirements for performance. Imposing on local governments the financial support for education then encourages those governments to withdraw from the provision of education, leaving that responsibility primarily to the private sector. The private sector in turn lacks both the ability and the motivation to subsidise the costs of education, thus denying education to children from low-income families and blocking their inter-generational mobility socially, economically and politically. This process, which has been primarily evident in developing countries, is the topic of the present contribution. However, it is worth demonstrating that the process is not unknown in developed countries as well.

Examples in the United States of America have been the federal No Child Left Behind legislation, on one hand, and, on the other, state-level resort to tax credits and vouchers. The George W. Bush administration, with congressional support, has sought to improve the quality of educational performance by imposing standards to be achieved by all children, then requiring examinations to check those outcomes without providing sufficient federal funding to meet the additional costs of either the additional teaching or the examinations. Hence, centralisation of educational-outcomes requirements is accompanied by decentralisation of the costs of achieving those outcomes. On the privatisation side, tax credits offered at the state-level encourage enrollment in private schools only of the children from families who earn enough to pay substantial income taxes. Also, vouchers offered to eligible students encourage enrollment in private schools but meet only a portion of the tuition costs. This subsidises enrollment of the children from the higher-income families most likely to enroll their children in private schools even without the subsidies, while leaving behind in the public schools the children from those families who cannot meet the remainder of the private-school costs. The United States provides a valid example of faulty trends in decentralisation and privatisation. Our purpose here, however, is to document the process of decentralisation and privatisation of education in developing countries, assessing the unfavorable outcomes in a number of such nations, then focus on the Nigerian experience as a prime case in point.

The Politics of Decentralisation

Defining Decentralisation

Decentralisation is the process of re-assigning responsibility and corresponding decision-making authority for specific functions from higher to lower levels of government or from central government to periphery governments.

This complex process affects the way school systems go about making policy, generating revenues, spending funds, training teachers, designing curricula, and managing local schools. Such changes imply fundamental shifts in the values that concern the relationships of students and parents to schools, the relationships of communities to central government, and the very meaning and purpose of public education (Fiske 1996).

Arguments for Decentralisation

The standard argument for educational decentralisation is that it redistributes, shares and extends power and increases community participation by removing centralised control over management and administration (Prawda 1993). In contrast to the concentration of power at the center, decentralisation is defended as the transfer of decision-making power over content and structure in education to sub-national governments or to communities and schools. This transfer of power or responsibility might be partial or complete, and may be connected to such concepts as delegation, devolution, deconstruction, deregulation, deconcentration or outright privatisation (Lauglo 1995). If complete, decentralisation would transfer all formal rights of structure and content in education to sub-national governments to which the full responsibility for management would be relegated.

Models of Decentralisation

No clear examples of completely decentralised systems exist, but rather one finds decentralisation within centralism. The orientation of structure versus content in decentralisation varies by the level of government getting the responsibility or authority, and the kind of economic crisis and stress that has been pushed down the line (Fiske 1996; Watkins 1993). Just as decentralisation has the potential to produce good educational results, so also does it have the potential to bring about the redistribution of political and cultural capital that is rarely stated as a formal goal. Consequently, it may be less concerned with improving social benefits or sharing power with lower level administrators and governments than it is with empowering people and improving outcome in schools. Both might be positive goals.

However, that positive version of decentralisation rarely happens. Carrin and Tshoane (2000) argue, as did Weiler (1990), that central-governmental authority for educational decision-making actually is never totally surrendered. The least practiced form of decentralisation is devolution, in which the center does not retain any authority over educational policy and curriculum framework. Instead, decentralisation too often entails a process of disruption in the social relationships surrounding education, communities and the state. Decentralisation is advocated under the presumption that fiscal and administrative decentralisation will correct educational imbalances and

bring about better synchronisation of educational planning and economic planning. Instead, the outcomes of decentralisation are similar to those experienced under Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). More often it formalises historical and cultural educational disparities across the country and its regions.

In a rather critical view of decentralisation, Weiler (1990) argues that there is tension between decentralisation efforts and the need for central control. He further reiterates that decentralisation seldom actually occurs, but seems instead to be absorbed into the existing centralised structures of educational management. To him decentralisation is just a process for the central government to enhance its control and legitimacy over sub-national governments. A common argument is that decentralisation is a strategy to avoid reducing central control of administrative authority and to maintain political control and power over lower levels of government, while off-loading some of the fiscal burden of education service provision.

Efforts by most central governments have been directed towards establishing a common curriculum and to ensuring effective ways of achieving national standards, excellence and quality in education, in the name of increasing participation and improving learning outcomes. This policy rhetoric-versus-reality problem has been documented for Nigeria (Geo-JaJa and Mangum 2003) and for Kenya (Adamolekun 1991). It should come as no surprise that decentralisation has done little to give voice and empowerment to people or to build community capabilities, as these were not its intended objectives. The grim reality is that the depth and, ultimately, the outcome of decentralisation reforms depends on the motives, the political commitment, and the centrality of the state in funding and distribution of resources to education.

The Case Against Decentralisation

These conclusions are negative only if one assumes that centralisation is inherently bad and decentralisation inherently good. It is common these days for the state to be viewed as a source of inefficiency and a bureaucratic obstacle to development. This has led to a swing of the pendulum to the opposite: advocacy of the decentralisation of fiscal responsibility, even to the extent of wholesale privatisation of education (discussed below). However, there is still much to be said for an activist state able to enlist and mobilise people and local tiers of government to promote their own development. Indeed, market processes as advocated, irrespective of how efficient they may be, are on their own rarely capable of generating correct signals, of producing the web of positive externalities and complementaries associated with investment in education for human development. Such advantages do not materialise automatically. Thus, there is a call for the state to play a necessary role in guiding education reform and to intervene where needed to ensure that the full economic and social benefits accruable are reaped. What

matters here is not the centrality or size of the state but rather what functions states perform and how well they perform them.

The Consequences of Decentralisation

The consequences of decentralisation in education are enormous for human development. This has led to serious debates whether decentralisation should be pursued further, or whether some or all the elements of decentralisation introduced so far should be reversed or revisited. Prudhomme (1995) states that the ''pure'' case of fiscal decentralisation which shifts financial responsibilities to regional and local governments could increase disparities and jeopardise macrostability. This cautionary position is probably useful as a warning to policy-makers in that decentralisation needs to be more than a mantra to be repeated in the presence of inefficiencies. It goes without saying that decentralisation strategy cannot be implemented in development without crucial central-government budgetary support to education.

Similarly, Stewart (1996) and Colclough (1996) have also cautioned that education reforms which lead to changing the role of central governments in funding or to the introduction of cost-recovery policies into the education system – irrespective of the characteristics of the underlying reasoning – will negatively affect the educational achievements of the stock of human capital represented in the country. Political decentralisation, they argue, is not as concerned with increasing efficiency – increasing the ability to recover costs, improving the delivery mechanism of government education services – as it is with the devolution of fiscal responsibility to the grass roots. Even if public education is productively inefficient, the social benefits associated with the indoctrination of common sets of values and knowledge, and the fact that some of the benefits of education accrue not only to individuals, but also to society at large (externalities), represent a range of reasons for not leaving the provision of education to market forces alone to determine (Colclough 1996).

Quite apart from the assumptions that decentralisation increases stakeholders' participation and improves learning outcome, there exists little evidence to support this causal relationship since there are so many intervening variables (peer-group support, different teaching and learning styles, teacher motivation, and socioeconomic background) which can affect quality of education and its ability to improve student outcomes (Hanusek 1994). Governments switching to decentralisation must be careful not to become victims of the hidden agendas of a bias in favor of devolving responsibilities away from the center while still maintaining administrative control. In sum, pointed out in this section is that decentralisation itself does not ensure more efficient services, nor more accountability, but has only created intermediate levels of power which are still accountable to centralised authority. In such a case, the location of power has not really shifted from the center to the periphery, but has much rather reinforced the center by a better control of the periphery through fiscal devolution.

Pressures Towards Privatisation

The literature on the politics of decentralisation stresses the importance of national–sub-national linkages in determining whether effective decentralisation will occur. But in practice a high degree of decentralisation has occurred without national governments giving more significant resources to sub-national governments. With public expenditure for education in general curbed, stagnant or below the rate of increase in enrolment, private funds (from parents, community etc.) are expected to play an increasing role in educational finance as a whole. Clearly, experience indicates that in areas with an insufficient base or means to guarantee access to education for all the school-age population, shifting funding and management responsibility might lead to privatisation of education development. More recently, with the decentralisation process, expansion in privatisation of schooling has been the norm.

The centrality of user fees to education reform in neoliberals' models raises serious question about equity and access to primary education, while neoconservatives downplay the impact of user fees on family income. In a situation of widespread poverty and lack of local resources, the tendency to overburden households and local governments financially through decentralisation and the shift to fees instead of tax-supported education has the price of improving the quality and access of education for some school-aged students in the face of the lack of resources for others. Even under economic constraints, public policy towards privatisation of existing schools is not considered an option due to complex implications for equity and the high poverty-composition of society. Several studies have found serious adverse-demand effects of fiscal decentralisation at the primary-school level (such as increased drop-out rates and low completion rates as well as gender biases). This aspect of privatisation will be discussed later.

Basically, the shifting of funding responsibilities from the center to the periphery has witnessed the expansion of private for-profit schools in developing countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, which are now attended by children of wealthy parents. Under these conditions, private for-profit schools exist both as a very expensive type for rich communities and an affordable low-cost alternative for poor households. The predictable consequence of this development is the familiar problem of equity, accountability and increasing differentiation in access in education along the expected divides of income and locality. Yet we see decentralisation justified in terms of cost-effectiveness and democratic participation.

Decentralisation and Privatisation in Education: What do Country Studies Tell Us?

Educational decentralisation can range from the arbitrary exercise of coercive power in Argentina and Chile, to Malawi's authoritarian government, to Mexico's 1980 and Chile's 1994 consciously planned interventions, which

were driven by neoliberal economic reforms. The decision to decentralise might not always be a rational linear process, but often is a highly disarticulated and political policy-decision which can produce unanticipated outcomes (Gershburg and Winkler 2003). Consequently, decentralisation cannot be divorced from the political or economic context in which it occurs. For instance, the connection of education reform to privatisation and fiscal decentralisation resulted in the decline in primary education enrolment in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire (World Bank 1993a) as well as Nigeria (Hinchliffe 1989). In addition, the positive effects of a reduction of direct and indirect fees or of the abolition of user fees on equity and efficiency indicators have been reported for Ghana, Kenya and Malawi (Lavy 1992; Colclough 1996), Uganda and Tanzania (World Bank 1995; Oxfam 2001), and for Botswana and Malawi (Colclough 1996). Insofar as the political structures in these countries are undemocratic and authoritarian, administrative decentralisation has maintained or even reinforced central authority on education.

Comparing Decentralisation in Education

Decentralisation experience among the Asian Tigers tests how sweeping changes in structure and content in education could be brought about if the theoretical model of decentralisation is inclusive of the fiscal and welfare state and the presence of a strong central government in education funding (Sweating and Morris 1993; World Bank 1993b). While playing a leading role in education expenditure, and intervening where and when necessary to ensure human resource development, over the long run as they progress, the central governments have progressively relieved themselves of their traditional functions in education provision. Indeed, the Asian Tigers' experience demonstrates that decentralisation, if managed otherwise, is unlikely to be effective unless nations choose to give high priority to human-development expenditures and include devolution of power. As their experience suggests, the balancing act of central governments in setting and enforcing education standards, while having a leading role in public expenditure in education, is even more important in a decentralised than in a centralised education system. It also suggests that other developing countries should adopt and adapt this strategy when necessitated by circumstances of economic crisis. These experiences also suggest that, overall, decentralisation paints a picture of completeness which is false and misleading, as it demands a shift from a "strong central government" to the "evaluative state" and from research-driven reform to a policy-driven reform (Litvack et al. 1998).

The general lessons to be learned from these country case studies include the following: Devolution of financial responsibility places poor households in the position of having to choose which among their children should benefit from educational opportunity, as experienced in Uganda; improving quality inputs or outcomes is not a common explicit rationale for fiscal devolution; and shifting of the financial burden from the center to the under-resourced

local communities further magnifies the demand for more public resources in under-resourced communities.

To get a better understanding of decentralisation in Nigeria, country profiles are used as an illustration of the diversity and complexity of types, degrees and approaches to decentralisation. Decentralisation within these countries has been recommended both by officials within the government and experts from international agencies. One reason for adoption is the many inefficiencies and imbalances that are promised to arise from attempting to administer the education and the economy through a highly centralised government. Yet the experience illustrates why administrative and fiscal decentralisation is doomed to failure in the absence of devolution of political power and the presence of a watchdog state with a significant role in education provision.

In China, education reform that prompted privatisation of schools and the decentralisation of funding had a net effect of reduced funding from all levels of government. This resulted in a change in people's perception of the central government, thus affecting the legitimacy of the state.

The experience in Chile in the 1980s and that of Mexico and Argentina in the 1990s can be viewed as mainly structural in nature, but for very different reasons. The approach adopted by Chile is considered a model for other countries to follow (IDB 1994). The Pinochet government (military democracy) simultaneously introduced a market model of reform and municipalised public education to increase competition and accountability of schools to parents. In Chile, as in other Latin America countries, evidence provided suggests that financial decentralisation has resulted in an absolute drop in the overall level of spending on education and the dramatic expansion of private for-profit schools. This has led to adverse impacts on the education system as a whole, but more on the rural municipalities.

In the 1990s, decentralisation which was an outcome of a larger political transformation focusing on changing the content of education generated tension between municipal and central administrators. Quite apart from contributing to positive enrolment, it did little to reverse persistent regional imbalances in *per-capita* student expenditure, net primary-enrolment rates, and learning outcomes. Similarly, in the case of Mexico, decentralisation was an integral part of a broader transfer of power to intermediate sub-units of government – which was just a strategy to mobilise support and resources. It was not an unconditional invitation to local administrators to assume fiscal responsibility and for communities to retain authority over the curriculum.

In Malawi, as in many other developing countries, fiscal devolution was used as a major instrument to counter the deteriorating education situation in the country (World Bank 1986). Whatever were its motives, the educational system is no more egalitarian than the society of which it is a part. Net primary-enrolment ratios continue to deteriorate, while rural/urban disparities in funding and access to primary schooling have escalated to levels

never experienced before. Other indicators illustrating low efficiency in developing countries are high drop-out rates, illiteracy rates, low test scores, and low completion rates. These outcomes illustrating some of the theoretical inconsistencies of decentralisation are confirmed by experiences in Zimbabwe (Conyers 2001), Mali (Birdsall and Orival 1996), Ghana (Agyemang et al. 2000), and Nigeria (World Bank 1999a). Decentralisation in these countries appears to be driven by many hidden factors, including: strengthening policy control at the center under the guise of decentralisation, targeting debt repayment, reducing national expenditure on education through devolution of financial responsibility to sub-national units, and reasserting the authority and power of central governments after a long period of military role, as was the case in Nigeria.

Decentralisation in Education: Similarities

A common striking similarity among the country studies is that the discourse of democratisation and social participation has been used to 'cloak' micro-institutional mandates. As local authorities have not exercised their presumed control over the state education apparatus, decentralisation has not led to empowerment resulting in greater efficiency and equity. In none of these countries was decentralisation a result of demand from below (Brown 1994: 1410). Rather it created governments which are not accountable to the grass roots, thus reinforcing the central control of the grass roots (World Bank 1999b). Once again, there is little evidence that decentralisation improves educational outcome and increases participation.

In fact, top-down decentralisation as practiced in these countries, having traces and elements of de-concentration, delegation, privatisation, and devolution, has only resulted in the privatisation of education and the shrinking of central resources going to education (Gershberg 1999: 13; Prawda 1993). As is the case of the "No Child Left Behind" undertaking, expansion in private enrolments in the primary-school system exemplifies the trade-off between private school and public schools, as quality deteriorates in the latter as a result of inadequate funding. For instance, African countries experienced a high share of private primary education in the 1990s: In Madagascar, the share of private schools increased from 13 to 21%; in Malawi from 6 to 21%; in Lesotho by 10%; and in Swaziland by 8% between 1985 and 1995 (Evans et al. 1996: 53). Expansion in private schooling was facilitated by a more tolerant government policy towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the low quality of public schools, coupled with limited access. These trends are particularly dangerous for nation-building and to the social benefits which equity and access to primary education should bring to human and sustainable development.

Fiscal Dencentralisation of Education in Post-adjustment Nigeria

Nigeria provides a good example of a politically motivated top-down decentralisation within centralisation. Decentralisation as practiced in Nigeria is a mix of de-concentration and delegation of authority along with the devolution of resources to state and local governments. It requires the central government to determine the substance of the school curriculum, teacher compensation, budget allocation, and access to education. The government has only paid lip service to content, since resources allocated have either been curbed, stangnant, or meager. Consequently, adequate or inadequate public management of education is what is at issue in the present context.

Since independence, Nigeria has undergone unprecedented economic and political reforms. The first major reform beginning in 1973 emphasised changing the structural relationship within the federal government. The second was the introduction of structural adjustment programs in the mid-1980s, with emphasis on politically restructuring the economy through policies of liberalisation and stabilisation. This was a World Bank- and International Monetary Fund-imposed mandate. This period involved the delegation of central government authority to state military governors and the redefinition of social services which could be provided by the different tiers of government. Military rule ended in 1999, evolving into a democratically elected government that same year. In the process, the functions and responsibilities of the respective governments (local, state and central) were espoused. Considerable decentralisation of administrative and financial responsibilities was instituted during the accompanying mobilisation of household, local community, and local- and state-government resources. Education was not spared in this larger political reform.

Insufficient resources and inadequate public expenditures and corrupt management practices forced the federal government to introduce cost-recovry measures in education through promotion of private-financing user fees (Geo-JaJa and Magnum 2002). However, requiring poor households to pay for children to attend primary school in lieu of providing adequate resources clearly excluded a substantial segment of school-age children from consuming education (Federal Ministry of Education 2003). Nevertheless, the government of Nigeria has continued to play politics with education expenditures, as spending over the years has drastically declined (Geo-JaJa and Mangum 2003). The need to address these inadequacies is reflected in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of achieving Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 2015. As indicated by Tahir, the Executive Director of UPE in a news conference, the achievement of this goal requires substantial improvements in the prevailing public management of education expenditures, including the allocation of more than 5% of the Gross National Product to education.

Federal-government expenditures on education between 1990 and 2001 varied between 10 and 5.5% of the budget and less than 1% of GNP, a

Table 1. Profile of the education system in Nigeria (1970–2002)

Year	Primary enrollment	Secondary enrollment	Tertiary enrollment	Public education expenditure	
				% of GNP	% Total public expenditure
1970	3,151,582	1,356,565	15,560	–	–
1975	4,889,835	–	44,964	6.9	16.4
1980	12,117,483	1,864,713	150,072	6.4	18.2
1981	13,760,030	2,345,604	176,904	6.4	24.7
1982	14,311,608	2,880,280	193,731	2.1	9.6
1983	14,654,798	3,393,186	208,051	2.0	9.3
1984	14,383,470	3,561,207	240,889	1.6	11.6
1985	13,025,287	2,988,174	266,798	1.3	8.7
1986	12,914,870	3,088,711	267,862	1.2	5.0
1987	11,540,178	2,934,349	276,352	0.06	2.8
1988	12,690,798	2,941,781	304,536	0.07	1.7
1989	12,721,087	2,729,528	335,824	0.08	2.8
1990	13,607,249	5,908,466	326,557	0.09	5.3
1991	13,776,854	3,123,277	368,897	0.05	4.1
1992	14,805,937	3,600,620	376,122	0.05	6.3
1993	15,870,280	4,032,083	383,488	0.09	7.3
1994	16,831,560	4,451,329	386,536	0.09	8.1
1995	15,741,078	5,084,546	391,035	0.07	14.6
1996	14,073,473	4,201,331	–	–	5.8
1997	14,695,333	3,921,616	–	–	7.3
1998	16,045,567	4,003,715	–	–	9.6
1999	17,907,010	3,717,185	–	–	9.0
2000	19,158,439	4,104,284	–	–	7.6
2001	19,385,177	4,601,082	–	–	8.0
2002	19,342,659	4,866,420	–	–	–

remarkably low level of effort, and probably the worst effort of all developing countries considering the school-age population and their obvious needs. Spending on education as a share of total federal-government expenditures decreased from 24.7% in 1981 to a low of 1.7% in 1988. In the 1990s, educational expenditures averaged just above 5% of total government expenditures (Central Bank of Nigeria 1995; cf. Table 1). Thus, education made up a smaller share of GNP and total government expenditures during the 1990s than it enjoyed in the first two decades after independence.

Over the years the insufficiency has remarkably wandered across education resources. In 1962 the distribution was 50% for primary education, 31% for secondary and 19% for tertiary education. In contrast, recent estimates show a very different priority of 36, 29 and 35%, respectively. The share for primary schooling has fallen appreciably, while that for tertiary education has increased dramatically (Hinchliffe 2002: 16). The bottom line is that current allocation of resources to primary education will not satisfy

the call for universal primary education, let alone for meeting the requirements of basic education. As the central government goes through the process of 'hollowing-out' its expenditures, while the ability of the local levels of government to contribute to education continues to decline, what is left of education may become inadequate to the tasks of nation-building and sustainable development. The 'hollowing-out' of the central government in primary education, combined with only scattered openings of private for-profit schools, make the task of finding affordable schools much more daunting for poor households, not least since an ever larger number of children are competing for enrolment slots.

Primary enrolment rates and other indicators of terminal efficiency and educational achievement are low, and there is considerable variation in both outcome and inputs across the country (Government of Nigeria 2001; Hinchliffe 2002). Education indicators clearly show a major gap between the sexes and among regions. Low enrolment is primarily a problem for children from poor households and for females. The bias is especially prevalent in the Muslim north. There has been a gradual increase in first-grade and primary-school enrolment over the period 1975–2002. Primary completion rates, which are even more accurate indicators of educational attainment than enrolment rates, were at a low average of 60% in the 1990s. As of 1996, the net primary enrolment was about 6%; the gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 75%; the illiteracy rate was in excess of 40%; and the gender gap around 25%.

Decentralisation in Education: Problems

The situation for primary education appears to be worse than that of secondary education, since it is financed mainly from the local governments' appropriation that is administratively controlled by State Primary Education Boards (SPEBs). According to these data Nigeria is "seriously off track" to meet the goals of Education for All (EFA), and it will require significant policy-retooling and unprecedented increases in primary enrolment rates to achieve the objectives of universal primary education and gender balance. The need to address these inadequacies cut to the heart of the policy of decentralisation in Nigeria. However, the issue became even more problematic under decentralisation, as expenditures gravitated to the second- and third-tier governments with less financial clout. The demand for education may be low because poor households perceive low returns from the children's consuming poor-quality public education. Thus, decentralisation as part of a larger policy of the central government has been singled out as the main impediment to universal education enrolment rates for Nigeria.

As in most developing countries, Nigerian education reform has been guided and driven at the federal level. Redistribution of administrative authority is about setting standards and ensuring that they are subscribed to and achieved. In so doing, the intermediate levels of governments or schools

take the blame for exclusion or poor-quality education rather than the central government. While there have been theoretical justifications for decentralising education systems in Nigeria, the process has been, overall, complex and undesirable.

The points raised in this section are consistent with the work of Carrin and Tshoane (2000), who posited that central-government authority over educational decision-making is never actually totally surrendered. In most instances, only fiscal and administrative responsibilities are transferred to peripheral sub-units. As experienced in other developing countries, the introduction of cost-recovery schemes such as community financing and parents' absorbing part of the education financial burden resulted, indeed, in serious adverse-demand effects at the primary school level. These are part of the reality of the literature, which has argued that decentralisation and the centrality of cost-recovery to education raise serious questions about equity (a concern in any situation where household or local funding is a significant component of education purchases) and access to different levels of education. Similarly, in the context of Nigeria, due to resource limitations and inadequate management of public expenditures, education has been selectively provided, as schools vary in quality and number in localities. For all of these practical reasons, some fairly strict conditions have to be satisfied if cost-sharing polices under decentralisation are not to offend equity, access, and efficiency criteria. It is in this realm of responsibility for results that Nigerian decentralisation and privatisation in education is found to be most wanting.

Lessons to be Learned from Nigeria

In Nigeria, the political motives of decentralisation did not allow for taking proper account of the following key factors, which represent necessary and sufficient conditions for an effective decentralisation as defined in this contribution:

1. Major gaps between rhetoric and reality arose as administrative and management functions were being decentralised without the adequate financial resources required to execute decentralisation effectively.

2. Little attention was given to the capacity of technical infrastructures and local manpower as well as the extremely poor state of finances in the peripheries. These policy oversights in design and implementation explain in part the huge gaps that exist between reform ideas and the poor attainment of the decentralisation goals of education for all. That, in turn, is why key educational stakeholders in Nigeria do not feel empowered. The center has had no problem abandoning financial responsibility, but it is having a hard time letting go of real functions for the effective delivery of education.

This present study sheds more light on the general perspective available from analyzing the decentralisation of education in Nigeria. It also lends credence to the fact that measures of decentralisation within centralisation have

not led to desired outcomes such as reductions in drop-out rates and an acceptable gender-equity ratio. All indications reveal a deep and on-going tension between the central government and lower tiers of authorities and a resulting fiscal incapacitation of the periphery to ensure equity and quality in the provision of social services, of which education is a major component. The Nigerian message clearly is that the key element needed for an effective decentralisation policy consists of the state's playing a leading role in guiding that decentralisation process and intervening where and when necessary to ensure that citizens benefited from it.

Conclusion

The country studies examined above demonstrate that user fees have undesirable outcomes such as excluding children from educational opportunities where compulsory education is not enforced. It is important to note that none of the advantages which could accumulate from decentralisation can justify placing the burden of financing primary education on poor households rather than providing free access to quality education financed through public expenditure. This conclusion supports the role of a 'strong government' in the provision of education as the last hope for a reversal of the reform effects. With careful attention to the lessons learned from the country studies as presented in the study reported here, educational policy-makers may well be able to respond so as to ensure that decentralisation enhances the quality of education in Nigeria and elsewhere. The centrality of user fees in decentralisation has caused serious disparities and generated enormous social and economic costs, which, in turn, have aroused conflicting expectations from different part of the nation. In particular, it has excluded school-age children whose parents are unable to pay the market price from receiving a basic education.

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PRIVATISATION, DECENTRALISATION AND GOVERNANCE IN EDUCATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC, ENGLAND, FRANCE, GERMANY AND SWEDEN

HOLGER DAUN

Abstract – The Czech Republic, England, France, Germany and Sweden differ culturally and economically, but they commonly exhibit general trends of decentralisation in the control of educational processes and outcomes. The present contribution looks at these five European countries as the venue for case studies in educational restructuring as well as evaluation, assessment and reporting. It shows that such trends have been most radical in the Czech Republic and Sweden, while England has centralised curriculum policy and France has devolved some decision-making to bodies at lower levels, but as representatives of the central state.

Zusammenfassung – PRIVATISIERUNG, DEZENTRALISIERUNG UND STAATLICHE LENKUNG IM BILDUNGSWESEN DER TSCHECHISCHEN REPUBLIK, ENGLANDS, FRANKREICHS, DEUTSCHLANDS UND SCHWEDENS – Die Tschechische Republik, England, Frankreich, Deutschland und Schweden unterscheiden sich kulturell und ökonomisch, lassen aber einen gemeinsamen Trend zur Dezentralisierung in der Lenkung des Bildungsprozesses und der Kontrolle seiner Resultate erkennen. Der vorliegende Beitrag betrachtet diese fünf europäischen Länder anhand von Fallstudien, die den Umstrukturierungsprozess, die Bewertung und die Beurteilung der Ausbildung sowie die Berichterstattung darüber untersuchen. Der Beitrag zeigt, dass derartige Trends in der Tschechischen Republik und Schweden ihre radikalste Ausformung erreicht haben, während England die Lehrplangestaltung zentralisiert und Frankreich einige Entscheidungen zwar an nachgeordnete Körperschaften delegiert hat, die aber immer noch als Repräsentanten des Zentralstaates verstanden werden.

Résumé – RÈPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE, ANGLETERRE, FRANCE, ALLEMAGNE ET SUÈDE: PRIVATISATION, DÉCENTRALISATION ET GOUVERNANCE DU SYSTÈME ÉDUCATIF – La République tchèque, l'Angleterre, la France, l'Allemagne et la Suède présentent des différences culturelles et économiques, mais elles dénotent toutes un mouvement général de décentralisation en matière d'autorité sur les méthodes et les résultats éducatifs. Cet article examine les cinq pays européens en tant que terrains d'études de cas sur la restructuration, l'évaluation, l'appréciation et la documentation de l'éducation. L'auteur établit que le mouvement est plus radical en République tchèque et en Suède, alors que l'Angleterre centralise sa politique curriculaire, et que la France délègue une partie de la prise de décision à des entités certes de niveaux inférieurs mais représentantes du gouvernement central.

Resumen – DESCENTRALIZACIÓN Y BUEN GOBIERNO DE LA EDUCACIÓN EN LA REPÚBLICA CHECA, INGLATERRA, FRANCIA, ALEMANIA Y SUECIA – La Repu´blica Checa, Inglaterra, Francia, Alemania y Suecia difieren a

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nivel cultural y ecońomico, pero comparten tendencias generales de descentralización en el control de procesos y resultados de la educación. Este trabajo se concentra en estas cinco naciones europeas como escenarios que ofrecen casos de estudio, en cuanto a reestructuración de la educación y también en cuanto a evaluación, calificación y confección de informes. El trabajo evidencia que estas tendencias han sido más radicales en la República Checa y Suecia, mientras que Inglaterra tiene una política de planes de estudio centralizada y Francia ha devuelto una parte de la toma de decisiones a entes de niveles más bajos, pero representantes del Estado central.

Резюме – ПРИВАТИЗАЦИЯ, ДЕЦЕНТРАЛИЗАЦИЯ И УПРАВЛЕНИЕ В СФЕРЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В ЧЕХИИ, АНГЛИИ, ФРАНЦИИ, ГЕРМАНИИ И ШВЕЦИИ – В Чехии, Англии, Франции, Германии и Швеции, несмотря на культурные и экономические различия, наблюдаются общие тенденции децентрализации, касающиеся контроля за образовательным процессом и его результатами. В данной статье рассматривается пятерка европейских стран в качестве модели для исследования процесса реструктуризации образования, а также для оценки его результатов. Автор статьи показывает, что рассматриваемые тенденции являются наиболее радикальными в Чехии и Швеции, в то время как в Англии политика, проводимая в отношении учебной программы была централизована, а во Франции органам местной власти было передано право самостоятельного принятия некоторых решений, но в качестве представителей центральной власти.

Sweden, England, France, Germany and the Czech Republic had different historical developments and rather dissimilar education systems until the end of the 1980s. Since then, all five countries have implemented similar education policies, which include more frequent evaluation, assessment and monitoring from above and reporting from below. This study presents an overview and comparison of some important restructuring initiatives and, in particular, the new arrangements for evaluation, assessment and reporting in the five countries.

Sweden: Radical and Rapid Restructuring

For many years Sweden was well known for giving priority to equality of education (regardless of socioeconomics, geography, ethnic background or gender). This was attempted through one of the most centralised education systems in the world. Centralisation, urbanisation and international influences had all affected political and cultural developments in Sweden. Following the worldwide recession of the 1970s, economic growth slowed, while public expenditure continued to increase. In the 1980s the government introduced three major policy initiatives: (i) decentralisation of administrative bodies and transferal of the decision-making process to lower levels in the state apparatus (from the central to lower levels), (ii) privatisation of public companies and service units, and (iii) the reduction of public expenditures (Montin 1992).

During the 1950s a new comprehensive education system was tested over ten years in a number of municipalities. A 9-year compulsory education system was then implemented on a national scale in 1962. Some thirty years later, another dramatic shift occurred within a short period (1988–1994) – the move from a centralised to a decentralised education system. Schools were put under municipal control in 1988. A great deal of decision-making was decentralised from the national level to the municipality or to school levels. Freedom of school choice (open enrolment) was introduced, and a combination of de-regulation and increased funding made it easier for private schools to emerge. In 1994 the curriculum and the grading system of compulsory and upper secondary education was reformed.

The basic principle which currently dominates the Swedish education system is that "everybody should have access to an equivalent education, regardless of their gender, ethnic or social background, or place of residence" (SMES 1997: 7). The goals and objectives, as well as the curriculum for compulsory and upper secondary education, have been established by the National Parliament. At the central state level the National Agency for Education (NAE), which replaced the National Board of Education and its provincial sub-units, monitors the achievement of defined national goals.

Decentralisation

In 2003, the NAE was divided into two agencies – one dealing with school development and the other with assessment and monitoring. Responsibility for evaluation, inspection and development work was taken over by the municipalities. A large number of decisions are now made by the municipalities or by the school principals themselves (SMES 1997). For instance, until 1991, the maximum class size was established centrally, but now the limits are set by the individual school (Skolverket 1996c). Some elements of the school principal's power are delegated from the local political level, and some come directly from legislative documents at the national level.

Since 1991, lump-sums have been allocated directly to the municipalities which then decide how to use the money. These subsidies are intended for all activities administered by the municipalities, such as social welfare, health and education. Each school then receives a lump-sum based on the number of pupils enrolled, which consists of money allocated from both the central and municipal levels. In the past, the municipalities received earmarked subsidies with very specific guidelines. The financing of primary and secondary education is shared between the central state and the municipalities. The state subsidies cover approximately 50% of educational costs (OECD 1997), while the remaining portion has to be provided by the municipality, which levies local taxes. Each school is, in principle, paid per pupil, and has a high degree of autonomy in deciding the distribution of the funding of various items. Schools themselves determine how and what to teach in order to achieve the national goals on various criteria for grading pupils.

In 1994, a new curriculum was introduced. Until then the schools had to strictly follow the detailed and centrally imposed curriculum. The new curriculum has eight core subjects taught throughout the country. Upper secondary (high-school) education was reformed when the comprehensive school was introduced. In 1994 education was again radically reformed.

Private Schools

Before 1991, private school choice was difficult, since such schools were rare and often charged school fees. Subsidies to private schools have always been a source of conflict. Since the subsidies were dramatically increased in the beginning of the 1990s, they have undergone several transformations. Since 1997, they have been determined by the municipalities themselves on the basis of the common needs of all schools and pupils in each municipality. The municipality allocates subsidies according to the school's needs, providing "subsidies to private school which are to be determined with regard to the school's responsibility and the needs of pupils, and in accordance with the principles which apply to public schools" (Skolverket 1998a: 6). Before the formal establishment of a private school, approval must be granted by the NAE. The establishment of such a school should not involve "essential organisational or economic difficulties for education" (in the municipality) (Education Act, Chapter 9, SFS 1997).

From 1998/99 the cost per pupil has been higher in private than in public schools. In that year, the total cost was SEK 51,300 (36,800–71,800) in public schools and SEK 51,600 (23,600–421,000) in private schools (variation within parentheses) (Skolverket 1996e, 1997c, 2002). The percentage of pupils in compulsory education increased from approximately one in 1992/93 to four in 2002, and the increase was of a similar scale in secondary education.

Private schools are obligated to follow the national curriculum and the various regulations and laws. This means for instance, that a private school has to accept all applicants, regardless of their background or abilities: "[P]rivate schools must, in the same way as municipal schools, be based on a democratic foundation and characterised by democratic values, openness, tolerance, objectivity and versatility" (SMES 1997: 12). In 2000, out of 288 municipalities, 150 municipalities had private schools. Such schools are heavily concentrated in the three biggest cities (66% of all private schools) (Skolverket 2001: 32). In 2001, the vast majority of the private schools had a specific pedagogical profile, while others had a denominational, ethnic or other profile. Many of the denominational and ethnic or linguistic schools are owned and operated by religious groups, including various Christian and Muslim associations (Skolverket 1996a, 1997a, 2001). These features are also found at the upper secondary level. At this level, there is still more diversity, since these schools can introduce a larger range of subjects and options for the pupils (Skolverket 1998b, 1999a, b; *Dagens Nyheter* 1999).

Choice

Before 1991, it was practically impossible for a pupil to choose his or her own school. Since the beginning of the 1990s, school choice has included public as well as private schools. However, Sweden is a sparsely populated country. In large areas of the country the distance between schools makes it unrealistic to actually exercise the right to choose a school other than to select the closest one to home (Skolverket 1996b, 1998b). In urban areas such opportunities exist and there is, at least in the largest cities, full competition between the schools. In urban areas, private schools are chosen predominantly by pupils of Nordic origin and whose parents have higher than high-school education.

