Yes but no:
Convergence and divergence of education policy

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Shangri-la in school education policy: A Scholar's Search

Eduardo Andere

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Introduction

The idea

In early September 2003 my first solo book on education policy had been published. As I was driving home from the publisher's office, a drive that would take on an average traffic day in Mexico City between 45 minutes to an hour, I was thinking about my next research. I had been entertaining some ideas even before I finished the manuscript for the first book.

With only factual information gathered by others, like the Department of Education in Mexico ("Secretaría de Educación Pública"—SEP) and the international organizations such as UNESCO, World Bank (WB) and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), I had been able to determine the relative performance level of school education students in Mexico to other countries around the world and the relative performance in terms of inputs, such as expenditure in education. A natural follow-up research would be to map Mexico's performance, not in terms of inputs and outputs of education policy and education systems, but in terms of processes and policies. To do this I would need to look inside the "black-box" of policy making. Looking inside the "black box" of education policy would allow me to determine the factors that do the trick and factors that are not really relevant towards the link among inputs, policy and outputs or performance.

The only way to be able to compare black boxes would be by looking inside, from the field, at the way education policies and practices are shaped and believed to be shaped by experts and practitioners in the countries that would be objects of research. But if other education systems to be compared were drawn from a pool of high-performing countries (i.e. students performing highly in international standardized assessments), then the comparisons would be done with ideal models of school education. On average, those ideal models could very well mirror the image of a model-to-be Shangri-la school education policy or system, so to speak.

I then decided to commence a new project that in the beginning, I thought, would take me one year or so. By the writing of this report more than three years have passed since the inception of the idea. This is so, because the project required many field trips to many countries and schools. At the end I visited 165 schools from the following countries or regions listed in chronological order: Finland, Sweden, France, United Kingdom (England, Scotland only), Ireland, Belgium, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, United States, Canada, Chile and Mexico. Unfortunately, I underestimated the difficulties of arranging an agenda of formal visits to schools. This underestimation changed my one-year task expectation to a three year endeavor.

The field trip and findings

Because I decided to search elsewhere for those ideal practices in policies and practices, I traveled to the field. I wanted to do this in order to gather data other than that which was

statistically-based. I was most interested in gathering qualitative data with thorough interviews and surveys of people embedded in their own education systems. Therefore, this is a quality-based report complemented by some narratives.

Instead of looking only at data from international agencies and correlations between exam results and each country's inputs, I traveled and visited schools and experts in high-performing countries or nations. I traveled because I wanted to find out, case by case, the similarity or proximity of practices and policies in school education across countries.

I knew that I was in a very time-demanding and time-consuming project that required a lot of personal involvement. However, the solo field-trip task would secure homogeneity in the methodology and methods of gathering data and construing it. With a draft proposal in hand, I began to fix an agenda.

Hundreds and thousands of interactions by means of e-mails, phone-calls and letters crowded my calendar book and my head before I was able to fix an agenda that would take me to the offices of principals or headmasters, the hallways and classrooms of schools and the offices of experts around the world.

At the end, what I found is a different or alternative story to that laid out by looking only at hard and aggregated data. I found an alternative and complementary story to the stories of others like those from international organizations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, in many ways, this story is neither better nor worse, than the OECD's own story.

This is then the story of this project from the inception of the idea and the planning of the agenda to the realization of the world trip. As told by friends of the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, I was adding some flesh to the bones of statistical education research.

In summary, I was just looking for evidence to support or reject the proposition of "best practices" in school education policies and systems. If best practices could be found, then I could add some evidence to the hypothesis of convergence in school education policies and systems and to the view of a world with declining national power or influence over school education policies and practices. With the advantage of hindsight I can say that the idea about best practices in education policy is a myth. But it is a very well dress up myth.

The original humble idea was to map (classify) Mexico's school education policies and practices in a world of policies and practices as defined by countries performing at the mean score or higher in PISA 2000 and PISA 2003. Mapping Mexico to the rest of the world could not be done otherwise since PISA is the only international assessment in which Mexico has taken part and the government has published results in a detailed format.

Mexico, as is the case in many other countries, has been mapped or benchmarked against the rest of the world in terms of results, i.e. performance of students in international assessments. Mapping or comparing countries under this type of *tabula rasa* is a topic of much debate. However, at least for the case of Mexico, we do not have another truly

international assessment of educational performance. This is why PISA has allowed researchers in Mexico and elsewhere to get some standardized data about school education ready for comparison. PISA results, then, is an operational definition of performance.

The publication of PISA results, at least from the performance point of view, has shown significant differences among countries. The results reveal Mexico as the country with the lowest performance level among OECD's PISA countries. If Mexico is lagging in students' performance, in many cases well behind the mean and the high-performing students from around the world (those performing above the OECD's mean performance level), what could one say about performance at the level of policies, processes and systems of education? Are the OECD's claims about "best practices" (see for instance, Guichard 2005, OECD 2005, OECD's 2005b, Andreas Schleicher 2005 and 2006) from PISA findings true? Or, in other words, is there a global Shangri-la of school education policies and practices somewhere out there?

PISA, and other measures of system performance based on student samples (TIMSS and PIRLS for instance), are very good at telling us where things stand ("photo comparisons") in regard to some outputs and inputs, but they are not as good when they have to explain why things are the way they are and, therefore, they are not as good when telling policy-makers what to do.

Even with the help of powerful software with modern techniques for multivariate analysis, the issues are so complex that these powerful techniques can tell us very little about the real world correlations and least about variables marrying cause to effect. Why? Because PISA would need greater, much greater fragmentation of samples to account for differences in schools and systems **in order to marry cause to effect or make claims about what works and does not work in school education**. Even though, it is very possible, given the different meanings of concepts and features of education systems, that sampling can never be done for some issues, like for example a simple comparison of compulsory education systems:

> Because of differences within and across countries in what *compulsory schooling* means, we conclude that goal [an estimate of achievement in the final year of compulsory education] is probably impossible to achieve.(Italics in original, brackets added by the author from the original text). (Porter and Gamoran, 10).

Precisely because different education policies and ideas (even under the same name, i.e. decentralization, school autonomy, compulsory education, curriculum implementation, etc.) mean different things to different people, there are some things that we would never be able to frame for sampling and comparison. I intend to add some evidence to the view that the world of school education is not comparable when it comes to policies, processes and practices.

Some difficulties of comparisons among many systems of education are insurmountable by large-scale international studies such as PISA and TIMSS. Comparisons can be made, of course. They can be made for some inputs and some outputs (as summarized in Box 1 chapter 7) but can not be made at the level of policies, processes and practices. Therefore,

claims or calls about things that work (as best practices) or do not work are extremely difficult to make with world-wide across-systems application.

Furthermore, fragmentations or stratifications should be defined by the different characteristics of sampled observations. Therefore, fragmentations or stratifications of schools in clusters with similar characteristics have to be much atomized to account for the many, sometimes-unimaginable combinations of school arrangements as will be depicted in many chapters but in a summary way in Chapter 7 (Box 2, Chapter 7).

The fragmentation has to be so detailed that, at the end of the day, in order to suggest what real life really is in school education (in order to make claims), researchers have to atomize their observation units more and more in very small clusters. They have to go from a holistic—amassing it all together—research to a fragmentalized or atomized unit of analysis research. But once the fragmentation is done to reach the real life of education systems and interactions as they occur between authorities and schools, and teachers and students and families, one is almost at the case-by-case method of analysis of systems and schools. This atomization is necessary if one wants to know the whys, hows, whats, and for whom (Dale) of school education policies and practices. Without this understanding, the amass-it-all approach can confuse more than clarify if the goal is to shed light about paths to follow in school education policies and practices. If the goal is to compare outcomes as in PISA results, then the PISA methodology, as that followed by other international studies, is strong (Porter and Gamoran). However, there are still people who see intrinsic methodological problems with PISA (Bonnet, Goldstein 2004 and 2004b and 2005, and Prais). Even before PISA, some researchers have seeing difficulties with comparative international studies (similar to PISA). These scholars claim that these international studies do not focus on "within-country factors" that affect performance (Theisen et al).

There is no way, given the great variety and complex interactions of schools, class-rooms and models of school education policies and practices in the world (see decagon-like model, Box 2 chapter 7), that we can have an appropriate sample size, because in order to explain the whys, hows, whats and for whom, we need to delve into those very specific case-by-case units of analysis. And because the units of analysis are so specific to the characteristics of school systems and schools themselves, the samples have to be so stratified that we end up with as many stratifications as there are schools, which is nonsense. We are left then with case-based analysis and case-specific analysis, where the appropriate method of inquiry is only possible with narratives (Bruner and Czarniawska) i.e. story-telling. This is, by the way, the approach education authorities in Scotland have chosen to go for the evaluation of school education, or so I believe is the case.

This is to say, too, that in order to understand the reasons behind performance or underperformance in school education, we have to construct a story of the school and the model of education in which the school is embedded. This is why many principals, teachers and experts around the world reject the idea of comparing schools under league tables (ranking tables), not only because comparisons can be unfair, but because they do not tell the real story, and therefore, they can mislead (as it is shown in Chapter 6). This is why too, that the main means of assessment in many models of education in the high-performing countries of this report are complemented by school inspections or schools visits or school

reviews by experts from different fields. After the inspection, the visit and the reviews, experts draft report documents that become the main quality assessment for the school. The school report is sometimes published at large and sometimes published for the school stakeholders only (local and school authorities, teachers and parents). Therefore, all of this plus the evidence gathered through perceptions of many people have led me to conclude that PISA needs some reshaping before the OECD and PISA experts can continue to make claims about what works and does not work in school education across systems or across boundaries. As I will suggest later, even with the reshaping of PISA, we might never be able to make such claims.

Therefore, one conclusion here is that **PISA is not enough**. PISA is a good, in fact an excellent, instrument for measuring and comparing some inputs or some outputs or performance, but is not a good instrument for explaining causal relationships or making claims about models' or systems' directions across the world. In other words, policies, processes and practices in school education don't travel. This report shows some evidence and arguments contrary to the belief that policies and practices in school education can travel or are transferable.

Best practice model

The comparison of outcomes (sampled students' performance, i.e. PISA results) gives us, at best, some measure of performance of policies and practices as they have been designed and implemented in the past. Policy-makers may link high performance with "successful" policies and practices and low performance to unknown factors. But if some "best practices" in policies and practices could be found from these high-performing countries, then countries in deficit could import or borrow policies and practices from high performers and rest peacefully and leisurely since eventually they will reach the performance levels of high performers. Another way of saying the same thing is that, by looking to the successful stories and importing their "successful" policies and practices, one could predict the future. Countries lacking or lagging from "best practices" in policies and practices will also be lagging in system's performance well into the future.

In order to reach Shangri-la, one just needs to look at the patterns or tendencies in processes, policies and practices of high-performing countries to borrow their key recipes for success. Borrowing in this fashion, by "traveling around the world" in search of best practices is not new. The relatively new but growing literature on borrowing and lending as an epistemic group documents many attempts followed by developed and developing countries in search of best practice. The growing literature is also documenting the failure of borrowing, lending, translating, and transferring (BLTT) policies and practices. Some attempts have been done to develop general propositions for BLTT; see for instance the works of O'Neill (1995), Popkewitz (1996), Schriewer and Martínez (2004), and Steiner-Khamsi (2004 and 2004b). But the field in its theoretical version is relatively new and more work needs to be done before a new paradigm is found for BLTT.

Perhaps this epistemic group should cross-fertilize from a totally different epistemic group doing similar analogous research with a different perspective, i.e., sociology of associations and organizations. See for instance the work of Czarniawska, Latour, Law and Callon. My

research, with a different methodology and method, contributes to the fields of comparative and international education and BLTT.

This is the report of a study based on people's perceptions about policies and practices in education systems that have been benchmarked by the OECD as best OECD practices or "best practices." Those OECD practices or "best practices" are framed or chosen from the OECD's average results and correlations. If most of the countries or nations in my analysis performed at or above the mean values of OECD's results, then I am saying that the selected countries are on or above the OECD "best practices." Therefore, questions addressed to experts or practitioners from the "best" of all countries or regions will extract answers from people who participate in or are knowledgeable about those countries or regions. They, in fact, represent "best practice" systems in the OECD's words. By interviewing and surveying many representatives from "best practice" countries or systems, I was trying to obtain perceptions of experts and practitioners of those "best practice" countries: what works and does not work. Should I get, so I thought, similar answers from all of them, then this would be evidence of a world of education that looks more and more similar, i.e. best OECD practices or "best practices" per se. But if answers were different, even from this group of **knowledgeable people** (people with information) stemming from the highest OECD performers, then it would be very difficult to claim that there is convergence and, therefore, a model, a world-value model, to follow in school education. In other words, the real world would seem to be explained by a model that does not conform to a model of converging cultures of education postulates.

A convergence theory, paraphrased as world-culture model (Boli et al 1985, McNeely and Cha 1994, McNeely 1995, Kamens et al 1996, Meyer et al 1997, Bake and Letendre 2005) of comparative education policies would sustain that some values out there, intrinsic in nature, explain convergence to a single identifiable structure or shape of school education models, i.e., more versus less decentralization of decision-making; more versus less devolution of power to schools; more versus less on-site-based management (autonomy) of schools, more versus less curriculum isomorphism, more versus less massification of schooling, etc. If these patterns do really exist they should be consistently and significantly similar across systems.

This research comes to a different conclusion. There are convergences as suggested by the convergence or isomorphistic theorists, but those convergences occur only at the input and output dimensions of education policies and practices. Policies *per se*, understood as processes or production functions of education, have not converged and seem not to be converging. Therefore, a conclusion from this research is that, whereas international studies and international organizations can make comparisons of inputs (enrolment levels and rates, curriculums topics and some contents, financial resources, school resources, etc) and outcomes (students', schools' and systems' performance based on standardized tests), they can not make claims about the consistent relationship between policies and process on one side and outcomes or performance on the other. They can not establish a causal and consistent relationship that applies to all countries, regions or systems, between inputs, policies and outcomes. They can not respond to the Dale's and Bruner's questions of what, why, how, and for whom.

No one Shangri-la but many Shangri-las

Apart from looking or searching for one or many Shangri-la models of school education policies and practices, I will compare the world policies and practices of the best-performing countries to those of Mexico (the lowest performing OECD country) and Finland (the top performing OECD country) in chapter 6.

Mexico is not a high-performing country (neither is Chile which was included in the survey too) as per the operational definition (average or mean score PISA 2000-2002 and PISA 2003 students' outcomes). Therefore, the results of Mexico and Chile from the collection and analysis of data will not be clustered with the other countries or regions. This will allow me to compare Mexico and Finland (which is included in the cluster of high performing countries that compose the Rest of the World (RW) averages or median values) to the RW (rest of the world) and look for different patterns or trends. I will not be able to conclude if the RW way is better or worse than the Mexican or Finnish systems; I will only go as far as saying that they are different or similar. However, since the average results for the RW are taken from the answers of many people as they perceive their system-policy mix, from systems labeled as high-performing, I will go as far as suggesting a gap of policies that may help to enlighten policy-makers in Mexico or Finland (and elsewhere) about what is wrong and what is right in the education policy world.

From time to time more extreme comparisons will be undertaken among different countries in search for similarities and divergences since data will be presented at the country or regional level facilitating this type of comparison. Finally, countries or systems will also be clustered together to see if there is any pattern or trend in education systems among the sampled countries (see for instance Annexes 2 and 3) in search of the Shangri-la school education model.

Categorized data will be presented for each variable in the study[1]. In some cases this category will be compared to the categories used by the OECD. This will be done at least in two cases: decentralization of decision-making and autonomy of schools. Some lessons will be derived from the utilization of different methodologies to categorize similar characteristics and from the findings of the field research as compared to propositions from different epistemic groups.

The story of the trip

So, I did my chores, packed my things and went in search of the global model of school education. After a fascination with international studies and league tables and with a feeling of amazement with conclusions and suggestions from the designers, analyzers and drafters of studies such as PISA and TIMSS, I created in my mind a series of preconceptions about what does work and what does not work in school education policies and practices.

[1] For more details about the scope of the research and methodology of analysis and reporting of findings please refer to Chapter 8: methodology.

Loaded with lots of statistically-driven deductive lessons, I decided to venture into the inductive world of school education in search for models and ideals. I decided to take one step further in international studies and embark in long trips around the world to see, observe with my own eyes and learn from the human and interactive field the real formula to make things work in a predictable, efficient and manageable way. By doing this, I would complement my understanding of the world of school education, which at the beginning was mainly drawn from the international studies.

My new "knowledge" would be acquired by building a dataset with plentiful information gathered from many schools and experts in all the corners of the world of high-performing countries. My enthusiasm and curiosity took me to the distant lands of outstanding schools. To do this, I decided to embed myself into the hallways, classrooms, principals' offices, teachers' lounges, teachers' working desks at schools; and into the offices of policy-makers and education policy experts. I wanted to get into the black boxes of policy-making around the world and unravel the hidden workings of policies and practices and interactions of policy-makers and practitioners.

At the end, so I thought, this would allow me to construct a model of school education that would travel beyond borders and beyond systems. With a global model or ideal Shangri-la model, I could do many things. For starters, I could illuminate policy-makers in Mexico, and other low-performing countries, to correct policies and to import the "right" education-policy model or formula. I could also compare my data with that from international studies and buttress their claims and suggestions or to present an alternative view of the world. But as my travel unraveled, and as it occurs with many traveling adventures, things got complicated, very complicated.

After a few weeks in a couple of Nordic countries (the ones with the highest mean values in PISA 2000), I was more confused than enlightened. My preconceived project from preconceived expectations about the world of school education began to shamble. Something was not right, I was getting answers out of my preconceived box or model and all my "knowledge" was shaken. This, however, entailed that the theoretical framework of my preconceived model had to be reconstructed.

It took me more than a year and a half to gather or produce all the data from 165 schools and 565 questionnaires from 16 countries. It took me another year (and still is taking me more time) to condense the data for reporting. At the end, and before I compiled, reduced and organized the data, I knew that I was in a dilemma. I wandered around the world in search of the ideal model and returned with a no-model model. How was I going to tell my story? I was not equipped to do it without risking shallowness and linearity.

I began my trip as Marc-Antoine Jullien and ended up as Michael Sadler— this is the best anecdotal analogy for the real story of my experience[2]. Therefore, I decided to show the

[2] In an informal conversation with Michael Crossley in his office at the University of Bristol at 5:30 pm on June 6, 2006, when I was verbally and briefly reconstructing my story, Michael interrupted me and told me something like the following: "you are, in a way, paraphrasing the interaction between the founding fathers of comparative education. Jullien in search for the ideal model studied and systematized information of

results as they actually occurred comparing them with the results of the preconceived model fed by the "benchmarks" and "best practices" of international organizations models. I decided to compare and contrast the theoretical battles between convergence and divergence theorists.

To do this, however, I decided to review the literature most closely related to the topics of my research. This was a complex task from the empirical and theoretical points of view, since my research, directly and indirectly, touched upon many topics from different groups of knowledge.

Hundreds of researchers before me have studied the field for years and have come up with alternative explanations of things as they seem to happen in the real world. I then collected the data as if I were looking for the ideal model with a preconceived theoretical, deductively-based "putting-it-all-together-data set" explanation of the world. Then, in a dialectic-like interaction with the different proposals and theoretical frameworks of dozens of people, organized in different epistemic or knowledge-producing groups, things began to make sense and my project was finally in a teleological path.

Roger Dale suggested, after hearing my oral narrative, that my almost three-year long research followed a theoretical road of epistemic travels. My research actually reviewed the evidence for "education success"—first by looking at the "meta analysis" World Bank, OECD-like approach whereby a large body of evidence is "amassed", and from this collection of data (PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS), suggestions or claims are made as to "what appears to be happening". Since, as I explained above, I was dissatisfied with the claims by OECD's PISA reports on findings, I then resorted to the narrative approach to try to find not if one model works or does not work, but under what circumstances and in what context a specific model works or does not work: what works for whom and in what circumstances? Of course, there are models and policies that work, that do the trick but the real question as Dale[3] says, "work for whom and how and under what circumstances".

The organization and contents of the report

This manuscript is the report of the findings of a research based on 565 perception questionnaires from 165 principals, 270 teachers, 59 academic experts, 56 government experts and 15 international experts from 18 nation-states around the world (Table 3 Annex 1).

But before reporting the findings, my first chapter sets the theoretical grounds and background of the research. It has been difficult to frame the research into a specific epistemic group since the scope, methodology and findings intersect several fields of study. The fields of study are: comparative education, international education, globalization, education and societies, world culture (convergence theories of education), traveling and borrowing, school improvement, school effectiveness, school reform, and public policy in

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education systems; fifty years later Sadler, in his famous 1900 speech, warned us about the limits of traveling tales and traveling policies."

[3] Interview on June 7, 2006 in Professor Dale's office.

education as it relates to issues of governance of schools and systems' structures such as decentralization and centralization of policies and systems and issues such as policy implementation and sense-making. A small contribution is attempted when explaining the findings of the research by resorting to propositions of 1) sociologists in Actor Network Theory (ANT) to the specific analysis of power relations and how things really happen in group interactions (Callon 1986 and Latour 1986), 2) BLTT experts and 3) sense-making ideas in school education (Spillane).

From the topic point of view, this report focuses on decentralization of school education systems and policies and autonomy of schools, although Chapters 5 and 6 are devoted to the analysis of issues related to school performance in a wider sense. In addition chapter 6 maps Mexico's and Finland's processes, practices and policies in relation to the rest of the world. From this mapping we can not easily deduce whether Finland is ahead or Mexico is behind the "best" practices and policies from the rest of the world. I go as far as suggesting only where convergences or differences occur based on the evidence before me, and highlight some of the differences between Mexico and Finland mainly.

Chapter 1 then looks at theories that will help me explain my findings and suggest future theoretical propositions for the field. The research is comparative in nature since it uses data from a set of countries to compare policies and practices as they relate to performance. The research falls also within the international education field, as some specific lessons are drawn for developing or lagging countries—lagging in performance—in order to change policies and practices. The research falls also within the globalization, education and societies group since it looks at the connection between external phenomena (e.g. globalization, competition, free trade), and domestic education policies and practices. The connection of external and domestic forces is analyzed highlighting the role of international organizations such as the World Bank and the OECD, primarily. But the research falls also within the comparative education approach of borrowing and lending policies and practices, since from its inception the whole project was launched with an ideal global model of school education in mind. Theorists in the field of borrowing and lending will help us to understand the conditions for traveling and the hurdles to borrowing and lending. Since some "things" are lost in translation, transferring or implementation of policies, some applications will be suggested towards the end of the report from relatively recent approaches to the study of translation and power relations in groups or associations (ANT).

Chapter 2 narrows the analysis to decentralization and centralization and governance as the main topics of concern for the rest of my report. Most of the writers in decentralization, centralization and school autonomy come from the fields of comparative education, international education, globalization, and borrowing and lending. After a general overview, the literature is narrowed even more to the decentralization or devolution of decision-making in Mexico. Since the literature around this topic for Mexico is thin, I draw examples of decentralization and autonomy from other countries in order to convey the idea that decentralization and autonomy are buzzwords for school systems' change and restructure. In line with many theorists and empiricists, I conclude that devolution of power and autonomy mean different things to different people and therefore, movements to transfer, lend or borrow these "ideas" or policies have landed in significantly different ways

when exported from one culture to the next, from one system to the next. These findings seem to contradict a vision of convergence in school education and a vision of best practices and benchmarks.

The comparison between the two visions is taken openly in chapter 3, where the convergence theories (Boli et al, McNeely and Cha, McNeely, Kamens, Meyer, and Bake and Letendre) and benchmark proponents (World Bank and OECD) are contrasted to the analytical work or suggestions of Dale, Crossley, O'Neill, Popkewitz, Schriewer, and Steiner-Khamsi, and others.

Chapter 4 directly draws on the evidence and findings from the research field in decentralization and autonomy. It first reviews the literature in the same topic by the OECD, and then it compares the OECD's findings to the findings of my research. Using data from the two studies, this chapter shows a world of school education with two main findings: 1) convergence in some inputs and outputs of school education, and 2) divergence in processes, policies and practices. In processes, policies and practices, there is also convergence at the talking, labeling and rhetorical levels, but there is divergence at the meaning level, i.e. policies baptized with the same name mean different things to different people.

The relevance of the findings may guide policy-makers and international organizations as to the **limits of international studies**, and shed some light to enlighten new ways of addressing and re-addressing international studies such as those conducted under the names of PISA, PIRLS or TIMSS. In doing this, chapter 4 sets the ground for the discussion of other areas of convergence/divergence in education and school policies. This is done in chapter 5. Here the convergence/divergence discussion is reviewed in issues such as curricula, textbooks, time-tableling, hiring and firing of teachers, evaluation, assessments and accountability. As with the previous chapter, evidence is found that seems to buttress the argument of a world of convergence in some inputs and outputs and divergence in the processes and policies meaning the same thing. These two chapters convey one lesson: "the taming of the shrew". With this title I mean that international organizations and their sponsor governments should use more reflexive rather than "imposing" language since the travel, "transferability" or the ubiquity of policies, processes and practices is limited by many factors, among them, culture, institutions, politics, translation and situations or contexts.

Chapter 6 maps Mexico and Finland to the rest of the world. This chapter also offers a methodological tool for comparing policies and practices from one system to the policies and practices of many. The analysis is done for Mexico and Finland as examples only. These are plausible examples though, because Mexico and Finland represent extreme values for the entire sample and the whole OECD membership. Mexico, the lowest OECD performer, and Finland the top OECD performer make an interesting arena for comparison and the limits of "transferability." Examples and lessons from other countries are also made to document evidence for or against "transferability". The analysis of chapter 6 is not only limited to the main topic of discussion of this report, i.e. decentralization and school autonomy, but to more topics grouped in eight clusters.

Given the nature of school education policies and practices, very little can be said in terms of who has the universal or golden key of education. Rather, there are many universal or golden keys of school education referred to here as many Shangri-las.

Chapter 7 wraps up the proposal and findings from the previous chapters. It presents conclusions and makes some suggestions for policy-makers. The main conclusion for policy-makers is that policy-makers, at the national level, face a tough decision: centralizing policies by suggesting to local authorities what to do from pedagogical and management-of-schools points of view or taking these out of the hands of the schools and local authorities and retrenching to a more "rules of the game" framework, based on goals or targets, stimuli and accountability. A case is made, particularly for countries lagging in performance, such as Mexico, to refrain from detailed policy-making and to act at the institutional or "mold- (Chubb and Moe) setting level: using commonly-agreed standards with local authorities and schools case-by-case, and accountability by means of assessments to those commonly-set standards and goals. Given the empirical findings and the theoretical suggestions, policy-makers will find it very difficult to do much more than this.

Chapter 8 describes the inception and implementation of the field research together with some methodological issues. There are at the end of the report many annexes with the reduced data from the research that might help readers to gain deeper analysis.

Colophon: Traveling people, traveling policies

This is a story about traveling policies. This is the story too of the interaction of theory and field work. The traveling policies are education policies that travel beyond borders in search of fertile grounds. They are policies that, when settled, mutate into new forms. They grow new organizations, new networks and new ways of doing things. After a while, the imported policies transform, succumb, mutate, fade or perish; they are, at least in many ways, absorbed by old and current practices, organizations, networks and ways of doing things. If they are applied, they do it after a process of embedment into the stones of the current practices, beliefs and ways of doing things. The "new" organizations and "new" ways of doing things end up changing the names but not the old practices and old organizations in essence. The traveling policies become localized, so to speak. And this is the way the local phenomenon affects the global incursion or prevents its incursion. After some time, a similar story develops when a new idea evolves into a fad and the new fad is implemented into a new policy arena triggering the same process.

Comparative education, international education and school effectiveness/school improvement fields are full of these stories, traveling stories.

Before telling my traveling story about education policies, I had to travel virtually to the lands of education policy and comparative and international education, and to other related fields such as globalization and education, and traveling and borrowing policies and practices, to be able to analyze and construe data and information into a theoretical framework in a dialectical interaction between the field (my research) and the epistemic theoretical communities. This dialectical interaction between the theoretical propositions and the data from an observed field incursion will result in them complementing and

learning from each other. At the end then, this is the report of my research, this is the story of two interacting incursions: one into the literature or epistemic groups of knowledge in education policy and the other into the practice of secondary-school education around the world as seen by the perceptions or preconceptions of many knowledgeable people, 565[4] to be exact.

[4] See Table 3 Annex 1.

Chapter 1: We all want schools to succeed: Can we in a global world? Or, is there a global model of education?

Eduardo Andere M.

Comparative education and traveling policies

When one enters into the field of comparative education one faces an identity crisis (Broadfoot, 2003b). It is not like entering economics or law with a prescribed set of theoretical propositions clearly and neatly arranged and presented so students can build and accrue knowledge. Comparative education is, therefore, a way of inquiry in order to accumulate knowledge about a, not less complex field and discipline, education. Comparative education is further complicated by many sub-fields or related field of inquiry that make it very difficult to define for any single researcher. With some many possible fields and sub-fields of inquiry is very difficult, for any researcher, to know which road to take when doing new research in comparative education at large.

Comparative education and related fields and subfields, can easily immerse a researcher into a sea of old and new terms and propositions that are cared for, jealously at large but confined in different clusters, by groups of experts or practitioners or a combination of them—"epistemic communities".

Terms such as globalization, internationalization, mundialisation, supranationalization, school choice, parental choice, marketization, standardization, accountability and assessments (of all sorts and depths) are equally making their ways to older, well-established, and stubbornly-held words such as social, economic and cultural structures in education (sociology of education), costs, benefits, efficiency and incentives (economics of education), institutions and policy change (history of education and education and law), school effectiveness, school improvement, school change and school reform. And again, a newer set of concepts and propositions has emerged with new terms: leadership, learning cycles, learning teams, "neo-comparative learnology" (Broadfoot, 1999), learning and knowledge (Andy Hargreaves), post-comparative education and post-modernism (Broadfoot, 1999). All these terms are supported or raised by countless research publications, with their own perspectives and propositions.

All of these are appealing, very applicable, for one reason or another, to the understanding and framing of my own research. Am I entering into a field so eclectic (Ninnes and Gregory, 2003, 279), and so undefined and undecided about the appropriate scope and field of study, with erratic agendas (Cowen, 2003, p. 299), to the point of risking my own focus? After all, there is evidence that the field has not had a clear sense of direction; on the contrary, there appeared at times to be a field "rather promiscuous [and] seduced, it seems, by every passing dandy," (Broadfoot, 2003b, 275).

Comparative education is a field of study in constant evolution. Therefore, new ideas, new propositions, theories and emphasis arise as new seminal work is published. It is not a field that has evolved without hurdles. The difficulties faced by the field stem from both, its comparative component and its educational component. Dale (2005) summarizes the

difficulties facing the field and warns comparative educationists about future research endeavors. Comparative analysis of social sciences is always challenged by a "methodological nationalism" (124) and "embedded statism" (128) and the more eclectic view of governance where decision-making is divided among different players including the state. There is lack of evidence "of convergence between nation-states in their decisions and responses to the common challenges that they face" (130). And finally, the "floatingness of education"carrying so many "different meanings and connotations" (134). To all this one must add, as Dale points out, that " 'other' societies are frequently implicitly being compared with (and often intended to shed light on, or provide 'lessons' for) the researchers' own [society] (126).

The focus and track the field seems to have gotten in recent years will have to be assessed in the future, when new research, with the advantages of hindsight, delves into the "state of the arts" of comparative education. For the time being, different groups of experts claim the field has had a significant reemergence and other groups of experts claim that there is nothing to compare than can really be borrowed from one system to the next, with works, from the education and comparative education field, by Cowen, Lindblad, Popkewitz, Steiner-Khamsi, Schriewer, Bernd Zymek and Robert Zymek, among others, and with works, from the fields of sociology, socio-biology, socio-technology and science and organizations, by Latour, Law, Callon, and Czarniawaska[1]. I will try to draw lessons from these relatively new fields of study because I think they provide some light to the understanding of my own research.

In any case, comparing systems, regimes or policies does not make a researcher a comparative and international education researcher, although the first stepping stones of comparative education were based on "travellers' tales" (Crossley and Watson, 12) of education systems or students' performance.

Over the years, researchers from comparative and international education fields have developed complex generalizations that have helped travelers in the search of traveling lessons. There are theories, methods and methodologies that frame the analysis and help the researcher to focus her/his research or research findings. But when facing basic research questions, a researcher has to take a decision, whether to delve into a comparative or international perspective of education systems and policies, or stay only at the national level analysis of education. I decided, given the broad focus of my research, and following the advice of Mortimore (1998, 147 and 160) who in turn was inspired by Robert Frost, to take "the less traveled road". I decided to do a comparative analysis of education policies with an approach that will take me to field I wanted to study.

[1] The works of Callon 1986, Latour 1986, and 1988 and Law 1986 are often cited (Latour 2005, 10) as the initiators of a field of study known as Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Serres as the initiator of the translation approach in the social sciences (Czarniawska, 2005, 8). Very little, however, has evolved from these new approaches into the field of education and even less into school education. However, the comparative education field is ripe for such cross-fertilization. There are two chapters one by Hedmo et al and one by Olds of this type of approach in a recently edited book "Global Ideas" by Czarniawska and Sevón. Although these chapters refer to higher education only, they give an insight into comparative and traveling stories and ideas in a narrative way

However, to accumulate knowledge in the field of comparative education has proved to be very difficult. The crisis of identity of the field is nothing but a reflection of this difficulty. Knowledge which does not accumulate is not knowledge. And this is probably the main criticism given to research in education (Crossley, 1999, 249) and comparative education and international education as fields or disciplines of research (Crossley and Watson, 18-19).

Following the advice of Val D. Rust (2000), associate editor of Comparative Education Review (CER), I resolved to tell my potential readers where my report of findings and research "is coming from"—the methodology and method point of view, although Czarniawska (1998, vi and 19) reminds us that "there is no method, strictly speaking, in social sciences." In any case, I had first to open by *machetazos* (machete strikes) my way through a thick jungle of bushes and grass.

With my field research and immersed in the comparative education field I was trying to understand the shape and nature of the stones from other hills (Broadfoot, 1999). After all, this is what comparative educationalists do or try to do. Eventually, this would help me to understand my own hill. For example, it would help me to understand the Mexican education system and its policies, and perhaps polish them by the stones of others' polished jades (Broadfoot, 1999).

After three years of looking for other hills' stones, I came to agree with Broadfoot and Watson, cited by Broadfoot (1999, 218), that culture and history, and context (Crossley, 1999, 2000 and 2001 and Crossley and Watson and many others) have to be internalized in all education policy and education systems' analysis with a comparative perspective. Failure to consider or internalize local, contextual and historical traditions may give us an inadequate picture of reality. The wrong picture of reality, when applied to education policy, may turn into failure. However, the discovery of these propositions, "history matters", "culture matters", "situation matters" or "context matters" seemed rather obvious and naïve. I was more interested in knowing the intricacies of policies and practices when they travel, if they travel at all, than discovering the proposition that culture matters, which seemed intuitively obvious, anyway.

In an insightful paper about decentralization policies in Indonesia[2], Bjork gives us an example of how the failure to internalize context and history makes the whole design and implementation of education policy a case of 'lost in translation'. There are many examples from different writers (especially in the sub-field of borrowing and lending of policies, as we will see later) that account for this "failure" in the implementation of borrowed ideas and policies.

World culture or convergence view

And yet, there are those who sustain a less complex and more linear world of education world-wide. These are located on the more stable and yet "shallower" waters of convergence (Hartley, 2003). At least in issues of governance or new public management

[2] For this topic of implementation of decentralization in Indonesia, see also (World Bank, 2004a)

in education, and some other issues and trends as influenced by international organizations (McNeely and Cha), a group of international and comparative educationalists conclude that education policies or education features are converging (see for instance the work of Boli et al, McNeely, Kamens, Meyer et al, Bake and Letendre, and Stromquist). These are theorists with theories that claim that the new forces (powers) of globalization, internationalization and transnationalization, have shaped or are shaping significantly similar responses in education systems and education policies around the world.[3]

International organizations such as the World Bank and the OECD, although with different views (Robertson, 2005, 151), have their own conclusions about how children ought to be educated in this globalized, competitive and knowledge-based world economy, and therefore, have their views about how systems and policies must be shaped, and how politicians and policy makers must react and steer change (OECD, PISA, 2004, see for example pages 265-268, or PISA 2005b). Nonetheless, their views of convergence (shared by many others, such as Brown and Lauder, 12) are, at least, challenged by those who see the world of education policies across boundaries, eclectic or an outcome of centrifugal-centripetal forces or tendencies (Broadfoot, 2003a, 3). The external forces are there but the national responses have resisted convergence (Dale and Robertson, 2002). Dale concludes that "…there is little sign of convergence between nation-states in their decisions and responses to the common challenges they face." (2005, 130).

Swayed by this world of contrasting views, theories and methodologies, I went in search of "best" common practices or patterns in education and school policies to see if there was convergence, with data gathered from the field. I went and searched for a common trend or recipe; one that travels beyond boundaries.

International education

This entire search was originally undertaken with the purpose of illuminating policy venues for Mexican policy makers and those from other developing countries. There is therefore at the center of international education (Crossley and Watson) since my research is looking not only at the "comparability" of policies and ideas from one system to the next, but also to the "transferability" of those policies and ideas for improvement and development. Here lays, then, the international education perspective of my research. If there is convergence of education policies and practices meaning the same thing, then we might transfer policies. If the trends are so widespread and common in high- performing countries, then we should not fear top-down (supply-driven) recommendations or policy loans tied to formulas from organizations such as the World Bank (Torres, 377, for the case of Latin America and Imam, 482, for Bangladesh) to "help" developing countries in their monumental challenge of educational development. Developing countries should then rest content because change will eventually take place drawing a brighter future for all of us.

[3] For an insightful account of the ways globalization and education link together and the theoretical responses from the neo-Fordists ("New Right") and post Fordists ("centre-left Modernizers") to the linkage, see the essay by Brown and Lauder and the book by Stromquist.

However, if convergences is not assured; should context, history and political interactions, national, local and group politics, prevent such trends or recipes from translating or transferring to other contexts or cultures, then we would have a gloomier future about quality of education for all as "dictated" from international organizations with top-down policy formulas.

With these contrasting views about the real world of international and comparative education, I went, any way, in search of evidence of education policy trends or institutional arrangements among high or "best" performing countries that might help to guide education policies and institutions in lesser-performing countries, i.e., Mexico.

I took my briefcase and my computer loaded with questions and methods in search of transferable answers and patterns. This is the story of the design of the trip, the implementation of my travels which took me to 165 high-performing schools around the world, the findings of my research and the dialectic-wise interaction of perceptions of knowledgeable people around the world and theoretical propositions of experts from different epistemic groups.

What follows is the reconstruction of the story of my field research and how it fits into the field of comparative and international education on the hand and the convergence and divergence sub-fields on the other.

Units of analysis, and global and local

With original-perceptions data collected from experts, principals and teachers in "high-performing countries", I will try to add additional elements to the questions of convergence or divergence in school education policies from a macro or system's perspective. At the same time, using narrative tools, I will share some lessons learnt by observing some of the policies and institutional arrangements as they are designed and implemented in the so-called high-performing countries.

Unfortunately, one cannot go and make direct comparisons of education systems from a single unit of analysis, i.e., national units or state units, since interactions in education are seen at all levels and from different rationales. This makes the world of comparative education analysis a very complex one. Complexity is not only derived by the variety of units of analysis (Broadfoot, 1999, 223-224) but also by the changing and asymmetrical nature of the units to be compared or observed that can only be explained by the context, the history, the culture and the human and political interactions of each education system, as was pointed very eloquently more than 100 years ago by Sadler:

> "A national system of Education is a **living thing**, the outcome of forgotten struggles and difficulties, and of "battles long ago." It has in it some of the secret workings of national life."(310) (bolds added by the author).

Therefore, I learnt my first lesson by reading Sadler's 100-years-old own conclusions. I learnt that, when comparing systems or policies from different countries, or nations or entities within a country or nation:

> We cannot wander at pleasure among the educational systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant. (Adler, 310, cited by Crossley, 1999, p.250 and cited by D. Phillips, 1989, p. 269).

If we have to do it we need to be aware of the contextual, historical, political and cultural underpinnings in each system, and the translation and implementation hurdles, otherwise phenomena described with the same words may mean totally different things when transposed from one context or system to the next. And this is perhaps the most illuminating finding of my research and travels. We have to be aware of the difficulties of making any generalizations, and we have to at least convey the idea that the story behind comparisons is more complex than the one shown by sheer comparison.

And yet, we live in a globalized, highly-interconnected, and in many issues, highly-interdependent world, with not only an increased need for knowledge about other peoples' doings, but also with increased trust for statistical data that can facilitate the comparison beyond systems and geopolitical boundaries. The growing interest in standardization of data among international organizations such as the OECD, World Bank and UNESCO, and the pressure from the first two to extend a global agenda, has triggered organizational and research focus change in other agencies such as UNESCO. At the end, one is left with mixed views and mixed feelings. Locality and globality seem both important in explaining educational policy change. But which one is more important? Analysts from both views recognize the influence of both forces but some lean, as seen before, to one side, and others to the other side.

International comparisons are very difficult to make and what is even more difficult is to draw conclusions from such comparisons. They are often made with more caveats and observations that make the comparisons conspicuously irrelevant. However, the difficulties and caveats of comparisons shouldn't prevent us from undertaking comparative education research. Some comparative analyses will be done for theoretical purposes; others, for curiosity and sheer comparison; others, in search of evidence to buttress theory; and, still others, in search of benchmarks and best practices to improve one's doings, policies and practices, or to inspire change. My research is about the search of those practices and policies, with a policy-borrowing perspective rather than a policy-lending slant (Peddie, 1991). My research has encountered too some evidence to contribute to the debate about the convergence/divergence hypotheses of policies and the influential forces of globalization and internationalization upon school education and school education systems.

The starting points, starting truths in comparative

The starting point of my reference framework commences with Sadler and Coleman. One additional lesson for all education comparativists is drawn again from Sadler:

> In studying foreign systems of Education we should not forget that the things outside the schools matter even more that the things inside the schools, and govern and interpret the things inside (Sadler, p 310).

In other words, "Other things matter" (Robertson[4]). Those things outside would be, in Sadler's mind, institutions, and their social interactions, like families and systems: micro-organizations and macro-organizations; micro-level of analysis and macro-level of analysis. 60 years after Sadler's assertion, Coleman et al proved him right. At the turn of the new century, the assertion is still seen as a fundamental finding of education research everywhere in the world. This does not mean, however, that schools don't matter; it only means that they matter less.

Can we all succeed in a global world?

We all want schools to succeed. But, can we all succeed in a global and globalizing world? We want them to succeed so that their students are champions in whatever contests (comparisons) they are faced with: contests of life and contests of learning. We all want our children to get quality education with high ethical, academic, civic and compassion standards.[5] But in a global and globalizing world, there is the perception that things have to change or are changing already to receive, and respond to, the forces of globalization and interconnectedness (Stromquist, 2002).

Whether one looks at the responses from a neo-Fordist approach (marketisation) or post-Fordist approach (interventionism), the world of education policy everywhere in the world is affected (Brown and Lauder). Regardless of the market or government response, the globalization of markets means that children will be subject to fierce competition in schools. School education, job markets and global economies are connected (Rubner 2006, 270). It is ironic that some countries are trying to flee away from this type of school competition but the global and competitive economies, the new ways of capitalism, drag them back to the competitive arena. This type of competition in education has been so fierce that it is even considered a disease like in Korea with the so called "gukyukbyeong" disease for sixth graders in primary schools and "jungsambyeong" for ninth graders in lower secondary or middle school (Lee, 2005).

One could argue that, in a globalized economy, success is not only measured in terms of goods and markets, but also in terms of education of children, since children, sooner or later, will enter, or try to enter, the labor force. If children do not enter successfully into the labor market, this, in itself, will be a measure of failure, economic and educational failure. Education and markets never before, so it seems, have been so interconnected. And yet globalization may be changing the way education is seen and structured. "Education is not

[4] Interview with Susan Robertson on April 12, 2006, in her office at the Centre for Globalisation, Education, and Societies, University of Bristol, Bristol, U.K.

[5] The issue of quality education is not, as Mortimore (1998, p. 148) points out, an issue without debate.Therefore, I have qualified education in a very broad manner to include as many definitions as possible.

enough" quotation attributed[6] to Henry M. Levin or derived from Levin and Kelley raises the point that things, "institutions", other than school-education, help to better explain people's access to jobs and job-creation from economies.

Globalization, performance and measurements

How is globalization changing the world and the world of education? In a global economy, performance is measured all the time. One thing "globalization" has certainly brought about is the increased use and need of measurements of all types. We indeed live in a world of measurement. Therefore, education, if shaped by globalization and competitive forces, has to be measured. Comparative education research has also been influenced by these forces. Hence, the field has entered into the "chronology" of "measuring the 'other'":

> In a world defined through a flux of communication and interdependent networks, the growing influence of comparative studies is linked to a global climate of intense economic competition and a growing belief in the key role of education in the endowment of marginal advantage. The major focus of much of this comparative research [2000s research] is inspired by a need to create international tools and comparative indicators *to measure* the 'efficiency' and the 'quality' of education. (Novoa and Yariv-Mashal, 2003, 424-425; italics and emphasis in original, brackets from the author).

We have entered dramatically and completely into an era of measurement, comparison in education (see Stromquist 2002, xiv) and accountability. It all began, according to Roger Dale, with a document published by a truly, "accountable-to-no-one" global organization, i.e., OECD. The document is entitled "Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation". This document set off the stage for goals and international policies in many areas such as education[7]. Coincidentally, the education committee at OECD was developing new ideas for education that ended up in PISA.[8] As stated by the OECD document (OECD 1996, 2),

> We also recognize that those responsible for public money are accountable for its effective use. We have a duty to state clearly the results we expect and how we think they can be achieved.
>
> It is time to select, taking account of the many targets discussed and agreed at international level for a limited number of indicators of success by which our efforts can be judged.

In education, this has been of paramount importance and is changing the way, at least at the perceptions level of policy makers, how things should look and how policy should be shaped. One of the things in education is that we are trying to measure, by alternative

[6] Point raised by Roger Dale during a personal interview in his office at the University of Bristol, on April 4th, 2006.
[7] Ibidem.
[8] The birth of PISA as described by Andreas Schleicher in a personal interview at the OECD on April 2004.

means, school-education outcomes based on competencies rather than contents. We are trying to distinguish things that work from things that do not work. We are trying to understand what does matter (schools, teachers, contexts, history, students' own abilities, etc.) and what doesn't matter (segmentation, segregation, uniforms, etc.).

If things that matter in one policy-context can travel, or be borrowed from or be loaned to any country, then we have convergence (i.e., policies and practices everywhere becoming more and more similar[9]). If they do not travel, then the world, in school education policy, diverges. The two views of the world are completely different and explain the way things are in a completely different fashion.

Macro-policies and micro-policies

The literature of policy-traveling and policy-borrowing becomes fussier and larger when the comparability occurs across levels and units of analysis. In this sense, then, we may have stories of macro-policies (decentralization, marketisation and competition among schools and systems of education), and micro-policies (school management, teaching and learning techniques, curriculum content [what is thought] and curriculum-teaching techniques [how things are taught]). And we still may have stories of convergence of features such as schedules (time and length of lessons), text-books and school materials, shapes and sizes of class rooms, etc. Often, the methodological and theoretical epistemologies of macro-policy comparisons are not the same as those from micro-policy stories. And this mixing of theories and methodologies complicates matters.

Making schools work, globalization and school improvement and school effectiveness

Nevertheless, from very different epistemologies millions of minds around the world are actively and vigorously working to this end, i.e., making schools work so that our children succeed. I include in this world effort, teachers, principals, education policy-makers and implementers (members of school districts, superintendents and their offices' personnel, and school management councils or boards), policy analysts, researchers and parents involved in schools either with management or advisory roles, and sometimes the media.

However, and spite of all the mind-work and the billions of pages produced as academic papers and books, government policy documents, school reports or media reports, no clear and definite result or outcome has come out as the right approach to take, from the school and educational policy point of view.

> In spite of the huge, and continuing, expenditure of resources in time, money and human endeavour, recorded in an enormous body of literature on educational change, it has not been noteworthy to date in bringing about changes of the order and scale required to have a systematic and durable impact on school systems and classroom practice. (Hall and Carter,1995, 171).

[9] Interview with Professor Roger Dale. See note number 2.

Maybe in this particular topic of education reform and educational change, or factors that really matter in determining success in the quality of education our children receive, there are "one thousand ways to skin a cat";[10] or, perhaps, we are not supposed to get an answer because there is not a global answer for all, at all. This might be so because the right mix of policies and practices, to affect change in a positive and consistent way towards students' achievement (goals, targets, indicators of education), is context-specific, "context matters" (Crossley, 1999, 251 and 263, Crossley, 2000, 323, and Crossley, 2001, Scott 2005[11]), history-specific and cultural-specific (Grant, Broadfoot, 2001, Phillips and Ochs, 2003, 458). Maybe, we will never get a single convergence story, at the policy level, because the measures of educational success are flawed, and given the nature and complexities of school education, we will never get the right measurement formula for education.

In this universe of information, research and reports, where should one look for an answer? It is my understanding, after looking at the evidence collected through my research, that even with the force of globalization, education is still a local phenomenon and nation-states, although not the only ones, are still the most important players. Globalization forces are relevant but national forces and states are also relevant and perhaps more important than global or international forces.

> … most if not all decisions about the shape and direction of national education systems continue to be taken by the states themselves. (Dale, 2005, 130).

And yet, globalization is an important force, and different authors have claimed to have found some trends or some patterns in the search for the right mix of education policies, school policies or school practices that might do the trick.

The literature of school improvement and school effectiveness has been specifically keen in searching and researching for those factors. The writers of this literature, at different times, have claimed that such factors have been found. Research, in this area, is immense too, but see, for instance, the list of 11 factors described by Stoll and Mortimore; or the list of 10 principles of "authentic school improvement" put forward by Hopkins (2004); or the factors outlined by Mortimore (1998).

School improvement has also traveled. In particular, under the auspices of ISERP and ISTOF[12], school-improvement researchers claim that there are some school and class-room factors ("universal factors") that travel across countries (Reynolds et al, 2002). By looking inside the schools and inside the classrooms (such as at instruction techniques or strategies

[10] Mark Mason from The Centre of Educational Comparative Research at the University of Hong Kong raised this point in a personal interview held on October 14, 2004.
[11] Context matters not only for students' academic achievement but for students' actual segregation. School choice programs without due attention to context would tend to increase segregation rather than integration. This is the conclusion of Scott's work (2005, 3) and a view shared by Levin (2005, viii).
[12] ISERP: The International School Effectiveness Research Project and ISTOF: The International System for Teacher Observation and Feedback under the direction of many people among them David Reynolds in the School of Education at the University of Plymouth, U.K. For a deep view see Reynolds et al 2002.

that presumably travel beyond borders), the literature of school improvement has suggested that those factors have been found.

Policy borrowing revisited

Other researchers, from a totally different level of analysis, have found some underlying reasons to believe that there are some "policies" that travel across countries or some underlying factors that can explain such policies or trends (Lindblad and Popkewitz,). For a contrasting view see Peddie (1991).

The less prolific but growing literature of policy borrowing, something that by name-mimesis could be baptized as policy-improvement or policy-effectiveness movement or literature, is still at the verge of setting the field for more propositions. But some work is being undertaken to raise the attention of education policy researchers and comparative educationalists and also to see to what extent and how policy-mimesis or policy-borrowing or policy-lending really occurs across nations (Phillips and Ochs, 2003 and 2004).

And finally, there are those who see the creation of any national education system as an eclectic result of complex processes with historical but also international roots (Zymek and Zymek).

International and national colossal forces

In any event, and almost from any view, national and international factors intertwine with colossal force in education. Education is then one of the epicenters of enormous pressure for change and improvement. Changes in education policies around the world in developed, less-developed and least-developed countries exemplify the effects of these colossal forces. Change can be dramatic, such as in Chile, Nicaragua, Indonesia, Korea and New Zealand; less dramatic such as in England, Sweden, the U.S., and the Czech Republic;or gradual such as in Mexico, Canada, France or Ireland, to cite just a handful of examples. However, there is a perceived belief, at least among policy makers, that education policy should adjust to the growing demands of a more complex and global world, and therefore, change, even if this is only at the appearance level to be seen as modern or using modern language.

Globalization and international studies

Adding to this pressure for change and the complexities of explaining how things happen in the real world, there is still the work developed by a totally different group of experts, i.e., those in charge of designing, implementing, and construing the results of international assessment such as PIRLS, TIMSS and PISA.

With modern and complex statistical tools, multivariate and regression analysis, this group of international experts makes direct suggestions about policies or practices that seem to work better than others across countries (see for instance OECD 2001, OECD 2004, OECD 2005b, and Andreas Schleicher, 2005, 2006, 2006b). Their work is based primarily on a narrow, but precise, measurement of education through standardized tests and correlations

based on factual and perceptions' data to results of exams. And this is precisely the kind of world described by the OECD's 1996 publication *Shaping the 21st Century*.

Their work has not only drawn international attention but, over the years, has attracted more governments to their measurement. Year after year there are more countries or national systems of education that join the ranks of international assessments sponsored by IEA, UNESCO or OECD. If properly applied, the policies and practices, they claim, will significantly improve the performance of students in international standardized assessment and therefore, students will be better equipped to face life, or further studies, in this more complex and globalized world. And yet, the evidence offered by the critics (sociology of education) of the critics (school improvement-school effectiveness) seems to dwarf the findings of these monumental efforts in the search for the "real factors".

At any rate, the efforts by international organizations, some of them government-sponsored and government- propelled, seem to feed the need for change, as an "impulse" or "preconditions for borrowing" (Phillips and Ochs, 2003, p 452) for further bolstering change in the policy arena. Therefore, globalization has increased, at least, the "impulse" for more comparisons, more awareness of other people's doings, and more policy borrowing and lending, again, at least the label level.

The following paragraph from the Finland official education site highlights the lending side of the story and the policy-makers' views on factors that positively affect education outcomes (National Board of Education):

> Why did Finland do so well in PISA? Some explanations are found in the main principles for comprehensive education in Finland:
>
> Equal opportunities for education irrespective of domicile, sex, economic situation or mother tongue
> Regional accessibility of education
> No separation of sexes
> Education totally free of charge
> Comprehensive, non-selective basic education
> Supportive and flexible administration – centralised steering of the whole, local implementation
> Interactive, co-operative way of working at all levels; idea of partnership
> Individual support for learning and welfare of pupils
> Development-oriented evaluation and pupil assessment – no testing, no ranking lists
> Highly qualified, autonomous teachers
> Socio-constructivist learning conception"

Can these "principles" or policies travel across countries? For some, as discussed earlier, yes, but for others, no. Some of the countries included in my survey show many of the policies and principles listed by the educational agency in Finland, and yet do not perform nearly as highly as the Finnish students.

My point is that globalization has increased measurement, assessment, comparisons and the perceived utility of policy-borrowing and policy-lending. And yet, globalization has increased also the need for understanding all these phenomena, particularly from a comparative and international point of view **looking inside the black box** of each specific system.

Systems of education in each case seem to work more, at least from the comparative and international education perspective, like a black box. The Finnish case is a good example of perceptions and misperceptions about the reasons of or causes for success.

There is a contrasting view of education success in Finland to that sketched by the educational agency in the Nordic country. It is a view that aligns Finnish success to a formula, recipe or process more difficult to follow. In portraying a different explanation of the Finnish success, Simola asserts the following:

> Quite simply, it is reasonable to suppose that schooling is not confined to pedagogy, didactics or subject matter, and that it also, even mainly, incorporates social, cultural, institutional and historical issues. (456-457)
>
> In any case, the Finnish 'miracle of PISA' no longer appears to be a miracle. To put it simply, it is still possible to teach in the traditional way in Finland because teachers believe in their traditional role and pupils accept their traditional position. Teachers' beliefs are supported by social trust and their professional academic status, while pupils' approval is supported by the authoritarian culture and mentality of obedience. The Finnish 'secret' of top-ranking may therefore be seen as the curious contingency of traditional and post-traditional tendencies in the context of the modern welfare state and its comprehensive schooling. (465-466).
>
> It is tempting to think that at least some of the authority of Finnish teachers is based on their relatively strong professional identity, which enables them to season their traditional teaching with the spice of progress. It is also tempting to think that at least some of the obedience of Finnish students stems from the natural acceptance of authority, and the ethos of respect for teacher. (466).

Globalization and convergence

Another group of people, with its own sociology of knowledge, has suggested that, by using data at a more aggregated level, and from the advantage of hindsight observations, the entire education and school worlds are **being shaped** by very specific forces or trends such as globalization, competitiveness and open markets (Ball, 1998, Davies and Guppy, Mok and Tan, Mok and Chan, Mortimore, 2001, Wing-Leong and Sidhu and Stromquist). Others try to explain changes in education brought as a reaction to those forces (Phillips and Furlong, and Mok, 2004, Stromquist 2002, 13). Still others see the phenomenon as a backward relationship, i.e., how education "provides individuals and communities with ways of both engaging with and navigating a way through the difficulties of globalisation" (Soudien, 145-146, Stromquist 2002, 13).

The comparative education literature also has tried to explain why and how some nation-states, immersed in a global economy, adapt or resist globalization and competitiveness pressures by isolating the national and cultural values from the global incursions. Roger Dale often suggests this. But this is clearly read from the East and Far East Asian researchers who try to explain the different rationales in educational change brought about by globalization (Gopinathan 2001, 5). Globalization is here and is a fact, but how states and nations react to the new international system (brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the thawing of the Cold War), in which increased globalization is one of its features, is a different question.

There is change everywhere in school systems, not only in words but also in practice. But how this change is interpreted and applied is a different matter.

Lessons from comparing Singapore to the U.S.: governance of schools is changing in both countries, competition among schools is increasing too, but in order to compare Singapore and the U.S. or any other western industrialized democracy, one should be much more precise about the depth and meaning of the compared changes: Countries in the West are changing out of dissatisfaction with their own performance and their own system. Countries in the East, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, in turn, are changing to prepare, already successful schools and already successful systems, into a new era (Gopinathan, 2006). For example, in the U.S. things, good things are not happening in the classrooms; in Singapore, they are. The same forces are driving change but from a different perspective and for different reasons: "context matters" then. In the U.S., change is driven out of a perception of failure of schools; in Singapore, change is driven by the beliefs of the "credible" government elite who sees globalization as an opportunity to steer additional change and reform. Markets and marketisation are steered by the credible government elite, not by a sense of failure. Things happen for different reasons because they are induced by different contexts. In Singapore, education is looked at in a very instrumental way. What is good for the economy is good for the state; markets and competition are good for the economy and, therefore, good for the state. Qualified human capital is good for the markets, and therefore, good for the government. An open, more-diversified, more-competitive education system is good for the labor markets and for the economy. So, it is not the perception of failure that brings change but the perception of need, to steer the economy even further, by the credible (based on performance) governmental elite that drives change in Singapore[13]. Context, history, politics and institutions, even regulatory framework, in comparing apparently similar policies is, therefore, important to understand the nature of change and true policy meaning.

Globalization, trends and convergences

Still others are looking at some specific trends in education, convergence not only in practices and policies but in traits, values and ideas too, i.e., stress on mathematics in all curriculums, massification of education "mass schooling", schooling as an institution, policies to support ideas such as public funding, education as a public or collective good,

[13] Interview by the author with Professor S. Gopinathan in his office at CRPP, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, on January 6, 2006.

compulsory education for all, credentials, (Baker and Letendre, 7-8) and education as a human right. In this world, convergence occurs whatever their causes, regardless of their context and in spite of cultural and geopolitical differences. Context factors matter but global ones are more important.

> Every individual school is still influenced by local, regional, and national factors, but the basic image of a school—what it is and what it should do—is commonly defined in the same way globally. Consequently, the organization of national school systems (French, German, American, and so on) is now influenced by transnational forces that are beyond the control of national policy maker, politician, and educators themselves, yet appear to be part of their everyday world. (Baker and Letendre, 9-10)

In the same token of convergence, there is the article of McNeely and Cha. They claim that this convergence is promoted and facilitated by international organizations.

> An extraordinary expansion of educational systems has taken place throughout the world over the last century. This expansion has been characterized by a remarkable degree of convergence in both educational ideology and educational structure across all types of nation-states.

And even for those who see the world as more eclectic, the global forces more than compensate the local forces:

> We will see that both dominant global messages and forms of local expression are in existence. Over time, however, the tendency has been much greater in the direction of uniformity than differentiation (Stromquist 2002, 13).

And still others are looking to the forces of globalization (efficiency-driven world by companies) and internationalism (democratic and peaceful world driven by governments) as shaping a world education policy agenda (Jones).

Complex subject

One of the difficulties in the study of education and education policy is to keep track on everything in an orderly manner. This is what knowledge is about for practical purposes: to be able to relate to a specific set of propositions widely accepted and easily referred to. Social sciences have struggled with this for decades: Except for economics and a few exceptions in political science (such as electoral politics and game theoretical applications), the construction and accumulation of knowledge in areas such as education is painful and difficult (Crossley and Watson, 8). Perhaps it is the lack of social method: "It is doubtful whether there is any method in social sciences studies, at least in the sense of a prescribed procedure, that brings about foreseeable results" (Czarniawska 1998, 19).

This is why the literature, as pointed out before, is of humongous proportions and not necessarily consistent. There are many different studies and approaches to the knowledge of education and education policies, what works and what does not work. There are hundreds of journals and publications around the world with thousands of publications

every year about similar or related topics. And the published work does not necessarily fall under an easy category, group or framework. There are studies in education policy that borrow theoretical or methodological frameworks of analysis from areas apparently unrelated to policy or public policy such as Lindblad and Popkewitz borrowing on psychiatry or Levin borrowing on epidemiology research. Or studies in a soundly established body and group of research such as the comparative education epistemic community through the Comparative Education, Comparative Education Review and Compare journals, often find itself writing beyond the boundaries of their own field (Litlle) or being reincarnated many times (Broadfoot, 2003c). This has brought into the field changing targets and changing means in education research.

The cross-fertilization of ideas from one group in one area, from one system or within the boundaries of one nation or nation-state with specific expertise, has mutated to a virus that does not necessarily respect the confines of the analysis of a given group or framework. This virus may bring failure when policies are imported from a different context, local context in Hopkins' words (2004, 84), or when are implemented down to the school day, day-to-day decision-making or life.

There is evidence everywhere that policies fail in their outspoken goals, v.gr., improving students' achievement or scores, because designers bypass or underestimate the intricacies and difficulties of policies during the implementation stage (Dyer). Implementation has to be planned with the same care than policy design is constructed (O'Neill and Hall and Carter). Therefore, we may find studies of macropolitics and macropolicies ingrained within the boundaries of school effectiveness and school improvement that were not meant for the level of analysis of schools and, therefore, for the "real or authentic" school-improvement approach (Hopkins 2004).

Macropolicies or systemic policies that do not take into account the factors directly related to schools, teachers and students will not succeed. "Unless central reforms address the context of teaching and learning, as well as capacity-building at the school level, within the context of external support, then (…) the aspirations of reform will never be realized (Hopkins, 2004, p. 86).