Formerly the municipalities were obliged to establish catchment areas for the schools. This system is maintained, but today schools are allowed to admit pupils as long as there is an available place and adequate teaching facilities and provided the admittance of pupils from outside the district does not endanger places for the eligible pupils or the quality of teaching (Skolverket 1996c). Under a voucher system, money 'accompanies' each pupil. The system also requires reporting from below and increased monitoring and assessment from the top. Also, there has been a shift from steering by regulation to steering by objectives, goals and results.

Evaluation, Assessment, Inspection

Each municipality must have a plan for all its schools which indicates the way the national goals are to be achieved. Every school must have a working plan compatible with the municipal plan further specifying the way national and municipal goals are to be attained at the school level. Finally, each teacher is required to design his or her own teaching plan, which has to be approved by the school principal (SFS 1994).

National standardised tests were introduced before the implementation of the comprehensive school in 1962. They continued to be administered in grades 5 and 9. Broader national evaluations, including school processes, are conducted every third year. The first of them was undertaken in 1992. School activities are evaluated in relation to attainment of national goals rather than in accordance with certain rules and regulations. The teacher must arrange a progress meeting at least once per term. At this meeting, the teacher, parents and pupil discuss the pupil's academic and social achievements (Skolverket 2000).

The municipality is obliged to deliver an annual quality report to the NAE, but there has been a slow start in reporting from the local level. A little over 200 out of 288 municipalities complete their reports, and even fewer have their reports approved. Also, schools and municipalities have to report in a standardised way on budget activities (Skolverket 2000: 22).

England: Decentralisation and Centralisation

In the 1960s, there was a movement for comprehensive schools. During the 1970s and in the first half of the 1980s employers were dissatisfied with the skills and knowledge-base acquired by pupils in the school system (Freeman and Soete 1994) and there was discontent with comprehensive schools (Sammons et al. 2003: 10). This contributed to the demand for radical measures to be taken in order to improve the quality of compulsory education.

The Local Education Authorities (LEAs) gradually undermined the power of churches over educational matters, and at the local level strong corporatism existed between the LEAs and the teachers' unions. The Conservatives viewed this as an obstacle to school improvement, and from the beginning of the 1980s they began to restructure the education system through a series of reforms. As the following time line indicates, this process has continued up to the present:

1980 Parents were given the ability to choose schools within the public system.

1988 A national curriculum was implemented; national assessment of achievement among pupils aged 7, 11,14 and 16 years was set up; schools were allowed to opt out of the LEAs and become grant-maintained schools; an Assisted Places Scheme was also introduced targeting underprivileged but high-achieving pupils who were given special support to continue in secondary schools of their own choice (McLean 1989).

1992 All secondary schools and some primary schools were put under Local Management of Schools (LMS) and were given the mandate to control their own budgets (local management financing).

1993 The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) was established and publication of inspection reports was undertaken (United Kingdom 1994). Quasi-markets began to emerge (Whitty 1997).

1996 Schools Inspections Act.

1997 Local government associations were established in 1997. Grant-maintained schools were brought back under LEAs as foundation schools,but these schools have more autonomy than others. Promotion of Specialist (profile) schools and Faith schools was taking place.

1998 A new framework for community schools, foundation schools and voluntary schools was set up, thus ending grant-maintained schools. Community schools are former country schools and are mostly set up by LEAs; foundation schools (many of which were grant-maintained schools) are funded by LEAs like community schools; voluntary controlled schools and voluntary aided schools were established.

2000 Local Government Act.

2002 Schools gained autonomy (well-run schools qualified for greater flexibility in certain areas of the National Curriculum). School companies

were introduced, which meant that schools were able to combine and form companies.

There is a variety of schools labelled in different ways. Principally, a distinction can be made between private and public schools. Some of the former are state-funded and controlled, while others are not. The majority of schools which are non-denominational are state-funded comprehensive schools.

Centralisation–Decentralisation

The Secretary of State sets a minimum level of budget for any LEA. Generally, the regional level is not at all concerned with education (Eurydice 2003a: 19). Below the national level, there are two types of local government– one in which the local authority provides all public services and another in which county councils provide the bulk of education and social services.

After the reforms of the 1980s, the 152 LEAs were no longer able to formulate and implement their own policies. For instance, financial responsibility and hiring and firing of teachers had been moved from the LEAs to the schools. The LEAs had to provide and oversee the organisation of public education in the area (Sammons et al. 2003: 10) under their jurisdiction. This included pre-school institutions, primary schools and the provision of school places and admissions, financial administration, monitoring and improving standards, staffing and staff development, school meals and transport. Since 2000, the LEAs have a duty to make unannounced visits to 10% of state-subsidised schools in their area. LEAs determine funding for individual schools (Eurydice 2003a: 22). Some LEAs have out-sourced educational services to private companies.

School governing bodies have existed for many years, but recently all LEA-maintained schools have been obliged to have such a body which deals with staffing levels and recruitment. The main roles of the school governing body are: to provide strategic planning, to ensure that the national curriculum is implemented and to act as a 'critical friend' to the school; to ensure accountability; and to establish a written performance management policy for governing the implementation of schoolteacher appraisal (Sammons et al. 2003).

The size and composition of the governing bodies vary with the size of the school and consist of the head-teacher and parent representatives elected by the parents (since 1998), LEA representatives, teachers, staff, and co-opted governors who are appoint by ed the governing body at the school. In 2002, the composition of the governing bodies was changed. The number may now vary from 9 to 20 (Eurydice 2003a: 26). Beginning in September 2003, the stakeholders' model was introduced. This was done to ensure that "the voices of parents, staff, members of the community" and the LEA are heard (Sammons et al. 2003: 64).

All categories of maintained schools enjoy a high level of autonomy; however, the school governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools have more responsibilities than community and voluntary controlled schools. Head-teachers respond to the governing body. Since 2002, successful schools have been able to reach the status of earned autonomy, which means that they are given greater autonomy and freedom.

The LEAs receive their funding from two sources: the central government and money raised by the local authority itself through communal taxes. The majority of the central-government funding is allocated through the LEAs (Eurydice 2003a: 41). Maintained schools are paid 100% of all costs, voluntary-aided schools 100% of running costs, but only a small proportion of capital expenditure. Each school is awarded 75% on the basis of pupil numbers, combined with an indexed amount related to pupils' age, needs for special education and other requirements (Eurydice 2003a: 43).

In 1998, Education Action Zones (EAZs) were set up consisting of local clusters of up to around 20 schools. The zones are based on areas which faced challenging circumstances in terms of underachievement or disadvantage (Eurydice 2003a: 20).

Private Schools

Private schools are institutions that are largely privately funded and receive most of their income from tuition fees. Such schools are not controlled by the state bodies. Most of the private schools are run by different Christian associations, Muslims and Jews. The Church of England has voluntary-aided schools, voluntary controlled schools and private schools. Most Catholic schools are voluntary aided institutions (Eurydice 2003a).

Only 7% of all school-age pupils are enrolled in private schools which are not under local or central-government control and do not receive funding, but instead charge fees. The private sector is, however, very heterogeneous. There are elite schools as well as denominational schools which have a low performance, while among the traditionally high-prestige grammar schools, a high proportion, according to research findings, have not been performing well (Sammons et al. 2003: 14).

Choice is maximal since there exists open enrolment. Parents are free to send their children to any school, provided that they can meet the extra costs in terms of transport, fees etc. Parents who choose to send their children to a school not within walking distance are responsible for transport. However, if the choice is made for religious reasons, the LEA must take this into consideration and support the parents as far as possible. When it comes to primary and secondary education, the parents have the right to express a preference as to which school they would like send their child, however, if the school is oversubscribed, admission is based on specific criteria (Walford 2003).

Evaluation, Assessment, Inspection

A body specifically dedicated to inspection, the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), was set up in 1993. It monitors educational standards, and its role has expanded in recent years. National assessments in the core subjects – English, Mathematics and Science – are conducted at the end of the four key stages (ages 7, 11, 14 and 16). The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is responsible for regulating and developing national assessments and for ensuring common standards across different examination boards. Since 1998 the LEAs are inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The school governing board is obliged to produce an annual report containing a full financial statement to be published by the LEA. Schools are supposed to publish a prospectus and an annual report on performance in national examinations. The head-teachers and staff report to the governing school body. Parents and children have the right to receive a written report on their child's academic achievement annually.

France: Decentralisation *Without Market F***orces**

France has a long tradition of direct state involvement in the economy and the proportion of state ownership has been comparatively large. However, privatisation began to take place during the 1990s (Carliner 1995). The government presents plans which indicate the desirable level of production to be achieved, but generally does not interfere in the private sector. On the other hand, the state is strategically involved in high-technology industries and stimulates innovations within this domain.

The education system consists of a basic cycle (2 years), an elementary cycle (5 years), *collège* (lower secondary: 4 years), and *lycée* (upper secondary: three branches: general, technical or vocational). Until the mid-1980s, the high degree of centralisation of the French education system was seen to be a way of guaranteeing educational equality in terms of economics, geography and culture (France 1992). From a highly centralised state, decentralisation took place to regions and *departements*, the latter being more like state antennas than bodies channelling the state policy to the grassroots. In 1983, secondary schools were given the status of local public institutions, which implied a great deal of autonomy.

Under the central state, there are territorial bodies at three different levels: region, *departement* and *commune*. The state is responsible for curriculum, finance and recruitment and training of staff, the regions for the *lycées*, the *departements* for the *colleges*, and the *communes* for the primary schools (Eurydice 2003b). Primary and secondary schools are administered by the Ministry of Education through the 28 regional offices headed by directors appointed by the government. The regions are divided into *departements* and are staffed with inspectors appointed by the government (France 1990,

1992). The central state pays salaries, equipment, and textbooks according to the number of pupils and the resources of the *communes*.

In lower and upper secondary education, the regions are allocated school equipment budgets from the central level and *departements* receive a departmental school-equipment budget. These subsidies are distributed to the *collèges* and *lycées*, which have financial autonomy and manage their operating budgets themselves. It should also be noted that a new curriculum was implemented in 1995.

Decentralisation

Since the 1980s, some decision-making has been moved from the central level to lower levels through delegation or deconcentration. School councils for pre-school institutions and primary schools were implemented in 1976. The council includes the head-teachers, teachers and elected representatives of the parents, the mayor of the *commune* and the town councillor representative for schools. The council defines the appropriate strategies for attaining national goals and establishes a school plan (*projet d'école*). There is a governing board which includes representatives of the local authorities, elected representatives of school staff, and elected representatives of parents. At the upper secondary level, the *lycées* are autonomous in terms of pedagogy (Emin and Levasseur 2003).

Private Schools

Private schools can have different types of affiliation with the state, implying different levels of subsidisation and degrees of control (Eurydice 2003b; Fowler 1991). Any individual, association or company may open a private educational institution. A simple contract applies to primary schools and lasts for 3 years, while an associate contract applies to both primary and secondary schools and has an indefinite duration. Before applying for state support, a private school has to have been functioning successfully for at least 5 years (without financial support) and must accept state regulations governing premises, equipment and the number of pupils per class (Eurydice 2003b).

Schools which receive subsidies must also agree to state inspection of contracts, buildings and teacher competence. All schools must follow the national curriculum to the extent that they are subsidised by the state. The strict regulation of private schools in France has prevented competition between public and private schools, causing them to converge. Most private schools are run by the Roman Catholic Church, but due to the control and processes of secularisation, these schools have become increasingly similar to public schools. For instance, teachers recruited by these schools are no longer required to be Roman Catholics. Within the private sector there are some elite schools, but their profile is more 'classical' than that of the schools in the public sector (Teese 1989). In 1999/2000, nearly 15% of all students in

primary and secondary education were enrolled in private schools (Eurydice 2003b).

Choice

At the primary and secondary levels, parents are obliged to enrol their children in a school belonging to the geographical area where they live. If the parents wish to choose another school within the *commune*, they must apply to the authorities for the permission to change schools. If they wish to choose a school in another commune, they must apply to the mayor in that *commune* (Eurydice 2003b).

Evaluation, Assessment, Inspection

At the central level, the Education General Inspectorate (IGEN) deals with the national curriculum and the General Inspectorate of Education Administration (IGAEN) with financial and administrative affairs. These bodies inspect teaching and learning arrangements and the use of resources as well as compliance with laws and regulations. Below the central level, there are 28 regional pedagogical inspectors, whose role is to stimulate, assess and inspect staff. On the basis of these evaluations, teachers are graded according to certain criteria, and this grading is used when teachers seek employment in another school.

Entrance assessments are made of pupils at the ages of 8, 11 and 15 years of age. The pupils are evaluated throughout the year by the teachers. A pupil's promotion from one grade to the next is decided by the teacher. Parents are kept informed of their children's progress by means of school report books. Also, at the end of each year, the school council conducts an evaluation of the running of the school, based on the school plan.

Germany: From One Decentralised Level to Another

Until the beginning of the 1990s, Germany, a federal state, had, a high gross national product *per capita* and also a high growth rate. At this time the country began to encounter economic problems and began to consider education more directly in an economic context. Political authority is shared between the federal government and the governments of the states (*Länder*). The 1949 Federal Constitution gave *Länder* in the federation jurisdiction in educational matters. The *Länder* have authority over all levels of education. The federal body for the coordination of educational issues between the *Länder* is the Permanent Conference of the Ministers of Culture. Important issues must be decided not only by the National Parliament but also by the federal council (Schmidt 1989).

Apart from the problems associated with the unification of East and West Germany, the German education system was comparatively stable. According to Telhaug (1990), this was due to the decentralised education system (the *Länder* had strong autonomy in relation to the federal government) and to the fact that the German economy continued to expand until the beginning of the 1990s.

Today there are different combinations of primary and secondary education: the comprehensive school (13 years); four years of primary and then nine years in secondary; four years in primary plus non-academic (*Hauptschule*) 5 years. The upper-primary/lower-secondary level is divided into different branches, one of which is academically oriented.

From the early 1970s, plans to restructure the West German education system focused on the comprehensive schools. Authorities in the *Länder* varied in their views on such schools according to political party. The CDU (Christian Democratic Union) favoured maintenance of the existing system, while SPD (Social Democratic Party of Germany) argued for the comprehensive school (Telhaug 1990). The issue was therefore left to the governments and school districts of the *Länder* to decide. If a certain number of parents in a school district request it, the school can be made comprehensive. Some 7% of the pupils attend comprehensive schools.

East Germany had a highly centralised system with ten years of comprehensive education. There were no private schools. The level of achievement was comparatively high, especially in the vocational branches. After the collapse of Soviet Union, the structure of the education system broke down, and alternative schools, such as Waldorf, Montessori and Freinet emerged (Manning 1998). With unification, some states began to subsidise all costs in private schools, while others paid 10% of the total expenditure. Comprehensive schools have tended to be more common in the eastern part of the country. In *Länder* dominated by CDU, selective *Gymnasien* (academically oriented high schools) were re-established. All the East German *Länder* have abstained from re-establishing *Hauptschulen* (Weiss 1993). Increasingly, the future of the *Hauptschule* is being debated (Weiss 1993).

Before re-unification, two types of educational restructuring were implemented in West Germany: (i) decentralisation of some area from the *Länder* to the school level; and (ii) increased monitoring and assessment of school quality and performance from the *Länder* level. Due to the scale and speed of immigration, the education system faced considerable problems of adaptation. Between 1970 and 1985 the proportion of foreign pupils in the *Grundschulen* and *Hauptschulen* increased from about 2% to 14%.

Decentralisation

The federal level allocates different responsibilities to bodies at lower levels, according to the 'principle of subsidiarity'; ideally, decisions should not be made at a higher level than necessary. In most cases non-state bodies, including

the churches and 'private agencies', are involved. Individual schools have been allowed increased decision-making, with the direct participation of those involved, including teachers, parents and pupils. New forms of school committees having their own areas of responsibility have emerged. Their frequency and characteristics vary not only between the *Länder* but also between districts. In terms of funding, the federal level covers 5% of educational expenditures, the *Länder* 35%, and the local communities 15%. Local authorities finance kindergarten and school buildings as well as the cost of technical and administrative personnel.

Private Schools

Parents and others are permitted to establish private schools, but the same laws also protect children from 'inadequate' educational institutions. Private schools are regulated and inspected and subsidies conditional. In 1987, the German constitutional court found that state funding of alternative private schooling was essential to the constitutionally guaranteed free development of individual personality (Glenn 1994). Private schools which receive subsidies cannot exceed the average cost per pupil in the public sector, but they are permitted to charge school fees. The amount and types of subsidies vary from one state to another (Weiss and Mattern 1989).

There are two types of private schools: *substitute* schools and *complementary* schools. The substitute schools organise general elementary or secondary education. They must be approved by the *Länder* government, and must follow the same regulations as public schools, that is, the public curriculum, inspection and control (Mason 1989). Complementary schools are principally vocational or professional schools providing types of education that are not found in the public sector. They simply register and are then neither controlled by the state nor are eligible for subsidies (Weiss 1989). Taken as a whole, however, there is no trend towards increased privatisation, despite the positive attitude toward such schools found in some opinion polls (Manning 1998).

Evaluation, Assessment, Inspection

Evaluation is more prioritised in some states than in others. Self-evaluation, external evaluation and reports are the main components in the new system. Self-evaluation is obligatory at all levels and relates to all aspects of school life and organisation.

The Czech Republic: Restoration and Innovation

Until 1939, the Czech education system had developed in parallel with other education systems in Europe, and it ranked among the best. After the communist take-over in 1948, the education system was made similar to those in

other communist countries. Compulsory education was a 10-year comprehensive basic school. Secondary education was also dominated by the state-controlled enterprises, with their uniform purpose. The primary goal of all secondary education was the formation of socialist citizens. Czechoslovakia was divided into the Czech Republic and Slovakia in 1993. During the first years following the collapse of the communist regime, educational transformation was mainly spontaneous and the result of bottom-up initiative and implementation. Two principal orientations emerged: one towards restoration and another one towards innovation and borrowing from the West (Daun and Sapatoru 2002).

As one of the measures of restoration, the pre-war structure of education was revived with basic education being divided into two levels. The first level comprises grades one to five, and the second level comprises grades six to nine. The number of basic schools increased by 8%, due to the revival of village schools. The *gymnasia* (which is more than 4 years) was restored. Impulses for innovation partially came from abroad. According to Rýdl (1998): "Immediately after the Czech Republic (CR) changed course in 1989, the country was inundated with foreign advisers, teams of experts from different international organisations, representatives of foundations, numerous western universities and the like." Decentralisation, per-pupil subsidy and other measures were borrowed from Western Europe. The principle changes after 1989 may be summarised as follows: the de-politicalisation of education and training; the recognition of the right of pupils (or their parents) to choose their educational path; the breaking-down of the state monopoly in education; and the decentralisation of management (Rýdl 1998). Educational transformation was characterised by (i) the general opening-up and liberalisation of the system and (ii) the limited involvement of the state in certain areas, such as the development of institutional structures.

Changes involved the structure of the system as a whole, the curricula, legislation, management, administration and financing of the system and its schools, and creation of new schools. Such institutions were mainly formed at the secondary level. Some new integrated secondary schools with various types of educational programs were established. At the primary and secondary level, there are different school types: the basic cycle (5 years) plus 4 years in lower secondary in another school; the basic cycle plus 8 years in lower/upper secondary in another school; or 7 years in a comprehensive school plus 6 years of lower/upper secondary (Eurydice 2003c).

In 1994 79% of the total expenditure on education came from the state budget and 21% from the municipalities. With the devolution of power to the regional level, all money was transferred by the regional bodies to lower levels (Eurydice 2003c). To date, only a small share of educational costs are paid by the municipalities who are still trying to find and implement an effective tax system.

Decentralisation

During the first half of the 1990s, the main actors in the governance and administration of the education system were the Ministry of Education, the National School Inspectorate, and other central bodies of the state administration, the School Offices, the municipalities and directors of schools. The country has passed through an extensive process of decentralisation. At the same time, certain centralising features persist or have returned.

In the mid-1990s, 76 school offices at the district were established and had some authority by delegation from the central level. They were meant to function as links between the Ministry, municipalities and schools, and dealt predominantly with economic, financial and administrative matters and, to some extent, with pedagogical issues at the basic school level. Since the end of the 1990s, these have been gradually abolished and another type of governance substituted. Fourteen regional authorities were established. Some of the functions of the district offices are now being re-centralised to the regional level, while others are being delegated to municipality and school levels.

However, municipalities and their education officers have had a rather limited impact on education reforms, due to their limited competence in educational matters. The municipality authorities are meant to be fully integrated and multi-functional, with the implication that education is only one of their activities. Municipalities (more than 6,200) are now responsible for creating the necessary conditions for compulsory school attendance. Some 80% of the municipalities have fewer than 1,000 inhabitants. They establish pre-school institutions and basic schools and are responsible for their economic administration (Eurydice 2003c).

School councils were established in 1995 and included representatives of school founders, parents and older students, altogether 6–15 members with at least one-third representing the teache-s and one third the pupils/parents (Eurydice 2003c). Also, in the mid-1990s, decision-making was delegated to school directors. Secondary schools became independent legal entities. A similar status was given to some basic schools. Universities regained their academic freedom and were granted autonomy (Rýdl 2003). Basic schools now have considerable autonomy in economic matters, on issues relating to personnel and administration and, to a certain extent, also in relation to pedagogical issues. School directors have total responsibility for quality and effectiveness, the financial management of the school, recruitment of teachers and the relations with the municipality and other stakeholders.

Private Schools

After 1989, private or non-state schools were permitted. Of all primary and secondary school pupils, 5% are in the private sector (Filer and Munich 2003). The number of private schools has nearly doubled each year over the

past few years. These schools may charge school fees. At the upper-secondary level private schools now amount to around 25%, containing nearly 13% of the students (Filer and Munich 2003: 221).

Private schools, especially upper-secondary institutions, have reacted rapidly to changes in the demands of the labour market and to the demand of parents and students for higher-quality education. Most private schools have unrestricted decision-making powers within the legal framework. During the first half of the 1990s, subsidies amounted almost to the level of the average cost of a pupil in the public sector. A distinction was therefore made between different types of private schools; schools run by voluntary associations or parents receive 90% of the per-pupil cost in the public sector, while other non-state educational institutions receive 50% (Eurydice 2003c: 37). Before establishing a private school, the organiser has to submit an application to the Ministry, including a conceptualisation of the education to be offered, plan of finance, number of classes and pupils (Eurydice 2003c).

Choice

New rules for the distribution of state funds were implemented with the introduction of 'formula funding' (meaning that money accompanies the pupils) in the beginning of the 1990s. Thus, schools receive per-pupil subsidies. Costs per student are calculated according to the level and type of school and an index which compensates for pupils with learning disabilities and the economic conditions of the geographical area. Schools are expected to market themselves and to inform parents about their educational profile.

The municipality is the main catchment area, and where there is more than one school, municipality authorities define the area. A pupil has the right to a place in the school of the catchment area, but a pupil also has the right to choose a school. This means that schools can compete for pupils as long as all places are not occupied by those legally eligible for a place. Parents may enrol their child at a school outside their catchment area. Private upper-secondary schools can charge fees.

Evaluation, Assessment, Inspection

The National School Inspectorate monitors education results, levels of professional and pedagogical management, staffing conditions, teaching materials and equipment, efficiency and school compliance with regulations. Its role has increasingly come to include consultation and evaluation. Recently, inspectorates have been established in the fourteen regions (Eurydice 2003c: 36).

A nationwide test administered in 1994 assessed the general educational level of the students in their final year of basic education (Rýdl 1998). A standardised test carried out in 1995 showed relatively large differences in academic achievement; students from public *gymnasia* produced slightly higher

Table 1. Comparison of principal features of governance in the five countries

	Country				
	Czech Rep.	England	France	Germany	Sweden
Primary and secondary education	Comprehensive and parallel	Mainly comprehensive	Mainly comprehensive	Mainly parallel	Mainly comprehensive
Decentralisation	Regions, municipalities school councils (volitional).	Local education authorities, school councils (obligatory), school directors.	Regions, limited at municipality level, school councils.	Regions (*Länder*), school councils emerging.	Municipalities, schools, school directors.
Private schools, % enrolled (primary–lower secondary)	< 1	7	15	5–7	4
Choice	Full choice: Open enrolment. Market forces.	Full choice: Open enrolment. Market forces.	Very restricted and exceptional.	Possible but rare.	Full choice: Open enrolment. Market forces.
Evaluation, assessment, inspection	National inspection, regional inspection. National testing. Self-evaluation and reporting at school level.	National inspection. National testing in certain grades. Self-evaluation and reporting at school level.	National and regional inspection. National testing in certain grades. Schools reporting.	*Länder* inspection.	National evaluations. National testing in certain grades. Municipal plans, school plans, teacher plans. Reporting from school to municipality, from municipality to national agency.

Note: 'Mainly comprehensive' means that the large majority of schools are public schools common for all pupils but a minority are in private schools.

results, while private *gymnasia* were found to have a more liberal and less stressful atmosphere (Rýdl 2003). Since 1995, all schools have been obliged to produce and publish an annual report. The municipalities are now autonomous self-administering units, despite their limited competencies in schooling. The scope of school autonomy is still not clearly defined, and there is a gap between the laws and decrees and actual practice in the schools.

Comparison and Conclusions

The education systems of the five countries differed substantially before 1980. Although some convergence has taken place, they are still rather dissimilar. However, they have to a large extent introduced the same types of governance and steering mechanisms including: evaluation and assessment from above; self-evaluation at the school level, and reporting from the schools to a governing board at the local level and/or reporting to higher administrative or political levels.

Decentralisation has been most radical in the Czech Republic and Sweden, where much decision-making has been moved from the national level to the municipality or even school level. England has a centralised curriculum policy, while France has devolved some decision-making to bodies at local levels, although they represent the central state.

Private schools have always played an important role in France, and to some extent in England. They have been less frequent in the Czech Republic and Sweden. This is still the case despite deregulation and substantially increased subsidies. School choice arrangements seem to be most radical in the Czech Republic, England and Sweden, where there is open enrolment and no limitations as to the geographical basis of choice. In these countries, choice has also been combined with market forces. France has the most restrictive policy in relation to school choice.

The processes and outcomes of the restructuring policies in Europe since the 1980s reveal some similarities between the countries. Some confusion exists concerning the new roles of school leaders within the new structure of decision-making. Also, school leaders have become increasingly involved in administrative matters. This is a new phenomenon that, to some extent, seems to undermine their traditional role as pedagogical leaders (Skolverket 1997b; Rýdl 2003). Furthermore, no direct relationship can be established between changing governance and pupil achievement in any of the five countries. Sweden, for instance, had a decline in the average national tests during the end of the 1990s but a small improvement from 2000/2001 (Skolverket 2003).

The processes and outcomes of education reforms are conditioned by the specific cultural characteristics of each country and its local communities. In this regard, the Czech Republic, due to five decades of a highly centralised and politicised system, differs from the other countries. For this reason it also lacks the necessary experience of local management and initiative.

Finally, the processes of changing school governance and educational outcomes based on decentralization and privatisation must be understood in terms of the reforms having been implemented in the context of an economic recession, budget cuts, and shrinking funds for the public sector.

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PRIVATISATION, DECENTRALISATION AND EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM: THE ROLE OF THE STATE

DAVID TURNER

Abstract – Since the early 1950s, the axis 'centralisation–decentralisation', especially as thematised in the work of Isaac Kandel, has represented a major focus of comparative studies in education. Kandel argued that issues relating to the internal conduct of the classroom (*interna*) should, so far as possible, be decentralised, while issues relating to administration, school structure and organisation of the educational system (*externa*) might safely be centralised. After 1988, successive governments in the United Kingdom have undertaken reforms which have placed more central control on the curriculum and even methods of teaching (*interna*), while school finance and administration (*externa*) have been devolved to the school level. The present essay argues that a simplistic approach to centralisation and decentralisation is not likely to be fruitful. Instead, we should acknowledge the role of the State in creating a 'permissive framework' for educational systems. Local action can then be seen as part of a policy accommodating or resisting the implications of that framework.

Zusammenfassung – PRIVATISIERUNG, DEZENTRALISIERUNG UND BILDUNG IM VEREINIGTEN KÖNIGREICH: DIE ROLLE DES STAATES – Seit den frühen Fünfziger Jahren stellt die Achse,'Zentralisierung–Dezentralisierung', besonders als Thema im Werk Isaac Kandels, einen Schwerpunkt der vergleichenden Studien dar, die sich mit der Bildung befassen. Kandels Argumentation ist, dass Fragen, die die interne Leitung einer Schulklasse betreffen (*interna*), so weit wie möglich dezentralisiert werden sollten, während Fragen, die die Verwaltung, die Schulstruktur und die Organisation des Bildungssystems (*externa*) betreffen, gut zentralisiert werden könnten. Nach 1988 haben die jeweiligen Regierungen im Vereinigten Königreich Reformen eingeleitet, die die Aufsicht über den Lehrplan und sogar die Lehrmethoden (*interna*) zentralisiert haben, während die Schulfinanzierung und -verwaltung (*externa*) auf die Schulebene übertragen wurden. Die vorliegende Abhandlung vertritt die Auffassung, dass eine simplifizierende Beschäftigung mit den Begriffen der Zentralisierung und Dezentralisierung wahrscheinlich fruchtlos sei. Stattdessen sollten wir die Rolle des Staates anerkennen, soweit er lockere Rahmenbedingungen für das Bildungssystem schafft. Lokales Handeln kann dann als Teil einer Politik betrachtet werden, die den Implikationen der genannten Rahmenbedingungen entspricht oder widerspricht.

Résumé – PRIVATISATION ET DÉCENTRALISATION DE L'ÉDUCATION AU ROYAUME-UNI: LE RÔLE DE L'ÉTAT – Depuis le début des années 50, l'axe <centralisation–décentralisation>, thématisé notamment dans l'ouvrage d'Isaac Kandel, constitue une dominante majeure dans les études comparées sur l'éducation. Kandel soutient que les aspects concernant la conduite interne de la classe (les *interna*) devraient être autant que possible décentralisés, alors que les

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questions relatives à l'administration, à la structure scolaire et à l'organisation du système éducatif (les *externa*) pourraient être centralisées en toute sécurité. Après 1988, les gouvernements successifs du Royaume-Uni ont entrepris des réformes qui plaçaient une autorité plus centrale sur les programmes et même sur les méthodes d'enseignement (*interna*), alors que le financement et l'administration scolaires (*externa*) étaient délégués au niveau de l'établissement. Cet essai soutient qu'une approche simpliste de cet axe n'est vraisemblablement pas fructueuse. Il convient au contraire de reconnaître le rôle de l'État en créant un < cadre permissif > pour les systèmes éducatifs. L'action locale pourrait alors être envisagée comme faisant partie d'une politique qui s'adapte ou s'oppose aux conséquences de ce cadre.

Resumen – PRIVATIZACIÓN, DESCENTRALIZACIÓN Y EDUCACIÓN EN EL REINO UNIDO: EL PAPEL DEL ESTADO – Desde principios de la década de los cincuenta, el debate sobre 'centralización o descentralización', ante todo como lo tematiza el trabajo de Isaac Kandel, ha sido uno de los grandes temas centrales de estudios comparativos en la educación. Kandel sostenía que los aspectos relacionados con la dirección interna del aula *(interna)* deberían ser descentralizados en la medida de lo posible, mientras que los temas relacionados con administración, estructura escolar y organización del sistema educativo (*externa*) deberían centralizarse cuidadosamente. Después de 1988, los gobiernos que se han sucedido en el Reino Unido realizaron reformas que dieron lugar a un control más central de los planes de estudio e incluso de los métodos de enseñanza (*interna*), a la vez que la gestión financiera y la administración (*externa*) se devolvían al nivel escolar. En este trabajo, el autor argumenta que un enfoque simplista de la centralización y descentralización muy probablemente no rendirá frutos, sino que deberíamos reconocer el papel del Estado creando un 'marco flexible' para los sistemas educativos. La acción local puede ser considerada como parte de un programa de adaptación o resistencia a las implicaciones de ese marco.

Резюме – ПРИВАТИЗАЦИЯ, ДЕЦЕНТРАЛИЗАЦИЯ И ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ В ВЕЛИКОБРИТАНИИ: РОЛЬ ГОСУДАРСТВА – С начала 50-х годов концепция «централизация-децентрализация», как это представлено в работах Исаака Канделя, главным образом применялась в сравнительных исследованиях в области образования. По мнению Канделя, вопросы, связанные с внутренним учебным распорядком (интерна), следует решать как можно более децентрализованно, в то время как вопросы администрирования, структуры учебных заведений и организации образовательной системы (экстерна) вполне могут рассматриваться централизовано. После 1988 года сменяющиеся правительства в Великобритании предприняли ряд реформ, результатами которых стало усиление роли центра в регулировании контроля над учебными программами и даже методами обучения (интерна), тогда как школьное финансирование и администрирование (экстерна) перешли в ведение конкретных учебных заведений (школ). В данной статье автор показывает, что упрощенный подход к централизации и децентрализации вряд ли будет плодотворным. Вместо этого следует признать роль государства в создании «либеральной основы» для образовательных систем. В таком случае укрепление действий на местах может рассматриваться как часть проводимой политики, способствующей или препятствующей действиям центра.

The Role of the State in Decentralisation and Privatisation

When Issac Kandel (1933, 1954) wrote his classic texts of comparative education in the post-war period, one of the important dimensions of his analysis was the contrast between centralised and decentralised processes of decision-making. He contrasted those states such as France which had centralised systems of administration with those such as the United States and the United Kingdom which had decentralised systems. Moreover, he argued in favour of decentralised administrations on the grounds that they more easily embraced change and that decisions made locally would be more relevant to the day-to-day operation of individual institutions. Since Kandel's time, the dimension of centralisation/decentralisation has remained an important focus for the comparative analysis of educational systems.

Kandel recognised that systems were unlikely to be purely centralised or purely decentralised. He distinguished between those aspects of the education system which were internal to the classroom and its operation, which he described as *interna*, and those which were external to the classroom processes, or *externa*. *Interna* included such aspects of education as the curriculum and teaching methods, while *externa* comprised aspects of the maintenance of school buildings, furniture and administration. Kandel argued that *interna* were more appropriately subject to decisions at local level, or the level of individual institutions, while decisions relating to *externa* could more appropriately be centralised to the level of the national ministry of education.

From the mid-1980s onwards successive governments in the United Kingdom adopted a policy position which was similar to Kandel's, but with one important difference. Overall they accepted that by decentralising decision-making and placing responsibility for important policy matters at the level of the individual institution, decisions could be made more efficiently and in a way related to the local conditions experienced within those institutions. At the level of rhetoric, free-market competition was embraced in the United Kingdom as a way of promoting efficiency within the education system.

One of the important sources of inefficiency in large organisations arises from the misallocation of resources. Decision-making which is remote from the day-to-day operation of the system is likely to place resources where they have less than optimal effect. That is to say, centralised decision-making cannot always directly address problems as they are experienced in individual institutions.

After 1980, the government introduced a number of important reforms which were designed to reduce inefficiencies arising from the misallocation of resources. Towards this end, they conceived of the education system as a whole as a free market, with individual institutions competing against each other for pupils or students, or, in the language of this new system, 'customers'. However, even in consumer and economic markets, free-market competition is rarely unbridled. The government recognised the need for instituting

certain measures to protect customers from adverse trends in the market. The government of the United Kingdom therefore introduced certain elements of market regulation at the same time as they introduced the free-market model.

The 'Free-Market' Model

This combination of free-market rhetoric linked with consumer-protection regulation led the government of the United Kingdom to introduce educational reforms which decentralised decisions relating to financial issues and *externa* while centralising decisions relating to the curriculum and, latterly, teaching methods or *interna*. Consequently, while broadly agreeing with the rationale and the precepts which Kandel had set out, the government of the United Kingdom implemented decision-making structures in a rather different form. They centralised decisions relating to *interna*, while decentralising decisions relating to *externa*, the exact inverse of the pattern which Kandel had proposed.

In successive important pieces of educational legislation, governments of the United Kingdom introduced a rather similar pattern of market operation at the primary, secondary, further and higher-education levels. The most important items of legislation in this respect were the 1988 Education Reform Act, which centralised curriculum decision-making at the primary and secondary levels while decentralising financial issues to schools, and the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, which broadened the financial autonomy of institutions in the higher-education sector at the same time as establishing a body which would manage, if not direct, curriculum issues at that level.

Another feature of these educational markets was that the government used a number of quangos (quasi-non-governmental organisations) to act as market regulators. These bodies were responsible for translating the broad brush strokes of governmental policy into detailed systems of regulation. Typically, one quango was established to set appropriate standards against which the operation of institutions could be assessed and evaluated. Another quango was established to manage the inspection of institutions and to arrive at decisions as to how institutions were performing against those standards. Yet another quango was responsible for publishing information relating to performance which could be used by customers in making informed consumer decisions. In some cases, more than one of these functions were combined within the operation of a single quango. For example, in the higher-education sector, the Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education (QAA) combines functions of standard-setting and inspection.

The outcome of these reforms has been the implementation of a similar pattern of administration at each level of education in the United Kingdom, although there are minor variations in the way the system operates in practice at different levels and in the different home countries of Scotland,

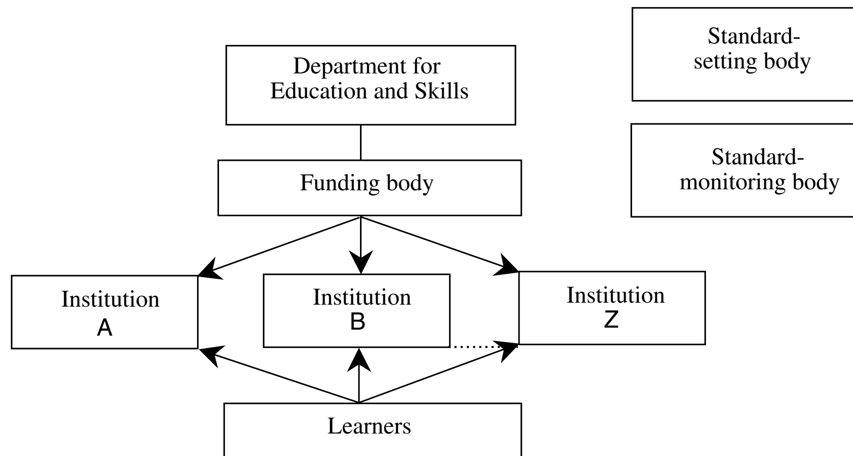

Figure 1. Quasi-market organisation of education in the United Kingdom

England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Central government allocates resources to the education system and sets out the broad outlines of policy. It passes these resources and policy directives to an agency at the same time as creating a legal framework of responsibilities within which that agency is required to ensure that the broad demands of policy are met. This agency passes resources on to individual institutions on the basis of the number of customers for whom educational services are being provided. At the same time, the funding agency contracts market regulators in the forms of standard setters and inspectors to ensure that its legal responsibilities for the maintenance of quality are met. The overall pattern of education at each level can therefore be schematically represented as in Figure 1.

What we can see from this process of educational reform is that an axis of centralisation/decentralisation is over-simplistic. Decentralisation takes place in a context set by national government. National government decides how a local market will operate, and it also decides which issues are appropriately devolved to local level and which must, for policy reasons, be retained at central level. Local decisions are made in a context which is set centrally. Where and how decisions are made within an educational system is therefore much more complicated than simply assigning decisions to the central or the local level. In addition, even the slightly more complex model indicated by Kandel is not really viable. Those decisions which are retained at a central level will still have considerable influence at local level.

An Example: Higher Education

To take one example of this quasi-market model in operation, at the higher-education level institutions are assessed against standards in two separate spheres of operation: teaching and research. Through these two separate

systems, institutions are allocated a budget which, according to the rationale of free-market operation, they are at liberty to allocate as they wish within their own institution. However, the managers of an institution who allocate resources without considering the likely impact of these operations on subsequent rounds of assessment – and consequently on subsequent funding rounds – would be extremely foolish. As a result, there is an influence from those spheres where decisions are centralised on those spheres where decisions are technically made locally.

The 1992 Education Act led to the setting-up of a funding body for higher education in each of the four countries: the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) and the Department for Education in Northern Ireland (DENI). Each of these bodies has a statutory obligation to ensure standards of higher education within their jurisdiction. In relation to teaching quality, each of the funding councils employs the QAA as their agent to set and to monitor standards. In terms of the centralisation/decentralisation discussion, this leads to the paradoxical position that the QAA sets and monitors standards across all four home countries, but operates in slightly different ways according to separate instructions from each of the funding councils. In practice, this means that the smaller funding councils in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have limited autonomy and are only able to modify the arrangements as operated in England at the margin.

In the teaching arena, the QAA has multiple functions serving the purpose of the standard-setting body and the standard-monitoring body. In its standard-setting role, the QAA has published a number of important documents, including the National Qualifications Framework, Subject Benchmarks and the Code of Practice. The National Qualifications Framework sets general indicators of what is expected in terms of intellectual performance if a qualification is to be rated at one of three levels at the undergraduate level or at the postgraduate level. Subject Benchmarks describe content which one would expect to be included within a named degree subject in the field which is described by the benchmark. Benchmark statements cover such fields as history, economics, education, medicine etc. The Code of Practice relates to institutional provision which should be made in relation to the treatment of students and includes detailed guidance on such aspects of the student experience as recruitment and admissions, accessibility of the curriculum, assessment, complaints procedures and quality assurance mechanisms.

The QAA acts as the standard-monitoring body by appointing evaluators or auditors to visit and review the performance of each institution on a 5-year cycle. Institutional review is designed to gather information about how well institutions match up to those national standards set in the National Quali“cations Framework, Subject Benchmarks and Code of Practice At the same time, evaluators assess how well the procedures of the institution are operating in assuring those standards.

In addition to publishing its final reports, the QAA also requires the institution to publish certain data about student admissions, progression and assessments. For the most part, this data is published through the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The data released by the QAA and HESA is subsequently used – not always very accurately – by the national press to produce league tables of universities.

Students and prospective students who have no better source of information about the performance of institutions of higher education can (and presumably do) use these press league tables in order to select institutions to study at. Since funding councils provide teaching on the basis of the number of students taught, the ability to attract students is a prime determinant of future funding for the institutions which therefore need to pay careful attention to their performance in league tables.

In the research sphere, the funding councils operate a system of evaluation of research every 5 or 6 years which is called the Research Assessment Exer cise (RAE). In a process of peer review, the performance of each institution in a range of subject areas is graded from 1 to 5, with grade 1 being the lowest level and grade 5 being a level of recognised international prominence in research. This assessment is made on the basis of the selected works of the selected staff within that subject area which the institution puts forward for evaluation. Funding from the funding council for research of quality is related to both the quality rating and the quantity of activity in that area, most importantly the number of staff who are active researchers. The formulae which are used in different subject areas and in the different home countries show some variation, but the main thrust of government policy in this area is to concentrate research funding in those institutions which are deemed to have a 'critical mass' appropriate to the promotion of high-quality research.

Research ratings are often included in the calculation of league tables in the national educational press. This means that the league tables are frequently a rather blunt instrument for deciding whether a particular institution offers a good undergraduate experience in a particular area of specialisation. It is not uncommon for ill-informed observers to draw rather sweeping and misguided conclusions about the operation of whole institutions or large parts of the higher education sector. For example, one of the least astute observers of higher education, Mrs Margaret Hodge, Minister for Higher Education, remarked in 2003 that if students acted rationally they would not choose to attend a university which had formerly been a polytechnic (Clare 2003). This conclusion appears to have been arrived at largely in view of the fact that a degree from one of the ancient universities attracts a greater differential in lifetime earnings than a degree from one of the post-1992 institutions. The conclusion that all students should therefore attend one of the ancient universities demonstrates the poor grasp which governments have of the operation of market economies even when they espouse the rhetoric of market economies as an instrument of public policy.

Over the past 30 years successive governments have sought to concentrate funding in a narrow range of institutions and to promote expansion at low cost in the broad range of higher-education institutions. To deride the performance of those institutions which have been least generously funded and which in spite of that have made a considerable strides is uncharitable at the very least.

Through a number of mechanisms successive governments have thought to promote differentiation between institutions and a more highly stratified system of higher education than previously existed, concentrating funds on institutions which were 'centres of excellence'. They have devolved block grants to institutions calculated on the basis of the amount of teaching and research happening within those institutions.

The bulk of financial decisions have indeed been made locally but within a context that has been set nationally. The higher education funding councils have even argued that the research assessment exercise is not directly connected with the distribution of funding, even though the outcomes of the RAE are used directly in the calculation of money remitted to institutions. By this and similar mechanisms, governments have sought to place responsibility for performance entirely upon individual institutions and deny their involvement in concentrating funding into areas which have traditionally been well resourced. Funding allocations therefore become an area where the relative control of central and local institutions is contested and whereby implication blame for poor performance can be allocated. The locus of control can no longer be described simply in terms of 'centralised' or 'decentralised', but is a complex interaction of local measures to optimise performance within frameworks set at a national level.

Within such frameworks, we need a theoretical approach which recognises a number of important dislocations within the system. Broad outlines of policy standards and regulations are set centrally, while local decision-makers respond to this unnatural, government-constructed decision-making environment.

Removing Old Certainties: Burring the Dichotomies

From a policy perspective, we need to be able to study this central construction of the decision-making space. We need to be able to understand what constraints central organisation makes upon decisions at the local level. The question is not whether decisions are made by the central ministry or by the local institution, but what latitude does the local institution have within the centrally regulated environment. To what extent is one local decision favoured over another by the rewards which are available within the centrally constructed system?

At all levels of the education system, the question has arisen as to whether local decision-makers are responding to technical quirks within the system

rather than making decisions which are in some broader sense appropriate to local needs. In popular parlance, there is the suspicion that local administrators are 'playing games'.

At the secondary level, there has been the suggestion that teachers have put aside their professional consideration of raising the educational quality of provision for pupils in favour of teaching to the tests to ensure good results when they are assessed against national standards. The suggestion has also been made that head-teachers are likely to allocate resources to those pupils who will have the largest impact upon measures of school performance against national standards, that is, they are likely to concentrate resources upon those pupils who are just below an important benchmark level of performance in the hope of raising the standards disproportionately by the allocation of limited resources.

Similarly, the parliamentary Committee on Science and Technology reviewed the extent to which academics in higher education were 'playing games' in making decisions whether or not to include particular individuals in the RAE (House of Commons 2002). A report of the Committee concluded that game-playing was not an important feature of the system, but recognised that academics are clever people; and it would therefore be surprising if they were not attempting to play the system to some extent.

What we see in the operation of this system is that local decisions are made not in the single context set by national government but in a variety of contexts, all of which may be to some extent the creation of central government. Local decisions are made within a framework of policy set by central government. They are made within the framework of regulation not set by central government but set by a quango designed for that purpose – and they are made within a framework of professional judgement of individual educators which may also be shaped by national policy. We can also see that these various national contexts may be pulling local decision-makers in different directions. The system of detailed regulation may or may not line up with broad outlines of policy, depending on the effectiveness of decision making by the quango responsible for regulation. The professional judgement of the classroom teacher may or may not line up with local pressures on resource allocation. The allocation of resources will be influenced in part by the mechanisms set in place for that allocation and in part of the professional preparation of teachers which is again influenced by national policy.

The operation of the quasi-market system set out in Figure 1 leads to the erosion of certain dichotomies which have frequently been used to describe educational systems – or perhaps, more properly, the operation of the quasi-market system moves analytic tension away from dichotomies which have become less useful. In particular, the operation of quasi-market organisation blurs the distinction between state provision and private provision in education.

In higher education, the division between state provision and private provision has always been rather difficult to maintain. Before 1992, polytechnics,

which came under the control of local education authorities, were always described as 'the public sector of higher education', while the traditional universities were described as private. After 1992, all institutions of higher education were formally constituted as private corporations in one form or another, but since all receive the vast majority of their funding directly from the funding councils and therefore from government, they can be seen in some senses as public institutions. In consequence of this, the University of Buckingham is frequently described as the only private institution in the United Kingdom, although even the University of Buckingham receives funding from the government. In addition, under the pressure of reduced funding, all institutions have sought to diversify their sources of income, including a range of strategies to promote links with industry and to raise endowment funding from former students. In this sense, the quasi-market is a mechanism for allocating state funding which all institutions can take part in. The distinction between state and private is no longer of primary concern.

Although less marked, a similar reduction of boundaries between state and private education has also happened within the compulsory sector of schooling. The government has always retained the right to set standards and monitor standards of private schools. But since 1988 and the introduction of the national curriculum, such monitoring has had a more direct impact on private schools which have maintained a distinct and separate philosophy of education. This can be seen in the more or less open conflict between Ofsted, the standard monitoring body in England, and Summerhill.

However, since related changes have also led to a situation in which government funding can be used to provide scholarships or some support for students in private schools, we can see again that the quasi-market is a mechanism within which public and private organisations can compete for students and therefore for a share of government funding.

In much the same way that the quasi-market operation blurs the edges between state and private institutions, it also blurs the edges between local and central decision-making. Local institutions are frequently quite eager to react to central policy both as a matter of principle and as a way of securing more funding. The central-government policy regime can therefore have a major impact upon local decision-making. Paradoxically, even with good will on all sides, such local decisions may not, in fact, line up with national objectives.

Conclusion

Recent performance of education in the United Kingdom highlights the difficulty which exists in analysing educational systems in terms of simple dichotomies. The contrasts between centralised or decentralised systems or between private and state systems are becoming harder to maintain in the light of the

quasi-market model of administration which has been introduced. Perhaps those dichotomies which have become so familiar in comparative educational studies have always been too simplistic. But what is becoming increasingly clear is that we need more sophisticated theoretical tools in order to apprehend the gap between what is intended in policy terms and what is promoted by detailed regulatory systems. Kandel argued – and the argument was broadly accepted by successive governments in the United Kingdom – that decentralising decision-making was enough to ensure that decisions in the local arena were authentic and responded to the local conditions. Attempts to put such a rationale into practice have shown that the issue is more complicated than that, and have highlighted and institutionalised certain dislocations in the policy process which would merit further comparative study.

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THE DECENTRALISATION OF EDUCATION IN KERALA STATE, INDIA: RHETORIC AND REALITY

MULLIKOTTU-VEETTIL MUKUNDAN AND MARK BRAY

Abstract – The decentralisation of educational administration has been widely advocated as a strategy to promote local participation in education. However, the fact that this advocacy has a long history raises the question why decentralisation has not been achieved in more educational systems. The answers to this question are many and complex. Among them are difficulties with the implementation of reforms. The present study examines some of these difficulties in Kerala State, India. It determines that although Kerala has a strong reputation for political participation, the rhetoric of decentralisation in the educational sector has not matched the reality there. The lessons to be learned in this context have wide implications for the theory and practice of decentralisation in education.

Zusammenfassung – DIE DEZENTRALISIERUNG DER BILDUNG IN DER PROVINZ KERALA, INDIEN: RHETORIK UND REALITÄT – Die Dezentralisierung der Ausbildungsverwaltung wird seit langem überall als eine Strategie befürwortet, welche die lokale Beteiligung am Bildungswesen fördert. Dies wirft die Frage auf, warum nicht bereits mehr Bildungssysteme eine erfolgreiche Dezentralisierung erfahren haben. Die Antworten auf diese Frage sind zahlreich und komplex. Eine der Antworten ist, dass es mit der Durchführung der Reformen Schwierigkeiten gibt. Die vorliegende Studie untersucht einige dieser Schwierigkeiten in der Provinz Kerala, Indien. Ihr Ergebnis ist, dass die Dezentralisierungsrhetorik im Bildungsbereich keine Entsprechung in der politischen Realität dieser Provinz gefunden hat, obwohl Kerala einen guten Ruf hat, was die politische Beteiligung angeht. Die Lehren, die man daraus ziehen sollte, haben große Bedeutung für Theorie und Praxis der Bildungsdezentralisierung.

Résumé – LA DÉCENTRALISATION DE L'ÉDUCATION DANS L'ÉTAT INDIEN DU KERALA: DISCOURS ET RÉALITÉ – Il a été vivement plaidé en faveur de la décentralisation de la gestion de l'éducation, cette stratégie favorisant la participation locale à l'éducation. Pourtant, le fait que ce plaidoyer ait une longue histoire interroge les raisons pour lesquelles la décentralisation n'a pas été concrétisée dans un plus grand nombre de systèmes éducatifs. Les réponses à cette question sont nombreuses et complexes. Elles comprennent les difficultés soulevées lors de l'application des réformes. L'étude examine certains obstacles rencontrés dans l'État indien du Kerala. Elle constate que, malgré la grande réputation du Kerala en matière de participation politique, le discours sur la décentralisation de l'éducation n'a pu se transposer aux conditions concrètes de la région. Les enseignements à tirer dans ce contexte comportent d'importantes implications pour la théorie et la pratique de la décentralisation de l'éducation.

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Resumen – LA DECENTRALIZACIÓN DE LA EDUCACIÓN EN KERALA STATE, INDIA: RETÓRICA Y REALIDAD – La descentralización de la administración educativa ha recibido mucho apoyo con el argumento de que es una estrategia que promueve la participación local en la educación. Sin embargo, la larga historia de este argumento suscita el interrogante de por qué la descentralización no se ha logrado en un mayor número de sistemas educativos. Las respuestas a esta pregunta son muchas y complejas. Entre ellas, tenemos las dificultades que causa la implementación de las reformas. Este trabajo examina algunas de esas dificultades en Kerala State, India, y los autores llegan a la conclusión de que si bien Kerala goza de una gran reputación en cuanto a participación política, la retórica de la descentralización en el sector de la educación aún no concuerda con la realidad reinante en ese lugar. Las lecciones que se deben aprender en ese contexto tienen amplios efectos para la teoría y práctica de la descentralización de la educación.

Резюме – ДЕЦЕНТРАЛИЗАЦИЯ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В ШТАТЕ КЕРАЛА, ИНДИЯ: ЗАЯВЛЕНИЯ И ДЕЙСТВИТЕЛЬНОСТЬ – децентрализация органов управления образованием получила большую поддержку как стратегия эффективного вовлечения учреждений местного уровня в процесс образования. Тем не менее, исходя из того, что эта поддержка имеет долгую историю, возникает вопрос, почему большее количество систем образования еще не подверглись децентрализации. Ответов на этот вопрос много, и они неоднозначны. Среди них можно выделить трудности, связанные с осуществлением реформ. В данном исследовании рассматриваются некоторые трудности этих реформ в индийском штате Керала. На основании данного исследова-ния авторы пришли к выводу, что хотя штат Керала и известен своим актив-ным участием в политической жизни, заявления о децентрализации в образовательном секторе все еще не соответствуют действительности. Из этой ситуации следует извлечь полезные уроки, которые имеют большое значение для теории и практики децентрализации в образовании.

Much of the literature of development agencies advocates reform of educational administration through decentralisation (World Bank 1999: 28–29; UNESCO 2000: 19; Asian Development Bank 2001: 106–109). In some quarters, decentralisation has almost become a mantra that is recited regardless of the circumstances of specific settings. However, decentralisation may have its limits. This study illustrates that statement by reference to a part of the world which has a strong reputation for political participation and human development. It indicates that even in this setting, the rhetoric of decentralisation may not be translated into reality. The experience in this setting raises questions about similar strategies in other parts of the world.

The geographic focus of the study is Kerala State, which has a population of 31.8 million and is located in the southwestern tip of India. In some respects, patterns in Kerala must be interpreted within the broader framework of national developments. India is constituted as a federal system, but national-level policies are important both in education and in other sectors.

Of particular relevance in the present context is a pair of amendments made to the national constitution in 1992. These amendments required state governments to strengthen the existing Local Self-Government Institutions (LSGIs) and to create new LSGIs where they did not already exist. The LSGIs were then to be given responsibilities in education and other sectors, and to be empowered through legal and fiscal mechanisms.

The present contribution begins with the broad literature on decentralisation and education, noting some of the challenges raised in that literature and the obstacles to reform. It then turns to the specifics of Kerala, commencing with some background information and then explaining patterns of continuity and change in the years which followed the launch of reform initiatives. Particular attention is devoted to a 1996 reform called the People's Campaign for Decentralised Planning (PCDP). In order to permit some detail in analysis, focus is especially given to experiences of Kannur District within Kerala State. Each district of course has its own characteristics, but Kannur has features which could be considered typical of the state as a whole.

Decentralisation and Education: Models and Experiences

The literature on decentralisation displays a wide range of models (Rondinelli et al. 1989; Hanson 1998; Bray 2003). One difficulty is that the term is commonly used loosely, and can mean different things to different people. The literature is not entirely consistent, but there is general agreement on some major points. Among them is the distinction between 'functional' and 'territorial' decentralisation. Functional decentralisation arises, for example, when a Ministry of Education hives off some of its functions to parallel bodies. Territorial decentralisation, by contrast, refers to a downward distribution of control among the geographic tiers of government, such as nation, states, districts and schools. This is a spatial conception of the term, and is the one with which the present study is most concerned.

The category of territorial decentralisation is commonly said to include three sub-categories: deconcentration, delegation and devolution (McGinn and Welsh 1999; Mok 2003). Deconcentration is the process through which a central authority establishes field units, staffing them with its own officers. Thus, personnel of a Ministry of Education may be sent out from the headquarters to work in provinces and districts. Delegation implies a stronger degree of decision-making power at the local level, but powers in a delegated system still basically rest with the central authority which has chosen to 'lend' them to the local one. Devolution is the most extreme of these three forms of territorial decentralisation. Powers are formally held at lower levels, the officers of which do not need to seek higher-level approval for their actions. The lower-level officers may choose to inform the centre of their decisions, but the role of the centre is chiefly confined to collection and

exchange of information. The present study is mainly concerned with delegation and devolution rather than deconcentration.

Much advocacy of decentralisation lacks historical awareness. Some documents present decentralisation not only as if it is a panacea, but also as if it is a new idea. In reality, decentralisation has been widely advocated in the development literature for several decades (United Nations 1962; Maddick 1963; Rondinelli 1981; Conyers 1982; UNESCO 1982). This fact must sound a note of caution. Logically, decentralisation should be seen as a process – an '-isation' – rather than as a static situation. If decentralisation is seen as a process and is implemented according to the recommendations of the policy advocates, then at some point it would seem necessary to stop: a decentralised system would have been achieved, and continued decentralisation would not be needed. The fact that decentralisation continues to be advocated so widely implies that it has not been strongly implemented in the preceding decades. The question then is: Why not? Part of the answer is that the benefits from decentralisation are less straightforward than is declared by many advocates. Ironically, some of these benefits, such as increased efficiency, are presented in other arenas as reasons for *reducing* decentralisation and shifting towards enhanced central control. Also, while it may be fashionable to advocate decentralisation, many implementers drag their feet because they fear lack of coordination in the system; and even when implementers are committed, they may encounter major obstacles.

One recent study which parallels the present one is by Bjork (2003) and focuses on a reform launched in Indonesia in 1994. At the central level, policy rhetoric was strong, but when Bjork investigated the extent of implementation, he was struck by the constancy rather than the changes in the schools (199). What had been billed as a major reconfiguration of the education system had yet to induce any significant changes at the institutional level.

Some of the reasons for the situation in Indonesia were specific to the situation in that country, but others have parallels elsewhere, including Kerala. Bjork identified three main impediments to change. First was the culture of the civil service: The Indonesian teachers affected by the reform were civil servants who saw themselves as answerable to the government rather than to students, parents or local school boards. Throughout their careers, Bjork reported (204), "public school employees have been conditioned to repress any inclinations they might have to approach their work with a sense of independence." The reforms changed the instructions from the top, but after a long history of being denied opportunities to participate in determining the direction of schooling, schools and teachers could not promptly switch attitudes and habits.

Second, Bjork focused on incentives and rewards. The new responsibilities demanded that educators develop new curricula, design original lesson plans, familiarise themselves with innovative instructional strategies, and meet regularly with members of their communities. All of these duties required investments of time. The primary incentive offered to individuals who agreed to

participate was an increase in authority; but few of the teachers interviewed by Bjork showed any desire to increase their influence. They tended to value the security of their jobs more than opportunities to influence school policy or make a difference to the lives of their students. They would have responded to financial rewards, but few such rewards were on offer. Bjork remarked (206) that this situation revealed the danger of applying Western models of teacher management to other types of school systems and then expecting similar results. Local educators did not feel compelled to support the reform out of a sense of duty to their profession or their communities.

Thirdly, Bjork focused on central-local relations. Many studies have highlighted resistance from the central government as a primary roadblock to policy implementation (McGinn and Street 1986; Fiske 1996). In Indonesia, Bjork found a genuine desire by many central officials to promote decision-making at the locality, but he added that many of these officials failed to back up their words with appropriate assistance. The concept of decentralisation appealed intellectually to many bureaucrats, but in practice they had trouble relinquishing power. Training workshops remained in the top-down mode, and did not greatly change attitudes or empower groups at lower levels of the hierarchy.

These findings from Bjork's study in Indonesia have been cited at length because in some respects they match the situation in Kerala. Each setting is, of course, different in its dynamics, and some contrasts may also be noted. Nevertheless, the analysis of experiences in Indonesia and elsewhere provides a useful set of lenses with which to view the patterns in Kerala.

The Indian Context

At first sight, India might seem to have an administrative framework which has long been decentralised. India is governed as a federal system of 28 states and seven Union Territories, and the constitution devised shortly after Independence in 1947 gave state governments far-reaching powers over many matters, including education. Some of these states, however, are very large; some important powers have been decentralised to the state level, but centralised within the state level.

In the 1950 constitution, control of education was primarily vested in the state governments rather than in the federal government. However, a 1976 constitutional amendment placed education on the concurrent list, making it a responsibility of both state and federal governments. In the case of conflict, this provision gave the federal government supremacy in all matters concerning education (Majumdar 1999: 232). At the same time, the constitution allowed a role for Panchayati Raj Institutions at the local level. These bodies, which owe their ancestry to forms of governance in pre-colonial times, have operated in different ways in different parts of the country. The Indian nationalist perspective on decentralisation was evident in the concept

of *Grama Swaraj* (village self-rule), of which Mahatma Gandhi was the most prominent proponent. Although Gandhi used the concept as a tool to challenge imperialism, he also desired the Panchayati Raj Institutions in the 20th century to have their own democratic bases and powers.

Interest in Panchayati Raj Institutions fluctuated during the initial post-Independence decades, but in the 1980s they were the focus of a major resurgence of attention. This led the national government in 1992 to pass two amendments to the Indian constitution and to require all state governments to create a three-tier system of strong, viable and responsive panchayats at the village, intermediate and district levels of rural areas, and in the municipalities of urban areas. State governments were expected to devolve adequate powers, responsibilities and finances on these elected bodies, to enable them to prepare plans and implement schemes for economic development and social justice (Ambasht 1996; Gaiha 1997).

In the domain of education, the requirements of the constitutional amendments were dovetailed with the National Policy on Education and its accompanying Programme of Action, which were first issued in 1986 and then revised 6 years later (India 1986a, b, 1992a, b). These documents emphasised the importance of decentralisation of planning and management at all levels as well as of ensuring greater community participation. This approach, as observed by Dhingra (1991: 1), marked a shift in educational planning.

In line with these thrusts, in 1993 the central government, with substantial support from external aid agencies, launched a District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). The programme sought to improve the efficiency of educational planning and management structures within selected districts (Varghese 1997: 141; World Bank 1997: 22–24). Within the first six years, the DPEP had been extended to 240 districts in 16 states. In Kerala, the DPEP was introduced in six of the 14 districts. Kannur, the district which is given particular attention in the present contribution, was not among them, and in this respect did not benefit from special treatment and resource inputs. However, even in the districts which did receive DPEP attention and resources, the practical limits of decentralisation rhetoric were evident (Kumar 2003; Mukundan 2003a).

The Kerala Political and Cultural Context

Kerala State is well known not only in India but also internationally for its highly developed civil society which, in Tornquist's words (2000: 118), makes it "a sort of Scandinavia of the Third World". Kerala has achieved universal primary education, near total literacy, and near gender equality in access to education. These characteristics have caused analysts to investigate what they call the Kerala Model (Sen 1997; Kurien 2000). In part, this model reflects a legacy of communist government (Fic 1970; Prakash 1994). Like other

communist states, however, human development indicators have not been translated into economic ones. In 1997, for example, per-capita incomes in Kerala were estimated at US-$324 compared with US-$390 for India as a whole (Franke and Chasin 2000: 18). This has perplexed many analysts, and caused Wallich (1995) to describe Kerala as "a mystery inside a riddle inside an enigma".

For some decades, Kerala's political scene has been dominated by two parties: the Left Democratic Front (LDF), which is a Marxist group, and the United Democratic Front (UDF), which is a liberal democratic group. The LDF came to power in 1996 with a particularly radical approach and the launch of what it called the People's Campaign for Decentralised Planning (PCDP). In 2001 the LDF was again replaced by the UDF, which claimed that it maintained commitment to the principles of decentralisation but did so in a modified way. Much of this study is an evaluation of the impact of the PCDP during the 5-year period of office of the LDF.

Kerala's education system has a 10 + 2 + 3 structure, that is, 10 years of basic education followed by 2 years of upper secondary and 3 years of higher education (Kappor et al. 1994). The cycle of basic education, which is the main focus in the present context, is subdivided into four years of lower primary (Standards I–IV), three years of upper primary (Standards V–VII), and three years of lower secondary education (Classes VIII–X). The schools are classified into three groups: government, aided and private. In 2003, Kerala had 6,726 lower primary schools, of which 37.4% were government, 60% were aided, and 2.5% were private. The state also had 2,968 upper primary schools and 2,580 secondary schools. However, many of the secondary schools also had primary sections.

In line with the central-government requirement, in 1993 the Kerala authorities introduced legislation to form two layers of local self-government in urban areas, and three layers in rural areas. In the urban areas, the municipal corporations were subdivided into municipalities. In the rural areas, districts were divided into blocks, which in turn were divided into villages. Each of these rural sub-divisions was governed by a panchayat. The 1993 legislation led to formation of five municipal corporations and 53 municipalities, and to 14 districts, 152 blocks and 991 villages.

The People's Campaign for Decentralised Panning

The PCDP covered multiple aspects of development including education, and stressed the importance of community participation within the system of multilevel planning. In the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997–2002), state development grants to local communities were increased from 5% to nearly 40%. In educational matters, the panchayats at each level were expected to function according to powers delegated by the Kerala Panchayati Raj Act of 1994. Education up to Standard VII was made the primary responsibility of the

village panchayats in a framework which fitted that for India as a whole (Dyer 2000: 28).

The proponents of the PCDP (Thomas Isaac 2000; Vijayanand 2001) argued that Kerala was following an adventurous strategy for decentralisation. Instead of gradual transfer of powers to local governments in accordance with perceived improvement in their capacities to exercise them, the authorities took a 'big-bang' approach. Franke and Chasin (1997) suggested that the decentralisation programme was probably the largest of its kind in the world. The state government delegated 29 general administrative functions to lower-level bodies, along with powers to raise incomes through taxation. The PCDP was grounded in the principles of autonomy, participation and transparency (Thomas Isaac and Harilal 1997). A special Committee on Decentralization of Powers stated (1997: 3) that "power should flow through the elected bodies and their members to the people and should not be blocked at any level, as power ultimately belongs to the people and it is only legitimate that it is handed over to them."

The PCDP began with the identification of gaps in local development at the *Grama Sabha* (village-assembly) level. Development seminars were organised in each village for elected representatives, officials and others. Panchayat development reports were drafted, and task forces were set up to address specific sectors and provide training. The village panchayat plans were expected to aggregate into the block and then district plans (Powis 1999; Thomas Isaac and Heller 2001). A six-phase process was devised for implementation in 1997 and 1998 (Table 1).

Specifically in the domain of education, responsibility for schools was transferred from the state government to the different layers of local government (Table 2). This study looks most closely at the primary schools, for which responsibility was transferred to the districts (for upper primary and secondary schools, many of which had primary sections) and to villages (for lower primary schools). Block panchayats did not have a specific role in this distribution of responsibilities, though, as will become clear, they did also have some influence on developments.

In the domain of education, the State Planning Board introduced a Comprehensive Education Programme (CEP) to guide the panchayats. The CEP visualised education as a single process from pre-primary to continuing education, and gave importance to the learning process inside and outside the schools. The CEP also stressed the importance of participation by teachers, parents and society as a whole (Ganesh and Ramakrishnan 2000).

Experiences in Kannur District

In order to examine experiences in some detail, this section focuses on patterns in primary education in one of the 14 districts, Kannur. According to official sources (Thomas Isaac 1998), this district performed well in the

Table 1. Phases of the PCDP, 1997–98

Phase	Period	Objectives	Activities	Mass Participation
1. Development seminar	August–October 1997	Identify the felt needs of the people	Grama Sabha in rural areas and ward conventions in urban areas	2.5 million persons attending *Grama Sabhas*
2. Development seminar	October–December 1997	Objective assessment of the resources and problems, and formulation of local development perspectives	Participatory studies: preparation of development reports and seminars	300,000 delegates attending seminars
3. Task force	November 1997–March 1998	Preparation of projects	Meetings of task forces	100,000 volunteers in task forces
4. Plans of grass-root tiers	March–June 1998	Formulation of plans of grass-root tiers	Plan formulation; meetings of elected representatives	25,000 volunteers in formulation of plan documents
5. Plans of higher tiers (blocks and districts)	April–July 1998	Formulation of plans of higher tiers	Plan formulation; meetings of elected representatives	5,000 volunteers in formulation of plan documents
6. Volunteer technical corps	May–October 1998	Appraisal and approval of plans	Meetings of expert committee	5,000 volunteer technical experts working in the appraisal committees

Table 2. Numbers of schools for which responsibility was transferred to LSGIs, Kerala State, 1996–1999

	Lower Primary	Upper Primary	Secondary	Total
Corporations	289	144	218	651
Municipalities	459	207	263	929
District Panchayats	–	2,615	2,104	4,719
Block Panchayats	–	–	–	–
Village Panchayats	6,007	–	–	6,007

implementation processes; yet even this district showed significant gaps between rhetoric and reality.

Kannur is in the northern part of Kerala State. It has a population of 2.4 million, and a long history of education. The data which follow derive from field surveys undertaken during 2002 in 18 of Kannur's 81 village panchayats (Mukundan 2003b). The sample was chosen in a purposive way to cover a range of situations in the district. Although no powers related to primary education were delegated or devolved to the block panchayats, some block panchayats did initiate educational programmes. Three of the nine block panchayats in the district were therefore also selected for study; and at the apex of the system, the district panchayat was also studied. Data were collected through documentary analysis, interviews and supplementary questionnaires.

At the beginning of the PCDP, each village panchayat covered by the research published a development report (in Malayalam, the official local language in Kerala), and each report contained a chapter on education that outlined historical development and contemporary features. The reports were ratified in development seminars during 1997 according to the schedule presented above (Table 1). The issues identified in the reports pertained to a wide range of educational aspects, including academic standards, examinations, evaluation, syllabuses, training programmes, textbooks, co-curricular activities, and physical facilities. However, concerning the quality of education and standard of learning, the reports were superficial. The educational projects included in different plans by different village panchayats were mainly based on the state-level framework, that is, the CEP introduced by the State Planning Board.

According to their general features, the projects could be classified as ones designed to enhance the quality of primary education; improvement of infrastructure; and integrated projects (Table 3). Almost 90% of the projects were related to school noon-feeding programmes, scholarships and uniform distribution, teaching/learning aids production and distribution, awareness camps for teachers and parents, construction of toilets and cooking sheds, repairs, and drinking water. Most panchayat projects replicated and overlapped with parallel projects implemented by the General Education Department, the State Council for Educational Research and Training, and the District Institute of Education and Training. The noon-feeding programmes in primary schools in Kerala have a history of decades, having been introduced during the 1960s as a foreign aid project to attract and retain students and subsequently replicated by successive governments.

Dimensions of continuity and change are summarised in Table 4. In some cases the changes (e.g., in curriculum) were not related to the powers decentralised to the LSGIs, but were part of centralised state-level decisions. Other changes could have been effected within the PCDP, but did not in fact eventuate to a significant extent. Thus, there was very little change in the administrative system and functioning of schools at the district and local levels,

Table 3. Types of panchayat-level educational projects, Kannur District

Quality Improvement projects	Infrastructure projects	Integrated projects
Comprehensive programmes for the quality of education in Standards I to X	School buildings	Noon-feeding programmes
	Furniture	Guidance and counselling centres
Short-term courses in remedial teaching	Classroom separation	
Language skills improvement	Toilet/latrine construction	School agriculture programmes
New evaluation techniques	Supply of drinking water	School health programmes
Research projects for teachers	Playgrounds and equipment for physical education	
Special education projects		
Programmes for students of scheduled castes/scheduled tribes		

though school authorities and teachers were to a certain extent required to implement instructions given by the administrative bodies of the LSGIs in implementing or participating in educational projects. The responsibility for the management of human and physical resources at the school level remained largely vested with the departmental bureaucrats and controlled by them based on the Kerala Education Rules and Kerala Service Rules. These responsibilities included distribution of responsibilities of headteachers and teachers; admission of pupils; appointments, staffing, salaries and other service benefits; sanctioning of leave; suspension and dismissal of teaching and non-teaching staff; curriculum and assessment; inspections and auditing; and the role of statutory bodies including Parent–Teacher Associations (PTAs) and the Mother PTAs designed for mothers in particular (as opposed to both parents). Further, even when village panchayats did develop projects, only a minority, most of them related to construction of buildings and toilets, were implemented as planned.