The epidemic may damage research but research is bound to grow regardless. Therefore, Crossley and Watson are right when they call for more communication between professional cultures of research, policy and action. The professional cultures at the research level need to cross-fertilize more often; but they also need to be closer to the professional cultures (epistemic groups) of policy makers and practitioners (local authorities, school boards, principals, teachers and parents).

My research, unfortunately, adds to this epidemic, which has gotten worse since globalization forces grew and the world system (bipolar system) became less orderly and looser. We may identify the beginnings of a new research stream that might look to be knowledge-building, but later on, based on newly-found research, the previous research, findings and proposals will be lost in a sea of new research streams and new schools of thought and ideas.

Education and comparative and international education are fields of study that have had some rough rides before identity. For that reason I will share my way of dealing with the topic by trying to construct a simplified view of education policy research. The outcome of this effort is the construction of an Education Policy Cube or Matrix that will help me explain the interaction of different sociologies of knowledge convergence to the idea of school-education performance and success.

One way of narrowing the complexity is by looking at the interaction of policies in comparative education, i.e., international or comparative education policy (Ball, 1998) to borrow the expression from Ball.

The main question in the field was first put forward by Sadler more than a century ago at an address given at an international conference on October 20, 1900: How far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education? He concludes that we can learn from them.

Education Policy, Comparative Education and Success

What does it really matter? This question has haunted researchers, practitioners, politicians, principals and teachers for many years all over the world. Modern debate about it was propelled by a single seminal report. It all began in 1966 with the multicited Coleman Report: A single publication that has triggered 40 years of research worldwide,[14] and still counting. Things became even worse with the publication of Christopher Jencks's et al research (as cited by Mortimore, 1998, 3, and by Gorard, 2001, 285). In summary, the authors of both works suggest that schools don't really matter. I can only imagine the frustration and deception their conclusions arouse among policy makers, school leaders, teachers and researchers in the education-policy community around the world. A sheer inspection of the volume of journalistic papers tells us the size of the attention that the Coleman Report has aroused. By conducting an advance search in JSTOR[15] with the heading "Coleman report", the search outcome is 1090 journal articles. Therefore, countless, difficult-to-track research papers, books, reviews and articles have been undertaken and published worldwide out of a single provocative proposition. Education, education policy and international education have been the object of analysis everywhere by all types of academics, policy makers' and practitioners' groups. New schools of thought and patterns of research have been born.

[14] As pointed out to me by Professor David Hogan, Acting Dean, Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice, National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Personal interview, January 13 2006.

[15] JSTOR: Journal Storage: A scholarly Journal Archive (www.jstor.org), is an on-line search engine for articles and reviews in many areas. The current advanced search was done only on JSTOR General Science Collection on January 18, 2006, 4:00 pm Singapore time. A Google search the same day and five minutes later generated an output of 22,500 hits.

The 40 year leap or loop, from 1966 to 2006, can be completed by the work of PISA-OECD[16] 2000, 2003 and 2006 (at the writing of this essay, yet to be analyzed and published). The findings from PISA 2003 make a perfect example of the loop reference.

The 1966 findings by the Coleman Report to the 2003 findings by the PISA –OECD Report are remarkably consistent regardless of the nature, national vis-à-vis international, or the time elapsed between the two studies, 40 years, or the agencies or organizations or people involved responsible for their design and implementation. The following box 1 highlights how close the wording of their findings is. Many more studies conducted at national levels around the world have found more or less the same correlation.

Box 1: Findings: Coleman and PISA

Coleman Report	PISA-OECD
Finally, it appears that a pupil's achievement is strongly related to the educational backgrounds and aspirations of the other students in the school. Analysis indicates, however, that children from a given family background, when put in schools of different social composition, will achieve at quite different levels. (Coleman et al, 22). But if a minority pupil from a home without much educational strength is put with schoolmates with strong educational backgrounds, his achievement is likely to increase. (Coleman et al, 22).	Regardless of their own socio-economic background, students attending schools in which the average socioeconomic background is high tend to perform better than when they are enrolled in a school with a below-average socio-economic intake. (OECD 2004, 189).

The two large studies (Coleman and OECD/PISA), with many more (Gorard, 2001, 285 - 287), have soundly documented that the socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and contexts of schools' students' intake, and students themselves (families) (Hoxby), have a strong relationship with schools' and students' performance or academic achievement. What this means is that one can fairly and roughly predict, ceteris paribus, the average expected achievement of a student by looking at the student's own socio-economic background as it compares to that of the students' peers in the same school of attendance. In other words, "schools don't matter" or don't matter much. Even worse, the school's socio-economic and cultural backgrounds and contexts of its enrolled students have a stronger explanatory power in the success or failure of its students than the school itself. One wonders then about the huge tuition charges of elite private schools around the world penalizing students and their parents with a negative price. If the socioeconomic and the socio-cultural backgrounds of students and parents account for much of the success of schools (as measured by their students' success), how come schools get away with charging astronomical fees to families who are the very reasons of the schools' success?

[16] PISA-OECD: Programme for the International Student Assessment conducted under the auspices of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The effects of the Coleman and Jencks' reports and many others have been cataclysmic. If these results are true, there is nothing, or at least very little, perhaps only at the margin, the "education epistemic community" can do to overcome the force of socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds.

However, the socio-economic and cultural status or backgrounds of students and their families in a given school fall out of the realm of education and education policy. This is a given for any educational community (policy-makers, schools and teachers). Why bother then? Why worry about improving schools when achievement is affected by schools only marginally (at best)? This gave rise to one of the more serious debates in education and school policy in the last 40 years. A debate by those who sustain "school matters", i.e., there are good and bad schools (Gorard, 2001, 285) and those sustaining "inequalities matter" from a totally different view (Gorard, 2001, 287).

Before the Coleman Report, and from a distant academic world, another contrasting less empirically-driven view of schools' performance in the U.S. had shaken the education community in America and elsewhere. This was awakened by the Milton Friedman's assertion that the failure of schools in America was due to the lack of freedom of choice and competition. He placed the burden of the low performance of school education on the schools themselves. And schools do not perform well because they do not have the incentives to do so. Instead, they are faced with the wrong and perverse set of incentives.

So, schools and the education policy community had it all wrong. On the one hand, they were not to be blamed, but they could not do anything about it, even if they wanted to and tried hard; on the other hand, they were to be blamed, but did not have the incentive mix or formula mix to change reality.

The debate today, around the world, and well into the XXI century, still bounces from the limits of the three basic propositions for explaining students' achievements or performance: 1) socio-economic (Coleman, Jencks, Gorard) and cultural and context factors (Broadfoot, Dale, Gorard, Hopkins, Crossely) and its opponents; 2) school factors ("schools matter") ("School effectiveness and School Improvement, (Hopkins, Mortimore, Reynolds) and its opponents (Gorard, 2001); and 3) institutional, policy or incentive related factors, neoliberal-driven (Moe, Chubb, Ravitch, Finn, Walberg and the entire Koret Task Force, and those against them Apple (2001).

Most of the education policy research converges, rather painfully, at one of these three-end points of school-student performance relationship.

Comparative education and international education as fields of study try to understand from the view of international comparable data how the world of education and education policies really is. They enter, then, into the literatures of those who see the tension of education right at the schools and the school policies. In other words, are schools to be blamed for differences in performance or policies?

But the literature review gets more complicated than this as I have described in the foregoing pages. Different people with different backgrounds approach or have approached, and tackle, or have tackled, the problem in many ways. To try to understand the combination of the propositions, I turn next.

Summing up: fields of inquiry and levels of analysis

I do not want to and I cannot conduct a theoretical review of all fields or sub-fields of inquiry in comparative education, international education, lending and borrowing, school improvement/effectiveness/reform, globalization, education policy and ANT. What I can tell is the all these sociologies of knowledge are intertwined and my field research seems to benefit from the proposals of all of them. However, the main hypothesis that my field trip findings are trying to test are those of convergence or divergence of education policies around the world after the following questions: Are the education policies of high performing countries (as define) more and more similar? Or, are those policies diverging as function of national rather than international forces?

Since sociologies of knowledge often cross the borders of their own research, the analysis of comparative education policies and practices can become very difficult to frame within a single epistemic group.

In any way the following matrix summarizes the theoretical framework of analysis sketched before together with question of level of analysis. I use a cube-like matrix[17] to highlight the interconnection among different aspects of research and methodologies.

My research is framed by three axis which give shape to a cube: 1) fields of inquiry: comparative education, international education, lending and borrowing, school improvement/effectiveness/ reform, globalization and education, education policy and ANT; 2) hypothesis: convergence or divergence of educational policies and practices; 3) levels or units of analysis.

Sections before have referred to the first two faces but not really to the third one. The third axis or face refers to the methodology of analysis: amass-it-all versus case-specific or system-specific. Amass-it-all is based on a holistic view where ample data-set are constructed and compared with the help of sophisticated statistical techniques and software packages. This is the approach followed by the international studies of the sort conducted by international organizations or association such as the OECD for PISA or IEA for TIMSS or PIRLS. From this approach correlations of all types are done trying to marry cause to effect. Case-specific or system specific analysis sees the amass-it-all approach as too ambitious and general but too shallow. Analysts favoring case or system specific approach suggest that amass-it-all perspective can only go as far as comparing inputs and outputs in education across countries. In order to meaningful compare processes and policies analysis

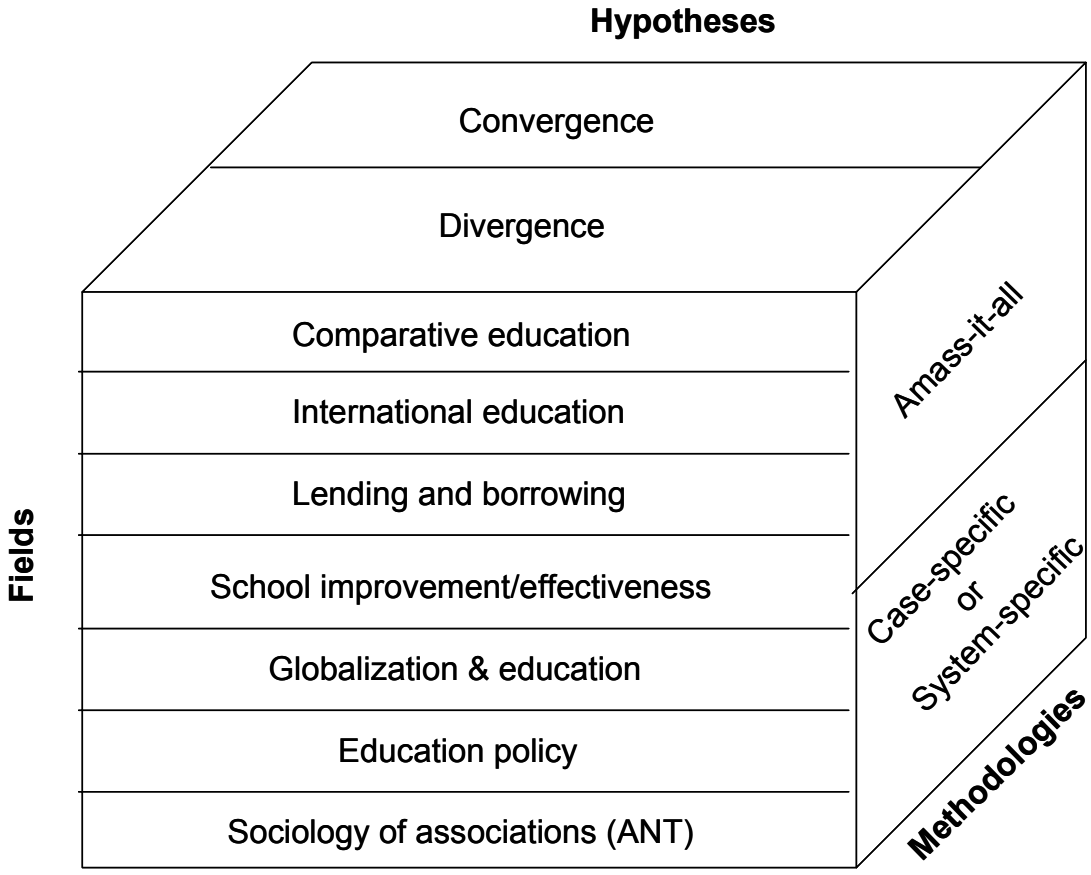
[17]. The use of the cube or Rubik-like cube in the area of education policy and comparative policy is not new. It has been used by Fiske (1996, 10) as cited also by Bray and Mukundan (2003, 15). In their now famous paper Bray and Thomas present a cubic-like, Rubik-like figure to explain the level of analysis approach to comparative education and educational studies (1995, 475).

should be done under case-specific or system-specific approach. Here data sets and findings from the amass-it-all approach are used co compare and measure performance in inputs and outputs across education systems but methodology is used to gain access to information about context and situations that give shape to specific policies meaning the same think. The case-specific or system-specific approach often uses techniques as field-research, case-by-case analysis, perceptions´ surveys and narratives.

Very rarely analysts in education policy and comparative education go to new areas of social science inquiry where new developments into the field of organizations and translation of ideas and pattern-creation are forming such as the area of Actor Network Theory (ANT) and translation from sociology of associations (Latour 1986 and 2005).

In a nutshell my research is summarized by the following matrix (figure 1) with three axes: 1) fields of inquiry, 2) hypotheses and 3) methodologies.

Figure 1 Cube-Matrix: fields, hypotheses and methodologies.



Convergence, divergence and the basic questions revisited

The issue is not if the world has changed or not or the systems of education have been restructured or not, but to what extent the realities of education are better explained by external or internal factors, or a combination of both. In other words, we all want answers to the fundamental question of what does it really matter? The answers are looked at by different groups of experts with different methodological approaches and methods as explained in the cube model. They have come with different sets of answers that I have clustered in the two identifiable schools of thought, i.e., convergence (international forces matters) and divergence (domestic and local forces and interactions matters).

At the end, my research is only one additional attempt to answer Roger Dale's question under a world where globalization and the knowledge economy seem to impose, through different means, a world agenda (Dale, 2000 and 2005), or an international organizations' agenda (Robertson): "what now is to be compared?" (Dale, 2005, 137).

In search of patters and trends or the lack of them

But my research also helps to map the world education systems (from the policy and practice point of view) in search of patterns or tendencies, or the lack of them, among high-performing countries. As will be seen at the end of my analysis, my findings point more to the lack of evidence to support convergence (similarity in policies and practices) than to the evidence to support convergence as per Boli et al, McNeely, Kamens, Meyer et al, Bake and Letendre, and Stromquist.

My findings also point to the fact that comparative research has to be clearly divided into two different levels of analysis: macro-policies, such as decentralization, marketisation, competition, accountability, assessments, etc., and micro-policies, such as teaching and learning techniques, class ambience, school ambience, theories of pedagogy. My research then has found some evidence of the lack of convergence at the macro level (therefore, context, history, situations, institutions, power and group interactions matter). In other words, since we do not really have a pedagogical theory of teaching and learning that works consistently across systems or a theory of education policies and institutions (decentralization, marketization, competition) that mean the same thing across nations or regimes, cultures, situations, interaction matter most.

Colophon: The "things" in education policy

Sometimes I have the feeling that "things" in education policy converge, and sometimes I am persuaded that "things" diverge. Why or where is this knowledge-like contradiction coming from? The answer is manifold and it is also a "depends-on-what-does-one-mean" criteria. The answer can only be attempted by resorting to the help of theoretical work combined with empirical observation, such as in the insightful work by Thomas S. Popkewitz (1996). The answer also comes from a combination of methodologies and methods of analysis: by looking at aggregated data from hard numerical series (such as the

ones produced by the OECD's and IEA's comparisons of system and performance) and from perceptions collected from knowledgeable people in school education, and contrasting this information from direct observations and interviews and opinions from specific actors, such as principals, teachers, policy experts and academic experts in thoughtful and insightful narratives everywhere.

One clue may come from the meaning of "things" in education policy. If for "things" we mean ideas and/or concepts or buzzwords, or "slogans"[18] then yes, I think there is a sharp convergence of agreed-upon concepts and ideas of education such as child-centered education policy, or teacher quality and development, or schools and teachers' flexibility and responsibility (accountability), or professionalism, assessment, decentralization or devolution of decision making, autonomy, school schedules (as in classes divided by periods more or less the same length), and in class-rooms divided by walls, etc. This convergence can be observed, at least, at the rhetorical level by politicians and policy makers across systems, intra-systems and beyond boundaries, or can be observed optically by traveling or visiting schools. With the use of the language, politicians and policymakers appear to be modern, and they appear to be using the "proper" language of modern policymakers[19].

If "things" in education policy mean the processes, interactions or ways by which this cognitive-true or values of education are "policized" (made into policies), politicized and implemented across systems, within systems and beyond boundaries, the answer may approach more the "divergence" hypothesis of the world in education policy than the convergence hypothesis. In this sense the world of school education is not at all McDonaldized in the sense Ritzer has promoted the idea of cultural convergence in many areas other than fast-food services. Dale, however, has argued against the McDonaldization of school education around the world.

And finally, if "things" mean outcomes and results (such as marks or means in international or national standardized tests), the answer seems to be mixed. Countries or systems with similar ideas or concepts, or techniques or practices, or processes have different outcomes and results. Countries or systems with different ideas or concepts, and different processes or policies have similar results or outcomes.

In all three counts, if the findings of the meaning of "things" in education meaning different things to different people are true, then it means that we do not have a theory that explains or answers the question: What does it really matter in education and school policy?

The lack of linearity in the analysis and understanding the complex relationships among inputs, policies, processes and outcomes in education policy stems more from the indiscriminatory mixing of the meaning of "things" in education research and education policy. Once the meaning of "things" is clarified, some light enlightens the obscure and

[18] Prof. Roger Dale refers to the same idea with the word "slogans". Point raised by Prof. Roger Dale during a personal interview in his office at Bristol University on April 7, 2006.
[19] Point raised by Prof. Roger Dale during a personal interview in his office at Bristol University on April 7, 2006.

complex (sometimes described as a black box) world of education policy, whether we talk about intra-system or intersystem analyses. But the light only gives us two answers: 1) convergence at the rhetorical level in policies and inputs only, and 2) there is no such an answer of what really matters that can be applied to all cases in all circumstances. Then, if the answer is "culture" matters and "context" matters, and "situation" matters, and political and group interactions matters, the question for future analysis and research is, how does one go and change culture, situations, institutions, and context in order to improve education and education quality? Here we enter the world of education policy and institutions per se.

School and education policies have changed around the world (Rotberg, and Coulby, Cowen and Jones, and Johnson, Smith and Crossley, Stromquist 2000, Robertson 2006a) as part of a world transformation of schools that took part around the globe in the latter 20 years of the last century and beginning five years of the new century.

Mostly all education systems that we can account for made radical changes in education and school policies. Some changes, like the ones designed and implemented in New Zealand (Boston et al and Friske and Ladd), Korea, Hong Kong, Sweden, Russia, South Africa, the U.S. (Popkewitz, 1996), Chile (OCDE 2004, Robert McMeeking) and Nicaragua (Gershberg) have had systemic effects. Others, like those in Finland, Flanders, France, England, Scotland, Australia, Singapore, and France (Andere, 2006), have had less systemic effects but still significant change, and still others like Canada or Switzerland with major changes only at the provincial, cantonal or district levels.

For some countries, like, Mexico, change has had more rhetorical significance than real (Gershberg, Ornelas, Andere 2003 and 2006, Tatto) and more political than educational, directed more towards reaffirming the state's control of education and education policy than to sharing and devolving power and decision-making to states, localities or schools.

Therefore, in general, change in education policy is questioned by no one. The nature of change and the process or reasons why change took place is under much debate.

Chapter 2: The Complexities of School Education: Prima Facie Findings

Eduardo Andere M.

The field trip idea

This is a trip of learning and explaining by means of observation, collection of data and interviews. This is a trip of travels to different regions around the world in search of patterns, or the lack of them, in secondary education policies and practices. From such experiences, we will not only learn about the way such education policies and practices are actually implemented or not throughout many schools and school districts but we will also learn about the different meaning of those policies and practices. It is a trip not taken before, so I have been told. It is, therefore, at the very least, a different way of inquiry into the complex world of education policy and comparative and international education. In the presentation of my experience and findings, I will combine the narrative tools with the statistical data (Czarniawska 1998, 65). In this way I will share information that can be obtained only by observation and analyze data that can be better reduced with the help of quantitative analysis of qualitative data.

Before traveling

At the outset my research was inspired by a very humble task: to map Mexico's school education system against the systems of high-performing countries individually and as a group which I have identified as Rest of the World (RW). The idea was to gauge how far behind or how far ahead Mexico is from the RW and the highest-performing countries among a list of 16 countries (counting England and Scotland separately) or nations and many more systems. As will be explained below, the analysis and collection of data has allowed me to go deeper than just a simple classification of education systems and tell some stories about different theoretical and empirical propositions from different schools of thought, such as the questions posed by globalization-education theorists (Dale, Robinson, Stromquist, and many more), comparative and international education experts (Broadfoot, Crossley, Keith Watson and many more) or international borrowing/lending proponents (Peddie, Lindblad, Popkewitz, Steiner-Khamsi, and many more). In construing my data I have ended up with many classifications about education and school policies and practices and explanations about divergence or convergence of school education policies and systems.

The need and justification of classifications

Comparing objects or observations entails classifying. Classifying observable objects or phenomena is as old as scientific inquiry itself and the study of education and comparative education is not foreign to this methodology. Education systems have been compared and classified for many years. Sadler is often cited as one of the first ones to have raised the advantages and disadvantages of systems' comparisons around the world and warning about classifications. But many others have contributed to the comparability of systems of education (Brickman). Broadfoot (1999, 220) citing Brickman and Wolhuter synthesizes in a single paragraph the history of comparative education as it relates to classifications:

> Comparative education has a long history which goes back at least as far as the ancient Greek and Roman era (Brickman, 1965). Commentators have suggested that comparative education has evolved through three stages. After the prehistory of 'travellers tales'; came Jullien's 1817 call for the collection of data on national education systems by an international agency (Wolhuter, 1997). This is commonly regarded as the beginning of the use of the term 'comparative education' and of at least one of the field's two major genres that subsequently developed. It was the beginning of a positivist approach which emphasized the systematic gathering of empirical, statistical data to inform policy-making. (Parenthesis in original)

In this respect my research adds to the list of papers and reports that use reduced or condensed data from perceptions of experts and practitioners and narrative examples of experiences and observations to compare education systems and policies from around the world to inform policy makers. However, the gathering or producing of data for my research has been done with a different approach, as I will later explain. But my research does not end at gathering and comparing data only. It also classifies systems and policies into very identifiable and different categories. Wolhuter not only summarizes the literature in the subject matter of classification of education systems but also offers alternative ways of comparing and classifying systems and policies. He ends up classifying "national education systems based on 15 conventional statistical indicators using factor analysis and cluster analysis" (Wolhuter, 166). His 15 statistical indicators are drawn from hard data based on UNESCO's statistical yearbook. Less quantitative classifications have been tried by others. Hopper, for example, classifies education systems as per the degree of centralization and standardization of selection processes of students, early segmentation of students and the criteria used by different systems to select students[1].

In centralization and decentralization policies others as cited by Bray (2003, 11) have attempted the ranking or classification of education systems. The OECD has tried with a more or less consistent methodological approach (for more than a decade now) to classify and rank the education systems as per the degree of centralization or devolution of decision-making. The OECD classification is based, in turn, on the methodology of van Amelsvoort and Jaap Scheerens from the University of Twente[2]. And yet, the same OECD classifies systems based on decentralization and school autonomy with an alternative methodology (OECD 2005b). All of these, including my classification, will be addressed in greater detail in the centralization/decentralization story of this report (chapter four mainly).

International organizations or agencies like the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), and UNESCO's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC) have merged the comparative and classifying exercises of education systems into policy-oriented reports. Henceforth, the study of

[1] There is even an earlier more general classification of systems in search of general educational patterns in Thut and Adams (cited by Hopper). Hopper used the work developed by Thut and Adams as a source of information for his classification of education systems.

[2] Researchers from the University of Twente act as Secretariat for the technical group Network C in OECD-INES (Indicators of National Education Systems Project).

comparative education systems to illuminate policy has become more complex and yet more widespread. These and other international organizations or associations have compared and classified education systems and policies by means of data gathering in a spectrum of high performers and low performers, or high achievers and low achievers, countries or systems. With huge data sets they have correlated these outcomes to features of education systems. Therefore, international organizations and international agencies have classified education systems not only in terms of a measure of performance but under specific features or aspects of education systems such as the "Locus of Decision Making" (OECD 2004b, Chapter D, and OECD 1998, 292-304) and "decentrilised decision making (OECD 2005b 63-72). This topic will be developed at length in chapter four.

Organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO have used, mainly, three different sources of data to study and compare systems: hard data such as enrolment rates and levels of education; test data, such as the results of international standardized assessments, i.e., the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE[3]—under the auspices of OREALC), and perceptions' data, based on context questionnaires to principals, students, teachers, experts or practitioners and so on. Many researchers around the world, for different purposes and different areas in education, have used these three different sources of data-gathering for their own research, to gain information about performance and to compare it against the features or characteristics of education policies and systems.

The work done in this specific area, comparison of education systems and policies, is not only large but old. Today students of education systems complain about the size and diversity of the literature, making items difficult to track. There are reports of active search of other systems' features and policy borrowing for more than 160 years (Thut and Adams, 2). Given the size and antiquity of the literature, it is very difficult to engage in a new line of research. It is difficult to travel new roads since the vast coverage of topics and methodologies seems to have covered them all. Nonetheless, after my perception that something was missing from the aggregated analysis in much of the work done by international assessing projects such as those derived from PISA, TIMSS (Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies), PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), LLECE and SACMEQ, I decided to collect data by a rather different methodology.

The Very First Lessons: Convergence and Divergence in School Education and the Change of Theoretical Model

Not long after I visited some schools in Finland, Sweden, France and England, I realized that something was not quite accurate about the analysis and recommendations of works such as PISA, for example. After walking in and walking out for morning or

[3] LLECE is teh Spanish initials for "Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Educación". This was the first regional evaluation under the auspices of OREALC. The second evaluation under OREALC has changed the name into SERCE ("Segundo Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo") [Second Comparative and Explicative Regional Study]. (See: http://llece.unesco.cl/publicaciones/16.act).

afternoon visits to many PISA-like schools[4], I realized that any attempt to explain the knots and vaults of an education system out of comparative aggregated data among these schools would miss the real story behind the schools. It would be an exercise of comparing pears and apples. I realized that schools, albeit their physical and programmatic similarities, are inherently different organizations. Yes, they all have students and teachers, although not all of them have principals or headmasters; they all have parents and committees, although not all of them involve parents in management and not all committees or boards have decision-making power. **Yes**, They all have schedules (time-tables) and curricula, **but not** all of them share either the profundity, nor the length or the scope in topics or options; they all are worried about teachers and teachers' professional development but they do not treat teachers or nurture teaching in the same way and by the same means. They all talk about improvement in quality and the need for accountability, but are very far from agreeing as to what quality is and how teachers, principals and schools should be accountable. They all talk about autonomy of decision-making and increased pressure from external factors (such as competition and globalization) but they do not converge at all in the definition and scope of autonomy and the ways schools and local or national authorities should deal with marketisation and globalization.

When the comparison of policies and practices is done at the school level rather than the education policy level, schools and teaching and learning is even more divergent than people can possibly imagine. There is no agreement at all about basic things such as single-sex versus co-educational schools; uniforms versus uniform-free schools; length and spread of free time for students during school activities; whole-day schools versus two-shift schools; homework versus more work at schools; teachers' lounge for work versus teachers' lounge for rest vis-à-vis both; students' rooms versus more library space; free lunch versus no "free riders"; praying versus no praying; religious education versus the history of religion; running-and-talking restriction policy in hallways and libraries versus a more relaxed disciplinary policy; mixed-ability grouping versus ability-based grouping; league tables versus in-depth case-by-case school report cards; assistant principals versus head teachers by subjects; police presence inside the schools versus no police at all; fences versus fence-free schools; technology and telecommunication gadgets versus technology and telecommunication training; larger class-rooms, in terms of students, versus teaching-development programs; arts and music versus math and science laboratories; fixed computer facilities versus portable computer laboratories; parents' room inside schools versus parents' at bay; hard policies on bullying students versus more support to students subject to bullying; more options in courses and extracurricular activities versus smaller schools; more freedom to hire teachers versus rotating centralized policies; open class-room with innovative arrangements and personalized arrangements versus traditional class-rooms; more student participation in decision-making versus more student participation in advisory committees; more freedom for principals to manage budgets versus more control by parents, boards or local or national education authorities. The number of combinations (as I will try to measure at the end of this report with the help of a decagon-type geometrical structure) in school policies and practices is enormous and unimaginable; they are not, and can not be, standardized.

[4] PISA-like school is defined as a school in an urban or rural area with students between the ages of 15 years three months old and sixteen years two months old. Therefore, these schools were, theoretically, "sampleable" PISA schools.

Schools are not McDonaldized (Dale, 1994 and Watson 2004, 169) or standardized (Hallak, 21) at the level of policies and practices, but perhaps only in minimal rhetorical expressions, and very specific inputs, traits or signs as will later be seen. Therefore, they can not be aggregated in some sort of comparative measure as a mean value; they can not, as I will endeavor to show later, be accrued to a global ideal model of education that we can all follow. Well, one can aggregate them all together, but if we do that, much information is missed about the real story behind schools' behaviors, school processes and politics, school factors and networks and school performance.

Even in Finland, where the total variance in performance explained by the variance between schools is the lowest in PISA 2003, each school is different in many respects; each school has a flavor not only of the municipality it belongs to but under the direction to which it is subject by different principals who are practically unmovable until they kindly retire. Or in Mexico or Ireland where the same measure of variance between schools is the lowest next to Finland, once one walks inside the schools, the stories of decisions, interactions, autonomies and performance are totally, dramatically, different stories, and then again they show strikingly similar low variance.

There are, of course, common traits, such as walled class-rooms and morning (not all, since there are still many two-shift schools around the world) schedules and class sessions. Even those common features are not "generalizeable". Among the PISA-like "sampleable" schools that I visited I found wall-less classrooms, in almost all countries, there were even schools such as in Mexico with borrowed facilities from a totally different morning school meant for students of different ages and different curriculum. The typical accommodations as drawn by the seminal work of Robin J. Alexander (2000) are less schematic at the secondary level. I walked into asymmetric classrooms as large as a third of a soccer foot-ball field, or multimodal classrooms with adjusting sizes and flexible doors and walls, and classrooms with sofa beds or "home corners", where students could gather in the middle of a session for a specific task or just to relax, or classroom that simulated a business environment even for preprimary and primary students. I also walked into classrooms decorated in very many different ways, some very traditional, neat and clean, with no other decorations than clean walls and blackboards, but others with very colorful and young decorations (posters and pictures of rock singers, cars, and movie or pop stars) or walled by "academic" posters with geography, history, literature or cultural features or walled by students' own works, some works of art, others just incidental to the lesson. Some class-rooms were the "property" of students and teachers and others the property of no-one. In many cases at the school day closing, I saw students sweeping and cleaning the place but, in others, I saw no cleaning and sweeping at all. In one school visit in Mexico, the students just left without any care, leaving the classroom in a mess. When I asked the principal why, he gave me more or less the following explanation: "We used to do it, but once a student complained and his parents, in turn, raised a formal complaint before the Commission of Human Rights. This Commission then issued a recommendation that students weren't supposed to clean the class- rooms." So the classrooms looked more like an after-kermes party room than an after-class-room space. And still, I saw some class-rooms like in Edmonton, Alberta in one school that totally created an environment for teaching and learning in humanities. It was a classroom so neat, lighted and so orderly that nothing was misplaced, not even a pencil—it was like walking into a museum hallway combining modesty and pride.

At the end, one can talk about convergence and divergence and still talk about the same real world. There is convergence in language and ideas and discourse and yet, there is divergence in meanings, policies and practices as they actually occur inside the organizations i.e. schools or networks, i.e. school policy networks (boards, principals, teachers, education authorities, parents and students). At times I saw myself in Escher's world with a paradoxical convergence and divergence symptom.

If we try to explain the world of school education by means and standard values of some of the results of education life and compare these measures to inputs and policies that share the same name but not the same meaning, we can go as far as telling that pears and apples are fruits. It is like saying that secondary school A and secondary school B are schools. **Yes**, pears and apples are fruits, like bananas and pineapples, **but no** this really tells us very little about the intrinsic, unique values and qualities of schools and schools' systems. If we let the comparative analysis of schools and school systems rely only on aggregated data-sets and their correlations, we undoubtedly have made a choice: shallowness instead of profundity; traits instead of values.

165 schools around the world

I visited 165 schools (see Table 2 in Annex 1) in Finland, Sweden, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, Flanders, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Boston, New York, Quebec, Montreal and Edmonton, Mexico and Santiago de Chile. I observed the differences and similarities among all of them. After looking at those, not only inside the school but also in the age range of students, the school facilities, and the organization of schooling, I realized that international studies such as PISA, like many other international studies of student performance, need much more fragmentalization in their samples, and probably larger samples, before they reach definite conclusions of what, why and how. They do not answer the Dale's hows, whos, wheres and whys (Dale 2006).

PISA-like schools and PISA schools not only differ from each other on issues of grade level of 15 year-old students (the actual sampled grade range in PISA 2003 was from grade seven to grade twelve) and affiliation (public, private-dependent or private-independent, the three of them with many variations, in ownership, state financing, actual governance, and policy-interactions) but also on the grade-level structure of schools with the following 17 varieties, as I noted in the 165 schools: 1) lower secondary schools only; 2) primary and lower secondary schools under the same umbrella school; 3) lower secondary and upper secondary schools under the same umbrella; 4) upper secondary schools only; 5) primary, and lower and upper secondary schools under the same umbrella; 6) lower secondary school of four years; 7) lower secondary schools of three years; 8) lower secondary (intermediate) schools of two years only; 9) upper secondary schools of two years; 10) upper secondary schools of three years; 11) upper secondary schools of four years; 12) schools with two years of primary education and four years of secondary education; 13) schools with two years of primary education and six years of secondary education; 14) upper secondary schools attached to colleges; 15) upper secondary schools for the talented in science and technology; 16) secondary schools with all sorts of sizes, segmentations and/or specializations (vocational, technical, general); 17) lower secondary and upper secondary schools with specializations in arts or music or languages.

To the concern of many (Ross et al 2006, 305-306) about the range of grades in PISA sampled-students, we have to add the complexity of the structure and organization of schooling in all countries as accounted for in the previous paragraph. Accounting for grade differences as done by the OECD's PISA 2003 with a subtle attention only to grade impact (see OECD 2004, Table A1.2 Annex A1, page 311) is not enough. Comparing children from Korea and Japan, all or most of them at grade 10, with Finland's, most at grade 9 or below, misses a point and misses a story. It is not only a one-year difference in school experience and school exposure; it is a totally different environment for students, teachers, parents, principals and authorities. 10-grade schools are upper-secondary schools. These schools are similar to lower-secondary schools in nothing but the school label. The regulation framework is different, the regulatory bodies are different, principals are drawn from different regulatory backgrounds and the selection process of upper-secondary principals is by no means similar to the selection process of lower-secondary or primary principals. Teachers in upper-secondary schools are also selected and assessed under different criteria for different schools. Curricula and curricula options are different too. Freedom of management of school activities, schools' teaching and learning functions and programs and school budgets are also totally different from those at the lower levels of education. These combinations of school levels and school regulatory frameworks and school organizations and associations have to be combined with other potentially disturbing factors for a theory of isomorphism in school education around the world. Schools also vary in leadership styles, in open-doors/closed-doors policies, not only from principals and teachers to students and parents, but from schools to the community. There are schools that fence-off their environment from the community's life and "territory", and schools that merge with the surrounding community. For the latter, sometimes it is difficult to distinguish the physical boundaries between the school and the community. There are schools with a principal-status culture (like in England and Korea for instance) and schools without principals at all (like in some German cantons in Switzerland). There are schools with offices for principals that resemble the offices of foreign affairs ministers, and schools with offices for principals shared among several people in a tiny area, and schools without offices for principals. There are schools with a strong relationship between the principal and the school board, and schools with no relationship at all. There are schools that are run by principals and schools that are run by boards, teachers or local authorities. And many, if not all, of these differences or variations may be found in schools under the same category or cluster. Therefore, the whole idea of mixing into forced means and standard deviations these totally different schools is like trying to merge oil and water into a single soluble element.

To make things more complicated, the policy frameworks for schools around the world change from country to country, from region to region, within a country, and from system to system. In some systems (the so-called high-performing ones) there are national, universal examinations; in others there are none (I will deal with this issue in more detail in chapter five). Even in countries with national examinations at the same level, the history may be different. Some countries have a long history and tradition of examinations; others are just beginning to apply them; and still others are moving away from them. Some of the sampled countries have very detailed standards in contents and goals; others do not have them at all, or only have them as goals but not as contents. Some countries are moving away from detailed curriculums, such as in New Zealand, and others are moving towards more detailed curriculums, such as in Finland. Some of them have a long history of standardization; others are getting into it; and still others are

moving away from it, at least from detailed content standards. Since most international studies such as PISA and TIMSS compare performance based on systems in a specific moment in time, they compare performances based on completely different school historical, regulatory, situational and institutional backgrounds. Therefore, they miss the story behind the differences.

International comparison exercises of the sorts conducted by IEA, OECD[5], SACMEQ and OREALC have to fragmentilize even more their samples and have to increase their sizes too in order to make more sense, or conversely, they have to soften or qualify even more their language when arriving at conclusions, making policy recommendations or making claims about the whys, whats and hows. However, at the end, even with greater segmentation of schools for sampling purposes, these international studies also face the "lost in translation" (or lack of "transferability") factor of histories, situations and regulations. When the "lost in translation" factor is not taken into account, we end up with policy fiascos as with the science policy case promoted by UNESCO (Finnemore 1993) to countries where there was no scientific community at all, or to policy-borrowing epidemics or "diffusion" with different meaning and unsuccessful implementation as the one in Learning for Life heavily promoted in the nineties (Jakobi), or to policy confusion and disarray when concepts such as marketisation and decentralization of education are promoted around the world with no real common understanding of the meaning of those words or ideas across countries as I will try to document in chapter four and five.

Apples and pears are fruits, no doubt about it; they might look alike, and they might even taste similar, as with the Asian pear, but they are not the same. This metaphor helps me to explain at what level I see the world of school education converging and at what level I see it diverging. This study is about convergence and divergence of schools' policies and practices as they relate to school education policies such as devolution of decision-making and autonomy of schools. The realization of all these differences in school policies and practices even among the so-called "high performing" countries changed my preconceptions about school policies and practices. This driving away from a preconceived (taken for granted) model of "benchmarks" and "best practices" forced me into the epistemic "journey" which story I unveiled in Chapter one.

What follows, in the next chapters, is then a tale of apples and pears, not as fruits but as apples and pears.

[5] At least for PISA the schools were sampled as different units (schools) where more than one program (lower secondary or upper secondary) one shift or one campus was offered by the same school (OECD 2004, Annex A, p. 328). What is not clear, however, is how not only these differences but the ones listed above as 17 varieties were considered by the PISA study to explain the performance of students across school varieties.

Chapter 3: Lending and borrowing Fads: Decentralization and Autonomy

Neither a borrower nor a lender be
Shakespeare[1]

Introduction

The change of models, from a preconceived, taken for granted model, where school policies and practices may converge in an ideal model of schools and school education policies forced me to look deeper into the literature of comparative education and borrowing and lending. This chapter, then, delves and narrows into different theoretical approaches as they try to explain why things that look similar are not, after a careful look. This chapter deals with the question of what happens when one travels around the world lending and borrowing policies here and there. The quick review of the literature will guide us into other sections i.e. unveiling the meaning of decentralization of decision making and autonomy of schools. But before unveiling the meaning of decentralization and autonomy I will try to justify why decentralization and autonomy are good examples to explain convergence and divergence on one side, and comparability and transferability on the other.

Why a theory of translation and ANT

My research falls within the framework of comparative and international education and globalization and education (since education reforms and restructuring dubbed decentralization and school autonomy are very often aligned with that "thing" called globalization[2]), since I not only seek to compare education policies and practices *per se* but also to enlighten education policy-makers and education policy-implementers about best or good policies and practices, as in benchmarks, if any.

My research is also about policy-borrowing and policy-lending, and therefore, falls within this approach or domain as well. When policies are borrowed, however, some things may be lost in translation, as pointed out to me by Robert Cowen[3] and suggested, from a totally different epistemic group, by Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) experts. Some things may be translated, transposed or transformed in a "process of metamorphosis" of pedagogic policy or action i.e., curriculum (Alexander 2000, 516 and Astiz et al). Hence, there is a need to delve into theories of translation, transformation, transferring, implementation, sense-making, adaptation of policies and practices too.

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[1] From Hamlet: *Neither a borrower nor a lender be; For loan oft loses both itself and friend, And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry*. (One of a father-to-son rosary advice from Polonius to Laertes before "traveling" Act 1 Scene 3 "A Room" Burton Raffel's Annotated Edition of Hamlet: "The Annotated Shakespeare" New Have: Yale University Press (2003) p.32). I am aware of the use of this Shakespeare's aphorism in two papers in the field of comparative education: Phillips (1989) as the title of his paper; and Peddie (1991) as the first phrase of his paper.

[2] "In particular, the contemporary spread of decentralization policies and reforms has been the harbinger of globalization processes, seemingly proving that, indeed, "the center cannot hold" in the face of global forces." (Astiz et al 2002, 66). And globalization is a concept not easily defined. Stromquist (2002b, iii) "Globalization is not yet a scientific construct." Dale and Robertson (2002, 10): "'Globalization' is too broad and too ambiguous a term to be used unproblematically…"

[3] Phone interview on April 15, 2006.

Theories of translation (used as the general term) in education are well localized in a group of writers in comparative and international education, and are beginning to get more attention as in Dale's paper "from comparison to translation" (Dale 2006), or in Alexander's "curriculum metamorphosis" (Alexander 2000) or as in the works of translation and implementation experts as detailed below. Although the meaning of translation in education policy and comparative education is not the same as that utilized by ANT (see for instance Callon's 1986 seminal work, or Latour 1986 and 2005 for translations in organizations and "associations") experts, I will draw from the different groups or sociologies of knowledge since some of their insights can help us to walk into a theory of translation or a theory of transfer (in Crossley's words) or a theory of transformation to explain divergence and convergence of school education policies and practices around the world.

I will try to cross-fertilize their suggestions and findings in search of explanations for my own findings. ANT's approach as explained by Latour (2005, 12), who focuses on the actions of actors and "actants" by tracing associations ("sociology of associations" instead of "sociology of the social") rather than already assembled and stable groups and Callon (1986) who focuses on the power relationships of actors as they try to impose upon others (Callon 1986, 196) their views of the world or the specific situation at stake, could be of interest to comparative education and education policy. ANT ideas are brought into this analysis for their focus on actors or actants, assemblies and associations, that is to say their focus on the "nature of what is assembled" or the nature of the state of affairs rather than the assembly or state of affairs per se. To my understanding, international studies in education of the type conducted by the OECD, IEA, UNESCO, OREALC and SACMEQ can enlighten us about "state of affairs" but shed little or no light at all about the nature of the state of affairs. The comparability of those international studies is limited to comparisons of situations (state of affairs) but can not delve into the nature (the whys, wheres, whats and hows) in Dale's (2006) and Bruner's (1996, 118) sense of the state of affairs or situations; or into the intricacies of borrowing and lending in Popkewitz, Steiner-Khamsi, Phillips and Ochs; or into the hurdles of implementation in Carter and O'Neill, or into the world of shifting meanings in sense-making in Spillane; or into the traveling policies and translations and narratives in Lindblad and Popkewitz (2004b), and Czarniawska and Sevón (1996 and 2005). All of them are here glued together not because they belong to the same epistemic group but because they focus their attention on the **nature of change** or on the processes (translation, lending and borrowing, transfer, implementation, sense-making, politics—as in power relations or interactions) that try to explain why and how the state of affairs became a state of affairs or why and how situations change over time.

As will be seen later, studies such as PISA can determine the "state of affairs" i.e. levels or ranking of performance of 15 year-old students, but can not make claims about the nature (why, how, what, who, when and for whom) of the "state of affairs". This notion or finding is (can be) of fundamental value to the studies of comparative education and international education.

Main scope: decentralization and school autonomy

From the methodological and methods point of view, my research is about the macro or national unit level of analysis, system-level policies. I look at the institutions and the incentives for change in schools, rather than to schools, classrooms and pedagogy

theories or practices *per se*. So my study falls within the confines of comparative education as defined by Halls (1977, 82) and not under the comparative pedagogy as defined by Halls (1977, 81-82) and, in more detail, by Alexander (2001).

Methodologically too, my research falls within the classification of systems' features by means of perception-based data from people who belong to different levels or units of analysis (teachers and principals from schools, government and academic experts from the national policy level). However, since my purpose is not to treat the people as belonging to different levels of analysis I will group them together under the general heading of "knowledgeable people".

My collection of data includes many topics of school education policy and practice at the comparative education inquiry domain or field. In this essay I will report mainly (chapters three and four) on two topics only, i.e., decentralization/centralization of decision-making and autonomy of schools, although, sporadically and in chapter five, I will draw examples from other areas, topics, policies or practices.

The two of them, decentralization and autonomy, are related topics or concpets but by no means mean the same thing. The findings of my research will add perceptions-based data to the understanding of comparative, international and policy-borrowing phenomena. If trends are found as to document convergence (isomorphism) of policies and practices in school education, less educationally developed countries such as Mexico (and most of Latin-American countries) can "wander around the world" borrowing policies and systems' features here and there with the certainty of eventual success. If the world is diverging rather than converging then we are lost in translation or implementation or transferring when lending or borrowing takes place. In a world of divergence, borrowing policies may translate into huge social debts then, as the examples of the spread of science policies and lifelong learning ideas from Finnemore and Jakobi suggest.

My research adds some evidence to the literature that sees the world of education policies, processes and practices as a world with more diversity that unity; more complexity than simplicity. This is, of course, not the first study that finds evidence of divergence rather than convergence. Empirically, Astiz et al argue that, even with the globalization force behind national education, systems have not responded with synchronized reforms: "Globalization does not necessarily produce simple isomorphism…" (87).

And yet, policy convergence may be happening at the aggregated, abstract level, like at the labeling of policies or policy ideas or at very broad pedagogical definitions (Alexander 2001). But as we try to get those policies or ideas down to schools, principals, teachers and students, their meaning and scope change or diverge among systems and across time. They are lost, again, in translation (Steiner-Khamsi 2004 and Phillips 1989, for example) or implementation (Spillane 2004, O'Neill 1995, and Dyer 1999, for example) or changed by the translating or imposing actors (Latour 1986 and 2005, Callon 1986 and Law 1986) so to speak.

One of those ideas, that became fad ideas and buzzwords for the last two decades of the last century, was the idea of devolution of power to schools. According to the fashion of the time, more decentralization of decision-making was preferred to more centralization

and more autonomy, as in schools, was preferred to less autonomy. Evidence (see for instance the work of Astiz et al) of policy changes across countries suggests a recent shift back to re-centralization[4] of some of the decision-making powers that were so eagerly promoted by international organizations and implemented by all sorts of governments (democratic and autocratic, parliamentary and presidential, centralized and decentralized) around the world for around twenty years (as documented below). What more literature seems to find is that decentralization of education never really materialized as such; it was always in tandem with centralization or recentralization measures.

Evidence of convergence can be found at the language, rhetorical or diffusion realms (see the literature on policy-borrowing and policy-lending referred to in the previous paragraphs, and Jakobi, and Dale 2006). There is no evidence that the "ideas" were translated into policies and practices that meant the same thing across systems other than labels. Concepts such as marketisation, decentralization, autonomy and accountability are too broad and too abstract to merit any coherent comparative analysis in practical terms. As in the oft-quoted (and abused) influence of globalization in education, Dale and Robertson (2002, 10) put it very clearly:

> Globalization" is too broad and too ambiguous a term to be used unproblematically in determining the effects on national education systems of the structures and processes, institutions and practices, that it connotes. Globalization is not a homogenous force, nor is it consistent in effects on education, either within or between countries.

Dale and Robertson's view of globalization can analogously be applied to decentralization or devolution of power policies. Policy-makers from around the world have learnt that translating or transferring concepts, ideas or policies subject to many different meanings or interpretations is a dangerous game. Lending policies which come under the nomenclature of autonomy, decentralization and accountability, for example, do not mean anything but chaos at worst and "ridiculization" at best. Lending policies from a supply-driven perspective rather than from an inside-outwards or demand-driven movement (in the sense of an idea nationally and historically supported) may turn out to be ridiculous. Finnemore ridicules this supply-led approach with the "science policy" epidemic-like trend propelled by an "epistemic community" of policy-makers at UNESCO. The point here (based on Finnemore) is that translating or lending policies from elsewhere, like the science policies of world powers such as the U.S., the U.K., or France to underdeveloped countries from Asia, Africa or Latin America ended up establishing bureaucracies and agencies of science and technology policy in places where there was no scientific community and, therefore, no need for it. There was only one need met, and that was the need of the "epistemic community" at work.

Students of decentralization policies in education have also approached the subject-matter from their own perspective. Few writers, however, have taken the Mexican case in a comparative way. Therefore, to understand the forces behind decentralization and the concept of decentralization with an international and comparative perspective, I will draw on the ideas and findings of studies of decentralization done elsewhere. This will

[4] In 1994, Dale saw this policy dialectic between decentralization and centralization, in the middle of the decentralization movement: "…apparently contradictory phenomenon of simultaneous decentralisation and centralisation that seems to be found in many contemporary education systems" (Dale 1994, 254).

help me to probe also that decentralization as understood and implemented by different education systems means different things, even at the very narrow meaning of the word per se (Crossley and Watson 2003, 42).

The different meanings of decentralization or devolution of power

Decentralization, marketization and privatization are buzzwords for reform and restructure of education systems. They may come together in a package of reforms but they mean different things.

> In a variety of national contexts, there have been discussions about the changing relations of state to the educational arena. Often, these discussions centre on issues concerning the centralization and decentralization of the state or the devolution of power, the latter referring to shifts in the loci of power to geographically local contexts, for example, through community governance of education…At a different level are discussions about 'privatization' and 'marketization' of social policy, concepts which indicate a major change in the relation of the state to civil society. (Popkewitz 1996, 27).

I will concentrate on the issues, policies or ideas of decentralization and autonomy, although privatization and marketisation are buzzwords related to the former. See for instance the following paragraph by the OECD:

> Over the past two decades, many countries have been engaged in a shift of decision-making authority to lower administrative levels, either to local or regional governments, or to schools. This move towards decentralisation is a global phenomenon, affecting developing as well as industrialised countries, although the motives and incentives are diverse. The increased attention for decentralisation in education is perhaps best reflected by the numerous initiatives to stimulate decision making by schools, such as site- or school-based management (SBM), the local management of schools and the establishment of relatively autonomous schools like the charter schools in the United States. This widespread trend towards school autonomy has also stimulated the debate about the advantages and disadvantages of private schooling. These debates are inspired by micro-economic theory and ideas about the application of market mechanisms such as choice and competition in education. (OECD 2005, 64).

Undoubtedly decentralization or devolution of decision-authority and its unfaithful companion, greater autonomy to schools, were two of the most important policy or system shifts in most education systems around the world (Gibton, Sabar and Goldring, p.193). Decentralization was a fad promoted by international organizations (Gershberg, 1999, 63, McGinn and Street, 471, Torres 2003, 301) and implemented by national governments (Andreas 2006, 285, Ross et al 319-320). As put by Watson (2000, 48):

> One of the main areas of reform in many countries during the past 15 years or so has been that of educational decentralization. While this has become a key feature of many governments' stated educational policy, it is a central plank of major international efforts at restructuring education in transitional, transformational and reconstructing societies.

Mark Bray and M.V. Mukundan wrote the following in 2003 (first paragraph)

> In all parts of the world, recent decades have brought numerous political and administrative reforms in the education sector. A considerable proportion of these reforms bear the label of decentralisation. Indeed decentralisation has almost become a mantra among policy makers and international agencies. These individuals and bodies commonly assert that decentralisation can facilitate better management and governance of education, and, in turn, improve efficiency and enhance relevance.

Many writers[5] have also talked about decentralization as one of the most important features of the movement towards the restructuring of education systems around the world (Green, Lindblad and Popkewitz 2004 p. vii, and Astiz et al). But to see if decentralization is really (or was) a universal trend, as it was claimed by Fisk ("Decentralization of schools is truly a global phenomenon" 1996, p. v), or by Bray and Mukundan, we have to understand what is the meaning of the idea or concept labeled as decentralization.

Decentralization was indeed a fad[6] in education policy change and restructuring, but whether decentralization was implemented or was finally adopted successfully by countries around the world is a different story. Decentralization was even actively promoted by the World Bank[7] (World Bank, 1995, 1999, Bray and Mukundan) and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Alexander 2000) and is still hinted by other organizations, such as the OECD, as expressed by the head of the Indicators and Analysis Division of the OECD responsible for the PISA project (Andreas Schleicher, 2006, 285), as a significant policy tool to bring about educational-performance improvements at the school level. The 10 mandates from the Washington Consensus (Williamson, 1993), for example, were so strong that they reached the area of education in the forms of marketization, competition and decentralization.

By the turn of the century the decentralization or devolution of power recipe had begun to fade, albeit at a slow pace, from the language of international experts and

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[5] The list of writers who have seen decentralization as an important policy shift or phenomenon in education or school restructuring is enormous. Consider the following: Gershberg 1999 (The world, Mexico and Nicaragua), Van Langen (Western countries and Netherlands), Tatto (Mexico), Van Haecht (Great Britain, France and Scandinavian countries), McGinn and Street (Peru, Chile and Mexico), Gibton, Sabar and Goldring (world and Israel), Watson (world), Bray and Mukundan (world), Mukundan and Bray (India and world), van Amelsvoort and Scheerens (Europe).

[6] This trend towards decentralization also reached Latin America, as a senior economist from the World Bank states:"Latin America presents a variety of experiences in the decentralization of education. Practically all countries have undertaken some form of decentralization of their education system which involved the transfer of decision making autonomy to actors within ("deconcentrated" bodies)..." (di Gropello, 2004, p. 2). Evidence of this trend may be also found in (Gershberg, Tatto, McGinn and Street, and Kaufman and Nelson, 2005), Faletti (Argentina), Cuéllar-Marchelli (Latin America and El Salvador). Evidence of the trend to decentralization with the influence of international organizations such as the World Bank may be also found in Torres (2003, 305) and Arnove et al (1997, 146-147).

[7] The following paragraph, taken from a 1999 World Bank publication (1999b), highlights the importance of decentralization to the World Bank. "The Bank's Top Education Priorities in the Region (…) *Making decentralization* work by reengineering education ministries, supporting governance reforms and improvements in information that ensure accountability, and assisting countries in identifying changes in incentives that could alter the behavior of providers and affect the sustainability of reform initiatives." (50 cursives in original).

international organizations that were staunch sponsors for the last two decades of the twentieth century. Such a language shift towards new, albeit hyphenated, buzzwords, 'decentralization-recentralization' or 'decentralization-accountability', and 'decentralization-standardization' can be seen in or implied by the publications of the World Bank (1999, 2004 and 2004b) or World Bank related publications (World Bank, 2004a, di Gropello, 2004).

The literature in decentralization (devolution of decision-making), in broad terms, is not limited at all. Once we enter into the realm of schools and site-based management, we find quite a large literature dealing with this topic from the school-improvement/effectiveness and school-reform literature, to the site-based management and autonomy of decision-making in schools' literature. The literature also grows significantly when public policy/public management experts write about decentralization of decision-making in education. But the literature of decentralization of education with a comparative perspective in Mexico is not very large. Even more, I know of only two attempts to classify education systems from the decentralization perspective with Mexico in it. One is done by Rideout and Ural as cited by Bray 2003, 211 and the other by the OECD in several publications to which I will refer later in greater detail. There is an additional attempt to which I would like to refer even though Mexico is not included in the classification of countries as per their decentralization of education. This is done by H-M.C. Gonnie van Amelsvoort and Jaap Scheerens. The study is confined to some European countries. However, this study is of relevance to the analysis in this section since the methodology used (and the wording as well) is that chosen by the OECD for one of its two own classification of educational systems as per the devolution of decision-making and autonomy to schools.

One byproduct or spin-off of my research is the mapping or classification of education systems in terms of decentralization and autonomy of decision-making in schools and by principals and teachers. Mapping or classifying Mexico in relation to the rest of the world has helped me to identify the degree to which education systems from around the world (not only Mexico's) seem to be responding to external forces (i.e., globalization and competition) and therefore converging. By looking at the perceptions' data of the surveyed experts and practitioners (knowledgeable people), in my study, I will make some suggestions about patterns or the absence of patterns of response to the external forces sometimes identified as globalization and internationalization forces (such as competition for instance). If the world is converging, policies and practices in school education systems and pedagogies (in Alexander's terms 2000 and 2001) should look similar; if not, divergence more than convergence would reflect reality.

Furthermore, the collected or produced data from my research will allow me not only to compare Mexico to the Rest of the World's (RW) patterns or trends (if any) but also to the relative position of each one of the 16 countries or nations (plus Chile) included in the study to the RW and to each other.

When looking at specific meaning of words and policies, some evidence has been found that seems to reinforce the hypothesis of a world explained by divergence, in policies, processes and practices, rather than convergence, except for some very specific traits or features (inputs and some outputs). At the end, I think that we can fairly say that in the world of education the education world is converging and diverging at the same time: converging in slogans, signs and very broad definitions or practices mainly in inputs

and some outputs; diverging in meanings, policies, processes and practices. We live in a world, at least in education policies and practices, of **Yes but No** (see the Box 1 the concluding chapter). It is an undeniable fact that there is some convergence in many issues, not only the ones (mainly in inputs and some outputs) cited by Meyer et al, but also in teaching and learning as proposed by Alexander (2000 and 2001). And yet, when one delves into the more specific "interpretations" or meanings of policy drives such as centralization and decentralization, or the "comparability" of international studies (PISA and TIMSS for instance), or the "transferability" of processes, policies and practices, reality seems to be explained more by diversity than by similarity.

By itself, the centralization and decentralization of decision-making *per se* is a matter (concept, term, idea) of long debate, academically, politically and administratively. It is an issue primarily related to public administration and public management (effectiveness and efficiency) and to economics (public versus private good); but also to politics (impositions versus distribution of power) and law (devolution/transfer versus delegation/sharing of power) (Boston et al, 163). In general terms, for the lay public, decentralization may mean different things.

> The words *centralization* and *decentralization* can mean different things to different people. (Bray 2003, 205).
>
> 'Decentralisation' is an umbrella word that shelters a number of meanings…Indeed, there is a cluster of words often employed interchangeably in everyday discourse: decentralisation, delegation, devolution, deconcentration, dispersal. (Boston et al, 163)

It may mean the degree to which decisions are designed and implemented by a central authority but may also mean the actual degree of freedom or autonomy a school, the principal and the teachers, have when making and implementing decisions.

To the different meanings of decentralization, we also find related concepts such as governance, autonomy and site-based-management that make the whole inquiry into the literature of state-society relations (Popkewitz 1996, 27) very difficult to track. And yet, at least from the point of view of law, one has to be very careful about the use of words. In law (the science and practice of precision in an ambiguous world), decentralization, autonomy, delegation and deconcentration, for instance, have specific meanings (Florestal and Cooper), and they are not supposed to be used interchangeably as synonymous for other words. Under Mexican law the three former words have very different meanings, and as such, should be used differently. However, in public administration and public management, comparative education and international education, there is flexibility in the use of words and people from different backgrounds use different words to express the same idea or the same words to mean different ideas. Therefore, this is the flexible way decentralization of decision-making will be used here, i.e., as synonymous to the idea of devolution or delegation of power or decision-making. And, what is the scope of this idea? To answer this question I will borrow Boston et al's expression: "rejection of 'centralisation'" (163). In the more precise meaning of my research: if most important decisions are taken by a central government in descending order, federal or national, provincial or state, regional/sub-regional, local or district, the system is more centralized. Therefore, my classification of decentralization of decision-making follows the "territorial

centralization/decentralization" of decision-making-power definition proposed by Bray (2003, 205).

In models defined by a federal system of education, like the Mexican, Canadian, U.S. or Swiss systems, devolution of power to the states or provinces, localities or districts means that the system, at least in theory, is territorially, federally and nationally less centralized. This does not mean, necessarily, that the schools have the power of decision-making. It may mean that the power of decision-making is located at a different level of governmental authority but not within the walls of the schools. But it may also mean that the schools have the power of decision-making over key features or aspects of school education. So, in terms of the distribution of power between an authority and the school, nothing has changed, only the location of power, in one case at the national or federal level, in the other at the state or local level. For the school, and from the school point of view, the level of the "external" authority is meaningless as long as this external authority has the power of decision-making over the school. There may be the case that in a federally decentralized system (such as the Canadian or the U.S.), local or provincial authorities exert considerable power upon the schools, so that, from the school point of view, the devolution of power has not reached them at all. It might also be the case of a relatively centralized education system with schools that see themselves with considerable autonomy. This is the case of New Zealand as I will document later.

When I finally applied my interviews and questionnaires to principals, teachers and experts around the world, the decentralization and autonomy of schools were topics that required long conversations. Often, my innocent question "how centralized/decentralized is education policy in your country?" was faced with the following answer: "It all depends." For that matter, the qualification was in place. For countries with very specific regional distribution of power, like the U.S., Canada or Switzerland, the question was then divided into two questions: one for the country and one for the district, province or region. For countries with very different systems, like those of Great Britain (England and Scotland) and Belgium (Flanders), the question was phrased with only one meaning, country and region; they are the same unit of analysis or observation in the Bray and Thomas sense. This is the reason why my presentation of findings is divided into two categories, country and regional (regional meaning state or provincial governments, such as, Flanders, Belgium or Boston, Massachusetts). Most accurate and comparable data is therefore provided at the regional level. However, for countries such as Mexico or France, with very large and centralized education systems, the whole meaning of decentralization might be the devolution of power to states or provinces, not to schools: devolving power to the states or provinces will be seen, in those countries, as an aggressive move towards decentralization. Therefore, making comparisons across these systems is rather painful and has to be done with bistoury. In addition to Hall's opinion that "comparative studies in education are about the business of comparing what is comparable" (1977, 81), comparative education is a field or "context" or "approach" in education that can make suggestions in order to show that some "things" are not comparable and can not be compared at all and, therefore, can not be borrowed, loaned or transferred.

Because decentralization of decision-making not only has different meanings for different people, or different reform policies taking the same label of decentralization (Gershberg, 63) or different fields or angles of study (law, economics, sociology,

politics, international and comparative education, and so on), I had to choose an angle too, i.e., comparative education and traveling policies. Notwithstanding, since it is impossible to make reference to decentralization only from the comparative education/traveling point of view, I will draw, here and there, propositions or insights from analysts in the public administration, translation and globalization literatures as I have done so far . To make things more complicated, many of the essays written about decentralization of education have been written without the international or comparative perspective in mind. They have been written with a national or domestic level of analysis perspective only.