Stakeholder participation demanded considerable involvement from teachers. In this respect, examples may be provided from the focus-group interviews and questionnaires in Chapparapadava Panchayat. Though this panchayat was described by local and state politicians as outstanding in its implementation of innovative projects, the education sector activities, particularly in regard to the quality of education, were very modest. Of the 56 teachers who responded to the questionnaires, 38 mentioned that they were active in union activities but only 18 participated in the *Grama Sabhas*. Among the 18, three were headteachers, one was a village panchayat

Table 4. Continuity and change in primary education in Kannur, 1996–2001

Departmental and political aspects related to primary education	*Continuity and the reasons*	*Change and the reasons*
Departmental bureaucratic administration at the field level	Continuing as a part of the deconcentration and delegation of powers to line department, and controls over all aspects of education in the district; all service benefits to these personnel sanctioned by the state government and General Education Department	Controlling officers at the field levels were transferred based on general norms prescribed in the state government rules and subsequent orders
Headteachers and teachers in government primary schools	Appointments, promotions, transfers and service benefits determined by controlling officers based on general norms. Salaries paid by the state government	Some of them transferred based on general norms by the department authorities
Headteachers in aided primary schools	Promoted, appointed and transferred by concerned management with the ratification of officers in the department and paid by the state government	Some of them transferred by management bodies based on general norms with the ratification of controlling officers in the department
Provisional teachers in government schools who are recommended through employment exchanges	Appointed subject to government prescribed norms by the controlling officers; salary as per government norms and paid by the government	
Temporary teachers in vacant posts in government schools and aided schools		Hired and paid by Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs)
Admission, transfer and promotion of students	Government norms, procedures and rules unchanged	
Curriculum, teaching and learning materials, time allotted for each subject	Subjects included in the curriculum and the time allotted for them unchanged	New curricula and materials introduced by the state government; activity-based classrooms and integrated teaching and learning strategies introduced
Classroom evaluation and student promotion	Marking system continues to a certain extent in tests and examinations	Grading system introduced by the state government

Pre-service and in-service teacher training		Activity-based classroom strategies introduced in pre-service teacher training; more in-service training in new strategies for teachers
PTAs and Mother PTAs	PTAs and their functions continue as before	Mother PTAs more active after the implementation of the new curriculum. Class PTAs introduced in some schools
School Development Committees		Suggested by the State Planning Board as a part of decentralised planning, but not widely implemented
Village Education Committees for overall monitoring of education at village panchayat level	Envisaged in the National Policy on Education and the Programme of Action (1986, revised 1992)	Political decision at the state level as a part of decentralisation; not functioning in most villages.
Panchayat-level education task force to prepare education projects		Constituted in all village panchayats as part of decentralised planning since 1996; but dissolved by the state government in 2001
Various projects intended for qualitative improvement, infrastructure development and integrated projects related to primary-education sector at village panchayat level		Projects formulated and implemented in villages as a part of state-level decentralised planning campaign; some of them carried out when funds available
District, block and village panchayat level monitoring and academic committees, resource centres		All envisaged in the state government's Comprehensive Education Programme (1998), but most existed only on paper.
special projects covering the whole district	State-government-sponsored mid-day meal programme continued in all primary schools of the district	Kannur District Panchayat initiated a special noon-feeding supply of milk to primary-school children with the cooperation of all block and village panchayats.

member, and one was a block panchayat member. Among the respondents, 40 teachers stated that they had never been contacted by any tier of LSGI authorities, and that they had never participated in any kind of educational planning and implementation at the panchayat level. Of the 56 teachers, 45 indicated that the Panchayat Education Committees were inactive. Thirty teachers felt that the objectives of the PCDP could be useful for overall development, but 22 teachers asserted that the PCDP had not brought any change in the primary-education sector.

An alternative set of examples may be taken from Alakode Panchayat, where different projects pertaining to education were submitted for the approval of the District Planning Council during 1996/97–2000/01. In 1996/97 the only project to be approved by the District Planning Council was the noon-feeding programme, and in subsequent years no educational project as a part of decentralised planning was implemented. Similarly, in Udayagiri Panchayat in 1997/98 no educational projects were implemented as part of decentralised planning, since there were no recommendations from the Task Force for Education. In this panchayat, programmes such as cluster meetings of teachers, comprehensive education projects for students and youth, supply of medical and first-aid kits, erection of news boards etc. had not been implemented by 2000/01.

One exception to this pattern, at least in the eyes of the local, district and state authorities, was Panniannur. This village panchayat prepared an education calendar which spelled out curricular and co-curricular activities to be carried out during the academic year, and did proceed with implementation. Projects in this panchayat included quiz competitions, knowledge festivals, handbooks for primary teachers, field trips for pupils, and arts and sports festivals. The panchayat set up a committee to monitor activities in schools, distributed reference books, organised seminars and exhibitions, provided coaching for state-level examinations, and organised awareness camps for mothers. A major factor was that most local politicians in Panniannur had come from the teaching field. This included the President and Vice President of the village panchayat along with the Chairman of the Education Standing Committee. Also, teachers and managers were forced to be innovative by competition from private English-medium schools; the activity in this panchayat partly reflected a project which had been carried over to the PCDP era.

Explaining the Rhetoric/Reality Gap

Perhaps the most important factor explaining the gap between rhetoric and reality lay in the nature of the PCDP. The strong panchayats such as Panniannur and Kerala's long traditions of political participation were in some respects problematic because they were misleading: State-level planners overestimated the capacity of administrators and community members at the local

level. In this respect, the pattern in Kerala matched that described by Bjork (2003) in Indonesia. Policy-makers mistakenly assumed that the participants in the *Grama Sabhas* could, with assistance, rise to the challenge fairly easily. In practice, when the *Grama Sabhas* did identify needs, they tended to focus on capital works and on familiar schemes such as noon-day feeding. The 'softer', qualitative sides of education proved much more difficult to address.

Another problem, which again echoed the Indonesian situation, concerned the nature of the models advocated by the centre. The project guidelines prepared by the State Planning Board took inadequate account of the diversity of local realities and possibilities. The guidelines were also highly academic, with extensive technical jargon. For example, a section of the planning handbook (State Planning Board 1998: 33) included the following statement:

> The education sector in Kerala is facing some challenges, and the deterioration of educational standards is prominent among them. Literacy and numeracy are not the only criteria to be considered for educational standards. Other matters to be considered should include how far the learner has achieved in: acquiring knowledge; applying knowledge; achieving the skills for living; showing progress in scientific awareness, civic awareness and value awareness; involvement in aesthetic activities such as appreciation and art performance; development of creativity; creative approach to the nature; and achieving propriety of values such as patriotism, humanitarianism, equality and rationalism.

This sort of jargon was evident in much of the promotional literature and created major difficulties for ordinary people in rural villages.

A third difficulty arose from the time frame. As noted, the PCDP was deliberately launched with a 'big bang'. Such an approach can have merits, as observed elsewhere (Bray 1985; Heyneman 1997; Gershberg 1999). The strategy can concentrate attention and by mobilising forces can overcome inertia. However, inevitably such initiatives encounter problems of capacity. In Kerala, moreover, the needs of the education sector were overshadowed by the demands of health and culture, which gained even stronger priority.

A related problem arose from the fact that most members of the *Grama Sabhas* lacked technical expertise. Many panchayats were highly politicised and, in the words of Jain (2001: 2) "served as little more than 'boxing rings', where people seek to knock out one another to get on to the list of potential beneficiaries for the latest government scheme". None of the panchayats investigated for this research included stakeholder representation *per se* from the education sector; and, as in Indonesia, teachers lacked incentives to change, tending to see themselves as accountable to the bureaucratic hierarchy rather than to local communities. Thomas Isaac, who was the member in charge of decentralisation in the State Planning Board and one of the main protagonists and designers of the Campaign at the state level, himself recognised this (Thomas Isaac and Franke 2000: 81):

> The first statutory gramasabha convened during December 1995 and March 1996 seemed to confirm the general apprehension. In most places the gramasabhas were

> convened to fulfill the legal formality with barely the quorum of 50 members present. The general opinion has been that the preparations, publicity, organization and the discussions in the first round of gramasabhas were of poor quality.

He added that active workers who understood the nature of the tasks were in short supply, and that the state-level personnel were not able to work with local-level bodies on delegated powers and projects. Another important factor was the lack of capacity of parents and people's representatives to deviate from traditional patterns. Few parents welcomed new programmes, especially those related to the implementation of new curricula that aspired to broaden the approach education. They tended to view with suspicion the new teaching techniques and evaluation methods supposedly used to update and improve educational processes. Few parents attended the awareness camps, and most even hesitated to attend the school PTA meetings in schools which focused on the curricular changes and their intended roles of parents. Similarly, few people's representatives, most of whom were politicians rather than professionals, could handle with equal dexterity issues in education, health, roads, community-building and infrastructure. Moreover, even when they did have some competence in education, they inevitably had divided attention in the pressures of the multifaceted approach.

Another challenge lay in the lack of an effective monitoring system. This problem basically reflected the lack of experience of the Panchayat Education Committees. The designers of the PCDP had recommended three types of monitoring: state-government monitoring; monitoring based on consensus and co-operation among neighbouring schools; and monitoring by bodies consisting of parents and people's representatives. The designers of the PCDP also envisaged that neighbourhood and ward committees would play an important role. However, in practice, the monitoring by these committees was vehemently criticised even by the so-called 'radical' associations of teachers. These bodies challenged the right as well as the qualifications of such committees to assess classroom practices and other curricular activities. This sort of resistance by the teachers undermined the spirit of such monitoring in various panchayats.

Conclusions

Gershberg (1999: 63) commenced his study of decentralisation processes in Mexico and Nicaragua with the observation that "we still know too little about how to implement such reforms successfully given the intricate political contexts in which they must occur." A similar remark was made by Gaynor (1998: 4): "While the decentralization of education continues to attract considerable interest and support, there is an increasing demand to extract lessons from experience and to critically challenge assumptions about

decentralization." Bjork's (2003: 186) study of Indonesia commenced by noting the need for case-specific analyses to provide "a much needed balance to more theoretical treatments of decentralization and reports produced by funding organizations". The present contribution has been written in the spirit advocated by these authors, providing data from one state, and particularly one district within that state, in India.

The strongest message of this study is that even in a society with high levels of education and strong traditions of participation, decentralisation is difficult to achieve. In Kerala, this was attempted with a multifaceted 'big-bang' approach which had limitations but also strengths. Among the obstacles were technical competence at the local level and the attitudes of actors unconvinced that decentralisation was desirable in the first place.

In his parallel study of Indonesia, Bjork (2003: 215) raised the obvious question whether time would make a difference. He asked himself whether he was too hasty in drawing conclusions about the fate of the reform only 4 years since it had been enacted, and whether 10 or 20 years would be needed before the benefits of the reform could begin to surface. A similar question of course needs to be asked in Kerala. Bjork's answer was to leave open that possibility in Indonesia; but he indicated that he was not convinced that it was likely to occur. He added that:

> The difficulties that Indonesian educators have experienced as they respond to [reform] directives stem from friction between the ideological foundation of educational decentralization and the culture of teaching and government that shapes the behavior of teachers as public employees. The … teachers have been socialized to accept a set of values and to display behaviors that clash with the philosophical underpinnings of decentralization.

Comparable forces were at play in Kerala; and since in any case the Left Democratic Front which came to power in 1996 was replaced in 2001 by its rival United Democratic Front, much of the momentum of the PCDP was dissipated. Of course, it can be argued that development must take the form of a series of pushes: two steps forward, one step backward. But the Kerala case seems to raise questions about the fundamental goals as well as about the practicalities of implementation.

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DECENTRALISATION IN EDUCATION, INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE AND TEACHER AUTONOMY IN INDONESIA

CHRISTOPHER BJORK

Abstract – Indonesia has seen several recent attempts to devolve control over the curriculum to the local level. Rather than catalogue all of the problems encountered in the course of their implementation, the present contribution focuses on a single reform, the Local Content Curriculum (LCC). Analysis of local responses to this reform provides insights into the state's influence on the actions and attitudes of Indonesian educators not previously detailed in research on educational decentralisation. These insights into the implementation of the LCC expand the understanding of the tangible effects of educational reform on actual learning institutions and pupils as well as inform about the central government's real ability to effect change in schools. The study also shows how the lethargy of local actors is bound to deeply engrained views about the role of Indonesian teachers in school, in the society and in the state.

Zusammenfassung – DEZENTRALISIERUNG IN DER BILDUNG, DIE KULTUR ÖFFENTLICHER EINRICHTUNGEN UND DIE AUTONOMIE DER LEHRER IN INDONESIEN – Indonesien hat in jüngster Zeit verschiedene Versuche erfahren, die Aufsicht über den Lehrplan auf die lokale Ebene zu übertragen. Der vorliegende Beitrag behandelt nicht so sehr die Probleme bei der Durchführung dieser Versuche, sondern konzentriert sich eher auf eine einzige Reform, den sogenannten *'Local Content'* Lehrplan (Lehrplan lokaler Inhalte). Die Analyse lokaler Reaktionen auf diese Reform verschafft einen neuen, detaillierten Überblick über den Einfluss, den der Staat auf die Arbeitsweise und die Geisteshaltung der indonesischen Lehrkräfte ausübt. Diese Einblicke in die Durchführung des *'Local Content'* Lehrplans erweitern das Verständnis der greifbaren Auswirkungen, die die Bildungsreform auf die konkreten Lernanstalten und die Schüler hat. Außerdem informieren sie über die tatsächliche Fähigkeit der Zentralregierung, Änderungen in den Schulen zu bewirken. Die Studie zeigt auch, wie die Lethargie der lokalen Akteure von deren tief verwurzelten Ansichten bezüglich der Rolle der indonesischen Lehrer in Schule, Gesellschaft und Staat abhängig ist.

Résumé – INDONÉSIE: DÉCENTRALISATION DE L'ÉDUCATION, CULTURE INSTITUTIONNELLE ET AUTONOMIE DES ENSEIGNANTS – L'Indonésie a connu récemment plusieurs tentatives pour déléguer l'autorité des programmes au niveau local. Au lieu de répertorier toutes les difficultés rencontrées au cours de la réalisation, l'auteur s'intéresse à une seule réforme, le Programme des contenus locaux. L'analyse des réponses locales à cette réforme donne un aperçu de l'influence publique sur les actions et comportements des enseignants indonésiens, qui n'ont pas encore été étudiés par la recherche sur la décentralisation de l'éducation. Ces indications sur l'application du Programme permettent une meilleure appréhension des conséquences réelles de la réforme éducative sur les établissements d'enseignement et sur les élèves, et renseignent sur la capacité réelle du gouvernement

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central à susciter des changements dans les établissements scolaires. L'étude montre en outre que la léthargie des intervenants locaux est liée à des conceptions profondément ancrées sur le rôle des enseignants indonésiens au sein de l'école, de la société et de l'État.

Resumen – DESCENTRALIZACIÓN EN LA EDUCACIÓN, CULTURA INSTITUCIONAL Y AUTONOMÍA DE LOS EDUCADORES EN INDONESIA – Indonesia ha vivido varios intentos recientes de delegar el control de los planes de estudio a los niveles locales. Este trabajo no cataloga todos los problemas que el autor encontró en el transcurso de su implementación, sino que se concentra en una sola reforma, el Local Content Curriculum. El análisis de las respuestas locales frente a esta reforma saca a la luz la influencia que ejerce el Estado sobre las acciones y actitudes de los educadores indonesios, que no se había detallado previamente en las investigaciones realizadas sobre la descentralización de la educación. Estos conocimientos sobre la implementación del Local Content Curriculum amplían la comprensión de los efectos tangibles que la reforma educativa tiene actualmente sobre las instituciones de aprendizaje y los educandos, al mismo tiempo que informa sobre la capacidad real del gobierno central de efectuar cambios en las escuelas. Asimismo, el estudio muestra en qué grado el letargo de los actores locales está ligado a una visión profundamente enraizada del papel que deben cumplir los educadores indonesios en la escuela, en la sociedad y en el Estado.

Резюме – ДЕЦЕНТРАЛИЗАЦИЯ В ОБРАЗОВАНИИ, ИНСТИТУЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ КУЛЬТУРА И АВТОНОМИЯ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ В ИНДОНЕЗИИ – В последнее время в Индонезии предпринималось несколько попыток передачи контроля над учебными программами органам местного управления. Вместо перечисления всех вопросов, возникших в ходе их внедрения в практику, автор данной статьи делает акцент лишь на одной реформе – содержании местных образовательных программ. Анализ отзывов о данной реформе позволяет понять, как влияет государство на действия эдукаторов в Индонезии, что ранее не получило освещения в исследованиях по вопросу децентрализации образования. Этот взгляд на осуществление реформы содержания местных образовательных программ позволяет расширить понимание очевидного влияния образовательной реформы на учащихся и на сами учебные заведения. Также это позволяет заявить о реальной возможности центрального правительства производить перемены в школах. Данное исследование показало, как бездействие местных акторов тесно переплетается с укоренившимися взглядами о роли индонезийских учителей в школе, в обществе и государстве.

Local Responses to Educational Decentralisation in Indonesia

During the final two decades of the 20th century, Indonesia, one of the most highly centralised nations in Asia (Mackie and MacIntyre 1994; Malley 1999), reversed course and began promulgating legislation designed to accord increased authority to sub-national levels. All sectors of government were affected by that push for decentralisation, which the World Bank labeled a

'make or break issue' for the country (Schwarz 2000a: 10, b). The Indonesian government went so far as to hire a full-time international consultant to coordinate all of the decentralisation projects undertaken by government ministries. During that period, a slate of programs designed to delegate authority to the provinces, towns and villages was enacted. Although the government sometimes had trouble following through on its promise to devolve authority to autonomous regions, its support for decentralisation projects did not wane. The culmination of this trend was the passage of two laws in 1999 (Laws 22 and 25 of 1999) that granted sweeping political power and revenue-collecting rights to Indonesia's districts and municipalities, beginning in 2001. By the end of the 20th century, the question was no longer whether or not Indonesia would embrace decentralisation, but the speed of change and the impact of the reforms promulgated by the government.

Considering the highly centralised, top-down nature of Indonesian government, the decision to redistribute authority to local levels represented a significant departure from previous practice. A state that had "embodied centripetal power" (Malley 1999) indicated that it would transfer key powers to local actors and institutions. That shift had important implications for the way that education would be organised and delivered in Indonesia. A system that had previously concentrated authority firmly at the top signalled that the monopoly of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) over the schools would be broken. After a long history of being denied opportunities to participate in the direction of schooling, local educators were given unprecedented authority over the curriculum, financial matters and school practice. Yet it was unclear to government officials how actors in the education sector would respond to that reconfiguration of the relationship between state and school. Ministry employees did not have a clear picture of how local actors would react to newly created opportunities to shape policy and practice in the schools (Bjork 2003). In promoting educational decentralisation, the MOEC was entering uncharted territory.

The present study explores local responses to educational decentralisation reform in the 1990s. Rather than attempt to catalogue all of the programs enacted in support of the government's mission to devolve authority to local levels, it focuses on implementation of a single reform, the Local Content Curriculum (LCC). Launched on a national scale in 1994, the LCC required all elementary and junior secondary schools to allocate 20% of all instruction to locally designed subject matter. The program was regarded as the MOEC's 'flagship' decentralisation project during the recent wave of support for devolving authority to local levels. Analysis of responses to the LCC provides insights into the state's influence over the actions and attitudes of Indonesian educators not previously detailed in research on educational decentralisation.

As school-based actors interpret policy guidelines and make decisions about what course of action to take, they are alert to the exigencies of their

daily environments as well as perceptions of the state formed over time. The process of interpreting, translating and reshaping policies drafted by central authorities plays a crucial role in the success or failure of educational reform efforts, yet rarely attracts serious attention in analyses of decentralisation measures. Government employees as well as international consultants rarely obtain a comprehensive reading of policy implementation at the local level. As a result, their explanations of reform efforts are often incomplete – and sometimes inaccurate. As will be demonstrated, close examination of policy translation at the ground level can deepen our understanding of the tangible effects of educational reform on actual learning institutions and students – and also inform us about the state's ability to lever change in schools. Government officials in Indonesia and other nations attempting to delegate authority to local levels cannot afford to ignore that perspective on educational reform.

Theoretical Framework

As noted above, a wave of support for decentralisation swept across Asia during the 1980s and 1990s. Central-government authorities typically sponsored such measures, with strong encouragement from international agencies such as the World Bank and regional organisations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Karl and Schmitter 1994; Rhoten 1999). Governments that did not embrace decentralisation risked losing legitimacy in international circles (Weiler 1989). In some cases, calls for decentralisation were driven by neoliberal economic theory. Delegating authority to local levels, it was argued, would lead to more efficient use of resources (financial, material and human). Other reforms were framed in more political terms, stressing the need to reconfigure extant power structures so as to provide citizens with more input into the management of public institutions. Devolving authority to local levels had the potential to institutionalise the participation of citizens in local government.

Clearly, the rationale relied on to justify decentralisation efforts as well as the projected benefits of such action were articulated quite broadly. However, such theory was not balanced by a chorus of voices expressing caution regarding the possible detriments of transferring authority to local levels. (It is possible to find cautionary tales in the research literature on decentralisation. One excellent example of such dissonance can be found in Prud'homme (1995).) As Rozman (2002: 1) observes, as "an antidote to communist central planning and vertical control, as a corrective to the one-sidedness of the Asian economic mode, and as a response to global trends, decentralisation promised a bonanza at the start of the transition to a new era". For politicians or bureaucrats making policy decisions, there seemed to be little reason to resist pressure to devolve.

Decentralisation appears to offer some valuable improvements to the centripetal management arrangements often relied on to oversee schools. Have

theories about devolution of authority produced their expected outcomes when implemented in previously centralised school systems? Local perspectives on decentralisation reforms have, until recently, been difficult to locate. Gaynor (1998: 4) notes: "While the view of decentralisation of education continues to attract considerable interest and support, there is an increasing demand to extract lessons from experience and to critically challenge assumptions about decentralisation". Case-specific analyses often provide perspectives that contrast with more theoretical treatments of decentralisation and reports produced by funding organisations. Although the number of such case studies is small, assessments of actual attempts to alter the central–local balance of power guiding education systems provide more abundant examples of the hazards of decentralisation than they do confirmation that devolution will produce the benefits cited by proponents of such measures.

The most common explanation for difficulties in devolving control over schools is political wrangling. Analyses taking that approach often underline inherent conflicts between the goals of decentralisation policies and the interests of government authorities (Weiler 1990; Maclure 1993; Lauglo 1995). McGinn and Street (1986: 474) succinctly summarise this view:

> If we see governments as complex systems of competing groups or factions whose members are both within the government and external to it, we can begin to understand the contradictions described above … Decentralisation reforms fail not so much because they are not implemented but because they are actively resisted, often by groups within the government.

The prevalence of such political explanations for difficulties in implementing decentralisation policies should not surprise us, given that researchers commonly locate themselves in the capitals of the countries they study and base their conclusions on data provided by central authorities. Studies that focus on the activities of upper level officials and politicians may enhance our understanding of "policy resources" and "policy mechanics" (Stein 1997), but they often fail to capture the full story. According to Rhoten (2000: 596): "Although political approaches provide some insight into the conflicts that shape the decisions and strategies of education decentralisation, these approaches are reductionist in their ability to understand how these decisions and strategies play out at the sub-national level."

The present study was conceived as an alternative to such research models. Rather than studying the effects of educational decentralisation on Indonesian schools writ large, I opted to conduct an ethnography of a single school system's responses to a change effort. My goal was to gain a thorough understanding of how educators interpreted educational decentralisation policies, what factors encouraged them to follow or reject MOEC directives, and the impact which their decisions had on the learning experiences of students. First, I spent a month in Jakarta, interviewing government officials and international consultants. Those individuals provided me with a

picture of the government's view of what the LCC was designed to accomplish, how it fit into broader plans for improving the quality of education in Indonesia, and the most formidable challenges to program implementation. Next, I set up residence in a city in East Java and spent a year immersing myself in the cultures of six junior high schools. My sample of schools included a combination of public and private, religious and secular, highly selective and lowly regarded institutions. Employing ethnographic methods, I explored the historical, political, social, economic and religious factors that shaped the work of Indonesian teachers. In this study, I describe the effects of those factors on implementation of the LCC, and compare the vision of reform held by national education planners with its translation at the local level in Indonesia. As I will show, the shape classroom teachers gave to the reform looked remarkably different from that described by government officials.

History and Goals of the LCC

The MOEC began to consider strategies for decentralising the Indonesian education system during the 1980s. After years of informal discussions about the prospects of creating a portion of the national curriculum that was designed to accomplish that goal, the MOEC conducted a feasibility study of curricular decentralisation in 1986. A program outline was prepared and piloted in three provinces. The following year, a second phase of piloting was conducted in three additional provinces. In 1994, after much tinkering and revising, the LCC became a distinct sub-section of the national curriculum and was implemented in schools across the country.

All elementary and junior high schools, public and private, were instructed to develop locally relevant courses that would "provide students with an understanding of … their local culture, basic life skills and an introduction to income producing skills" (UNDP/UNESCO/ILO 1994). The MOEC encouraged schools to create LCC courses that fit the unique conditions of the communities they served. For example, a school in Bali might decide to offer instruction in tourism, while an institution located in a rural area of Java could create a course in agriculture. Program guidelines required all elementary and junior secondary schools to allocate 20% of the curriculum to locally designed subject matter. Education officials also pressed teachers to craft original lessons and to experiment with innovative pedagogy as they translated lesson plans into learning activities. By following that blueprint, officials in Jakarta posited, teachers would enliven instruction and motivate students to remain in school longer.

Clearly, the LCC was an ambitious reform. The government was looking to it to remedy a plethora of problems facing the education system. Top-level officials, international consultants, program assistants, bureaucrats working in the provinces, and local educators all had opportunities to leave their

imprint on the reform. As the number of hands touching the LCC increased, so did the breadth of what it was designed to accomplish. Three goals, however, remained salient. First, reform plans emphasised the importance of concentrating authority over the design and implementation of the new curriculum at the school level. As a result, classroom teachers were entrusted with responsibilities previously unheard of in Indonesia. Second, individuals working at all levels of the system stressed the value of creating tighter links between curricula and local conditions. Educators may have differed in their interpretations of how curriculum can best match the local context, but there was a consensus that the LCC should mesh with local realities. MOEC officials conceded that previous national curricula did not adequately consider Indonesia's remarkable diversity. Third, the Indonesian government hoped that the introduction of the LCC program would convince students to stay in school longer. Adolescents more concerned about employment than intellectual development had few schooling options after 1988, when the MOEC decided to close all vocational junior secondary schools. The government was depending on the LCC to enhance the appeal of junior secondary education and to prevent students who in the past might have opted for vocational education from dropping out prior to junior high-school graduation.

Response to the Reform in the Schools

The Indonesian MOEC had sweeping plans for the LCC. Did implementation of the program meet those goals? To what extent did introduction of the program alter authority structures or the content of the curriculum delivered in the schools? When I conducted fieldwork in East Java, I discovered that the LCC, a centrally mandated decentralisation policy, had virtually no impact at the school level. The introduction of the LCC did not produce a redistribution of authority from central to local levels.

Literature on educational reform generally suggests that teachers are eager to augment their authority over curriculum and instruction (Cohn and Kottkamp 1993; Little and McLaughlin 1993; Hargreaves and Fullan 1998). Yet the Indonesian teachers I observed displayed little interest in wielding more influence on their campuses. When offered control of the LCC, they demurred and continued to wait for their superiors to instruct them how to carry out their work. The mismatch between central expectations and local realities produced a state of paralysis at all levels of the education system. Central education officials assumed that teachers had assumed leadership over the LCC. In actuality, local educators continued to wait for direction from the capital.

That stasis was particularly evident when observing and talking to teachers. As one member of the teacher advisory group responsible for overseeing implementation of the LCC in East Java explained to me, "In the last 2 years the group has not been very active. Don't be surprised if you meet

our members and they aren't doing anything. In 1997 and 1998 we met only once a year. Now we are waiting for instructions for another meeting. We haven't been given permission yet.'' In all of the schools I studied, the pre- and post-1994 curriculum showed remarkable consistency. In most cases, course titles had been changed or skills subjects (such as sewing or electronics) reclassified to fall under the LCC umbrella, but the substance of what students study remained constant. In reviewing the new LCC curriculum at his school, for example, one teacher noted that all of the topics categorised as LCC were taught prior to 1994. Instructors continued to use the curricular materials and instructional methods they had relied on for years; only the titles of those classes or the manner in which they were configured (such as the sequence of topics presented) had been altered.

Why did the Indonesian teachers reject the opportunities presented to them to increase their autonomy? Were they satisfied with the *status quo*, or is the answer to that question tied to action at the national level? Did MOEC officials interfere with the transfer of authority to the localities out of a desire to protect their own power? Did the reform stall because teachers lacked the resources necessary to translate the plans for change into action?

Although a confluence of factors precluded local actors from following MOEC plans for the reform, entrenched beliefs concerning the connection between public schools and the state had the most direct impact on the actions of LCC teachers. Since the time that the Indonesian public school system was formed, teachers' duties to the state were emphasised over their obligations to students and parents. The government went to great lengths to ensure that educators did not forget that their primary allegiance was to the national cause. That stress on the teachers' duties as civil servants produced a culture of teaching that values obedience above all other behaviours. Educators are not recognised for their instructional excellence or commitment to their craft. Instead, they derive rewards from dutifully following the orders of their superiors. Teachers candidly told me that they considered the role of educator to be secondary to their civil servant identity. When the 'civil-servant' and 'autonomous-educator' facets of their identities conflicted, teachers almost always placed a higher priority on conforming to the norms that guided the activities of government employees.

Indonesian educators have been conditioned to repress any inclinations they might have to approach their work with a sense of independence (Bjork 2002). In the past, individuals who veered from the narrow path laid out for them by the government entered risky territory. In promoting decentralisation, the government indicated that it expected educators to follow a contrasting set of norms. Instead of loyally adhering to plans drafted by national experts, educators were to assume leadership in the schools, a task not previously assigned to them. Yet teachers were still defined as civil servants, their salaries continued to be paid by the national government, and they were evaluated using the same behavioural checklist that had been in place for years. With the LCC, the government pressed teachers to more

readily display the 'autonomous-educator' aspect of their job, but failed to recognise tensions between the competing forces acting upon them. Not surprisingly, teachers clung to the behaviours that served them well in the past instead of supporting the precarious, unproven recommendations outlined in decentralisation policy.

With no history of exercising leadership, instructors continued to follow the practices that had provided them with security in the past. Assuming the role of the autonomous educator in a decentralised system required investments of time and effort that many teachers were either unprepared for or uninterested in making. In most instances, the individuals assigned to teach LCC courses did so without complaint, but made no effort to follow MOEC guidelines. Instead, they continued to teach in the way had in the past, but used words and phrases from government documents to describe that work. In other cases, individuals protested when asked to teach LCC subjects. Socialised to respect the verticality of the system's hierarchical authority, they averted opportunities to display leadership. Ignoring pressure to change was the safest, least demanding course of action for teachers. Blending in with the background was more likely to bring educators the ends they sought than distinguishing themselves from their peers or taking on extra duties.

The Influence of Central Bureaucrats on Program Implementation

As stated above, analyses of efforts to implement decentralisation measures commonly point to political clashes when education reforms do not meet stated objectives. Was that the case with the LCC? Did MOEC officials in Jakarta impede the transfer of authority over the LCC to local educators? I was struck by the desire to empower local educators expressed by the members of the LCC management team. I met with those individuals on several occasions throughout my period of fieldwork and each time I came away with the impression that they were firmly committed to the goals of the reform. In office after office, bureaucrats expressed support for increasing the autonomy of local educators. Their words and implementation plans indicated that the Ministry was firmly behind the decentralisation project. That is not to say that the central government created conditions conducive to a smooth devolution of authority. When I ventured into the field and observed local responses to the LCC, on numerous occasions I witnessed educators experiencing difficulty as they attempted to implement the reform due to lack of support from the MOEC.

Interviews and observations indicated that the level of assistance provided to provincial offices of education by the leadership team in Jakarta was insufficient. Members of the East Java Curriculum Coordinating Group (CCG) did not feel prepared to assume control of LCC programs in the province. At the school level, the lack of support was even more glaring.

The teachers who were relied on to develop new curricula and introduce it in classrooms often attempted to do so without any formal preparation. Those who did attend training workshops complained that the instruction offered was unrelated to the challenges associated with their new roles and responsibilities as LCC instructors. Based on the data I collected, it seemed clear that the MOEC did not provide the assistance required for a smooth transfer of authority to sub-national actors and institutions.

MOEC employees stationed in Jakarta were disconnected from the targets of the policies they promulgate. Unaccustomed to modifying their plans in response to feedback from individuals located below them in the administrative hierarchy, MOEC officials assumed that their plans for the LCC were being followed. In actuality, teachers and administrators, hesitant to act independently, continued to wait for direction. That situation simplified the work of education planners in Jakarta. Unaware of the lack of support felt by local educators, MOEC employees were not forced to revise their methods of training teachers – and the cycle of dependency persisted.

One might argue that MOEC officials, in failing to provide adequate resources and support for the LCC, blocked the reform. I concur with that assessment. However, there is a critical difference between unknowingly offering insufficient guidance and actively impeding change. I did not come across any evidence of active resistance to the LCC. MOEC officials did undermine the goals of the reform in a number of significant ways, but such interference was usually unintentional; the officials were generally unaware of the effects of their actions.

The most striking example of this occurred at a national LCC conference, when workshop leaders assigned to discuss effective instructional strategies for the LCC with a group of teachers criticised the suggestions offered by participants, gradually monopolising the meeting and lecturing the instructors about how they should approach their work. The workshop leaders were oblivious to the contradictions between the goal of the session – to empower classroom teachers to work autonomously – and the effects of their approaches to leading the session on participants. A similar dynamic was at play during the meetings of the provincial CCG.

The inability of MOEC officials to recognise the ways in which their actions contradicted the philosophy and objectives of the LCC points to cultural rather than political obstacles to the transfer of authority. Bureaucrats working in the capital had great difficulty adjusting their attitudes, behaviour, and manner of interacting with sub-national actors to fall in line with the philosophical underpinnings of educational decentralisation. Circumscribed in institutional and societal frames that respect vertical hierarchy and reward obedience to authority, those officials were generally unaware of the repercussions of their actions. This situation emphasises that transforming institutional cultures is an enormous undertaking, and that decentralisation reforms are not likely to succeed unless core values and routines are modified.

Power Dynamics in the Education System

Teachers' resistance to LCC policy directives makes more sense if the structure and goals of the education system are considered. The diagram below (Figure 1) identifies four forces that commonly act upon teachers as they negotiate an education system.

In reacting to an educational reform, the four influences outlined in the diagram have the potential to impel teachers to modify their behaviour. Those factors can also provide a system of checks and balances, reducing the chances of a single constituency dominating the process of setting priorities for the schools. However, in most of the schools in my sample, three of the four forces included in the model below (students, parents, and teachers) remained disconnected from the centres of power. None of these groups have traditionally been included in decision-making in Indonesia; their views have not been solicited by the officials managing the system. With the influence of those stakeholders truncated, the balance of power became heavily skewed in the direction of Jakarta. As a result, the state has enjoyed a virtual monopoly over Indonesian schools – even private schools not directly falling under the government's jurisdiction. The government has controlled the curriculum, salaries, in-service training, evaluation, and even the teachers' union. When adapted to fit the Indonesian context, Figure 1 takes a new form, as in Figure 2.

The government exerts a degree of influence that eclipses the authority of all other parties in the education system. Instructors may be given the responsibility of translating policy into practice, but their awareness of what schools and teachers can accomplish is limited to their experiences with the modern Indonesian system. As a result, Indonesian teachers generally coordinate their behaviour to fall in line with the state's expectations. That is why

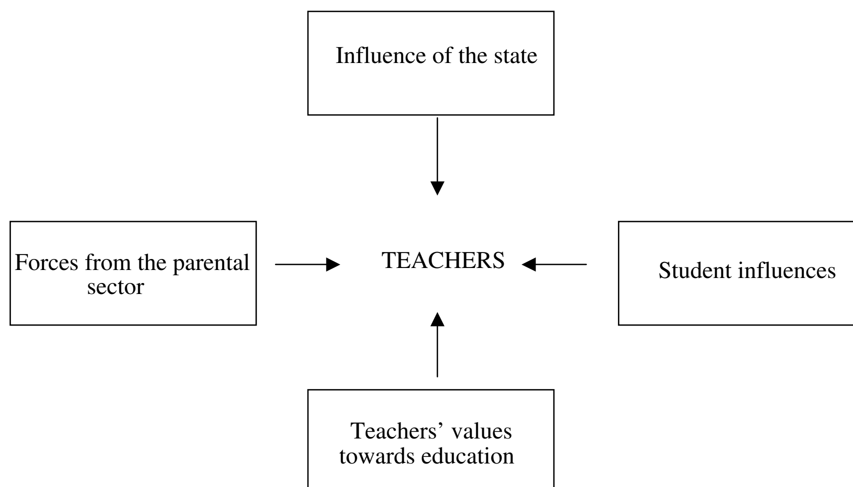

Figure 1. Forces acting upon teachers

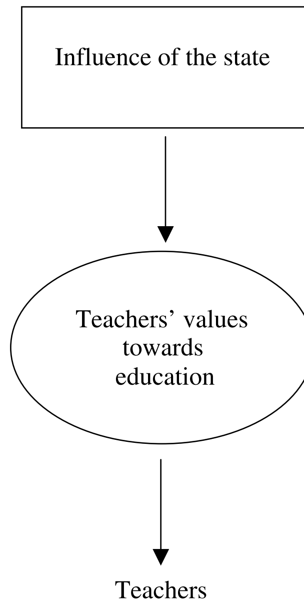

Figure 2. Forces in the Indonesian public school system

'Teachers' Values Towards Education' is placed below 'The Influence of the State' in Figure 2, not as an independent source of pressure.

If the authority of the state is so forceful, why didn't teachers feel compelled to implement the LCC according to MOEC plans? How can we account for local resistance to the policy? At first glance, the lack of action that I observed in East Javanese schools appears to represent a form of opposition to government leadership. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes evident that educators acted in accordance with the norms that historically governed the Indonesian public school system.

During the past half-century, national cohesion was a driving force behind activity in all government sectors in Indonesia (Darmaputera 1988; Schwarz 2000a, b). The school system was structured around that purpose and educators learned to adhere to all directives related to the national cause. Schools were decorated with pictures of national heroes and politicians, ceremonies designed to honour the state were institutionalised across the archipelago, and a national curriculum that stressed the schools' role as socialisers of patriotic citizens was introduced. Instruction, in contrast, was not made a high priority. Neither the MOEC nor the schools communicated to educators the idea that their pedagogical skills required attention. Teachers were rarely observed in classrooms and their instructional abilities were not evaluated. Throughout the new order period, discussing politics on campus could mark the end of an educator's career, but failing to show up for scheduled

classes was condoned. Teachers learned to follow the rules established by the MOEC and organise their behaviour accordingly.

Based on previous patterns in oversight of the school system, one might predict that the MOEC would not pay close attention to local implementation of the LCC. Teachers had come to understand that what they did inside the walls of their classrooms was rarely of interest to government officials – as long as their behaviour did not threaten state authority. When inspectors did visit the schools, they tend to pay minimal attention to teaching and learning. Furthermore, the MOEC did not hire any inspectors to monitor LCC programs. From this perspective, the lack of action by LCC teachers can be viewed as conformity to MOEC direction rather than as a challenge to governmental authority.

Local schools demonstrated compliance with the policy on paper without altering the basic structures that arranged campus activity. That was all the MOEC demanded in the past, and there had been no indication that its approach to decentralisation would upset that situation. As Meyer and Kamens (1992) have observed, in loosely coupled education systems, curriculum can be constructed to reflect international standards without actually requiring school districts to implement reform policy as it is written (Meyer and Kamens 1992: 165).

Enacting LCC programs according to the detailed plans outlined in MOEC documents would most likely have created great stress for teachers and administrators. Those people had not been sufficiently trained in the skills necessary to carry out the program, they were not accustomed to spending their out-of-class hours preparing for instruction, and they rarely had access to the materials outlined in LCC guidebooks. Furthermore, displaying autonomy might have been more dangerous for school employees than disregarding exhortations to approach their work with a sense of independence. MOEC policy documents may have indicated that such behaviour was desirable, but the immediate environments in which teachers worked offered little evidence that such recommendations merited serious consideration.

School cultures had previously rewarded obedience rather than initiative; the teachers I observed were clearly averse to deviating from that norm. Delegating authority to local levels required fundamental changes that go against the core values and structures that have anchored the Indonesian school system since its foundation. The influences pictured in Figure 2 were not powerful enough to impel teachers to discard the paradigms they had learned to respect or to accept the autonomy that was offered to them. Their experiences with a top-down, authoritarian system of government were too deeply engrained.

Broader Aims of Decentralisation

Educational decentralisation is embedded in broader notions of participatory democracy, and the distribution of power. Indonesia's history of top-down,

authoritarian control does not provide a fertile setting for reforms that aim to enlarge the circle of actors involved in the management of public services. There are inherent tensions between decentralisation measures like the LCC, whose success depends on the active involvement of local educators, and the norms that have ordered Indonesian civil-service culture for decades.

In the past, the primary responsibility demanded of educators was promoting national integration. Beyond the borders of schools, too, the individuals who staff Indonesia's learning institutions were socialised to respect authority and to suppress any inclinations to display any independence of thought and action they may have felt. Clearly, the behavioural expectations for LCC teachers conflict with the values that have steered the professional lives of those actors. That dissonance explains in great part teachers' reluctance to embrace the role of autonomous educator which they were expected to play in a decentralised system.

Indonesia's long history of economic and political instability also impeded smooth implementation of the LCC. Since independence, the archipelago has been plagued by periods of great volatility, including a particularly chaotic time during the 1950s when the national government nearly collapsed. Both Presidents Sukarno and Suharto experimented with democratic reform, but each such venture was followed by a reassertion of central authority and a curtailing of civil liberties. Based on patterns of extension and retraction of authority over the past 50 years, teachers might therefore be skeptical about the depth of the government's current commitment to decentralisation reform. In the past, politicians publicly voiced their intention to foster a more open and democratic society, only to tighten the leash connecting regions to the center when such openness undercut their own authority. If there is a chance that the government will ultimately withdraw its support for the LCC, why would teachers invest themselves in the program? A more prudent response to the policy would be to voice support for the reform, continue to approach their work the way they have in the past, and wait for a return to previous practices.

Educational decentralisation is part of a larger movement to steer Indonesia away from the authoritarian rule that characterised the New Order era. The LCC was one of a slew of programs introduced in the 1990s that sought to democratise public institutions in that country. One of the points stressed throughout this article is that efforts to decentralise education – or any sector of government – are not implemented in isolation. Their success or failure in great part depends on the convergence of mutually supportive activity in multiple locations. The MOEC is not the only ministry that faced obstacles in its attempts to devolve in recent years; all sectors of government have struggled to implement decentralisation policies introduced during the last decade (Buising 2000; Ferrazzi 2000; Katyasungkana 2000; Dibb and Prince 2001; Usman 2001).

Analyses of those efforts do chart some progress toward their objectives, but examples of success are usually balanced – or overshadowed – by

evidence of setbacks and unmet goals. The pervasiveness of such cautionary evidence across all sectors of government underlines the enormity of the challenge the Indonesian government is facing as it attempts to transform the structure of the state and to create a more democratic society.

It is not yet clear if Indonesian government officials' public declarations of support for more localised control will result in a transfer of authority over public institutions (such as schools) that will prove to be consequential and durable, or if such proclamations will mask surface-level modifications to a resilient centralised government apparatus that continues to concentrate power in Jakarta. If the government is indeed committed to decentralisation, it is imperative that more attention be paid to the implications of reform plans for local agencies and actors. Upper level officials will need to gain a deeper understanding of the conditions in which their policies are enacted. Their methods of training school-based employees must be revised so as to prepare those people to lead rather than follow. The system of incentives offered to local actors must be powerful enough to galvanise them into action. Civil servants will need more thorough and ongoing training in the skills required of them in their new roles.

This study underscores the magnitude of the demands placed on those educators who have to translate decentralisation policy into practice at local levels. Reforms such as the LCC press educators to alter the ways they interact with their supervisors, to take on responsibilities not previously demanded of them, and to rethink their relationships with the school and the community – in essence, to reinvent themselves professionally. Educational officials working in the capital must undergo a similar transformation before the policies they promulgate will meet their objectives. Studies of educational decentralisation need to look closely at those issues, in addition to the political considerations that tend to dominate research on this topic.

Conclusion

Decentralisation measures like the LCC depend on local actors displaying independence and initiative as they implement reform measures. After decades of rewarding teachers and other civil servants for dutifully following the orders of the superiors, the MOEC is now asking them to act autonomously – to shape policy and practice in the schools. This demands a conspicuous shift in the role of the teacher. Operating in a system in great flux, educators have not followed the MOEC's plans to decentralise the schools. Whether or not established governmental practices and power configurations can be altered remains unclear. In such an environment, abandoning the practices and attitudes that paid dividends in the past can be a risky undertaking. Politicians and analysts may offer optimistic forecasts such as the following:

> It is possible that implementing regional autonomy may create unrest in some part of the country in the short to medium term. However, in the long run these reforms have the potential to create economic, social, and political stability and to bring peace and security to the people of Indonesia (Usman 2001: 25).

But local actors have yet to come across tangible evidence that such long-term gains will actually materialise. Case studies of devolution policies enacted in numerous government sectors indicate that a firm commitment to the ideas that underpin decentralisation is a necessary prerequisite to the successful devolution of authority to sub-national organisations and actors. As Rhoten (2000: 612) notes, "a province's institutional capacity is also inexorably connected to the province's political culture and the assumptions of power and authority that shape government–society relations". Although the central government has demonstrated a commitment to empowering local government organisations and actors, it has yet to create a socio-political context conducive to such a transfer of authority. Government leaders have pressed local educators to revise their roles, without modifying the foundation which anchors the education system. After decades of being conditioned to believe otherwise, instructors need to be convinced that current efforts to democratise the government will be supported in the future, and that the benefits they will derive from investing in the implementation of a reform like the LCC exceed the potential costs.

The data which I collected indicate that the MOEC has not yet commenced rebuilding the culture of the education system to fit the new vision of teaching and learning it is promoting. Instead, it is attempting to append the LCC reform to an existing core, with only minor modifications. Central–local interactions, training workshops provided to teachers, and incentive schemes all continue to reflect entrenched practices that often clash with new goals for education. As a result of this discord, introduction of the LCC has succeeded in reforming discourse, but not practice.

This ethnographic study of the translation and implementation of the LCC reveals a lack of action by local actors, connecting that stasis to deeply engrained views about the role of the Indonesian teacher within the school and the state. Friction between the objectives of decentralisation and a socio-political context which has traditionally defined teachers as dutiful civil servants has led to the maintenance of the *status quo*. Indonesia's long history of top-down authority structures, failed experiments with democratic rule, economic uncertainty, and emphasis on the schools' obligation to support national integration have prevented individuals at all levels of the system from altering their behaviour.

Teachers, in particular, have not adopted the role of the autonomous educator that government officials designed for them. Those influences, more than the technical factors highlighted in macro assessments of decentralisation policies, have impeded a redistribution of authority to the local level.

Until the political situation in Indonesia stabilises and school-based educators are convinced that efforts to democratise Indonesian government and society will continue to be supported in the future, it is unlikely that teachers or administrators will modify their behaviour to fit recent ministry prescriptions for practice. If the individuals depended on to translate decentralisation plans into practice remain skeptical about the future, reform measures are unlikely to meet their objectives.

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DECENTRALISATION AND SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT IN THAILAND

DAVID T. GAMAGE AND PACHARAPIMON SOOKSOMCHITRA

Abstract – School-based management (SBM) in Thailand began in 1997 in the course of a reform aimed at overcoming a profound crisis in the education system. The present contribution reports on the introduction and institutionalisation of decentralisation and SBM with community participation in Thailand. The data reported here are based on an empirical survey of 1,000 school-board members from Bangkok as well as provincial and rural areas which was followed by 45 interviews with all relevant stakeholders. The results of the study are promising, as they show broad support for the reform among school principals as well as board members. However, they also reveal a continuing need to train principals and board members in educational leadership and management.

Zusammenfassung – DEZENTRALISIERUNG UND MANAGEMENT AUF SCHULEBENE IN THAILAND – Das Management auf Schulebene in Thailand begann 1997 im Zuge einer Reform, deren Ziel es war, eine tiefe Krise des thailändischen Bildungssystems zu überwinden. Der vorliegende Beitrag berichtet von der Einführung und Institutionalisierung der Dezentralisierungsbewegung und des Managements auf Schulebene unter Beteiligung der Gemeinden in Thailand. Die Angaben basieren auf einer Umfrage unter 1,000 Mitgliedern der Schulausschüsse aus Bangkok, der Provinz und ländlichen Gebieten. Anschließend wurden 45 Interviews mit allen bedeutenden Beteiligten des Projektes durchgeführt. Die Resultate der Studie sind vielversprechend, da sie eine breite Unterstützung für die Reform unter den Schulleitern und den Ausschussmitgliedern erkennen lassen. Allerdings machen sie auch deutlich, dass die Schulleiter und Ausschussmitglieder nach wie vor in Leitung und Management im Bereich des Bildungswesens unterwiesen werden müssen.

Résumé – THAILANDE: DÉCENTRALISATION ET GESTION PAR L'ÉCOLE– La gestion par l'école a débuté en Thaïlande en 1997 dans le cadre d'une réforme visant à surmonter une grave crise du système éducatif. Cet article décrit l'introduction et l'institutionnalisation de la décentralisation et de la gestion par l'école en Thaïlande, impliquant la participation communautaire. Les données présentées proviennent d'une enquête empirique menée auprès de 1,000 membres de conseils d'établissement originaires de Bangkok ainsi que de régions provinciales et rurales, suivie de 45 entrevues avec toutes les principales parties prenantes. Les résultats de l'étude sont prometteurs, car ils montrent un solide soutien en faveur de la réforme de la part des directeurs d'établissement et des membres des conseils. Néanmoins, ils révèlent également un besoin permanent de formation pour ces derniers à la direction et à la gestion dans le secteur éducatif.

Resumen – DESCENTRALIZACIÓN Y GESTIÓN A NIVEL ESCOLAR EN TAILANDIA – En Tailandia, la gestión a nivel escolar comenzó en 1997 en el

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transcurso de una reforma que apuntaba a superar una crisis profunda del sistema educativo. Esta contribución informa sobre la introducción e institucionalización de la descentralización y la gestión a nivel escolar con participación de la comunidad en Tailandia. Los datos presentados en este informe están basados en un estudio empírico de 1.000 miembros de juntas directivas de escuelas de Bangkok y de zonas provinciales y rurales, seguido por 45 entrevistas con todos los actores implicados relevantes. Los resultados del estudio son prometedores, puesto que muestran un amplio apoyo de la reforma por parte de los directores de las escuelas y de los miembros de las juntas directivas. No obstante, también revelan una necesidad permanente de capacitar a los directores y miembros de las juntas directivas en liderazgo y gestión educativa.

Резюме – ДЕЦЕНТРАЛИЗАЦИЯ И ВНУТРИШКОЛЬНОЕ УПРАВЛЕНИЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕМ В ТАИЛАНДЕ – Внутришкольное управление образованием в Таиланде было начато в 1997 году в ходе реформы, направленной на преодоление глубокого кризиса в системе образования. В данной статье освещается введение и институционализация децентрализации и внутришкольного управления при участии общественности в Таиланде. Данные, приведенные в статье, основаны на результатах эмпирического опроса, проведенного среди 1,000 членов школьного совета в Бангкоке, а также в провинциях и сельских районах и на результатах 45 интервью со всеми участвующими спонсорами. Результаты исследования являются весьма оптимистичными и показывают, что директора школ и члены школьного совета горячо поддерживают эту реформу. Тем не менее, выявлена необходимость дальнейшей подготовки директоров и управленцев в области образовательного руководства и менеджмента.

Decentralisation and Education Reform Issues in Thailand

Since the late 1980s, the decentralisation and devolution of authority to school level have emerged as a phenomenon in most education systems around the globe. Decentralisation in education has occurred with a view to improving student outcomes and the effectiveness of the school systems in both developed and developing countries as well as in Western-style democracies and even in former Soviet block countries. These reforms were the result of the attempts to devolve power and authority from federal, state, district and local education authority (LEA) levels to either advisory or governing bodies comprising principals, teachers, parents, community and, in the case of secondary schools, students. While it is true that calls for reforms exist in most countries, any widespread turnaround in performance or examples of significant success are limited. Louis (1986) suggests that educational reform is difficult, and most of the work has to be done in schools. Real reforms in education require extensive, consistent support, accompanied by in-service training and technical assistance for school leaders – enabling them to change management and planning skills, and helping them to deal with the school and classroom implications of reforms.

Some researchers and policy analysts believe that schools need to effect changes in order to deliver society needs for the 21st century, but are reluctant to overthrow existing structures for the governing and managing of schools. Professional school administrators know this and make extensive efforts to acquire the necessary skills with supportive authorities providing adequate professional development programmes to help them change their practices. This contribution reports on a success story in the introduction and institutionalisation of school-based management (SBM) undertaken with community participation in Thailand. Data supporting this study are based on an empirical survey of 1,000 school-board members from Bangkok, provincial and rural areas, followed by 45 interviews with all relevant stakeholders.

Why School Systems Should Adopt SBM

Gamage (1996: 21) asserts that SBM identifies the individual school as the primary unit of improvement by relying on the re-distribution of decision-making authority to stimulate and sustain improvements in a school. For this purpose, varying degrees of power and authority to make decisions in the domains of the school's mission, goals and school policies relating to financial, material and human resources are not simply delegated but transferred to a representative managerial body called the school council or board. Accordingly, a school community, together with the principal and teachers, could be seen as followers of a dream who are committed to making it real, thus rendering the leadership nothing more than a means to make it happen (Gamage 1998: 47).

It is important to note that community control of the local school is an idea which came about in the United States in the mid-17th century. By contrast, the Australian state-education systems, which were highly centralised bureaucracies until the early 1970s, began then to move away from the centralisation to decentralisation and SBM involving community participation. Since the late 1980s, the concept of community participation in SBM has become a major theme and has been largely accepted as a policy initiative in school reforms in a significant number of education systems. These include Australia, Britain, New Zealand, the United States, Spain, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Hong Kong, Mexico and South Africa. Later, China, Japan and Southeast Asian countries began introducing SBM within their school systems. It was only after the Asian Financial Crisis that Thailand began to show an interest in SBM.

Guthrie (1995) argues that SBM is an eminently sensible approach. It remains in public control while simultaneously fostering good instructional practices and good management tactics, including the prospect of effective accountability to all stakeholders. These decentralisation initiatives take many forms, including the empowering of principals, teachers and parents. Today, educational decentralisation with devolution of authority to individual institutions is a popular reform theme of governments around the world.

Goals, strategies and outcomes are as varied as the countries themselves (Hanson 1998; Cranston 2000; McInerney 2003).

Educational decentralisation reforms have their roots in the political arena. As nations make the transition from autocratic to democratic forms of government, a natural outcome is an effort to decentralise educational systems. This is one important mechanism for enabling citizen participation in government institutions. Winkler (1993) suggests that improving the quality of education is often offered as a goal of decentralisation, reflecting the notion that local people can solve local education problems better than the centralised state system. However, Zajda (2003: 72) notes that an adequate definition of quality in education may also include student outcomes and the nature of the educational experiences which help produce those outcomes, especially within the learning environment.

Global Trends in Reforming School Administration

In 1966, an initiative on the part of the concerned citizens of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) established a representative committee to recommend an alternative model of school governance to the existing bureaucratic model. This report: the Currie Report of 1967, recommended that representative governing bodies should be established at each school which would consist of teachers, parents, local community members and, in the case of secondary schools, students, with the principal as an *ex-officio* member. After a lengthy public debate carried out in the print-media, in 1974 the new concept was implemented at ACT schools. By 1976, the ACT, Victoria and South Australia were able to establish school councils or boards as mandatory, corporate governing bodies to manage their schools, with varying degrees of authority devolved to the school level. By the late 1990s, all eight Australian school systems had enacted legislation introducing reforms involving SBM (Gamage 2001a).

Based on a White Paper issued in 1988, SBM was introduced in New Zealand after October 1989, with representative Boards of Trustees at the school level as mandatory corporate governing bodies. More than 90% of the cost of running each school was devolved onto schools in the form of school-based budgets with authority to govern the school, including recruitment and employment of staff by the board (Caldwell 1990; Dimmock 1993; and Gamage 1996). In Britain, the 1988 Education Reform Act empowered school communities to establish boards as mandatory, corporate governing bodies consisting of the head-teacher (principal) and governors, elected by the parents, teachers and nominees of the LEA (Bell 1999; Gamage 2001b). This model of SBM, known as local management of schools (LMS), left only the day-to-day management of a school to the head-teacher. Governors' accountability is mediated through procedures adopted to elect, appoint or co-opt governors and through the requirement that they meet with and report to parents annually (Bell 1999).

Guthrie (1995) asserts that the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE 1984), triggered one of the longest sustained periods of school reforms in American history. It reported on the educational 'crisis' in cataclysmic terms, blaming schools for setting low standards for students leading to detrimental effects on the economy and society. Since then, SBM has been adopted and implemented by school systems in literally every corner of the nation: from Washington to Florida and from California to Massachusetts (Ogawa 1992). Each state adopted different strategies for improving its system. Gamage (1996) states that the most radical set of educational reforms in the United States occurred in 1988, due to the efforts of a coalition of parents and citizens in Illinois. On the basis of their campaigns to empower school councils, in 1988 the State Legislature amended the School Reform Act, instituting school councils as mandatory, corporate governing bodies.

In May 1992, the Mexican federal government transferred the responsibility over basic and teacher education to the 31 states. This decentralisation strategy was at the core of an overall education reform that began in the late 1980s. The central government had strong motives to decentralise the educational system, as it was notoriously rigid, inefficient, conflict-laden and unresponsive to the needs of local schools (Ornelas 2000). In the late 19th century, Japan centralised its institutions, including education, in order to catch up with the Western industrialised nations. In order to maintain its competitive edge as a world leader in economic globalisation, the Japanese national leadership instituted a series of reforms to deregulate and decentralise the educational system in the late 20th century (Muta 2000; Nakatome 2003). Hong Kong's school system, which was developed as a highly centralised education system by the British, began to move towards decentralisation and devolution in 1991, operating its own SBM model called the school-management initiative (Gamage 2002; Cheng and Cheng 2003; Wong 2003).

Current Reform in the Thai System of Education

With the Asian financial crisis of the mid-1990s, Thailand was confronted with dramatic social problems both from within and due to its interdependence on the complex and rapidly changing world. A significant degree of the blame for this disaster was placed on the country's weak human-resources base, which resulted from poor-quality education provided by a badly coordinated and hierarchical bureaucratic administration. It was believed that education was very important for enhancing individual development and so contributing to the social and economic development of the country, enabling Thailand to survive the Asian Financial Crisis. It was acknowledged that the crisis exposed serious weaknesses in the national economy: inadequate export competitiveness and a low human-resources

quality. Thus, a new era of national education commenced in 1997, which placed more emphasis on a better coordinated, high-quality education system to improve the country's competitiveness in the face of globalisation (ONEC 1997).

Results similar to those revealed by the American report on *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 issued from a comparative study of some of the most advanced national systems of school education by the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC 1997). It revealed that the Thai education system was inferior to most other systems, including those of neighbouring countries. It was a bitter reality for Thailand that the quality of Thai school education was rated as very low in comparision to other member countries of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) group. It was recognised that Thai education, which seemed to be unresponsive to socio-economic needs, required rapid change and improvement to meet the shortage of human resources in terms of both quantity and quality, especially in science and technology (Atagi 2002).

Accordingly, the National Education Act of 1999 was enacted to pave the way for extensive nationwide educational reforms. All of the agencies involved in the drafting process and the deliberations of the Act made arrangements for the implementation of educational reforms. A Committee on Reform of the Educational Administrative Systems and a Committee on Learning Reforms were established. ONEC, as the major state institution responsible for the implementation of the Act, conducted studies to identify efficient strategies of educational reform through the Committee on Strategic Planning on Education Reforms, established by the National Education Commission (NEC). The major tasks following the guidelines of the Act were the reform of educational administrative structures and those of learning and legal measures. Implementation of the provisions of the Act started with the least possible delay (ONEC 2002, 2003).

Research on the Institutionalisation of SBM Reforms

A research project was launched for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of the new educational reforms involving the introduction of SBM with community participation. The key objective of the project was to determine:

1. The perceptions of school principals on the new reforms for addressing the problems with which they were confronted.
2. The perceptions of school-board members on the feasibility of the new structures, procedures and processes set in place for the efficient operation of the system.
3. The expectations of principals regarding board members and their own expectations of the principal.

4. The challenges faced by principals in their capacity as Chief Executive Officers of their schools.

The research methodology consisted of both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, with an empirical survey based on an instrument developed for the New South Wales school system for a similar project in 1991 by Gamage (1996). Appropriate modifications to suit the Thai context were added. A series of interviews were also conducted with relevant stakeholders on the basis of a specially developed semi-structured interview schedule. The sample comprised 1,000 school-board members from 100 co-educational primary schools in Bangkok as well as in provincial and rural areas in Thailand. The data collection was conducted in mid-2002 with a response rate of 53.2% to the empirical survey, followed by 45 interviews to seek clarification and additional information on the quantitive data. In analysing the data, an SPSS computer software package was employed for the quantitative data, while an N-vivo software package was employed for the qualitative data.

How Principals Perceive SBM Management Reforms

Data analysis suggests that 66.7% of the principals who responded to the survey agreed with the idea of seeing themselves as a member of the team instead of the leader of the team. When asked whether being a principal under the new system enabled them to seek advice and support from the school-board members, 70.3% of the principals agreed. Further, 69.7% of the participating principals strongly believed that it was essential for them to discuss issues with staff and board members in order to agree upon strategies for implementing change.

When the principals were asked whether they thought that the involvement of the local community in the management of the school was increasing, 68.5% believed that this was the case. Again, 68.5% of the participating principals agreed that the ability to delegate is an essential skill of a school principal. Even though some principals felt that with the introduction of SBM their workloads had increased, 51.8% indicated that there was adequate provision for them to seek help from other school-board members to reduce their workload, whereas only 16.7% disagreed with this position; 31.5% did not respond to the question.

The discussions during the interviews complemented the findings of the empirical survey, as the majority of participants (71.1%) at some point in their answers expressed the view that the principal's workload should not have increased, as there are more people involved in activities related to school management. This position was further reinforced when 88.9% of participants (40 out of 45) were in agreement with the position that there was adequate provision for the principals to seek help to reduce their workloads under the school-board structure.

How Board Members Perceive New Governance Structures

In the empirical survey, 89.2% of the respondents identified the new SBM reforms as the type of reforms that the Thai education system needed, while 85.9% of the school-board members believed that the new school-board structure was effective. Futher, 85.4% of the school-board members indicated that they were either happy or very happy with the way their principals were working with the school-boards. Similarly, 79.2% of the participants felt quite satisfied with the way the other members or categories of stakeholders were performing their duties on the school-boards. The qualitative data suggest that 93.3% of the participants had positive feelings about their school-board participation, while 86.7% of the participants agreed that the new SBM reforms were what the Thai education system needed, thus reaffirming the findings of the empirical survey. Additionally, 80% of the interviewees were happy with the new school-board governance structure and believed that it was effective, while only 20% were not sure if they could agree with the view that the school-boards were effective, as they thought more time was needed for the new structure to function well. However, 95.6% of the participants believed that their participation in a school-board was not a waste of time.

To a question on how decisions were made by the school-boards, 334 out of 532 or 62.8% indicated that decisions were made by majority vote, while another 201 or 37.8% indicated that decisions were made by consensus. In this context, it is clear that almost all board members declare that at the board level the decisions are made either by majority vote or by consensus – a very satisfactory achievement after two-and-a-half years. With regard to the process of decision-making, 75% believed that every member received a fair chance to express his or her views, while another 35.9% confirmed that it was a true partnership of all stakeholders. In response to another question as to whether any stakeholder category dominated the decision-making process, the vast majority indicated that no particular category dominated the decision-making process. However, 22.7% indicated that the principal dominated the process. This latter view appears to be a misinterpretation of the process, as very often the principal would be called upon to provide clarification on government policies or report progress made on different issues and on implementation of decisions already made as well as on projected school development. An overwhelming majority of 88.9% of the respondents stated that it was not detrimental to the decision-making process. Regarding the current composition of the school boards, 85.7% of the participants were of the opinion that it was either good or very good.

In evaluating the effectiveness of the decision-making process, 450 of 532 or 84.6% of the board members rated it as either good or very good, while 3.2% rated it as excellent. In considering whether the information provided was adequate for making informed decisions, 86.5% rated it as either good

or very good, while 2.8% rated it as excellent. Finally, in reflecting on the overall functioning of the school-boards, 86.5% rated it as either good, very good or excellent, which shows there is a high degree of consensus that the new structures were working well and that they were effective. In considering the power and authority vested in the school-boards, 81.8% perceived it as either adequate or more than adequate, whereas only 15% considered it as either inadequate or barely adequate. In answering a question as to whether the time available for school-board business was adequate, 85% believed that it was either adequate or more than adequate. When the question of ensuring accountability to the relevant constituencies was raised, 56% indicated that it was done by extending invitations to attend board meetings, while another 20.5% indicated that this was done by co-opting opinion leaders to the sub-committees where issues and problems are discussed and recommendations made.

In considering the influence of the school-board on the teaching and learning environment in the school, 75.4% of the participants believed that the operation of the school-board has resulted in some or significant improvements, whereas none of them indicated that the situation had deteriorated. Reflecting on areas in which the school-boards were empowered to make decisions, they nominated the following, prioritised on the basis of the numbers supporting a particular area: (1) fund-raising; (2) developing policy; (3) articulating school vision and goals; (4) composing mission statements; (5) making improvements to buildings; (6) developing curriculum; (7) deciding about repairs to buildings; (8) managing the school budget; (9) caring for school discipline; (10) managing performance management; (11) managing the canteens; (12) building new schools.

It is clear from the findings of both the empirical survey and the interviews that the vast majority (around four-fifths) of the school-board members appreciated the structures, procedures and process set in place and expressed their satisfaction regarding the operational effectiveness of the SBM processes. However, a small minority of the board members felt that a longer period of time was needed for the reforms to work more effectively.

Expectations of Principals and Board Members

At the interview phase of the study, 34.8% of the principals were so pleased with the support they received from their school-board members that they did not have any further expectations which needed to be met. However, 21.8% of the principals indicated that they would appreciate more participation from school-board members who tended to play passive roles, while another 17.4% expected more donations for school improvement. Further, 17.4% of the principals preferred the board members to have a better understanding of their roles, accountabilities and responsibilities. In order to obtain active community involvement, 68.5% of the principals were in

agreement that the ability to delegate authority was an essential skill of a principal.

The vast majority (90.6%) of the school-board members strongly supported the idea that the principal should work cooperatively with the other school-board members while providing leadership. For this purpose, 90.2% of the respondents strongly supported the view that it was important for school principals to undergo leadership and management training. Similarly, 89.1% of the board members were of the opinion that principals should be supported by other school-board members to achieve the set goals. Of the respondents, 77.9% felt that it would be better for the principal to be able to use a computer, while 77.3% of them had a good understanding of the principal's basic responsibilities and skills and the importance of his or her role as the school leader. Furthermore, 46.5% believed that teaching principals had the opportunity to understand students' needs better, as they were able to spend more time with their students in the classrooms. All those who participated at the interviews were of the opinion that there was a high degree of mutual respect between the principals and other board members.

Challenges Faced by School Principals

The data from the Thai empirical survey reveal that 66.7% of the principals were of opinion that they were facing new challenges as the leader of the school, while 59.2% of the principals were not sure whether they should also need to play the role of school manager as well. Yet, 55.6% of the principals were ready to agree with the view that they have to play the role of school supervisor. Another 53.7% of the principals could see themselves as one of the teachers in the school, while 46.3% felt that they also needed to play the role of public-relations officer, as they did not enjoy the luxury of having public-relations officers as in more popular schools in bigger cities. The majority of the principals also expressed the view that they had to play the role of conflict-handler. The importance of this role was more significant in city schools than in rural ones. However, the Thai principals were still not convinced that they needed to play the role of entrepreneur. Thai schools are not market-oriented organisations and continue to depend on state funds.

Need for Training School Leaders and Board Members

One critical finding of this study is that most study participants expressed uncertainty regarding the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the SBM team members. There was no conclusive identification of an acceptable model for training for all concerned. Yet when five Thai newspapers participated in a national debate initiated through the media on 'The Future of Thai School Boards', some of the reports and discussions highlighted the

need to provide training for Thai school leaders in the areas of educational leadership, organisational leadership, school planning and strategic development, and entrepreneurial and marketing initiatives.

It is now widely accepted that school leaders need specific preparation if they are to be successful in leading and managing their self-managing or empowered schools. The development of effective leaders requires the adoption of a range of strategies including practically oriented university-level professional development programs, seminars and workshops enabling them to acquire a good knowledge-base on all relevant aspects and develop required skills and competencies. Principals should be made to feel that these reform efforts will lead to considerable school improvement and student learning, since their leadership affects the success of SBM.

The role of the principal leading a SBM-school involves changing his or her leadership style and managerial approaches and acquiring a new set of skills and competencies (Gamage and Pang 2003). This can only be done by building on the existing strengths with major training and development-support programs. At the same time, the employment conditions of principals need to be changed, and the prestige and status of the public image of school principal and other educators enhanced.

Pre-service Training for School Leaders

Culbertson (1990) notes that in America professional-development programs in the field of school management and administration have been developed since the turn of the 20th century. School leaders in all American states are required to have at least 3 years of teaching experience, a university master's degree, and a license or certificate to become a school principal. Su et al. (2003) state that these certificates and graduate programs in educational administration in American colleges and universities are well established. Gamage and Ueyama (2003) note that in the United Kingdom the government has launched a new initiative for improving the leadership and management skills of head-teachers, principals and educational administrators. The Blair New Labour Government has published a 'White Paper on Excellence in Education' emphasising the importance of all prospective head-teachers or principals undertaking formal preparation for their positions. For the purpose of professional development, newly appointed head-teachers are given the right to apply for a grant of £2,500 within the first 2 years of appointment. This preparation is expected to occur at the university level (Gamage 2001b; Gamage and Ueyama 2003).

Furthermore, Gamage and Ueyama (2003) state that the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) established in England in 2002 has set out to train 100,000 head-teachers, including deputy heads and other aspiring leaders, in order to improve school effectiveness. They also note that most Australian universities have been offering graduate level programs on a

full-fee paying basis since 1998. In 2001, the Federal Government established a fund to award interest-free loans to educators who wished to undertake the programs. These programs are available at graduate certificate, graduate diploma, master's, and doctoral levels. For example, the University of Newcastle offers a master's program called 'Master of Leadership and Management in Education' (MLMEd) designed to meet the growing demand for professional development of practicing and prospective educational administrators (Su et al. 2003). Thailand and many other countries such as Japan and China have been using a traditional apprenticeship model, in accordance with which school leaders have to learn their job on the job (Daresh and Male 2000; Su et al. 2000). This means that they move up the ranks from classroom teachers to master teachers to heads of departments and to school principalship with no proper preparation (Su et al. 2003).

In view of the fact that seniority tends to be more important in the selection and appointment of educational administrators, no pre-service training requirements are laid down by the Thai educational system. Consequently, Thai educational administrators learn to become principals by going through real school experiences every day. Therefore, most of them have little or no pre-service training before taking up leadership positions.

A number of empirical surveys conducted in the United States, Australia and Japan between 1999 and 2003 identified certain topic areas to be covered in pre-service training programs for educational administrators. Gamage (2004) notes that all three groups of principals consulted recommended the inclusion of: 'contemporary administrative leadership', and 'school and community relations', while two of the groups identified: 'effective communication and decision-making', 'management of human resources', and 'theory and practices of curriculum development' as areas to be included in the programs. Gamage and Pang (2003: 39) also emphasise that it is important for the educational leaders to have an appropriate understanding of their role. It is also desirable for a prospective administrator to have a strong background in liberal education, supplemented by training in education as a broad field of study and finally training in educational administration itself.

In the empirical survey of school-board members in Thailand, 90.6% of the school-board members believed that the principals should work cooperatively with the school-board, while providing leadership. Another 90.2% of the school-board members expect their principals to undergo leadership and management training, while 70% of the participating principals agreed that the ability to delegate authority is an essential skill of a principal. In this context, 66.7% and 59.2% of the principals believe that 'leadership' and 'management', respectively, are the biggest challenges they face in their principalship. These results emphasise the need to provide education and training to enable the principals to function as effective contemporary educational leaders.

The results of Phase Two of the study complemented the results of Phase One. The participating principals expressed the view that in order to lead

schools under SBM reforms, they needed to play many roles and face many new challenges which require new skills, competencies and professional development. The findings suggest that when one considers the dedication and commitment that the Thai principals have to their jobs, it is very important to provide the necessary training in leadership and management enabling them to be more efficient and effective pro-active leaders and managers.

It is the urgent responsibility of the Thai authorities to provide appropriate programs for training school principals especially in leadership and management. In addition, the Ministry of Education should encourage Thai universities to provide appropriate professional development programs at the graduate certificate, diploma and master's degree levels for current and prospective school leaders, with incentives offered to persuade them to undertake such studies. In developing such programs, it is important to take note of the views expressed by the American, Australian and Japanese principals referred above as well as such programs offered in the United States, Australia and England.