But whatever the meaning of decentralization, decentralization policies were often associated with new public management, neo-liberalism (Gershberg, 99), new responses to globalization (Astiz et al), etc. Decentralization of decision-making became a fad in the 1980s and 1990s, as science policy in the 1960s and 1970s (Finnemore). They not only became a fad; from the label point of view, they were implemented everywhere in the world in systems as culturally different as those in Europe (Amelsvoort and Scheerens) and Latin America (Gershberg 99, Kaufam and Nelson, see footnotes 5 and 6 in this chapter).

There are many papers devoted to the decentralization issue (devolution of decision-making power, autonomy, and site-based management). It is beyond the purpose of this essay to account for, or review all the literature in this area. Besides, people have written about decentralization of education from very different epistemic groups. Therefore, there is no single work that can properly review the entire literature. As per the issue of decentralization of education adopted from a fad or adapted to local needs, the following are some of the authors to follow: Dale (1997 and 1999), Astiz, Gershberg, Green, Grindle, Popkewitz (1996), Lindblad and Popkewitz (2004), Steiner-Khamsi (several publications) and Whitty. Most notably people in the literature of borrowing, lending and transferring of education policies have argued against decentralization, not as a fad, but as the meaning of the concept or idea of decentralization across systems (for instance, Dale and Popkewitz) or cautioned us about the extreme complexities in the processes of "attraction", borrowing or lending (Phillips 1989, 272, Steiner-Khamsi 2004, Dale 2006)

Dale, who did not precisely identify with the epistemic community of borrowing, lending and translation, wrote, in 1997, the following idea that new research in the area, including mine, has found to be true:

> However, there has been little investigation of the precise mechanisms of these schemes, and it frequently appears to be assumed that what is 'privatization' or 'decentralization' in one country is the same in another. Recognizing, though, that education systems have nowhere (with the possible example of Chile) [which I do not think is a good example neither] literally been privatized, and that there are numerous and very different possible interpretations of decentralization, delegation, devolution, and so on, should give us pause before assuming that we are talking about the same phenomenon. (Dale 1997, 273) (Brackets added by the author).

In order to offer some evidence of how different systems may arrive at decentralization from totally different reasons and may also define decentralization in different ways, I

will devote a few paragraphs to the decentralization of school education systems in Mexico, New Zealand, the U.S and Singapore. Later on (chapters four and five), I will use data collected from my research to show, from a wider perspective, the lack of convergence in education policies and education systems around the world.

In search of meaning: decentralization in Mexico, New Zealand, U.S and Singapore.

Mexico

Most of the work written about decentralization and school autonomy in Mexico is policy-based. And most of the non-policy-based literature is descriptive only. Very few works are framed within the comparative and international education literature. The paper by McGuin and Street is one of those. The authors compare three Latin American decentralization policy cases—Chile, Peru and Mexico. From these narrative comparisons, they arrive at the conclusion that changes in education policies are a function, primarily, of policy makers' preferences, i.e., the state's preferences. Policy makers from non-democratic, non-pluralist societies will decentralize as long as the decentralization policies benefit the groups or interests that are similar to the interests of the ruling group. There is no real democratic participation in these countries. Their decentralization policies are not genuine.

> Genuine decentralization or participation of all the people first requires the achievement of consensus at least about the value of widespread participation. This can be achieved in a pluralist society, that is, one in which there exist strong groups with projects different from those of the state. But it cannot be achieved, or at least maintained for long, in a society with marked social divisions that deny some groups access to the resources necessary to achieve their objectives. A strong state must first achieve some minimal degree of social equity so that decentralization can lead to genuine participation. (McGinn and Street, 490)

Despite the correct strong conclusions that seem to be in line with the politics of Mexican decentralization policies in education, their analysis does not fall into the subject area of my research which is to what extent decentralization policies are, homogeneously, adopted by high-performing countries, i.e. to what extent these decentralization policies are comparable, or to what extent the meaning of decentralization for decision-making is the same across these countries. Nevertheless, this is an article that compares education policies and, from this perspective, is similar to my research. One additional point, though. The McGinn and Street paper was published in 1986, five and a half years before the largest education modernization/decentralization policy ever designed and implemented in Mexico. In May 1993, the national government issued a new modernization and decentralization policy wrapped up in the so-called ANMEB[8] (National Understanding for the Modernization of School Education in Mexico). This "Acuerdo" or understanding was presented as a "social agreement" with all groups directly or indirectly involved in education, from the national union of teachers (Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de

[8] The most recent and largest attempt by Mexican authorities to decentralize the education system and education policy-making. ANMEB is the Spanish acronym for "Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación Básica".

la Educación—SNTE) to the governors of the 31 states of Mexico, business organizations, and even church leaders. The analysis of the politics and law of the decentralization (Andere, 2006) of education policy in Mexico shows that the decentralization was more an example of a political act than a real policy shift. At the end, more power was given to the national union of teachers, SNTE, and the really substantial issues of school education policy were kept at the center within the confines of the federal government. Since then, policies of decentralization and devolution of decision-making to states and schools have been limited to political declarations and rhetorical legitimizing. McGuinn and Street were, and still are, right in their conclusions, at least for the case of Mexico, as much as eight years before the so-called decentralization policies became effective in 1993.

In a more recent article about education policy in Mexico, Posner raises the question about the risks and difficulties of educational policy change in the transition from a corporativist system under a corporativist state into a liberal democracy (401). But although the paper does not concentrate on policy matters per se, i.e., decentralization of decision-making and devolution of power to states and schools, he describes the system where decision-making is kept and controlled by the state and its ruling class.

> The history of Mexico, from its political revolution of 1910 until recent times, is an example of a system and practice of education which emphasizes control and in which the middle class never enjoyed relative independence, being beholden to the system itself for its continued existence.

Relevant to my research from Posner's exploratory analysis is the observation of the limited research (for whatever reason) in topics related to education policy, as pointed out at the beginning of this section. The research is even scarcer when the topic of research is education decentralization and devolution of policies (Posner, 403 and 412). Posner is not the only one pointing to the need for more independent research in education policy. Reimers (2003) has also stressed the need for more research and greater acceptance from policy makers of research conducted by academics.

Gershberg, like McGinn and Street, also analyzes the education decentralization of Mexico but in his case as compared to Nicaragua. Gershberg reminds us that the decentralization of school education in both cases, as pointed out before, was supported and, in fact, promoted by the multilateral community.

Mexico, for reasons outlined by Gershberg, Ornelas, Andere (2003 and 2006), Tatto and others, cannot be used as an example of "real" decentralization, despite claims from politicians and policy-makers otherwise, since what in Mexico was sloganized[9] as modernization and decentralization of education actually mutated into recentralization of decision-making but by different means. Therefore, I decided to look briefly at other country-specific cases to try to understand the meaning of decentralization as a response to the so-called external colossal forces of globalization and economic competition. We know by the work of Astiz et al that there is no evidence for a strong direct relationship between globalization and decentralization. My study adds evidence to the lack of convergence of school education and, therefore, to the limitations of international

[9] ONeill (1) uses the word "slogan" to exemplify the case that reform or change in education might mean different things to different people

studies when making claims about their comparisons in policies, processes and practices.

Tatto claims that "the rhetoric of the reform includes talk about improving education to move the country toward a global economy and a growing democratic and technological society" (259), I did not find, however, in the wording of ANMEB, a single direct reference to the "global economy" or to the global threat, or to the global society or to the "global" word per se.[10] The drafters of the most important reform of education in Mexico towards modernization were not thinking, at all, in terms of the relationship between education and globalization. It was not clear, from this public and most important document (ANMEB), if education was seen as a response to the challenges of globalization or was actually an action to move the country towards a desirable global economy. But whatever the relationship, the policy-makers' view of education resulted in a plan of modernization and deconcentration or decentralization. The drafters of ANMEB used the following argument for the launching of the reform:

> There exists a clear *consensus* about the need to transform the education system in Mexico. This social claim, spread not only geographically across the whole country but also among all sectors of society, is a call for quality in education. (Zedillo et al, 3) [Translation by the author. Italics added by the author].

And yet the government, or the drafters of the document, provided no evidence of such consensus. There seems to be evidence to the contrary (Andere, 2006). Parents and teachers, at least, seem to be satisfied with the quality of school education in Mexico. They were content at the beginning of the 1990s and they are pleased with the system at the beginning of the 2000s. The drafters went even further and affirmed that there was "wide consensus" (Zedillo et al, 12 and 15) to implement curriculum changes both to primary or elementary education and lower secondary education. Again, the policy-makers or the drafters of ANMEB did not provide any evidence of such "wide consensus."

Therefore, there is no evidence that the decentralization (territorial decentralization) in the Mexican case, first, was a clear reaction to a global threat; second, did really materialize into "real decentralization"; and third, reduced the control (Tatto, 280) of the central government in the most important components of education policy. As per the state of affairs after ANMEB, central control was reaffirmed and increased. This is shown by Andere 2006 contrasting what the national or federal authorities retained as decision-making power vis-à-vis the states' governments after the ANMEB (Andere, 2006, 48). At the end, what the decentralization of education policy in Mexico meant was more work for states but not more power of decision-making. Buildings, the management of buildings and the management of the teachers' payroll were transferred to the states. The central government kept control of the core curriculum, labor policies and school schedules. No real decision-making upon the substance of education policy was transferred to the states, least of all to the schools. The Mexican case is a perfect example of reform-talking; it was a good example of reform at the rhetorical level and it was a good example of a "sloganized" reform. The decentralization of the education system in Mexico never crystallized (as devolution of power).

[10] Contrary to what Tatto says (p.560), President Salinas did not technically sign the ANMEB. His signature was only "ornamental" under the heading of "witness".

Decentralization of education in Mexico might be also explained by the instrumentalist hypothesis of politics and decision-making. There appears to be evidence that in some developing countries decentralization is instrumental to the center's conservation of power (McGuinn and Street, p. 472). This instrumentalist approach appears to tie very well with non-democratic and non-pluralistic countries (McGuinn and Street). Decentralization policies will be carried out only, in these non-democratic-non-pluralistic regimes, if they are deemed as politically correct and instrumental to the control of power by those who already control power (McGuinn and Street). Decentralization of education in Mexico, according to these authors, is not explained by external forces. For these authors, the external-forces hypothesis would have less explanatory power, if any at all, than the internal political forces and idiosyncrasies. And yet, these internal forces are not at all grass-roots based as in the U.S. case. They bounce between perceptions and ideas of what works, on one side, and the political considerations of what is convenient, on the other side, for politicians and policy-makers.

What Mexican authorities called decentralization, at least based on the attempts of ANMEB, can hardly be identified as "rejection of centralization" or devolution of power either. The Mexican case seems to fit smoothly into the instrumentalist hypothesis outlined above.

New Zealand

New Zealand is a good example of radical decentralization and public management reform imitated by many. New Zealand is widely acknowledged as one of the systems where decentralization and New Public Management has taken place in a radical way (Boston et al) or a broad way (Dale 2001, 496). Decentralization and devolution of decision-making power in New Zealand was done holistically to the entire public system. And the education component did not escape the national movement. Even though education reform was part of a comprehensive new public management approach, three reasons were given as justification for the reform in education: perceived "poor educational outcomes"; "deficiencies in educational administration" and "preparing New Zealand to participate fully in an internationally competitive economy and society." (Boston et al, 171).

According to the Education Review Office (as cited by Boston et al, 172)

> "The aim … was to be achieved by altering the incentive structure within the administration of education through two major structural changes. The first was to abolish all layers of administration between the central state agencies and the local school in order to locate decision making as close as possible to the point of implementation and thereby achieve greater administrative efficiency and responsiveness.
>
> The second was to alter the balance of power between the providers and the clients of education by providing communities with the means for a greater say in the running of their schools and for expressing their expectations about children's education"

By some standards, for instance, in the Mexican view, this New Zealand way of decentralizing would be seen as a centralization of authority move rather than a decentralization one, since local or provincial intermediaries were eliminated. At the end, the New Zealand education system, according to Boston et al (172), is collapsed between the two new stakeholders, i.e., the Ministry of Education and the "parent-elected board of education" in each school. This is why, as we will see later, the answers I received from my interviewees in New Zealand were located at the very left-end of the centralization-decentralization continuum (see Graphs S1 and S2, Annex 2), especially for a country that is seen, after the Tomorrow's Schools' initiative, as a much "decentralized" one.

New Zealand is then a good example of centralization of decision-making (in as much as intermediaries between the school and the central government were eliminated or collapsed) in education policy under the umbrella of decentralization-rhetoric. With a different twist than that for the Mexican case, decentralization in New Zealand meant centralization and yet by different total forces and logic. In both cases the slogan decentralization was used; in both cases the end-of-the-day result of the so-called decentralization reform meant more control by the central authority. And yet, the Mexican and New Zealand reforms have nothing in common. In New Zealand, autonomy of schools was increased dramatically even with more power of decision-making at the national or central government level. In Mexico, neither autonomy to schools nor devolution of decision-making really occurred. In New Zealand schools are autonomous since school boards are able to manage the schools directly without intervention from a local authority or from government member representation on the parental school boards. The autonomy is confirmed by the perceptions' data of my study (see Graph S3a, Annex 2) where New Zealand is located to the right of the less-autonomy more-autonomy spectrum. In Mexico, independent decision-making school boards do not even exist for public or government-sponsored schools. Therefore, decentralization and autonomy do not necessarily come together or mean the same thing. Comparing the two systems under the same label is not only fruitless but wrong. The two brief descriptions of the "decentralization" movements of both Mexico and New Zealand reflect totally different conceptions of devolution of power: the two movements rest on different histories and political interactions.

As per the relation between education and globalization in New Zealand compared to Mexico, it is not clear whether the drive towards decentralization was decided after or as a reaction to the promotion, persuasion of or interaction with international organizations or was actually the result of rational decision-makers trying to reform the entire governmental sector to improve achievements in all areas. Analysis and data seem to point to the view that a least a "dialect" between international and national actors occurred when the system was being designed and implemented (Dale 2001, 496).

These two examples, even before looking at the complete data-set of my research, draw an image of convergence and divergence. **Yes**, decentralization and autonomy became, and still are, in some ways, buzzwords or rhetorical slogans in the new wave of education policy and system reforms around the world of the last two decades of the twentieth century. **But no**, there is a difference. The convergence of systems and policies seems to be occurring only at the talking levels and for rhetorical reasons, perhaps for legitimizing purposes of policy-makers (Van Haecht, 69), making them

appear modern, updated[11] and proper. The convergence dialogue and discourse might have occurred, perhaps, as a response to the needs and desires of a specific "epistemic community" (Finnemore).

United States

Not all decentralization stories come as well-defined, packed and strategically-designed as in the governmental strategic plans to change education policy in Mexico and New Zealand. A totally different story of decentralization and autonomy of schools is provided by the United States example. The pressure for independence between schools and city governments came from grass roots, civic organizations, not from epistemic communities, government-based or academia-formed or both (Gittell). The movement originated at the people's level (Kaufman, 6). Boards of Education in America were meant to channel public participation in schools (Gittell, 670). They were not the bureaucratic design of a group of people in the policy-making ranks advised by academic experts or international organization communities.

> The local board of education was designed to be the primary means of citizen participation in school policy making. (Gittell, 670)

School governance and decentralization in the U.S. continued to evolve towards more community control of schools (Gittell, 677). Only in recent years have there been increasing strikes against the tradition of local community control of schools. One of those strikes has originated from standardization efforts (another fad movement that has not yet converged around the high-performing countries and yet has apparently been adopted by other countries, such as Mexico[12]) across the world and the U.S.

One statistic often given as an indication of centralization in education policy in the U.S. is the sharp decrease in the number of school districts from a total of 117,108 in 1939-1940 to a total of 14,383 in 2003-2004 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2001). But even more recently, the No Child Left Behind Act of President Bush has challenged the decentralization tradition with more federal intervention through a strategic web of goals, rules and monetary incentives. Nonetheless, and at least to the beginning of the new century, decentralization of education in the U.S., has been a battle fought and won at the street level, at the community level; nothing that relates to a reaction to external forces such as globalization or competition. In Mexico and New Zealand, devolution-of-power ideas have been originated by established epistemic communities with a top-down designed plan, without "street fights." None of these three stories can be explained by the influence of external forces with the promotion of international intermediaries. International intermediaries were present, but there is no clear unambiguous proof that national authorities reacted to their presence or to "pressure" more than they reacted to a "rational" drive for improvement (New Zealand) or to a "rational" drive for political accommodation and enhancement of the ruling elite (Mexico).

The brief review of these three examples helps us to answer partially the following questions: Why and how the policies are finally adopted? And, what is the way these

[11] Suggested by Roger Dale in a personal interview in his office at Bristol University on April 10, 2006.
[12] On February 9, 2006 the Secretary of Education in Mexico revealed a plan to test all Mexican students at different cycles in primary and lower secondary schools (Comunicación Social, 2006).

policies have affected or not the national systems of education? I will use one additional example to deal with these questions.

Singapore

Singapore is a traveling regime in search for ideas and policies. At the outset Singapore's education policies seem very modern and westernized—they are. But from inside out the story has two explanations. One as given by Professor Gopinathan and detailed in the first chapter of this report; a second one is explained by my observations and some interviews. Policies and practices in education in Singapore are designed, organized and dictated by a very powerful, centralized, yet effective, government. As will be explained elsewhere, getting access to Singapore's schools was an insurmountable endeavor during my first visit. Even with the help of the Mexican Embassy to my request, access to schools was denied. It took me more than a year and a half of cultivating a network of academic relations that finally got me access to some schools.

I was appalled by the synchronization of answers I got from all principals and teachers and the few academic people I was able to interview. The whole system works as an orchestra, Singapore is not only a city-state; it is also an orchestra state with outstanding results in almost all sectors of the economy and society. For example, there are many fads in Singapore policies; one of them is encapsulated under the word "creativity". Policy-makers, experts, principals and teachers talk about the creativity drive; changes in curriculum and schools are done to make (it is believed) students more creative. They have made their merit-driven school system more flexible into a talent-driven system: "think out of the box" is one of those slogans that reflect the spoken change. But creativity is passed to schools, principals and teachers as a recipe, as one interviewee from elsewhere told me: "Is like if the policy makers ordered the schools and students to be creative".

If we do not have the history and the context, we can not understand the policies, the real meaning of policies. In Singapore decisions simulate markets, decentralization, autonomy and competition; decisions made at the top are followed by all in the middle and at the bottom. And decisions are usually baptized by slogans so they can easily filtrate down to society so all synchronically march together; slogans such as "Thinking Schools, Learning Nation" or "Teach Less, Learn More". Decentralization and marketization happen in Singapore more at the slogan and simulation levels and labels than at the real devolution of power and autonomy concepts.

Yes but No

Trying to find some answers to solve the puzzle of convergence and divergence, I looked into the literature of public policy and education in a comparative setting. The literature on the public policy of school education is very thin (Van Haecht, p. 51). There are few articles relating to public policy, as a field of study, in education and therefore, the field has received much more attention from the educationalists per se or the economists and sociologists of education than from public policy or public administration quarters. However, the article by Van Haecht could be one exception. She tries to piece together the public-policy approach with an international comparative perspective. At the end she gets into the difficulties we all get into when comparing

education policies: **yes but no**. There are some tendencies or patterns in education systems and policies and features, and yet, idiosyncrasies, situations, national contexts and institutions matter most. And yet again, policies travel: there are tendencies like decentralization and (re)centralization, and new ideologies, neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism that have shaped some policies and these policies have traveled. However, Van Haecht seems trapped (we all are) when, at the end, idiosyncrasies and context matter most.

According to Van Haecht, one thought seems to be true in almost every case, notwithstanding the lack of tendencies in decentralization and school choice and (re)centralization—the state, the nation-state continues to be the central most important player in education policy:

> In the domain of educational policies, consequently, it would be naive to overestimate the likelihood of the state's eventual elimination. Territorial policies are definitely under the state's control, which has transferred part of its power (but can, if need be, recover them), and maintains control over what is judged fundamental in terms of the government's dominant orientation (Van Haecht, 69).

New Zealand schools and school board members would agree with this statement. With devolution and site-based management and all that follows from Tomorrow's Schools, the Ministry of Education in New Zealand has the power to suppress the Board of Trustees of any school if things are not going well. The Ministry rarely uses the power but the power is there in case it is "necessary" to intervene and take over. In the Mexican case, the statement seems to be true as well as the central government has been able to keep, and in some cases to increase, its role in national education policies. New decisions that involve national assessments and standardization buttress this argument. The U.S., however, is a different story, although many people believe that the NCLBA is changing the system to a very central stage. There are also new calls stemming from academia and the national press in favor of a more centrally-controlled system through national standards and national exams.

At the end Van Haecht's analysis falls more within the boundaries of a comparative education field rather than public policy. But she addresses questions of methodology, theoretical versus empirical approaches, and specific comparisons of centralization/decentralization policies in education in a handful of countries (US, UK, Germany and Scandinavian Countries).

Therefore, the comparisons of education systems and policies of the kind carried about in my research are not foreign to the literature of comparative education or public policy/administration literatures. The intersection of the two is rarely found—not even in Van Haechts' paper. Public Policy analysts will concentrate more on the politics and efficiencies of a particular system or a specific nation-state, as the ones cited before - the New Zealand case and the U.S. case, for example. Comparative and international education, however, is the only field that can claim a greater role both theoretically or deductively and empirically or inductively, when intruding, comparing or construing national policies of education across boundaries. This is why my research should be primarily framed by the comparative and international slants.

The Role of International Organizations

So, from the analysis of the three main cases, although by different means and resources, whether new or in a large federal centrally-controlled system, i.e. Mexico, or in a small nationally-monolithic system, i.e. New Zealand, or large federal and yet state-controlled system, national or federal states remain powerful in education. According to Professor Roger Dale, the power of states at least in Europe and the European Union's efforts to develop common educational policies, especially at the higher education level, might be fading.[13]. This could also be explained by the rescaling and redistribution of power among local, regional, national and global entities (Robertson 2006a y Robertson 2006b). Nevertheless, this transnationalism or supranationalism does not seem to be pervading other regions of the world. When states have the power over their education systems (whether we are in a federal or national system of education), they exercise power by means of curriculum, standards and examinations or by means of incentives, e.g. the U.S. The closest we get to the mundialisation of school education policies and practices is through the borrowing/lending practices of ideas and policies promoted by international organizations. Even here, we are far from a world of supranational structures and regulatory frameworks.

And yet, we observe a lot of change in governmental policies, at the national level, in education. The literature about the influence of globalization and traveling policies, even if the apparent adoption is only followed for rhetorical or legitimizing reasons, (Van Haecht p. 69), is humongous. Most of the new research has been influenced by international organizations i.e., OECD, UNESCO, World Bank and the governments behind them.

Comparative research of education systems was facilitated by Jullien's dream of compiled and organized data (as cited by Crossley and Watson, 34-35) when international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and OECD started to accumulate large and standardized data-sets (Crossley and Watson, 35). A brief review of publications from UNESCO, the World Bank, the OECD and IEA's sponsored assessments (TIMSS and PIRLS for example) tells a very eloquent story about the improvements in data-gathering and data-sharing. PISA and TIMSS in mathematics and PISA and PIRLS in reading offer a mine of normalized or standardized information that facilitates comparisons. But the facilitation of comparisons by the "abundance" of information can also take comparability to the extremes. Information provided in an aggregated and standardized data-set can also lead to shallow or insufficient analysis as Crossley and Watson (35) warn, and as I will try to document throughout this report.

The epitome of the inductive approaches in comparative education research is then represented by cross-national studies such as those promoted by the OECD in PISA and by IEA in TIMSS and PIRLS. Within this realm, the inductive one is where my research is to be found. However, I have tried to relate, as much as possible, the inductive findings and relations of my project to theoretical propositions.

All sorts of relations and comparisons are drawn from the international studies such as PISA and TIMSS. The secretariats of the organizations responsible for PISA and

[13] Point raised by Prof. Roger Dale during a personal interview in his office at Bristol University on April 4, 2006.

TIMSS, with the help of international networks and teams, not only limit their task to the release and publication of results; they go as far as making claims about what works and does not work in education policies and practices. They do it not only by comparing results of assessments but by relating those results to policies and practices, even to education systems' features and organizations. They not only compare they try to transfer as well.

One of those relations is found in OECD's comparative studies of national systems and policies of education as they pertain to centralization/decentralization of decision-making and school autonomy. The analysis of centralization/decentralization of making decisions and the classification derived thereby are the direct predecessors of my research. Apart from being inductive and comparative in nature, the end result of both studies, OECD's and mine, is the location of patterns, the ordering of tendencies and the classification or categorization of education systems or policies according to certain criteria. After all this comparing and analyzing, I conclude this report by suggesting some research venues and policy orientations.

Colophon

Much research is needed in order to map Mexico's education system in the international comparative agenda of education. This research contributes to the rather small literature of comparative education and decentralization of decision-making and school autonomy. Is Mexico following a worldwide converging path of decentralization and autonomy? Is the world of education in education around the world converging or diverging? What is the role of international organizations? Can we generalize the apparent lack of convergence in the three countries Mexico, New Zealand and the U.S. to the world arena? Is the world of education policies and practices converging or diverging? I turn to these questions in the next chapter where some evidence is offered from the field work.

Chapter 4: Are decentralization and autonomy related to school's quality?

Introduction

From any point of view international organizations such as the World Bank and the OECD have played, and still play, an important role in education and education policies around the globe. They are seen, by many, as agents or transmitters for policies and ideas. Very little can be said about decentralization and autonomy in comparative and international education without referring to the ideas and proposals of international organizations. International organizations are embedded in the world of traveling policies and practices. Or traveling policies and practices are embedded in the studies, agendas and proposals of international organizations. This chapter then deals with the role of international organizations and some of their proposals in education. The chapter is divided into three sections: The first section reviews some theoretical considerations about the role of international organizations in education policies and practices. The theoretical fabric will help us to place the empirical findings within theories, so readers can easily relate arguments and counterarguments from field work or empirical evidence to theories. The second section of the chapter presents the views of one international organization, i.e. OECD, relating to the topics of concern throughout all chapters: i.e. decentralization and autonomy in comparative and international education. The last section will compare OECD's studies and proposals to my own research findings.

International Agendas and International Organizations: Decentralization and Autonomy

How far is the world of national education policies really explained by international factors, and by the role of international organizations? International organizations play an important role in shaping new policies of education (Keith Watson 1996, 213); they have at least actively tried as we have seen before. Whether they have been effective or not is another relevant question.

The evidence of my research seems to show that the world of school education policy does not follow specific "international established" patterns; in other words, there is not an ideal model for school education policies and practices; or there are not "benchmarks" or "best practices".

This research seems to show that what we can aspire, at best, is to a world of good practices and good policies. Nevertheless, we need more travels before we arrive at concrete evidence. Since international organizations are seen as key factors in the interaction between a world of global culture or global forces (globalization or competition) and national education systems, we have to study a little more the interaction as it relates to decentralization of decision-making and autonomy of schools. It is the thesis of this chapter that since international organizations were so keen (as will be documented later) in promoting an ideal model of school education based on decentralization and autonomy, in order to demystify the belief of an ideal model we have to show first that international organizations were indeed promoting the "ideal model" and secondly that the ideal model never really landed.

International organizations (and their governmental sponsors) have their own agenda for promoting change in education systems. It is an agenda based on specific recommendations about the basic shape of national education systems. International organizations act as intermediaries between world systemic changes, i.e., economic forces, distribution of labor, world economic order, competition, globalization and national states.

In one extreme view, we may understand changes at home by looking at changes abroad.

> World-systems analysis restores the international dimension to the field of comparative and international education. It provides a framework that is essential to an understanding of educational developments and reforms that are simultaneously sweeping many of the countries of the world. (Arnove 1980, 62)

In a broad sense comparative education research can never be really divorced from the linkages between the different levels of analysis. What happens in the schools is really also affected by what happens in the economy and society at large; and what happens in the nation is also affected by "accommodation" and "re-accommodation" of international factors, forces or events. Even within the more narrow perspective of "comparative pedagogy" Alexander (2001, 511) states:

> For pedagogy does not begin and end in the classroom. It can be comprehended only once one locates practice within the concentric circles of local and national, and of classroom, school, system and state, and only if one steers constantly back and forth between these, exploring the way that what teachers and students do in classrooms both reflects and enacts the values of the wider society.

It can be inferred that the wider society is affected also by the international factors, forces or ideas as they land into new territories by different means or mechanisms. See, for instance, Dale's "typology of mechanisms of external effects on national policies" (1999, 6).

At the other extreme view, international factors and international organizations have not shaped national policies and practices under a single pattern. Under this extreme, policies and practices have not converged. Or in other words, there is not an ideal model of school education policies and practices.

Experts from different epistemic groups accept the influence of international forces (globalization, for instance), and the mediation of international organizations, but not all of them see the result of this international-national interaction as converging or diverging. This is summed up by Professor Dale (1999, 1) in the introductory paragraph of the abstract to his paper on globalization and its mechanisms:

> This paper attempts to clarify the concept of globalization and to specify how globalization affects national education systems. It argues that though globalization represents a qualitative change in the nature of national-supranational relations, this does not necessarily imply greater homogeneity of policy or practice in education.

There are those who see the world converging by an international culture of world standards based on a rational view of individual growth tied to national development with international and national institutions finely attuned (Boli, Ramirez and Meyer, 1985) by a rationalistic world culture (Meyer et al, 1990) which drives change at the national level (Arnove) to the very low levels or units of analysis:

> To the increasingly sophisticated intracountry analyses that are being undertaken, there must now be added a global perspective. World-systems analysis not only expands macro analyses to take international system, but it enhances our understanding of the source of change and conflict in the micro system of school and classroom. (Arnove 1980, 62)

Within this debate Roger Dale (2000) describes and summarizes the relationship of international organizations, globalization and education policy as explained by two approaches to the theory of the influence of supranational forces or international organizations upon national education systems or, in short, the relationship between globalization and education. The two approaches referred to as "Common World Educational Culture" (CWEC) and "Globally Structured Educational Agenda" (GSEA) sustain that globalization and education are related.

The two approaches differ, not on the existence of the relationship, but on how the relationship is explained and to what extent globalization (international factors) affects education. CWEC or world culture proponents, according to Dale, believe that the relationship is of a causal nature from a system of values and beliefs around a "world culture" (Meyer et al 1997) to educational systems. This causal relationship is triggered by the cognitive or scientific value of the world culture and by international organizations as transmitters.

The GSEA or global agenda proponents believe that the transmitter agent between globalization and education relies, too, on international organizations, governmental or non-governmental, but for different reasons. International organizations like UNESCO with a less aggressive approach, or the World Bank or the IMF with a more assertive approach (loans tied to specific policy responses), influence education systems. But unlike the CWEC approach where educational practices and policies are transmitted by their own scientific or intrinsic value, the global agenda approach believes that those practices are actually a reflection of the well-defined and powerful economic and political forces of capitalism that have to take into account the context and history of each nation-state to fully explain the relationship between globalization and education (Dale 2000). In other words: "interaction matters" (between the institutions of the world culture and the institutions of the nation-state.)

For CWEC the world curriculum and massification of education are givens, a direct consequence of the world culture, or assumed to be the result of world culture being imposed. For GSEA, they are non-homogenous practices; isomorphism of policies, practices and national education institutions is something that has to be demonstrated (Dale, 2000, 448). For the world-culture approach (CWEC), the nation-states are not obsolete, but they are certainly not alone since world science, culture, values and beliefs of a rationalistic nature, per se, drive policies and practices in education. For the world-culture approach, the agents for the transmission of the system values into education are the international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank and OECD (Dale,

2000, 443). However, for the global-agenda (GSEA) approach, the issue is much more complicated. For this approach the relationship between education and globalization is a function of a complex (dialectical in nature) interaction between international agents (international organizations) and nation-states (national dominant powers). It is an interaction between the epistemic community of international organizations with a specific agenda, by means of support, imposition, diffusion, persuasion or promotion (Dale 1999) and the national policy-makers framed by contextual, historic and institutional forces of national education systems. The global agenda model sees the world of education converging at the agenda level but not at the practice or policy end of education.

From a less theoretical and more empirical perspective, we find some evidence of the intentional influence of international organizations in the works of Reimers and Gershberg for the specific case of the Latin American region. There are even those who see almost a complete surrender of national policies to international agencies driven by globalization (McGinn, 350-351). What we do not have evidence for yet, is whether the **intentional** influence has translated into a global or shared global educational model, or in other words, if similar policies and practices, **meaning the same thing**, have been actually, and at the end of the day, adopted by high-, middle- and low-performing nation-states or regions or systems of education.

Should we have convergence in policies and practices **meaning the same thing**, then we would have strong evidence of a clear connection of external forces like capitalism and globalization to education policies by means of a common culture by whatever medium. And we would have evidence of the existence of an ideal model of school education. But, if policies and practices of high-, middle- and low-performing countries are not similar, in substance, i.e., meaning the same thing, then the world is better explained by the interaction hypothesis or dialectic hypothesis suggested by the global agenda (GSEA) approach, i.e. a more complex world of school education.

By looking at the descriptive features of decentralization and school autonomy of Mexico, New Zealand and the U.S. (Chapter 3), one does not find evidence to support convergence in education policies and practices. But, can the lack of convergence in these three cases be generalized to other countries or regions around the world?

Reimers states that in Latin America there seems to be evidence of the influence of international agencies for a "model" of education emphasizing efficiency and competitiveness (Reimers, 2002, 57 and 59), whereas Gershberg affirms that "Nearly every country in Latin America has implemented some form of educational decentralization policy" (63). Although, as implied by Gershberg too, the latter is so widely defined that it may mean anything. Therefore, we are back to square one: we do not have convergence then in one of the most actively-promoted policies or practices, i.e. decentralization.

The problem that I see with the world culture (CWEC) approach is that when its exponents talk about globalization and education and the transmission of practices and policies, they only refer to two practices or trends: massive schooling or "massive and rapid spread of national educational systems" and curriculum isomorphism or the "unexpected global isomorphism of curricular categories across the world" (Dale, 2000,

430). The latter example is, according to Dale (2000, 430 f.n. 11), the one that "represents the strongest statement of the CWEC case."

Two observations and a critique: if massive schooling and curriculum homogeneity across the world are the two mostly widely-spread ("unexpected") shared practices, a counter argument would be that the world culture approach has selected two educational practices or outcomes that would have been observed, anyway, across the world, whether we live in a global, pre-global or post global world. All nations in the world, whatever the level of development or political ideology, have increased the number of students (absolute and relative) in schools. Second, chances are that topics such as science and mathematics, with general accepted principles and laws, will be similarly adopted (in curriculums and contents) by all countries whatever their global or national situation or context (the law of gravity is the same whether it is taught in Mexico or China; 2+2 = 4 is also global). There is only one science of mathematics and one science of physics and chemistry and biology. In those sciences, the curriculums of all nations and all school districts around the world will have to be the same or significantly equal if they teach mathematics, physics and chemistry. But when we go to topics or subjects such as language, history, social sciences, and the arts, the values and ideologies and idiosyncrasies of each nation or state or even each local school district or school, in centralized or decentralized systems, will play an important role. So, the proposition in this matter is that non-scientifically related curriculums will be more local and more contextual, whereas more scientifically-related curriculums will be similar and will look alike across the board. But this similarity or isomorphism does not stem from global influences, metropolitan hegemonic forces or international politics; it originates from the logic of its own cognitive value of scientific knowledge.

Even at the level of curriculum and other "simple matters", King warns us of the difficulties of comparisons among systems (371).

> In the particular case of comparative education, the record since the 1960s reveals many instances of failure to understand or convey the exact meaning of scholastic terminology, even in such simple matters as enrolments, attendance, teaching and 'guidance'; the curricular or career importance locally of such items as Latin or mathematics; the 'hidden curriculum' actually experienced not merely by the bulk of the school population but by groups or individuals within it; and so on.

The world culture approach does not really go into the area of policies and practices of education; they measure the assumed isomorphism on outcomes (mass schooling) or inputs (curriculum) but not on policies and processes, i.e., how inputs are translated into outcomes and models, production models so to speak. Their theoretically-built model has to be tested in the realm of policies and practices such as the widely-promoted policies of decentralization and autonomy of education, for instance.

My research seeks to add new evidence to the lack of isomorphism in education policies and practices with specific emphasis on decentralization and autonomy policies. I expect to do this by showing how systems of school education around the world are structured in such matters as decentralization and autonomy. The OECD, for instance, has specifically studied education systems though the influence of decentralization and autonomy policies. The OECD began its incursion into the analysis of education systems in the late eighties and early nineties. The first issue of Education at a Glance

(OECD 1992) identifies the following indicator: "Decision-making characteristics" comprising the following measures: locus of decision-making; decision-making by schools; domains of decision-making; modes of decision-making and school autonomy in decision-making (OECD 1992, 13). Since then and on three occasions, the OECD has paid attention to this issue in different studies and publications.

Decentralization of decision-making and autonomy of schools: OECD's Views

There are two different ways the OECD has gathered information and produced reports in relation to the topics of decentralization or devolution of decision-making and autonomy of schools and school members (school boards, principals, head teachers and teachers). One of those ways is reported in the Education at a Glance series. The other one is in a fairly new publication OECD 2005b entitled "School Factors Related to Quality and Equity: Results from PISA 2000." The two ways or methodologies are based on data gathered by means of perceptions. However, the perceptions are gathered from two quite different groups and questionnaires. The two studies are here presented separately and are not related at all. I will compare the two OECD studies to my own research. In any case, the OECD's decision to report on decision-making factors goes back to the late 1980s and early 1990s with the first publication of Education at a Glance. The decision is supported by a belief that decentralization and autonomy are factors that, not only have spread around the world for the last two decades or so, but are believed to have an impact on education quality as well.

> Over the past two decades, many countries have been engaged in a shift of decision making authority to lower administrative levels, either to local or regional governments, or to schools. This move towards decentralisation is a global phenomenon, affecting developing as well as industrialised countries, although the motives and incentives are diverse. The increased attention for decentralisation in education is perhaps best reflected by the numerous initiatives to stimulate decision making by schools, such as site- or school-based management (SBM), the local management of schools and the establishment of relatively autonomous schools like the charter schools in the United States. This widespread trend towards school autonomy has also stimulated the debate about the advantages and disadvantages of private schooling. (OECD 2005b, 64)

Although the two studies are based on different methodologies and under the responsibility of different drafting bodies inside the Education Directorate at the OECD, they are conducted or framed under the academic auspices of a group of researchers at the University of Twente (Netherlands). Therefore, while some of the language used in both reports is similar, we cannot make direct comparison between them. For instance in both studies the analysis is made under a theoretical framework of domains and modes and domains and levels that coincide in some aspects but not in others. As a consequence the comparison between the OECD's studies and my own research will be done separately.

Scheme 1: OECD's Decision-making theoretical framework

Education at a Glance*	Factors and Quality**
Domains	Domains
• The organisation of instruction • Personnel management • Planning and structures • Resources	• Curriculum and instruction • Personnel management • Student policies • Financial resources
Modes	Levels
• In full autonomy • In consultation with others • Within a framework • Other	• Elected or appointed school board • The School principal • The Department head • Teachers

Sources: * OECD 2004b. ** OECD 2005b.

Scheme 1 shows, in a nutshell, the main similarities and differences in the wording and levels of analysis in the two OECD studies. I will refer to their meaning and scope separately. Then, I will briefly compare each of the OECD studies (Education at a Glance and Factor and Quality) with my own research. At the end of this chapter, some conclusions will be drawn as to the relationship between decentralization and autonomy and quality and the impact of this on traveling ideas or policies in education systems around the world.

The Education at a Glance View

Chapter 6 of OECD's Education at a Glance 2004 (2004b, 423-438) classifies many PISA countries according to a variable that is called Decision Making in Education Systems (DMES). However, no direct claims are made in this publication about the relationship between DMES and students' or systems' performance.

Most recently, two different but related publications (OECD, 2005 and Guichard, 2005) complement the more or less neutral OECD analysis (2004b) and relate DMES to quality performance and efficiency. Guichard (16) and the OECD (2005, 54) using exactly the same words maintain

> There is a presumption that the devolution of responsibilities to local authorities and schools brings efficiency … **Although there is no common model, in most countries that performed well in PISA surveys, local authorities and schools have substantial autonomy to adapt educational content and/or allocate and manage resources** (this is the case in England, Korea, Finland, Japan, the Netherlands for instance; Australia on the other hand performed above the average at PISA with very little devolution of responsibilities to schools) …In Mexico, decisions related to education are taken mostly at the central level by the federal government or the state authorities. **Schools have some autonomy in the organization of instruction, but have no autonomy at all in personnel management and resource allocation, and only very limited autonomy in planning and structure**. Modest steps have been taken to give them more responsibilities The *reforma integral de la secundaria* [integral curriculum reform for lower secondary schools] gives some autonomy to both the States and

> schools in designing curricula. *Escuelas de calidad* [Quality Schools, a program designed to promote managerial skills in schools] promotes deeper changes in responsibility devolution, including in terms of resources allocation. However, the scope of these programmes is limited both regarding the number of schools that participate and the means. *Overall more progress is needed in terms of devolution to all schools and local authorities, especially as concerns the use of financial resources and staff management. Such devolution requires accompanying measures. First, schools principals, whose role should evolve from mainly administrative to a role more focused on improving learning processes, need training. Second accountability has to increase.* {Italics original in the OECD 2005 version: there are no italics in the Guichard version; brackets and bolds added by the author, translations by the author).

There are many issues with the analysis of the variable DMES and the wording of the previous paragraph. The Education at a Glance (OECD 2004b) analysis of DMES is more descriptive than judgmental. The Guichard and the Economics'Department analysis of DMES, however, are more judgmental than descriptive. The discrepancy may come from the drafters and the views of two different directorates at the OECD: Education at a Glance is drafted by the Division of Education Indicators and Analysis within the Directorate of Education, whereas the Economic Survey for Mexico is published under the responsibility of the Economic and Development Review Committee and drafted by three people among them Stéphanie Guichard. One can only assume that the education section of the Report was drafted by Guichard since the wording of her article and the OECD's Survey is the same. So, whereas the analysis and conclusions of data are more carefully written and addressed (less judgmental) by the Education at a Glance (OECD 2004b) report than the Survey's, the two documents are published under the responsibility of OECD's structures or management bodies. So, strictly speaking, the conclusions or suggestions from either document may be construed as conclusions or suggestions from the OECD as an institution.

There is one additional comment. The introductory section of the OECD's Survey on Mexico (OECD, 2005, 10) states:

> Over the past decades, Mexico has made great progress in increasing school enrolment in a context of tight budgets, rapid growth of the school-age population, great linguistic diversity, sizeable internal and two-way cross-border migration flows, and a high degree of extreme poverty. There has been a deliberate increase in public spending on education; but while the volume of educational services has increased, there are doubts about whether the additional funding is actually delivering the expected improvements. Both the coverage and quality of education services remain far behind OECD **best practices** even though, on paper, average teacher-pupil ratios are not out of line. And the system is not able to prevent poverty from reproducing itself from one generation to the next. Many children, especially the poor ones, still drop out before completing compulsory education and school-leavers have poor literacy and numerical skills. *Oportunidades* [Opportunities, a social policy to reduce poverty] has shown itself to be an effective programme in reducing poverty, improving education, nutrition and health and reducing drop-out rates. It should continue. Beyond that, there is much to be done in improving the quality of

outcomes and access to higher education. (Brackets and bolds added by the author).

From the previous paragraph we see that the OECD—an international organization—recognizes that there are indeed "best practices" in education policies. By this wording, one could think that the OECD's system of beliefs and values aligns with the GWCA view of the world—there are 'out there' some values, i.e., best practices, which are awaiting the adoption (borrowing, importation, adaptation, translation) of national states. It would follow that, if nation-states were wise enough to adopt or adapt those policies and practices, their educational "problems" or challenges would be solved or overcome. Then, eventually, everybody would be highly educated, we would all reach Shangri-la. And yes, the answer to the heading questions of this chapter would be, "**Yes**, we can all succeed since we have a global modal of school education". **But no**, unfortunately, the world of education is not this simple.

The first issue here is the so-called "best practices" in education. Best practice means practices everywhere converging to an ideal "best model", Therefore, convergence means policies and practices getting more and more similar or equivalent. This is a very strong theoretical proposition. With this in mind, I embarked into a field-trip-like project that would allow me to find the "best practices" i.e. the Shangri-la system and the Shangri-la school. If I could find those "best practices," if I could locate benchmarks and the ideal model, then, by adopting them, Mexico (as for many other countries) could be brought out from its underperforming trap as implied by the latter OECD's paragraph. Eventually, Mexico, as for many other underperforming countries, could join the ranks of best-performing countries.

At the end, as will be seen, I found not one but many Shangri-las. **Yes**, there are "ideal" schools and **yes,** there are ideal models and ideal systems of school education that work, **but no,** they do not work for all; they work only for specific environments, contexts, institutions, cultures, situations and history. "Who is taught what, how, by whom, where, when…" (Dale 2006, 190), makes the difference; or "We need a surer sense of what to teach to whom and how to go about teaching it in such a way that it will make those taught more effective, less alienated , and better human beings." (Bruner, 118).

Let us then test this "best practice" OECD view of the policy-mix duo of choice in the eighties and nineties around the world, i.e. decentralization of decision-making and autonomy of school management to.

Allow me to start the anatomy of decentralization and autonomy by comparing the findings of my analyses to the general findings of the OECD's studies as they are published in the OECD's Education at a Glance 2004, Chapter D, Indicator D6 (OECD 2004b).

OECD's Education at a Glance Methodology and Findings

The OECD's methodology is similar and different to the methodology of my research. It is similar in two respects: 1) it is based on analysis of perceptions ; and 2) results are shown in a classification-like manner. But it is different in all other respects.

OECD's methodology is explained in three different documents: OECD's Education at a Glance 2004, Chapter D, Indicator D6 (OECD 2004b), and in two documents provided by the OECD's Education Secretariat titled: 1) "Indicators of National Education Systems: Locus of Decision–Making Questionnaire 2003 (NW C 03-020); 2) Data Collection Manual: Decision-Making in Education (NW C 03-019).

Although this way of measuring the devolution of decision-making has been done since the early 1990s, as said before, on three occasions, 1992 (OECD 1992), 1998 (OECD 1998) and 2003 (OECD 2004b), I will refer in detail only to the latter one as reported in Education at a Glance 2004 since it has taken Mexico only for this latter year's study.

By looking at the three reports one can deduce the following: 1) the basic framework methodology is the same, modes and domains; decentralization and autonomy. However, the 1992 publication is much more modest in the presentation of results compared to the 1998 and 2004 publications (there is a very brief "method" explanation at the end of the report in Annex 2—OECD 1992, 136-137). 2) The1998 and 2003 reports are more similar from the methodological point of view but, even in this case, comparisons have to be done carefully since the "make up" of expert panels changed from 1998 to 2003 (OECD 2004b, 424). 3) The analysis in the latter report has become more sophisticated and with focus on public lower secondary schools only. The 1992 edition of Education at a Glance[1] was more shallow and yet broader. It was shallow because the analysis is given with less details and less explanations compared to the 1998 and 2003 publications but broader because it included not only public lower secondary education but also primary and upper-secondary education schools. Comparisons with private schools were made too.

The advantage of the OECD's methodology is that the questionnaire is much more structured and defined along very specific questions (OECD 2003a), for instance:

> **P1-1 At what level is it decided what school a child should attend?**
> ^If pupils/parents are free to choose the school to attend, tick 'school'^
> ISCED2
> [ ] Central government
> [ ] State government
> [..] Provincial/regional authorities or governments

[1] 1992 is the first year Education at a Glance was published (OCDE 1992, 5). This is an important threshold date, not only for the publication of the Education at a Glance but for the decision by the OECD to become more involved with education and comparative education. "The increased demand for information on education and the need for improved knowledge on the functioning of the education system raise many questions not only for data collection but also for the organisation, reporting and collection of the data. These questions led the authorities in the Member countries of the OECD to consider new ways of comparing their education systems. Agreement was reached on the feasibility and utility of developing an international set of indicators that would present, in statistical form, key features of the education systems of Member countries." (OECD 1992, 10). One of those indicators was and still is the "Decision-making characteristics" as named in 1992 (OECD 1992, 13) or the "Decision making in education systems" as renamed in 2004 (OECD 2004b, 423). In 1992 the "set of international education indicators proposed by the OECD" were grouped in three clusters: 1) costs, resources and school process (in this cluster we find the "decision-making characteristics" indicators; 2) demographic, economic and social context; 3) outcomes of education (OECD 1992, 13). A sheer look at the Education at a Glance from 1992 (148 pages long in two languages - English and French) to Education at a Glance from 2005 (435 pages long (OECD 2005c) English only, plus technical Annexes) is evidence of the importance and sophistication of statistics in comparative education.

[ ] Sub-regional or inter-municipal authorities or governments
[ ] Local authorities or governments
[ ] Schools, school board or committee

The disadvantage of the OECD's methodology may be twofold: 1) there is no way to make sure the methodology was consistent across all the participating panels; 2) neither was the way the panelists followed the same analysis and the same deliberations across countries. There is no way to confirm if panels were or were not actually organized. There is no published information about who are (were) the people who actually answered the questionnaires in the "panels" of three "members". I tried to get that information, say for Mexico, from the Mexican representative before the Network C but, instead of getting a direct answer, the representative's superior answered my e-mail by telling me to request the information through the "appropriate channels". I made an official inquiry under the Mexican Freedom of Information Act[2]. On July 3 2006 the Department of Education answered through the "Instituto Federal de Acceso a la Información Pública[3]" (IFAI) with the following response: "…after an exhaustive search of the requested information as it relates to the names of the persons who took part of the panel that answered the OECD's questionnaire, the information was not located in the files of this agency[4] [The Mexican Department of Public Education—SEP]." However, SEP, by the same means, sent me a copy of the questionnaire as it was answered by, what I think, was one of the panelists. The person who answered the questionnaire is a public official working for SEP so presumably one of the experts at the national or federal level of education. It is not clear if this completed questionnaire was the result (by consensus) of the panel's discussions or if it was a draft of their work or the draft of one of the panelists. There is no record, apparently, of the panel ever meeting since the completed questionnaire sent to me by this means (an electronic copy through the IFAI electronic portal) mentions nothing about the panel's organization or response. But judging from the lack of information, and that the same person whose name appears as "Respondent" in the OECD's questionnaire is the same person that plays the role as representative to Network C before the OECD, one can not conclude that the panel ever met.

Furthermore, by looking at the answers to the above-mentioned Questionnaire, one can easily disagree with the responses. For example, the answer to question one **P1-1** from above is "School, school board or committee". This is not correct; the way the selection (i.e. "At what level is it decided what school a child should attend**")** is done in schools in Mexico varies from state to state or from district to district. In most districts, schools do not have a choice; they have to accept children based on a "nearest to school" policy.

[2] The Mexican name for the Freedom of Information Act is: "Ley Federal de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública Gubernamental" (Federal Law for Transparency and Access to Public Government Information"). (www.ifai.org.mx/english_version/fltapgi.htm)).
[3] The English translation for IFAI is: Federal Institute for Access to Public Information (www.ifai.org.mx/english_version/fltapgi.htm).
[4] The complete (unabbreviated) original Spanish version for this quotation is: "Con fundamento en el artículo 46 de la Ley Federal de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública Gubernamental, hacemos de su conocimiento que después de una exhaustiva búsqueda de la información solicitada, lo referente a los nombres de las personas que formaron parte del panel que contestó el cuestionario OCDE, ésta no fue localizada en los archivos de esta Dependencia. El oficio formal de inexistencia se encuentra en proceso de firma por parte del Comité de Información de la Dependencia, por lo que en cuanto se tenga, debidamente signado, se le hará llegar una copia del mismo a la dirección de correo electrónico señalado en su solicitud. Por lo que se refiere a la copia solicitada del cuestionario, se remite en archivo adjunto. Reciba un cordial saludo."

There are even some districts, like the DF (Mexico's capital city) where the selection process is organized by a formula designed and managed centrally and decided with very little or no discretion at all. After such response, then, one may conclude that schools have autonomy in the selection of students in Mexico and this is not the case, not everywhere and not always. The rule is that schools do not have the autonomy of selection of students (and parents are not free to choose); the exception might be that in specific cases schools have some degree of autonomy, like with very high-performing schools such as the "Secundaria Anexa a la Normal" (a very high-performing public lower secondary school in Mexico City). The partial answer from SEP and the apparently inadequate answer to the questionnaire, as suggested by the previous analysis of question P1-1, may give evidence to the thesis of the lack of methodology consistency and profundity in the OECD's methodology. Therefore, the overall findings as reported by Education at a Glance 2004 could be incomplete and probably inconsistent and incorrect.

There is no indication that the OECD "audits" the procedures from the different participating countries to secure homogeneity in the application of the surveys. There is no way then to sustain that the OECD's methodology was consistently applied and reported from around the world. There is no way either to evaluate if the panels from around the world applied the same criteria and construed the questions with the "same meaning". In addition, the multiple-choice type of answers given to panelists to respond to the questionnaire might hide important information of the intricacies about decisions in schools.

For instance, decisions of admission to schools may be based on multilevel/multiple people involvement— principals and/or teachers and/or parents and/or local authorities; or principals alone; or principals with the advice of the local education authorities. Decisions of admission may be also affected by the 17 school organizational structure at least previously identified in Chapter 2 (for example, lower secondary schools only, or lower plus upper secondary schools under the same roof or under the same principal, or the same school with two different principals, etc). Or decisions on admission may be based on merit, i.e. grades obtained by students at their previous school and, therefore, are "automatic" decisions. Decisions may be based on "nearest to school policies" or "siblings in the school" or demand and supply consideration (parental choice vis-à-vis school choice) or a combination of all or some of the above. And still decisions may be decided by a complex software program "hands free" from human discretion with many variables taken into account. Decisions on admissions may be made also by "last-minute" calls from downtown politicians or "important parents" or "important stakeholders" trying to influence the decision of principals when they have a say in the final decision. In relation to this point and as learnt during my interviews with principals from around the world, some principals yielded to this kind of pressures while others did not. I would not expect principals to accept this "embarrassing happening" (embarrassing in some cultures) under a formal questionnaire or interview but they did under the assurance of anonymity. I do not expect the panel of experts to include this in its analysis and consensus; the members of the panel might not even know of the specific ways principals and schools handle calls and last-minute calls for selections or admission of students.

All of these different ways (and many more) of doing things were reported by my interviewees when I was trying to make a classification index of admission policies and

practices in all visited schools and countries. The mix of answers reflects a long and intricate list of options. In some cases the level of admission policies and practices was not only complex, but sometimes, untraceable. In many cases principals reported some "invisible hands" interventions to try to influence admissions. In some instances, principals were able to resist, but still in others they were not. In other cases, for instance, where parental choice is exercised fully-fledged under a "first-come/first-served basis" rule, principals and schools' management teams were able, albeit subtly, to tailor the parents' requests by means of private interviews between parents and school authorities. If the school authorities see that the school is not an "appropriate" fit for the applying child, they will try to "persuade" the parents otherwise with arguments such as "your child will be better off in a different school"; or "your child and you will be happier in a school less academically demanding" or "there is this or that school that is a better or perfect fit for your child" etc.

There is no way that a multiple-choice questionnaire, answered by the perceptions of three "experts" - two governmental and one "school-related" person but chosen most probably by a central governmental representative, will report on this complex reality. And therefore, it is even less plausible to make a comparison of decision-making policies and practices among schools, districts, systems or countries based on a flawed means of gathering data. The generality or abstraction of the multiple-choice questions will hide, in the answers, the intricacies of the differences and therefore, many things, important things, will be lost in translation, or worse, will be wrongly translated. As a consequence we could get as decentralization something that is really centralized and as autonomy something that is actually decided in the downtown offices of policy-makers and politicians. Many of the things decided in schools are not written in regulations, manuals or curricula. Many of the happenings in schools and schools districts depend on the personal and political interactions between schools and local authorities and between principals and superintendents, education chiefs or school board members. In some districts and for some schools they may work smoothly, but in the same districts for different schools they may work in rather slouchy and sloppy ways.

Under the OECD's methodology, panels or groups of experts were supposed to be organized among all participating countries but not all OECD countries took part in this project: Canada, Ireland and the U.S. for example did not participate, although the U.S. participated in 1992 and 1998, and Ireland in 1998 only. The panels were supposed to be composed of people from the same level and similar knowledge of their respective education systems; they were labeled "national experts" although there is no assurance that experts[5] were really chosen for the project in each country. And they were supposed to answer the questionnaire by consensus. As seen, there is no evidence, however, that the panels were indeed organized following a common criteria; there is no evidence that the panels faced the same questions in their own language, with an adequate translation, making sure that the same question was understood by the panelists with the same meaning across systems. At the end, the OECD secretariat and Network C secretariat (University of Twente) worked with inputs that had been put together by many different contacts from many countries without assuring themselves (at least no public information being available) that the methodological assumptions were actually met.

[5] There is also the difficulty with the definition of "experts". How does one define an "expert" to be able to choose a coherent group of people for making judgmental calls about perceptions' data?

Therefore, making a relationship between decentralization or autonomy of schools and more efficiency as in the OECD's wording; or between policies of "lagging" countries and "benchmarks" is rather inappropriate and imprecise. It is not possible because we do not have a model of decentralization and autonomy across systems and beyond boundaries.

But assuming for the sake of the argument that the OECD's gathered information is correct, let us see if the OECD's analysis compared to mine can give us an indication of isomorphism of policies and practices (at least in decentralization and school autonomy) or an indication of best practices and benchmarks as they relate to high-performing countries.

The Decision-Making Factors and Quality View

Chapter 5 "Decentralised Decision Making, Privatisation and Student Performance" of the report entitled "School Factors Related to Quality and Equity" (OECD 2005b, 63-86) deals with decentralization and autonomy with a different methodology. Although the two OECD studies are based on perceptions' questionnaires, there are two main differences between them: 1) the theoretical framework (see Scheme 1 above); 2) the questionnaires and answers. In the Factors and Quality (F&Q) (OECD 2005b) study, data is drawn from questionnaires to PISA's 2000 participating school principals, whereas Education at a Glance study data is drawn from questionnaires to panels of experts (see section above).

The advantage of F&Q study over the OECD's Education at a Glance study is that the questionnaire is drawn from the same sample of PISA 2000 schools. Therefore, answers are given by principals from the PISA 2000 samples schools and presumably subject to generalization or inferences. As will be seen later the critique to the F&Q study is not based on the statistical merits or handling of data but on the acquisition of data per se and, as a consequence, on the conclusion or lessons (claims) drawn from the data set and the correlations derived from it.

F&Q asks the following question: **"Is there a relationship between school autonomy and student performance?**"(OECD 2005b, 71). In general terms the wording used by the drafters of this document is very carefully written with lots of quid pro quos and caveat. But at the end the drafters are tempted to tilt the balance towards "the-higher-the-autonomy-the-better-the-performance" recipe. This is clearly construed from the following paragraph:

> In other words, on average, student performance in reading is higher in schools with more responsibility. More specifically, if a school's autonomy in one of the OECD countries is one standard deviation above the international average, its mean performance in reading literacy is nearly 7 score points higher than the performance of the average OECD school. Taking into account all countries, this effect is even larger. If a school's autonomy in one of the PISA countries is one standard deviation above the international average, its average performance is nearly 9 score points higher than the average PISA school. This finding suggests that decentralised education systems are more advantageous for students than centralised systems. (OECD 2005b, 71).

When the results are controlled by students' and schools' factors, the positive relationship between quality and autonomy is blurred.

> The PISA 2000 results only partly support the widespread positive expectations that exist with respect to school autonomy and the internal decentralisation of decision-making. The expected results are only found when the models are unadjusted for student background and school-level characteristics. (OECD 2005b, 73)

This blurriness is confirmed by the EA's[6] study, as will be seen in this chapter and the next. What blurriness means in education and school policies such as decentralization and autonomy is that education systems around the world are not converging. Or in other words, the policies and practices have not really traveled or have not been transferred.

Comparison between the OECD's and EA's studies

With Education at a Glance

The two studies are not directly comparable since they have classified the systems based on different school levels (lower secondary schools only for the OECD's sample versus lower and upper secondary schools in my study in EA's sample[6]) and different affiliations (public or state schools only in the OECD's study versus all affiliations in my EA's study). However, they offer two different ways of measuring the devolution of power or the centralization of decision-making variability and autonomy. By doing this, they also show some of the difficulties in the analysis of ideas and concepts such as decentralization and autonomy as they are transferred, translated or imported into different cultural, political and institutional settings. For purposes of my research's goal, we do not need consistency in the two studies. We only need to see if the two studies have enough information to reasonably suggest that patterns and trends can be derived or located in school education policies. If different studies show sound reasonable indication of patterns and best practices, then we have a case for convergence; if not, then we have a case for divergence, i.e. no Shangri-la.

There are few countries that are included in the two samples (OECD's and EA's) but Box 1 next shows the countries in OECD's studies and the countries and regions in EA's study. They are listed top-down as they go from a more centralized decision-making system to one less centralized in each study.

[6] EA stands for the initials of the author i.e. Eduardo Andere.

Box 1: Decentralization rank: from more centralization to less centralization
OECD's sample and EA's sample

OECD Decentralization Public/State Secondary Schools only (1)		OECD Decentralization Public/State Secondary Schools only (2)		EA Decentralization All schools of all affiliation (3)	EA Decentralization All Schools and Affiliations (4)	EA Decentralization Public/State Secondary Schools only (5)
Mexico	30	France	79	France	France	France
New Zealand	25	Japan	78	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico
France	24	Mexico	77	New Zealand	New Zealand	Czech Republic
Sweden	18	Australia	76	Czech Republic	Czech Republic	England
Japan	13	Finland	73	Korea	United Kingdom	Finland
England	11	Sweden	54	Finland	Korea	Australia (ACT)
Korea	9	Korea	51	Japan	Australia	Sweden
Czech Rep.	7	Czech Rep.	40	United Kingdom	Finland	
Finland	2	New Zealand	25	Sweden	Japan	
Australia	0	England	15	Australia	Sweden	

Source: 1) Ranked by percentage of decisions taken at the central level (OECD 2004b, p. 431, table D6). 2) Ranked by percentage of decisions taken at the central, state, provincial/regional, sub-regional and local levels (OECD 2004b, p. 431, table D6.1). 3) Ranked from more centralized to less centralized decision-making countries where the level or unit of analysis is the central level of government (national or federal), (Annex 2, Graph S2). 4) Ranked from more centralized to less centralized decision-making countries where the level or unit of analysis is the state, regional, or local level of government (Annex 2, Graph S1). 5) Ranked from more centralized to less centralized decision-making jurisdictions where the level or unit of analysis is the state, regional or local level of government and for public or state lower-secondary schools only (Annex 3, Graph S1)
Note: ACT=Australian Capital Territory.