In-service Training for School Leaders

Su et al. (2003) describe formal, structured and well thought-out in-service training programs, often located on university campuses, which are pre-requisites for American educational administrators. The research done by Gamage and Ueyama (2003) and Su et al. (2003) found that principals in America, Australia and Japan had many similar views on in-service training. When the principals were asked to rate the areas they thought should be covered in in-service training, all three groups recommended the inclusion of: 'practicum in educational administration', 'information technology and information management'; and 'ethics, morals and values for educational leaders'. Both the Australian and Japanese principals agreed that 'initiation and orientation' and 'contemporary issues in educational administration' should also be covered. The American and Australian principals were keen to see that 'assessment of candidates' is also included, as they are responsible for the recruitment of staff. It is obvious that with the implementation of SBM, Thai principals also need such training.

In Thailand, in-service training programs have been designed by the Office of Education Reform (OER) for educators. ONEC (2002) reports that two separate sets of curricula have been implemented. The first set emphasises whole-school reforms. The target groups for training include administrators in 40,000 schools of all levels. The second set is comprised of 14 courses. The target groups for training involve 500,000 educators. Among these, 28,289 educators were trained during the period 2000–2002. It is expected that the first round of training will be completed by 2006. The second and third rounds of training are planned to be implemented in 2007 and 2008, respectively.

In September 2003, Thailand played host to "The Third International Forum on Education Reform: Education Decentralisation Revisited: SBM". The conference focused on the decentralisation of administrative authority from the national government to the schools. Kerri Briggs, who spent the last 2 years as a special assistant in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education of the United States Department of Education, made the following comments during this meeting on in-service programs for educational administrators:

> You've got to have a principal who knows how to make the system work … Finding good principals is a big challenge and training programs are a necessity … We're not going to have super-hero principals in every school, so you've got to find a way to train principals and give them the skills they need in order to be good principals (Fredrickson 2003: 1).

As mentioned above, in-service training programs are already being held in Thailand. In view of the changing educational environment, however, specific tasks related to SBM need to be included in these programs: for example, shared decision-making, school-based budgeting and conflict resolution, particularly related to the successful implementation of SBM and the creation of learning communities. During Phase Two of the study, 71.1% of the participants commented that training and more information on SBM are needed by the Thai educators. Moreover, approximately 78% of participants in the empirical survey were of the opinion that it is important for the principal to be able to use a computer. During the interviews, the principals who participated in the study claimed that in the position of school principal, they faced many new challenges, indicating that 'leadership' and 'management' are the key areas in which new skills and competencies are needed. In these circumstances, it is important for Thai authorities to take note of the views expressed by American, Australian and Japanese principals in formulating their in-service programs.

Need for Training School-Board Members

To ensure the success of SBM, all stakeholders need to understand what SBM is and how it is implemented. Each participant must understand his or her new role, responsibilities, and accountability. School and district leaders must be supportive of SBM and ensure that communication channels are kept open. Most of all, SBM must be given time to succeed, with at least a 3-year period of transition. The empirical survey suggests that 89.1% of school-board members were of the opinion that other school-board members should support the principal to achieve set goals. Within a group of 23 school principals who participated in interviews, 34.8% were fully satisfied with the performance of their school-board members. Others expressed the view that they were interested and keen to participate but

were not sure of their roles, responsibilities and accountabilities as school-board members.

These findings make it obvious that the board members should be provided training to cover the above areas as well as those concerned with reviewing school budgets, designing strategic plans, and monitoring progress. The data based on the comments made in the questionnaires and views expressed by 71% of those interviewed suggest that there is a strong need for training school-board members. When asked if the principals had any expectations about other school-board members, most principals expected more 'participation' from school-board members. One principal even compared some school-board members to "the main Buddha image in the temple", as they did not say a word at the school-board meetings and perhaps knew little or nothing about their roles. Here, too, it is the responsibility of Thai authorities to design appropriate training programs for all school-board members, including the initiation and orientation of new members by the principal and the school-board chair.

Finally, the findings of the study and current literature suggest that teaching has become a less favoured profession in Thailand. The main reason for this appears to be that while the responsibilities are demanding, the salary remains relatively low. Therefore, the teaching profession is especially unattractive to the younger generation. Good and bright students have various career choices, and they often avoid the teaching profession. Low salaries discourage bright and vigorous students from becoming teachers. There appears to be an urgent need to improve the terms and conditions of education work both for itself and in view of securing the commitment of educators to reform.

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THE POLITICS OF DECENTRALISATION IN LATIN AMERICA

ERNESTO SCHIEFELBEIN

Abstract – Largely following the advice of and loans from the World Bank, many Latin American countries decentralised education to the state, municipal and local levels. Such decentralisation was part of an effort to provide universal access to primary education with massive investments near one billion dollars per year during the 1990s. The rationale was simple and appealing: The more local the decision, the greater the voice of the voter-consumer was supposed to be; while the larger number of suppliers was assumed to lead to greater variety. Research documented here shows that while authority and resources could be transferred downward in the system in a short amount of time, the so-called 'autonomous schools programs' failed to generate significant improvement in pupils' achievement. Decentralisation could be successful, however, when combined with reliable strategies such as good initial teacher-training employing a wide set of teaching models; the use of well-tested scripts, guides or frameworks; and the systematic assignment of the best teachers to first grade.

Zusammenfassung – DIE POLITIK DER DEZENTRALISIERUNG IN LATEINAMERIKA – Viele lateinamerikanische Länder haben dem Rat und den Darlehensverpflichtungen der Weltbank Folge leistend die Bildung dezentralisiert und die Zuständigkeiten auf teilstaatliche, städtische und lokale Bereiche übertragen. Eine derartige Dezentralisierung war Teil der Bemühung, einen allgemeinen Zugang zu einer Grundausbildung zu gewährleisten. Begleitet wurde sie von massiven Investitionen in Höhe von ungefähr einer Milliarde Dollar pro Jahr während der Neunziger Jahre. Die Überlegungen waren einfach und verlockend: Je lokaler die Entscheidung, desto größer sei vermutlich das Mitspracherecht der Wähler und Verbraucher; wobei man annahm, dass eine größere Zahl an Anbietern zu einer größeren Vielfalt führe. Die Forschung, die in diesem Beitrag dokumentiert ist, zeigt nun folgendes: Während Autorität und Ressourcen in dem System schnell nach unten übertragen werden konnten, gelang es nicht, mit den so genannten ‚Autonomen Schulprogrammen' eine signifikante Verbesserung der Schülerleistungen in die Wege zu leiten. Eine Dezentralisierung könnte jedoch erfolgreich sein, wenn sie mit verlässlichen Strategien kombiniert würde wie einer guten Lehrerausbildung zu Beginn, die eine große Menge an Lehrmodellen einbezieht; der Verwendung von Skripten, Anleitungen und grundlegenden Rahmenbestimmungen, die allesamt erfolgreich getestet wurden; und dem gezielten Einsatz der besten Lehrer in der ersten Klasse.

Résumé – POLITIQUE DE DÉCENTRALISATION EN AMÉRIQUE LATINE – Bénéficiant largement des conseils et des prêts de la Banque mondiale, de nombreux pays latino-américains ont décentralisé l'éducation aux niveaux gouvernemental, municipal et local. Cette décentralisation faisait partie dans les années 90 d'un effort mené en vue de garantir l'accès universel à l'enseignement primaire, accompagné d'un investissement considérable de près d'un milliard de dollars par an. Les raisons en étaient simples et séduisantes : plus la prise de décision s'effectuerait au niveau local,

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plus les voix des électeurs-consommateurs seraient nombreuses, en outre la multiplication des prestataires augmenterait la diversité. La recherche documentée ici montre que si l'autorité et les ressources ont pu être transférées en peu de temps vers la base du système, les « programmes scolaires autonomes » n'ont pas réussi à améliorer sensiblement les performances des élèves. Pourtant, la décentralisation pourrait être concluante si elle était associée à des stratégies fiables telles qu'une formation des maîtres initiale de qualité appliquant une large gamme de modèles didactiques, l'emploi de textes, de manuels et de cadres éprouvés, et l'affectation systématique des meilleurs enseignants aux classes de première année.

Resumen – LAS POLÍTICAS DE DESCENTRALIZACIÓN EN AMÉRICA LATINA – En su mayor parte, siguiendo las recomendaciones y los préstamos del Banco Mundial, muchos países de América Latina han descentralizado la educación en los niveles estatales, municipales y locales. Esta descentralización formó parte de un esfuerzo realizado para ofrecer un acceso universal a la enseñanza primaria con inversiones masivas cercanas a mil millones de dólares anuales durante los noventa. Los motivos eran simples y atractivos: cuanto más local era la decisión, mayor se suponía que sería la influencia del votador y consumidor, al tiempo que se suponía que un mayor número de prestatarios de la educación ofrecería una mayor variedad. Las investigaciones aquí documentadas muestran que mientras la autoridad y los recursos se pueden transferir hacia abajo en el sistema dentro de un corto período de tiempo, los llamados 'programas escolares autónomos' no lograron generar una mejora sustancial del rendimiento de los alumnos. Sin embargo, la descentralización podría tener éxito si se la combinara con estrategias fiables, tales como una buena formación inicial de docentes, utilizando una amplia gama de modelos de enseñanza, material didáctico, guías o marcos conceptuales probados y mediante la asignación sistemática de los mejores docentes para el primer grado.

Резюме – ПОЛИТИКА ДЕЦЕНТРАЛИЗАЦИИ В ЛАТИНСКОЙ АМЕРИКЕ – Во многом следуя рекомендациям и займам Всемирного Банка, большинство стран Латинской Америки децентрализовали образование на государственный, муниципальный и местный уровни. Такая децентрализация была частью попытки обеспечить всеобщий доступ к начальному образованию при значительных инвестициях около 1 млрд. долларов в год на протяжении 1990-х годов. Решение было простым и привлекательным: чем больше решений принимается на местном уровне, тем значительнее был голос избирателя-потребителя, в то же время полагалось, что большее число участников должно привести к большему разнообразию. В предлагаемом исследовании показы-вается, что когда власть и ресурсы были направлены к основанию системы в течение небольшого срока, то, так называемые, «автономные школьные про-граммы» не смогли добиться значительных успехов в успеваемости учащихся. Тем не менее, децентрализация могла бы быть успешной при наличии надежных стратегий, таких, как хорошая изначальная подготовка учителей и обширный набор методик обучения; использование хорошо проверенных текстов, рекомендаций и основ; а также систематическое пополнение самыми лучшими учителями первого класса.

Decentralisation of education in Latin American countries involved the state (Argentina, Colombia and Mexico), municipal authorities (Brazil), and even

local schools (Chile, El Salvador and Nicaragua), was prompted by advice from the World Bank, and stimulated in part by its loans. Decentralisation was part of an effort to provide universal access to primary education and six-year schooling for each student, with massive investments approximating one billion dollars per year during the 1990s.

Education authorities had been trying to implement decentralisation of education since the early 1980s, following advice from economists, managers, sociologists and the private sector. Decentralisation as a program was seen as a feasible alternative at that time, as there was a lack of agreement among educational policy-makers on what needed to be done to improve the quality of education. However, those endeavours were limited and not systematically evaluated. Reliable test results around 2000 made it clear that local decision-makers were ultimately not more efficient or better managers than central decision-makers. They also made it clear that schools did not improve teaching practices or educational outcomes during the decade. Thus, it could be argued that the problem appeared be located at the classroom level, rather than in management.

This study reviews the rationale for decentralising education. It describes different types of decentralisation policies and monitoring practices and evaluates national testing reports and comparative studies of students' achievement. Finally, the present work considers the main causes which might account for the lack of impact of decentralisation on achievement levels.

A Rationale for Decentralising Education in Latin America

The 1995 *World Bank Sector Review of Education Priorities and Strategies* presented community involvement and school autonomy as two of six critical reforms required for building a sound education system. The advice was eagerly followed in Latin America. Development projects implemented in the 1980s had increased coverage, however, academic achievement in the late 1980s remained almost at the same level as at the beginning of the decade. For this reason, countries sought an institutional change which could substantially raise achievement levels.

Although as a policy decentralisation in education was at that time considered politically correct, its rationale was based on a set of ideal constructs and assumptions not tested in the real world. Decentralisation was triggered by 'Reaganomics' and 'Thatcherism', which enjoyed an enormous influence on economies during the 1980s, and was upheld by the reforms public administration intended for a free-market global economy. However, a review of 600 evaluations of school-based management programs in the United States found only two with an adequate research design (Winkler and Gershberg 2002: 5). Critical reviews of decentralisation processes in Latin America or in the United States (Carnoy 1998: 310; Odden 1995) were not considered relevant by the designers of the new policies which defined the course of decentralisation.

The rationale for decentralisation was simple and appealing: *the more local the decision, the greater the voice of the voter-consumer would be*. It was also thought that a larger number of suppliers would lead to a wider variety of experience. However, in all the literature reviewed for this study, not a single piece supporting decentralisation considered the way decentralisation would improve teaching processes at the classroom level. This finding is not unexpected, as most of the work was written by economists and sociologists. The rationale assumed that decentralisation would generate teamwork needed to cope with 'a rapidly changing environment' – this despite the traditionally isolated work of a teacher in the classroom. In Latin America, few teachers ever visit other teachers in action; and there are no demonstration classes by expert teachers or exchanges of written descriptions (scripts) of good teaching. 'Team teaching' also has not been popular. On the other hand, teaching has actually been rather decentralised because principals seldom visit classrooms.

It was expected that decentralisation would create incentives (market competition) for several important goals: to select the best teachers; for as many students as possible to attend school; to make better use of resources; and also to provide incentives for parents to select the best schools. Decentralisation at the school level was expected to improve understanding of local conditions. Even the quality of education was supposed to improve in the long-term as a result of more efficiency and additional local financing. The notion of any possible losses from decentralisation were dismissed.

The flimsy available evidence was transformed into a simple and appealing message: *devolving responsibilities to local schools would increase their performance, technical capacity might be retrieved, and corruption would disappear*. This forthright institutional proposal had the support of development banks and prevailed over an array of (likewise) non-tested education strategies for improving education. The main explanation for the fact that such an unproven decision was made at all is that educators, unlike physicians, do not have canons of scientific validity to protect systems from unproven treatments and specious theories.

The decentralisation rationale competed, with advantage, against an array of what were at that time non-tested strategies supported by a stack of imprecise reports. Among those strategies were the following: vouchers; selection of principals by local groups; technology (radio, TV, or computers and software); local school proposals (to be funded with World Bank loans); better initial teacher training; learning scripts (guides or frameworks). Lacking at that time were the following features: a common body of knowledge; a shared set of criteria; clear-cut standards for recognizing and treating educational problems. Decentralisation was, therefore, an attractive way to transfer tough decisions, as well as the accountability for the results, away from the central level. For governments, the fear of further failure was a far greater motivator than their fear of losing their power through decentralisation.

Pressure for lifting educational quality mounted when the Latin American Ministers of Education admitted (Guatemala 1989) that achievement levels were low. UNESCO had reported that "half of the fourth grade students lack [reading] comprehension" and that the "average first-grade repetition rate ... is approximately 45%" (UNESCO-OREALC 1992: 26). With the assistance of the World Bank and UNESCO, countries prepared projects and eventually built schools, updated curricula, distributed textbooks, expanded pre-school education, and tried to improve supervision and information on outcomes. The new bank-assisted projects included School Improvement Grants (SIG) and involved schools in education management. The World Bank eventually reported that it was lending more money for school and community involvement in educational decision-making (World Bank 1995). It published the information that "the results are positive" (HCO 1995). In fact, however, the only improvement was in coverage or educational access, while quality still remained low.

The Fad of Decentralisation in Latin America Since the 1980s

Countries decentralised education to different levels (state or provincial, municipal, school networks, or the school) based on different rationales and strategies (political, economical, financial, tactical, religious or educational). Decentralisation could be carried out as a result of a variety of factors, including decentralisation of government, civil war or modernisation of the state, reduction in spending, breaking the power of teachers' union, or (even) to improve school performance (Hanson 2000: 408; Winkler and Gershberg 2000). The country cases described below give an idea of the motives, rationale, magnitude and type of decentralisation (whether via privatisation, devolution or delegation). The cases also indicate the variety of resources which were decentralised (including power, regulations, money, information, or rewards), as well as the level (whether regional, municipal or local school) of the decentralisation strategies.

Fe y Alegria

Fe y Alegria is a multinational system of private schools with principals appointed by a Roman Catholic organisation and teachers paid by the government. It began operations in 1955 and now operates nearly a thousand schools in 12 Latin American countries which have 20,000 teachers and 500,000 students. This private system based on public funding demonstrates the long-term regional willingness for experimenting with decentralisation. Schools operate within the regulations of the public system, however, the principal is an educational leader who is able to raise teachers' expectations, create a common instruction style, share experiences, supervise teaching, and use an effective shared decision-making process. Unfortunately there is no

information on achievement scores, however, the system on the surface at least appears to be efficient.

Argentina

In Argentina, primary education was devolved to the states (*Provincias*) for fiscal reasons in the late 1970s. The central government decided to move educational expenditures to the provincial governments (Winkler and Greshberg 2000: 13). Secondary and higher education were eventually also transferred in the early 1990s. All in all, the strategy was successful in persuading provincial governments to assume the financial burden for primary education (McGinn and Borden 1995: 232).

Colombia

In Colombia politically powerful states (*Departmentos*) and an interest in a more democratic structure were the main reasons for establishing a fund (*Situado Fiscal*) to be distributed among the states (Hanson 2000: 408). Each state allocates resources to the schools. Municipalities complement the federal funds with their own money. Schools are not accountable for results because resources are managed at the state level. However, Colombia complemented decentralisation with a pedagogical reform in rural areas (*Escuela Nueva*) which links the classroom with the context and family activities. As a result of this reform, achievement in rural areas is higher than in urban areas (UNESCO-LLECE 2001).

Mexico

Mexican decentralisation was a combination of devolution, delegation and deconcentration (Hanson 1997: 5). The main reasons for transferring most educational decisions to the states included the desire to break the power of the teachers' union and strengthen policy control at the national level – all done under the guise of decentralisation (Ornelas 2000: 428). Although the process began in 1992, the central government kept control of key decisions until 1998 by means of negotiated transfers to the states (Winkler and Greshberg 2000: 11). As soon as transfers became automatic, real decentralisation began. Educational decentralisation has been part of the broader political liberalisation process which brought a new political party to power for the first time in 90 years.

Brazil

In 1991 in Brazil the state of Minas Gerais decentralised some of the managerial functions in state schools and created a local process to appoint

their principals. At the same time, the state agreed to help municipalities which were not able to provide universal education in spite of allocating 25% of their revenues to education. Local schools have autonomy over 30% of the curriculum, select the textbooks, hire teacher replacements, return teachers to the state pool of teachers, select and fire the principal, and administer some US-$10 per student. Among the reasons for decentralisation were the reduction of dishonesty and racketeering and the creation of incentives for the continuous improvement of education. Results seem positive, but there are critics of the schools' administrative work: "Schools in which parent-dominated councils appointed their principals increased test scores, reduced repetition rates, and improved physical facilities, relative to schools without councils. Gains in achievement in these schools were directly related to the number of visits parents made to classrooms" (McGinn 2002: 9). In 1996, Brazil redefined the roles and responsibilities for the federal, state and municipal levels, but the Federal Ministry still plays a predominant role.

El Salvador

In El Salvador rural communities created autonomous schools (without public support) to cope with the drastic reduction in educational access caused by the civil war (1979–1992). In 1990, the government began financing those schools through the Education with the Community (EDUCO) program. This program was also linked with the modernisation of government administration. In each EDUCO school, there is a Community Board (ACE) which receives central funds, hires a principal and as well as the teachers, buys materials, and manages the school. ACE leaders were trained by central teams during 40-hour seminars. They were empowered to open cheque accounts at local banks. While there are central norms for hiring teachers, the actual decisions are local. The EDUCO program eventually developed as a model for further community participation and now operates in 233 of the 262 municipalities.

Nicaragua

In 1993, the operation of school-boards (*Consejos Directivos*) was begun in secondary schools, later on in primary schools, with the aim of transferring resources to the school level. The rationale for the program included both political and economic features. On one hand, the idea was to bring parents into school decision-making and to balance the power of the teachers' union. On the other hand, decentralisation aimed at reducing unit costs and bureaucracy. A survey carried out in 1996 with 182 members of the school-boards showed that parents in autonomous schools were wealthier than parents in centralised schools, but less well-off and less educated than parents in private schools. The participation of parents was an important goal after long periods of political turbulence (Hanson 2000: 408).

Guatemala

In Guatemala the decentralised PRONADE program was launched as a component in the Peace Agreements signed in 1996. PRONADE is similar to the EDUCO program in El Salvador. Each community creates an Education Council (COEDUCA) that signs an agreement with PRONADE to receive public funding. The Ministry of Education hires private NGOs to monitor activities at the school level. There are some 4,000 COEDUCA committees mainly working in rural indigenous areas with 10,000 teachers and 300,000 students. PRONADE schools are performing as well or better than similar bilingual schools (even though both are performing at rather low levels).

Chile

In this country, decentralisation was shaped in the early 1980s by economists who transformed an old system of subsidies given to free religious private schools into a voucher system which created incentives for parents to choose schools for their children. This goal was part of a general policy of deregulation designed to foster market incentives, reduce political opposition, improve the quality of education, and direct public resources to deprived population groups (Schiefelbein and Schiefelbein 2000). Furthermore, salary contracts with teachers were negotiated in each one of 327 municipalities rather than through a high stakes national collective bargaining process with a powerful union. The value of the vouchers was tied to school enrolments and daily attendance (Winkler and Rounds 1996: 366). Grants were adjusted for education level and day or night shift, with rural and boarding schools receiving greater funding. In addition, private schools were eligible to receive government-financed textbooks and school lunches for poor children, although they were not eligible for capital-investment grants.

Starting a new school developed into a simple non-bureaucratic process. Nevertheless, five key functions remained centralised: the financing of schools, curriculum development, national testing (evaluation), school lunches to poor children, and distribution of textbooks. At the outset, it was accepted that private education would be difficult to deliver at the 3,000 rural schools (one third of the total) and in urban-marginal areas, both because existing schools would have natural monopolies and the margin of profit would be small or negative. The original design was changed several times in 1981–1990 without careful evaluation of previous educational outcomes (Schiefelbein 1991: 23). The size of the subsidies was gradually reduced during the heavy contraction of the economic activity in the early 1980s. By 1990, the real value of the grant had decreased by almost 40% (Winkler and Rounds 1996: 366).

The political platform of the democratic government elected in 1990 supported the decentralisation process, but reversed the deregulation of the teaching labor market. The so-called Teachers' Law established centralised

bargaining, a common structure of wages, and made it practically impossible to sack teachers. A World Bank loan was carefully implemented in the 1990s and reported as successful by World Bank officials (Delannoy 2000). However, in 2000 the national testing system and international tests administered by UNESCO and OECD showed that student achievement was low. After two decades, the decentralisation policy had not met the expected objectives.

Decentralisation Strategies and Implementation

Strategies for Decentralisation in Education

Decentralisation was implemented with the support of many different actors and was often rated as the only policy able to improve education. In addition to support in academic articles and strategy papers published by multilateral banks, decentralisation was recommended in meetings of presidents and upheld by political pressure. It involved competition for exiguous resources and existed due to a lack of potentially successful alternative strategies. Decentralisation appeared to be an alternative that did not challenge other proposals, but rather meant that decisions were to be made at a lower administrative echelon. Decentralisation's shift from this status into becoming the only policy able to improve the quality of education had the effect of constraining any systematic opposition.

Each country retained some responsibilities at the central level, while shifting others downward in the system (McGinn and Borden 1995: 232). For example, the school calendar, curriculum design and teacher accreditation tended to remain centralised. Hiring of teachers, school construction, data collection and in-service training tended to become decentralised. There was also more variability in resource allocation and in determining teacher salary schedules. In most countries, central governments continued to finance almost the entire educational system (Hanson 2000: 409). However, there was a trend towards 'co-financing' by municipalities, sometimes by using part of the funds received from the central government for the municipality.

The decentralisation strategies described above were mainly implemented through projects prepared with the assistance of the World Bank. Countries used loans to eventually build school space, update curriculum, distribute textbooks, provide in-service training, or to expand pre-school education, to finance School Improvement Grants (SIG), to involve schools in education management, and to engage in efforts to improve supervision and information on outcomes. All in all, only four out of 20 Latin American countries are now operating centralised educational systems (Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama and Uruguay). Each of these countries has less than 10 million people, and their size may be smaller than the present decentralised units of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia or Mexico.

Implementing decentralisation in education

International meetings on education also endorsed the need for decentralisation. The Major Project of Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (PROMEDLAC) supported community participation in decision-making at the school level. Ministers of Education who gathered in Quito in 1991 agreed that decentralised management was a key strategy for improving the quality and efficiency of educative systems (UNESCO-OREALC 1992).

Decentralisation has frequently been listed as an objective in national education plans and laws. For example, Article 13 of the Brazilian Basic Law for education states: "Teachers will participate in the preparation of the pedagogical plan of their school." In the Dominican Republic, the plan loosely stated that "by the end of the 10-year planning period the community and municipalities will participate in planning and school management." Costa Rica issued regulations for the regionalisation of education in the early 1980s.

Since the 1990s the World Bank has included in all new education development projects a component of locally designed Education Improvement Projects (EIP) or School Improvement Grants (SIG). These institutional projects were implemented in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Peru. Most schools were able to identify the area of reading as their main problem. Teachers were aware that their students did not understand what they decoded. However, EIPs proposed the traditional solution of a 'trainer' to lecture teachers on the principles of active teaching techniques, rather than engaging in demonstrating to them 'how to do it'. Lack of timely information prevented early detection of deficient decentralisation and the design of remedial strategies.

Monitoring Decentralisation

Ministers were aware of the need to monitor decentralisation (UNESCO-OREALC 1992: 36), but relevant information was not available for this purpose. The need for reliable and timely information was recommended, once again, in the Seventh Meeting of the Regional Major Project in Education (Cochabamba 2001) as a requisite for effective management. However, the meeting also recommended further decentralisation in order to ensure that schools operated with autonomy, using EIPs prepared with wide participation of teachers, parents, and students.

There are many reports on the operation of decentralisation programs, but few reports on their impact on student achievement. For example, Guatemalan teachers in the PRONADE program had better attendance records than those in the centralised system. A similar improvement in attendance was noted in El Salvador. Parents in the decentralised schools believed teachers were better trained and more committed than in the centralised system,

Table 1. Answers to reading comprehension Items. Third and Fourth Grades (ca. 2000)

Answers to items that imply an inference. Level of difficulty: medium	Country, year and grade	Number of words in text (characters)	Percentage of faultless answers in tests circa 2000		
			Total Sample	Estimated distributions	
				High half	Low half
Alternatives	El Salvador, 2001, Grade 3	62 (382)			
(a)			26%	13%	39%
(b)			57% (35%)	81% (71%)	32% (0%)
(c)			16%	6%	25%
Alternatives	El Salvador, 2001, Grade 3	62 (382)			
(a)			22%	10%	32%
(b)			16%	5%	30%
(c)			61% (42%)	85% (78%)	34% (1%)
Alternatives	Ecuador, 1999, Grade 3	80 (430)			
(a)			13%	7%	33%
(b)			61% (42%)	86% (79%)	34% (1%)
(c)			19%	7%	33%
Alternatives	Honduras, 1997, Grade 3	27 (156)			
(a)			23%	16%	25%
(b)			20%	16%	25%
(c)			17%	16%	25%
(d)			38% (17%)	51% (35%)	25% (0%)
Alternatives	Brazil, 2002, Grade 4	47 (291)			
(a)			24%	9%	25%
(b)			10%	9%	25%
(c)			11%	9%	25%
(d)			49% (35%)	73% (61%)	25% (0%)

Alternatives	Chile, 2002, Grade 4				
(a)	105	10%	6%	17%	
(b)		(665)	11%	6%	17%
(c)			66% (55%)	82% (76%)	50% (33%)
		18%	6%	17%	
National average of 7 items	Paraguay	N.A.			
(four alternatives)	G3, 2001		59% (46%)	81% (75%)	38% (17%)

Note 1: Students are asked to select the alternative that best describes the main idea of the written text.
Note 2: 'High Half' corresponds to students with a total test score over the national average. 'Low Half' corresponds to students with a total test score below the national average.
Note 3: The estimated percentage of students who 'knew the correct answer' is presented in parentheses.
Note 4: If in Chile the 'Low Half' has 40% faultless answers (20% net), the 'High Half' would be 92% (89% net). If the 'Low Half' has 35% faultless answers (13% net), the 'High Half' would be 97% (96% net).
Note 5: If in Paraguay the 'Low Half' has 30% faultless answers (7% net), the 'High Half' would be 89% (85% net). If the 'Low Half' has 25% faultless answers (0% net), the 'High Half' would be 94% (92% net).
Note 6: Wrong answers are distributed evenly.
Source: Reports of the National Testing Services.

but no actual improvement in achievement has yet been demonstrated. There is little turn-over among the members of the school-boards in El Salvador, but there may be changes in their functions on the board. However, education officials in Minas Gerais (Brazil) believe that parents still have a marginal role in decisions and rely on the advice of education authorities.

Decentralisation and Educational Outcomes

Data on achievement suggests that few students from families with an income below the national average are learning to read (understanding written messages), with the exception of Colombian rural students. Table 1 (first two rows) presents answers from Third Grade students in El Salvador including two items dealing with 'reading inferences', as these are reliable indicators of comprehension (UNESCO-LLECE 2001: 24). Poor reading comprehension is usually also associated with poor achievement in mathematics, science or social sciences.

The data shows the modest outcome of the EDUCO program, one of the best-implemented decentralisation processes in the region. Table 1 presents percentages of 'faultless answers', even though the relevant figures are the percentages of students that 'knew the correct answer'. The test administered in El Salvador in 2001 presented three alternative answers from which the student had to select the best alternative for the main idea presented in the test. Therefore, random answers would be near 33% "faultless answers" (as when a fair coin is tossed many times the percentage of tails tends to be near 50%). The net correct answers (net from random successes) are presented in parenthesis. The figures are appalling for the 'Low Half' (see the last column in Table 1).

Almost no Salvadoran student from the 'Low Half' knew the correct answers (no-one in the first item and only 1% in the second). In the first item 57% of students (in the total sample) have 'faultless answers', and most of the successful students are in the 'High Half'. The correct answer required the student to arrive at the conclusion that 'hiding from animals that are chasing', written in the original text, also means 'hiding from enemies'. If 35% of students in the total sample knew the correct answer, then there were also 22% 'faultless answers' from a random success (about one third of the '100–135' students that did not know the correct answer). Likewise, 'faultless answers' from the 'High Half' and the 'Low Half' (8–32%) correspond to 71 and 0% 'correct answers'.

Most of the EDUCO schools were enrolling students from the 'Low Half' of the population. Therefore, the decentralisation experience in El Salvador has not improved the ability to read (and understand what was read) because the rate of 'correct answers' was near zero.

Figures estimated for Ecuador, Honduras and Brazil show that the 'Low Half' of Grade 3 or Grade 4 students were also answering at random (see Table 1, last column in rows 3–5). In the 'Low Half' there is no evidence of

students knowing the right answer. Only 33% of Chilean students and 17% of Paraguayan students would know the correct answers in the optimistic estimate for the 'Low Half' (rows 6 and 7). A similar finding was reached in a UNESCO international survey. The analysis of Third and Fourth grade students of 13 countries included in the LLECE study showed that they "are learning to read, but have problems to grasp the meaning and to make inferences from what they read" (UNESCO-LLECE 2001: 43).

There may be a few improvements in some countries, but these are minor and not statistically significant. On the other hand, scores in Chile in 1989 were lower than scores in 1982 (McGinn and Borden 1995: 233).

International Surveys of Academic Achievement in Latin American Countries

International comparisons show that achievement scores in Latin America are far below the scores in the developed world (Elley 1992; ETS 1992; IEA 2000; Schiefelbein 1995); and the country achievement score variance is

Table 2. Performance on international surveys of reading/literacy 1990–2000

Countries	Studies ca. 1990		Studies ca. 2000	
	IEA 92 Grade 8	UNESCO 92 Grade 8	UNESCO 97 Grade 4	PISA 2000 Age 15
Argentina		66%	83%	83%
Bolivia		52%	69%	
Brazil			82%	79%
Colombia			78%	
Costa Rica		70%		
Chile		67%	84%	81%
Dominican Rep.		56%	68%	
Ecuador		55%		
Honduras			70%	
Mexico			74%	84%
Paraguay			74%	
Perú				65%
Venezuela	70%	70%	73%	
Cuba			103%	
USA	(96%)			(92%)

Note 1: Scores for each country are presented as percentages of the United States score. (The United States is the country used as reference and in 1997 is similar to Cuba.)
Note 2: Scores of the UNESCO 1992 report are presented as a percentage of the United States score in the IEA 92 report, given that Venezuela participated in both surveys.
Note 3: Scores of the UNESCO 1997 report are presented as a percentage of the United States score in the PISA 2000, report, given that Argentina participated in both surveys.
Note 4: The United States line presents, in parentheses, the percentage of the United States with respect to the country with the highest national score.
Source: Schiefelbein, Wolff, and Schiefelbein 1999.

small. Therefore, the region as a whole still lags far behind the quality goals and improved outcomes in education expected from decentralisation in education. Comparative data for the 1990–2000 period is presented in Table 2. Achievement levels of Latin American countries are presented as a percentage of the standardised scores of a developed country (United States). The average is 72% (excluding Cuba) and the range varies between 52 and 84%.

A survey carried out by UNESCO in 14 countries in 1997 detected serious problems in reading, with the exception of Cuba. The report concluded that "students are taught to decode, but cannot catch the meaning of the message or to make inferences. Students can read, but are not learning from what they read" (UNESCO-LLECE 2001: 34). Table 2 confirms that decentralisation alone (as the main strategy for raising quality) has not been able to generate the expected increment in quality. UNESCO had already reported in the early 1990s that "it is not enough to decentralise, since low levels of performance persist among lower socioeconomic groups" (UNESCO-OREALC 1992: 36). Ten leading world experts estimated that decentralisation could be a cost-effective strategy (Schiefelbein, Wolff, and Schiefelbein 1999), but their estimate does not imply that it is a powerful enough strategy to raise achievement unaided. Furthermore, there is little association between the level of decentralisation and achievement levels in developed countries (OECD 1998).

In summary, evidence that decentralisation contributed to improved efficiency is ambiguous (McGinn and Borden 1995: 233). Based on available evidence, it cannot be said that autonomous schools programs have generated appreciable improvement in students' achievement (Brown 1994). "It is still unclear whether, and under what circumstances", writes Brown, "decentralisation makes any real difference in levels of student attainment of academic or social objectives" (Brown 1994: 1410). Being a managerial reform, decentralisation may not have a real impact on the quality of teaching and academic achievement, unless the reform also includes strategies that can raise achievement, as was the case in Colombia.

Explaining Low Achievement Levels in Latin American Countries

Test results discussed in the previous section make it clear that decentralised decisions appear more successful than the previous centralised decisions. One way to reckon at this failure is to blame central planning for not providing technical assistance and training to principals and local authorities, or failure to cope with implementation problems. Nevertheless, an alternative point of view is to assume that poor achievement is not associated so much with resource allocation, but instead with using teaching strategies better suited to the needs of specific groups of students.

Table 3. Chile, achievement by type of school and socioeconomic level 2000–2002

Socioeconomic level	Mathematics		Language		Maximum difference
	Municipal private	Subsidised	Municipal private	Subsidised	
SIMCE 8th Grade 2000. Average score by type of school and socioeconomic level (average 250; s.d. 100)					
High	–	**303**	–	**297**	1
Medium high	302		**297**		5
Medium	**280**	275	278	275	6
Medium low	279		**280**		2
Low	245	**251**	246	**252**	10
	–		–		
	232	**233**	232	**234**	
	–		–		
	231	221	**230**	221	
	–		–		
SIMCE 4th Grade 2002. Average score by type of school and socioeconomic level (average 250; s.d. 100)					
High	–	299	–	**303**	2
Medium high	**301**		302		7
Medium	270	275	276	281	9
Medium low	**277**		**282**		2
Low	246	**253**	249	258	13
	–		–		
	229	227	232	230	
	–		–		
	223	210	**229**	216	
	–		–		

Note: Only differences of 10 or more points (see column 'Maximum difference') are statistically significant.

Even the well-implemented EDUCO project (which increased teachers' attendance), could not raise test scores in El Salvador (see Table 1), while there was an increase in achievement in Colombian rural areas that could only be associated with *Escuela Nueva*. Therefore, it appears that the cause of low achievement tends to be at the classroom level rather than in management. If teacher training is inadequate, decentralisation may not be a solution for such a problem. In fact, "there is as yet no evidence that local control of schools improves quality of teachers or levels of learning overall" (McGinn and Borden 1995: 233). Hence, the assumption that decentralisation would help teachers improve their performance was too optimistic, as was evidenced in Chile. Table 3 shows that Chilean private schools (with full autonomy) do not have higher student achievement in each socioeconomic level than the public schools. Achievement scores in private (autonomous) and municipal schools are similar when both are teaching students of a similar socioeconomic

level (in that case differences are not significant). If this finding could be confirmed in other countries, there would be no reason to expect a positive impact of massive decentralisation in students' achievement.

The previous evidence implies that decentralisation should be combined with other strategies. These include initial training for future teachers in a wide set of teaching models; pre-school education and the use of broadcasts such as Sesame Street; well-tested scripts, guides or frameworks; systematic assignment of new teachers, or allocation of the best teachers to first grade.

Lessons from Decentralisation Experiences in Latin American Countries

Latin American countries implemented a variety of decentralisation strategies in the 1990s as part of a massive investment of nearly one billion dollars per year. However, by the year 2000, only half the students in Latin America understood what they read in a rather simple text. This finding can be expected given the lack of information and monitoring, poor initial teacher training, strong pedagogical traditions (traditional teaching), and lack of companion components focused on the reform of teaching methods.

The rationale, strategies and types of implementation are quite different in each of the decentralisation experiences, while the range of motives extends from the political, economical, financial, tactical, and religious to the educational. Decentralisation has been carried out for a variety of reasons. In addition, each country retained some responsibilities at the central level, shifting others downward in the system.

Decentralisation experiences did not improve the ability of students to read (and understand what was read), except in one country where decentralisation was complemented with a pedagogical reform. Few students from the 'Low Half' (students with a total test score below the national average, most of them being enrolled in decentralised schools) know the correct answer to a question about a rather short written text (between 50 and 100 words). Data from a dozen countries which implemented decentralisation strategies detected students not able to catch the meaning of the message or to make inferences. Only in Colombia was there a significant improvement in reading comprehension in the rural area where the *Escuela Nueva* project was implemented.

There is no evidence that local control of schools improves the quality of teachers or levels of learning overall. Chilean private schools (with full autonomy) do not have higher student achievement in each socioeconomic level than do the public schools. If this finding could be confirmed in other countries, there would be no reason to expect a positive impact of massive decentralisation to be visible in student achievement. In any case, the assumption that decentralisation would help teachers to improve their performance was a little too optimistic.

Conclusion

In summary, this study of various countries has demonstrated that authority and resources could be transferred downward in the system in a short amount of time, but autonomous schools programs did not generate any significant improvement in student achievement. It is still unclear whether, and under what circumstances, decentralisation makes any real difference in levels of student attainment of academic or social objectives. On the other hand, decentralisation could be successful when combined with other reliable strategies.

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PRIVATIZATION AND VOUCHERS IN COLOMBIA AND CHILE

ALBERTO ARENAS

Abstract – The voucher model of financing schooling is becoming increasingly common throughout Latin America, with at least 12 countries using vouchers or voucher-like schemes. The present study focuses on the voucher models of Colombia and Chile, which have the most extensive programs of this type and those of the longest standing in the region. Using empirical evidence, the author compares the two models along four evaluative dimensions: educational quality, segregation, choice and socialization. After weighing the successes and weaknesses of each system, he concludes that, among other characteristics, the most effective and equitable voucher model features: (a) a flexible interpretation of educational quality; (b) financial grants which target solely the poor; (c) vouchers which cover the entire cost of tuition; (d) open enrolment at participating schools; (e) the participation of both secular and religious private schools; (f) accessible and meaningful information to parents; and (g) strong systems of accountability.

Zusammenfassung – PRIVATISIERUNG UND GUTSCHEIN-MODELLE IN KOLUMBIEN UND CHILE – Das Gutschein-Modell für die Finanzierung des Schulwesens hat sich in zunehmendem Maße in Lateinamerika verbreitet; mindestens 12 Länder verwenden Gutschein- oder ähnliche Programme. Die vorliegende Studie konzentriert sich auf die Gutschein-Programme Kolumbiens und Chiles. Diese Länder haben die ausgedehntesten und etabliertesten Programme dieser Art in Latein Amerika. Indem sich der Autor auf empirische Evidenz stützt, vergleicht er die beiden Modelle anhand von vier Bewertungskriterien: der Bildungsqualität, der Selektivität, der Auswahlmöglichkeit und der Sozialisation. Nachdem er Erfolge und Schwächen eines jeden Systems gegeneinander abgewogen hat, zieht der Autor den Schluss, dass ein effektives und gerechtes Gutschein-Modell – neben anderen Eigenschaften – folgende Züge aufweist: (a) eine flexible Interpretation der Bildungsqualität; (b) finanzielle Subventionen, deren Empfänger ausschließlich die Armen sind; (c) Gutscheine, die die gesamten Kosten des Unterrichts decken; (d) ein offenes Aufnahmeverfahren an den beteiligten Schulen; (e) die Beteiligung von säkularen und konfessionellen Privatschulen; (f) zugängliche und sinnvolle Information der Eltern; und (g) ein strenges System der Verantwortlichkeit.

Résume – COLOMBIE ET CHILI: PRIVATISATION ET CHÈQUES-ÉDUCATION – Le modèle de financement scolaire constitué de chèques-éducation devient de plus en plus courant dans toute l'Amérique latine, dont au moins 12 pays ont adopté ce système ou d'autres analogues. L'étude présentée ici se penche sur les modèles de chèques-éducation de la Colombie et du Chili, dont les programmes correspondants sont les plus intensifs et les plus anciens de la région. En s'appuyant sur des preuves empiriques, l'auteur compare les deux modèles nationaux en fonction de quatre critères d'évaluation: qualité de l'éducation, ségrégation, choix et socialisation civique. Après une appréciation des succès et faiblesses de chaque système, il conclut entre autres éléments aux caractéristiques les plus efficaces et équitables du

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chèque-éducation: (a) une interprétation flexible de la qualité de l'éducation, (b) des subventions accordées uniquement aux personnes défavorisées, (c) des chèques-éducation couvrant l'ensemble des frais de scolarité, (d) l'inscription libre dans les écoles participantes, (e) la participation des écoles privées tant laï que religieuses, (f) une information accessible et pertinente pour les parents, et (g) des systèmes solides de responsabilité financière.

Resumen – PRIVATIZACIÓN Y VOUCHERS EN COLOMBIA Y CHILE – El modelo de los bonos para financiar la formación escolar se está volviendo cada vez más habitual en América Latina, donde por lo menos 12 países están usando estos sistemas de bonos o métodos similares. Este trabajo se concentra en los modelos de vouchers de Colombia y Chile, países donde estos programas están más difundidos y son más antiguos. El autor utiliza pruebas empíricas para comparar los dos modelos mediante cuatro dimensiones de evaluación: calidad de la educación, segregación, oportunidad de elección y socialización civil. Tras haber ponderado los puntos fuertes y débiles de cada sistema, llega a la conclusión de que, entre otras características, el modelo de vouchers más efectivo y equitativo ofrece: (a) una interpretación flexible de la calidad de la educación; (b) subvenciones financieras destinadas exclusivamente a los alumnos de escasos recursos económicos; (c) vouchers que cubran la totalidad de la cuota escolar; (d) matriculación abierta en las escuelas participantes del sistema; (e) la participación tanto de escuelas seculares como de escuelas religiosas; (f) información de los padres, accesible y sustancial; y (g) sistemas estrictos de responsabilización.

Резюме – ПРИВАТИЗАЦИЯ И СИСТЕМА ВАУЧЕРОВ В КОЛУМБИИ И ЧИЛИ – Ваучерная модель финансирования обучения становится все более популярной в Латинской Америке; по крайней мере, 12 стран ввели в пользование ваучеры или подобные схемы. Данное исследование основывается на ваучерных моделях Колумбии и Чили, где существуют наиболее обширные программы данного типа, ранее всех введенные в этом регионе. Используя эмпирические данные, автор статьи сравнивает эти две модели по четырем оценочным критериям: качество образования; сегрегация; возможность выбора; и социализация. Взвесив все плюсы и минусы каждой системы, автор ста-тьи подводит следующий итог: наряду с другими особенностями самая эффективная и общедоступная ваучерная модель отражает: (a) гибкую интерпретацию качества образования; (b) наличие финансовых грантов для малообеспеченных граждан; (c) систему ваучеров, покрывающих расходы всего курса обучения; (d) открытое зачисление в школы, участвующие в данной программе; (e) участие как светских, так и религиозных частных школ; (f) предоставление родителям доступной и содержательной информации; (g) строгая система отчетности.

Privatization and Vouchers in Schools in Latin America

Given that the decentralization of educational policies is becoming the norm worldwide, with some reforms accompanied by privatization schemes employing vouchers, an analysis of this controversial strategy is timely. Vouchers or voucher-like schemes have been implemented in at least 12 Latin American countries, starting with Chile more than 20 years ago

(Patrinos 2000; West 1996). Although the underlying premise of vouchers is the public subsidy of private schooling based on the number of eligible voucher students per school, the form it takes in each country may be radically different.

For instance, the eligible population may vary: In Belize, students of all SES levels qualify, whereas in Guatemala and El Salvador only poor girls and poor children, respectively, do. The programs also vary according to the types of private schools eligible: In the program in place in Puerto Rico in the 1990s, religious schools were included, whereas in Colombia they are not. In terms of school administration, Bolivian parochial organizations can privately manage public schools, but in Mexico only public entities can do so. Another variable is the coverage of the program: In Chile it covers more than 90% of the school-age population, but in the Dominican Republic, only a very small percentage.

To explore the effects of these different schemes, the present study analyzes the voucher models of Colombia and Chile, the most extensive and longest-standing in Latin America. Perhaps the main difference between the two models is that Colombia's is limited to low-income secondary-level students (King et al. 1997), whereas Chile's model provides unrestricted choice nationwide at both elementary and secondary levels (Gauri 1998). This key difference, along with a few others, elucidates policy implications not just for these two countries in particular, but also for other countries intent on implementing vouchers. Taking advantage of the available empirical evidence on both the Colombian and Chilean models, I compare and contrast their successes and weaknesses along four evaluative dimensions: educational quality, segregation, choice and civic socialization.

Evaluative Dimensions

The arguments for and against vouchers have often been based more on political ideology than empirical evidence. In this section, I expand on the four above-mentioned dimensions, which researchers have identified as vital for evaluating the effectiveness of vouchers (Levin 2000; Gill et al. 2001). For each dimension I include pros and cons of vouchers, along with a few methodological remarks regarding measurement.

Educational Quality

Two main questions have been asked regarding educational quality: Do students who join voucher schools improve academically? How does the exodus of voucher students affect those who remain behind? Proponents of vouchers believe that voucher students will tend to improve academically because private schools have a clear and focused educational mission, and are less bureaucratic, less bounded by restrictions, and less dominated by interest

groups than are regular public schools (Chubb and Moe 1990). Voucher advocates also believe students who stay behind will eventually benefit as well because public schools will strive for educational excellence to avoid losing additional students.

Skeptics of vouchers argue that when the SES of students and the amount invested in each school is taken into account, private schools are not necessarily better academically (for Colombia see King et al. 1997; for Chile see Tokman Ramos 2002). Moreover, they worry that vouchers may negatively affect children who stay in public schools because of the dual consequences of 'creaming' and 'peer effect'. Creaming occurs when voucher private schools enlist the most academically talented public-school students and those with highly motivated parents. Peer effect, a result of creaming, occurs when public schools have an overpopulation of academically weak students without good students to provide a positive influence.

In terms of methodology, quality has been measured by standardized test scores and rates of retention, promotion and graduation. Other key aspects of quality (e.g., how well a school fosters in students emotional well-being, physical and artistic development, and a sense of empathy for others) have not been studied because of the difficulty of measuring and standardizing the results. Given that quality is much broader than what is currently measured, the results provided for this dimension require cautious interpretation.

Segregation

Two interdependent questions are pertinent: Will voucher schools accept students who fit a certain profile (e.g., higher SES, academically talented, or no record of discipline problems) more readily than other students? Will public schools become overattended by children from marginalized backgrounds (e.g., low income, ethnic minority, or with special emotional or physical needs)? Voucher supporters concede this danger but counter that systems of accountability can be instituted to ensure that schools admit students based on a lottery system and are prohibited from requiring supplementary fees from parents. Plus, they argue, schools are already segregated by SES and ethnicity under the present system, and little is being done to offset this situation. Vouchers, they say, are more equitable because they provide poor families with access to the kinds of education enjoyed by more affluent families (Chubb and Moe 1990).

Opponents contend that families which need vouchers the least are most likely to seek them. That is, affluent families have more social capital (including access to voucher information), time and motivation to find the best school for their children. They also claim that setting up effective systems of accountability is extremely difficult because schools are not required to provide clear justifications for rejecting students, and poor families often do not feel entitled to complain about possible wrongdoing by a school. Also, in terms of providing services to children with emotional or physical problems,

private schools often are subject to different requirements than public schools. The creaming and peer effect arguments predict that voucher private schools end up serving the brightest and highest SES students. This also means that the poorest, academically weakest, and most difficult to educate disproportionately attend public schools.

From a methodological standpoint, as with the other dimensions, the available data should be compared not against an ideal but against the existing system. Segregation has been measured by analyzing SES stratification, school admissions policies, and the presence of ostensibly 'voluntary' fees.

Choice

The pertinent questions regarding choice include, Do parents demand vouchers? What do voucher parents think about their children's schools? Defenders of vouchers argue that parents have a basic right to take an active role in their children's education, including deciding which school their children will attend. One of the earliest philosophers to espouse this view was John Stuart Mill, who believed in the importance of education but opposed its monopoly by the state. In his 1838 essay *On Liberty* (1991: 117), he wrote:

> If the government were to make up its mind to require for every child a good education, it might save itself the trouble of providing one. It might leave to parents to obtain the education where and how they pleased, and content itself with helping to pay the school fees of the poorer classes of children, and defraying the entire schools expenses of whose who have no one else to pay for them.

Mill defended the importance of individuality of character and diversity of opinions, and believed in fostering these through a diversity of schooling options without state intervention. Otherwise, he said, the state would "establish a despotism over the mind" (118). Opponents of vouchers concede that parental choice is a legitimate goal in any education system, but they weigh this right against the negative consequences resulting from vouchers.

In terms of methodology, choice has generally been measured through parental surveys at least 1 year after parents have transferred their children. Parents surveyed include those who transferred their children either to pre-existing schools or to schools specifically created to accept voucher students.

Civic Socialization

The main question in this dimension is, Do vouchers contribute to the socialization of responsible, respectful and democratically active citizens? This dimension has not been a major concern for supporters of vouchers because they contend that any democratic society should respect a plurality of views, something guaranteed by a large number of private schools (Coons and Sugarman 1978). They argue that ideological diversity does not entail abetting abhorrent ideologies or civic fragmentation; in fact, they claim,

private (including religious) schools and universities for centuries have educated a large percentage of those who receive formal education in Latin America, without the propagation of hateful doctrines. Moreover, because private schools have to contend with less red tape, they have flexibility to create programs that bring together schools and poor communities, such as community-service learning. This has occurred in some private schools in the United States (Campbell 2001).

Antagonists of vouchers believe that teaching civic responsibility occurs through two main mechanisms: the overt and the hidden curriculum. In terms of the overt curriculum, public schools have as their main mission to transmit important knowledge (and the skills to create new knowledge) and to foster the pursuit of truth and social justice through democratic means. They claim that there are no guarantees this will happen with a proliferation of private schools which inevitably defend particularistic views. With the spread of a market-oriented, individualistic ideology, many private schools are more interested in their pecuniary investment than in providing a responsible civic education. In terms of the hidden curriculum, if indeed vouchers lead to increased stratification in academic talent, physical difference and SES, then voucher children will be less likely to establish close relationships with less fortunate children. While close contact with children from a different background is no guarantee of developing respect for difference, integrated schools have a unique potential to raise social consciousness.

Of the four dimensions, this is probably the least studied, in great part because of measurement difficulties. Most of the evidence comes not from comparing voucher and non-voucher schools, but indirectly from comparing private secular and religious schools to public ones.

Two Latin American Voucher Models

The Colombian Model

In 1991, the Colombian Ministry of Education implemented a system of vouchers targeting poor students in order to address under-enrollment in private secondary schools and over-enrollment in public secondary ones (King et al. 1997). At the program's peak in the late 1990s, about 250,000 students, or about 7% of the secondary school population, had received vouchers via a lottery system (Villa and Duarte 2002). With the lottery system, every interested child is given an equal opportunity to be chosen. Eligible children have to meet three criteria: (1) They must come from a poor family, as demonstrated by a utility bill indicating the SES standing of their neighborhood – neighborhoods are divided into six strata, only the bottom two of which are voucher-eligible, (2) Students must have studied in a public primary school, a requirement designed to avoid subsidizing students who probably would have attended a private secondary school

anyway, (3) They must be accepted at a private secondary school before applying for the voucher.

In terms of financing, while in 1991 the voucher amount covered the full cost of tuition at a moderately priced private school, the face value of the voucher did not keep up with inflation. As a result, the voucher nowadays covers only about half the cost of tuition, the other half being paid by the child's family or scholarships (Angrist et al. 2001). To limit the amount of money parents have to pay, the Ministry decided to restrict participation to non-profit private schools.

Unlike the Chilean situation, no massive transfer of students from public to private schools has occurred, for three main reasons (King et al. 1997, 1998): First, public schools in Colombia enjoy a good reputation, often better than those of inexpensive private schools; thus students tend to seek entrance into a private school only if the public school of their choice is overcrowded or there is no public secondary school nearby. Second, high out-of-pocket expenditures create a financial disincentive for parents. Third, the Ministry has limited the number of new vouchers offered over the years to those funded by the World Bank (currently 5500 annually).

The low number of new vouchers has called into question the continuity of the model in forthcoming years. Competing models of school financing have been implemented in Colombia in recent years through programs such as Schools in Concession (*Colegios en Concesión*), public schools whose administration is transferred to private schools which have shown excellent results in the state national examinations; and the Space Buying in Private Schools (*Compra de Cupos en Escuelas Privadas*) program, by which the municipality or department, pays private schools to allocate a certain number of spaces for poor children. These appear to be effective strategies for expanding educational access at a low cost to the state (Villa and Duarte 2002). These alternative models place the burden of school selection on the state, not on the consumer, which voucher critics say protects poor parents from choosing mediocre schools.

The Chilean Model

The voucher system in Chile was approved 10 years before the Colombian system (see Table 1). It covers more than 90% of the school-age population (Aedo and Sapelli 2001), the most extensive program in Latin America. Unlike the Colombian situation, in the Chilean system all school-age children are entitled to vouchers, regardless of SES. Prior to implementation of the voucher system, two types of schools received public funding: tuition-free public schools and private (mainly religious) subsidized ones (Espínola 1993). The funding paid for administrators' and teachers' salaries along with plant maintenance. This manner of funding changed radically with the advent of vouchers. All public schools and those private schools electing to

Table 1. Characteristics of voucher models

Features of voucher model	Colombia	Chile
Year of implementation	1991	1981
Percentage of students receiving vouchers (out of total primary and secondary student enrollment)	3%[a]	91%[b]
Type of schools participating	Private schools only	Both public and private schools
Eligibility of secular and religious schools	Only secular schools	Both secular and religious schools
SES restrictions	Only poor students	None
Massive transfer of students from public to private schools because of the voucher program	No	Yes
School authority to institute admissions criteria	Yes	Yes
School authority to institute additional fees beyond voucher amount	Yes	Yes

[a] For 2000 (estimated from Angrist et al. 2001; Fundación Corona and Corpoeducación 2003).
[b] For 1998. This figure includes 2% of students in publicly subsidized schools run by private groups (Aedo and Sapelli 2001).

participate started to receive only the funding that came with each student in the form of a voucher (participating private schools could continue to accept non-voucher students). With vouchers, all public and private subsidized schools receive the same amount per student, with slight variations per region to compensate for cost of living.

As a means of raising school revenues, a system of shared financing (*financiamiento compartido*) was instituted in 1993 (Gauri 1998: 89). Prior to this new policy, private voucher and public schools were prohibited from charging fees beyond the voucher amount in order to prevent discrimination against poor families. Under the new policy, all private voucher schools (both elementary and secondary) and all public secondary schools (starting at the 8th grade) were allowed to levy a 'voluntary' fee on students. By 1998, the new policy had been embraced by 42% of private voucher schools and by 10% of secondary public schools (Aedo and Sapelli 2001: 5). As in the Colombian model, the Chilean one places no restrictions on the location of the school a child may attend. Limited only by safety issues and time constraints, children can travel free of charge to any public or voucher private school of their choice (Tokman Ramos 2002: 3).

In terms of enrollment, there has been an unequivocal exodus from public schools to voucher private ones (Hsieh and Urquiola 2003). In 1981, almost

80% of students were enrolled in public schools, while only 14% were in subsidized private ones. By 1996, the enrollment in public schools had decreased to about 60%, while that of voucher private schools had increased to 34% (meanwhile, enrollment in unsubsidized private schools remained stagnant at between 5% and 6% of total enrollment). During this period, the majority of students sought entrance into secular schools, while a smaller but not insignificant number sought entrance into religious Catholic or Protestant schools. As in Colombia, many secular schools were founded with the specific purpose of receiving voucher students.

How do schools determine who is accepted at their schools? In Chile, entrance to public schools is determined on a first-come, first-served basis. Public schools cannot use tests or interviews unless there is an excess of demand ('good' public schools do experience an excess and thus are entitled to institute their own selection criteria). In contrast, voucher private schools use criteria such as the student's previous performance, perceived academic potential and family characteristics.

Comparison of the Two Models

Educational Quality

Colombia's voucher system has been analyzed in at least two large-scale studies. The first (King et al. 1997) examined the results of criterion-referenced tests administered by the Colombian National Testing Service in mathematics and Spanish for the 7th and 9th grades for three types of schools: public, voucher private and non-voucher private. The study found no statistically significant differences in scores between public and voucher private schools. Moreover, teacher–student ratios and infrastructure (as measured by the presence of an auditorium, a library and a computer lab) were comparable. Non-voucher private schools, however, had substantially better scores, a lower teacher–student ratio and a better infrastructure than the other two. The second study (Angrist et al. 2001) compared lottery losers and winners in both public and voucher schools on retention rates, number of school years completed and standardized test scores. Both types of schools fared similarly on retention rates, but voucher students were more likely than non-voucher students to have completed the 8th grade and, in contrast to recent findings (King et al. 1997) scored 0.2 standard deviations above non-voucher students on the test.

There are at least two explanations for these somewhat contradictory results: First, King et al. (1997) used data from 1992 to 1993 (just one year after the program started), whereas Angrist et al. (2001) used data from 1999; perhaps in the interim voucher private schools increased in quality to attract more voucher students. Second, given that parents have to pay about half the cost of tuition at voucher private schools and that students lose their

vouchers if they fail a grade, children have a strong incentive to do well; possibly this financial incentive was less prominent in the early 1990s, when the vouchers covered full tuition.

In Chile, where researchers have to control for SES because of its unrestricted nature, the System of Measurement of Education Quality (*Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación*: SIMCE) has revealed a similar hierarchy of academic achievement. At the top, one finds non-voucher private schools (just as in Colombia), followed by voucher Catholic schools (McEwan and Carnoy 2000; McEwan 2001). The comparisons of public and voucher secular private schools are less conclusive. Some show that voucher secular private schools are superior to public schools (Aedo and Sapelli 2001), others that both types of schools are similar (Tokman Ramos 2002), and still others that public schools are superior (Carnoy and McEwan 2001; McEwan 2001).

Possible explanations for these contradictory results are: (1) voucher secular private schools are superior to public schools; (2) public schools are superior to voucher secular private ones; or (3) both types of schools are similar but the transfer of the wealthiest and best students from public to private schools has increased the scores of private schools and decreased those of public schools.

A related issue is how the massive transfer affects children who remain in public schools. Theoretically, it should lower their academic achievement, and some findings do point in that direction. Hsieh and Urquiola (2003) compared data from municipalities where the transfer rate was high to those where the transfer was low, finding that in the first group of municipalities public schools performed comparatively worse academically (even worse than before the transfer). This could be explained by the combined effect of the loss of better students and negative peer effect. Another possible but less likely explanation is that the public schools were worse to start with; this is unlikely because it would not explain why scores in those public schools actually went down. For the Colombian model, peer effect may be of second-order importance because public schools enjoy a relatively good reputation (and thus highly motivated parents want their children there) and because, in any case, the program only targets poor students.

Segregation

While in Colombia voucher parents still have to pay hefty out-of-pocket fees and tuition, which the poorest families may not be able to afford, several factors still limit the potential for segregation. First, only low-SES students are voucher-eligible. Second, Colombian public schools have historically enjoyed relatively high prestige, particularly when compared with low-tuition private schools. Third, many beneficiaries are children who enter private schools because of overcrowding in the available public schools or because no public secondary school exists in the area. Thus, so

far Colombia has been able to minimize segregation – although it may eventually become a problem if public school standardized test scores continue to lag behind those of private schools (Fundación Corona and Corpoeducación 2003).

In contrast, there seems to be little doubt that Chile's model has led to segregation by SES and academic skill levels. As one study concluded (Hsieh and Urquiola 2003: 3):

> The main effect of unrestricted school choice was an exodus of "middle-class" students from the public sector. Specifically, we find that in communities where private schools grew by more, there is a greater decline in the socioeconomic status (measured by parental schooling and income) of public school students relative to the community average.

This study was unique in comparing enrollment rates and academic scores of schools within the *same* communities rather than *across* communities, as other studies had done. Hsieh and Urquiola (2003) found that the SIMCE scores in the same community had increased in private schools but decreased in public ones, leading to a conclusion that creaming indeed had occurred. Chilean public schools have traditionally suffered from a poor reputation (even though this reputation may be unjustified: Tokman Ramos 2002), lending popular legitimacy to the transfer. The net result has been a greater segregation of schools in terms of SES and academic skill level to the benefit of the private sector over the public one. The negative peer effect on public schools, however, is yet to be demonstrated empirically.

Neither system offers private schools economic incentives to accept students who are difficult or expensive to teach (e.g., children with discipline records or special education needs). Consequently, these children may be denied entrance to voucher private schools and found disproportionately in the public sector in both countries.

Choice

The long waiting lists at the more desirable voucher private schools unequivocally demonstrate strong parental support for vouchers in Colombia (King et al. 1997) and Chile (Gauri 1998). This support, however, has been conditioned by both supply and demand constraints. On the supply side, three main issues make the Colombian model much more restrictive than the Chilean one: First, and most important, the government offers a limited number of vouchers to poor students; as a result, few new schools have been founded. In Chile, the unrestricted nature of the model has led to the opening of more than 1,000 voucher private schools (McEwan 2001). Second, the Colombian Ministry allows only non-profit and secular schools to receive vouchers. (Chile allows private schools – secular and religious – to charge parents up to four times the voucher amount.) Third, 80% of each voucher is financed by central government funds, and 20%

by municipal funds (in Chile, funding comes directly from the central government); given the financial burden on municipalities, only 25% have decided to participate, and of those some have reneged on their payment responsibilities (King et al. 1998).

On the demand side, both the Colombian and Chilean models suffer from three main constraints: First, access to information on quality schools is far from perfect. In Chile, for example, newspapers publish the SIMCE scores once a year to help parents make informed decisions, but many poor parents do not read this information or know how to interpret it. Gauri (1998: 123) surveyed Chilean parents from public, voucher private and non-voucher private schools, and found that parents with children in public schools were the least likely to know what the SIMCE was and the least able to name two voucher schools in the area with high SIMCE scores. Colombia has similar problems. As a result, poor parents end up choosing a school based on geographic proximity rather than educational quality. As Aedo and Sapelli (2001: 29) assert, "Factors such as the parental level of education [and] income ... constitute elements that systematically affect the decision between a municipal school and a private subsidized school."

Second, both models involve a system of co-financing between government and consumer, forcing parents to pay at times more than 50% of tuition and fees. The effects of this in Colombia can be measured by the percentage of lottery winners who decide to use the voucher. In a survey of 800 lottery winners, only 69% were actually using the voucher; another 16% decided to go to public schools; and the remaining 15% decided not to go to school at all (Angrist et al. 2001: 10). While it is not clear why 31% of lottery winners decided not to use the voucher, it could be attributed to the high out-of-pocket expenses borne by families. (Even for regular public schools in Colombia parents have to pay the equivalent of one-third the voucher value.)

Third, in both Colombia and Chile, schools are entitled to reject students through a selective admissions process, the only difference being that in Colombia the rejection occurs *prior* to receiving the voucher, because a prerequisite for receiving one is admission to a private school. As mentioned previously, it is quite possible that children considered undesirable have less chance of being admitted than easy-to-educate students.

Despite these constraints, parents in both countries (especially those of a higher SES) have sought vouchers in large numbers and have decided to keep their children in voucher private schools over a number of years (Aedo and Sapelli 2001; Angrist et al. 2001). Even when parents choose schools for reasons other than high test scores, they still enjoy the value of exercising choice. As Hsieh and Urquiola (2003) argue, parents may be spending their money in ways they value greatly, such as placing their children with other children from a similar SES background, enjoying the real or perceived additional safety offered by private schools, or taking advantage of subsidized religious instruction.

Civic Socialization

Although both supporters and opponents of vouchers believe that schooling should instill in students the defense of principles of democracy and social tolerance, in Colombia and Chile this dimension has not been explored empirically. Instead, this issue can be studied through proxy by comparing public and private schools in general. In both countries, a large percentage of the population attends private schools. In Colombia, 37% of the total student population was enrolled in private schools in 1995, but in large metropolitan areas the percentage was significantly higher: In Bogotá, for example, 58% were enrolled in private schools (Angrist et al. 2001: 5). In Chile, the national percentage is even higher, with 43% enrolled in private schools in 1998 (Aedo and Sapelli 2001: 3).

Given these high numbers, could it be, as voucher opponents argue, that civic socialization takes a back seat in private schools? Based on empirical evidence from the United States, the opposite in fact appears to be true. In what is probably the most comprehensive study of the subject, Campbell (2001) used the 1996 Household Education Survey to compare the civic socialization of students from public, Catholic, non-Catholic religious, and private secular schools. Civic socialization was measured by level of community service, civic behavior, political knowledge, and political tolerance. Campbell controlled for parental SES, parental education, school size, ethnic composition, and whether the school mandated community service. The results showed significant differences favoring Catholic schools over all other schools in terms of community service, civic behavior and political knowledge; significant differences also favored private secular schools over public ones in terms of political tolerance. In sum, public schools fell below private schools (both religious and secular) on every measure of civic socialization.

Without empirical evidence we cannot know how these results might translate to Latin America. However, a few related observations are pertinent: First, in many Latin American countries public and private schools mandate community service (in Colombia, for instance, community service is mandatory). Second, it is generally assumed that people become sensitized to social problems only when they are exposed to them firsthand, for example, by studying side-by-side with poor children. As it is, schools are extremely segregated by social class in both countries, and the current voucher schemes do not address this problem (in the case of Chile, at least, the problem may be worsening). Third, elite private institutions in both countries – from which the countries' political and economic leaders generally graduate – do not participate in the voucher schemes; therefore, voucher schemes do not affect this situation one way or the other. Fourth, private schools have more flexibility in decisions regarding community service and, thus, could foster community service beyond that mandated by the central government. Fifth, a recent survey of public and private universities in Colombia found no

significant difference between the two in terms of community involvement (Estas son las universidades 2003).

In light of these observations, the arguments of voucher supporters or opponents are not supported: that vouchers lead to more, or to less, civic socialization.

Conclusions

This study has presented two models of vouchers, each with strengths and weaknesses. Given the popularity of vouchers in Latin America and elsewhere, it is urgent to adopt a set of guidelines to assist policy-makers in choosing models which improve educational quality broadly conceived, minimize various forms of segregation, increase parental choice, and enhance civic responsibility. Following is a tentative set of guidelines based on inferences from the evidence presented here for the Colombian and Chilean models:

1. *Define and measure educational quality flexibly*. Current definitions and forms of measurement are too narrow, focusing primarily on linguistic and logic skills. Other characteristics of a well-educated person – such as being skilled in the arts, exhibiting good interpersonal relations, or protecting the environment – do not lend themselves to easy quantification and end up relegated to a secondary position.
2. *Target poor students*. A restricted model like the Colombian one ensures that students who need help the most get it. It also avoids a common criticism of the Chilean model that it provides an educational subsidy for the rich.
3. *Ensure that vouchers cover the entire cost of tuition*. If the voucher's face value falls below the actual cost of tuition, as is the case in Colombia, many poor parents will be disadvantaged or even forced to withdraw their children from private schooling. For the same reason, schools should be prohibited from charging the all-too-common and onerous 'voluntary' add-ons.
4. *Require open enrollment*. The selective admissions process in both countries appears to have increased SES and academic segregation. Forcing schools to use a lottery system when demand exceeds the number of vacancies can make vouchers a more equitable mechanism.
5. *Offer vouchers with differential values*. Providing more generous vouchers to students who are more expensive to educate (e.g., students with special physical or emotional needs) would assist schools more effectively and equitably to meet these children's needs.
6. *Subsidize transportation*. Many poor families choose the school closest to their home because of the added expense of transportation. Subsidizing public transportation for students, as is done in Chile, would greatly reduce this problem.

7. *Allow participation of religious schools*. The Chilean policy of including religious schools is sound. Many high-quality religious schools throughout Latin America would welcome the opportunity to educate poor children if fairly compensated. Plus, existing religious schools do not have to incur the expensive startup costs that create a disincentive to found new non-profit schools.
8. *Offer parents meaningful and accessible information*. Poor parents are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of accessing and interpreting information on schools. The Ministry and/or municipalities should work directly with parents to select the most appropriate venues and means of communication to ensure that parents make informed school choices.
9. *Provide more autonomy to public schools*. Private schools generally have more flexibility than public ones to implement strategies to overcome deficiencies. Minimizing regulation would enable public (and private) schools to respond quickly to new needs that arise (e.g., improving civic socialization through community service).
10. *Establish strong systems of accountability*. To prevent corruption and mismanagement, the Ministry needs to set up a strong system of accountability to ensure that the quality of voucher schools remains high, the admission process at the best voucher schools is fair and transparent, and no financial add-ons are allowed, problems often found in voucher models.

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THE POLITICS OF PRIVATISATION, DECENTRALISATION AND EDUCATION REFORM IN MEXICO

CARLOS ORNELAS

Abstract – Reform in the Mexican education system accords with global patterns of liberalisation, decentralisation, compensatory programs and accountability. The present study analyses reform in that country during the past 15 years. It reveals that despite expectations of change attending the installation of the new government which replaced the ruling party dominant for 70 years, there has been far more continuity than change in educational politics. It also shows that these have been constrained by the militant and powerful National Teachers' Union. Although the new government has achieved some progress in equity and management, the quality of education can be seen to remain inferior.

Zusammenfassung – DIE POLITIK DER PRIVATISIERUNG, DEZENTRALISIERUNG UND BILDUNGSREFORM IN MEXIKO – Die Reform des mexikanischen Bildungssystem entspricht den globalen Mustern der Liberalisierung und Dezentralisierung sowie der kompensatorischen Programme und der Verantwortungsübernahme. Die vorliegende Studie analysiert die Reform in diesem Land während der letzten 15 Jahre. Sie macht deutlich, dass es in der Bildungspolitik weit mehr Kontinuität gegeben hat als Veränderung, trotz der Erwartungen, dass sich anlässlich der Einsetzung einer neuen Regierung, die die 70 Jahre lang herrschende Regierungspartei ersetzte, Veränderungen ergäben. Die Studie zeigt auch, dass sich die Bildungspolitik den nötigenden Vorgaben der militanten und machtvollen 'Nationalen Lehrerunion' ausgesetzt sah. Obwohl die neue Regierung einige Fortschritte auf dem Gebiet der Chancengleichheit und des Managements erzielt hat, zeigt sich, dass die Bildungsqualität schlecht geblieben ist.

Résumé – MEXIQUE: POLITIQUE DE PRIVATISATION, DÉCENTRALISATION ET RÉFORME ÉDUCATIVE – La réforme du système éducatif mexicain fait écho aux modèles mondiaux de libéralisation, de décentralisation, de programmes compensatoires et de responsabilité financière. Cette étude analyse la réforme menée au Mexique au cours des 15 dernières années. Elle révèle que, malgré les changements escomptés favorisant l'installation du nouveau gouvernement qui a remplacé le parti demeuré au pouvoir pendant 70 années, les politiques éducatives ont été beaucoup plus marquées par la continuité que par la novation. Elle montre en outre que ces politiques ont été limitées par le puissant et militant syndicat national des enseignants. Bien que le nouveau gouvernement ait enregistré quelques progrès en termes d'équité et de gestion, la qualité de l'éducation peut encore être qualifiée d'inférieure.