The columns in this Box 1 (and the next Boxes too) are not directly comparable but they reveal some interesting coincidences and differences. First, in all columns France and Mexico appear as the most centralized systems, yet one is high-performing and the other is not. Surprisingly, New Zealand is seen by the OECD as very centralized—almost as closed as the Mexican one and equal to the French system (column 1) from the central government point of view and much decentralized (column 2) from the central, state, regional or local levels of aggregation. New Zealand's Tomorrow's Schools' reform sandwiched the system into two main stakeholders - the school and the central/national Ministry of Education. There were no intermediaries between the two of them; therefore, more centralization. If the analysis of the system is presented as in column 2, then New Zealand is seen as highly-decentralized since most countries, in this sample, reported to have some sort of consultation or other by schools when making decisions. This was rather reflected by EA's model since New Zealand was seen to be as nearly highly-centralized as Mexico and France and yet still high-performing. However, the comparison between the two models falls apart by looking at the level of analysis question, i.e. lower-secondary schools only in OECD's sample (column 1, Box

1) and only public secondary schools in EA's sample[7] (column 5, Box 1). There were no schools in EA's sample with the lower-secondary only characteristic for New Zealand. All of them as can be seen in Annex 1 Table 2 are drawn from lower-secondary schools attached to upper-secondary schools. This is why New Zealand is absent from a column 5 ranking in Box 1. In fact, lower-secondary schools as usually understood (years 7 to 9—ISCED 2[8]) or the first three years after six years of primary education (ISCED 1) are non-existent in New Zealand. The vast majority of lower secondary schools and their students in New Zealand are attached to upper-secondary schools or form part of upper-secondary schools.

The school education system is particularly different in New Zealand. Most lower-secondary students attend schools that organize schooling in lower-secondary and upper-secondary sections together; for example, from grade 7 to grade 13 secondary schools or from grade 9 to grade 13 secondary schools (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2005). There are different school types in New Zealand for primary and secondary school education (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2001). For instance, depending on the date of registration, children could start primary education at the age of 5 or at the age of 6. Depending on the type of school, children could finish primary education at the age of 11 or 12. If children were enrolled in "Contributing schools", then children will end primary education at 11 years old. But if children were enrolled in "Full Primary Schools", then they would end primary education at the age of 11, 12 or 13. "Full Primary Schools" children can then go directly to secondary schools from ages 13 to 17 or to schools from grade 10 to grade 13. But students enrolled in primary "Contributing schools" could then go to secondary schools from the ages of 11 or 12 to age 17 or 18 or schools from grade 8 to grade 13. In most cases students go directly from primary schools to secondary schools with intermediate years incorporated into the secondary schools. So there are no "lower-secondary schools" from the neat-organizational point of view based on ISCED of the lower-secondary category and assumed by the OECD's model. This is also true, for example, in the Czech Republic where the organization of schools is also complex and different from a neat 6-3-3-school education system that we observe in many countries and systems around the world. Whether panelists from OECD's analysis took this "structural" matter into account or not is not possible to follow. If all schools or most schools in New Zealand are structured as "lower- plus upper- secondary schools" under the same roof using the same principle as in EA's sample, then the OECD's decision-making analysis can not be compared with countries such as Mexico, France, Finland, Korea, Switzerland and Japan, where schools are clearly structurally divided between lower-secondary and upper-secondary. And therefore, "**Yes**", systems and schools can be compared " but **No**" we can not make claims about "benchmarks" or "best practices". These claims can not be valid since the compared units (schools and decision-making processes or policies) are not comparable. Therefore, claiming that less centralization is better than more centralization or that more autonomy is better than less autonomy as "best

[7] In order to close the methodological gap, I have reduced the size of my sample to the surveys of lower-secondary public (government-run) schools only. Obviously, the number of observations is reduced drastically as can be observed in Annex 3. EA's sample is now reduced to 75 or 110 observations whether Mexico and Chile are excluded from or included in the sample (Annex 3, Table 1a, Column "Interviews").

[8] ISCED 1997: International Standard Classification of Education (Retrieved on July 11, 2006 from http://www.unesco.org/education/information/nfsunesco/doc/isced-1997.htm).

policies" to explain students' performance such as in PISA goes beyond the observable data into the realm of "wishful correlations".

There is however, more information in both studies that can be analyzed for comparison's sake. The OECD's study has a variable that is called "percentage of decisions taken by schools in public sector lower-secondary education, by mode [full autonomy, consultation with others, within a framework and other] and domain [organization of instruction, personnel management, planning and structure of schooling and curricula and allocation and use of resources] of decision making" (OECD 2004b, pp. 426-428). EA's analysis of autonomy of schools was segmented firstly into three different levels: school level, the principal and the teachers. Then it was fragmentalized into different modes in each level. At the **School level**: a) overall autonomy (all things considered); b) curricula; c) text books, d) school materials; e) schedules or time-tabling; f) tests or exams; g) free time (recesses) for students. At the **Principal level**: a) overall autonomy (all things considered); b) hire and removal of teachers; c) curricula; d) schedules or time-tabling; e) evaluation or assessment of teachers, f) evaluation or assessment of students; g) innovation; h) management of budget. At the **Teacher Level**: a) overall autonomy (all things considered); b) meeting the parents; c) curricula; d) course schedule (course time-tabling); e) evaluating or assessing students (deciding the promotion or not of students to the following grade); f) selecting textbooks; g) innovation. (See Graphs S3a to S3g in Annexes 2 and 3 for results in EA's study).

The OECD's categories and EA's categories can not be compared directly in the autonomy variable either. As per the meaning of the modes in the OECD's analyses, the last three categories might be compared with EA's categories or modes as follows: 1) "organisation of instruction" with curriculum (school-level mode b) and time tabling (school level mode e and principal level mode d); 2) "personnel management" with hiring and removing teachers (principal level mode b) and evaluation of teachers (principal-level mode e); 3) "planning and structures" and with overall autonomy (school-level mode a); and 4) "allocation and use of resources" with management of budget (principal-level mode h), text books (school-level mode c) and school materials (school-level mode d).

Boxes 2, 3 and 4 tell us similar stories of autonomy when we compare some of the OECD's domains to EA's criteria. First, columns are not comparable; secondly, the whole unit of analysis in OECD's study is blurred by the organization of the systems in each country or region or by the complexities of decision-making in each school or in each district., and thirdly, the perceptions of experts from OECD's panel do not coincide with the perceptions of experts, principals or teachers in EA's sample.

For instance, in Box 2 where autonomy in schools is measured, Australia shows very little autonomy in the OECD's study compared to others, whereas in EA's sample Australia is fairly high in autonomy. Who is right? Well, both and neither. Again, Australia is a system of systems of education. Whether the panelists from OECD's study were talking about the system as a whole or New South Wales or any other of the seven states is difficult to know. In EA's sample, only one of the eight schools visited belonged to the "lower-secondary" level and is located in ACT (Australian Capital Territory), by itself a district with a very high academic record for school education. Does this reflect the reality of Australia? Not at all. Australia again is a complex, territorially-decentralized, school education system with relations to schools and local

authorities defined by different political and institutional realities. Therefore, again the analysis is lost in a sea of systems´ complexities.

The first paragraph of Chapter D of OECD's Education at a Glance 2004 (OECD 2004b, 423) says:

> Overall, decisions are most highly centralised (taken at the central and/or state level of government) in Australia, Austria, Greece, Luxembourg, Mexico, Portugal, Spain and Turkey, with central government particularly dominant in Greece (88% of decisions taken by the central administration) and Luxembourg (66%).

Looking back at Box 1, column one, Australia is ranked (by the OECD study) as the most decentralized of all countries if we measure decentralization by the central level of government—an OECD definition. And yet, the previous paragraph strikes the reader with a conclusion that sharply contrasts with Box 1's observation. The OECD's decision to present data as central plus state level of government decision-making changes the story completely. So, should we then call the Australian school system centralized or decentralized? Should we then say that, since Australia is a high-performing country, centralization of decision-making is good or bad? It does not make any sense to talk about these factors in a comparative way. We can not say anything further without falling into a world of ambiguities, imprecision and quid pro quos. To make sense, we have to exit the comparison realm and enter the in-depth case-narrative analysis of the intricacies, characteristics, histories and stories of decision-making and autonomy in each school education system. But let's look first at more examples in the issue or concept of autonomy of schools.

Box 2: Autonomy rank (full autonomy, consultation and framework*): from more autonomy to less autonomy
OECD sample and EA's sample

OECD		OECD		EA	EA
Autonomy		Autonomy		Autonomy	Autonomy
Public/State Secondary Schools only (1)		Public/State Secondary Schools only (2)		All schools of all affiliation (3)	Public/State Secondary Schools only (4)
New Zealand	45	England	85	New Zealand	England
Sweden	43	New Zealand	75	Sweden	Australia (ACT)
England	42	Czech Rep.	60	Australia	Sweden
Korea	29	Korea	48	England	Finland
Finland	23	Sweden	47	Japan	Mexico
France	21	France	32	Finland	Czech Rep.
Mexico	13	Finland	27	Mexico	France
Australia.	9	Australia	24	Korea	
Japan	9	Japan	23	Czech Rep.	
Czech Rep.	6	Mexico	23	France	

Source: 1: Ranked by percentage of decisions taken at the school level in full autonomy (OECD 2004, p. 434, table D6.3). 2) Ranked by percentage of decisions taken at the

school level in full autonomy and within a framework, and other (OECD 2004, p. 434, table D6.3). 3) Ranked from more to less autonomy as perceived by interviewees of all schools of all affiliations all things considered (Annex 2, Graph S3a). 4) Ranked from more to less autonomy as perceived by interviewees of public/state lower-secondary interviewees only all things considered (Annex 3, Graph S3a).
Note: ACT=Australian Capital Territory
* OECD's definition of autonomy (decision-making) by mode (OECD 2004b, 431).

Boxes 2 to 3 refer to autonomy of schools that are very similar but with minor changes. Box 2 defines autonomy "all things considered" (EA) and all modes (OECD). Box 3 defines autonomy all things considered (EA) and all modes and domains considered (OECD). The results in ranking are very similar with changes only in column 2 in Box 3 as compared to Box 2.

Box 3: Autonomy rank by mode* (full autonomy, consultation, framework and other) and domain* (organisation of instruction, personnel management, planning and structures, resources) of decision-making in OECD's sample and overall autonomy in EA's sample, from more autonomy to less autonomy

OECD		OECD		EA	EA
Autonomy		Autonomy		Autonomy	Autonomy
Public/State Secondary Schools only (1)		Public/State Secondary Schools only (2)		All schools of all affiliation (3)	Public/State Secondary Schools only (4)
New Zealand	45.75	New Zealand	85.5	New Zealand	England
Sweden	42.75	England	85	Sweden	Australia (ACT)
England	42.25	Czech Rep.	60.5	Australia	Sweden
Korea	29.25	Korea	48	England	Finland
Finland	23	Finland	43.75	Japan	Mexico
France	20.75	Sweden	40.75	Finland	Czech Rep.
Mexico	12.5	France	35.5	Mexico	France
Australia	9.5	Japan	28.5	Korea	
Japan	9.5	Australia	24.5	Czech Rep.	
Czech Rep.	6.5	Mexico	22.25	France	

Source: 1) Ranked by percentage of decisions taken at the school level in full autonomy by domain of decision-making (OECD 2004, p. 435, table D6.4). In calculating the percentages, data was drawn from OECD's Table D6.4 and only as it relates to the "In full autonomy" percentages for the four domains (organisation of instruction, personnel management, planning and structures and resources): The four domain values were added up with 25% weight each. 2) Ranked by percentage of decisions taken at the school level in consultation, within a framework or other by domain of decision-making (OECD 2004, p. 435, table D6.4). In calculating the percentages, data was drawn from OECD's Table D6.4 and only as it relates to "consultation, within a framework or other" criteria by four domains (organisation of instruction, personnel management, planning and structures and resources): The four values were added up with 25% weight each. 3) Ranked from more to less autonomy as perceived by interviewees of all schools of all affiliations, all things considered (Annex 2, Graph S3a). 4) Ranked from more to less autonomy as perceived by interviewees of public/state lower-secondary interviewees only all things considered (Annex 3, Graph S3a).
Note: ACT=Australian Capital Territory. EA (Eduardo Andere's sample, author's initials)
* OECD's definitions of autonomy (decision-making) by domain and mode (OECD 2004b, 431).

We can talk about autonomy all things considered Boxes 2 and 3, or under specific domain or criteria Boxes 4 and 5. Box 3 shows consistency all across for New Zealand in OECD's and EA's samples (since schools in New Zealand are very autonomous by all counts), but not for countries such as Australia or Korea or Japan where the comparative analysis loses ground again because the level of analysis (the school systems' analysis) differs from one country to the next. For example, since EA's sample was based on PISA-like schools (15-year-old children), almost all the sampled

students for PISA are students enrolled in upper-secondary schools as it is also the case of Japan with 100% of sampled students in the upper-secondary level of schooling. Therefore, neither Japan nor Korea appears in column 5 of Box 3. And in both cases, the EA's results for Korea and Japan are different to those obtained by the OECD.

Looking at these results one wonders why the OECD's publication cited above (Economic Survey of Mexico (OECD 2005, 54) and Guichard's one (16)) talk about benchmarks or OECD best practices (OECD 2005, 10) if the evidence seems to show that there are no benchmarks or best practices in school autonomy. Should we have benchmarks or best practices, levels of autonomy in high-performing countries would be similar, which is not the case in both studies, and levels of autonomy from low-performing and high-performing countries should be different, which is not true either.

But let us see in more detail the meaning of autonomy. Autonomy is a difficult concept to measure anyway; which is why the OECD's approach and EA's approach segmented the concept in domains (OECD) or criteria (EA). Perhaps the most important area to test autonomy in schools is the organization of instruction in the OECD's framework or curriculum in EA's criteria. Because organization of studies or school autonomy "all things considered" are concepts that encapsulate many different meanings, the comparison between the two approaches is consequently very difficult. Box 4 next shows the OECD's results vis-à-vis EA's results, but only as they relate to the question of autonomy as in "curriculum". Under this latter criteria and for the EA's method, if schools are perceived as having full autonomy to determine the school curriculum of studies, the value approximates 7; the more dictated or detailed the school curriculum lands into the school from a central, state, provincial, regional., sub-regional or district authority level, the less autonomy the school has and the lower the value in the answers of interviewees. To see how the interviewees answered the questions of School autonomy in EA's study, refer to Tables S3a to S3g in Annex 2 and Tables S3a to S3g in Annex 3).

Box 4: Autonomy rank by mode* (full autonomy, consultation, framework and other) and domain* (organisation of instruction in OECD's samples and curriculum in EA's sample) of decision-making: from more autonomy to less autonomy)

OECD		OECD		EA	EA
Autonomy		Autonomy		Autonomy	Autonomy
Public/State Secondary Schools only (1)		Public/State Secondary Schools only (2)		All schools of all affiliation (3)	Public/State Secondary Schools only (4)
New Zealand	88	New Zealand	100	Japan	Australia (ACT)
England	75	England	100	Sweden	Sweden
Finland	75	Australia.	88	Australia	Finland
France	75	Czech Rep.	88	Finland	Czech Rep.
Korea	75	Finland	88	Korea	Mexico
Sweden	75	France	75	New Zealand	England
Mexico	50	Korea	75	Czech Rep.	France
Australia	38	Mexico	75	England	
Japan	38	Japan	63	Mexico	
Czech Rep.	13	Mexico	63	France	

Source: 1) Ranked by percentage of decisions taken at the school level in full autonomy by domain of decision-making (OECD 2004, p. 435, table D6.4). In calculating the percentages, data was drawn from OECD's Table D6.4 and only as it relates to the "In full autonomy" percentages for one domain only i.e. "organisation of instruction". 2) Ranked by percentage of decisions taken at the school level in consultation, within a framework or other by domain of decision-making (OECD 2004, p. 435, table D6.4). In calculating the percentages, data was drawn from OECD's Table D6.4 and only as it relates to "consultation, within a framework or other" criteria in one domain only i.e. "organisation of instruction. 3) Ranked from more to less autonomy as perceived by interviewees of all schools, all affiliations, as per the criteria of school curricula or curriculum (Annex 2, Graph S3b). 4) Ranked from more to less autonomy as perceived by interviewees of public/state lower secondary interviewees only as per the criteria of school curricula or curriculum (Annex 3, Graph S3b).

Again since the two studies are based on different methodologies, columns for different criteria of analysis and different perceptions from different people in Box 4 can not be directly compared. Box 4 shows the results from the two studies in four columns in the domain (OECD) of "organisation of instruction" and the criteria (EA) of instruction as two close concepts. The two models' ranks show similarities but also differences. OECD's first column ranks New Zealand as the country with highest autonomy in "organisation of instruction" over countries such as England, Finland, Australia and Korea. EA's ranking in column three ranks New Zealand below all those countries. How come? Well, for starters, EA's ranking in column three has ranked countries for a sample that includes all types of schools with children 15 years old. As seen above, New Zealand's education system does not allow us to make a neat 6-3-3 distribution of education levels. Given this fact, one could ask again how come the panels of experts in OECD's analysis were making judgments about the autonomy of a lower-secondary school that does not really exist in theory or in practice. The distinction is not trivial.

Lower-secondary schools tend to show different organizational, managerial and resource operations than upper-secondary schools or lower-secondary schools attached to primary schools. This makes the whole comparison of schools and systems a very difficult task. To make more sense, we would need to compare similar samples of schools "lower-secondary schools" with similar structural and organizational charts. This simple observation (the difference in the structure and organization of schools) makes the comparison very difficult. This is why comparativists have many difficulties when they try to define the discipline in a consistent way.

It is beyond the scope of this section to make a detailed comparison of the two surveys. But readers can take a look at the OECD's findings (OECD 2004b) and compare them to EA's findings (Annexes 2 and 3).

At the end, the findings of EA's approach show that ideas or concepts such as decentralization and autonomy are understood differently by different people. Again, in the example of New Zealand, people in the field, i.e. such as teachers and principals, tend to perceive New Zealand as much less autonomous than the panel of experts from OECD's model in the curriculum criteria (see Box 4).

The great variety in all countries shown in EA's graphs (Annexes 2 and 3) show the great difficulty in defining concepts such as decentralization and autonomy. Even after long discussions to secure a common understanding about the scope of each question in EA's survey, principals and teachers and experts from each educational background gave different weights and different answers to the same question. And when taken together, all answers from all people in all countries, the graphs do not show convergence either. The lesson from here, then, is that decentralization and autonomy are rather too ambiguous concepts to define. Even if we can define them more or less as devolution of power, we have to be very careful about defining devolution in what area or for what purposes. To make my point more clearly, let's take again another example. Let's look at the example of "personnel management" (OECD) vis-à-vis "hiring or removing teachers"(EA) as depicted in Box 5.

Box 5 compares the results of autonomy of school in the personnel management OECD's domain (OECD 2004b, p. 435, table D6.4) and hiring and removing and evaluation or assessment of teachers in EA's variables (Annexes 2, table S6b and table S6e). Without doubt, one of the most important decisions a school or a principal may have in "personnel management" is that of hiring or removing teachers.

Assuming for a moment that the two studies are comparable, observe the difference in rankings between columns one and column three or four for the Czech Republic, Korea and Sweden. Take the case of Sweden, for instance. Sweden is a top country as per decisions taken in full autonomy, and yet, what does it mean to be above that of New Zealand by a difference of 25 percentage points when actually in New Zealand there are no schools, as per the system's structure, which can be really compared to Sweden? This is why New Zealand is not ranked in column 4. Even though results in EA's columns for all boxes are shown in a ranking table, when one sees the graphs of Annexes 2 and 3, most of the medians from all countries are not significantly different from the rest, making the whole analysis much more difficult to make. Neither the OECD's model nor EA's survey can really cast any undisputable light about the meaning of autonomy and decentralization. Or, in other words, we can not tell, from

this type of analysis if one country is really more decentralized than the rest, without looking inside the country to the ways the personal and political relationships are carried out in everyday life. Therefore, one can not claim that there are benchmarks or best practices in virtually anything.

If best practices or practices or policies are going to be exported or imported (borrowed or loaned, transferred or translated), this has to be done with a background story: a story of who, what, where, why and for whom.

Box 5: Autonomy rank by mode (full autonomy, consultation, framework and other) and domain (personnel management in OECD's sample and hiring and removing teachers in EA's sample) of decision-making: from more autonomy to less autonomy)

OECD		OECD		EA	EA
Autonomy		Autonomy		Autonomy	Autonomy
Public/State Secondary Schools only (1)		Public/State Secondary Schools only (2)		All schools of all affiliation (3)	Public/State Secondary Schools only (4)
England	63	England	83	Czech Rep.	Czech Rep.
Sweden	63	New Zealand	79	New Zealand	Finland
New Zealand	38	Czech Rep.	75	England	Sweden
Korea	25	Sweden	69	Finland	England
Finland	17	Korea	42	Sweden	Mexico
France	8	Finland	29	Japan	Australia (ACT)
Australia	na	Japan	21	Mexico	France
Czech Rep.	na	France	13	Australia	
Japan	na	Australia	na	Korea	
Mexico	na	Mexico	na	France	

Source: 1) Ranked by percentage of decisions taken at the school level in full autonomy by "Personnel management" domain of decision-making (OECD 2004, p. 435, table D6.4). In calculating the percentages, data was drawn from OECD's Table D6.4 and only as it relates to the "In full autonomy" percentages for one domain only i.e. "personnel management". 2) Ranked by percentage of decisions taken at the school level in consultation, within a framework or other by domain of decision-making (OECD 2004, p. 435, table D6.4). In calculating the percentages, data was drawn from OECD's Table D6.4 and only as it relates to "consultation, within a framework or other" criteria in one domain only i.e. "personnel management". 3) Ranked from more to less autonomy as perceived by interviewees of all schools of all affiliations, as per the criteria "hiring or removing teachers" (Annex 2, Graph S6b). 4) Ranked from more to less autonomy as perceived by interviewees of public/state lower-secondary schools interviewees only as per the criteria of "hiring and removing teachers" (Annex 3, Graph S6b).

With Factors and Quality

Since EA's study is based on questionnaires on PISA-like schools, the F&Q study and EA's should be more comparable. However, as will be seen below and judging from the findings of the two studies, similarities are found only in a few cases.

One of the sources of the differences between F&Q and EA studies is that the first one is based only on questionnaires to principals in a small section of a long questionnaire, whereas the second one is based on a questionnaire and an interview. Before the question was answered by the principal in EA's study, some exchange of ideas and concepts occurred between the interviewee and the researcher. The exchange of ideas and concepts in EA's study was done with the purpose of securing meaning and understanding across schools and countries or systems. This is not trivial. As we saw before, many researchers have identified that the decentralization and autonomy concepts or ideas are elusive and difficult to define in education policy.

However, the sample of comparable countries in both studies is larger and consistent among all areas of inquiry as will be seen in the following tables. I will draw only on a few examples to see the similarities and differences in the two studies. I will try to explain the sources of the differences.

Let us begin by comparing the two studies under the "Curriculum and Instruction" domain.

Box 6: OECD's Curriculum and Instruction Domain and EA's Curriculum Domain at the School Level

OECD's Curriculum Domain (1)	Percentage of students enrolled in schools with autonomy	EA's Curriculum (2)
Hong Kong	41.2	New Zealand
United States	40.2	Ireland
Chile	35.5	Sweden
Canada	13.4	Australia
Belgium	12.4	Finland
OCDE	12.1	UK
Ireland	10.4	Hong Kong
Mexico	9.3	Belgium
Switzerland	9.0	RW (Rest of the World)
Finland	8.7	Czech Republic
Czech Republic	8.1	Chile
New Zealand	7.0	United States
Australia	6.6	Korea
United Kingdom	5.4	Japan
Korea	2.2	Canada
Sweden	1.6	Switzerland
Japan	0.5	Mexico

Sources: 1) Ranked from more autonomy to less as per the percentages of students enrolled in schools where principals report that the school board has some responsibility for curriculum and instruction (OECD 2005 b, p 136 table 5.5). 2) Ranked from more to less autonomy based on an ordinal comparison of median values of perceptions (Graph S3c Annex 2).

There are few similarities in the two studies and sharp differences. Let us take the three cases seen in chapter 3: New Zealand, Mexico and the US. The three cases show large differences in the two studies as seen in Box 6. New Zealand is at the top in EA's study reflecting the fact that interviewees in EA's study see the schools (as an entity) to be very autonomous. The highest authority of schools in New Zealand is the school board. Therefore, seeing the school as an autonomous entity is comparable to saying that the school board has a great deal of responsibility as implied in the OECD's F&Q study. Almost by all measures, schools in New Zealand are seen as very autonomous; they are certainly more autonomous than most of the countries listed above New Zealand in the OECD's columns in Box 6. Mexico is listed in that table as more autonomous than New Zealand whereas in the EA's columns, it sits at the bottom of the ranking table just next to Ireland, which I think reflects reality even better. Even though the United States is known as one of the most decentralized school systems in the world, schools may not be as autonomous as the New Zealand schools. One of the reasons is that schools in the US have a strong relationship with an outside school board that usually sits in the School District and is often called the School Board.

Why is it that, if the two studies are based (in theory) on PISA schools (OECD's F&Q study) or PISA-like schools (EA's study), they show such differences in findings at least at the school level? One reason might be that the questionnaires in the F&Q study are not enough to convey reality. By looking at the questions of the F&Q study and the options for answer, one can imagine sources of confusion for principals.

In F&Q's study, principals were given a questionnaire with 22 main questions. Question 22 is divided into 12 sub-questions from a) to l).The heading of the question is "In your school, who has the main responsibility for: (Please <tick> as many boxes as appropriate on each row.)" There are five possible "tick boxes" principals might have ticked: 1) Not a school responsibility; 2) Appointed or elected board; 3) Principal; 4) Department head; 5) Teachers. And, finally, the 12 sub-questions: a) hiring teachers; b) firing teachers; c) establishing teachers' starting salaries; d) determining teachers' salary increases; e) formulating the school budget; f) deciding on budget allocations within the school; g) establishing student disciplinary policies; h) establishing student assessment policies; i) approving students for admittance to school; j) choosing which textbooks are used; k) determining course content; l) deciding which courses are offered.

From the questionnaire framework, the OECD's drafting experts draw some models and correlations that in many cases are quantum leaps of wishful correlations more than reflections of reality. Let me explain. If I am a principal and see a questionnaire like this, I might as well tick more boxes because all possible answers are true, or I might tick none since there might be the case that no clear autonomy is perceived by principals in each or all questions. There is no way to show that principals answered in a consistent way across the board. Some could have chosen to tick many boxes and some few boxes. The source of the uncertainty for principals is the following: there are schools around the world that do not have school boards but governing bodies (like outside school boards, the local government, the church, the district school board). How do we know the way principals answered this question then. For other schools, school boards inside the school are advisory boards, involved but not with no decision-making authority. How do we know that principals were consistent when answering the question of advisory boards vis-à-vis decision-making boards? In other schools, school boards have principals who sit with voice but without vote and still others where they sit with both voice and vote. How then do we know how the principals understood and answered the questions since in both cases the board and the principal are intertwined.

Let us take now the questions as they relate to the principals. Some schools have very strong principals with strong personalities and styles where "principals' control of things" is not in question, and yet in other schools, typically in German cantons in Switzerland, schools are run without principals. How do we know that principals, or whoever answered the questionnaires, were consistent about the role of principals in all 12 questions. There is no way of knowing except with an interview.

Let us take the issue of department heads and teachers. There are many schools around the world, especially small schools that do not have the luxury of department heads but still try to select textbooks in consultation with the principal or among a group of teachers or the vice-principal Again, how the principal construes the questions in such circumstances is very difficult to know. And since the department heads are also teachers, how do we know whether, in ticking the answers, they consistently answered only one of the boxes or the two boxes. Some probably ticked one and some both

reflecting the same situation. If they did not answer in a consistent way, then the numbers in percentages reported by the OECD may mislead us instead of guiding us as I think happened in Box 6 with the case of New Zealand, the US and Mexico.

Let me take one more comparison between the two studies to try to convey my critique with one additional example. Box 7 shows the findings of the two studies for the financial resources domain.

Box 7: OECD's Financial Resources Domain and EA's Management of Budget at the Principal Level

OECD's Financial Resources Domain (1)	Percentage of students enrolled in schools with autonomy	EA's Management of Budget (2)
Sweden	79.9	New Zealand
Czech Republic	74.5	Sweden
Korea	68.4	Australia
Australia	66.3	United Kingdom
Finland	62.1	Ireland
Canada	56.7	Korea
Japan	52	Hong Kong
OCDE	48.9	United States
Belgium	48.8	RW (Rest of the World)
Ireland	46.5	Canada
Hong Kong	45.7	Belgium
United States	43.1	Chile
Mexico	40.9	Japan
New Zealand	38.7	Finland
United Kingdom	35.9	Czech Republic
Switzerland	25.7	Switzerland
Chile	21	Mexico

Sources: 1) Ranked from more autonomy to less as per the percentages of students enrolled in schools where principals report that the principal has some responsibility for financial resources (OECD 2005 b, p 134 table 5.3). 2) Ranked from more to less autonomy based on an ordinal comparison of median values of perceptions (Graph S6h Annex 2).

Here again we see many discrepancies between the two studies. And again New Zealand is one example in mind given the sharp difference. First observation is that principals do not really run schools like businesses. They do not really have a budget as in the business sense, i.e., a yearly budget that includes everything that the principal can handle and financially manage. In most cases they do not even receive cash but an imprest account. And in many cases the imprest account they receive is just a fraction of the total budget. That fraction is subject to rules, scrutiny and accountability. So, to talk about financial autonomy in schools has to be taken to the level of schools where there might be very little maneuverability. In this sense schools around the world share the same picture. This is more or less seen in Graph S6h Annex 2 where most countries

sit around the median values of 4 and 6. With the small fraction, and all the rules, principals are free to move around. In no way principals in Mexico, for instance, have more autonomy or equal autonomy than principals in New Zealand like Box 7 shows for the OECD's F&Q study column. Why? Principals in Mexico do not even have a budget to operate with. The difference in the two systems is shown by the right column Box 7. So, how principals in Mexico understood the OECD's questions is difficult to see. Furthermore, principals in New Zealand are rather very important actors in the whole Tomorrow's School reform. They are for instance very highly paid. Why? Because, the reform drafters in the 1980s in New Zealand saw the "principal position" in the schools as key to the success of the Tomorrow's Schools initiative. Yes, inside school boards in New Zealand are very powerful and autonomous, but that does not mean that principals aren't. How the principals and boards relate in the power-structure dance is something that has to be studied case-by-case at the school level.

Without knowing the way principals construed their questions, any inferences drawn by the OECD's F&Q study can mislead us more than can guide us.

Findings? Decentralization, autonomy and quality

Does more decentralization and/or autonomy in schools mean more quality in education outcomes?

Do students who come from decentralized systems of education perform consistently higher in international assessments?

Well, regardless of the evidence and as per the intentions and perceptions of experts inside the OECD and the World Bank, at least, they seem to believe that more decentralization and more autonomy are better regardless of the context, location, situation or history of school education systems. Take for instances the multicited paragraphs in this chapter about bench marks and best practices (OECD 2005, 54 and Guichard 2005, 16). Or consider the study "School Factors Related to Quality and Equity: Results form PISA 2000" (OECD 2005b) as seen above. Or consider for instance the following paragraph taken from Education at a Glance (OECD 2004, 424):

> Various motives are attributed to the desire to increase the autonomy of schools, such as enhancing the quality, effectiveness and responsiveness of schooling." (OECD 2004b, 424).

One special issue of the International Journal of Educational Development in 1996 was "devoted to a critical examination of [The World Bank's] Priorities and Strategies for Education. (Watson 1996, 213; italics in original, parenthesis added by the author). In the editorial to the special issue, Watson says the following: "These strategies [The World Bank's strategies] are offered to educational policy makers in developing countries if they wish to receive funding from the bank. Since the Bank accounts for 25% of all bilateral and multilateral assistance to education this is an important source of influence." (Watson 1996, 213, parenthesis added by the author). One of those strategies cited by Watson (19996, 213) is "more emphasis on institutional autonomy".

We saw in this chapter and chapter 2, many examples and opinions behind the idea of the international intentional influence of international organizations such as the OECD and the World Bank.

Does the data from the OECD's decision-making study or the EA's study support the relationship between the decentralization/autonomy duo and performance? We have to go back to the studies for a little while to try to answer the question.

The countries that are depicted in Boxes 1 to 7 above are high-performing countries since all of them except for Mexico performed well above the OECD's mean score and country's mean score (Table 1 Annex 1) in both PISA 2000 and PISA 2003. And yet in three classifications, there are countries that seem to be more decentralized than others and more autonomous than others. For instance, at the country level, column 1 Box 1 above (OECD's sample) shows high-performing countries such as New Zealand and Finland as very opposite in the centralization-decentralization scale: column 2 shows Japan and New Zealand, two high-performing countries, as opposites too, or England and Australia as opposites also. Should we go to columns 3, 4 and 5 (EA's sample) from the same Box, we see more or less the same discrepancies: New Zealand and Czech Republic high in the list and Sweden and Australia at the bottom in columns 3; or New Zealand and Czech Republic high vis-à-vis Japan and Sweden, low in column 4; or the Czech Republic high where Sweden is low in column 5. If one sees the aggregated scores for PISA 2003 of the Czech Republic and Sweden, they tie with 1528 and 1529 respectively (Table 1 Annex 1). Therefore, there seem to be varying degrees of decentralization for all high-performers.

The autonomy of schools side of the story is more or less the same story. See for instance Box 2 above. Column 1 (OECD's study) that shows high-performing countries New Zealand and Sweden at the top of the autonomy scale and high-performing countries Japan and the Czech Republic at the bottom, and still Finland in the middle. Column 3 (EA's study) tells more or less the same story with New Zealand and Sweden at the top and Czech Republic and France at the bottom.

Let us finally take the issue of autonomy in schools from the "organisation of instruction" (OECD) or "curriculum" (EA) points of view. This is shown in Box 4 above. Column 1 (OECD's study) which shows New Zealand and England very high in the autonomy scale and Japan and the Czech Republic very low; again, all of them high-performers. Column3 (EA's study) shows Japan as very high and the Czech Republic and England as low in autonomy with France as the lowest one from this reduced list, and again all of them high-performers.

There are very few countries in these two samples (OECD's and EA's) in Boxes 1 to 7 to scientifically tell sound stories of a relationship between performance and decentralization or autonomy as it is claimed for some factors by the OECD (OECD 2005b). However, the albeit squalid evidence of the three studies tells us cautionary tales about such relationships. Marking the relationship a significant one can be misleading in a world of traveling policies and practices. OECD's claims and World Bank's strategies in education travel around the world with "arguments" based on supposedly sound evidence of a causal relationship where in reality there seems to be none. Countries are urged or have "imposed" policies and practices with little evidence of deliverance. Countries then engage in policy or systems' reforms that, at the end, do

not resemble such policies and practices except in talks, names and simulations, and this is where we find rhetorical convergence.

Countries may import policies and practices but when those finally land in districts and schools they are subjected to the translation, implementation and sense-making filters of policy-makers, policy-implementers and practitioners. Each filtering layer will reshape the traveling, imported or transferred policies and practices as per the history of schooling, the resources available and the political and human networks at hand. One school principal from a very high-performing country put it blatantly in one of the interviews: "Of course, they [the downtown authorities] will try to impose or force their decisions upon my school; however, I will only take my charge on those matters that I think are doable, right and appropriate." Another principal told me: "No, I do not follow strict instructions from above: We [teachers and I] do what we think is best for the school."

In due justice to the OECD's view of the world of education, there is a change in the wording in OECD's claims from 1998 to 2004 that shows a shift or recognition that stories about decentralization and autonomy are not as clear today as once believed. In 1998 the OECD's wording was:

> Concentrating decision-making close to the actual process of schooling is a strong indication of decentralisation. In 13 out of 22 OECD countries a majority of types of decisions that bear on lower secondary education are taken locally or by the school itself. (OECD 1998, 292)

And in 2004 the OECD's remarks were

> In 14 out of 25 countries most types of decisions that bear on lower secondary education are taken locally or by the school itself. (OECD 2004b, 424)

The deletion of the first phrase from OECD's Education at a Glance 1998 to OECD's Education at a Glance 2004 speaks for itself. Decision-making close to the school does not necessarily mean decentralization as we have seen.

All these suggest that one can hardly arrive at a global model of school education that we can all follow so we can all succeed. Transference has taken place but, when adopted or adapted the traveling or imported policies end up with different meanings and practices. I will offer more evidence of the lack of convergence and the missing Shangri-la in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: "The taming of the shrew" in education transferring

Do School Policies and Practices Converge or Diverge? Additional Evidence.

The evidence from EA's study seems to question the existence of global patterns, and/or benchmarks, or casual relationships between decentralization or autonomy and quality of education as in high performance of school education systems measured by students' performance in standardized international assessments.

But can we get more evidence of this lack of convergence in policies and practices? In the few next pages I will try to offer evidence from the data gathered through the international study (EA's study) of perceptions of knowledgeable people as explained before. I will select some issues or areas of convergence and divergence: text-books and school materials; curriculum and time-tableling; school budgets and hiring and firing of teachers; and assessment and accountability. Readers, however, may navigate through the graphs in Annexes 2 and 3 to draw more lessons and observations.

Text Books and School Material

To begin with let me propose, as many others have suggested, that convergence of education policies seems to occur at the slogan or rethorical levels. At the school level, however, convergence may be occurring in specific issues or practices such as autonomy of schools in topics like selection of textbooks or school materials. But even at this level where all countries, including the non-high-performing countries Chile and Mexico, show the same level of autonomy (Annex 2, Graphs S3c and S3d), the international experts (INTEXP[1]) see this particular feature of autonomy as not very important in relation to the high performance of students. At the end, however, the evidence shows, even in this, seemingly not as important issues (selection of textbooks and acquisition of school materials) that autonomy here is irrelevant for quality since the two very low-performing countries show convergence in these two topics too.

Data, however, make the claims for convergence a more complicated story. If we look at the same data but only for public schools at the lower secondary level, there is no pattern at all even in this rather "simplistic" observation of school autonomy in the selection of textbooks (Annex 3, Graph S3c). School materials (such as papers, pencils, blackboards, maps, arts and laboratories supplies, other than large and computer equipments, etc.) is another feature that at first glance one may think school practices and policies convergence around high performing countries. By carefully looking at the perceptions of people (Annex 2, Graph S3d) one finds a distributions that is even more consistent across countries than the one shown for selection of textbooks. Again, apparently, we have at last convergence in at least one issue. And then again, international experts (INTEXP) seem to think that although important the autonomy of schools when making decisions about "school materials" convergence is not as important for them (Annex 2, Graph S3d). A similar story, although less dramatic than with text books, is replicated in public or state lower secondary schools only as can be seen in Graph S3d Annex 3. Here, there seems to be convergence in all high performing countries including in the sample, but the fact that Mexico and Chile have managed to

[1] As explained in the methodology section INTEXP is an observation that stands for the quartile values of 15 international experts as to the relationship of a given variable say "school autonomy in curriculum" and students' performance.

squeeze its "autonomy level" to the "high performing" world-level casts doubts about any possible causal relationship from autonomy in "text books" and "school materials" to school education quality.

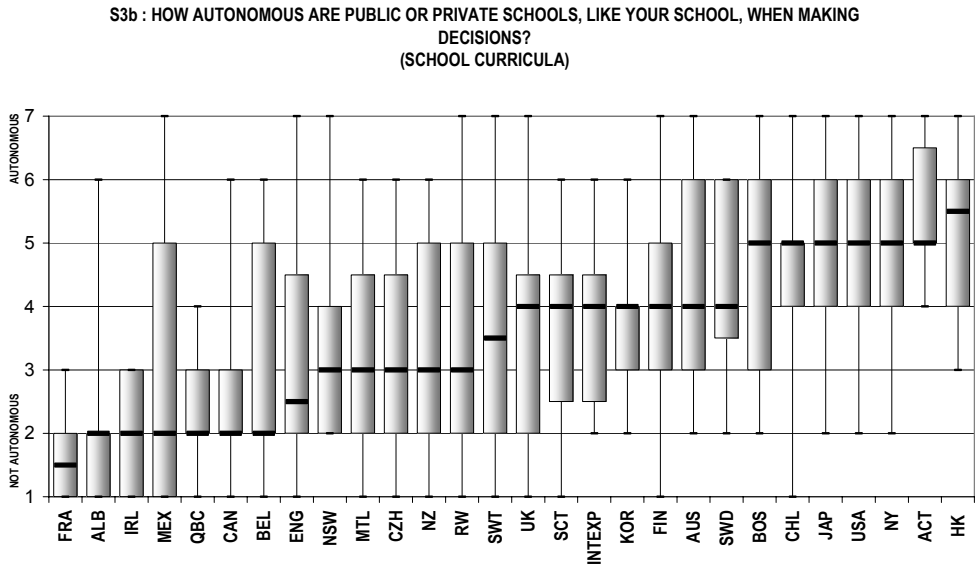
The question could then be autonomy of textbooks' selection for teachers. Graph S5f Annex 2 shows a clear pattern in favor of autonomy in selection of textbooks for teachers, even in this case INTEXP think of this factor as more important for quality that the autonomy of schools in the selection of Textbooks. There are three observations that blur this case: 1) Alberta is clearly out of the line here and yet, Alberta is a very high performing region. 2) A low performing country lines up in this factor with high and very high performing countries. 3) Chile, a very low performing country too, shows a slightly higher autonomy of teachers in selection of textbooks than Mexico does. The autonomy of teachers in the selection of textbooks is not under the reign of high-performing countries only.

School Curriculum and Time-tableling

Far more important, prima facie, are policies and practices related to school curriculum. School curriculum and timetables are key topics in every school, sometimes taking many days of principals' work or management-teams' works in schools. They are key issues from whatever perspective we may look at them.

Curriculum

By carefully looking at Graphs S3b Annex 2 (reproduced here) we see one of the most extreme variations in all countries, with INTEXP undecided about what is better for education quality as defined as high performance of students in national or international standardized assessments. Going to the data of public or state secondary schools only does not help at all to the convergence cause as we can see from Graph S3b Annex 3. The variation here is very large among countries and regions.



As we can see from the graph, and based on the perceptions of 442 people (see Column S3b, Table 1a, Annex 2) there are high performing countries or regions such as Hong

Kong and ACT (Australian Capital Territory) that perform very high and NY (New York) and Boston (USA) that do not perform very high, and Chile that performs very low, all of them in the much autonomous side of the spectrum. In contrast there are regions or countries that perform very high such as Alberta and Canada and Flanders (Belgium) and countries that perform not as high, as France or very low as Mexico and all are located within the very low autonomy side of the spectrum. And still others such as New Zealand, UK, Korea and Finland all with a rather very high performing record that seat towards the center of the graph.

This graph has to be construed under the assumption that no country in this world of the high performing countries, plus Mexico and Chile, has a system that allows total freedom in school education curriculum.

One may say that there is convergence in the lack of autonomy in curriculum setting, but one can not say much more than that. Even more, there is no school in this world of high performing countries plus Mexico and Chile that operates its own curriculum. Even in the very prestigious private independent English schools principals reported during the interviews their duty towards the estate curriculum and the visits of inspectors. Flanders is also believed, by national authorities, to have a rather flexible goal oriented curriculum, but when the same question was asked to principals and teachers they saw the goals as too detailed and too narrow, therefore, principals and teachers in general qualified the system with less autonomy that government experts did.

Some times curriculums are not detailed but are framed by national exams. When a record of national exams is strong exams are the subterfuge for detailed content curriculums.

However, to follow the state curriculum (as in curriculums or national exams) does not prevent schools to run their own curriculum-versions on top of the state curriculum. IN some cases, schools can tailor their own curriculums since as one principal from one private independent school in England told me: “state exams are so easy that we have a lot of room for maneuvering”.

Take another example from Edmonton Canada, a Public Schools District widely known and praised (Ouchi 2003) among other things for site-based management. Edmonton Public School System is divided into two sub-systems widely known as Edmonton Public (the largest) and Edmonton Catholic. Edmonton is also well known for the high performance of its students. In PISA 2003, Alberta’s students performed very high in Mathematics: as high as Hong Kong and Finland, and much higher than Canada as a whole (Bussière et al, Table B1.1, 70). Edmonton is the second largest school district in Alberta[2] (Alberta Education 2004). However, except in few cases, schools in Alberta, are seen, by their surveyed people, as having very low autonomy. The only area where principals and teachers report to have high autonomy is in the management of budgets by principals.

Surveyed people in Edmonton answered the following question “How autonomous are public or private schools, like your school, when making decisions (overall)” with a

[2] Alberta has two very large districts Calgary and Edmonton and many smaller, and each district can have many authorities

median value of four (Graph S3a, Annex 2). This is a median answer that goes in line with many other countries and also in line with the observation RW (Rest of the World).

The rest of the answers for Alberta were given with a "low to very low autonomy mark" in relation to the rest of the regions or countries. Examples of those answers are: 1) curriculum (Graph S3b, Annex 2); 2) textbooks (S3c, Annex 2); 3) exams/tests (Graph S3f, Annex 2); 4) teachers involvement in "course curriculum" (S5c, Annex 2); 5) teachers selecting textbooks (S5f, Annex 2); 6) principals involvement in curriculum (S6c, Annex 2). There are some areas, few however, where the opposite effect happens, i.e., Albert higher in autonomy than the rest of the regions or countries: 1) principals ability to "hire/remove teachers" (Graph S6b, Annex 2); 2) principals' autonomy to evaluate teachers (Graph S6e, Annex 2); principals' autonomy to manage the budget (Graph S6h, Annex 2).

One principal from an Edmonton Public District school told me, referring to the Edmonton Catholic District

> Performance-wise the two districts (public and separate or catholic) are very close. As a whole the Edmonton school district is based on site management or site-based decision making. In terms of school operation the primary role of principals in the catholic system is to supervise the instruction, but in the public system is to run a business. We, the principals in Edmonton's public district manage the entire thing.

And yet, even here, as we saw before with the curriculum issue, everything is not really managed by the principals or the schools. However, two different school administrations within the same city, Edmonton, with different school district philosophies and operations, perform very high and highly close. From this specific case we may derive convergence in performance but not in administrations or education or school policies and practices.

In general, my conclusion from the interviews, questionnaires and observations is that principals run the core of the schools even when they lack managerial independence or autonomy. Even with little autonomy at the school level (Graph S3b, Annex 2) principals and teachers, in general, see the role of principals, with enough freedom and maneuverability (Graphs S6a, S6b, S6c, S6d, S6e, S6f, S6g and S6h in Annex 2) to get things done their own way.

There are means (many) by which principals can affect the schools and the school life even with no autonomy as in running a "business entity." Not all principals can run schools as corporate managers. Some can, as seen above by the comments from one principal in a public school in Edmonton or the next opinion from the principal of a privately-run, profit-oriented, and yet publicly funded "Vittra" School in Sweden: "I see my job more as a business corporate manager than as a school principal". In any event is not clear that principals even in "vanguard" market-oriented school administrations can run schools like businesses since for starters in no school in the world, principals have the authority to fire teachers or staff or if they have it like in Finland, New Zealand or Sweden, they use it very rarely. One principal in Finland told me: "I have the authority to fire permanent teachers but I have never used it in my more than 15 years in my tenure as principal."

Time-Tableling

One of the areas that principals, in many times in consensus or understanding with teachers can "modify" the wishes from downtown authorities is in the issue of "time-tabling" or the arrangement of schedules as in detailed curriculums (session and subjects) for the day-to-day operation of the school in any specific school year. All curriculums in the 16 visited countries operate either under very specific detailed instructions or within a framework.

The expression "within the/a framework" is widely used in the school policy arena, including by the OECD experts as we saw it before when comparing the OECD's study to EA's study. However, the meaning of the expression is by no means exact. In systems like the English one, curriculums may have a "flexible framework" but a network of national exams takes care of the issue by restricting the actual curriculum taught in schools to the topics and questions of the exams. By and large frameworks define the core subjects, the number of sessions per week or school year, the expected outcomes per topic, and numbers of credit to successfully complete the school program and the number of school days per year. Within this "framework" principals and teachers "implement" or "adapt" the authorities wishes to the "situation" of the school. The situation of the school is defined by the following idea, as one principal from Finland told me: "What is good for the children given our own pedagogical experience (principal plus teachers) and the availability of resources. I put my charge only on those things I deem, with my teachers, correct and appropriate".

This "I put my charge" may also go inside the classroom between teachers and students. In the 165 schools I visited and the many classrooms from each school (except perhaps for the case of Mexico) class-rooms look alike but by no means are similar. Each class-room has a different character. The same observation applies for schools. In most cases, although not in all, I could say even before walking inside the school, just by standing outside that I was before a school building. But once I entered the school everything from the architecture to the colors, from the ethos to the design, from the class-rooms to the size of the school everything was different. It was like entering different nations. There is one analogy that fits well into this comparison. And this is the analogy of houses and homes: Houses look alike but homes are by definition different! We in Spanish may say: "Mi casa es su casa"[3]" but we never say "mi hogar es su hogar[4]".

The situation of the school, to paraphrase the principal from Finland, means that principals and teachers will respond in relation to their own experiences, expectations and networks of relationships given by the history and networks and human relationships inside the school and with stakeholders (teachers, parents, students, and local authorities).

The micromanagement of timetables may impact the macro-idea of a national curriculum. When shaping the "time-tables" principals can reduce the number of children per class-room session by "hiring more teachers" or save money by "increasing the number of students per classroom" therefore, "less teachers". Saving money can increase information-telecommunication technologies in the school, but may also

[3] "My house is your house".
[4] "My home is your home".

increase guidance, or staff-development or "clean and dignified bathrooms". All of these, in almost all high performing countries are decisions made by principal whether they have a school board inside the school or not. When shaping time-tables principals can shorten or lengthen the school day making anyone to go home earlier or later. Timetables may increase the number of hours devoted to remedy classes or to after-school day counseling. Timetables may be distributed during the calendar year in one section or several sections, allowing principals and teachers to timetable in a sequential order or timetable in a flexible way so students can tailor their own program. There are schools in New Zealand, Canada, Finland and the U.S. with flexible timetables so students could write their own programs at their own pace under some student guidance and counseling. Students can also follow a more traditional timetable under the same school. Students can accordingly accelerate their pace or slow it down as per their choice and school opportunities.

In one math class in New Zealand there were students from all levels of upper-secondary education (year 10, 11 and 12) taking the same level of mathematics. And still in one very large "class room" in Edmonton, students were conducting their own studies with several teachers taking questions, on a one-by-one fashion, around a tennis-court sized class-room. Principals can also arrange timetables so that all math or science or English courses are squeezed or spread in few or many weeks, making teachers to react to the wishes of principals. So principals and teachers not only "make-sense" (their own sense) of dictated or induced policies from downtown but also "fine-tune" such policies and regulations to their wishes.

Many principals from different countries refer to the subject-matter of time-tableling as very complex but also very crucial. This is the only area that principals from almost all schools, except from France perhaps, (see Graph S3e, Annex 2) have a high level of autonomy. Besides, timetabling consumes a good deal of time from principals or vice-principals. Even with the use of ad hoc software programs to facilitate the task of time-tabling principals resort to different, more "primitive" means to actually finish their scheduling task. Some principals have designed their own timetable "folders" or flyers, others, combine the ad-hoc software with electronic or physical spreadsheets, and still others do the timetables in special "classrooms" where the whole floor is used as the arena for shuffling or fitting the puzzle's pieces of subjects, teachers' own schedules, "frameworks" and students' wishes.

Indirectly, students also contribute to "timetabling" and curriculum re-writing when they sign up for "optional" courses. Optional courses, especially for most advanced levels grades 8 and 9 in lower-secondary and years 11, 12 and 13 (when available) in upper-secondary, can shape curriculum and schedules as per students' wishes.

At the end what happens inside the school can affect the curriculum and therefore change the wishes from downtown policy-makers or politicians.

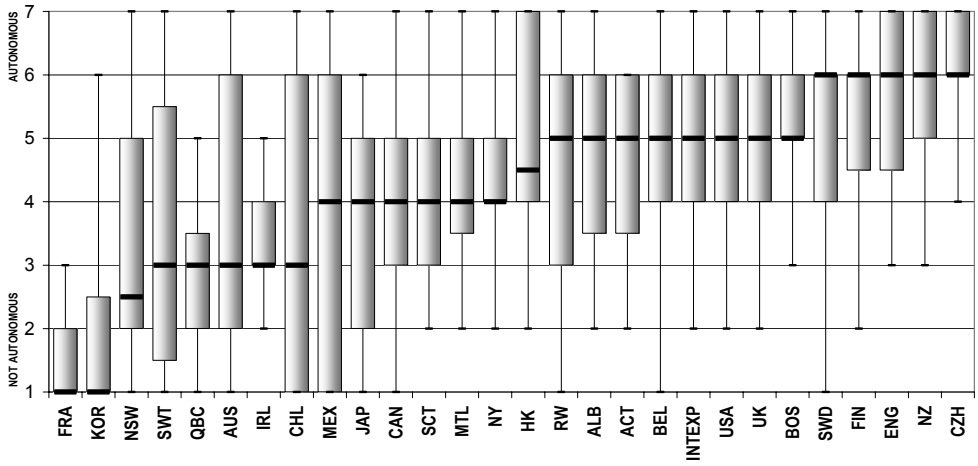
The Management of Budgets and Hiring and Firing Teachers

In most cases, principals do not have a real budget to operate with, and even when they do they are constrained by many regulatory bodies, inside the school (school boards) and outside (district school boards, regulations, inspections and/or supervision). The bulk of the schools' budget is made of by the teachers' and personnel's salaries and

fringe benefits. Some principals have room, albeit small, for maneuvering school budgets but the actual cash they get (other than salaries and benefits which they do not get to manage at all) is very small, and in many cases less that 10 percent of the total school budget. And still in many cases principals do not get the cash but only a book-keeping account of their cash managed by others (in most cases local authorities). Local or municipal or state authorities more often than not supply the school with their needs by drawing down on the schools budgets.

The lack of budget or budget control is another indication of the limited negotiation power they have in the management of human resources and in the management of schools as real business entities. The finding here is that principals do not have the autonomy to manage schools like businesses but they find ways to manage the schools like pedagogical entities. The marketisation movement has reached schools only in rhetorical ways. None of the 165 schools visited around the world is really managed as a business organization albeit the site-based management or autonomous call principals make in Edmonton Public or Swedish Vittra Schools. One of their limitations, of course, is human resources' management. Teachers, everywhere are still very powerful, and I do not mean teachers' unions.

S6b: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (HIRE/REMOVE TEACHERS)



By looking at Graph S6b Annex 2 (reproduced here) one is inclined to conclude that principals, in general, have a fairly large capacity to hire and remove teachers. Well, the story is different. The graph is actually showing the freedom of hiring more than the freedom of removing teachers (I learnt that the two decisions can not be merged into a single question, when I realized it was too late for me to change the questionnaire). Had I divided the question into two parts, one for hiring and one for firing, the answers I would have gotten would be the same or similar for hiring and totally different for firing. Principals almost never fire teachers or staff, just like school boards (inside or outside schools) almost never fire principals. When principals have the authority to fire teachers they rarely use it since in practice there are many potential "legal" costs when firing a teacher. As a principal from Sweden told me "Listen my friend, I can not fire a teachers even if she or he kills her/his mother". So principals, by and large, and at least for the short run, are stuck with the human resources, from the teachers or administrative staff point of view, to face the challenging world of schools.

Teachers in turn can make the life of principals even more difficult. And surprisingly teachers can affect principals' human resources managerial abilities, whether they act alone or in collective action. Permanent teachers, knowing their immovability can limit the principals' plan for change, innovation or motivation. They can little by little mobilize other teachers against the principal. At the end the struggle is a battle of negotiation and managerial abilities between the principal and the teacher(s). There were schools, in my sample of visited schools, where teachers were able to dominate the principal's authority by blocking decisions or making all decision for change to travel a long and lengthy road before implementation. So the so called autonomy of principals or schools to hire and fire teachers, or move teachers around, is a myth.

Notwithstanding, schools and school districts and school education systems have learnt ways to circumvent the school-teachers' rigidities, at least temporarily. One of those is the often used strategy of hiring teachers under a "probation period" or "training period" or as "substitutes" for absent teachers. What this tactic does is to reduce the probability for teachers or school boards to hire teachers who are not really committed to teaching and team-work but also to procrastinate the main hiring decision for one or two years. At the end, when teachers are hired to permanent life positions, the real personnel-management challenges arise. However, in all cases, principals only spoke about difficulties with personnel management in exceptional cases. By and large schools have found ways to perform very high albeit high labor rigidities. Therefore, schools in high performing countries do not act as businesses in a market environment.

There are still other ways to solve the rigidity problem as I encountered it among the 16 high performing countries. One of those ways is the rotation of teachers policies followed in Korea. Every few years teachers are rotated by the central city or provincial authorities. Some principals think this is a good idea and some think this is not as good. At the end is good when principals want to get rid of teachers for whatever reason; and is not good, when principals want to keep outstanding teachers in their teaching staff. Another way is the one found in Districts such as Edmonton where principals can not really fire a teacher but may ask the superintendent's office a transfer for teachers they want to get rid of. And still a third one, is found in Mexico where principals and "supervisors" may negotiate with local authorities and the union to transfer a teacher from one school into an administrative position in the offices of the local authority or offices of the union.

The general rule then, in high performing countries, is: principals can hire, or have a say in hiring teachers but very rarely fire them. And still, schools perform high. Teachers' rigidity is not seen as a hurdle to quality, why? This almost impossible for a business-like organization where labor mobility and flexibility is key to the company's success under a competitive environment.

In most high performing countries the teacher profession is highly regarded and so are the requirements to become a teacher, i.e. quality of teachers matter. This is specifically true in countries such as Finland where teachers albeit their relatively low salaries are highly motivated and valued (as in social esteem) by the society. One way of measuring the popularity is by looking at the high demand of university studies to be trained as a teacher. For example, to be accepted at the Jyväskylä University's Teachers College program students have to file a pre-application in order to be invited to present an

admission exam. For 2006 1,571 applications were received for the first screening phase. Out of this number 300 applicants were invited to sit for an admission exam. Out of the 300, with information provided by the exam and after an interview, only 96 students were formally accepted[5]. This is an extremely high rate of acceptance of 1:16 (1,571/96). Teachers in Finland are mentioned often as one of the reasons for success in PISA.

When my interviewees, from around the globe, responded with something like "teachers matter" I replied with the follow up question "Isn't that obvious? The real question is, from the systemic point of view, what does it take to have such a qualified cohort of teachers? Are good teachers a function of culture? Or, Are good teachers a function of systemic rules and practices? Finnish people like to think that it is both: Culture and system or policies, the answer then, is not very helpful for policymakers. Culture and history as put by Simola (2005); culture and students as put by Jouni Välijärvi et al (2002, 15) in"students' own attitudes and abilities, notably engagement in reading…and interest in reading… cultural communications between parents and children…"; policies (such as teachers' training[6] as designed and implemented in 1970) as put by Jari Lavonen and Rasku-Puttonen[7] or practices (such as proactive and career student guidance in schools) as put by Raimo Vourinen[8]. Although all of them, to a certain point, agree that culture is the common important factor.

Assessment and Accountability Policies

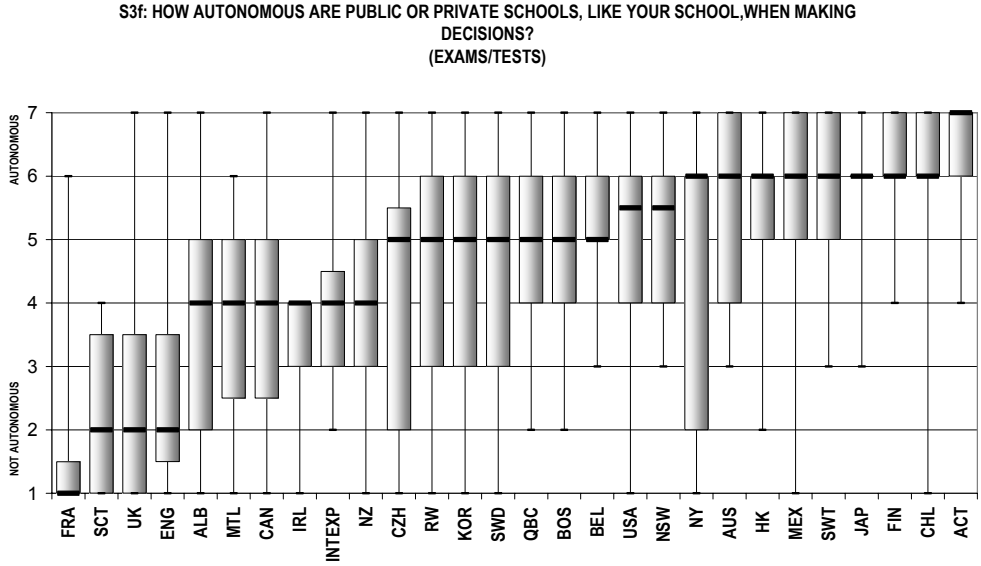
This is of course another issue-area of enormous debate. I can not go into the debate per se since will imply the review of the literature and evidence which is beyond the scope of my research. I can only highlight the variety of high-performing countries policies towards assessments as in national exams vis-à-vis school's autonomy in exams.

Three questions were made to principals and teachers and some experts about the evaluations/assessment policies and practices of their respective education systems. The answers are shown in Graphs S3f, S5e and S6f of Annex 2 which I reproduce below.

The answer to the question "how autonomous are public or private schools, like your school, when making decisions?" is sketched in Graph S3f. Interviewees were asked to assess the overall impact of external exams over internal exam in the following way and weights: 1) External exams (such as national exams) influencing the students success from one academi year to the next or from one education (ISCED) level to the next, such as in leaving mandatory exams from lower secondary to upper secondary or from upper secondary to university; 2) The degree to which external national exams are taken into account for the over-all assessment of students; 3) the degree to which external exams bind teachers to "teach to the test" strategy in the class-rooms.

[5] Information provided by Helena Rasku-Puttonen, Professor of Educational Psychology and Dean of the College of Education, University of Jyväskylä, in her office at 10:00 am on July 12, 2006.
[6] All teachers in Finland, class teachers and subject teachers have to complete three years of undergraduate work and two years of graduate work.
[7] Personal interview in her office at University of Jyväskylä on July 13, 2006.
[8] Personal interview in her office at University of Jyväskylä on July 07, 2006.

By framing the questions in this way I asked my interviewees or surveyed people to carefully think about the influence of national exams upon the students' own school careers and the schools' and teachers' own teaching and learning practices. For example, if the external influence is heavy as in weights 1, 2 and 3 from the previous paragraph then the answer should be (7). Any less than that should be given answer from (6) to (1). The next graph shows then answers.