Resumen – LAS POLÍTICAS DE PRIVATIZACIÓN, DESCENTRALIZACIÓN Y REFORMA EDUCATIVA EN MÉXICO Reformas del sistema educativo mexicano conforme a los modelos globales de liberalización, descentralización, programas compensatorios y responsabilidad. Este estudio analiza las reformas que han tenido lugar

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en ese país durante los últimos quince años. El trabajo revela que, pese a las expectativas referentes a los cambios que se producirían con la asunción del nuevo gobierno, que ha reemplazado al partido que era el dominante por setenta años, la continuidad en la política educativa es mucho mayor que los cambios, y que estos han sido forzados por la Unión Nacional de Educadores. Si bien el nuevo gobierno ha logrado algunos progresos en cuanto a equidad y gestión, se puede decir que la educación sigue teniendo una calidad inferior.

Резюме – ПОЛИТИКА ПРИВАТИЗАЦИИ, ДЕЦЕНТРАЛИЗАЦИИ И ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНАЯ РЕФОРМА В МЕКСИКЕ – Реформа мексиканской системы образования проходит в соответствии с мировыми схемами либерализации, децентрализации, компенсаторных программ и форм отчетности. В данном исследовании анализируется реформа в этой стране за последние пятнадцать лет. Обнаруживается, что вопреки ожиданиям от перемен, порожденным приходом к власти нового правительства, которое сменило доминировавшую в течение 70 лет правящую партию, политика в сфере образования преимущественно оставалась прежней. Здесь также показывается, что перемены тормозятся воинственным и влиятельным Национальным союзом учителей. Хотя новое правительство достигло некоторого прогресса в достижении социальной справедливости и в управлении системой образования, все же качество образования остается по-прежнему невысоким.

In recent decades neoliberal and democratic calls for liberalisation, privatisation, decentralisation, and compensatory programs for the poor have become part of a worldwide trend in education. These supranational policy ideals have stimulated national movements which have forced governments around the world to reorganise the responsibilities of the state, teachers and administrators. Mexico joined this global trend in the 1990s led by young politicians like Carlos Salinas, who were successful in gaining political power without changing the long-standing political regime dominated by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). In line with these global trends, Mexico was able within a few years to liberate its economy, privatise large public enterprises (telephone, railroads, banks) and reach partnerships with the USA and Canada (NAFTA) and later with the European Community. A very significant change in Mexican politics occurred on 2 July 2000. The candidate for the centre-right wing National Action Party (PAN), Vicente Fox, defeated the nominee of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which had been the dominant political force for the past 70 years. Fox had been able to convince Mexico's citizens that a change in government was possible by electoral means. His campaign rhetoric made the notion of change the dominant theme. Fox argued that it was necessary to dislodge the PRI from the National Palace in order for Mexico to aspire to becoming a successful nation. Once in office, however, the President adjusted his political discourse to more realistic ends.

The Fox National Program of Education: 2001–2006 (hereafter called the 'Program') specifies expectations for the 6-year term and presents a vision for Mexican education for the year 2025 (Poder Ejecutivo Federal [PEF] 2001). The paradox underlying this program was that the proposals actually reflect continuity with the 1990s reforms rather than point to any significant change. The federal Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) continued to follow the basic patterns designed by the former President Salinas de Gortari (1988–1994) in his educational reform of the 1990s. The latter contained two fundamental goals and two important strategies. These were to improve the quality of education and to achieve a more equitable education system (Salinas 1989). The methods for reaching these goals consisted of the decentralisation of basic schooling and teachers' colleges as well a major curricular reform. These goals and strategies were consistent with international trends. They were also the goals of the succeeding President, Ernesto Zedillo, 1994–2000 (PEF 1996), although on this occasion they were presented with some variation in language and a little more precision in design. These goals also formed part of the Fox administration's reform with the addition of one important new factor: the improvement of school management.

Prior to the publication of the Program, the Fox federal government designed a set of new projects backed by fresh funds which were to eventually provide a distinctive cast to the Fox administration of education. They included the Quality Schools Program (PEC), which was an advance on the Zedillo-designed school projects, and the national plan for grants for medium and higher education for poor children. Also following the trend created by the Salinas' reform movement, public universities were now made accountable to the Federal Congress.

Other projects, such as education for diversity, have not yet even been subject to the solid preparation and groundwork needed for their implementation. Another project which remains a matter of public dispute is the National Institute for Educational Evaluation (INEE). The Fox administration has also not yet devised a power structure which would be capable of dismantling the existing educational establishment. This may be due to various causes: a lack of clarity among the top-level policy makers at the SEP; the intervention of political parties and independent scholars, and also the actions of the powerful National Teachers Union (SNTE), which imposes heavy constraints on the reform process. The present study offers possible answers to the following questions:

1. Who has been in charge of SEP politics during the first 3 years of the Fox administration?
2. What are the important premises of the Program?
3. What are the new projects and what progress have they made?
4. What are the controversies which surround INEE?
5. What are the implications of public universities' accountability?

Change and Leadership

President Fox appointed Reyes Tamez, then the rector of the University of Nuevo León, as the new Secretary of Public Education. This caused considerable surprise, for the new Secretary was unknown outside his own state. (The following background information is based on newspaper articles as well as interviews conducted by the author of this study.) SEP has five under-secretariats: one to provide services to the Federal District (not decentralised); and another for Higher Education; for these two the President appointed members of a transition team. The Secretary designated a professional public servant as Under-Secretary for Technical Education. Some dispute occurred over the appointment of the two most important under-secretariats. During the former PRI government rule, the SNTE controlled the selection of the Under-Secretary for Basic Education. During the term under discussion the President named one distinguished PAN cadre, a grandson of the founder of the party and former Secretary of Education in Baja California.

The most important agency of the SEP is the Under-Secretariat for Planning and Budgeting. This department manages the relationship with Congress, the SNTE, and the Finance Ministry. Secretary Tamez requested the previous functionary to remain in the post while the Congress approved the 2001 budget in order to assist in the disbursement of funds to the states. By April 2001, the Under-Secretary had resigned and the office was without a head for eight crucial weeks at a time when important SEP–SNTE negotiations for salary increases were taking place. A significant problem arose due to the fact that politicians close to the President wished to influence him to appoint a favourite. However, finally the President decided to choose Secretary Tamez's candidate. This lack of coordination and the many conflicts among cabinet members have been a constant issue in Fox Administration.

Traditionally, when a new government takes office in Mexico, the top bureaucrats arrive with their own political teams whose members are placed in key positions. Replacement of the higher echelons of the bureaucracy has been usually quite radical. Many observers expected an even greater number of changes because the new government was from the opposition party. However, the new administration announced no real fundamental changes. Most director-generals from the previous government continued in their posts for at least the first two-and-a-half years of the new administration.

This approach did not help Secretary Tamez in his dealings with the SNTE leadership. During the negotiations of April–May 2001, the SNTE used pressure strategies to achieve its ends. One such strategy took place in private meetings in which the union negotiators employed their customary tactic of using virulent language and revolutionary rhetoric. Another strategy was to claim that a chaotic situation existed whenever an unfavorable answer was received from the SEP, even though the mobilisation of dissent groups

helped the SNTE. Another strategy involved private negotiations between the real leader of the SNTE and the President without the knowledge of the formal representation of the SEP. The scenario was the same in 2002 and 2003.

It was a matter of public knowledge in Mexico that Elba Esther Gordillo, who was the General Secretary of the PRI and the leader of the majority in the chamber, was the real power behind the throne in the SNTE. In addition, she was a friend of the President and considered one the most powerful women in Mexico. She had mastered the kind of political skills which had helped the PRI to continue as the dominant party for 70 years. Though the PRI lost the Presidency in 2000, it still retains the majority in the Federal Congress and most state governorships.

Education Reform Guidelines

The basic guidelines of the former Salinas government still define and steer educational reform. This can be attributed to the following reasons: the limited mobility of the leading cadres in the SEP; the continuity of bureaucratic routines; the continuation of the basic practices – some of them of dubious merit; and the fact that there has not really been much change in the actual educational policies.

The Fox administration's claim of introducing educational change and reform remain at the rhetorical level. It could be argued that President Fox already wished to promote some of PAN's proposed reforms, such as religious education, privatisation and the elimination of the national textbooks commission when he was Governor of Guanajuato in 1996. However, he was convinced at the time by his advisors that such a policy move could create social conflict with the SNTE, the PRI and left-wing parties.

Nonetheless, the external environment forced some changes on the SEP. After 1997, the Federal Congress played a more active role on the determination of the budget and required that all agencies should be accountable. Equally, the political relations between the SEP and the states have become more complex than in the past, when the hegemony of the PRI was incontestable. Now the opposition governments (from the PRI and the left-centre party PRD) claim greater degrees of autonomy and demand more resources from the central government.

The Mexican formal education system is a huge and diverse creation, with more than 30 million students, a million-and-a-half teachers, and almost a quarter of a million schools, as can be seen in Table 1. In addition, around 300,000 people are employed in its administrative apparatus.

Two elements are useful in analysing the continuance of the SEP cadres from the previous government, many of them members of the PRI, in key positions. One is that the group that wished to banish the PRI from the National Palace remains in public administration. The other is that the

Table 1. An overview of the Mexican education system

Type	Level		Students	Teachers	Schools
Basic education (Compulsory)	Pre-school Three years	General	3,202,642	132,716	49,840
		Community	128,136	16,183	16,062
		Indigenous	305,125	14,383	8,856
	Primary Six years	General	13,878,550	506,672	75,662
		Community courses	141,345	16,544	14,331
		Indigenous	837,296	34,062	9,470
	Junior secondary Three years	General	2,920,829	190,383	9,776
		Technical	1,592,633	79,978	4,102
		Tele Secondary	1,146,608	54,872	15,871
Technical training One–three years			1,164,667	36,398	5,295
High school Three years	Technical	Technical	359,171	31,683	1,659
	Bacca-laureate	General	1,977,450	141,137	7,515
		Technical	958,651	61,024	2,153
Higher education	Higher technical	Higher technical	65,815	Professors*	Institutions**
	Under-graduate Four–five years	Normal education	166,873	231,558	4,486
		University	1,549,269		
		Technical	316,547		
	Graduate One–three years	Diploma	30,240		
		Master	97,632		
		Doctorate	10,415		
Total			30,849,894		

* Includes full time and part time.
** Includes Public, Private and Autonomous. Note: Of the Total of Students 50.3% are male and 49.7% are female.
Source: Subsecretaría de Planeación y Coordinación (2003), *El sistema educativo de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*: Principales cifras. Mexico City: SEP.

government still acts responsibly; professionals manage the daily operation of the SEP and hire prestigious scholars as advisers to design strategies for educational development: ‘‘the hiring of experts provides legitimacy to politics’’ (March and Olsen 1996: 41). Those advisors, who also worked for Salinas’ and Zedillo’s administrations, suggested, designed, and even wrote sections of the Program.

The Program of Education Reform

When Vicente Fox won the election, many envisioned profound changes in the system of education. Even the hard-line segments of the corporatist

union were prepared to resist. They believed the PAN government would bring about the privatisation of schools, the introduction of religious (Roman Catholic) instruction, attacks on secular teaching and the philosophy of Article Three of the Constitution. It turned out to be a false alarm. Instead, the Program deferred to what was already in motion.

Tensions in Decentralisation and Centralisation

An agreement between the Secretary of Public Education, the SNTE leadership, and the 31 state governors allowed the SEP to transfer to local governments the operation of basic education and teachers' colleges (SEP 1992). However, while that maneuver did decentralise management, it also centralised power (Ornelas 2000). The new General Law of Education defines an educational system in which the main functions of design, evaluation, channeling of educational resources, and bargaining with the SNTE at a national scale are in the hands of SEP chiefs. Routine affairs: operating the system, adjusting the calendar, and managing labour relations, are the responsibilities of the local authorities (SEP 1993).

The educational reform led by Salinas was more than a move towards decentralisation. It included Constitutional amendments designed to: make 9 years of basic education compulsory; introduce curricular reforms for primary and secondary schooling; bring about changes in the teachers' colleges; provide new textbooks; facilitate the intensive use of computers and technologies of telecommunications; and promote social participation in education as well as parental empowerment. It also introduced the notion of meritocracy in higher education by means of the evaluation of institutions, programs, scholars and students (Ornelas 1996). In basic education, the SNTE mediated to introduce a scheme named *carrera magisterial* (teachers' career system) to evaluate teachers and students. In exchange for these systems of evaluation, resources would be made available from the federal government treasury to give incentives to teachers (from 27% to 224% of basic salaries), professors and institutions of higher learning (SEP 1998).

Goals of Education Reform

There are three major goals for the program: equity; quality in education; and reform of institutional management (SEP 2001). These are the main policy strengths of the Program. Other ideological aims include the notion that schooling should contribute to social cohesion and that education is a public responsibility. The Program has two emphases reflecting a rather utopian view of education in 2025 and the profile of a perfect teacher. The programmatic aspects (policies, objectives, lines of action and goals) are consistent with the general ends. Few goals include figures, although most of them have a time-frame to meet.

These goals cover all types and levels of the education system: from pre-school to higher education; from technical training institutions to 'intercultural' education; from the regular school to the open programs. The Program provides a diagnosis of the education system derived from results of educational research since the 1970s. The Program incorporates a moderate criticism of the current state of Mexican education. However, when one balances this against the Modernisation Program of President Salinas, it would appear that the present reform program does tend to imitate the past (PEF 1989).

Equality of Opportunity, Equity and Educational Backlog

Based on the year 2000 census, the Program documents what is known as the 'educational backlog', which refers to the number of people who have not completed the nine grades of basic education. More than 32 million people had not completed basic education, of whom six million were illiterate. At the outset of the Zedillo administration (1994–2000), the figure was 36 million, indicating that reforms had already been put in motion, particularly the compensatory programs introduced after 1991 with the support of the World Bank (SEP 2000). In the educational program of the Carlos Salinas government, the matter of the backlog was preeminent. The priority was to tackle the educational disparities between urban and rural areas as well as those between social groups (PEF 1989). The diagnosis of those disparities, although fairly crude, was realistic. Thus, the search for equity expanded to the poorer segments of society, especially the indigenous population (Indians), rural workers and inhabitants of the impoverished urban areas. The goal was to provide them with access to schooling and the opportunity to continue with their education.

The above conception represented a great advance on the traditional way of handling the question of equality of opportunity. It included the notion of increasing school retention, and it also pursued the notion of equivalent outcomes in terms of knowledge. Such a program was an improvement on the orthodox nationalist rhetoric and it also showed international influences, especially those based on policy ideals such as Education for All and investment in basic education promoted by UNESCO and the World Bank (UNESCO 1990; World Bank 1994). The compensatory programs involved cash and grocery grants for poor children, provision of books and school materials for pupils, new furniture for schools, and bonuses for teachers working in impoverished rural areas.

As a consequence of these programs, and within a context of broader educational reform, equality of opportunity seemed to increase, although children at the lower levels of society were still disadvantaged (Rogel 2003: 208). The efficiency indicators in primary education continued to improve over the years as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Efficiency indicators (average)

Indicators	1988	1991	1991	1995	1999	2003
Drop-outs	7.2	5.3	4.6	3.1	2.4	1.5
Repetition	11.1	10.1	9.8	8.3	7.1	5.4
Terminal efficiency	–	56.4	58.1	66.2	85.6	88.0

Source: Secretaría de Educación Pública (1999, 2003).

In addition, more of the students who had completed primary education enrolled in junior high school, as the rate of continuation increased from 80 in 1988 to 94 in 2002. The gains in these indicators implied more than just advantages gained from compensatory programs. Education expenditure grew from 3.4% of the gross national product in 1988 to 5.4% in 1994, the last year of Salinas; it extended to 6.1% in the year 2000 and to 6.8% in 2002 (Fox 2003). Also, teachers' incomes doubled in real terms. The political tools used to deliver these programs were similar, although there were modifications in the terms used: 'solidarity' under Salinas, '*Progresa*' (an acronym for the program of education, health and food supply) under Zedillo, and 'opportunities' with the Fox government.

The strategy designed by the Fox Government to deal with the backlog goes beyond compensatory projects, but has not yet achieved substantive progress. First, the Program requires a reorganisation of those projects based on rigorous and professional evaluation. Second, the Program devises a new institution, the National Council for Life and Work, to be in charge of coordinating all procedures related to dealing with the backlog and achieving 'distributive justice'. Accordingly, this council is supposed to drive innovations based on new technologies in order to bring culture even to the most remote areas, provided that funds are available. As of September 2003, the results were disappointing. So far the main action was the creation of 'Digital Community Centres' in poor municipalities. In some of these, the government offered e-services (Fox 2003). However, connectivity remains expensive for impoverished towns. The Program proposes that those from the poorer social groups should receive the same quality education as those of the middle urban classes.

Quality in Education

The Program promotes the notion of quality in education. The discourse of quality addresses teachers as the all-important actors in education in terms of their labour, knowledge, abilities and aspirations. The future of Mexican children is said to depend on them. It also promotes the idea that school principals and supervisors should take the lead in improving quality through new and effective management skills. The Program also continues with the proposals of recent past to empower parents, and other civil organisations,

to participate in school development. However, because the General Law explicitly forbids it, parents cannot participate in issues concerning educational content and teaching methods. Finally, quality in education for all levels is seen as a task of the whole society. Thus, the Program appealed to the mass media owners contribute to this aim.

According to the Program quality in education also requires better curricula, textbooks and modern equipment, so the SEP aims for state governments to provide more resources for infrastructure and school maintenance. To enforce this matter is difficult because of budget restrictions and a stagnant economy.

The goals are ambitious. The Program aims to open up a system which has rigid and bureaucratic controls, and lacks creative dialogue with the external world. Accountability and 'going public' with achievement tests may contribute to opening up education, but not under the current political climate. The SNTE is a power to reckon with: It has *colonised* all structures of management in basic and teacher education and it fights transparency (Reséndiz 1992).

The Reorganisation of the System: Between Optimism and Obstacles

The Program makes use of the discourse of federalism and holds the notion of decentralisation in high regard. It diagnoses vast numbers of faults in the management of the system and proposes corrective measures and institutional re-engineering. To achieve this end, it calls on all social actors in Mexico to take over the challenges of the present, the future, and of the global knowledge society.

The Program presents the problems of the past, exposes strategies to overcome them and takes account of the new conditions of globalisation and international competition. The Program also ventures goals, posing provocative reflections on distributive justice, the knowledge society and the need of Mexico to be part of it. The ultimate goals are to abolish the backlog (over time), to achieve both a more equitable society and a state of political democracy. It hopes to produce capable and productive citizens. It projects a systematic vision of education for the 21st century (disputable, of course) and envisions an effective, well-organised educational system characterised by quality in education.

The weakness of the Program – as of all government plans – is that it does not define just how most of the goals will be achieved and how the policies will filter down to the states, the districts, the institutions and to individuals. Although it speaks of federalism, it does not portray the states as partners of the central government but instead as followers. The Program proposes a body: the National Council of Educational Authorities, to coordinate the work of the federal and state governments. However, a lack of political will meant that there was no effective organisation. The very day President Fox approved the Program (28 October 2001), he declared the establishment of this Council despite the fact that the Chamber had yet not sanctioned the

legal amendment which allowed for such an organisation. This offended the legislative body, which responded by deferring approval of the motion. Even representatives of PAN censured the President for such a move.

The educational programs of Salinas, Zedillo and Fox are quite similar. All three took account of the results of educational research and the opinions of scholars as well as political goals in order to design the policies. Nonetheless, top-level politicians diagnosed the need to have a distinctive feature to differentiate the Fox administration from the previous ones (Rangel et al. 2000). For that reason, the SEP designed and rapidly carried out new ambitious projects. These programs, besides providing legitimacy to the government, may have positive outcomes in education.

New Projects

Although the government made the Program public in October 2001, the SEP leadership did not wait for its development to begin new ventures, especially those linked to the President's campaign promises. Three of these imply new types of work, institutional efforts and fresh resources. The Quality School Program (PEC) for basic education and the National Grants Program for Post-Secondary and Higher Education (Pronabes) already offer results, although they suffer problems of coordination. The General Coordination for Intercultural and Bilingual Education presupposes a revision of the previous strong trend toward the homogenisation of education promoted since the 1920s.

Quality and School Management

The Zedillo administration envisaged a PE (pilot School Project) based on international trends toward school-based management (Hanson 1996). It was designed for only 40 schools in each of five states, with the support of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Spain (Ramírez 2000). Both the PE and the PEC (Quality Schools Program) arose from the same diagnosis and had parallel goals.

Both programs condemn centralism and stress federalism in order to promote projects from the centre designed to improve the quality education. Both criticise the way schools have few margins for decision-making and the fact that school principals spend more of their time performing routine bureaucratic operations rather than exercising pedagogical leadership (SEP 2001). The diagnoses also censure the lack of communication between teachers, administrators and parents. Although cautiously worded, both projects criticise faults (documented by educational research but denied by the SNTE): the absenteeism of many teachers; the incompetence of many supervisors (usually political appointees); corruption (a term avoided in official documents), and political conflicts between the groups of the SNTE.

These problems force schools to work with the "minimum of normality" and also account for absence of quality in education (Latapí 1998). Lastly, those projects confirm shortages in infrastructure and equipment.

PE and PEC consider that if teachers, principals, students and parents participate as a school community with similar interests, each school would identify its problems and also the methods to overcome them. With such participation, it is assumed, the community will generate dynamic, realistic and realisable school projects to subdue bureaucratic routines which are so hard to eradicate (SEP 2001). The central government designed and carried out both projects. It also obtained the participation of the states, trained personnel, gave information about their aims, recruited local agents and was the main constructor of symbols. The federal government also hired experts to evaluate the programs. The evaluations are favourable, with those on the PEC so full of praise, however, that they lose credibility (Loera 2001; Bracho 2001). These evaluations document achievements in the following areas: progress in the integration of technical councils; participation of parents' associations; improvement in the infrastructure; coordination among teachers; and revamping of the leadership of school principals. However, they also attest to errors in the conception, faults in operation, regional asymmetries, bureaucratic resistance, and discontent of some participants.

Their fundamental difference (besides the number of schools involved) is that the PEC had a budget for grants (from $10,000 to $30,000) for each school with a project approved by the SEP, while the PE was limited to its appeals to mobilisation and social consciousness. The PEC furnishes funds only to schools in poor urban areas. Other organisations have provided compensatory resources for rural areas since the early 1990s. Nevertheless, the PEC is charged with the burden of bureaucratic centralism. Its own Director-General testified for the public record: "Even though we have resources assigned, it took us more than 8 months to build trust funds for the schools ... it was a torturous passage through the national bureaucracy" (*Reforma* 8 July 2002). He also recognised that red tape and procedures to join the program are difficult for many schools. He also indicated that central functionaries distrusted school principals. Yet because of the attraction of the grant, it is expected that the PEC will provide some favourable results. In 2001, more than 2,000 schools were part of PEC projects. The figure grew to 10,000 in 2002 and to 15,000 in 2003 (SEP 2003 a,b).

Grants for the Poor

While PEC's central aim is quality, Pronabes has an equity agenda. It is a central government initiative with the participation of the federal universities (UNAM, IPN and UAM), other state public universities and the state governments. It consists of cash grants for students in high school and higher education whose families earn less than three minimum wages. Pronabes does not require first-year students to have an elevated grade-point average.

This attack on meritocracy is justified because poor children suffer deficits in intellectual capital due to their social origins. After 2 years, however, the grantees most show a grade-point average of at least eight (in a scale from 0 to 10). Students receive the grants over 12 months, not just for the span of the school calendar (PEF 2002).

Though there has not been any formal evaluation of Pronabes, anecdotal evidence suggests that in 2 years of life this program already offers satisfactory results. According to two rectors, drop-outs diminished drastically among grantees in comparison with non-grantees. Pronabes also gave rise to other innovations proposed in the past but not yet enforced, such as personal tutoring at college level and remedial support in Mathematics and Spanish to poor achievers. The federal administration provides one peso for each peso from the state governments. The budget has increased over three times in two years (SEP 2003b).

Optimism for this project has some foundation, although bureaucratic problems, inefficiencies and cheating still persist. It is not always possible to certify whether students tell the truth about their family earnings, and confusion exists because many families do not have steady income. The criterion of three minimum wages for each family can hide inequalities. In a few years, the results of this program may be more noticeable.

Intercultural Education

Since 1921, after the Mexican revolution, the Mexican state has oriented its educational policy towards unifying the nation so that those who had been through the schools saw themselves as Mexican first rather than as Indian, white, creole or *mestizo*. The school aimed to provide an exclusive vision of the nation, its history and culture. The regime succeeded in achieving some homogeneity through its centralist programs. In 1930, the state promoted projects of indigenous education, but these were few in number, poorly funded, with few intellectual resources, and a there was a perception of them as being second-class (Ornelas 1995).

International agencies and social movements elsewhere were pushing for the recognition of minority cultures, traditions and of different language within the national boundaries (Rangel 2000). These notions contradicted the traditional notions of equity as sameness promoted by the regime of the Mexican revolution. The global trend gained momentum in Mexico with the uprising of the Zapatista National Liberation Front (EZLN) in 1994 in Chiapas. This brought the Indian question into the national debate. The consequence for education came in the 2001 amendment of Article Two of the Constitution. It dictates new rights for Indians, stipulating that all organs of government are required:

> To guarantee and increase the levels of schooling for indigenous people, favoring intercultural and bilingual education, literacy, the finishing of basic education, the

> productive capabilities and medium and higher education ... To define and develop programs with regional educational contents that recognise the cultural heritage of their peoples, in agreement with the law and in consultation with the Indian communities. To promote respect and recognise the existing and diverse cultures of the nation (Senado de la República 2002).

This new focus of education for plurality and democracy implies a new formulation of educational content not only for the Indian people but for all Mexicans, the training of prospective teachers, and sustained political work to convince in-service teachers, researchers, and society at large of the need for such a reform. The Fox administration, however, lacks the political skills, the unity of vision and the political will as well as the time and resources to carry this out.

The National Institute for Educational Evaluation

During the Salinas administration, Mexican education participated in international evaluation. The Mexican government accepted entry into the Third International Mathematics and Sciences Study (TIMSS) while Ernesto Zedillo was the Secretary of Education. Later, as President, he rejected the publication of the results due to his favouring of opacity, rather than transparency. The current debate over the evaluation of public schooling began in October 2001 when a national newspaper published the results of Mexican students in the TIMSS (Reforma 2001). TIMSS published the overall report in the mid-1990s, but excluded the outcomes for Mexico. Out of six tests, Mexican children ranked last in four and next-to-last in the other two. While these figures confirmed what researchers had argued since the early 1980s: that the quality of education was very low (Martinez Rizo 2003; Guevara 1991), what really galvanised public opinion was the fact that the government had hidden the results. Teachers, parents' representatives, scholars and politicians criticised the SEP for its lack of transparency. The debate, which became very bitter, forced President Fox to reiterate a campaign promise to create an independent and efficient organisation and for the INEE to be in charge of evaluating and publicizing educational results, starting with basic education.

Types of Evaluation in Education

Since the 1970s, there have been various types of evaluation in the Mexican education system, but no accountability. The evaluators and the organisations keep the results to themselves. Reformist sectors within the SEP had ideas about ways to increase the income of teachers by use of meritocractic approaches without the intervention of unions. These measures have already had some success in higher education, but not with a university union as powerful as the SNTE. In higher education, the Salinas government tried to

evaluate everything from the administration of public universities (Coombs 1991) and the technical institutes, to the programs, the faculty and the students. The government pushed for the creation of specialised institutions like the Peer Review Committees (CIIES) and the National Commission for the Evaluation of Higher Education, which evolved into the Center for the Evaluation of Higher Education (Ceneval) in 1994. Contrasting views on that move are given by Ibarra Colado (1997) and Ornelas (1996).

In basic education, the SNTE, from both custom and conviction, opposed any kind of external evaluation. In an unexpected turn-around, the leader Gordillo accepted the evaluations of the *carrera magisterial* in exchange for better wages in the 1992 Agreement in order to decentralise basic education. However, she maneuvreed to have a SEP–SNTE group as the leading body in that plan. Eventually it became an additional tool for promoting the loyal cadres of the SNTE. At the outset, there was much resistance from teachers, accompanied by denunciations concerning corruption (Loyo 1997).

Since 1993, to enforce the *carrera magisterial* the General Direction of Evaluation of SEP annually conducts around six million examinations of students and about 600,000 of basic education teachers. The *carrera magisterial* has become a type of horizontal promotion scheme through which more than 75% of teachers receive an economic incentive. Students' tests were a matter of secrecy until 1 August 2003, when the SEP was obliged by a new law of transparency to make the results public. The results of the teachers are still on hold due to the opposition of the SNTE.

Political Process

In the 2001 budget, the Federal Congress allocated 100 million pesos to the SEP to design and follow through with the INEE. However, top policy-makers did not carry this out. The publication of the TIMSS results created pressure to design the Institute, yet despite this various political forces still advanced their own interests. The Congress organised public hearings in April 2002. The Secretary of Public Education and congressional leaders announced that they would devise an initiative of law to create the INEE with autonomy and school accountability as its main features.

On 8 August 2002, President Fox decreed the creation of the INEE as a deconcentrated organ of the SEP, without autonomy (PEF 2002: 77–82). The decree was announced at a formal ceremony in which the leaders of the republic were gathered: state governors, SNTE leaders, all education secretaries from the states, entrepreneurs, labour bosses, all cabinet members, senators, representatives, and even the leaders of three churches. The purpose of the meeting was the signing of a Social Commitment to Improve Education. Perhaps the government wished to convey the impression that the initiation of the INEE was the result of a vast social consensus. Yet with this same action the President managed to affront Congress or at least the commissions

which had worked with the Executive for a joint initiative. He also disappointed scholars who expected an independent institution.

Once the decree was issued, the SEP acted rapidly to establish the governing organs of the INEE. By the end of September 2002, the Board had already chosen an Executive Director and the 16 members of the Technical Council. The INEE lacked the strength and credibility of an autonomous institution. Although the Executive Director and the Council members are honorable people and respected scholars, their dependency on the SEP restricts them from making impartial judgments. At the founding ceremony, President Fox asserted that he would soon send the Congress a proposed law providing for the autonomy of the INEE. He repeated the message in his annual report of 2002 (Fox 2002), but did not send the law to the Congress. He failed to mention it in his 2003 report. The government still expects to consolidate – not necessarily to legitimate – the structure of the INEE and establish barriers to its autonomy.

Bureaucratic Structure

The main purposes of the INEE are set out in Articles 2 and 3 of the Decree: "The Institute's object is to offer the federal and state governments and to the private sector tools to make evaluation ..." To fulfill such object "the Institute should *cooperate* with SEP in its evaluations". In other words, the SEP will perform evaluations and the INEE will be a collaborator. The composition of the Board guarantees the bureaucratic subordination of the INEE. The Chairperson of the Board is the Secretary of Public Education. The core of the Board consists of five officers of the SEP, one from the Finance Secretariat, and, for some obscure reason, the Director-General of the National Institute of Petroleum. (The current Director-General of this institution was formerly Rector of the Autonomous Metropolitan University, and may well know something about educational evaluation, but the Decree establishes that it is the position, not the person, who sits on the Board.) The Board is also consists of two representatives of the SNTE, two from parents' associations, one representative of the private sector, and two from civil society. It is not the independent, external and impartial institution promised by the President when public anger emerged over the government's secrecy over the TIMSS results (*Reforma* 15 November 2001).

The INEE's organisational structure is complex and somewhat confusing. The Executive Director reports to the Board, while the Technical Council has advisory functions without authority. The Decree established another Advisory Council in which the states' directors of evaluation participate. It appears to act as a lobbying body for the state governments. In addition, the General Director of Evaluation of the SEP joined the INEE, and so it appears that there will be a duplication of functions. Fourteen months after its creation, the INEE had not published a single report of its actions, nor had the national standards tests of primary and junior secondary schools been

performed since 1996. At a meeting with scholars attended by the author of the present study on 14 November 2002, the Secretary of Public Education announced that the INEE would soon release those results.

An institution with three collective organs, one of governance and two of advice, and a Director-General having broad functions who reports to many groups, prefigures a routine and bureaucratic structure. The Director-General would need a small army of functionaries and technicians to perform the duties fixed by the decree. The INEE is not a flexible and effective institution. Since it is not autonomous, it would be more efficient and much less costly to publish what the SEP has already done. For those reasons, legislators of the PRI and PRD organised discussions in Congress to create another institution, rather than to reform the present one. A new legislature, with a PRI majority, commenced sitting in September 2003. More debate on the issue will undoubtedly follow.

University Autonomy

In April 2002, 39 public autonomous universities delivered their audited financial statements to the Supreme Body for Accountability in the Federal Congress. This issue, which appeared so unlikely only 5 years before, implied an important turn-around on the conception and practice of university autonomy. The success or failure of this policy cannot be attributed to the Fox administration. However, the system is now in place and in line with global trends towards democratic practice, transparency and accountability.

In his classic study, Levy (1987) argued that in the authoritarian Mexican regime, universities were rare institutions eluding in many respects corporatist control with real exercise of autonomy. This autonomy exists to the extent that universities do not have to account for the subsidies received from either the federal or local government. Still, the evaluation policy of the Salinas administration began to move beyond this vision of such autonomy. Though there was institutional resistance through measures taken at the time, several state legislatures like Jalisco and Veracruz were able to force the state universities to tender their financial statements. The Autonomous University of Tamaulipas sued the federal government; after several years the Supreme Court decided that all public universities should be accountable for public monies.

However, as in most parts of the world, public universities still decide what and how to teach, what programs should have priorities, how to define their institutional structure, and how to certify their students. Moreover, they decide how to recruit and promote their faculty; the election of university authorities is a process in which internal forces are more important than external influence. It seems that responsible autonomy, as defined by the Salinas administration (Arredondo 1992), will govern the relationship between

the state and the public universities beyond the government of President Fox.

The Politics of Education Reform

The bureaucratic re-engineering of the SEP did not take place during the Fox 'government of change'. Secretary Tamez did make some substitutions in top-level personnel, but most directors – those who control the daily routine – still remained in their posts, despite the criticisms of them made by the PAN and Fox followers before the Fox election. These directors still control the relations with the states, Congress and the SNTE. A transmutation of power in the SEP has not been apparent, and the traditional groups and the modernist ranks which entered with the Salinas administration still govern Mexican education. It seems that the newer officials do not understand the political strategies used by the PRI and have been incapable of devising their own means of control and authority.

Even with its new rhetoric and vision for the year 2025, the Program has demonstrated more allegiance to the past rather than any spirit of profound reform. However, innovative programs like the PEC and Pronabes do promise more changes in the future. This is due to the fact that they come with attached resources, and neither the SNTE nor other political parties oppose these projects. The pact signed with the SNTE in August 2002 provides that the union will have powers – in addition to the colonisation of education that already occurred – to oversee policies of the SEP. The SNTE has more power under this government than under the PRI, although it is allegedly an ideological adversary. Corporatist politics supplied benefits to the union leaders, but in exchange for discipline and subordination, the SNTE leadership is now independent of the government.

A lack of power and political ambition limited the foresight of the Secretary and his advisors, who were experts on educational policies rather than in political strategy. In 2001, they missed the opportunity to create the INEE; instead, erratic manoeuvres led to conflict with Congress. New initiatives to dismantle this weak institution are currently under debate. The state has not enforced transparency and accountability in basic education.

In the recent past, university autonomy has been a barrier to the excesses of authoritarian rule, with the public universities being sanctuaries of dissent and democratic forces. University students and scholars argued that they were the critical consciousness of society and state, and insisted on responsibility from the government. Today it is not easy to require that others be accountable and yet expect that the universities, due to their moral superiority, should be excluded from this requirement.

In the mid-term federal elections of July 2003, the PRI secured more seats in the chamber than any other party. It already had a majority in the Senate, and so a come-back to the National Palace seems possible for 2006.

President Fox insists in his speeches that Mexico is a wonderful country and that he has faith in its future. One of the tools to achieve such desirable ends is quality and equity in the education system, provided by well-managed schools following the more successful models of democratisation and liberalisation advanced by globalisation. However, he has been unable to deliver on his promise for empowering schools.

Conclusion

Due to a lack of experience in politics, deficiencies in political strategy and superficiality in action, the Fox administration very early wasted its 'democratic bonus'. A legitimate government, having little real power and suffering from ideological and administrative impotence does not instill much confidence in education reform, but much rather a sense of skepticism.

In view of the political power of the National Teachers' Union and the long tradition of corporatism, some global trends have not gained ground in Mexico. Privatisation of education had never been an explicit aim of the government, while decentralisation of management was counter-balanced by the centralisation of power. Social participation in the educational system has been a matter of rhetoric rather than a public policy.

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