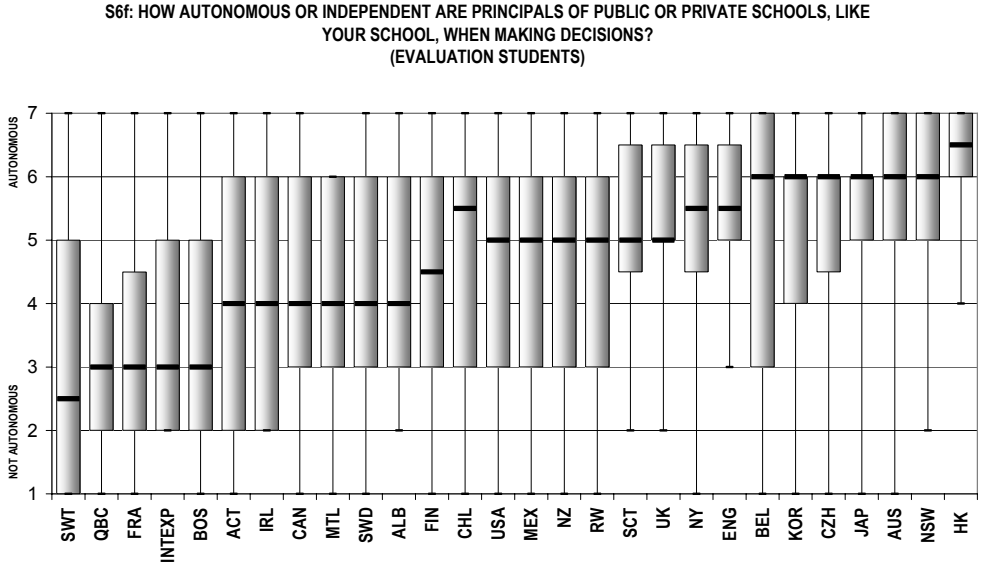


Note that there is a great variability in graph S3f with a clear step-wise shape, showing that countries to the left have education systems that are bound by very strong external or national assessment policies and countries to the right showing a lot of autonomy in the exam assessment of students regardless the existence of no of national assessment policies, as in national exams. Or in other words, education systems in ACT (Australian Capital Territory), Chile, Finland, Japan, Switzerland, Mexico and Hong Kong are systems where schools' assessment policies are very strong even over national ones in determining students' future and school's own ability to assess and evaluate students. IN contrast, education systems in France, Scotland, and England have very strong national assessments. Interviewees or respondents were asked to consider their answers for lower-secondary and upper-secondary levels only. So countries like Scotland with no national exams before the end of compulsory education (around the age of 15-16 years old) will show strong influence albeit the focus on over-all school evaluations rather than only national exams. Should the question have focused on primary levels or education before the end of compulsory education the Scottish answers would surely have moved to the extreme right of the graph.

Note that the "benchmark" question for INTEXP[9] shows an answer at the median level (4) with most of the answers clustered between (3) and (4 ½). This means that INTEXP are not decided about the influence of "national assessment policies" upon students' own performance. Or in other words, they are not decided about the impact of autonomy of schools in exams/tests to the performance of students.

[9] The equivalent S3f question for INTEXP was: "Autonomy in schools [exams/tests] is key to education quality (such as performance in international [national] evaluations [assessments])". See Annex 7 for the list of equivalent benchmark questions for international experts (INTEXP).

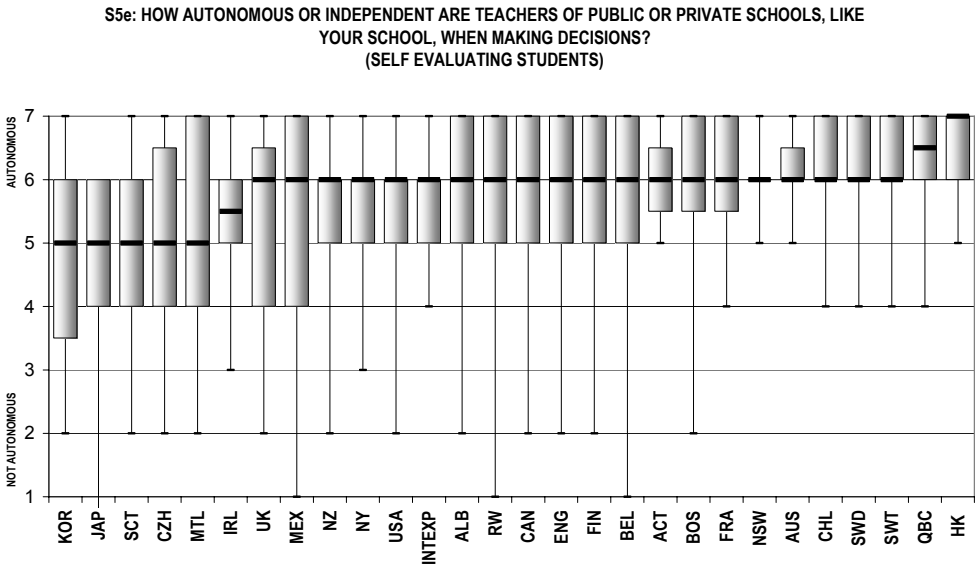
Graph S6f shows the answer to the question "how autonomous or independent are principals of public or private schools, like your school, when making decisions?"



Respondents were asked to assess the principals' role in determining students' school career success as to promoting students from one educational level to the next, say from lower secondary one to lower secondary two or from lower secondary school to upper secondary school. Again the graph shows a step-wise shape meaning a lot of variability among all systems. Note however that INTEXP (see Annex seven for equivalent questions to international experts) tend to think that the involvement of principals in students' assessments is not really key to students' academic performance. In any way, this graph may be also used as an indirect indicator of principal's strong role in schools. The assessment of students is an area where teachers usually have more direct involvement. In schools where principals do not only run the school as an entity but also take an active role in "assessing/evaluating" students means that principals exert a greater role than just management in the school life. As per Graph S6f this is the case for the school education systems in Hong Kong, New South Wales (Australia), Japan, Czech Republic and Korea.

Graph S5e shows the answers of principals, teachers and international experts to the question "how autonomous or independent are teachers of public or private schools, like your school, when making decisions (self-evaluating/assessing students)?

There is a high degree of converge (INTEXP included) in this answer showing that, in fact, teachers have at least a significant say about their own students' careers albeit national exams or principals' involvement in students' evaluations school-wide. Is this convergence related to quality? By sheer looking the Graph S5e one is tempted to answer **Yes** to this convergence-quality question, **But No**, by careful looking the fact the Mexico and Chile (low performing countries) have median values of (6) the whole relationship could be blurred. But what this Graph seems to show is that teachers remain after years of national assessments, in some countries, and strong principals' roles, in others, the most important factor in students' own development career and future.



But other than perceptions knowledge, do high performing countries have or don't have national assessment policies as in national exams to the whole student population in some or all subject or levels in lower or upper secondary schools?

Table 1: National Assessment Systems

Country	National Assessments	
	Universal	Random
Finland		✓
Sweden	✓	
France	✓	
England	✓	
Scotland		✓
Ireland	✓	
Belgium (Flanders)		✓
Czech Republic		✓
Switzerland		✓
Singapore	✓	
Australia	✓	
New Zealand		✓
Hong Kong	✓	
Korea	✓	
Japan		✓
USA		✓
Canada		✓
Mexico		✓
Chile	✓	

Table 1 shows again a menu where very high performing countries don't have and do have national compulsory systems of academic assessments. Finland, Belgium (Flanders), Scotland, the Czech Republic, New Zealand, Japan, USA, Canada and Mexico do not have national exams applied to a universal (all) student body, i.e. students in grade 8th or grade 9th, and topics, i.e. math, sciences, history, languages, etc. At the time of writing this chapter some countries (Finland and Mexico) are moving to "national exams" and some countries are moving away from them, such as Korea. And some countries like Finland and New Zealand keep a dual system of random exams at lower levels and certification or matriculation exams (in lieu of national exams) at upper levels. Regardless of the history or not of universal national exams, all countries or systems have national assessments based on random samples. In this case they look for the overall picture rather than the school by school or student by student assessment. Countries with history of universal national exams do often conduct random-based samples for specific purposes. Therefore, no country in this world of high performing countries (Mexico and Chile included) is without national assessment policies, some of them more aggressive (universal) some of them more systemic (random). Mexico is a novice country in this world of measuring and assessment. Of all the countries or systems in Table 1 Mexico is the one with the youngest school education evaluation system. Given the novelty of Mexico in school education measuring and assessment, one would be tempted to say that convergence in assessment policies is positively related to students' performance. Two caveats: 1) Chile, a low performing country, too, with a long history of measuring and assessment blurs the relationship; 2) the intrinsic differences from one assessment system to the next are of paramount dimensions. Take for instance the case of Scotland with national universal evaluation policy of all schools but done on a school-by-school basis; assessments as in exams are not compulsory and they are applied mostly at the upper-secondary level. Although a non-compulsory system, most of students sit for these national exams. The rest of grades or levels are only assessed with a holistic evaluation policy with emphasis in in-depth formative school-by-school evaluations focusing on individual achievements rather than institutional targets. These evaluations are conducted by inspections that take detailed quantitative and qualitative indicators to guide their views and opinions. This Scottish policy is sharply different to their British English neighbors' policies where universal national assessments are the business of the day with all sorts of league tables. Or even with Ireland where leaving exams (especially those at the upper-secondary level) are a national event and yet league tables are banned by law. So the convergence at the label level does not mean convergence at the policy level or meaning level.

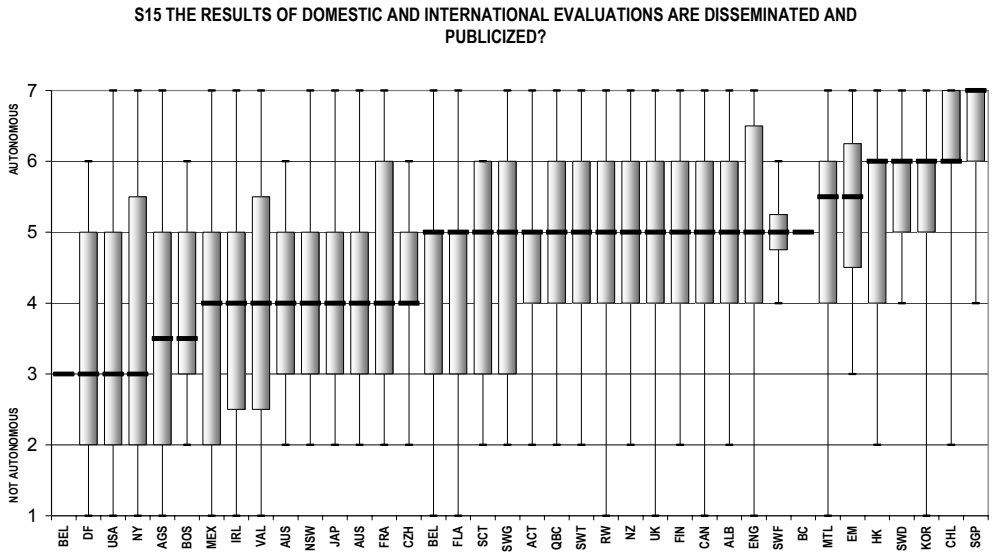
However, one very sensitive issue in almost everywhere I applied my questionnaire, to principals, teachers, experts (academic, government or international) is the publication of results or findings of assessments, measurements or evaluations. Given the sensitivities shown by most of my interviewees I devote a separate section, to the topic of league tables and the publication and diffusion of school assessments and results.

Publication of Results or the "Appropriateness of League Tables"

Do not say all you know,
for he who says all he knows
often says more than he knows[10]

There are two questions in my questionnaires which were in search of a pattern in the response of many teachers, principals and experts to how well results from assessments are publicized and to how far teachers, principals and experts agree with the publication of results in a ranking or league table format.

The answers to the first question, how well the results from assessments (national or international) are publicized in your country or region can be seen on Graph S15 next.

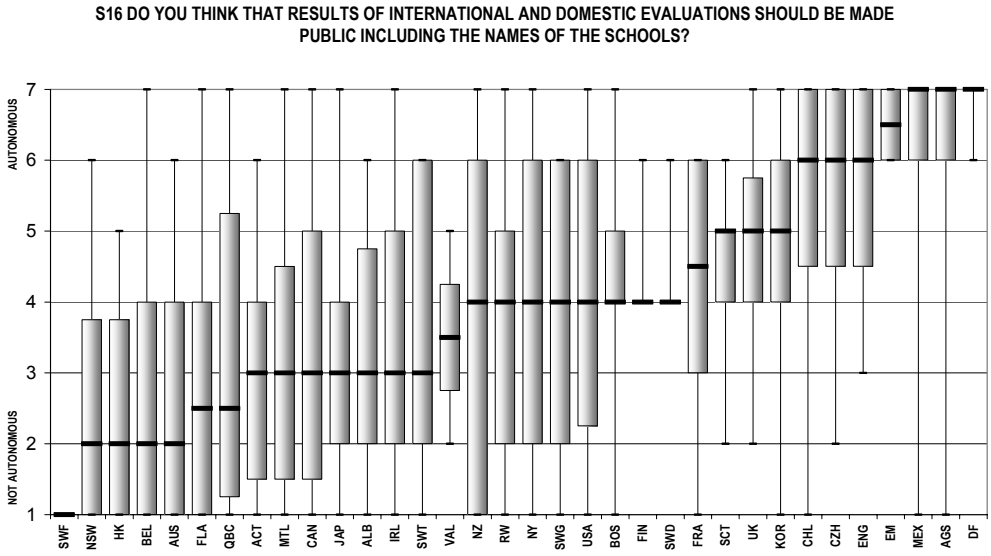


The first observation and critique to my own inquiry was that the question should have been divided into two questions, one for international assessments and the other for national or local assessments. But even with the subdivision answers would have been probably more skewed (but with the same pattern) for national assessments. Nevertheless, there is a lot of variation showing that countries have responded to the accountability issue related to the publication of assessments with a rather different approach. Countries like Singapore, Chile, Korea, Sweden and Hong Kong report very high publication perception (6) whereas countries or regions like Belgium (Flanders), DF (Mexico City), USA, and New York, report very low levels. The data form the perceptions questionnaire is not factual so "judgmental" mistakes can be done by interviewees, however, assuming that respondents were open and truthful in their responses, two things may be derived from Graph S15: 1) There is a lot of variation in high performing countries in relation publication and dissemination of assessments policies or practices; 2) if the perception is not aligned with factual evidence, then publication and disseminations or results have not reach principals and teachers

[10] Attributed to ancient Persian proverbs or aphorisms (Retrieved on July 19 06 from http://www.appleseeds.org/ancient-thoughts.htm

appropriately. At then end if publication and dissemination do not reach people they can not have an accountability effect.

The answers to the second question as per the agreement with the publication of assessment in a ranking or league table format, can be observed in Graph S16 next.



The sharp step-wise pattern of Graph S16 shows a great variation in the perception of teachers, principals and experts in relation to league tables. However some specific comments can be made: 1) Mexico is the country most to the right of the spectrum. Ironically, assessments of compulsory schooling in Mexico have just begun and publication of results is therefore very limited and controlled by the state. Of all the countries in the sample Mexico is the one with least history and experience in school assessments and evaluations. However, some efforts are being done by Aguascalientes State with the longest history of school education assessments in Mexico, and DF (Mexico City) where new efforts are been done to publicize the results in a more thorough way. 2) England, next to Mexico in the scale from 1 to 7 is the country with perhaps the most actively and openly aggressive policy towards assessments, dissemination and league tables. 3) There is a cluster of high and very high performing countries or regions (Switzerland (French cantons), New South Wales, Hong Kong, Belgium, Australia, Flanders, Quebec, ACT, Montreal, Canada, Japan, Alberta, Ireland, and Switzerland (German cantons)) that do not agree with open publication and least league tables. All in all the issue in not decided in the minds of interviewees, and this is why RW (rest of the world median) seats at the neutral value of 4.

As far as I can read in my notes interviewees in general reacted positively when as asked them about the publication of results but negatively or at least ambiguously when I clarified with the expression publication as in League Tables or Ranking Tables with names of schools. In most cases principals and teachers rejected the idea of school names, except in places with values 5 and above in Graph S16 (i.e. France, UK, Korea, Chile, Czech Republic and Mexico. Sometimes the question aroused some discussion and debate. At the end what worries most of my interviewees, including, professors is the comparability issue. Are we sure that schools are comparable? If schools are not

comparable, there are fairness issues that have to be brought to the debate before adopting a publication and ranking policy. At the end my interviewees showed doubts about the fairness of comparisons since, in many ways, schools can not be compared *tabula rasa*.

Some countries, and this seems to be the venue in all, are publishing results with the so-called value-added methodology: lists of schools that regardless of their selectivity policy or student intake (socio-economic, education and cultural backgrounds) add value to the students as a whole.

Again in this widely debate issue that falls within the discussion of epistemic communities in areas such comparative education, school improvement, evaluation and assessment, institutional design, competition, and accountability, the evidence seems to show that there is no convergence. Of course there is convergence in the application of something that is called evaluation, assessment and accountability policies among all countries and regions. But there is no convergence or agreement as to meaning of such policies or practices (more or less the same story as we saw with decentralization and autonomy). The spectrum of meanings of assessment and accountability policies and practices can be so wide that there is a lot of room for interpretations and implementations.

Chapter 6: World's map of school education systems: Mexico and Finland

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to compare countries or education systems with data drawn from the field trip perception study. A detailed comparison country by country would require many pages beyond the purpose of this chapter. I have selected two countries for comparison: Mexico and Finland. The two countries are OECD's members and the two countries have participated in PISA right from the beginning. They have been chosen because they represent the extreme values in PISA output comparisons. Therefore, by mapping and comparing Mexico and Finland we will learn lessons from two countries that belonging to the same organization, committed to open trade and competition and therefore subject to the pressures of globalization, score at opposite ends. From this extreme comparison we will also learn the limits of comparative education. We will show that comparative education has no boundaries when comparisons are done in some inputs and outputs. But when comparisons are done with processes, practices and policies, comparative lessons are much fussier.

This chapter is then divided in three sections. The first section addresses the difficulties of comparisons in the school education policies and justifies the selection of Mexico and Finland as the countries for comparison. The second section maps Mexico and Finland in sequential order, in relation to decentralization and school autonomy issues. Decentralization and autonomy have been the chosen topics for comparison all along this report. The third section highlights, under a nutshell presentation, the main features of the Mexican and Finnish school education systems under an array of 67 topics, variables or categories grouped in eight clusters: 1) decentralization and autonomy; 2) assessment and evaluation; 3) innovation, 4) free choice, 5) salaries of teachers, 6) information and communication technologies; 7) teachers' unions and 8) parents' participation in education.

Difficulties in comparing policies

The literature in education and school polices and practice is enormous. The difficulties of comparing and mapping policies and practices among countries in education are of humongous proportions. There are many insurmountable methodological problems in order to make transnational or trans-systemic comparisons in education and school policies, processes and practices. Some of those difficulties have been spelled in chapters three, four and five and some will be mentioned in chapter seven and eight.

For starters it is very difficult to frame the theoretical propositions in education policy within a specific group of experts. Most of the analysis done is carried out with a very narrow context scope. The literature of education and school policies and practices, from this perspective, can only be framed to suit a specific country or nation or system or locality. Within this scope is where we find limitless studies.

In this sense, we may speak of education and school policies and practices (ESPP) in Mexico, or the U.S., or Finland, or Chile, or Scotland or New Zealand to mention a few. But to speak about global ESPP is another very complex matter. As suggested before and in chapter seven, the mapping of ESPP can not be done at all without loosing meaning. We can make more sense if the scope of, or parameters for comparison are limited to inputs and outputs. Education and school inputs and outputs (ESIO) can more easily be mapped among many if not all education systems. Therefore, the mapping of education systems can only be done by looking at patterns drawn from education inputs or outcomes, but very little can be said from the point of view of processes, policies and practices (see Box 1 in chapter seven).

A second major difficulty that arises from the comparative analysis of ESPP stems from the specialized literature in the field. It is impossible to track the literature without clustering the groups of experts and observers in the field. And then one has to go by topic and country rather than by ESPP among many countries.

One way of measuring or mapping a country's performance is by comparing ESIO under the basis of very specific standardized data, such as data on tests (PISA, TIMSS or PIRLS, for instance) or enrolments or graduation rates (outputs or results) or financial expenditures or pupils per teacher or school size (inputs). This type of comparison is not limited to education and is done in almost all issue-areas of human interaction. The high and increasing number of comparative studies from topics such as corruption and transparency, freedom and democracy to areas of productivity, business and education is some evidence of the growing attention international studies of this sort have received. Comparative education experts have, as we have seen, classified countries based upon different criteria and based too on the emergence and re-emergence of international assessments and international data-sets that facilitate and buttress the comparative analysis. Ironically, these studies also show the limits of comparisons drawn from their findings.

PISA has stimulated the participation of countries and has become fashionable among policy makers and governments. After a start in PISA 2000 with only 32 countries, 11 countries signed up in 2002 for an updated PISA 2000 repeat or PISA plus. PISA 2003 began with the same number of countries as finally reported in PISA 2000-2002 i.e. 41. However, the final reports of PISA 2003 included 40 countries only. Nevertheless, PISA is used or is planed to be used by many countries not only as an instrument for measuring but also for policy advice[1] from around the world. For the 2006 PISA round more countries, 57[2] in total are expected to participate.

> Although PISA was originally created by the OECD governments in response to their own needs, it has now become a major policy tool for many other countries and economies as well. PISA is playing an increasing policy role in regions around the

[1] The German government after the results for PISA 2000 launched several study and research projects to learn from the PISA 2000 results. One of those projects was finally published in 2004 (Döbert et al) and a follow up (Döbert and Sroka).

[2] Information obtained from: http://www.pisa.oecd.org./pages/0,2966,en_32252351_32236225_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

> world, and the survey has now been conducted or is planned in partner countries in Southeast Asia (Hong Kong-China, Indonesia, Macao-China, Chinese Taipei and Thailand), Eastern Europe (Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, The Russian Federation, Serbia4 and Slovenia), the Middle East (Jordan, Israel and Qatar), South America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru and Uruguay) and North Africa (Tunisia). (OECD 2004, 22).

PISA has received some critical reviews[3] too but is bound to grow if only by the demand brought about by the increasing number of participating countries. And PISA such as other international studies should continue albeit their technical, translation or cross-cultural limitations. Even critics of international studies acknowledge their potential value. I concur with the following conclusion by Blum, Goldstein and Guérin-Pace:

> We are not arguing against any kind of international comparative study. Indeed, we think they can be useful. However, we do want to make both the constructors and the users of such surveys more aware of the complexities of design and interpretation, and the caveats that need to be entered about their use (244).

The responses to international studies vary a lot. Policy makers such as in Germany seek some direct lessons to be learnt from PISA (Döbert and Sroka and Döbert *et al*) whereas others claim that nothing of value can be learnt from PISA (Prais 153) at least for the UK case. At any rate, PISA, and other international studies, can help us to measure, map and compare some inputs and some outputs or ESIO's (see chapter 7) but other types of inquiry are required to measure and compare policies, processes and practices or ESPP.

The report of this research shows the limits of international comparisons for ESPP and claims about what works and does not work in ESPP across boundaries. This report has shown some evidence of convergence and some evidence of divergence in school education: convergence at the ESIO's level and divergence at the ESPP's level. Since very little can be said in terms of claims the fore-coming analysis will mainly map one country or two countries to the other countries or the rest of the world (RW). Therefore, I will be very careful to only highlight the differences or similarities of one country to other or the rest. I will only draw on two examples: Mexico a non performing country and Finland a top performing country from my operational definition point of view (high marks in international standardized assessments such as PISA). Mexico and Finland, from the performance point of view, are extreme cases. Mapping the two countries will highlight features consistently related with one low extreme and one top extreme. However, one can easily map any country to a top performer, a low performer or a mean performer. Mapping any country or education systems can be done fairly easy by just looking at graphs in Annexes 2 and 3.

[3] There are many critical reviews of PISA and other international studies such as, Bonnet, Prais, Goldstein. Even positive evaluations of international studies such as PISA or TIMSS raise issues related to the limits of international studies when trying to marry or relate cause to effect by measuring factors such as culture and context (Porter and Gamoran 16).

Mexico and the rest of the world from the perception's study

Only in recent times the Mexican government has decided to actively and consistently participate in international assessments. Therefore we are witnesses to the bare beginnings of the history of comparative education in Mexico.

The decision to map Mexico's amid other systems follows the implementation of a policy of evaluation and assessment of school education in Mexico. Three decisions support this statement:

> 1) The active and publicly acknowledged participation of Mexico in international assessments of students' performance. Although Mexico was part of TIMSS 95 and "Laboratorio" 1997, the Mexican government withheld the publication of the results of the former until November 2003 when the newly created National Institute for the Assessment of Education ("Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación" (INEE) published them albeit in a partial way. Laboratorio 1997, a Latin American assessment conducted under the auspices of UNESCO (1998 and 2000) was published with methodological questions and caveats by the Mexican government. Therefore, the first, truly world assessment of students' performance (rather system's performance through students' assessments) was conducted in PISA 2000. Regardless of the technical merits or drawbacks of PISA, this is the only data we have to map the Mexican system's performance among their international peers in an age range between 15 years and three months old and 16 years and two months old. Usually in Mexico students at that age range are enrolled in their last lower secondary grade (school year 9) or the first grade of upper secondary (school year 10).
>
> 2) The establishment of the Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación (INEE) on August 2002. The Institute is granted the executive authority to conduct assessments of school education. The Institute does not have the power to assess the higher education institutions or their students. The INEE does not really have the technical and budgetary capabilities to assess all students and all schools; although a proposal has been announced by the Secretary of Public Education to launch universal assessment as of June 2006 under the auspices of SEP (Department of Public Education, Mexico). Therefore, INNE is an instrument for the assessment of the performance of the overall school system but not its parts. The Institute has issued several reports or comments stating that previous assessments conducted under the auspices of the Department of Education (SEP) lack technical rigor and chronological comparability. We are therefore building an assessment portfolio and policy scheme from scratch. Hence, assessment and comparability are being born together in Mexico.
>
> 3) The reorganization of "Secretaría de Educación Pública" (SEP) under which the old school and teacher assessment unit was restructured with new attributes to conduct an evaluation of education policies. Together with the creation of INEE this reorganization was matched by increased federal funds devoted to assessment and evaluation. The restructuring of SEP and its updated assessment and evaluation unit

came into effect on the 21st of January 2005. Therefore, it is very early to measure the sort of instruments the newly reorganized office will use in order to evaluate education policy.

Of the all the new decisions perhaps the one that has received more media[4] and experts' attention is the publication of results of students under PISA. This may be so since this assessment was not questioned methodologically by the Mexican government[5] as the 1997 Laboratorio (UNESCO 1998, 12). This attention may also be drawn from the fact that with PISA we have been able, from the first time in the history of school education in Mexico, to get solid evidence about the performance of students and schools (system) compared to many countries.

As it has repeatedly been said, students from the majority of Mexico's partners and competitors in world markets show significantly higher levels of performance. This in itself has aroused some degree of debate among academics, policy makers, teachers and the media, mainly. But the real question, from the policy-making point of view, is not whether Mexico is ahead or behind PISA or OECD countries, but whether policies, processes and practices are in line or not with policies and practices of high performing countries in say PISA 2000 and PISA 2003.

And here we enter very shallow waters. Comparative studies using PISA data, such as those conducted under the leadership of the German Institute for International Educational Research (DIPF) and under the sponsorship of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, show the limitations to answer questions that relate performance of students to "system characteristics" and governance (Döbert, 23).

Since data from my field research allows for comparisons I will show, in few graphs, how Mexican education policies and practices (ESPP) stand in relation to the rest of the world (RW), to the opinion of international experts (INTEXP), and to the values in each of the questions of the survey that can be drawn in this fashion.

Given the perceptive nature of the data I will not make suggestions whether or not Mexico's position is better or not to the rest of the countries or benchmarks. I will limit my comments to show the differences or similarities. Readers are invited to draw their own conclusions based on information provided by this study and their own analysis.

I will divide Mexico's map in three sections: Decentralization, Autonomy of Schools, Other

Decentralization

Graphs S1 and S2 depict responses from principals, teachers and some experts about decentralization of education policies. Remember, the more interviewees deemed their

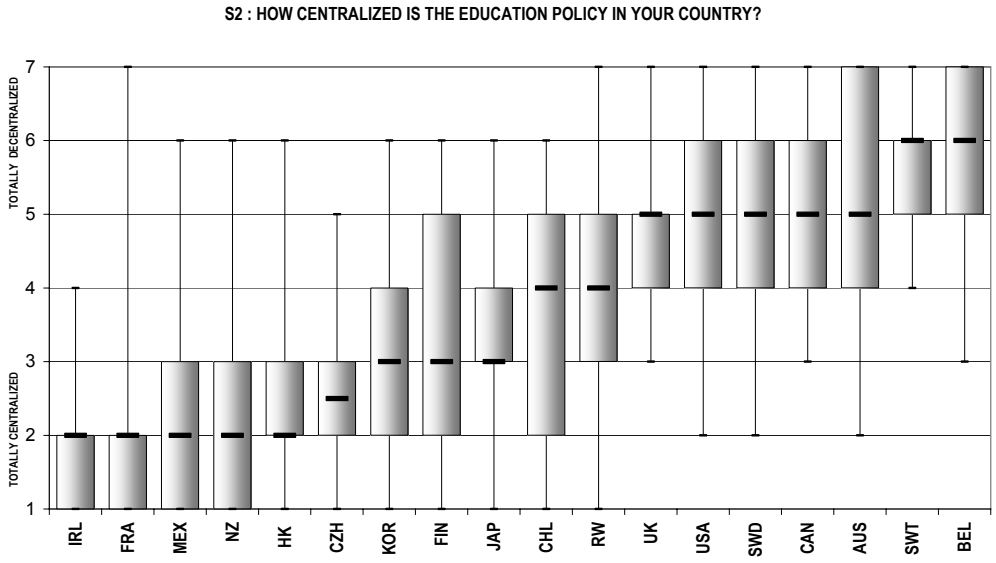
[4] PISA has received a lot of press coverage around the OECD countries and the PISA associated countries or regions (Pirjo Linnakylä)

[5] Personal interview on April 10 2003 with Mr. Victor Manuel Velázquez Castañeda, Director General (at the time of the interview) of the office of education assessments, Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP).

own systems as centrally, **nationally**, controlled the more they answer is shown to the left in Graph S2. The more interviewees see their systems as centrally, **regionally**, controlled by state, district or local authorities the more the answer is shown to the left too as seen in Graph S1.

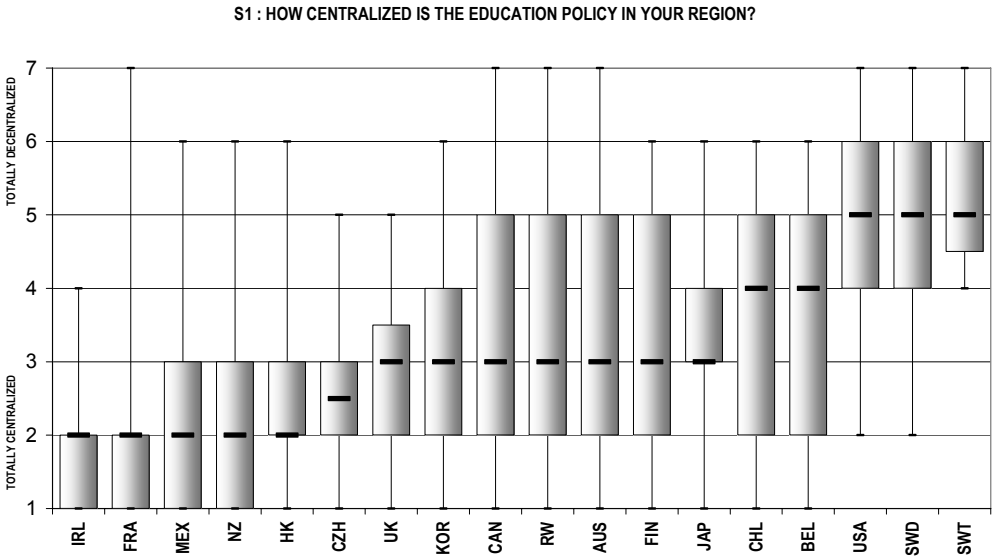
Graph S2 shows Mexico to a median value of 2 and very close to Ireland and France and surprisingly equal to New Zealand (albeit "Tomorrow's School" reform). Interviewees in New Zealand, for reasons discussed in chapter 4, rated their education system as very centralized.

Mexico is seen as one of the most centralized systems even though the outspoken decentralization measures of early 1990s with the so-called *federalización de la educación básica* [Federalization of school education]. Principals, teachers and experts still see the Mexican system as very centralized. An important point here is that the Mexican interviewees, as per the perceptions in the field, see the Mexican system very far away from the median value (4) given by the rest of the world (WR) perceptions. I can not conclude from this information whether the Mexican system is better equipped or not to deal with the challenges of education, what I can say is that the Mexican system looks much centralized compared to the median value of the high performing countries shown in Graph S2.



Graph S1, is an interesting comparison because it looks inside the education systems where the locus of decision making is located outside the federal or national sphere. Since Mexico is no in this situation, responses for Mexico in Graph S1 are the same as responses in Graph S2. However, there are many countries, as seen before, such as the UK, US, Canada Australia, Switzerland and Belgium that most of the education matters and policies are located outside the realms of the federal or country-wide authorities. To make a fair comparison between the systems which are federally or country-wide centralized with the systems which are state or regionally centralized, interviewees were asked to consider the same question but from the perspective of their regional or district authorities (for

regionalized or territorially decentralized systems) and from the perspective of the national or federal system to countries territorially centralized as Mexico, France, Ireland or Japan. Under this criterion (Graph S1) Mexico is still centralized as compared to a much restricted definition of centralization. This means that even if we compare Mexico to the regions and districts and not to the countries or nations, the answers for Mexico compared to the rest of the world are to the left of the RW median value. And in both cases Mexico is far away from the median score answers of almost all high performing countries and all top performing countries.



Autonomy

There are many ways to define autonomy. To begin with: autonomy of what or in what topics or issue-areas? School autonomy, principals' autonomy and teachers' autonomy although related are not the same, and the topic of school autonomy in general was discussed at length in chapters 3 and 4.

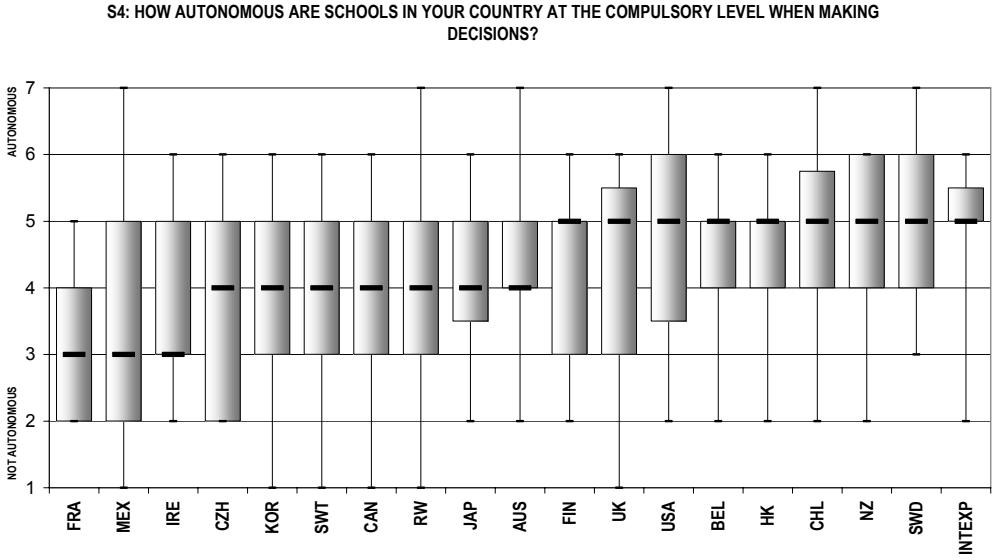
For reasons of space I will map Mexico's position first in relation to a wide (overall) definition of autonomy in the following cases: autonomy of schools; autonomy of teachers and autonomy of principals. Then, I will choose more specific domains of autonomy, such as, autonomy of schools and principals in curriculum and autonomy of teachers in course curriculum. I will also visit the concept of autonomy of principals in time-tableling and autonomy of teachers in the selection of text-books. Readers are invited to browse freely on all graphs from Annexes 2 (all schools); Annex 3 (only public secondary schools) and Annex 4 (only upper secondary schools) to get a closer look at Mexico's position vis-à-vis the RW. Readers can also map any other country to the rest of the RW and/or the international experts (INTEXP) benchmarks or to any other country in the survey as will be shown below for Finland.

Autonomy of schools

Graph S4 shows the perception answers to a very broad definition of autonomy (overall autonomy, all things considered). In total 552 observations were given for this question (see column S4, Table 1b Annex 2, or the Exhibit at the end of this chapter). Participants were asked the following questions: How autonomous are schools in your country at the compulsory level (or the level from the perspective of your own school or for children 15 year olds) when making decisions?[6]

Although the question is phrased as country-wide, respondents were asked to answer from their perspective of their own system.

Graph S4 shows Mexico again to the left of the less autonomous more autonomous spectrum. And even though Mexico's median value (3) is not far away or significantly different from the RW's median value (4) is very far away from the INTEXP benchmark (5) showing that respondents in Mexico when given the same question as the rest of the people replied with the "less-autonomy tilt".

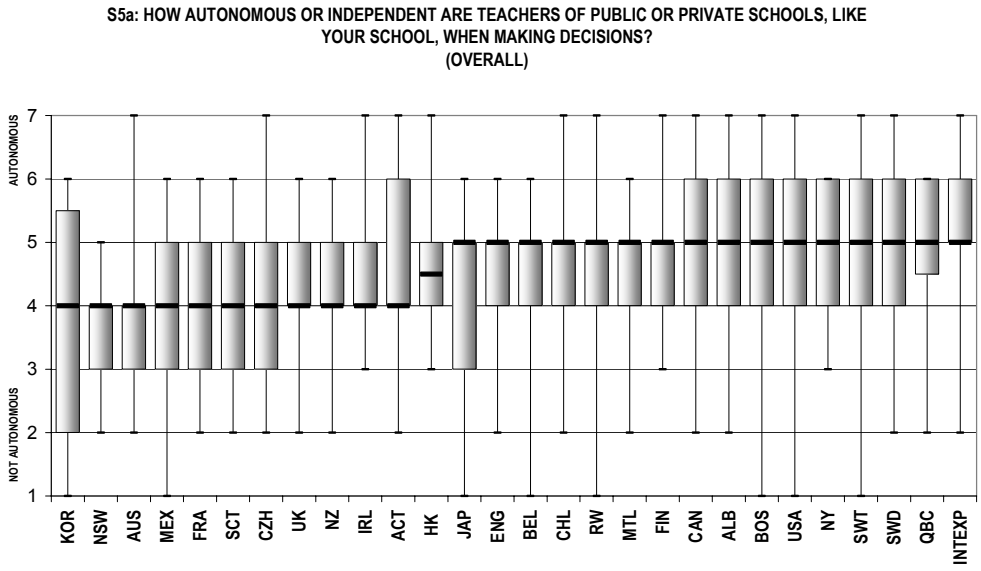


Autonomy of teachers

442 respondents (column S5a, Table 1c, Annex 2) answered the following question: How autonomous or independent are teachers of public or private schools, like your school, when making decisions (overall [all things considered])?[7] Mexico's answers as seen in Graph S5a are clearly tilted to the left of the autonomy continuum and to the left of RW's and INTEXP's benchmarks. See that the INTEXP's benchmark is again the one farthest to the right of the spectrum. At any rate INTEXP and most of the observations, including the

[6] The equivalent question for INTEXP was: Autonomy in schools is key to education quality (such as performance in international [or national] evaluations [or assessments]). (Annex 7).
[7] The equivalent question for INTEXP was: Autonomy in schools [over all, all things considered] is key to education quality (such as performance in international [national] evaluations [assessments]). (Annex 7).

RW value have the same median answer (5) which means that experts and respondents on average from each of the countries have a tendency to see autonomy of teachers as key to educational quality; a view that is also shared by low performing countries such as Mexico (4) and Chile (5). Therefore, autonomy of teachers is not a trait belonging only to high performing education systems. We need more information before we can unambiguously relate autonomy to quality. A broad concept like "over all autonomy" needs to be narrowed in order to gain more insight: Autonomy in relation to what. Graphs S5b to S5g are framed with a narrower definition of autonomy. But before we turn to some of these narrower definitions of autonomy let us look first at the autonomy of principals from the "overall (all things considered)" perspective.

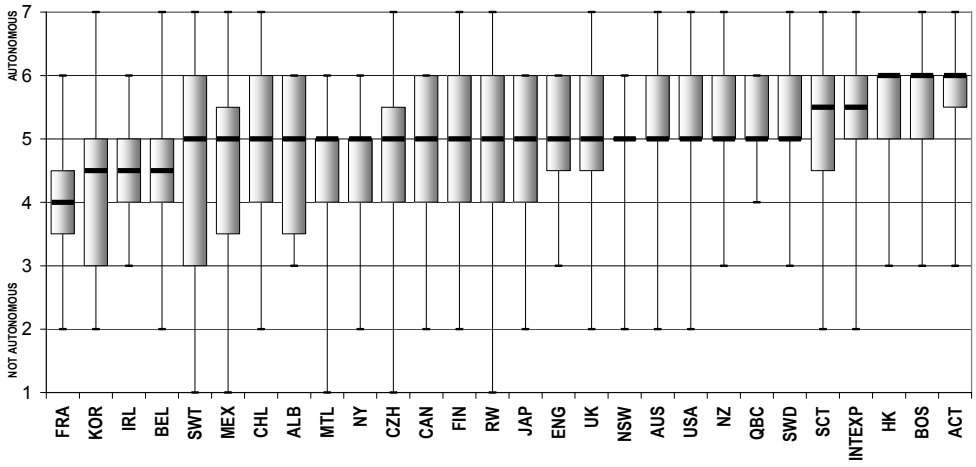


Autonomy of principals

438 respondents (columns S6a, Table 1e, Annex 2) answered the following question: How autonomous or independent are principals of public or private schools, like your school, when making decisions (overall [all things considered])[8]? Again we see the same pattern as with the teachers' "overall" question. All the median values are close to each other and Meixco's answers (median of 5) are tilted to the left whereas INTEXP's answers to the right. In this case the INTEXP's benchmark (5.5) is a little higher than the RW's one (5).

[8] The equivalent question for INTEXP was: Principals or schoolmasters' autonomy is key to education quality ("overall). (Annex 7).

S6a: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE THE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(OVERALL)

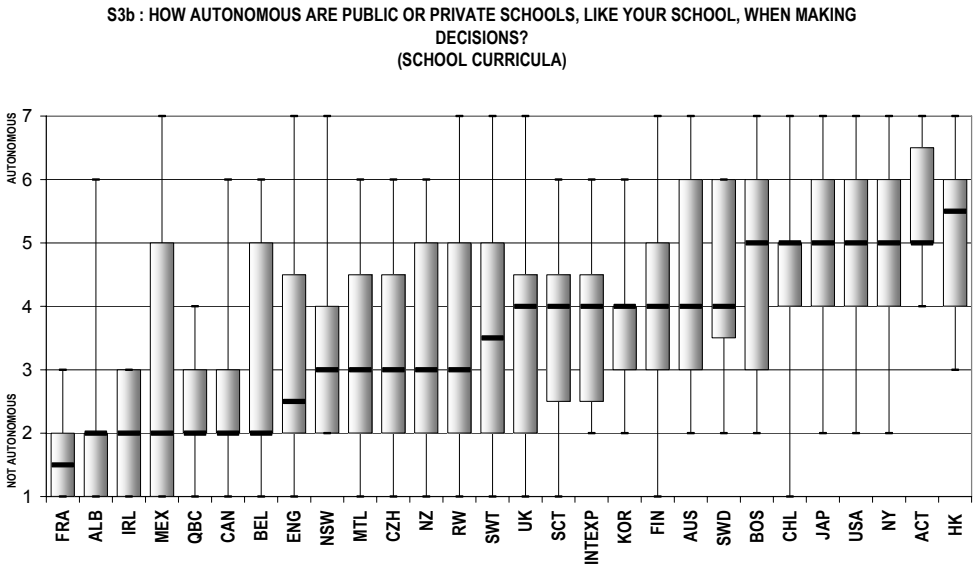


Autonomy of principals is seen by all respondents with a slight higher median value than the one for teachers. But again low performers (Mexico and Chile) perceive their systems as autonomous (principals' autonomy) as high performers. Therefore, it is difficult to make firm conclusions about principals' autonomy and school education quality.

Less clustered around the same median value of (4) or (5) are the answers to questions of autonomy where the definition of autonomy is narrowed to more specific meanings, such as curriculum autonomy, text-books autonomy etc. These more specific definitions of autonomy can be see in graphs S3b to S3g for schools, S5b to S5g for teachers and S6b to S6h for principals (in Annexes 2 for all schools, Annex 3 for public secondary schools and Annex 4 for upper secondary schools). I turn now to each one of them.

Autonomy of schools in curriculum

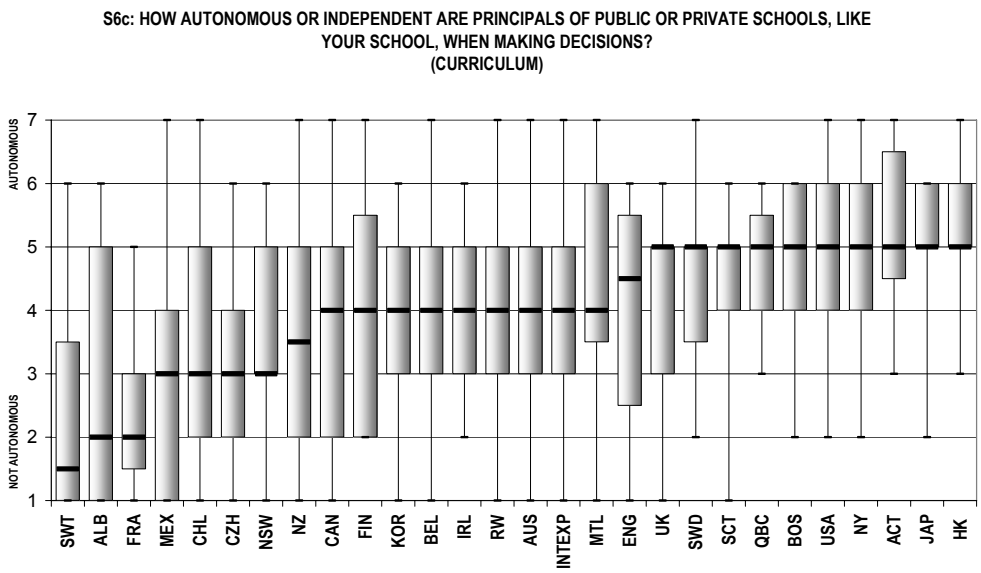
School autonomy in curriculum is seen by the responses of 442 people (column S3b table 1a Annex 2) in Graph S3b next. A sheer comparison between Graph S3b to Graph S3a above shows that a narrower definition of autonomy makes respondents more willing to give a less ambiguous answer. The step-wise shape of bars in Graph S3b shows, nonetheless, a lot of variety among all countries and regions. Mexico, again, is in the far left side of the Graph, far from the RW benchmark and even farther from the INTEXP median answer. See, however, that INTEXP have moved from a median of (5) in overall autonomy (Graph S3a) to a median of (4) in curriculum autonomy (Graph S3b), showing that they are not sure about the importance of curriculum autonomy in relation to quality.



Autonomy of principals in curriculum

How involved and autonomous are principals in the design of school curricula? One way of looking to this question is by looking to the answer shown in Graph S6c. Note how similar the shapes of Graphs S6a and S6c for principals in overall and curriculum autonomy look to the shapes of Graphs S3a and S3b of schools in overall and curriculum autonomy. This means, at the very least that interviewees are being consistent with their answers. This also shows that principals, whether they face powerful decision making boards or not, are highly correlated to the entity "school". In other words, they are crucial in schools, their autonomy moves in tandem with the autonomy of the school.

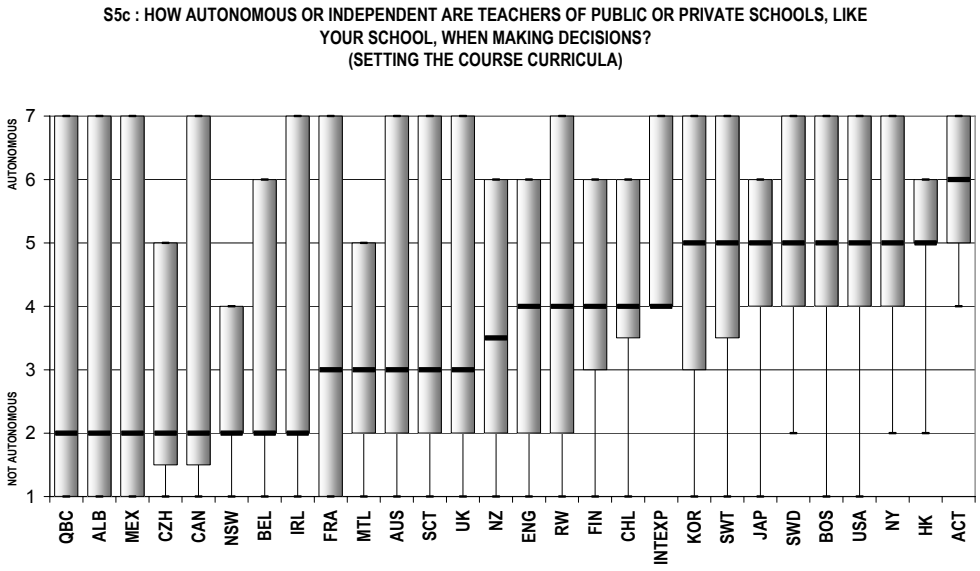
As a consequence Mexico position in the graph is the same as in the school curriculum autonomy, far to the left of RW and farther to the left of INTEXP. INTEXP and RW answers (Graph S6c) are almost coincidental in the graph with a median value of (4) in both cases. Neither the world of high performing schools nor the INTEXP have, on average, a clear view about the importance of curriculum autonomy to quality, although country by country the variation is very large from a median value of (1 1/2) for Switzerland (because many schools don't even have principals) to a median values of (5) in many systems with Hong Kong as the one farthest to the right.



Teachers' autonomy in course curriculum

We saw in Graph S5a above that overall teachers' autonomy is considered by almost all countries, the RW and INTEXP as key to education quality or as a feature of high performing countries. The lowest median value (4) the following or systems Korea, New South Wales, Australia, Mexico, France and many more, show a high floor value for this variable. However, when 442 respondents (column S5c, table 1c, Annex 2) are asked about the autonomy of teachers for setting their own course content or course curriculum the answers are quiet different in all systems around the sampled countries ranging from a low (2) median value in Mexico, Czech Republic, Canada, Belgium and Ireland to a (6) median value in ACT (see Graph S5c).

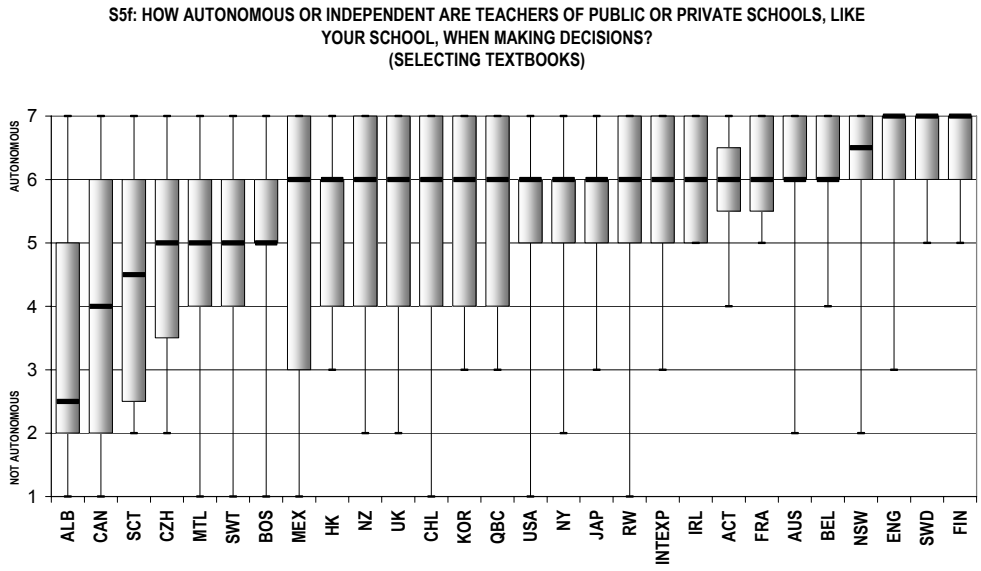
The overall tendency in the answers as seen in the (4) median value shows that teachers there is not a clear trend among high performing countries about the issue of teachers' autonomy in curriculum. INTEXP, again, are undecided about the issue in relation to quality although all the INTEXP answers cluster above the second quartile. This means that expert bow to the idea of teachers as professionals. Mexico's position (median of 2 in a 1 to 7 scale) is again far to the left of both the RW and the INTEXP.



Teachers' autonomy in textbooks

In general, around the world for the schools visited and based on people's answers to the question on teachers' autonomy in selection of textbooks is very high. Many countries or systems show a very high response median score value between (6) and (7) with the highest values for Finland, Sweden and England. The latter means total autonomy for teachers in the selection of texts. Total autonomy means that teachers in these systems are seen as professionals, i.e. able to take their own decisions with supervision of no-one. RW and INTEXP are one-by-one with a median value of (6) and similar dispersion of answers as shown by the grey bars in Graph S5f, Annex 2.

Mexican median value (6) is in line with the RW and INTEXP values but with greater dispersion. Surpassingly, schools in Edmonton (ALB) show the lowest autonomy in teachers for "selection of text books". However, let us remember that most of visited schools in Edmonton come from the alternative or separate school district (Edmonton Catholic School System) which has greater control by the education catholic authority with its own superintendent. However, in terms of performance Edmonton Catholic schools perform as high as Edmonton Public schools.

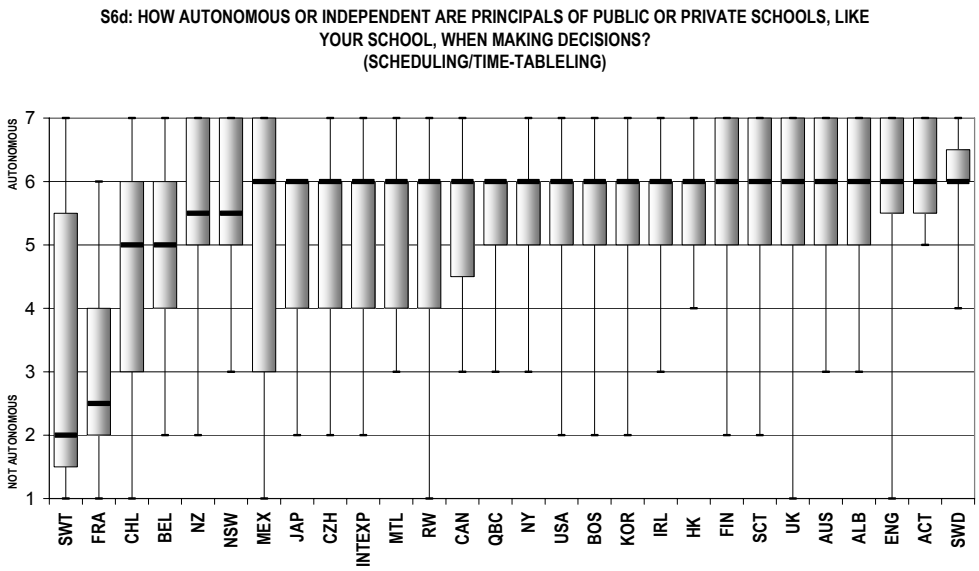


Autonomy of principals in time-tableling

Time tableling is under the domain of principals everywhere. This can be seen by the high median values and low dispersion for the answers of most people from most countries and for RW and INTEXP answers in Graph S6d next. It is also one of the ways shrewd principals can get into the pedagogy of the school with her/his own views of what works and does not work.

The autonomy of principals in this domain seems to be very high whether we talk about all schools (Graph S6d Annex 2), public secondary schools (Graph S6d Annex 3) or all upper secondary schools (Graph S6d Annex 4). However, there seems to be also evidence that autonomy decreases as we go to lower secondary schools and increases as we go up to upper secondary schools. By and large, autonomy is high in all cases and schools. There are few exceptions though. Switzerland is one of those where most school in German cantons are run directly by teachers and France where the authority of regional academies is very strong.

Mexico's schools, as per the perceptions of interviewees are very much in line with the RW and INTEXP median values. As with the rest of the observations, we can not draw a direct relationship between time-tableling autonomy of principals and school quality.



Finland

For many reasons Finland is a country to compare. Finland has consistently shown high marks in international assessments. This has been the case, for instance, in PISA 2000 and PISA 2003. Finland has aroused interest from many researchers and policy makers around the world. And often, Finland is shown as an example to follow. As per the evidence and analysis of this project one can compare Finland to other countries or education systems in outputs and some inputs. We can not, however, compare policies and practices conveying the same meaning. Henceforth, one can not make claims about the ubiquity of Finnish policies, processes and practices to other regimes. In this matter, one can only observe and learn.

Finland is an interesting case because there have been significant shifts in education policies in the past 35 years. Some of those shifts have been directly identified with the success of Finland in PISA and some have been identified with the culture and history of the Finnish people.

There have been three significant shifts in recent education policy history in Finland. The overall schooling, curriculum and teacher training reform of 1970; the curriculum reform of 1994 and the curriculum reform of 2004. Of the three reforms the 1970 one was the most far reaching with many of its mandates still applicable today. The 1970 reform meant to overhaul the entire school education system. In a nutshell, the reform moved away, for good, from a tracking school system by which students were segmented at a very early stage. They were segmented to either secondary studies leading to an academic track or vocational studies leading to work-like track. The new reform established a new comprehensive and inclusive school education system, with opportunities open for all studies regardless of academic performance, domicile, students' own abilities and capabilities or vocation. Coupled to this reform there was an overhaul for the teaching

instruction career. After 1970 to become fully certified teacher students have to complete bachelor's degree and a master's degree, adding in most cases two academic full-time years of formal university training than before 1970. A third reform within the 1970 package was the devolution of school education to municipalities. As of 1970 municipalities are fully in charge of schools, from the appointment of principals to the hiring—in coordination with principals—of teachers and staff. Municipalities are also in charge of school finances and expenditures policies. To crown the reform the school curriculum was modified to a very detailed subject and content curriculum.

It is very difficult to measure, in terms of quality, the impact of the systemic 1970 reform. However, if one is to gauge the school education level of Finland by the performance of students in international standardized assessments such as PISA, the school system of Finland is doing very well. Finland is not only the top performing country in PISA 2003 (see Table 1, Annex 1) it is also the country with the lowest between and within school variation of all participating countries (OECD 2004, table 4.1a, p. 383). This means that parents can be very confident that their children will receive the same top level education regardless of the school children are enrolled in.

Noteworthy are the curriculum (Opetussuunnitelma) reforms, as well. Starting with a very detailed in content and subjects school curriculum for primary and secondary education the 1970 reform was followed by a devolved to schools and municipalities curriculum reform in 1994 and back to a more centralized reform in 2004. When I asked one of the interviewed principals about the reforms she told me to compare the reforms just by a sheer look at the thickness and letter size of each document. I did so. From a sheer view of the three books or compendiums one can easily see the shift in school curriculums in Finland: centralized-decentralized-centralized. There is one additional component though (as seen before), the 2004 curriculum fully implemented as of August 2006, "widens the definition of the school role in education to something more that education" a Finnish principal told me in a personal interview[9]: "Schools are now required to raise children, which was under the family realm before, take care of health and security issues, which were under the society's realm before, develop students skills to work in groups, grow as persons, relate to the environment and work with new technologies. Schools with the help of municipalities and school networking most develop new ways to assess those goals." In a nutshell, "before the 2004 reform curriculums were based on subjects, subjects and contents, today, they are still based on subjects but also on concepts and themes"—she added.. This of course implies a new focus in curriculum as the curriculum is construed by municipalities and schools.

For all these reasons Finland is a country to map to the RW and to the INTEXP. And comparing Finland, the top performing PISA OCDE member, to Mexico the lowest performing OCDE member in PISA will allow us to see to what extent countries show similar or different patterns in policies and practices regardless of the performance. The top country and the bottom country in education results as in PISA map the world of education from the extremes. This will allow sharp comparisons too.

[9] Interview to Rehtori Maarit Rossi on the train from Kirkkonummi to Helsinki on June 14th 2006.

Following the same headings as with the Mexico's mapping, there is not a clear tendency that one can identify Finland-exclusive or Mexico-exclusive, but many interesting lessons and stories can be derived from the extreme comparison.

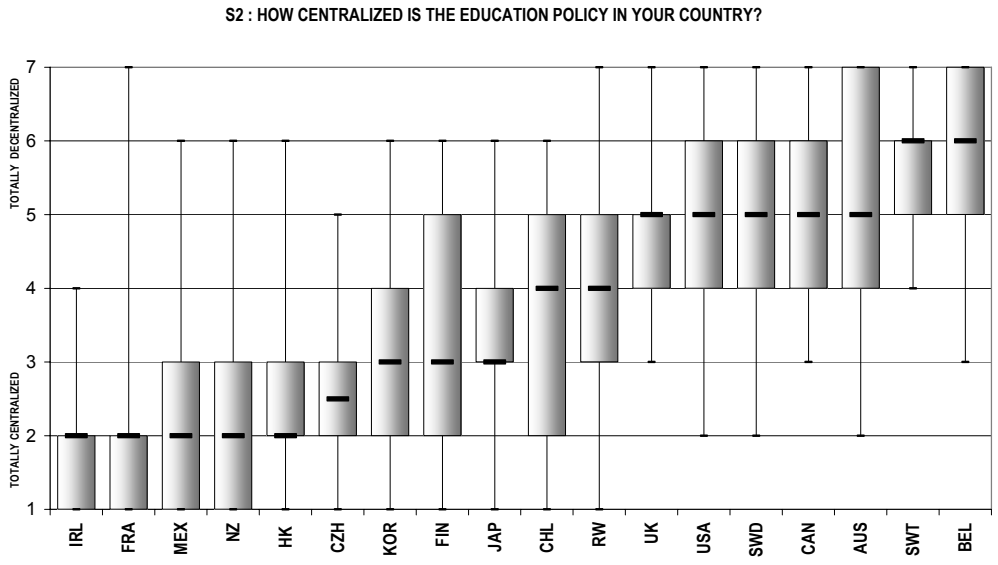
Decentralization

If a (1), (2) or (3) answer is construed as an answer that perceives the system centralized (very strongly centralized =1; strongly centralized= 2 and centralized=3) Finland and Mexico fall within this category. And yet, the Finnish system is seen as centralized because interviews were conducted on March and April 2004. By this time the new, more centralized curriculum had been announced. The new curriculum had to begin the implementation stage on August 2004. Therefore, interviewees were influenced by the perception and knowledge of a new more detailed curriculum.

Centralization of education in Finland and centralization in Mexico are two totally different realities. The centralization in Mexico is much more a system, system-wide concern where the central agency SEP controls not only curriculum and expenditure policies but also labor salary policies, labor national negotiation and nationally designed and nationally funded special programs and projects. Decentralization in Finland is a much narrower topic. In Finland centralization means re-centralized in only certain aspects, limited for instance to some curriculum changes. Nevertheless, curriculum control is seen as crucial school education policy almost everywhere.

Henceforth, Graph S2 shows Finland with a median value of (3), between Mexico (2) and RW (4). In this sense Finland and Mexico are in the "centralization" realm of the spectrum. But even though they are separated only by one ordinal unit it does not mean that the two decentralization meanings are similar. Therefore, the analysis of this Graphs, and the rest of the Graphs as well, has to be done with some narrative about the meaning and scope of the decentralization concept in each country or system.

Assuming though, a relatively wide definition of decentralization Finland is to the left of the spectrum with respect to the RW and to countries or systems such as UK, USA, Canada, Switzerland and Belgium which seems intuitively plaussible.



Autonomy

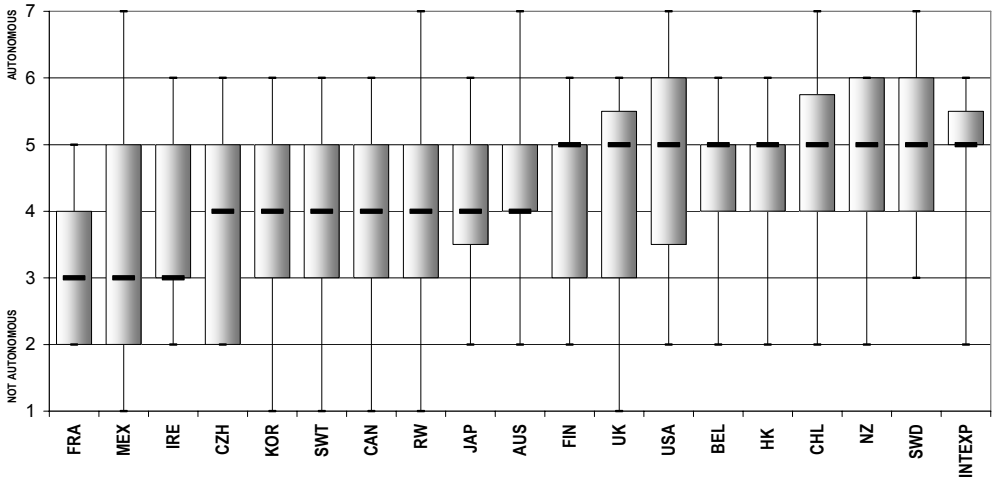
As seen before autonomy is a concept with a lot of latitude for meaning. Again, assuming a fairly broad definition of autonomy Finland aligns with the countries that see their own schools as autonomous. Again, the answers in a small country such as Finland with a relatively homogenous school education system, from the points of views of inputs, processes and outcomes, shows a large variation (shaded grey area in Graph S4) of answers because the local authorities involvement in each school can vary from municipality to municipality.

Autonomy of schools

School autonomy in Finland, all things considered, also coincides with the expectation of INTEXP about the relationship between autonomy in schools and education quality.

The difference between Finland and Mexico in school autonomy is far larger than the difference in decentralization. Furthermore the distribution of responses (shaded grey bar Graph S4) in the Mexico case is larger because the modalities of secondary education for 15 year olds are larger in Mexico than in Finland. Finland aligns with countries that are descriptively recognized as having fairly autonomous schools such as UK, USA, Chile, New Zealand and Sweden.

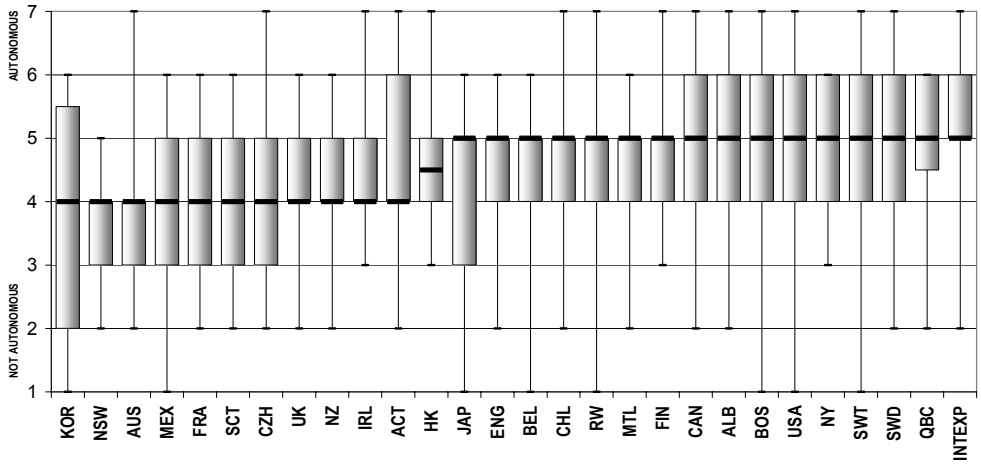
S4: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE SCHOOLS IN YOUR COUNTRY AT THE COMPULSORY LEVEL WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?



Autonomy of teachers

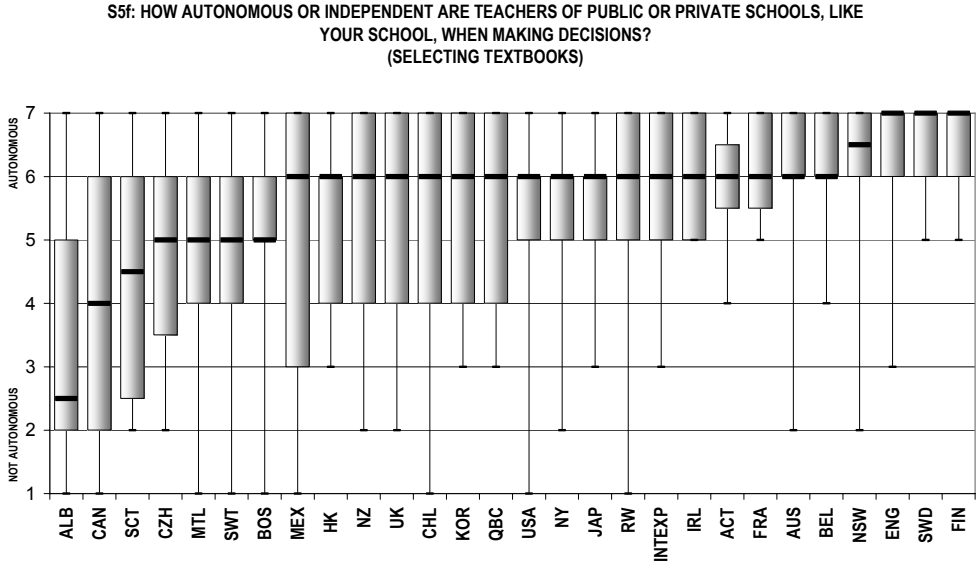
The same story of Graph S4 is replicated in Graph S5a. Teachers are seen in Finland as one of the main factors of success. The teaching profession as one of the most prestigious profession and the profesionalization of teachers as one of the most important policy shifts of the 1970 education policy reform. There seem then to be alignment between this perception of teachers' autonomy and relevance to education success and teachers seen as professionals.

S5a: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(OVERALL)



One indication that teachers in Finland are seen as professionals is their ability to independently select text books. Teachers in Finland are not only autonomous in the selection of textbooks, they are perceived as very autonomous by almost everyone in

Finland and as per Graph S5f Finland is the education system where teachers are seen the most autonomous in this criteria with a very small variation of answers (shaded grey in Graph S5f).



How far is this recognition of teachers? The following story answers the question. One of the interviewed principals is also the co-author of a series of ten math books for lower secondary education. The books are ahead of its time as I was told by four Finnish professors two of them directly involved in PISA and the other two related to math and science school education. The books were done after ten years of work and were ready for publication at the end of the 1990s. They were published. Two of the professors[10] told me that the exams were not only ahead of their time but also they were done to prepare students for examinations such as the PISA assessments. Of course the work of the teachers for the math books was conducted before PISA was enacted. The books went on a national tour to try to persuade teachers for adoption. By and large, the books were not accepted by teachers, the books required new ways for teaching and learning and new work for teachers that they were not ready to take. Years passed and one of the math teacher writers became a principal. When I asked her, are you math books used in your lower secondary school? She replied: "no, that is a decision that belongs to my teachers".

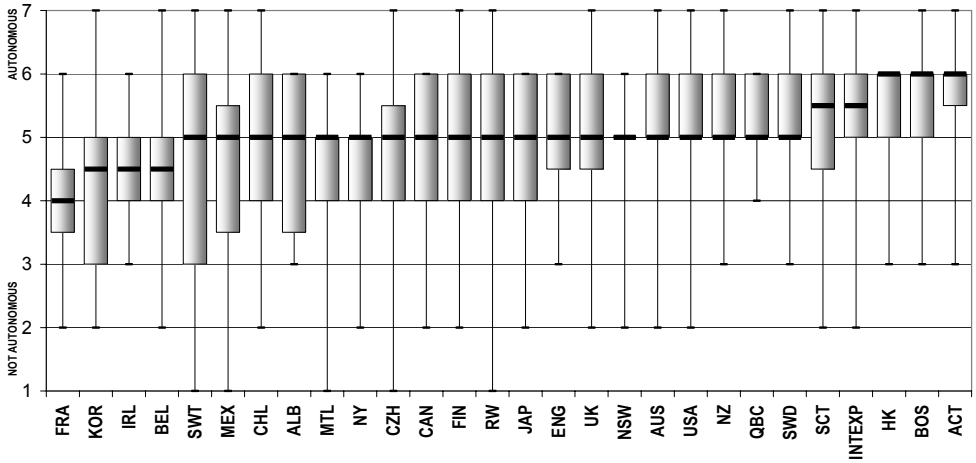
Finally, one principal of a lower secondary school put it, more or less, in these words: "Teachers know what to do and why; they are professionals in their field, therefore, I do not have to tell them what to do. I, therefore, trust their skills and their action. If they do not deliver then it is my job, as principal or leader, to communicate with them in a proactive way, not reactive or pre-active way, pro-active."

Autonomy of principals

[10] Interviews to professors Erkki Pehkonen in Helsinki, Finland on June 28th 2006, and Jouni Välijärvi in Jyväskylä University on July 28th 2006.

Finland principals have autonomy since their answer (5) is in the autonomy range (some autonomy= 5, autonomy=6 and strong autonomy =7). However, they directly respond to a local authority ("koulutoimenjohtaja") boss and a municipal school board. This is why they do not see their autonomy as a very strong autonomy, especially as of August 2004 with the implementation of the new curriculum. The curriculum reform is too recent and complex to really gauge, at this early stage, how more autonomous or less autonomous the principals will be. However, by and large principals are the masters of their schools. They decide about the hiring (always in coordination with the municipality) of teachers and the fate of teachers inside the schools. They manage time-tables and the limited budget. Freedom to manage budget can vary from municipality to municipality. Principals can decide about the size of the class in order to save or allocate money, and they can also decide about the relationship of the schools to parents and the media. They are free to organize extra-curricular activities and international exchanges. They are celebrities in their locality. They can create special groups or task-forces in their schools or they can dissolve them. They can share some decision power to other teachers or they can keep teachers at bay. At the end they pretty much run their schools but are bounded by the municipalities' decisions about resources, new facilities, new buildings, and the over all mission and school strategic plan for the municipality. At the end, principals have their own ways to follow instructions from the Opetusministeriö, Ministry of Education (Minedu) and the municipalities. They follow instructions that make sense or they "put their charge on things that work better in their own schools".

S6a: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE THE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (OVERALL)

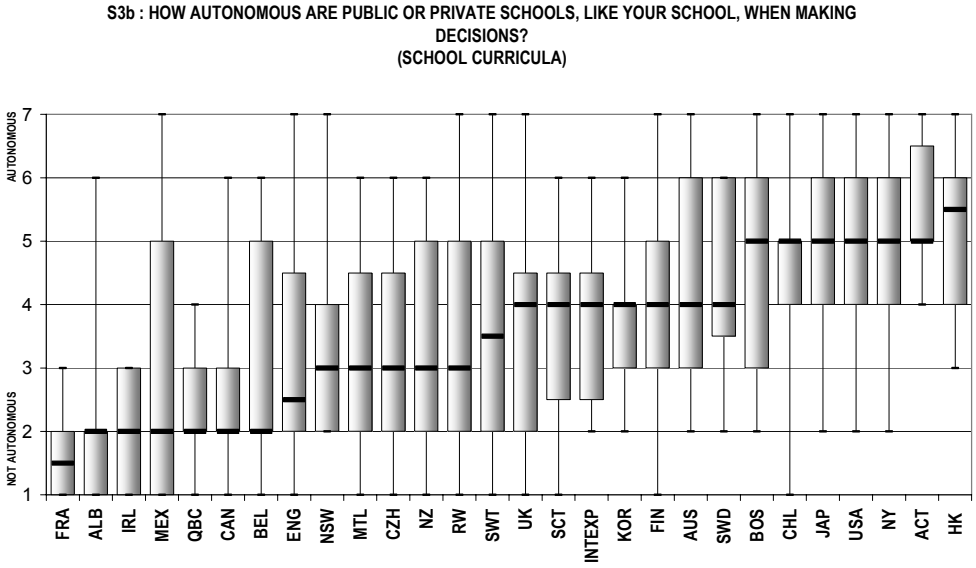


Nevertheless, as seen before, autonomy of principals is seen by all respondents from all systems with a high median value. Mexico's respondents gave high ordinal value to this question though. However, some respondents from Mexico come from three (out of 16 visited schools) private independent schools (which usually show very high autonomy levels) and seven upper secondary schools with vocational track (which usually show higher levels of autonomy). In contrast, there are no private independent schools in Finland and no three year upper-secondary school visited (see Table 4, Annex 1). Comparable level

schools, say public or state lower secondary schools in Mexico and Finland show quite different autonomy levels. For starters, public lower secondary schools in Mexico do not receive annual budget at all for administrative, operational or maintenance expenses. They have no influence at all in curriculums and have very limited maneuverability in time-tables.

Autonomy of schools in curriculum

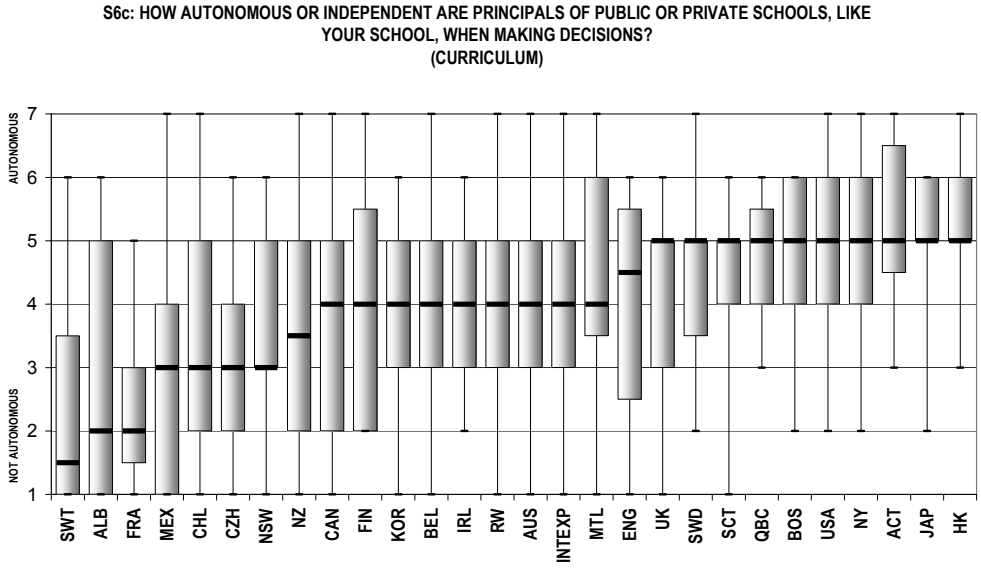
School autonomy in curriculum is seen by the responses of 442 people (column S3b table 1a Annex 2) in Graph S3b next. A sheer comparison between Graph S3b to Graph S3a above shows that a narrower definition of autonomy makes respondents more willing to give a less ambiguous answer. The step-wise shape of bars in Graph S3b shows, nonetheless, a lot of variety among all countries and regions. Mexico, again, is in the far left side of the Graph, far from the RW benchmark and even farther from the INTEXP median answer. See, however, that INTEXP have moved from a median of (5) in overall autonomy (Graph S3a) to a median of (4) in curriculum autonomy (Graph S3b), showing that they are not sure about the importance of curriculum autonomy in relation to quality.



Autonomy of principals in curriculum

Since schools in Finland do not really have a board answers about curriculum autonomy for schools or principals are clustered together. This can be seen by the ordinal value of (4) given by Finnish respondents in Graphs S3b and S6c. The ladder-like shape in the two graphs shows a lot of variance among all sampled countries or regimes. This means that the autonomy issue in curriculum, crucial element of education policy, is treated quite differently among high performing countries. In general schools are seen slightly less autonomous (median of 3) than principals (median of 4). This is probably explained by the observation that within the schools the principals are the highest authority except for the extreme cases of Switzerland, Alberta (as measured mainly by the Edmonton Catholic

Public) District and France. Chile, for instance, is an interesting case. Chile shows a relatively very low autonomous level (3) for principals (Graph S6c) compared to a relatively high autonomous level for schools (5) (Graph S3b). This may be indication of a system that shows devolution to schools but little trust to principals.



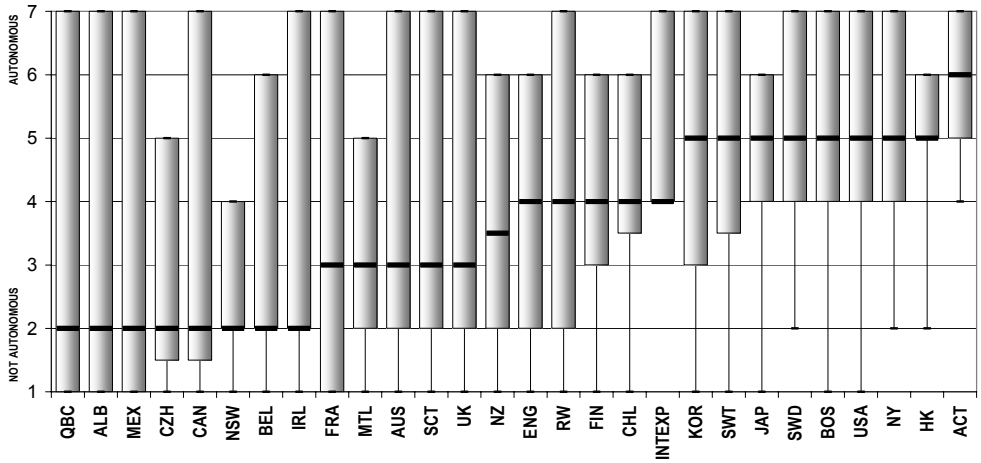
Teachers' autonomy in course curriculum

Finland, England and Chile show the same median value as the RW and INTEXP for the autonomy of teachers as in curriculum question. There are countries or systems that show higher median values for this question as shown again in Graph S5c below. However, making a direct comparison of Finland to countries or education regimes such as Korea and Japan is inadequate. All schools with 15 year old students in Finland are clustered at the lower secondary school level whereas all 15 year children in Korea and Japan are enrolled in upper secondary schools. Intuitively there is a plausible preconception that the higher the level of schooling the higher the autonomy for schools, principals and teachers. Comparing Finland to Switzerland can be also incorrect. The school education reality of teachers and schools between the two countries are completely different. Many of the sampled schools in Switzerland are run without principals. Teachers therefore enjoy one of the greatest autonomies in the world. Comparing too Finland to ACT for example could also be wrong since a direct comparison of systems can not be done. ACT is run very independently from the rest of Australia. ACT could at best be compared to one city or municipality in Finland like Helsinki or Kauniainen one of the richest—if not the richest--municipalities in Finland. Furthermore, two of the schools visited in ACT (Table 2 Annex 1) are full secondary schools (lower secondary plus upper secondary levels under the same school one of those under the private dependent category). ACT not only enjoys a relatively small school district but also territorial decentralization. In Finland, the entire country is regulated under the same national authorities, mainly the Ministry of Education and the National Board of Education. One can also take an issue at the comparison between Finland and the U.S. schools. There were only two school districts visited in the U.S., Boston and New York

City. Special care was done in construing an agenda of high performing schools in both districts. In Boston, for example, at least half of the visited schools were run under a special Pilot Program. Pilot schools are schools that enjoy a high degree of autonomy in almost all school aspects, teachers' autonomy included. All the six schools visited in Boston were schools with students enrolled in lower secondary courses and upper secondary courses as well. None of the Boston schools were lower-secondary only schools. In Finland all 15 year old students are enrolled in lower secondary schools. Therefore, of the 10 schools visited in Finland seven of them were lower secondary schools and three of them schools with lower and upper secondary components (Table 2, Annex 1). Therefore, the answers of Boston schools, given their Pilot nature or the top performance may bias their median score value to the right ot the spectrum.

Schools visited in New York City were selected among a group of high performing schools some of them with special management programs that foster autonomy of decision making at all levels. And again, Boston and New York school systems are run under a national education system that it is territorially decentralized. Therefore, for a system that is nationally-run with some devolution of decision making to municipalities Finland is one of the countries with the highest autonomy of teachers in course curriculum or course content as seen is Graph S5c. This perception coincides with the evidence that the teacher profession in Finland is among the most popular profession among graduating students from high school and the suggestion that the quality of Finnish teachers is the key factor in explaining the high performance of students.

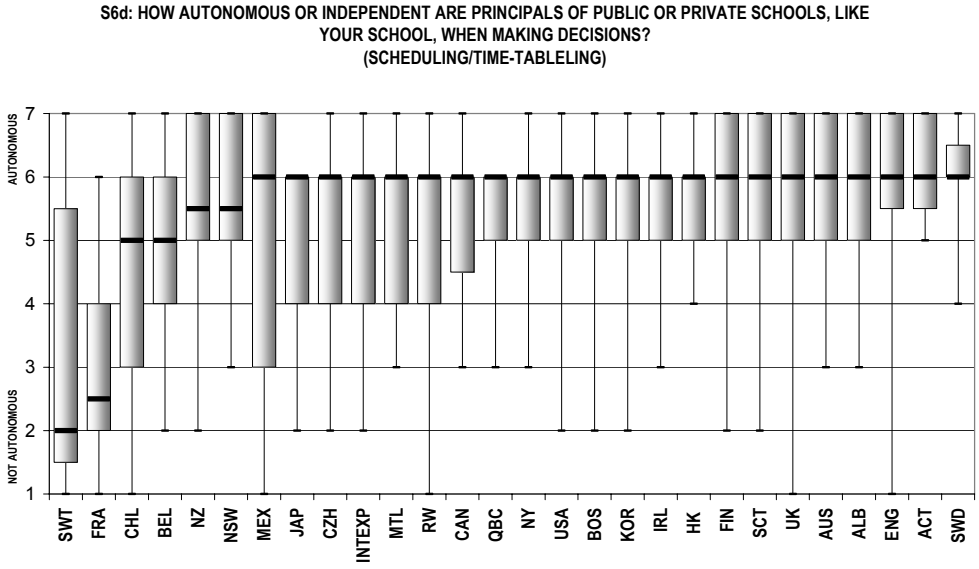
S5c : HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SETTING THE COURSE CURRICULA)



Autonomy of principals in time-tableling

Finland principals rank among the top autonomous in time-tableling. The perceived lose of autonomy in curriculum is not perceived in time-tableling. Even under a perceived re-

centralization of autonomy in curriculum (that even reduces the number of hours for optional courses) principals see themselves as very autonomous in time-tableling. However, as seen before, time-tableling is one of the activities that principals around the world see themselves as very autonomous. This is so because time-tableling is seen as a routine activity. However, creative time-tableling as seen before, may give principals some intromission in the pedagogy of the each school.



Mexico and Finland in a nutshell

The following pages outline the main features of Mexico first and Finland next to the RW, INTEXP, and the maximum and the minimum mean score values for each feature or variable. The idea is to present in a graph-like scheme the school education policies of Mexico an Finland to the high performing values and to the extreme values in each feature, variable or category. Being consistently below the RW or the INTEXP benchmarks may be an indication of school education policies behind the world's policies of high performing countries or behind the INTEXP's ideal model when applicable. INTEXP's benchmarks appear in group 2 and group 3 only.

Features, variables or categories have been arranged in groups to facilitate the reading. Most groups or features are clustered around the same topic but in groups four and five different unrelated topics were grouped together. All features or variables were clustered in the following groups: 1) decentralization and autonomy; 2) assessment and evaluation; 3) innovation, free choice, salaries of teachers and information and communication technologies; 4) teachers' unions and parents' participation in education.

The exhibit at the end of this chapter shows the following data: the nomenclature for each variable, category or feature; the meaning of each nomenclature; the number of

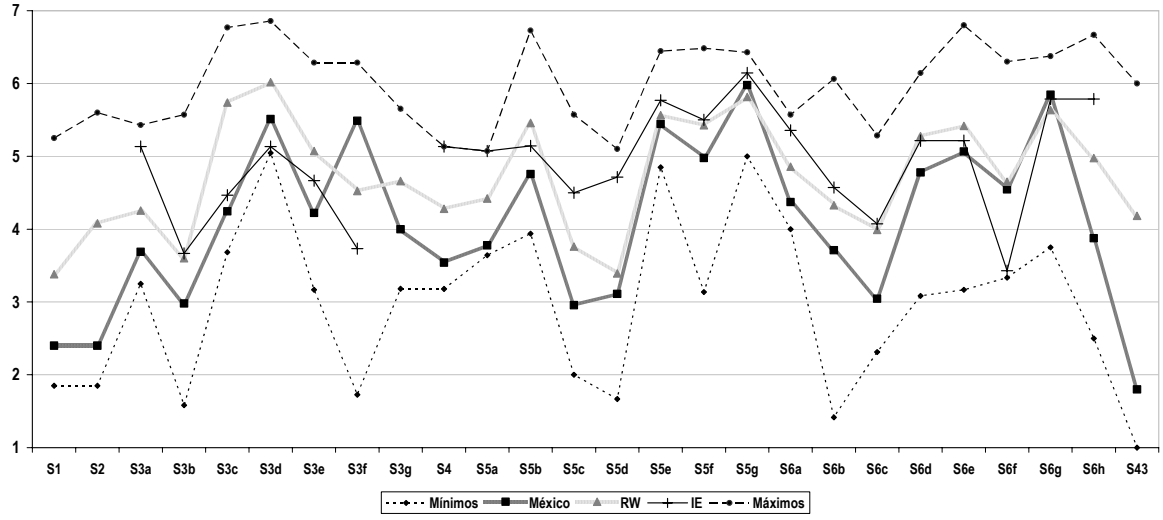
observations or respondents for each variable; the initials for countries or regions scoring with the maximum or minimum value for each variable.

Decentralization and Autonomy

Mexico

Mexico's line (the one with the square dot) is consistently below the RW and INTEXP scores or benchmarks. There are 26 features or variables in Graph Group 1a. Mexico is below the RW in 20 of the 26 features or categories; above in four categories and the same in two categories. Compared to INTEXP benchmarks, Mexico is below in 16 categories, above in three and equal in two out of a total of 21 measured features or categories.

Graph Group 1a
Decentralization and Autonomy
Mexico

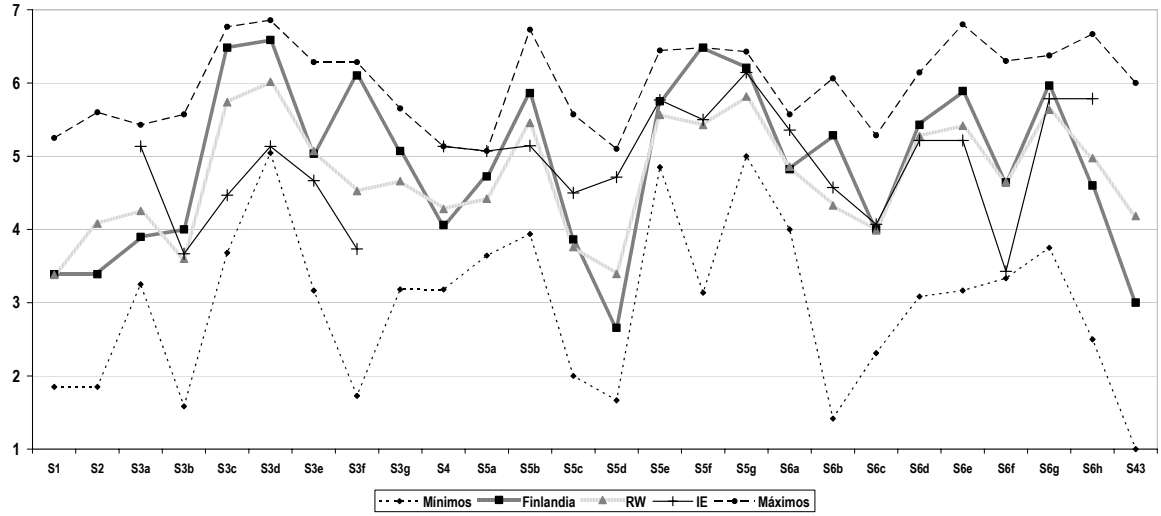


Finland

In contrast (Graph Group 1b), Finland's line (also the one with the square dot) is above in 15 cases, below in 6 cases and equal in 5 cases out of the 26 variables or features in relation to the RW benchmark. When the benchmark is INTEXP Finland is above in 12 cases, below in six and equal in three out of 21 categories. In terms of this sheer comparison Mexico and Finland are the mirror image of two systems.

In other words, Mexico is below or equal in 24 cases out of 26 when the benchmark is the RW. Finland is above or equal in 20 cases. When the benchmark is INTEXP, Mexico is below or equal in 19 cases out of 21 cases. Finland is above or equal in 15 cases out of 21.

Graph Group 1b
Decentralization and Autonomy
Finland



Assessments and Evaluation

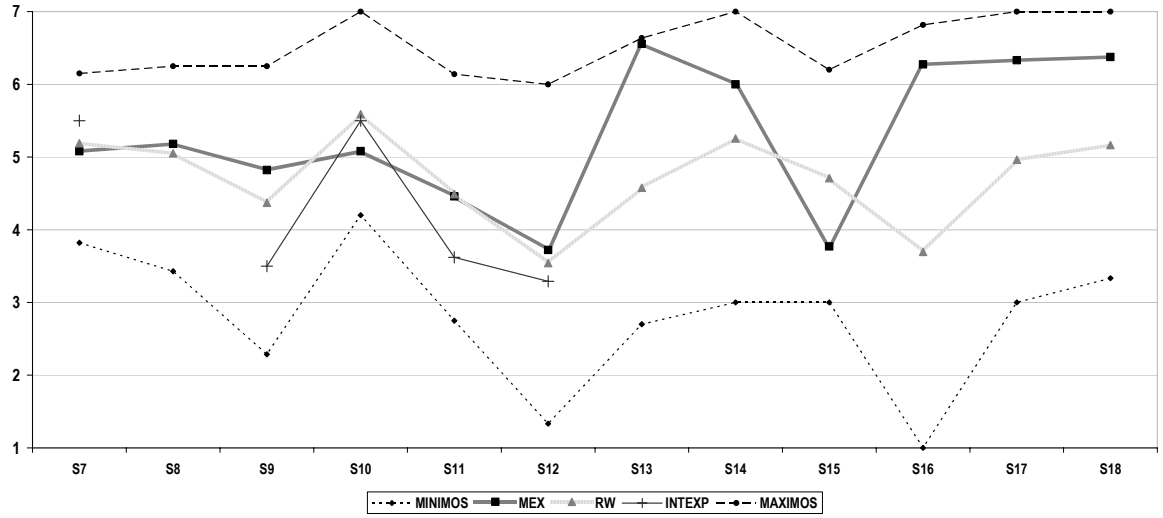
The next Graph (Graph Group 2a) represents a set of 12 questions all related to "assessment culture" or "assessment practice". Questions or variables S7 to S12 refer to assessment or evaluation culture as perceived by interviewees. For these variables or features the higher the score value (closer to 7) the higher the "importance" of assessments in education policy in each country or region. In broad terms interviewees were asked to judge about the importance given by different groups (education authorities, school authorities, teachers, parents, students, the media) to assessment practices such as international or national standardized assessments.

If we divide Graphs Group 2a and 2b in two subsets, one to measure the culture and the other to measure the practice of assessment and evaluation the interesting thing here is that Mexico and Finland have more or less the same pattern. Take Mexico. Variables or categories S7 to S12 refer to the assessment culture. For this group Mexico's line almost runs in tandem with the RW's line. This means that the perceived (by the interviewed people) culture of assessment in Mexico is not different to that of the RW. Assessment culture does not seem to be related to high performance or low performance. Out of the six categories from S7 to S12, Mexico is slightly above in three, equal in one and below one.

In evaluation and assessment policies and practices Mexico's albeit their relatively new assessment history is higher in almost all categories. From S13 to S18 variables Mexico scores higher in every account except in one than the RW. Take, for instance, question or variable S16 (league tables, identifying the names of the schools). Mexico is way above the RW and very close to the maximum value for this question. How come? Thw only logical answer I can offer is the "newness" of the Mexican experience in assessment and

accountability. There is very little known the pros and cons of league tables. By the time interviews were conducted league table in Mexico were inexistent except for one or two entities out of 32 entities. Not league tables were published at the national level for all lower or upper secondary schools. Answers then were given more as a "wishful" thinking rather than as a response from experience.

Graph Group 2a
Assessment and Evaluation Culture and Practice
Mexico



Finland

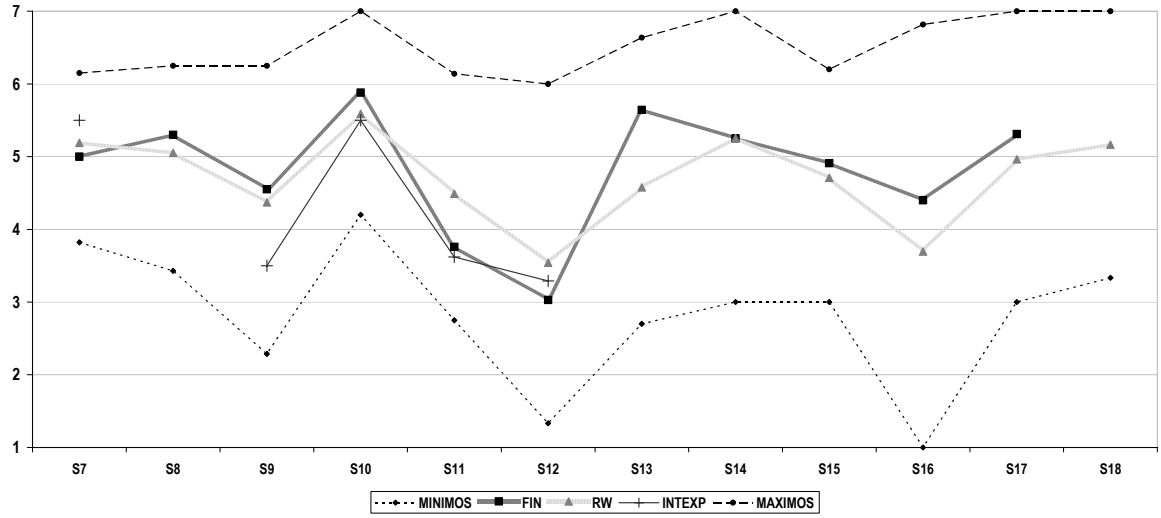
Following the same of analysis, Finnish perceived assessment culture also runs in tandem with the rest of the world. Of the six categories from S7 to S12 Finland is slightly above three categories below one and equal in one. In both cases, culture and practice, the distance Finland and the RW is very small.

The answer from INTEXP moved in tandem with the answers Finland and the RW.

Mexico and Finland are not far away from each other and from the RW and INTEXP when the measure is the culture of assessments (from S7 to S12) as seen in Graphs Group 2a and Group 2b. This means that principals and experts from Mexico, Finland and the RW do not tie high performance of students to any given culture of assessment and evaluation. The story is not the same when we transit from a measure of culture to a measure of practice. In this case (S13 to S18) the answers diverge between Mexico and Finland. Unexpectedly, Mexico's answers are higher (meaning greater appreciation of the importance of assessment to high performance or greater recognition of publication and dissemination of results) than the RW and Finland. One explanation for Finland is that up to the middle of 2006 there were not national assessments or evaluations. A new national assessment policy is been implemented although it is at the beginning stage. Notwithstanding, Finland has

been a member of the IEA for many decades and took part in almost all IEA assessment for three decades since the 1960s.

Graph Group 2b
Assessment and Evaluation Culture and Practice
Finland



Innovation, Free Choice, Salaries of Teacher and Information and Communication Technologies

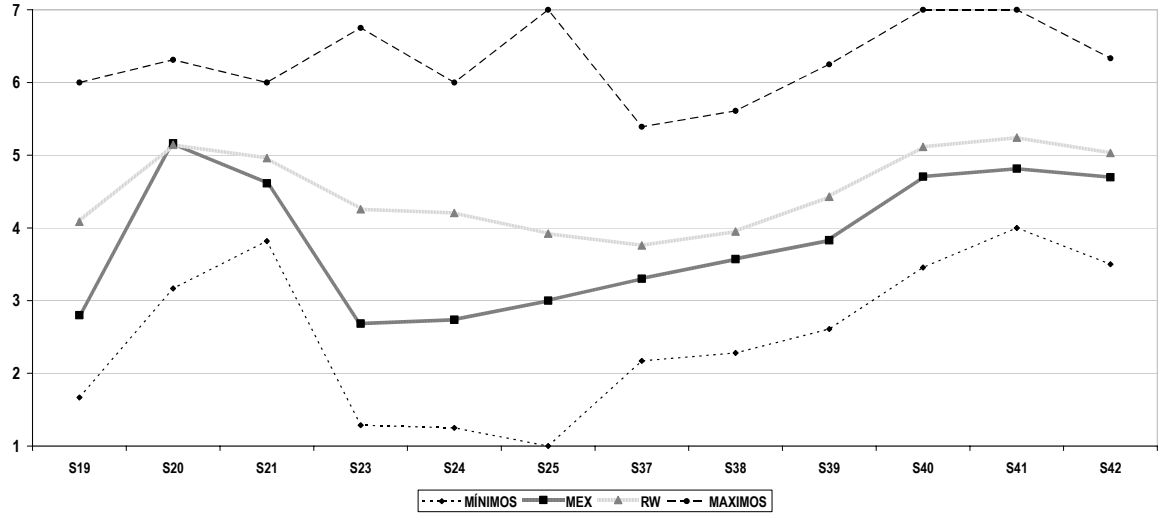
Mexico

Graph Group 3a clusters four different groups of features of school education policies as perceived by principals, teachers and experts. Since the Graph shows the mean scores from all interviewed people there are two ways to suggest some interpretation. On the whole, it is clear, from this Graph, that all the Mexican values are consistently below (except for one value, S20) than the RW. In fairness, Mexico's values are not very different to those given by the RW respondents, except, perhaps, for the "free choice" cluster. Here, Mexico appears to be below by a bigger range to the RW. It seems to be that free choice support from national or regional authorities or actual free choice for parents when selecting the school for their children is lower in Mexico than the rest of the world.

S37 to S39 asked the question of teachers' salaries at different levels (primary, secondary and tertiary) to average salaries in the country. Mexico's mean responses although below the RW's values are very close. In other words, there is almost the same perception in Mexico and the RW in relation to the teachers' salaries compared to the average salaries in each averaged country. In this respect, teachers are treated analogously similar in all countries measured by the RW average answer.

Finally, interviewees were asked to assess their own information and communication technologies (ICT). Again Mexico falls below the RW but not by much.

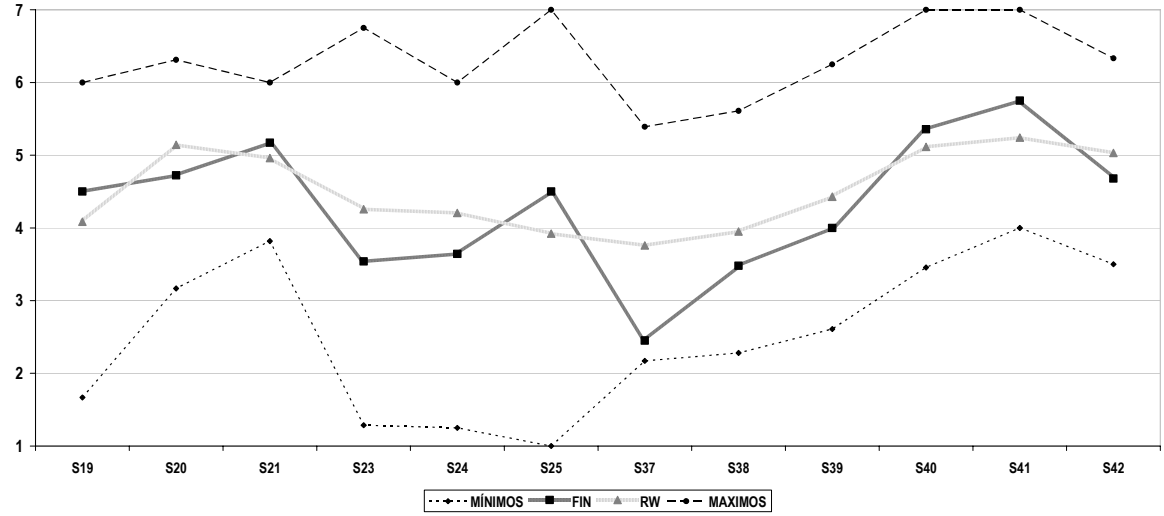
Graph Group 3a
Innovation, Free Choice, Salaries of Teacher and ICT
Mexico



Finland

In Group three features or categories the story for Finland is different. We do not see here the in tandem variation as seen between Mexico and the RW. Finland shape is more a zig-zag shape: above in some values and below in others. However, in most cases Finnish values are not very far way from RW values except for S37 salary of primary or elementary teachers. Finnish respondents see the salary of teachers as low compared to the average salaries of Finnish people.

Graph Group 3b
Innovation, Free Choice, Salaries of Teacher and ICT
Finland



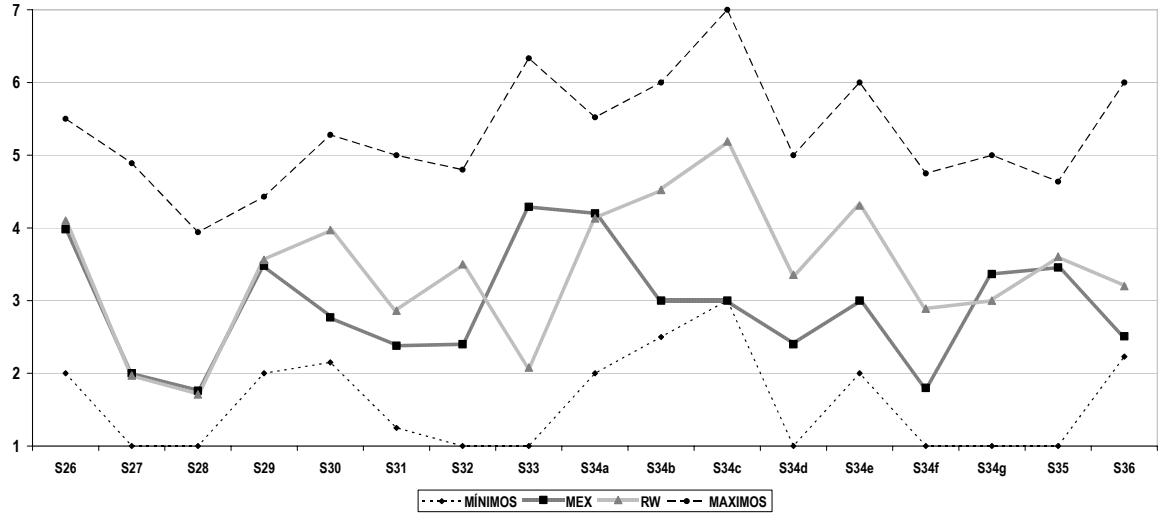
Teachers' Unions and Parents Participation

Mexico

The last group (Graph Group 4a) is composed of two clusters: unions and parents. Again the whole purpose was to measure the proximity or gap between unions and education policies and school policies and practices and parents and education and school policies and practices. Variables or questions S26 to S33 refer to the teachers' unions and their role in education. Contrary to a preconceived perception, teachers' unions scores in Mexico move in close tandem for questions or variables S26, S27, S28 and S29 (unions influence in education policy goals, strikes, suspension of classes by union strikes or demonstrations, openness of teacher unions to education policies). The rest of the unions' variables are at lower or higher values than the RW. Categories S30, S31 and S32 (support to changes at the school level, support for free choice or vouchers, and support for teachers' assessments or accountability) fall below the RW mean value. This means the respondents in Mexico see the Mexican teacher union with a less supportive role than the RW. The maximum difference between Mexico and the rest of the World for this cluster is shown in variable S33 (aggressiveness in defending a position). Mexican teachers' union is seen much more aggressive than their counterparts as measured by the S33 for the RW.

Variables or categories S34a to S34g and S35 and S36 measure the perceived degree of participation of parents in education. Here the divergence between Mexico and the RW is more notorious. Of the nine categories Mexico is clearly below the RW values showing a lower degree of parents' participation except for category S34g (parents' participation at the private primary schools) and S35 (parents helping students with homework, secondary school level) where Mexico and the RW are very close together.

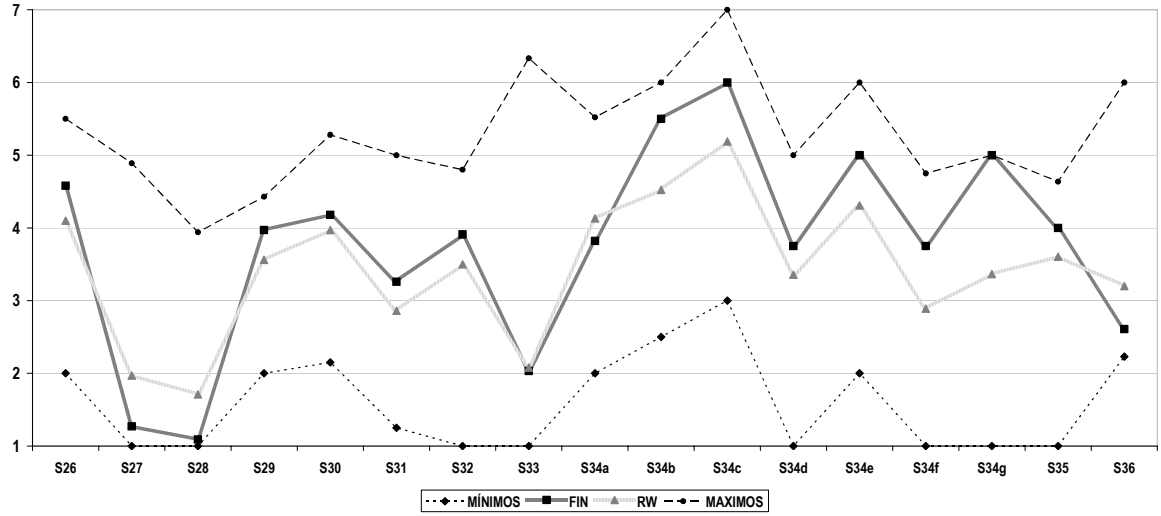
Graph Group 4a
Unions and Parents
Mexico



Finland

Mexico and Finland vary a lot in these two last categories, i.e. unions and parents. Finland and the rest of the world move in tandem for almost all the variables or categories: in 12 out of 17 cases Finland is even above the RW and some times with a clear difference especially for the parents' participation in education. The physiognomy of the two systems, Mexican and Finnish, as shown in Graphs Group 4a and Group 4b is very different. See, for instance, how the Finnish answers to the questions related to parents' participation are consistently higher than Mexico's answers and the RW scores. Does this means that increasing parents' participation in school education is the key to performance? Well, the answer is not simple. Increased participation of parents per se is not the answer. Take for instance New Zealand and Finland two high performing countries with two very different models for parent participation. Parents in New Zealand after the 1989 "Tomorrow's School" reform took over the schools through decision making school boards. In Finland schools are not run by decision making school boards inside the schools. Parents, by and large, participate in a less direct manner. Parents, in a way, are at bay. And the whole movement in Finland, as per the new curriculum seems to forecast, is for schools to "take over" some of the traditional tasks of homes and parents, i.e. raising students. Therefore, without looking to the bare societal interactions very little can be said in terms of the right formula to affect performance.

Graph Group 4b
Unions and Parents
Finland



Exhibit

	Question	Observations	Maximum	Minimum
S1	How centralized is the education policy in your region?	542	SWT	IRL
S2	How centralized is the education policy in your country?	543	BEL	IRL
S3	How autonomous are public or private schools, like your school, in your country when making decisions?			
S3	***Autonomy in schools is key to education quality (such as performance in international evaluations) INTEXP***			
S3a	Overall	443	ACT	FRA
S3b	School curriculum	442	ACT	FRA
S3c	Textbooks	441	NZ	ALB
S3d	School Materials	441	ACT	ALB
S3e	Schedules / Time-tableling	441	ACT	FRA
S3f	Exams / Tests	436	ACT	FRA
S3g	Free time for students during day activities	434	SWD	QBC
S4	How autonomous are schools in your country at the compulsory level when making decisions?	552	INTEXP	FRA
S4	***Autonomy in schools is key to education quality (such as performance in international evaluations)***			
S5	How autonomous or independent are teachers of public or private schools, like your school, when making decisions?			
S5	***Teachers autonomy is key to education quality (performance) INTEXP***			
S5a	Overall	442	INTEXP	KOR
S5b	Meeting with parents	441	QBC	SCT
S5c	Setting the course curricula	442	ACT	QBC
S5d	Setting the class schedule	440	HK	FRA
S5e	Self-evaluating students	431	HK	KOR
S5f	Selecting text books	440	FIN	ALB
S5g	Innovation: such as, new school materials, activities for the children, new ideas	437	ACT	JAP
S6	How autonomous or independent are the principals of public or private schools, like your school, when making			
S6	***Principals or schoolmasters autonomy is key to education quality INTEXP***			
S6a	Overall	438	ACT	FRA
S6b	Hiring and removing teachers	437	CZH	FRA
S6c	Setting the school curricula	438	ACT	SWT
S6d	Schedules / Time-tableling	437	ACT	FRA
S6e	Evaluating teachers	435	HK	FRA
S6f	Evaluating students	437	HK	FRA
S6g	Innovation: such as, new school materials, activities for the children, new ideas	437	ENG	FRA
S6h	The management of the school budget	295	ACT	FRA
S7	How do education authorities react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	545	QBC	CZH
S8	How do school principals and/or school boards react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	545	EM	AUS
S9	How do teachers react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	548	EM	AUS
S10	How do the media react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	543	BC	NSW
S11	How do the parents react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	535	KOR	SWF
S12	How do the students react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	541	VAL	SWF

	Question	Observations	Maximum	Minimum
S13	Under your criteria how important is the application of international standardized evaluations for the overall education	257	AGS	FRA
S14	Under your criteria how important is the application of domestic standardized evaluations for the overall education	104	ACT/JAP	SWF/NSW
S15	The results of domestic and international evaluations are disseminated and publicized?	516	SGP	BEL
S16	Do you think that results of international and domestic evaluations should be made public including the names of the	369	DF	SWF
S17	Under your criteria, how important is the participation in international evaluations for the improvement of the overall	362	VAL	SWF
S18	Under your criteria, how important is the participation in domestic evaluations for the improvement of the overall	182	VAL	QBC
S19	Does your country at the federal, state or local level have specific policies or programs to reward innovation in the	107	BEL/KOR	SWF
S20	Does your school have policies, programs or practices to support innovations in teaching among teachers?	425	SCT	FRA
S21	Are teachers in your school very innovative?	428	SWF/NY	DF
S23	Does your federal or national government support free choice?	239	ACT	SWG
S24	Do your local or state authorities support free choice?	210	VAL	SWF
S25	Are the students (parents) in your district free to choose the modality or type of schooling (vouchers, independents schools, private school, public school in a different district, home schooling) and still receive public support?	242	BEL	SWF
S26	How important are the teachers' unions in defining education policy goals?	525	BC	SGP
S27	How often do teachers' unions strike?	519	FRA	BC/SGP
S28	How often are classes suspended by teachers' unions strikes or demonstrations?	522	FRA	BC/SGP
S29	How open are teachers' unions to changes in education policies by federal, state or local authorities?	502	ACT	VAL/EM
S30	How supportive are the teachers' unions in your country to innovations or changes at school level?	502	ALB	DF
S31	How supportive are the teachers' unions in your country to free choice? (i.e. vouchers)	433	BEL	SWF
S32	How supportive are the teachers' unions in your country to teachers' assessments or accountability?	500	SGP/ALB	SWF/BC
S33	How violent can your teachers' unions become in defending a position?	513	EM	SGP
S34	How would you rank parents' participation in education in your school?			
S34a	Overall	535	KOR	BEL
S34b	In primary public schools	51	ALB/BC	SWT/SWF
S34c	In primary private schools	47	ENG/ALB/BC	MEX/AGS
S34d	In secondary public schools	104	JAP/ACT	NSW
S34e	In secondary private schools	47	ENG/MTL/BC	BEL/BEL
S34f	At the classroom level in public schools	101	MTL	BEL/DF
S34g	At the classroom level in private schools	46	FIN/MTL/ALB	BEL/BEL
S35	Do parents of students in your school help with homework?	420	ALB	VAL
S36	Are parents' associations or organizations influential in education policy decisions?	465	BC	DF
S37	The teacher's salary at the primary and lower secondary level in your country compared to other salaries in your	512	HK	CZH
S38	The teacher's salary at the secondary level is:	522	HK	CZH
S39	The teacher's salary at the tertiary (university) level is:	469	SWF	CZH
S40	How well equipped is the school in ICT (information technologies) for teaching purposes?	423	SWF	QBC
S41	Teachers' accessibility to ICT in the school?	424	SWF	QBC
S42	Students' accessibility to ICT in the school?	423	EM	VAL
S43	All things considered, how independent are principals of public schools in the management of their bidgets in your	109	ENG/SWD/ACT	JAP/DF

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Policy Suggestions

Conclusions

Does all this means that international organizations or associations should stop sponsoring or developing international studies or assessments such as TIMSS, PIRLS, PISA, SAMECQ and SERCE?

No, not at all. On the contrary, comparative studies and assessments of the sort conducted by IEA, OECD, SAMECQ and OREALC, should continue and further refine. Comparisons are very useful for measurement and diagnosis, system-wide, district-wide or cluster-wide. These studies are also very useful for schools which take part for their assessment and self-evaluation. However, more care should be given to the scope and reach of lessons learnt from such measurements, comparisons and assessments. One thing is to compare another is to transfer.

To begin with, the international comparisons of this sort are good at telling us the differences and similarities in a given target population in education outcomes, i.e., competences, abilities and cognitive knowledge. But what evidence from this research seems to show (as others before me have suggested with different analytical or methodological tools) is that these studies are not as good when explaining the causality, or "comparability" (comparing the same thing) of the observed results given the complexity of the issue. These studies are not very good either as a predictive or recommendation tool for the "transferability" of policies, processes or practices.

Fragmentalization or stratification difficulties, as I have explained before, appear to be insurmountable if we want to get into the complexities of school education. Stratifying schools' characteristics as belonging to the same group, in order to explain the whys, what, and for whom, seems impossible. When characteristics from one group to the next are so different, the samples should be fragmentalized to allow for these differences. In schools' and students' samples, for purposes of comparability not on students' performance but schools' performance or systems' performances, the fragmentalization should be very large to allow for differences in schools' and systems' characteristics. Since schools' characteristics or factors are so different (context, situation, politics, history, institutions, policies, age and length of studies of sampled students, etc.) from one school to the next and worse from one country or system to the next, the fragmentalization would have to be so atomized that we would actually end up with a case-level analysis study rather than with a cross-section analysis.

The world of schools and schooling is very complex as could be depicted by a decagon (polygon with ten sides and ten angles), the ten sides of which are listed in Box 2 below. It has been the continuous story of this manuscript that the proposal that international studies can be successfully undertaken at the level of inputs (financial resources, socio-economic backgrounds of students, families and schools, school facilities, levels of training of teachers) and outputs (enrolment levels and rates, graduating students, performance in

national or international assessments, value-added performance, etc.), but not at the level of claims, processes and policies. International studies can not go as far as telling us the whys, hows, what, where and for whom (Dale and Bruner). The reason why it is not possible to make "claims" about "best practices" in education policies and practices is found in the intrinsic complexity of schooling and school education policy worlds. Box 2 (in lieu of a decagon) shows the inherent complexity by highlighting the number of potential combinations that may occur in this limited world of 165 schools. This is why the task of pinpointing the factors that do the trick has been and will be forever an impossible task. Comparative studies such as those based on statistical information gathered from many systems have to simplify the world by making many assumptions. Each assumption reduces the number of possible combinations. Therefore, the details of success or failure stories behind the schools and school education systems are missed.

The lesson here is that international studies should continue of course; international statistical comparison should also continue, and some comparisons of inputs and outputs should be made. However, international studies should refrain from making claims as to the five or ten or fifteen actors that explain success because such claims miss the real story behind the schools. This means that international organizations should also contain their impetus from and for the borrowing and lending process, policies and practices. They can go as far as showing the differences between the sampled populations but they can not go around the world importing or exporting policies and practices "from other hills".(Broadfoot, 1999).

Each factor or element in each one of the ten sides could theoretically and empirically combine with all others. The number of possible combinations is enormous. To this already complex polygon we have to add more complexities, such as leadership styles and personal relationships among all the players, but most conspicuously among principals and board members, local authorities, teachers, parents and students. And to make things even more complicated, schools are organizations ("school are organisms not organizations"[1]) that are also defined by the personal histories of students and teachers. Each student that enters into a school brings behind her/him many stories, family stories, socio-economic stories and personality stories (genes plus context or "nature and nurture[2]"). The same happens with teachers (including principals and administrative personnel). Each teacher brings to the school her/his own stories. All these stories combine everyday within the confines of a social organization or association that we call "school".

In my visits to schools and interviews with principals and teachers, I was able to learn about some of these stories in the 165 schools. Personal stories and school stories shape the everyday life of all schools in unimaginable ways. This is why to study schools and teaching and learning in schools is extremely complicated; sometimes an impossible task for comparativists or school scholars.

[1] An insightful remark by Her Majesty's Inspector Isobel McGregor Lead Inspector at Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education, Scotland , interview on July 20, 2006.
[2] The expression is taken from David L. Kirp.

One of the possible complex combinations the theoretical decagon shows is the one related to principals and the power relationships of principals inside and outside the school. For example: How principals become principals? Whose loyalty are they indebted to? To whom and for what topics are they accountable? For how long are they expected to stay as principals? Is the "principalship" position a reward position for years and years of teaching? Or, is the "principalship" position a merit-based job available to young or experienced teachers or school managers or even policy-makers or academics who want to jump to the field?

Or consider the following set of questions: What is the parental involvement in the school (at the decision-making level, advisory level, school level, class-room level, support-level, financial level)? What kinds of school boards are related to schools: external boards, as in district, church, local authority; internal or inside-the-school boards; decision-making boards or advisory boards? How are boards composed: by representatives from parents, teachers, students, alumni, government, church, business, community, village, school personnel, the principal, etc.? Who calls the shots inside the boards?

At the end the interaction between the different actors will be a function not only of formal rules and procedures but also of personal and power relationships between actors. And here the following questions are relevant: Who is the principal? For whom does he work? Is there a principal authority in the school, or is school run without a principal? Who are the teachers? How is the morale of teachers? What is the relationship between the principal and the teachers? Are there enough resources in the school to carry out dictated, imposed or suggested policies from "downtown"? What are the ideas and preconceptions of principals and teachers? What is the relationship between the principals and the superintendent or the chief of education in the local authority?

And questions like: Who are the children? What is their socioeconomic background? What is the education of their parents? Are the parents of current children sitting on the school board? What is the relationship between the principal and the parents?

All these relationships and interactions help us to understand how ideas, proposals or policies are implemented into practice in the schools. And the complexity of the relationships also helps us to understand why policies and practices, as in process, can not travel as recipes for change and lsuccess. The personal and power relationships of the people who decide the policies, and the people who are supposed to implement them or to make sense of them, determine the final outcome, i.e. how policies or instructions are finally put into practice and the everyday life of schools. When principals receive instructions from "downtown" they react, together with some, many or all teachers, with the following set of questions: Do we have the resources? Does it make sense for our children? Do they fit with our own pedagogical ideas and beliefs? Do we have the human means (teams, attitudes, motivations) from parents, teachers, children, or community, to work the policy through? Are students directly involved in decision-making, or they only play an "ornamental" or "legitimizing" role?

On top of policy ideas or ideas that come to the school sometimes after long travels and filters, each filter is subject to many interpretations or translations from actors or players.

For example, before they land in the school they may come from the international organizations to the offices of national ministers of education; from these offices to the middle-level offices of national ministries of education; from middle level to state, provincial, sub-regional or local offices of education; from local or district authorities to school boards; from school boards to principals; from school principals to teachers and teachers' teams, and from them to parents and children. Policies not only travel through levels but also through filters such as: autocratic-style principals, democratic principals, decision-making boards, advisory boards, strong teachers versus weak teachers, abundant resources versus scarcity, strict rules for management of the school and resources versus flexible rules, etc.

In addition to the polygon-like complexity and levels and layers of translation or implementation, we have to add one more dimension: time. People and things change. Principals and teachers change, not often, but they do change. Local authorities change too, not often if they are civil servants and often if they are politicians. Children and parents in a school also change every year or every school-level cycle. National authorities change and state authorities, when applicable, also change. Regulations change, availability of financial support to schools also changes and technologies change too. Sometimes, when a researcher's observation about a school or district or education system is published, it is no longer valid, since conditions in that school might have changed from the time of the visit, observation and study to the time of the report's publication. So the school education complexity decagon-like model is moving over time.

Yes but no

Yes, based on international studies, we can measure and conclude that some systems, schools or even students perform at a higher level than others, or that some districts have better results that others; we can even rank the results in league tables, **But No**, we can not say for all why the results are the way they are; how schools or systems perform at such a high or low level ; where there is consistency, what are the factors of success or the obstacles to failure and how to borrow or lend policies across the board. We may use data drawn from these studies to better understand, case by case, the complexities of school education, i.e. "contextualizing the data" (Theisen *et al*, 46). We can also learn that countries around the world face similar problems and challenges: "(…) our own problems are not unique, and such knowledge can be most useful." (Noah, 155).

Summing up, evidence from this research seems to show that measures and comparisons are made; that there is convergence and divergence of school education inputs, outputs and policies and practices. It also shows that convergence or divergence does not occur in a linear and clear way.

To clarify the subject matter and based on what the evidence from this report seems to show, I will add to the convergence and divergence dimension of school education the comparability and transferability dimension. One thing is to compare and the other, quite different, is to transfer. Some school education concepts are and can be compared but they can not travel or, if they travel, they are not transferable. Based on a simple model of education and school policies (inputs, process and outputs) adapted from many sources

including the OECD's own model (OECD 2005b, 12), the next Box 1 seeks to clarify the complex world of comparability and transferability for the two opposite views of a converging or diverging school-education world. What this matrix shows is the relationship between convergence and divergence and comparability and transferability of school education concepts. It shows where in school education there is convergence and where there is divergence, and whether 1) inputs, 2) processes, policies and practices, and 3) outputs are comparable or transferable or both. So the school education world is converging and diverging at the same time. Box 1 shows from the inputs, process, policies and practices, and output points of view whether we have convergence or divergence.

Box 1
Yes but No Analytical Tool

	Comparability		**Transferability**	
	Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
Convergence	**Inputs** Number of teachers and schools Textbooks Curriculum structures and subjects Financial commitments	**Inputs** Nature and level of financial commitment	**Inputs** Textbooks with adaptations Curriculum structures and subjects	**Inputs** Resources Curriculum implementation Teaching and learning inside the classroom
	Outputs Measuring scores Measuring size of systems Measuring Learning	**Outputs** Fairness of scores	**Outputs** Methods to measure goals and performance	**Outputs** Goals of education
Divergence	**Processes, Policies and Practices** Rhetoric Label Talking	**Process, Policies and Practices** Decentraliza-tion Autonomy Assessment Marketization and Instruction of Learning		**Process, Policies and Practices** Meaning the same thing

Therefore we can not say what combination of policies and practices will do the trick everywhere because, as shown in Box 1, they are only comparable at the rhetoric, label or talking level and they are not transferable because transferred they do not mean the same thing.

Policies and practices can not travel consistently because the factors and combinations that shape them in one place are not replicable in another place, not even inside a given system, let alone across systems. Therefore, when talking about policies, process and practices other than their labels "Neither a borrower nor a lender be".

Therefore, the international studies of the kind mentioned before (e.g. PISA or TIMSS) are well suited for comparability of students' performance but are not good tools to explain causes or even less to caution on policies and, as a consequence, are not suited for "transferability" of policies.

There is a lot of convergence in "policy talking" or the rhetoric of policies for many different reasons, as seen before. There is also convergence in aspects such as text books, autonomy of teachers or "principals' freedom" in budget management. But even here, the freedom is very limited since the budget management of principals is constrained by the relatively very small size of funds available to principals as compared to the total budget. In many cases even the cash available is earmarked by the school board, the local authorities or the national supervisors. In other cases, principals are also limited by powerful "boards", or by powerful "teachers' groups" or "teachers' organizations", or by powerful politicians or civil servants inside or outside the school. School principals are not "managers"—they are school principals, with very little power to actually change, affect or influence the overall direction or performance of the school, at least from the financial point of view. With little power comes little accountability too.

The convergences in school policies or practices, in text-books, school material and budget management are not seen as belonging only to the realm of high-performing countries as low-performing countries such as Mexico and Chile also show convergence in these policies and practices. Therefore, convergences here can not be related to high-performing countries only.

Even with the theoretical or ideological "beauties" of some proposals for some people like the "free choice" idea, value or principle; for the epistemic communities harnessed by competition and marketisation (neo-liberals[3]) or the "public school" idea as a value; or for the epistemic communities in favor of welfare-based economies and societies, none have been able to harness enough, consistent evidence to ubiquitously sustain their proposal as true across time and across systems At the end we finish up with contrasting studies showing specific triumphs for each approach in very specific situations where we see a world not of one Shangri-la school-education system but of many Shangri-las.

[3] As defined by Arnove et al 1997.

The word, idea or concept (for some even a value) of decentralization and its companion, autonomy of schools, is now partially challenged with new "pseudo-paradigms" that call for re-centralization and accountability of schools and school's policies. But even worse, evidence from the field research project presented in this report, and from many more researchers before me, documents that decentralization and autonomy, supply-driven policies are implemented in many different ways around systems, districts and schools.

There is much lost in translation or transferability in the export/import business of education policies and practices. Principals, teachers, representatives on boards, and local educational authorities will "adjust" or adapt or fine-tune or make sense of, supply-driven policy or rules to their own culture, context, situation or practice, and everyday life.

They will follow only from those policies and rules by higher central authorities (state or national) that which makes sense in their own microcosmic reality, i.e., the school. Even at the local or district level of analysis, this seems to be the case as stated by Spillane:

> When it comes to implementing new ideas about instruction, all the will in the world is not enough. In analyzing the standards as they seeped into local school districts and classrooms, what mattered most was what district leaders and teachers came to understand about their practice from the standards. Putting human sense-making center-stage in the implementation process illuminates how district policymakers and teachers construct messages about changing their practice from policies that often misconstrue the intention of policymakers.(2004, pp 168-169)
>
> Inundated with signals from their environment, people notice some and ignore most others, as they use the lenses they have developed through experience to filter their awareness. Indeed, part of sense-making involves categorizing signals into some sort of framework. (2004, pp. 169)

After all, from the rational point of view, this is the right way to go for schools, boards, teachers and principals, and sometimes parents and children when they are involved somehow in the decision-making pipeline.

So, in light of all this, is there anything left for policy-makers? Do school education policies really travel across systems in a way that policy-makers just need to follow the international organizations' recommendations and views?

Policy suggestions

There is room for maneuvering, but policy-makers have to do less borrowing of policies and practices. Knowing the realities of implementation, translation and sense-making, policy-makers could try to refrain from supply-driven and top-down ordered formulas of policies and practices for school boards, principals and teachers.

The lending and borrowing should stop. This should stop because, at the end of the day, we do not know how these recipes or policies are translated into the offices, hallways and class-rooms of each school around the system, district or even world. So the word of

caution also goes for international organizations. Supply-driven policies may increase the size of bureaucracies, i.e., inspectors, supervisors, advisors, liaison people making sure schools and principals and teachers implement policies the policy-makers' way. But the fact of the matter, as the evidence for lack of convergence shows, or the evidence from borrowing or lending shows, or the evidence from implementation, translations and "sense-making" shows, they don't; they (the schools) don't often follow the mandates (rules or manuals) of supply-driven policies and practices.

So, what is then left for policy-makers? Policy-makers should change focus. They should move away from supply-driven policies and move closer to demand-driven policies. They should observe, listen and react more carefully to schools and school districts. If supply policies don't get implemented, then the only instrument left for policy-makers is "incentives".

The most policy-makers can do is to establish targets as in standards and to maneuver through incentives. The formulations, details and scope of school policies and practices should be left to the school, their districts and local authorities at most.

In this world of standards and incentives, policy-makers set targets and make schools accountable to them based on a system of incentives and penalties (v.gr. the lack of incentives). Policy-makers, after consultation with experts, should establish some targets (standards), minimal targets, for compliance. A multi-layered target system should then be designed to account for different socio-economic levels or differences in the levels of attainment among schools or districts from similar "clusters" or groups.

Once the society, through its institutional channels, congresses, legislative bodies, parliaments and elected officials has set a goal for education, i.e., quality, fairness, efficiency, etc., with very specific measures of achievement, experts and policy-makers should be called to decide the best indicators to reach those standards.

Once those indicators, benchmarks or standards in certain subjects (mathematics, sciences, mother-tongue language and foreign language, etc.) or enrolment, retentions, absorption, etc. levels are established, then schools and their external or internal school boards or authorities, should design, organize and implement policies and practices to fit to the school's conditions and culture. Schools should be accountable for moving in a direction towards achievement.

Targets and accountability are the real policy instruments available to policy makers. Accountability avoids free-riding behavior.

In an ideal world with "best possible teachers" and "best possible principals" and "best possible parents", we would not need the duality "targets-accountability". We would probably not even need authorities or agencies of education monitoring schools and teachers. "The best possible people" will do wonderful things for our children. In this ideal world, teachers and principals would continuously communicate and create learning-communities; they would promote and undertake professionalizing programs on their own; they would innovate or reiterate practices that work based on evidence; they would excel at

raising expectations of students, parents and their own. Parents, in turn, would create at home an environment ("attitudes") towards schools amicable to teachers, principals and school work. But in a more realistic world, reduced to the chores of a daily, sometimes cumbersome, life that we all face, principals, teachers and parents don't always and everywhere behave in the positive, even altruistic ways, just outlined. This reality is true at all levels: country, system, district, school, and academia (academic departments inside the schools).

Given the framework of the day-to-day life of schools, policy-makers are left only with incentive-driven measures to promote change (or reassure behavior) so that the right policy-practice-mix for each school, district or system flourishes. The right mix of policies and practices for teaching and learning will flourish if the right set of mold-type (Chubb and Moe) institutional arrangements or "basic principles" (Hanushek *et al*),or initial conditions are set in place by national or state authorities. The system of school education then has to change from a rule-and-manual driven system to a system of targets, standards, accountability and incentives.

The next question is: what are those incentive-driven measures and at what level should they be applied? The incentive-driven measures should be defined almost case by case by targets and accountability tied to incentives and penalties (from closure to the lack of incentives).

Whether policy-makers end up designing or implementing national targets versus state targets, district targets or school targets, is an issue of concern to each country, nation or system. Borrowing or lending here is as shaky as borrowing or lending at the level of decentralization or autonomy, i.e. many things are lost in translation (own translators' interpretations—ANT), or may be mis-communicated or mis-construed as with the "telephone game" cited by Spillane, xi).

The issue should be debated among stakeholders and experts. Once a decision is made about the target and the incentive drivers, then the policy should be straight: 1) target-response-incentive or alternative, 2) lack of response, lack of incentive or even closure; closure of the school but not of opportunities to children. For this mechanism to work in a highly fragmentalized world of school-education, targets, with a multilayer approach, should be set in agreement and discussion with districts and even schools, school per school. The incentive response should be tied to the achievement of the commonly-set target. These are targets commonly set by policy-makers from national or state education authorities and district and school officials and decision-making bodies.

Policy-makers can then save a lot of resources that are spent when they try to implement recipe-like policies. Those resources should be used in alternative uses such as incentives.

Box 2
Polygon of factors and combinations that may affect students' and schools' performance

Levels (modes) of Autonomy	Schools' Organizational Structures	Admission-Decision Policy	Levels of Authority Deciding on Admissions	Class Groupings	Level of Decision-Making and Power Relationships Inside the School	Power relationships outside the schools	Domains of Decision Making	Systemic and Cultural Factors	Other Factors
1) Full autonomy	1) Lower secondary schools only	1) Nearest school	1) Principals	1) Mixed ability	1) School Board dominant	1) Local authorities	1) Curriculum	1) National exams	1) School pedagogy (Montessori, Steiner-Waldorf, International Baccalaureate, other)
2) In consultation with others	2) Primary and lower secondary schools under the same umbrella school	2) Free choice: first-come first served	2) Teachers	2) Students' own profile or school career decisions	2) District school board dominant inside the school	2) State authorities	2) Textbooks	2) Random exams	2) Socio-economic factors (student intake, school socio-economic background)
3) Within a Framework	3) Lower secondary and upper secondary schools under the same umbrella	3) Limited free choice	3) Management Teams	3) Grade point average from feeder school or lower grade level	3) Parents dominant	3) National authorities	3) School materials	3) Regional systems	3) Information and communications technology in schools
4) One or some of the above combined in full autonomy	4) Upper secondary schools only	4) Nearest school plus quota for free choice	4) Guidance or pastoral teachers	4) At random	4) Teachers dominant	4) Strong superintendent or education chief	4) School equipment	4) Federal systems	4) Teaching and learning methods
5) One or some of the above in consultation with others	5) Primary and lower and upper secondary schools under the same umbrella	5) Nearest school policy plus supply/demand balance	5) School Boards	5) By alphabetical order	5) Young principals with new agenda	5) Weak superintendent or education chief	5) Time-tabling	5) Parliament/ congress members involved	5) Other school policies and practices: uniforms, single-sex, lunches, praying,

Levels (modes) of Autonomy	Schools' Organizational Structures	Admission-Decision Policy	Levels of Authority Deciding on Admissions	Class Groupings	Level of Decision-Making and Power Relationships Inside the School	Power relationships outside the schools	Domains of Decision Making	Systemic and Cultural Factors	Other Factors
6) Two or more of the above by consensus	6) Lower secondary schools of four years	6) Siblings in the school	6) One or some of the above plus parents	6) Student's behavior record	6) Retiring principals with no agenda	6) Inspectors and supervisors	6) Exams/tests	6) Level of expenditure	6) Disciplinary policies inside and outside the classrooms
7) One or some of the above in consultation with others	7) Lower secondary schools of three years	7) Feeder school's recommendations	7) Teacher (s) from lower ISCED level school	7) Students' gender balance	7) Strong principals	7) Elected school boards	7) Meeting with parents	7) Strong versus weak unions	7) Professional development policies
8) Other	8) Lower secondary (intermediate) schools of two years only	8) Ballot system based on an array of criteria	8) Teacher (s) from upper ISCED level school	8) Students with pals and friends	8) Superintendent or local education chief dominant inside the school	8) Political appointees in local authority	8) Course curriculum	8) Red-tape culture	8) Students' own abilities and attitudes
	9) Upper secondary schools of two years	9) Academic merits of students	9) A combination from two or more from above	9) Students home address (so they can travel together)	9) Unions' presence inside the school	9) Teachers' unions	9) Self-evaluating students	9) Teacher profession valued	9) Full-day schools
	10) Upper secondary schools of three years	10) Religious affiliation		10) Ability segmentation	10) Students' participation in School Boards (decision-making boards)	10) Principals' unions	10) Innovation	10) Large versus small schools	10) Ethos in the school and in the class-room
	11) Upper secondary schools of four years	11) Religious acceptance		11) Combination of two or more from above	11) Church-related organizations (e.g. Archdioceses)	11) Parents' associations	11) Self-evaluation of teachers	11) Competition	11) Size of class-room

Levels (modes) of Autonomy	Schools' Organizational Structures	Admission-Decision Policy	Levels of Authority Deciding on Admissions	Class Groupings	Level of Decision-Making and Power Relationships Inside the School	Power relationships outside the schools	Domains of Decision Making	Systemic and Cultural Factors	Other Factors
	12) Schools with two years of primary education and four years of secondary education	12) Different combinations of two or more factors from above			12) Principals with or without open-door policy	12) Other	12) Budgets	12) National standards	12) Planning and organizational policies
	13) Schools with two years of primary education and six years of secondary education	13) Interviews with parents and children			13) Teachers with or without open-door policies		13) Strategic planning	13) State or District Standards	13) Transparent society values
	14) Upper secondary schools attached to colleges	14) Persuading Interviews			14) School with department heads or faculty heads		14) Hiring teachers	14) Content-based curriculums	14) Structure of personnel (by age and experience of teachers)
	15) Upper secondary schools for the talented in science and technology				15) School with deputy principals or vice-principals and schools without them		15) Firing teachers	15) Goal-oriented curriculums	15) Level of training of teachers

Levels (modes) of Autonomy	Schools' Organizational Structures	Admission-Decision Policy	Levels of Authority Deciding on Admissions	Class Groupings	Level of Decision-Making and Power Relationships Inside the School	Power relationships outside the schools	Domains of Decision Making	Systemic and Cultural Factors	Other Factors
	16) Secondary schools with all sorts of sizes, segmentations and/or specializations (vocational, technical, general.)				16) Clusters or groups of schools per district		16) Salaries of teachers	16) Large education systems or districts	16) Open-doors schools
	17) Lower secondary schools and upper secondary schools with specializations in arts or music, or languages.						17) Hiring principals	17) School and education-prone culture	17) Schools with police-officers and without
	18) Shared or borrowed facilities						18) Salaries of principals	18) Education of parents	18) 165 different architectural designs and decorations

Chapter 8: The field trip: from the agenda to the methodology

Introduction

In a nutshell the idea was to learn about policies, processes and practices of secondary school education in 16 high performing countries (PISA-like schools) plus Mexico and Chile, through personal interviews and school visits. There were many problems with the actual selection of schools to be visited, as I will later describe. At the end, I had to settle for a judgmental sample. In any event, the first thing to do was to secure an agenda of visits to schools and experts.

The Agenda

The selection of countries and the gathering of data

This is a report of a study of perceptions of principals, teachers, academic experts, government experts and international experts and school visits in order to learn about policies, processes and practices of high performing secondary schools in 16 countries (including England and Scotland) plus Mexico and Chile. Perceptions were gathered with personal interviews and observations were made based on school visits.

A high performing country, from the education point of view, might be defined in many ways. In order to constrain, for operational purposes, the definition of high performing country I decided to use comparable students' results from international standardized assessments. Of all the available assessments I selected PISA 2000-2002 and PISA 2003 for reasons above stated.

High performing country is a country or region or system that performs at or above the average or mean score value in either one of the two assessments (PISA 2000 and PISA 2003) once the equivalent areas of assessment (reading, math and science) from the two rounds (PISA 2000 and PISA 2003) have been taken into consideration. Table 1 (Annex 1) shows the list of participating countries and the results from the assessed areas in PISA 2000-2002 and PISA 2003. The countries are ranked in a descending order as per the results of PISA 2000-2002.

The final selected countries were chosen, from that list (grey shadows in Table 1, Annex 1), based on the willingness and ability to participate from the schools' point of view in the perception's survey and proposed visit.

Most of the contacted countries accepted my incursion, not without pain (a different story that I shall relate in an alternative report), however. At the end, the following are the high performing selected countries for my research: Japan, Hong Kong-China, Korea (South Korea), Singapore, Finland, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, United Kingdom (England and Scotland only), Ireland, Sweden, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Czech Republic and United States. Chile and Mexico were also included but they are treated as non-high performing countries. All of the high performing countries lie above the mean value of 1419 for PISA 2000-2002. For PISA 2003, with results published by the OECD once the

field survey had started; also lie above the mean value, 1454[1]. However, the U.S. mean-score for 2003, 1,469, may be not significantly different from the OECD's mean-score value. In any case, the U.S., from the sample of 16 countries, is the one closest to the mean value. From the ranking point of view the U.S. fell from position 18 (among 41 countries) in PISA 2000-2002 to the position 24 (among 40 countries) in PISA 2003. This means that the U.S. is the lowest performing country among this list of high performing countries.

Nevertheless, the U.S. was included in the sample for four main reasons: 1) it is at or above the mean value in the two PISA assessments; 2) the U.S. has been a country of choice for travelers. There are reports of traveling expeditions to the U.S. in search of school education policies and practices since the second half of the nineteenth century (Thut and Adams 1964, 3); 3) the U.S. is the country with the longest story of assessments (Postlethwaite 2004, 24), 4) the U.S. is a country of the utmost importance to Mexico, not only in terms of investment and trade where the U.S.-Mexican relationship is large albeit asymmetric, but also in terms of sheer human interaction and border crossings, one of the largest if not the largest in the world between a developed country and a developing one.

Unit of Analysis Quest

One of the first lessons that I learnt during the design but mainly in the midst of the implementation of my research field work was the unit of analysis factor. The questions of my survey and interviews could not be addressed properly by looking only at the aggregate national or federal or country-wide unit of analysis. I had to frame and reframe the questions and the answers at the regional or district level of analysis to make sense. Therefore, for many of the questions the state, provincial, local or district perspective was more appropriate than the federal or nation-state one. As a consequence, for many of my questions or variables this brings my number of observed education systems to 28 with the following systems (listed in a chronological way as visits and interviews took place: Finland, Sweden, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, Flanders, Valonia (two observations only), Czech Republic, Switzerland (17 observations from German cantons and four observations from French cantons), Singapore (not a PISA country, only five academic expert observations), New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory, New Zealand (Wellington), Hong Kong, South Korea (Seoul), Japan (Tokyo), Boston, New York City, Quebec City, Montreal, Alberta (Edmonton), British Columbia (Vancouver, three observations only), Mexico (Mexico city—DF, the of State of Mexico, and Aguascalientes), and Chile (Santiago de Chile). Of the above countries, states or regions, I will treat the Mexican one as a single unit except otherwise noted.

As seen before, Mexico has a fairly centralized education system; therefore, the three observed entities will be merged into a single unit called Mexico. The same will be done for Belgium. Even though the same amount of effort and intermediary calls and letters from the Mexican Embassy at Brussels and from me in Mexico City were done before the

[1] The mean value for PISA 2003 was calculated from the aggregated means for each country of three (reading, math and science) assessments only. The fourth area of assessment (problem solving) was not included to facilitate comparison between the two PISA rounds. PISA 2000-2002 did not assess students on problem solving.

national authorities of Flanders and Valonia, I was not able to get a list of schools to visit from the latter. I was able to interview only one school and only one expert. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation of data will be done only for Flanders, unless otherwise noted. The Great Britain case (referred as U.K[2]. in OECD's publications) was another difficult unit to aggregate. Even though the OECD only publishes aggregated data[3] on the U.K. the two entities, or countries included in my research, England and Scotland, were treated as different regions or countries, again, unless otherwise noted.

Perhaps the three most difficult countries to disaggregate in a meaningful way, for the unit of analysis perspective, were Canada, the U.S. and Switzerland. I chose the visited districts in all of them based on judgment and availability.

An effort was made for the rest of the countries to visit schools in the capital cities or nearby surrounding cities or areas and the same criteria was done in the beginning for the Canada, the U.S. and Switzerland. For instance, even after several personal attempts before the federal authorities in Washington D.C. there was not response at the end. I, therefore, decided to visit New York City and Boston districts where a professional response was received.

Out of my U.S. sample, or the rest of the regions or systems of the world samples for this matter, I can not infer or generalize for the rest of each country or the world. Furthermore, since the sample of schools and experts was done on a judgmental basis nothing can be inferred for any country or for the world either. I will delve into this methodological limitation later on in the methodological sections. However, on second thoughts, given the scope of my research, going to a small number of schools in search of commonalities, and case analysis-based research, I do not think a statistical sample is needed for the kind of questions (purpose) and answers I was looking through my field trip research project.

The fragmentalization of my sample reduced the size of the number of observations by the fragmentalized units of analysis from each country, but in all cases at the outset the following was assured: At least one person from each of the following clusters was to be personally interviewed: principals, teachers, government experts or policy-makers and academic experts. At the end the total number of number of observations or people interviewed or surveyed accounted to 565. The total number of observations, without low performing countries (Chile and Mexico) accounted for 473. Singapore (five observations only), a non-PISA country, was included for some of the questions since Singapore is the highest performing country in TIMSS[4]. A detailed account of schools visited and people surveyed can be found in Tables 2, 3 and 4 of Annex 1.

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[2] Since the four countries of the United Kingdom of Great Britain: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Island, were included in PISA studies.

[3] In Annex A and B of PISA results (OECD 2004, 305-471) some data is shown for regions or countries within national entities such as Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and Flemish and French Communities in Belgium for example.

[4] In TIMSS 2003 (Mullis *et al* 2004, 34-35) Singapore ranked first above all sampled countries assessed for 4th and 8th grades.

At the end as can be seen from the Tables 1 and 2 of Annex 1 many more than one observation per cluster were finally secured. Five schools at the minimum were also selected from each country or region (except for Singapore, which as I said is not a PISA country, Valonia, French cantons in Switzerland, Australian Capital Territory (ACT), Quebec, Montreal and British Columbia, although ACT, Quebec and Montreal once they are integrated into their country levels, add up to five in each case. Mexico is considered as one unit of analysis even though schools visited are located in three different entities. This is justified since the centralization (federal) of the education system in Mexico is very high as was seen mainly in chapters three and four.

Random Sample: Hurdles and Limitations

Schools and experts to be interviewed were not selected under a random-based method since it was impossible to do research based on this way. It was not possible since resources were very limited. Furthermore, it was not possible since the project design required a single researcher to secure homogeneity in the construction of data-sets and the analysis of data and perceptions. In addition, without the support of an international organization such as the OECD, UNESCO or World Bank with access to governmental authorities that could have facilitated lists of schools and access to schools, random studies of the sort of this one are impossible. But even in the latter case, access of homogenous lists of "high performing schools" is not possible. In some countries is illegal to produce league tables of national or international exams; in others, it is politically incorrect even to request them.

In best practice analysis based on perceptions of non-randomized surveys there are always limitations to the scope and strength of conclusions and recommendations. Any conclusions have to be limited, strictly speaking, to the group of surveyed people and surveyed schools. Under this basis, inferences about school districts can not be made either. Having said that, since special care was taken about the selection of schools and only one researcher conducted all the interviews and visits of schools, (as detailed in the methodology sectiom, I am very confident of the appropriateness of the answers as a reflection of reality in the school districts and educations jurisdictions visited.

Therefore, if chosen countries, districts or jurisdictions fall within the assumption of "high performing countries" it will not be too adventurous to say that they reflect the policies and trends or the lack of them in countries with high student performance levels. This is an important assumption that I need to clarify even more before making more statements.

The actual conduction of interviews and observations

Some difficulties

The first problem to face was of a definitional nature. The second problem to overcome was a rejection among most interviewed people about classifying countries in a league-table fashion. League tables, I was told, by many interviewees missed a lot of information about what is going on inside the education systems and what is going on inside the schools. Therefore, to talk about the best practice in education and school policies and practices is rather imprecise and misleading. So after a few weeks of interviews and

surveys, I decided to change the title of my project from "Best practices in policies and practices of highest performing countries" to "good education policies and practices in highest performing countries". But this change was not enough. After few more weeks of conducting dozens of interviews, I decided to re-entitle, again, my project to "good education policies and practices in high performing countries". With this humbler and less league-table driven title I was more in line with the values and thoughts of dozens if not hundreds of my interviewees.

Once some changes in the title of my project and proposal and some deleting or rewriting of questions were done, the interviews and surveys ran smoother.

Therefore, the first lesson in school education and school policies and practices research is that there are no "best" practices and there are no "highest" performing countries. As I stated before, international studies such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS can very well tell us, even in a ranking order, the distance between high performers and low performers. What they can not tell, as I have pointed out, is the following: 1) **comparability** of assessed students (there may be 15 years old students, but that does not mean that these students were subject to similar experiences from the input and process point of view); 2) **causality** between inputs and outputs, or between policies and processes and outputs at least not in a consistent way across systems; 3) **predictability** of inputs and processes to outcomes and results, and 4) transferability of policies, processes and practices meaning the same thing from one system to the next.

Different epistemic groups or communities will argue for and against the "missing link" (for comparability, causality, predictability and transferability) with an array of fundamental questions or quests, such as, context, history, institutions, situations, translations, transfers, implementation, sense-making, adaptation, resources-ideas-institutions political and power interactions in groups or association, as sketched in chapter one.

A second problem I encountered during my visits and interviews, perhaps more vividly that I had envisioned was on definitions of some concepts and expressions. Specifically, I encountered that many of my questions were culturally driven by my own background and the background of education systems more amicable to me, i.e., Mexico's and U.S.'s. To begin with I faced difficulties in explaining the concepts or definitions of centralization, devolution of power, governance and autonomy. These are concepts that have significant latitude for interpretation as have be seen in chapters three, four and five mainly. The outlined cases of Mexico, New Zealand and the U.S. support the argument that different concepts may mean different things, have different stories (Singapore too) and therefore, different regulations and perceptions in different systems. This was a problem when conducting the interviews or collecting answers from the questionnaires. Many of my interviewees were uncomfortable with the word decentralization or the word centralization. The meaning of those words is culturally-driven and context-driven; I learnt this after few interviews. After the numerical reduction of 565 surveys (See Annexes 2 and 3) the lesson was confirmed. It was in a long road of learning and reassuring, for a simple answer.

The decentralization question and answers: culture and context matter.

The respondents-to-be were given the following question about centralization of education system and policy: How centralized is education policy in your country? Here is the first problem in interpretation: For very centralized, monolithic systems the answer is very straight forward, but for decentralized systems like those in the U.S. Canada and Switzerland or even the U.K., and Belgium, the answer is less clear and very complicated.

Participants were asked the question from the perspective of the overall system, from the national or federal point of view. But they were also given the opportunity to elaborate especially when the system is fragmentalized. Some of the respondents were as far as giving two answers one for the country-wide perspective and one for the fragmentalized unit; say Boston vis-à-vis the U.S, or England vis-à-vis the U.K. And still others just made comments from the interviews or in writing in the questionnaires. From those elaborations the author gave a mark response in those cases that no specific written response was given by the interviewees or surveyed people. In most cases, but not in all, the answer for the system-wide perspective, like in the Canada or Switzerland case, was very straight forward, i.e., more decentralized at the federal level than at the state, province, local or district level. And the answer was invariably one or two points above the mark for the fragmentalized unit. Therefore, I decided to generalize the answer to the rest of the observations with a two point mark-up to recognize for the difference of centralization of decisions making when talking from the perspective of a country vis-à-vis its circumscriptions or regions. This was done for cases where people did not specifically answered with two answers, one for the national and one for the local or district.

In all cases even in countries with a very small national or federal intromission in education policy such as the Australia, U.S., Canada and Switzerland, special care was taken in construing the respondents' answers. Extreme cases like Switzerland or Canada without a single organization at the federal or regional level countries have managed to collaborate by ways of inter-cantonal or inter-provincial committees or commissions aimed at designing and formulating commonly agreed upon policies. The U.S., a decentralized system with a federal education authority (U.S. Department of Education) is even more difficult to map. Some of the respondents complained about recent federal intromission in the constitutional rights of education policies to states. Some of the interviewed people see the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) as an attempt, on behalf of the federal government, to centralize education policy by means of monetary incentives. The Department of Education, i.e., the federal government, under the authority given by the NCLBA is doing within the American Union what international organizations are doing in developing and emerging economies, trying to promote an agenda of values and "best practices" based on incentives (loans, assistance money or federal money.)

The Language of Teachers and Principals

The third difficulty: the language of teachers, principals and experts is not the same not only across systems and cultures but within the same system and culture. Teachers and principals are too focused on the processes and intricacies of teaching and learning, sometimes with absolute disregard of concepts such as "vouchers", free choice, devolution of decision power, decentralization of decision making authorities, etc. It was very difficult

for me to interview some of the teachers or principals based on the same questions. For many, the meaning of these words and concepts were totally alien and irrelevant to their daily work. Experts from governments and academia were more amicably to these concepts and yet more hesitant to give a definite answer. This is why answers in the issued of decentralization clustered around "4" which is the neutral answer, right in the middle from too much centralization and too much decentralization. The whole idea, concept or word "decentralization" is too broad to define anything in any unambiguous way. There is a lot "lost in translation" or "lost in implementation" effect. The idea or concept of decentralization has to be chaperoned, always, by a "story".

Teachers and principals from all over my sampled-world were more worried about their own processes and views, within their own school, than with issues of "best" or "good" practices and policies. In most schools, when asked about PISA ("Have you heard of PISA?") most of the principals and teachers, did not acknowledge its existence, except for countries like Finland or New Zealand, where all people new about PISA. A couple of teachers even told me "Oh yes, the Tower of Pisa in Italy". So, when explaining the importance of policy and practice at the system level, difficulties arouse about the broad meaning of this aggregated decentralization concept.

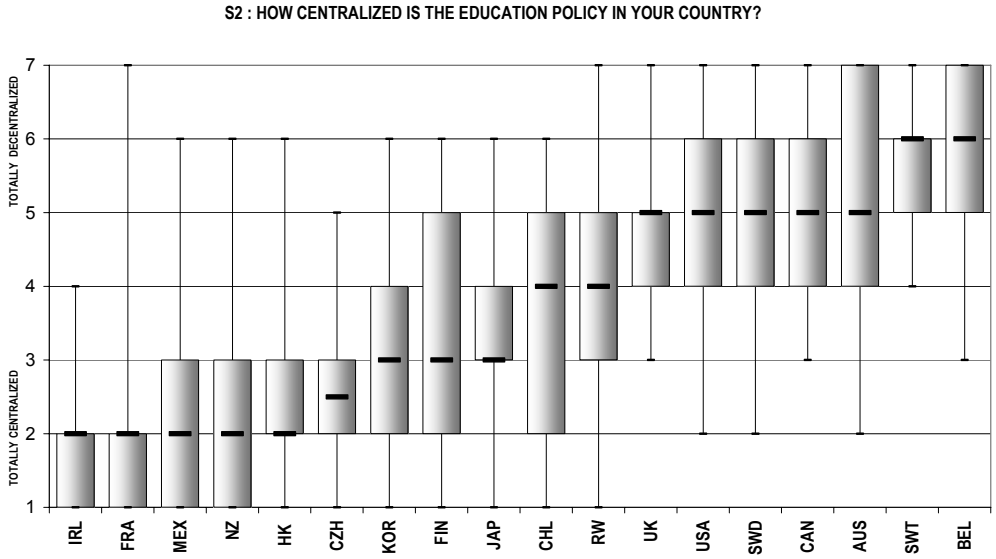
Reducing qualitative answers into numbers: unit of analysis problem revisited

At the end, I saw my task as a "conceptual translator" trying to convey the same idea to all, assuring that they understood the idea or concept behind all questions and assuring that I understood the real meaning of their answers. I tried to collect this information by ranking the answers of all the people from 1 to 7. Say, for the case of the centralization-decentralization continuum, (1), in my survey, meant a very centralized system in almost all aspects; (7), a much decentralized system in policies and practices, with no single central authority controlling the system or the policies of the observed entities. A (1), (2) or (3) answer will reflect the perception of a centralized system, no devolution of power, controlled one way or another: (1) being very centralized and a (3) a loosely centralized system. A (5), (6), or (7) answer would mean a perception of a decentralized system with some (5) devolution of power or (7) a lot devolution of power to districts, school boards or school authorities. Number (4), is the perfect undecided, ambiguous, answer, either given directly by the respondents or marked by me during the interview when, even after some dialogue, my interviewee and myself were not able to answer in any way the perceived reality of the situation, i.e., more centralized less centralized.

With all this in mind the following graph is an example of the responses arranged by ascending median value (first quartile, third quartile and mean values as subsequent ordering criteria).

Graph 1. Spectrum of Decentralization of Decision Making in High Performing Countries

Graph 1. (De)Centralization by Country



As can be seen from the Graph 1, there is not a clear pattern about decentralization or devolution of decision making, even though, the decentralization/autonomy of schools duo was the "policy" of choice by international organizations such as the World Bank, and was considered by many as the right thing to do in school education policy management during the 1980s and 1990s as it documented throughout this report.

Graph 1 shows that there is a lot of variation from the country with the most centralized system, Ireland, the observation most to the left, and the system most decentralized, Belgium, the observation most to the right of the centralization-decentralization spectrum. The median value for all high performing countries (RW—all but Mexico and Chile) is 4.

This apparent convergence to "4" does not mean that we have a pattern or similarity, on the contrary. What "4" means in this analysis is that education systems and policies, as perceived by many knowledgeable people, are seen by their own systems and policies as comprising or showing elements or features of both centralization and decentralization of decision-making.

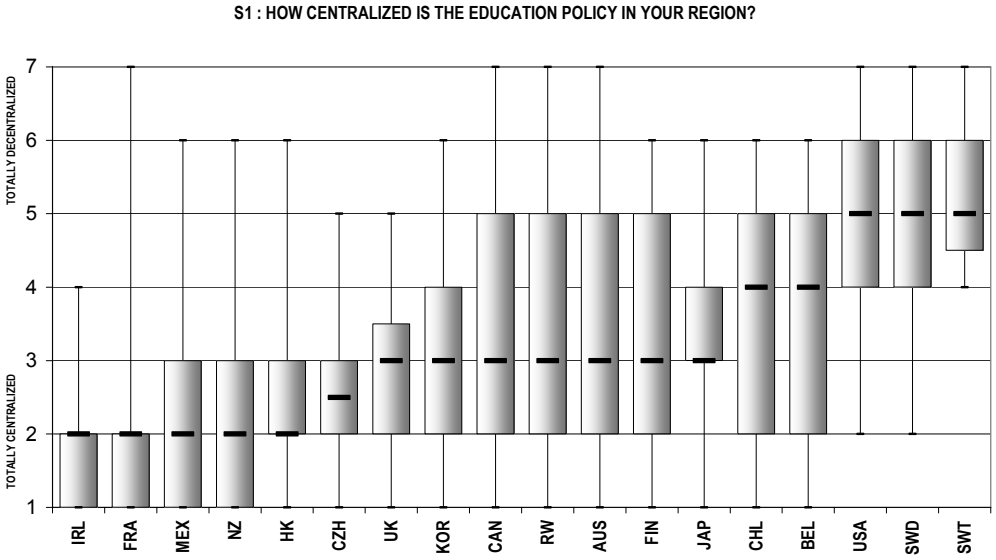
There is no a clearly identifiable single tendency. Policies and systems world-wide, at least from the perceptions of 452 persons for this variable (Annex 2, Table 1a columns S2) in my sample of knowledgeable people from high performing systems, look differently. This data seems to convey that there is no convergence among high performing countries around the issue of centralization or decentralization of school education systems and policies. School education apparatuses from around the world seem to have their own *ad hoc* arrangements in the management of education policies and systems. One may venture a conclusion by saying that countries to the left of the RW observation are more centralized and countries to

the right are more decentralized. But even such a generalization might encounter difficulties since the RW observation sits at a value "4" which is not really significantly different from any of the observations in our sample, given the spread of answers in each country or system, to the spread of answers in the RW cluster.

One might start by questioning this line of analysis and argue that the national or country-wide level or unit of analysis of the decentralization factor is not appropriate since there are many systems with very centralized policies in relation to schools but very decentralized from the geo-political (territorial) fragmentation of the country. This is the case for instance of education realities in the U.S., Canada, Belgium, Great Britain and Switzerland. There are two ways, within the limits of my research, that I tried to overcome this plausible observation against by comparing say the U.S., to France with such a macro-level question: one way was by asking the interviewees to make a judgment about the degree of centralization-decentralization of their system, country-wise or country-wide and compare it to the degree of centralization-decentralization of their system, region-wise or region-wide (in this case the interviewees should take their own region, locality or state, as the basis for comparison and evaluation). The second way; was by looking at the question of school autonomy rather than the centralization-decentralization of decision making. Decentralization and autonomy as policies and practices might come together in some countries, but they may diverge in others, as the data from the survey shows or the case specific analysis (see chapter three) of Mexico, New Zealand and U.S. cases revealed.

Let us look then at the region level of analysis to report on my first approach to solve the questions of the proper level of analysis. This is shown in Graph 2.

Graph 2. (De)Centralization by Region



By comparing the two graphs the first obvious difference is the median value for the RW observation. Graph number 2 shows a median value of 3 rather than four. In Graph 2 the level of analysis is region or district-specific rather than the country-wide analysis of Graph 1. The number of respondents for this variable S1 shown in Graph 2 is 451 without Mexico and Chile and 542 with Mexico and Chile (Annex 2, Table 1a, Column S1). This is probably a more accurate way of comparing education systems by looking at the level of the authority that calls the shots in the relationship between the policy makers and the school.

After two decades of decentralization talking and decentralization pushing, and at least from the perception's and observation's points of view, the education systems at the district or regional level of inquiry seem to look more centralized than decentralized. Centralized national systems, those that are not fragmentalized (for example Finland, Korea and Japan), do have the same answer since they are not really divided into regions like the fragmentalized systems (for example, UK, US, Canada and Switzerland).

This is why we observe most of the countries to the left of the RW value with the same level of centralization and answers. Even more, there is no need to divide the analysis for those countries or observations with centralized national systems of education since they will show the same results. The analysis was done, any way, for all of the countries or regions, to account for and compare the systems that are truly fragmentalized or federalized so to speak, i.e., those to the right of the RW observation. The two graphs look alike with only a small shift downwards beginning with countries to the right of the RW observation. This means that interviewees, once controlled by the level of observation or analysis (region rather than country) downgraded their answers to show a system with more centralization of decision making rather than less. There has been no real devolution of decision-making to schools and if it there has systems might have been recentralizing as we speak, as seems to be happening with Finland and the U.S. for example.

Methodology

Interviews and visits

The gathering of information was based on perceptions' surveys or questionnaires and interviews. Some of the interviews, those applied to principals and experts were in-depth interviews in most cases. Perceptions' information was collected in several different topics related to education and school policies and practices. Information was collected from school principals, school teachers and academic and government experts among high performing countries.

As visits and interviews were carried out it became clear that the gathering and analysis of information had to be done not only at the country level but the regional one, therefore since in some countries the analysis of education and school policies is better done at the regional or local level given the decentralized nature of the system as a whole.

Therefore, the analysis of data has been done for two sets, one national or country-wide and one regional. Each Graph from Annex 2 or Annex 3 correspond to a specific variable i.e. S1 or S3a or S3b etc. For each variable the participating countries or regions are then listed in an ascending fashion from a 1 to 7 answer range. The number of observations (i.e. number of answered questionnaires in each country or region are summarized in Tables 2, 3 and 4 in Annex 1). The number of observations per country or region per variable, although near in many variables, is not the same since there are some questions (questions that are turned into variables) that were not always answered by all people in all cases. So in other to portray the story as it really happened I have manufactured a long array of tables and graphs that can be consulted in Annexes 2 and 3.

The data was gathered by personal interviews and surveys conducted in all regions and schools by one researcher only. This approach was based on seven factors:

1) Interviews, many of them, in depth interviews, to principals of 165 schools (See Table 2 Annex 1) in the countries and regions listed in Tables 2, 3 and 4 Annex 1). School and experts interviews in Chile and Mexico are not counted within the high performing countries. Therefore, without Chile and Mexico 137 schools (Tables 2, 3 and 4 Annex 1) from "high performing countries" were visited. Although an effort was made to visit high performing schools in Chile and Mexico too they were not counted for the median or mean values of high performing PISA countries represented by the observation RW (rest of the world).

Most of the interviews in schools were done with principals. When principals were not available, the interviews were conducted with deputy or assistant principals, although these cases were exceptional. These in-depth interviews were complemented with questionnaires to teachers, often conducted with a short interview. Some questionnaires by teachers were conducted without an interview for two reasons: a) teachers were not

available[5] during the visit to the school or b) principals asked me to leave or send the questionnaires without an interview. In all cases, principals were asked to convey to teachers the meanings of questions and answers in case of doubts. In all cases, teachers were asked to reply to me when if doubt. Less than five teachers in all replied to me by e-mail with doubts. I did not kept record of which teachers were interviewed and which were not, my mistake. I did not do it because in the beginning all the teachers were present and only in sporadic cases in each country or region I was not able to interview teachers. My memory of interviews and missing interviews tells me that no more than 20% of teachers, at most were not interviewed.

2) In all countries in-depth interviews with similar questionnaires were also carried out with experts in education policies, both governmental and academic. Some academic experts were not available during my visit and therefore sometimes the interview was conducted by phone or the questionnaire was replied by email. In all cases, no more than three to five experts, were not interviewed personally. The goal was to interview at least one expert (either governmental or academic) from each country. At the end in most cases more than two experts per country were interviewed. In total 59 academic experts and 56 government experts were interviewed in all countries (see Table 3 in Annex 1).

3) A third group of experts labeled "international experts" (INTEXP) was chosen to answer similar questions but framed in a rather "global" or ideal model of education policy. So, instead of asking INEXP "how autonomous are public or private schools, like your school, in your country when making decisions?" the question would be framed by the following statement: "Autonomy in schools is key to education quality (such as performance in international [national] evaluations [assessments]" (See Annex 7).

The idea was to create a "bench mark" of experts' perceptions most of them related to the work of PISA to facilitate analysis of comparisons among countries or regions. Six of the 15 interviewed experts are, or were at the moment of the interviews, PISA-related OECD's experts' staff; two were from UNESCO experts in education; four of them were related to PISA either as country contacts or national contact managers or as technical members or consultant from international agencies working for PISA; two more experts from the European Union in areas of education and school policies and one university professor who has taking part of international studies of different sorts in secondary education.

4) Although the main tool of data gathering was the interview I decided and therefore designed a questionnaire to help me to reduce or condensed the data for further analysis and interpretation. It also helped me to conduct all the interviews and all the visits under a consistent, homogenous and stable pattern and sequence of questions and answers. The same questionnaire was applied to all different nations or regions. The survey or

[5] In one profit-oriented private school I got the following answer from the principal when I inquire about the possibility of meeting two of the teachers from the same school: "I would not like my teachers to meet you since they have very limited time; and if that have some time left, I rather have them to meet with me than with you".

questionnaire was composed of a core section equal to all surveys to all interviewees. Variations of the questionnaire were made for the different clusters of interviewees, i.e., principals, teachers, government experts, academia experts and international experts. As per the request of some interviewees-to-be the questionnaires were translated into five different languages: Spanish, English, French, Korean and Japanese. For translations into French, Korean and Japanese translations were made with a back-and-forth interaction between the translators and me, in search of meaning of words and significance. Nevertheless, during the interviews when in doubt, questions and doubts were clarified all the time by my presence in interviews. In France, Korea, and Japan the interviews were done by the researcher with the help of a translator or student (fluent in English and Spanish and the language of concern). As it turned down in France, even though the authorities requested for a translation and an interpreter, all principals and most teachers were able to handle the interviews, or most of the interviews, in English or Spanish.

Most of the questions in the questionnaire were closed-ended questions with a 1 to 7 ordinal scale where 2 is preferred to 1, 3 preferred to 2 and so on. The following is an example of the 1 to 7 type of questions:

How autonomous are public schools in your country at the lower secondary level (or upper secondary level) when making decisions?

a. Overall

Zero autonomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total autonomy

b. School curriculum

Zero autonomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total autonomy

Parenthesis in the question means that interviewees were asked to answer each question from the perspective of their own school, lower secondary or upper secondary.

At the end some original questions were rejected for analysis either because they were dropped by the researcher after some rounds of interviews (because questions were inconsistent or the questionnaires were deemed as too long by the interviewees) or because the answers were incomplete.

Some of the questions were given a “multiple choice” answer. The following is an example of a multiple choice question:

How is the class selection (students in class[or grouping]) decided in your school?

School	
a.	At random
b.	By GPA
c.	By gender balance
d.	By cultural diversity
e.	By alphabetic order
f.	By IQ
g.	By behavioral attitude
h.	By parents' request
i.	Other

A confidential profile section was included in the questionnaire to allow for identification by the researcher of the school visited and interviewees interviewed from schools and experts ranks. A list of the final questions (to principals, the longest questionnaire) that were finally considered for this report is included in Annex 8.

5) School interviews were complemented with a short visit to all the premises of schools and when possible a short observation to mathematics and English classes, mainly. All in all the visits to school lasted, on average, three hours. The protocol of the visit was composed by the following steps: a) arrival most of the time in early and mid-mornings; b) interview with the principal (from 45 minutes to 1 and ½ hours long depending on the time allotted by principals to the interview); c) interview to teachers separately or together depending on the time available to teachers (interviews lasted from 20 minutes to 45 minutes); 4) visit to the premises of the school, with as many stops as possible (principals' offices; administrative offices; teachers' social lounge; teachers' work or office lounge; students' lounge (many schools have students' lounge from very large and agora type to very small, small-room type); typical classroom; math and sciences classrooms; science laboratories; workshops (usually for metals and wood); computer and information technology rooms; painting and sculpture classrooms; home-economic classrooms; design and textile laboratories; music class-room and studios; sports facilities; facilities for social events and from time to time special areas unique to some schools such as: school museum, chapel, meditation and praying rooms, students' and staff's nursery, parents' lounge, special secluded gardens and special education sections and facilities. Many times I was invited to stay for lunch either at shared facilities by students and teachers, or in special dining facilities for teachers and staff only. In most cases I was allowed to take photographs although in many schools I was asked to avoid students' faces.

6) All interviews and visits to schools were done by the same researcher. This allowed for homogeneity not only in conducting the perception's survey and interviews but also for reducing the error from different interpretations to answers from surveyed people. This is especially important when conducting studies based on perceptions.

7) The sample of schools was based on a judgmental basis rather than on a random criterion. The judgment criterion was done by the implementing researcher with the help

of an "informed" party in each of the visited countries or regions. It was impossible to do it otherwise. There are not lists of high performing schools, available in all countries. In some countries, for instance, that information is not available to the public, and when available the information is rather not comparable or not to be trusted, since in many cases the information is not official. Therefore, the only way to get a list of high performing schools was through an informed party, usually a professor or a public official working in an agency related to education policy. Sometimes the access to best available information by a better informed party was done with the intermediation of the Mexican Embassy, when willing and available, but in most cases the access to the better informed person, was usually done by me directly. Therefore, I am very confident that the chosen schools are indeed among high performing schools (either from the point of view of schools with students obtaining high marks in international or national standardized exams, or schools with high and consistent value added, or schools holding high reputation by the better informed party or parties) in each country or region.

Access to schools and experts

The next hurdle to overcome was getting access to schools. Not all schools were available or not all schools were open to the research. However, most of the "sampled" ones (chosen by the "better informed party and/or me") were sympathetic to the project and opened their doors kindly and eagerly. This is why was not possible to get a similar number of schools in each country or region. It was not possible either to get similar or symmetrical distributions of schools by size, ownership or management (i.e., public, private subsidized and private independent). But even with all the resources and all the support available it would not have been possible to make sizeable enough homogeneous samples of different kinds of schools (one of the reasons for this is the logic behind the decagon polygon sketched in Box 2 of Chapter eight).

The schools to be visited and schedules of visits were arranged by the best-informed-party for the following countries or regions: Finland, England, Scotland, Flanders, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Australia, Korea, and Chile. For the rest the schools and the schedules were arranged directly by the researcher some times with the help of the Mexican Embassy (Valonia, New Zealand, Japan and Canada). In all cases and once the schools were selected the contact with the school principal was done directly by the researcher to finalize the protocol of the visit.

In most cases, the questionnaires were sent in advance (one or two weeks before the actual visit) so interviewees could see the survey before the interview. In many cases the surveys was requested in advance to secure access to the schools. In all cases the survey was advances in order to save time for principals and teachers during the interview and visit to schools. Experts were sent the questionnaires in advance in most cases. Very few people (only two schools and three researchers as I recall) rejected the interview after reviewing the questionnaires.

Non-random sample

Non random-based studies of international policies and practices, at different level of analysis have been conducted before. There are groups of people trying to find other types of patterns, convergences or "universals" with similar methodologies i.e. non-random samples, based on structured visits, observations and interviews across different countries, but at the level of analysis of the classroom or the classroom in the domain of specific subjects, i.e. mathematics. In this line of research we find the work of two projects: 1) Validation of an International System for Teacher Observation and Feedback (ISTOF, preceded by ISERP)[6] and the International Center for Classroom Research (ICCR)[7]. Their work is conducted by teams of experts from different countries who rely on *in situ* observations, interviews, videos, and analysis of school policies and practices and class room practices as they relate to teaching and learning. Therefore, they are similar to my project in the non-random methods of selecting schools and in the search of patterns, but they are different in the level of analysis and methodology of collecting data (many researchers vis-à-vis one researcher in my project). The two studies are carried out too with the comparative perspective.

Management, reduction of data and graphs

Since interviews were not videotaped or recorded, the answered questionnaires and the researcher's notes are the only written sources of data. The questionnaires were very detailed to closed "1 to 7" answers to avoid large sections with open answers. This was primarily done in order to save time for interviewees. However, the "1 to 7" answers of most questions was chosen as a means to reduce qualitative perception answers into a reduced ordinal arrangement of preferences. In this way content analysis was no needed because, with this method, the content analysis was done as close as possible to the source of the information, i.e. the interviewee and the questionnaire.

All questionnaires were answered directly by interviewees or by the researcher in front of them. At the end of the day the questionnaires were then transferred into data-sets in a spreadsheet format. The spreadsheet was then arranged in order to facilitate the manipulation by specialized statistics software package. Exploratory analysis of the date was done for the first quartile, median, third quartile, maximum, minimum, mode, mean and standard deviation values for each question.

Graphs as seen in Annexes 2 and 3 were drawn with the help of a spreadsheet-type of software. Graphs were arranged so that a pattern-like or step-like shape was obtained. In order to arrange the Graphs in the step-like pattern, each observation was ordered by the following criteria in ascending order: 1) median value, 2) minimum value, 3) first quartile, 4) third quartile and 5) mean value.

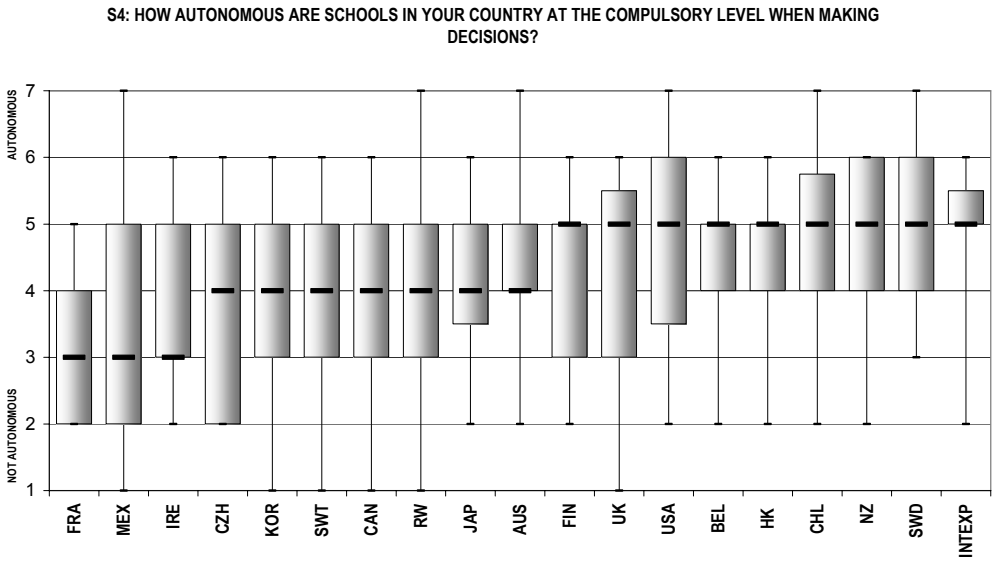
[6] Information about ISTOF may be found at http://www.icsei.net/. However ISTOF is an organized effort by many people in 20 countries or regions. A leading person in ISTOF is Professor David Reynolds, School of Education, University of Plymouth, U.K. ISERP: The International School Effectiveness Research Project.
[7] Information about ICCR may be found at http://www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/ict/iccr/ and http://extranet.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/DSME/lps/

Interpretation of the graph and interviews: How to read the graphs?

Graphs are read from left to right in ascending order. The vertical axes shows the ascending order of answers from all interviewees to the "1 to 7" format questions. The horizontal axes shows the countries or regions of the world in an ascending order as per the criteria mentioned in the previous paragraph.

The observation RW (Rest of the World) is the variable observation for country values given by respondents of all high performing countries as if they answered from the perspective of their own country, but not region or locality. Mexico and Chile, non-high performing countries, are not included in this RW observation. In this case I avoided any biases by including them in the RW mean-score value.

For example, next Graph from Annex 2, Graph S4, shows a median value of (4) for the observation RW. This is actually a neutral value. It means that countries are not following a recipe for autonomy of schools (refer to chapter four for a more detailed explanation). Each bar in the Graph depicts an observation for a given country or region say IRE for Ireland or MEX for Mexico or CHL for Chile.



One of the ways of construing the variations of answers in each country, region or observation, depicted by the grey bars in each graph and the maximum-minimum value depicted by thin lines in each observation, is by looking at either of two explanations: 1) that school systems and policies are in a state of flux so interviewees refer to different perception values because the rules and/or structure and organization of each system are changing; or 2) that there are difficulties in understanding concepts such as decentralization (or autonomy) with a single meaning for all people, even inside the same country, the same region, or the same school. In any way, as seen in the Graph, all answer show a pattern.

The median answer from international experts (INEXP), given here as a benchmark, means, in this case, that more autonomy is better than less, but INTEXP certainly do not want to see a system totally autonomous, since the median answer (5) is not far away from the median answer (4) for the RW. Therefore, it is hard to conclude by using this type of "internal" or "inside-out" (perceptions' analysis) any concrete one sided answer-. At the end we are only given some indications of the way people think about the structure and performance of their own school education systems. This is why, I have said, the analysis of systemic or school factors that seem to be related with high quality or high performance in school education have to be chaperoned, always, by a story: A story of conditions, history, situations, and political and group power interactions in each district and in each school.

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ANNEX 1

Table 1: Sampled Countries by PISA 2000/2002 and 2003 Results

Table 2: Total Visited Schools by Country, Region, Affiliation and Grade Level

Table 3: Total Number of Observations or Surveyed People By Country, Region and Affiliation

Table 4: Total Number of Observations or Surveyed People By Country, Region, Affiliation, Level, Principals and Teachers

TABLE 1
PISA 2000/2002 and 2003 Results
(Reading, Mathematics and Science)

Country	PISA Results				Country	PISA Results			
	2000/2002	Ranking	2003	Ranking		2000/2002	Ranking	2003	Ranking
Japan	1629	1	1580	5	**Country Mean**	**1419**			
Hong Kong-China	1626	2	1599	3	Russian Fed.	1400	26	1399	31
Korea	1624	3	1614	2	Portugal	1383	27	1412	30
Finland	1620	4	1635	1	Greece	1382	28	1398	32
Canada	1596	5	1579	6	Latvia	1381	29	1463	25
New Zealand	1594	6	1566	9	Luxembourg	1330	30	1455	27
Australia	1589	7	1574	8	Israel	1319	31	n.a.	
United Kingdom	1584	8	n.a.		Bulgaria	1308	32	n.a.	
Ireland	1543	9	1523	16	Thailand	1299	33	1266	36
Austria	1541	10	1488	19	Mexico	1231	34	1190	37
Sweden	1538	11	1529	14	Chile	1209	35	n.a.	
Belgium	1523	12	1545	12	Argentina	1202	36	n.a.	
France	1522	13	1548	11	Macedonia	1155	37	n.a.	
Switzerland	1519	14	1539	13	Indonesia	1131	38	1137	39
Iceland	1517	15	1502	17	Albania	1106	39	n.a.	
Norway	1504	16	1479	22	Brazil	1105	40	1149	38
Czech Republic	1501	17	1528	15	Peru	952	41	n.a.	
United States	1496	18	1469	24	Netherlands	n.a.		1575	7
Denmark	1492	19	1481	21	Macao-China	n.a.		1550	10
Liechtenstein	1473	20	1586	4	Slovak Rep.	n.a.		1462	26
Hungary	1464	21	1475	23	Turkey	n.a.		1298	33
Germany	1461	22	1496	18	Uruguay	n.a.		1294	34
Spain	1460	23	1453	28	Serbia	n.a.		1285	35
Poland	1432	24	1485	20	Tunisia	n.a.		1119	40
Italy	1422	25	1428	29	**Country Mean**			**1454**	

Source: PISA 2000-2002: OECD 2003 Literacy Skills for the World of Tomorrow- Further results from PISA 2002, Figs. 2.5, 3.2 and 3.5 pp.76,100 and 109.
PISA 2003: OCDE 2004 Informe PISA 2003 Aprender para el mundo del mañana, AULA XXI Santillana, Figs. 2.16b, 6.3 and 6.10, pp.92,285 and 298.
n.a. Not aplicable.

TABLE 2
Total Visited Schools by Country, Region, Affiliation and Grade Level

Country/REGION	Schools (affiliation)			Grade Level		
	Public	Private Dependent	Private	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary or High-School	Lower Secondary and High-School
Finland	**8**	**2**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**3**
Sweden	**8**	**1**	**0**	**7**	**1**	**1**
France	**6**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**
United Kingdom	**6**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**11**
ENGLAND	2	3	2	1	0	6
SCOTLAND	4	0	1	0	0	5
Ireland	**2**	**5**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**8**
Belgium	**3**	**5**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**6**
FLANDERS	2	5	0	0	2	5
WALONIA	1	0	0	0	0	1
Czech Republic	**8**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**2**
Switzerland	**8**	**0**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**2**
SWTZ GERMAN	7	0	0	5	0	2
SWTZ FRENCH	1	0	0	1	0	0
Singapore	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Australia	**6**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**7**
NSW	4	0	1	0	0	5
ACT	2	1	0	1	0	2
New Zealand	**6**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**10**
Hong Kong	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**4**
Korea	**7**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**8**	**0**
Japan	**6**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**6**	**3**
United States	**10**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**10**
BOSTON	5	0	1	0	0	6
NEW YORK	5	0	1	0	2	4
Canada	**16**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**6**	**9**
QUEBEC	3	0	0	0	0	3
MONTREAL	3	0	1	0	0	4
ALBERTA	9	0	0	2	6	1
BRITISH COLUMBIA	1	0	0	0	0	1
Mexico	**13**	**0**	**3**	**8**	**7**	**1**
D.F.	3	0	1	4	0	0
AGUASCALIENTES	8	0	2	4	5	1
ESTADO DE MEXICO	2	0	0	0	2	0
Chile	**6**	**4**	**2**	**12**	**0**	**0**
TOTAL	**120**	**26**	**19**	**56**	**32**	**77**

Public schools are managed and financed by governments; private dependent schools are financed by public funds but managed by private entities; private schools are managed and financed (50% or more) by private entities.

TABLE 3
Total Number of Observations or Surveyed People
By Country, Region and Affiliation

Country	Teachers		Principals		Experts			Total
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Academic	Government	International	Interviews
Finland	**15**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**-**	**33**
Sweden	**10**	**4**	**8**	**1**	**2**	**5**	**-**	**30**
France	**6**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**2**	**4**	**-**	**18**
United Kingdom	**10**	**12**	**5**	**6**	**3**	**4**	**-**	**40**
ENGLAND	2	9	1	5	1	2	-	20
SCOTLAND	8	3	4	1	2	2	-	20
Ireland	**2**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**-**	**20**
Belgium	**3**	**11**	**3**	**6**	**2**	**6**	**-**	**31**
FLANDERS	2	11	2	6	0	6	-	27
WALONIA	1	0	1	0	0	0	-	2
BELGIUM	0	0	0	0	2	0	-	2
Czech Republic	**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**-**	**18**
Switzerland	**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**2**	**3**	**-**	**21**
SWTZ GERMAN	9	0	6	0	0	2	-	17
SWTZ FRENCH	0	0	1	0	2	1	-	4
Singapore	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**5**	**0**	**-**	**5**
Australia	**9**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**4**	**6**	**-**	**31**
NSW	7	2	4	1	0	1	-	15
ACT	2	2	2	1	0	2	-	9
AUSTRALIA	0	0	0	0	4	3	-	7
New Zealand	**10**	**6**	**6**	**4**	**6**	**3**	**-**	**35**
Hong Kong	**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**6**	**2**	**-**	**18**
Korea	**11**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**-**	**23**
Japan	**15**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**-**	**29**
United States	**20**	**4**	**9**	**2**	**4**	**3**	**-**	**42**
BOSTON	9	2	5	1	2	2	-	21
NEW YORK	11	2	4	1	2	1	-	21
Canada	**29**	**2**	**18**	**1**	**8**	**6**	**-**	**64**
QUEBEC	6	0	5	0	2	2	-	15
MONTREAL	9	2	3	1	2	2	-	19
ALBERTA	14	0	9	0	2	2	-	27
BRITISH COLUMBIA	0	0	1	0	2	0	-	3
Mexico	**23**	**6**	**13**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**-**	**50**
D.F.	6	2	3	1	0	2	-	14
AGUASCALIENTES	15	4	8	2	1	2	-	32
STATE OF MEXICO	2	0	2	0	0	0	-	4
Chile	**11**	**12**	**6**	**6**	**4**	**3**	**-**	**42**
International Experts	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**15**	**15**
Total Surveys	**194**	**76**	**119**	**46**	**59**	**56**	**15**	**565**

TABLE 4
Total Number of Observations or Surveyed People
By Country, Region, Affiliation, Level, Principals and Teachers

	Teachers Public				Teachers Priv Dep				Teachers Private				Principals Public				Principals Priv Dep				Principals Private				Total Teachers				Total Principals				TOTAL ALL			
	Sec	Prep	Sec/Prep	Total	Sec	Prep	Sec/Prep	Total	Sec	Prep	Sec/Prep	Total	Sec	Prep	Sec/Prep	Total	Sec	Prep	Sec/Prep	Total	Sec	Prep	Sec/Prep	Total	Sec	Prep	Sec/Prep	Total	Sec	Prep	Sec/Prep	Total	Sec	Prep	Sec/Prep	Total
Finland	13	0	2	15	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	7	0	1	8	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	13	0	6	19	7	0	3	10	20	0	9	29
Sweden	7	1	2	10	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	6	1	1	8	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	11	1	2	14	7	1	1	9	18	2	3	23
France	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	6	6	0	0	6	12	0	0	12
United Kingdom	1	0	9	10	0	0	5	5	0	0	7	7	0	0	5	5	0	0	3	3	0	0	3	3	1	0	21	22	0	0	11	11	1	0	32	33
ENGLAND	1	0	1	2	0	0	5	5	0	0	4	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	3	0	0	2	2	1	0	10	11	0	0	6	6	1	0	16	17
SCOTLAND	0	0	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	11	11	0	0	5	5	0	0	16	16
Ireland	0	0	2	2	0	0	3	3	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	5	5	0	0	1	1	0	0	6	6	0	0	8	8	0	0	14	14
Belgium	0	0	3	3	0	4	7	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	2	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	4	10	14	0	2	7	9	0	6	17	23
FLANDERS	0	0	2	2	0	4	7	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	4	6	0	0	0	0	0	4	9	13	0	2	6	8	0	6	15	21
WALONIA	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	2
Czech Republic	7	0	2	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	2	9	5	0	2	7	12	0	4	16
Switzerland	5	0	4	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	4	9	5	0	2	7	10	0	6	16
SWTZ GERMAN	5	0	4	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	4	9	4	0	2	6	9	0	6	15
SWTZ FRENCH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1
Singapore	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Australia	0	0	9	9	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	5	6	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	13	13	1	0	7	8	1	0	20	21
NSW	0	0	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	9	9	0	0	5	5	0	0	14	14
ACT	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	1	0	2	3	1	0	6	7
New Zealand	0	0	10	10	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	4	0	0	6	6	0	0	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	16	16	0	0	10	10	0	0	26	26
Hong Kong	0	0	2	2	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	4	4	0	0	10	10
Korea	0	11	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	12	0	12	0	8	0	8	0	20	0	20
Japan	0	15	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	7	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	15	2	17	0	7	3	10	0	22	5	27
United States	0	4	16	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	2	7	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	4	20	24	0	2	9	11	0	6	29	35
BOSTON	0	0	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	11	11	0	0	6	6	0	0	17	17
NEW YORK	0	4	7	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	9	13	0	2	3	5	0	6	12	18
Canada	4	8	17	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	6	10	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	8	19	31	2	6	11	19	6	14	30	50
QUEBEC	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	5	5	0	0	11	11
MONTREAL	0	0	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	11	11	0	0	4	4	0	0	15	15
ALBERTA	4	8	2	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	1	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	2	14	2	6	1	9	6	14	3	23
BRITISH COLUMBIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
Mexico	12	9	2	23	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	6	6	6	1	13	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	16	11	2	29	8	7	1	16	24	18	3	45
D.F.	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	3	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	8	0	0	8	4	0	0	4	12	0	0	12
ESTADO DE MEXICO	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	4	0	4
AGUASCALIENTES	6	7	2	15	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	4	3	4	1	8	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	8	9	2	19	4	5	1	10	12	14	3	29
Chile	11	0	0	11	8	0	0	8	4	0	0	4	6	0	0	6	4	0	0	4	2	0	0	2	23	0	0	23	12	0	0	12	35	0	0	35
TOTAL	66	48	80	194	12	4	27	43	8	3	22	33	44	29	46	119	5	2	20	27	4	2	13	19	86	55	129	270	53	33	79	165	139	88	208	435

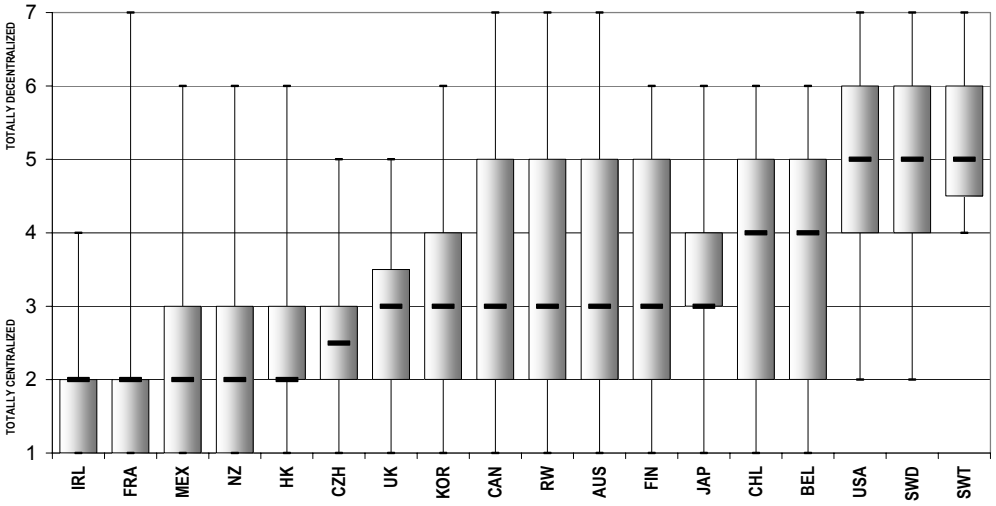
ANNEX 2

Graphs of all Kinds of Schools

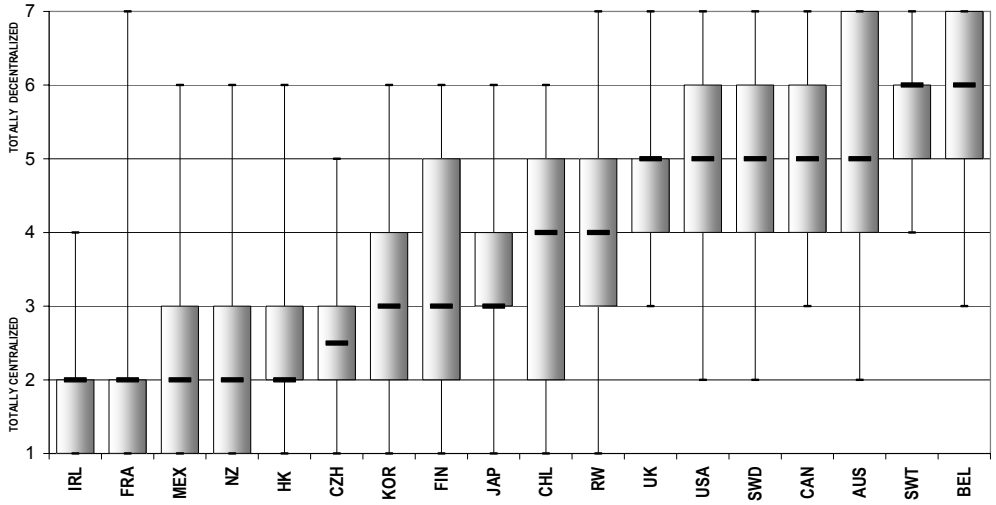
And

Tables with Number of Observations for All Categories

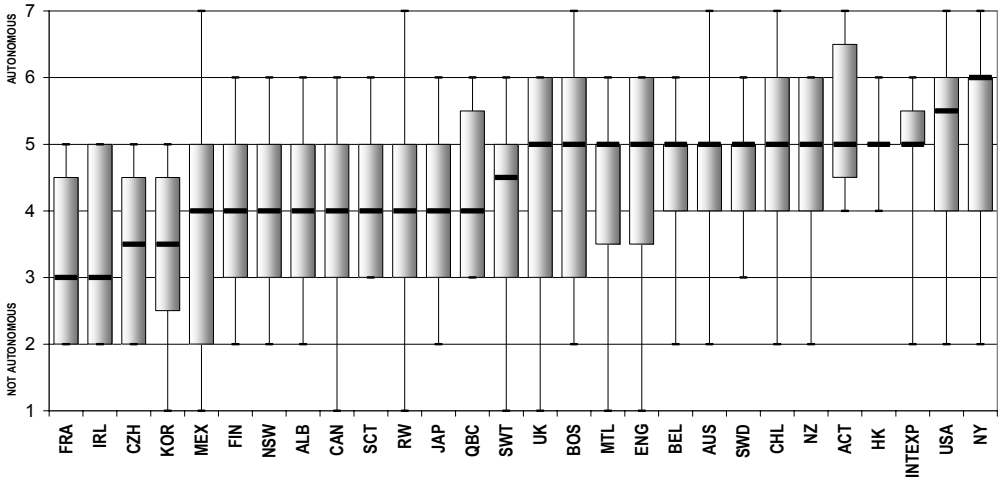
S1 : HOW CENTRALIZED IS THE EDUCATION POLICY IN YOUR REGION?



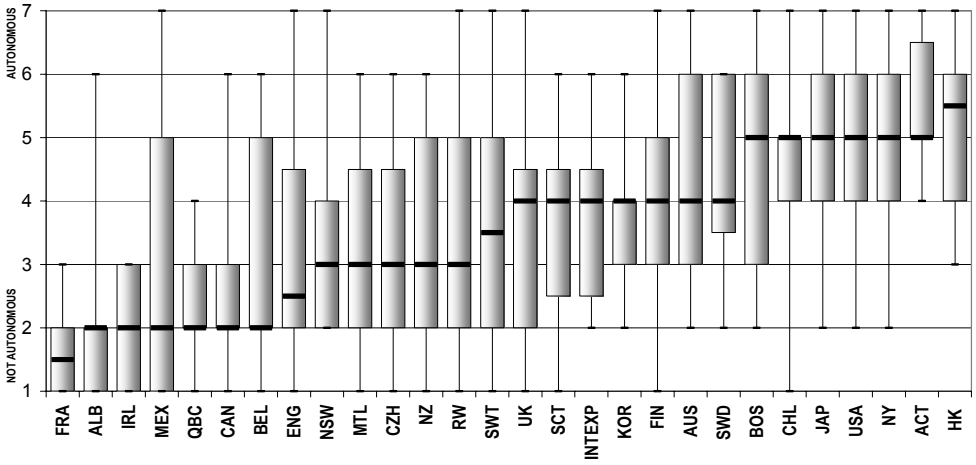
S2 : HOW CENTRALIZED IS THE EDUCATION POLICY IN YOUR COUNTRY?



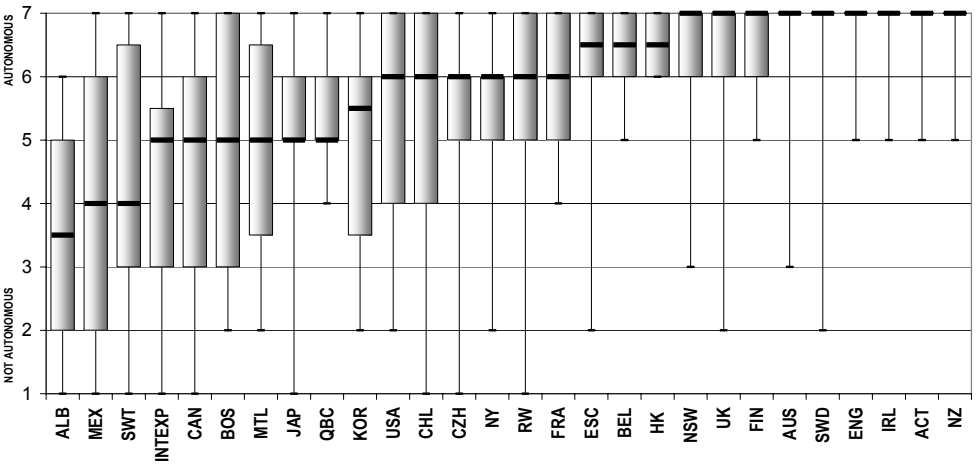
S3a: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(OVERALL)



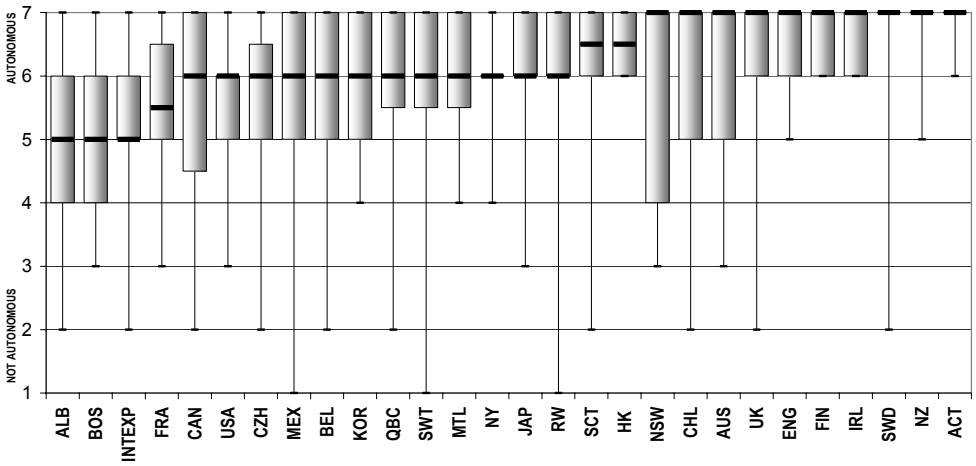
S3b : HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SCHOOL CURRICULA)



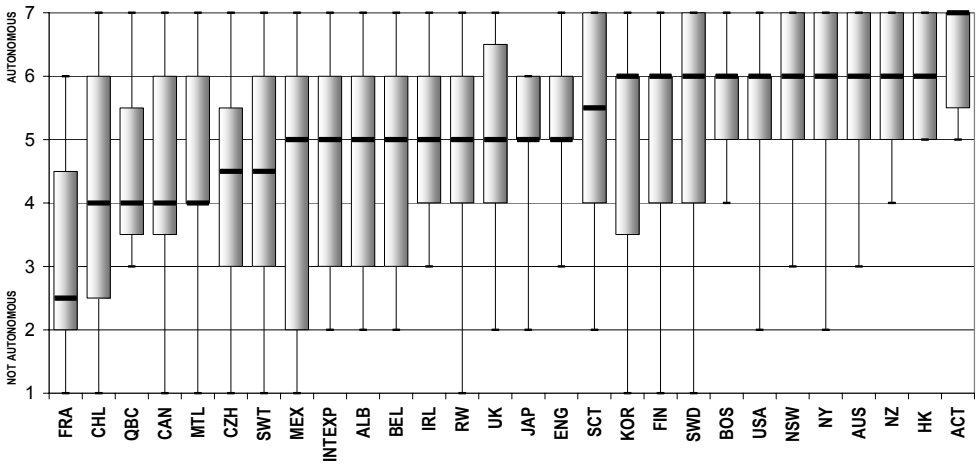
S3c: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(TEXTBOOKS)



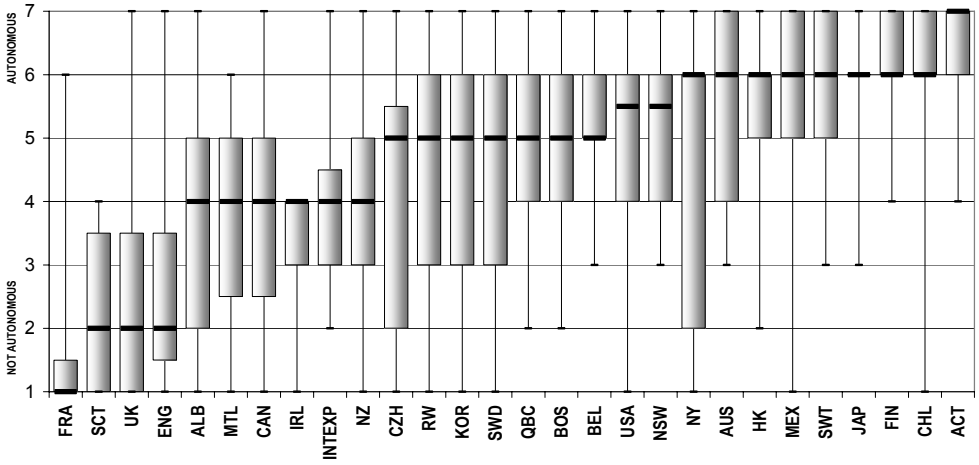
S3d: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL,WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SCHOOL MATERIALS)



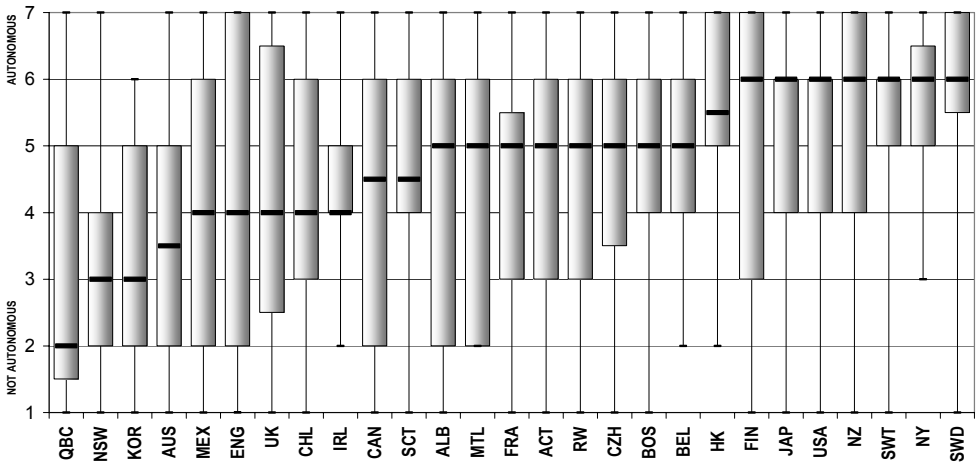
S3e: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL,WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SCHEDULES / TIME-TABLELING)



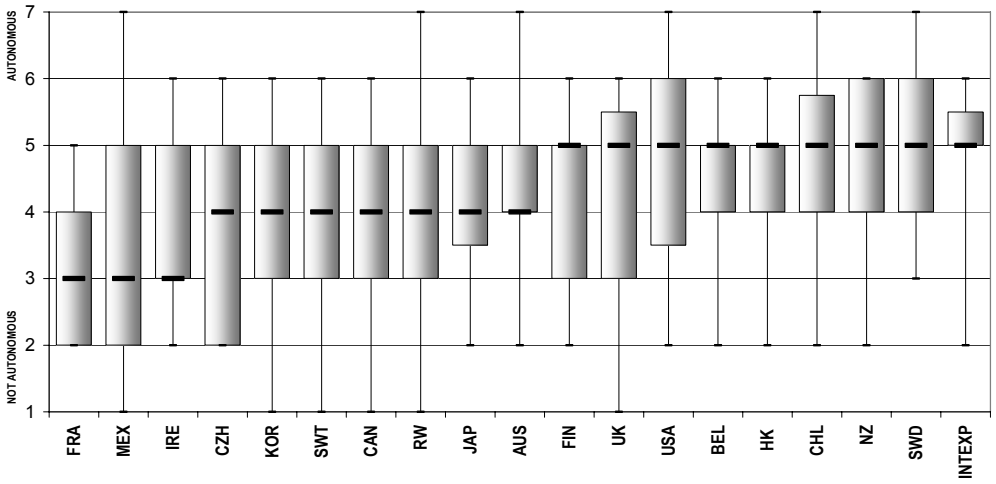
S3f: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL,WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(EXAMS/TESTS)



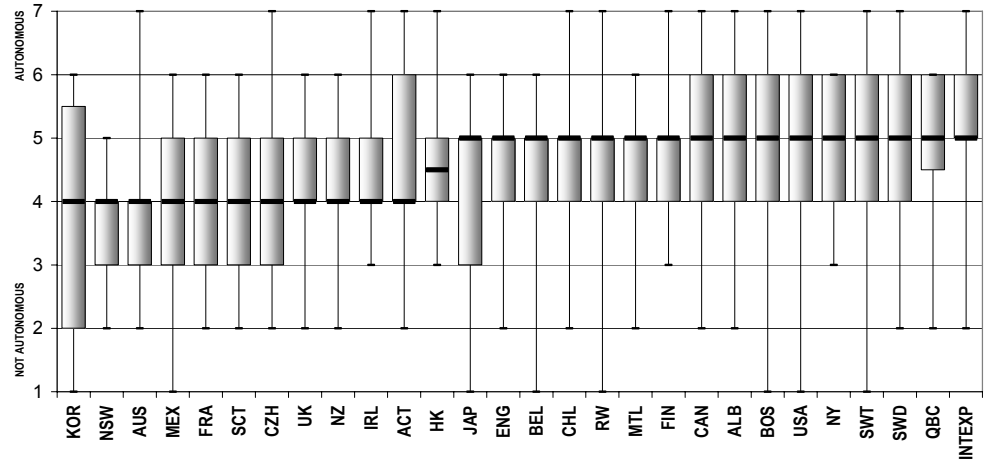
S3g : HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(FREE TIME FOR STUDENTS DURING DAY ACTIVITIES)



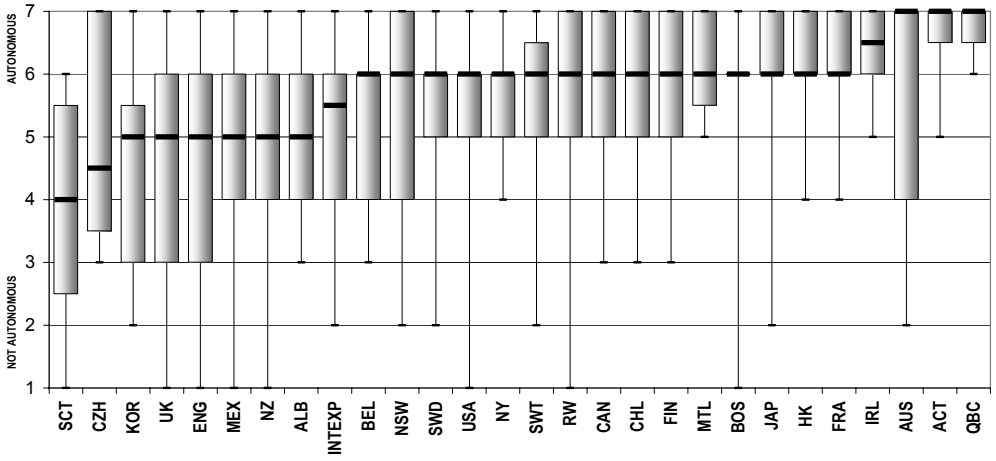
S4: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE SCHOOLS IN YOUR COUNTRY AT THE COMPULSORY LEVEL WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?



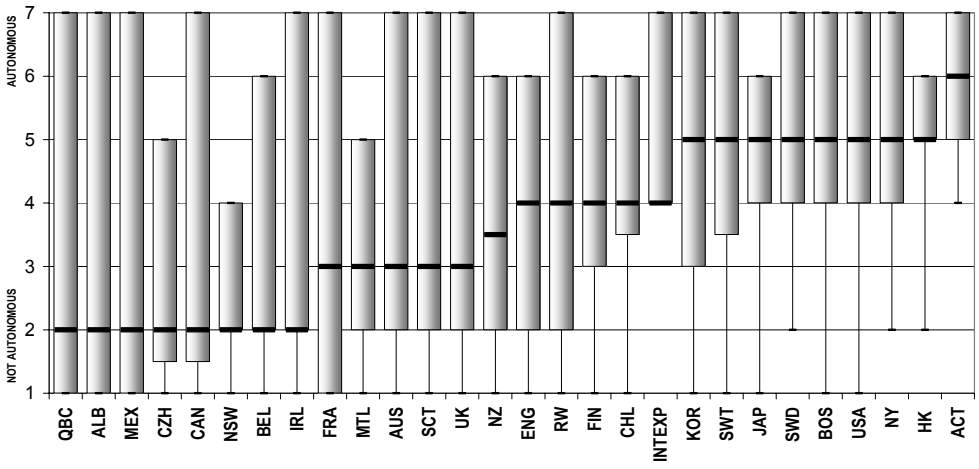
S5a: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(OVERALL)



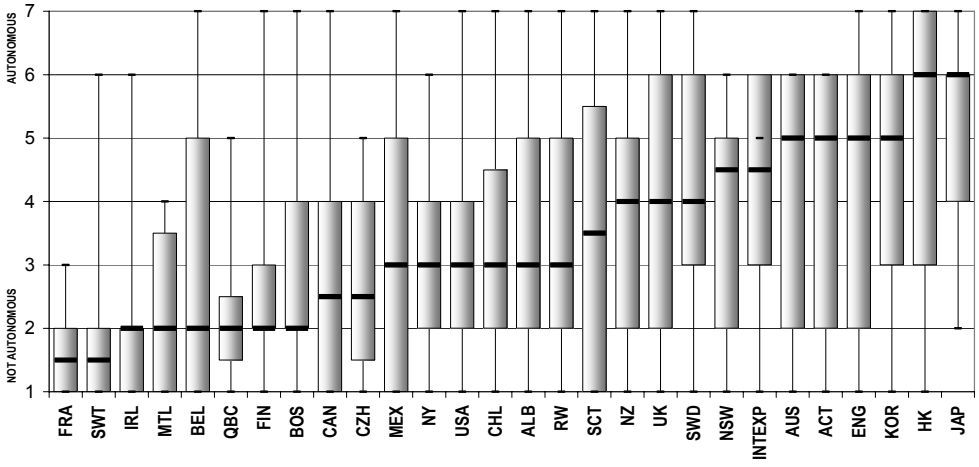
S5b: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(MEETING WITH PARENTS)



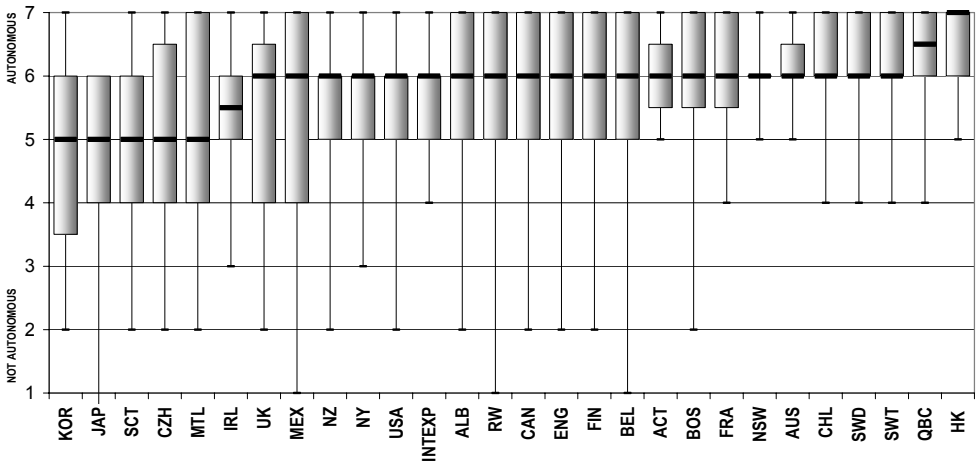
S5c : HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SETTING THE COURSE CURRICULA)



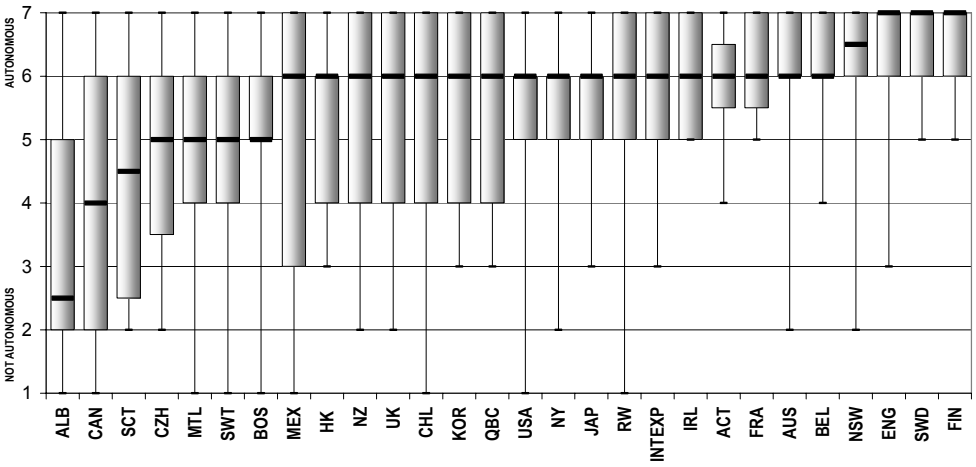
S5d: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SETTING THE CLASS SCHEDULE)



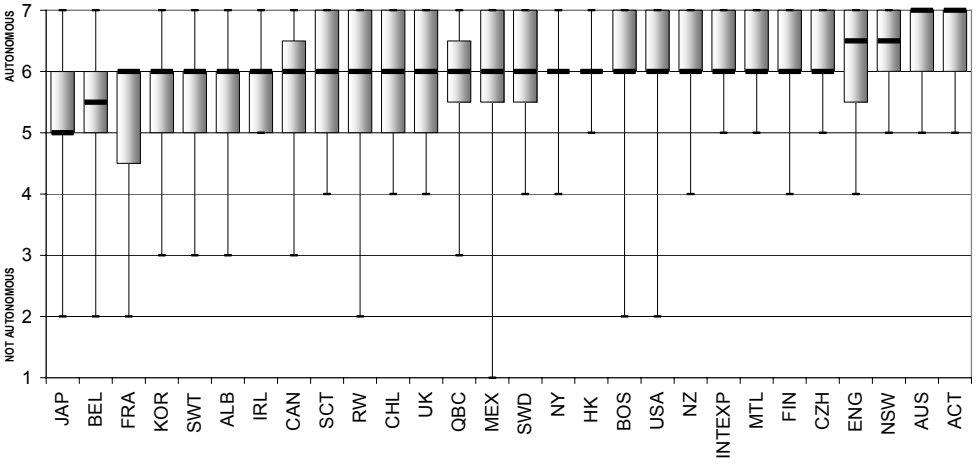
S5e: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SELF EVALUATING STUDENTS)



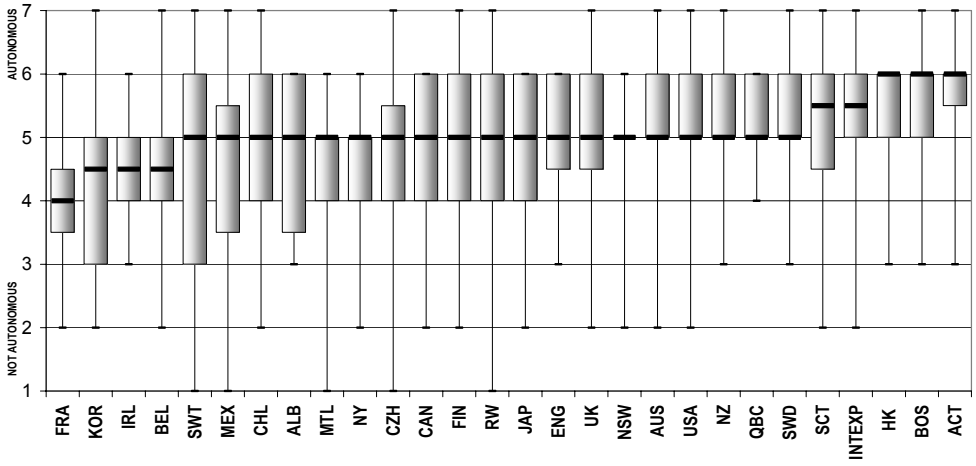
S5f: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SELECTING TEXTBOOKS)



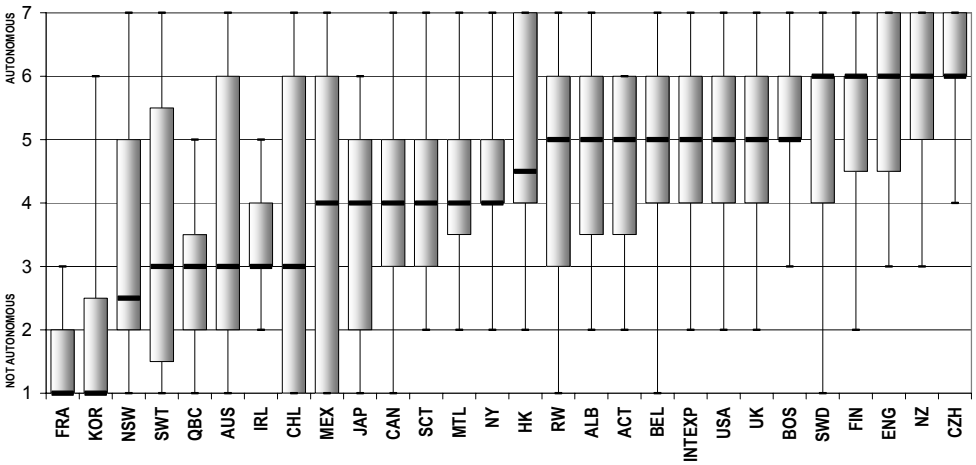
S5g: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(INNOVATION)



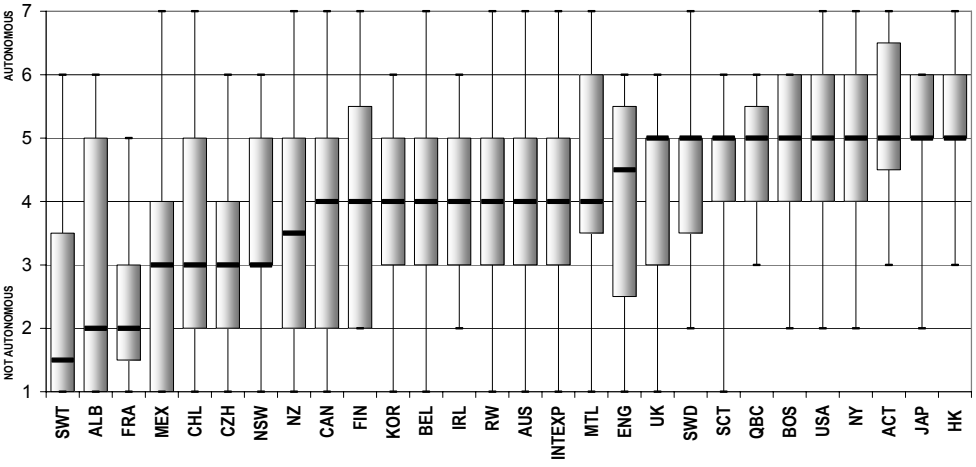
S6a: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE THE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(OVERALL)



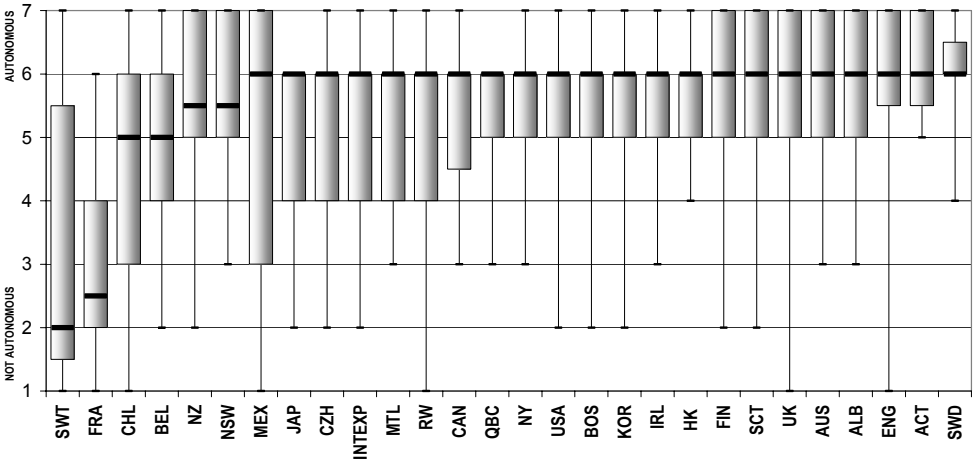
S6b: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(HIRE/REMOVE TEACHERS)



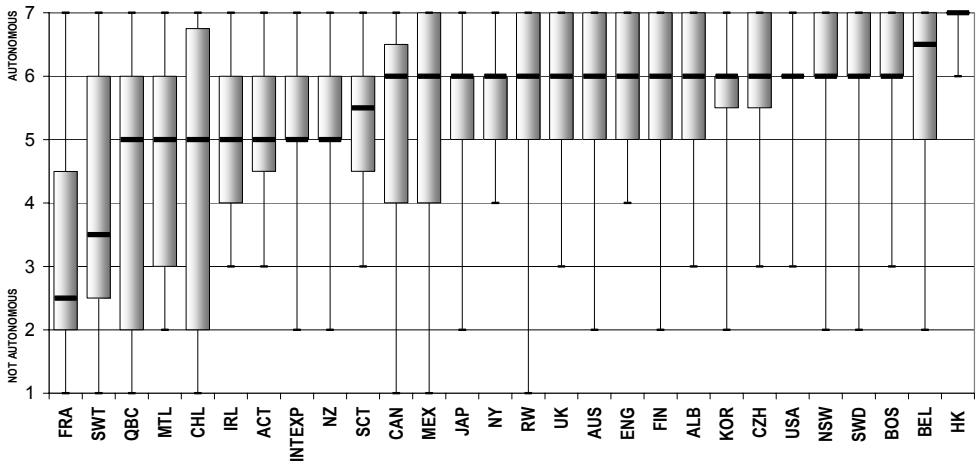
S6c: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(CURRICULUM)



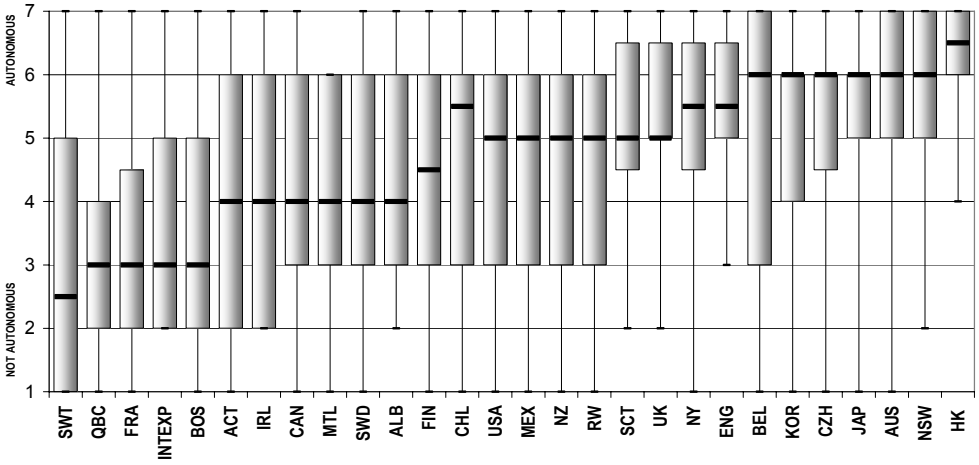
S6d: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SCHEDULING/TIME-TABLELING)



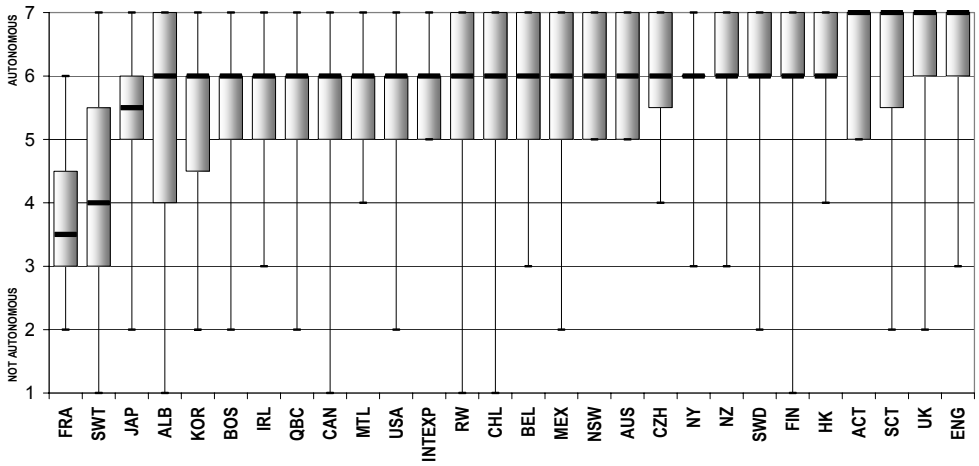
S6e : HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(EVALUATION OF TEACHERS)



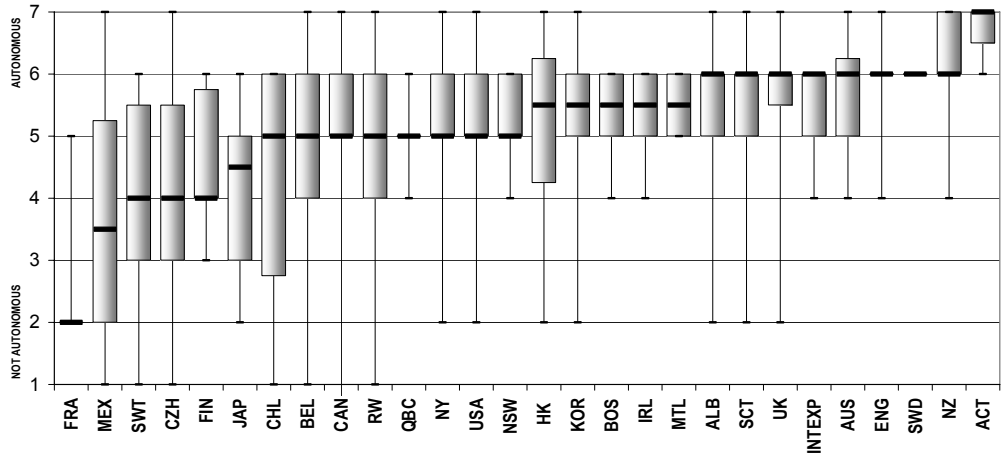
S6f: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(EVALUATION STUDENTS)



S6g: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(INNOVATION)



S6h : HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(BUDGET)



Number of observations for all categories

Table 1a

GENERAL	Interviews		S1		S2		S3a		S3b		S3c	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
1 Teachers Public	194	160	190	156	190	156	191	158	191	158	191	158
2 Teachers Private	76	58	74	57	74	57	73	56	73	56	73	56
3 Principals Public	119	100	118	99	119	100	118	99	117	98	116	97
4 Principals Private	46	37	46	37	46	37	46	37	46	37	46	37
5 Academic Experts	59	54	58	53	58	53	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Government Experts	56	49	56	49	56	49	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 International Experts	15	15	0	0	0	0	15	15	15	15	15	15
TOTAL	565	473	542	451	543	452	443	365	442	364	441	363

Table 1b

GENERAL	Interviews		S3d		S3e		S3f		S3g		S4	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
1 Teachers Public	194	160	191	158	191	158	188	155	188	155	190	156
2 Teachers Private	76	58	73	56	73	56	73	56	73	56	75	57
3 Principals Public	119	100	116	97	116	97	115	97	113	94	118	100
4 Principals Private	46	37	46	37	46	37	45	36	45	36	47	38
5 Academic Experts	59	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	49
6 Government Experts	56	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	53	46
7 International Experts	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
TOTAL	565	473	441	363	441	363	436	359	434	356	552	461

Table 1c

GENERAL	Interviews		S5a		S5b		S5c		S5d		S5e	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
1 Teachers Public	194	160	192	159	191	158	192	159	192	159	185	152
2 Teachers Private	76	58	74	57	74	57	74	57	72	55	73	56
3 Principals Public	119	100	116	97	116	97	116	97	116	97	114	95
4 Principals Private	46	37	46	37	46	37	46	37	46	37	46	37
5 Academic Experts	59	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Government Experts	56	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 International Experts	15	15	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	13	13
TOTAL	565	473	442	364	441	363	442	364	440	362	431	353

Table 1d

GENERAL	Interviews		S5f		S5g		S6a		S6b		S6c	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
1 Teachers Public	194	160	191	158	191	158	192	159	192	159	192	159
2 Teachers Private	76	58	73	57	72	56	72	56	72	56	72	56
3 Principals Public	119	100	116	97	114	95	114	95	114	95	114	95
4 Principals Private	46	37	46	37	46	37	46	37	45	36	46	37
5 Academic Experts	59	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Government Experts	56	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 International Experts	15	15	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
TOTAL	565	473	440	363	437	360	438	361	437	360	438	361

Table 1e

GENERAL	Interviews		S6d		S6e		S6f		S6g		S6h	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
1 Teachers Public	194	160	192	159	190	157	191	158	191	158	96	63
2 Teachers Private	76	58	71	55	71	55	72	56	72	56	25	9
3 Principals Public	119	100	114	95	114	95	114	95	114	95	116	97
4 Principals Private	46	37	46	37	46	37	46	37	46	37	44	35
5 Academic Experts	59	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6 Government Experts	56	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7 International Experts	15	15	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14	14
TOTAL	565	473	437	360	435	358	437	360	437	360	295	218

Table 2: Number of observations for all categories by country and by region

Country	S1							S2							S3a							S3b							S3c						
	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp
FIN	13	4	8	2	2	2		13	4	8	2	2	2		15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	0	0	
SWD	10	4	8	1	2	5		10	4	8	1	2	5		10	4	8	1	0	0		10	4	8	1	0	0		10	4	8	1	0	0	
FRA	6	0	6	0	2	4		6	0	6	0	2	4		6	0	6	0	0	0		6	0	6	0	0	0		6	0	6	0	0	0	
UK	10	12	4	6	3	4		10	12	5	6	3	4		10	11	4	6	0	0		10	11	4	6	0	0		10	11	4	6	0	0	
ENG	2	9	1	5	1	2		2	9	1	5	1	2		2	8	1	5	0	0		2	8	1	5	0	0		2	8	1	5	0	0	
SCT	8	3	3	1	2	2		8	3	4	1	2	2		8	3	3	1	0	0		8	3	3	1	0	0		8	3	3	1	0	0	
IRL	2	4	2	6	3	3		2	4	2	6	3	3		2	4	2	6	0	0		2	4	2	6	0	0		2	4	2	6	0	0	
BEL	3	11	3	6	2	6		3	11	3	6	2	6		3	11	3	6	0	0		3	11	3	6	0	0		3	11	3	6	0	0	
FLA	2	11	2	6	0	6		2	11	2	6	0	6		2	11	2	6	0	0		2	11	2	6	0	0		2	11	2	6	0	0	
VAL	1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0	
BEL	0	0	0	0	2	0		0	0	0	0	2	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	
CZH	9	0	7	0	1	1		9	0	7	0	1	1		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0	
SWT	9	0	7	0	1	3		9	0	7	0	1	3		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0	
SWG	9	0	6	0	0	2		9	0	6	0	0	2		9	0	6	0	0	0		9	0	6	0	0	0		9	0	6	0	0	0	
SWT	0	0	1	0	1	1		0	0	1	0	1	1		0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0	
AUS	9	4	6	2	4	6		9	4	6	2	4	6		9	4	6	2	0	0		9	4	6	2	0	0		9	4	6	2	0	0	
NSW	7	2	4	1	0	1		7	2	4	1	0	1		7	2	4	1	0	0		7	2	4	1	0	0		7	2	4	1	0	0	
ACT	2	2	2	1	0	2		2	2	2	1	0	2		2	2	2	1	0	0		2	2	2	1	0	0		2	2	2	1	0	0	
AUS	0	0	0	0	4	3		0	0	0	0	4	3		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	
NZ	10	5	6	4	6	3		10	5	6	4	6	3		10	5	6	4	0	0		10	5	6	4	0	0		10	5	6	4	0	0	
HK	2	4	1	3	6	2		2	4	1	3	6	2		2	4	1	3	0	0		2	4	1	3	0	0		2	4	1	3	0	0	
KOR	11	1	7	1	3	0		11	1	7	1	3	0		11	1	7	1	0	0		11	1	7	1	0	0		11	1	7	1	0	0	
JAP	14	2	7	3	1	1		14	2	7	3	1	1		14	2	7	3	0	0		14	2	7	3	0	0		14	2	7	3	0	0	
USA	19	4	9	2	4	3		19	4	9	2	4	3		19	4	9	2	0	0		19	4	9	2	0	0		19	4	9	2	0	0	
BOS	9	2	5	1	2	2		9	2	5	1	2	2		9	2	5	1	0	0		9	2	5	1	0	0		9	2	5	1	0	0	
NY	10	2	4	1	2	1		10	2	4	1	2	1		10	2	4	1	0	0		10	2	4	1	0	0		10	2	4	1	0	0	
CAN	29	2	18	1	8	6		29	2	18	1	8	6		29	2	18	1	0	0		29	2	17	1	0	0		29	2	16	1	0	0	
QBC	6	0	5	0	2	2		6	0	5	0	2	2		6	0	5	0	0	0		6	0	5	0	0	0		6	0	5	0	0	0	
MTL	9	2	3	1	2	2		9	2	3	1	2	2		9	2	3	1	0	0		9	2	3	1	0	0		9	2	3	1	0	0	
ALB	14	0	9	0	2	2		14	0	9	0	2	2		14	0	9	0	0	0		14	0	9	0	0	0		14	0	8	0	0	0	
BC	0	0	1	0	2	0		0	0	1	0	2	0		0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	
SGP	0	0	0	0	5	0		0	0	0	0	5	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	
MEX	23	6	13	3	1	4		23	6	13	3	1	4		23	6	13	3	0	0		23	6	13	3	0	0		23	6	13	3	0	0	
DF	6	2	3	1	0	2		6	2	3	1	0	2		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0	
AGS	15	4	8	2	1	2		15	4	8	2	1	2		15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	0	0	
EM	2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0	
CHL	11	11	6	6	4	3		11	11	6	6	4	3		10	11	6	6	0	0		10	11	6	6	0	0		10	11	6	6	0	0	
INTEXP							0							0							15						15							15
Total All	190	74	118	46	58	56	0	190	74	119	46	58	56	0	191	73	118	46	0	0	15	191	73	117	46	0	0	15	191	73	116	46	0	0	15
Total Without MEX & CHL	156	57	99	37	53	49	0	156	57	100	37	53	49	0	158	56	99	37	0	0	15	158	56	98	37	0	0	15	158	56	97	37	0	0	15

Country	S3d							S3e							S3f							S3g							S4						
	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp
FIN	15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	7	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	2	2	
SWD	10	4	8	1	0	0		10	4	8	1	0	0		10	4	8	1	0	0		10	4	8	1	0	0		9	4	8	1	2	5	
FRA	6	0	6	0	0	0		6	0	6	0	0	0		5	0	6	0	0	0		6	0	6	0	0	0		6	0	6	0	2	3	
UK	10	11	4	6	0	0		10	11	4	6	0	0		10	11	4	6	0	0		10	11	4	6	0	0		10	12	5	6	3	4	
ENG	2	8	1	5	0	0		2	8	1	5	0	0		2	8	1	5	0	0		2	8	1	5	0	0		2	9	1	5	1	2	
SCT	8	3	3	1	0	0		8	3	3	1	0	0		8	3	3	1	0	0		8	3	3	1	0	0		8	3	4	1	2	2	
IRL	2	4	2	6	0	0		2	4	2	6	0	0		2	4	2	6	0	0		2	4	1	6	0	0		2	4	2	6	3	3	
BEL	3	11	3	6	0	0		3	11	3	6	0	0		3	11	3	6	0	0		3	11	3	5	0	0		3	11	3	6	2	5	
FLA	2	11	2	6	0	0		2	11	2	6	0	0		2	11	2	6	0	0		2	11	2	5	0	0		2	11	2	6	0	5	
VAL	1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0	
BEL	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	2	0	
CZH	9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		8	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	1	1	
SWT	9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		8	0	6	0	0	0		8	0	8	0	0	3	
SWG	9	0	6	0	0	0		9	0	6	0	0	0		9	0	6	0	0	0		8	0	5	0	0	0		8	0	7	0	0	2	
SWT	0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	1	1	
AUS	9	4	6	2	0	0		9	4	6	2	0	0		9	4	6	2	0	0		8	4	6	2	0	0		9	4	6	2	4	6	
NSW	7	2	4	1	0	0		7	2	4	1	0	0		7	2	4	1	0	0		6	2	4	1	0	0		7	2	4	1	0	1	
ACT	2	2	2	1	0	0		2	2	2	1	0	0		2	2	2	1	0	0		2	2	2	1	0	0		2	2	2	1	0	2	
AUS	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	4	3	
NZ	10	5	6	4	0	0		10	5	6	4	0	0		10	5	6	4	0	0		10	5	6	4	0	0		10	6	6	4	6	3	
HK	2	4	1	3	0	0		2	4	1	3	0	0		2	4	1	2	0	0		2	4	1	3	0	0		2	4	1	3	6	2	
KOR	11	1	7	1	0	0		11	1	7	1	0	0		11	1	7	1	0	0		11	1	7	1	0	0		11	0	7	2	3	0	
JAP	14	2	7	3	0	0		14	2	7	3	0	0		14	2	7	3	0	0		14	2	7	3	0	0		14	2	7	3	1	1	
USA	19	4	9	2	0	0		19	4	9	2	0	0		19	4	9	2	0	0		18	4	9	2	0	0		19	4	9	2	3	3	
BOS	9	2	5	1	0	0		9	2	5	1	0	0		9	2	5	1	0	0		9	2	5	1	1	1		9	2	5	1	1	2	
NY	10	2	4	1	0	0		10	2	4	1	0	0		10	2	4	1	0	0		9	2	4	1	0	0		10	2	4	1	2	1	
CAN	29	2	16	1	0	0		29	2	16	1	0	0		28	2	16	1	0	0		29	2	16	1	0	0		29	2	17	1	6	5	
QBC	6	0	5	0	0	0		6	0	5	0	0	0		5	0	5	0	0	0		6	0	5	0	0	0		6	0	5	0	2	2	
MTL	9	2	3	1	0	0		9	2	3	1	0	0		9	2	3	1	0	0		9	2	3	1	0	0		9	2	3	1	2	1	
ALB	14	0	8	0	0	0		14	0	8	0	0	0		14	0	8	0	0	0		14	0	8	0	0	0		14	0	9	0	2	2	
BC	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	2	0	
SGP	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	5	0	
MEX	23	6	13	3	0	0		23	6	13	3	0	0		23	6	13	3	0	0		23	6	13	3	0	0		23	6	12	3	1	4	
DF	6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	2	
AGS	15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	7	2	1	2	
EM	2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0	
CHL	10	11	6	6	0	0		10	11	6	6	0	0		10	11	5	6	0	0		10	11	6	6	0	0		11	12	6	6	4	3	
INTEXP							15							15							15						15							15
Total All	191	73	116	46	0	0	15	191	73	116	46	0	0	15	188	73	115	45	0	0	15	188	73	113	45	0	0	15	190	75	118	47	54	53	15
Total Without MEX & CHL	158	56	97	37	0	0	15	158	56	97	37	0	0	15	155	56	97	36	0	0	15	155	56	94	36	0	0	15	156	57	100	38	49	46	15

Country	S5a							S5b							S5c							S5d							S5e						
	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp
FIN	**15**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**15**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**15**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**15**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**15**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**	
SWD	**10**	**4**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**4**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**4**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**4**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**4**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**	
FRA	**6**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**6**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**6**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**6**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**6**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
UK	**10**	**12**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**12**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**12**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**12**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**12**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**	
ENG	*2*	*9*	*1*	*5*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*9*	*1*	*5*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*9*	*1*	*5*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*9*	*1*	*5*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*9*	*1*	*5*	*0*	*0*	
SCT	*8*	*3*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*3*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*3*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*3*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*3*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
IRL	**2**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**	
BEL	**3**	**11**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**3**	**11**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**3**	**11**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**3**	**10**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**3**	**10**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**0**	
FLA	*2*	*11*	*2*	*6*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*11*	*2*	*6*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*11*	*2*	*6*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*10*	*2*	*6*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*10*	*2*	*6*	*0*	*0*	
VAL	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
BEL	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
CZH	**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
SWT	**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**8**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
SWG	*9*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
SWT	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
AUS	**9**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**4**	**5**	**2**	**0**	**0**	
NSW	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*7*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
ACT	*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
AUS	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
NZ	**10**	**5**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**5**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**5**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**4**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**5**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**	
HK	**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**1**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**	
KOR	**11**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**11**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**11**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**11**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**11**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**	
JAP	**14**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**13**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**14**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**14**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**13**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**	
USA	**20**	**4**	**9**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**20**	**4**	**9**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**20**	**4**	**9**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**20**	**4**	**9**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**18**	**4**	**9**	**2**	**0**	**0**	
BOS	*9*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
NY	*11*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*11*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*11*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*11*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*10*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
CAN	**29**	**2**	**16**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**29**	**2**	**16**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**29**	**2**	**16**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**29**	**2**	**16**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**27**	**2**	**15**	**1**	**0**	**0**	
QBC	*6*	*0*	*5*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*0*	*5*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*0*	*5*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*0*	*5*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*0*	*4*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
MTL	*9*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
ALB	*14*	*0*	*8*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*14*	*0*	*8*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*14*	*0*	*8*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*14*	*0*	*8*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*13*	*0*	*8*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
BC	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
SGP	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
MEX	**23**	**6**	**13**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**23**	**6**	**13**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**23**	**6**	**13**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**23**	**6**	**13**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**23**	**6**	**13**	**3**	**0**	**0**	
DF	*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
AGS	*15*	*4*	*8*	*2*	*0*	*0*		*15*	*4*	*8*	*2*	*0*	*0*		*15*	*4*	*8*	*2*	*0*	*0*		*15*	*4*	*8*	*2*	*0*	*0*		*15*	*4*	*8*	*2*	*0*	*0*	
EM	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
CHL	**10**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**0**	
INTEXP							**14**							**14**							**14**							**14**							**13**
Total All	**192**	**74**	**116**	**46**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**191**	**74**	**116**	**46**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**192**	**74**	**116**	**46**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**192**	**72**	**116**	**46**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**185**	**73**	**114**	**46**	**0**	**0**	**13**
Total Without MEX & CHL	**159**	**57**	**97**	**37**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**158**	**57**	**97**	**37**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**159**	**57**	**97**	**37**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**159**	**55**	**97**	**37**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**152**	**56**	**95**	**37**	**0**	**0**	**13**

Country	S5f							S5g							S6a							S6b							S6c						
	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp
FIN	15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	8	2	0	0		15	4	7	2	0	0		15	4	7	2	0	0		15	4	7	2	0	0	
SWD	10	4	8	1	0	0		10	4	8	1	0	0		10	4	8	1	0	0		10	4	8	1	0	0		10	4	8	1	0	0	
FRA	6	0	6	0	0	0		6	0	6	0	0	0		6	0	6	0	0	0		6	0	6	0	0	0		6	0	6	0	0	0	
UK	10	12	4	6	0	0		10	11	4	6	0	0		10	11	4	6	0	0		10	11	4	6	0	0		10	11	4	6	0	0	
ENG	2	9	1	5	0	0		2	8	1	5	0	0		2	8	1	5	0	0		2	8	1	5	0	0		2	8	1	5	0	0	
SCT	8	3	3	1	0	0		8	3	3	1	0	0		8	3	3	1	0	0		8	3	3	1	0	0		8	3	3	1	0	0	
IRL	2	4	2	6	0	0		2	4	2	6	0	0		2	4	2	6	0	0		2	4	2	6	0	0		2	4	2	6	0	0	
BEL	3	11	3	6	0	0		3	11	3	6	0	0		3	11	3	6	0	0		3	11	3	6	0	0		3	11	3	6	0	0	
FLA	2	11	2	6	0	0		2	11	2	6	0	0		2	11	2	6	0	0		2	11	2	6	0	0		2	11	2	6	0	0	
VAL	1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0		1	0	1	0	0	0	
BEL	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	
CZH	9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0	
SWT	8	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0		9	0	7	0	0	0	
SWG	8	0	6	0	0	0		9	0	6	0	0	0		9	0	6	0	0	0		9	0	6	0	0	0		9	0	6	0	0	0	
SWT	0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0		0	0	1	0	0	0	
AUS	9	4	6	2	0	0		8	4	5	2	0	0		9	4	6	2	0	0		9	4	6	2	0	0		9	4	6	2	0	0	
NSW	7	2	4	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0	
ACT	2	2	2	1	0	0		2	2	2	1	0	0		2	2	2	1	0	0		2	2	2	1	0	0		2	2	2	1	0	0	
AUS	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	
NZ	10	5	6	4	0	0		10	5	6	4	0	0		10	5	6	4	0	0		10	5	6	3	0	0		10	5	6	4	0	0	
HK	2	4	1	3	0	0		2	4	1	3	0	0		2	4	1	3	0	0		2	4	1	3	0	0		2	4	1	3	0	0	
KOR	11	1	7	1	0	0		11	1	7	1	0	0		11	1	7	1	0	0		11	1	7	1	0	0		11	1	7	1	0	0	
JAP	14	2	7	3	0	0		14	2	7	3	0	0		14	2	7	3	0	0		14	2	7	3	0	0		14	2	7	3	0	0	
USA	20	4	9	2	0	0		20	4	8	2	0	0		20	4	8	2	0	0		20	4	8	2	0	0		20	4	8	2	0	0	
BOS	9	2	5	1	0	0		9	2	5	1	0	0		9	2	5	1	0	0		9	2	5	1	0	0		9	2	5	1	0	0	
NY	11	2	4	1	0	0		11	2	3	1	0	0		11	2	3	1	0	0		11	2	3	1	0	0		11	2	3	1	0	0	
CAN	29	2	16	1	0	0		29	2	16	1	0	0		29	2	16	1	0	0		29	2	16	1	0	0		29	2	16	1	0	0	
QBC	6	0	5	0	0	0		6	0	5	0	0	0		6	0	5	0	0	0		6	0	5	0	0	0		6	0	5	0	0	0	
MTL	9	2	3	1	0	0		9	2	3	1	0	0		9	2	3	1	0	0		9	2	3	1	0	0		9	2	3	1	0	0	
ALB	14	0	8	0	0	0		14	0	8	0	0	0		14	0	8	0	0	0		14	0	8	0	0	0		14	0	8	0	0	0	
BC	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	
SGP	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	
MEX	23	5	13	3	0	0		23	5	13	3	0	0		23	5	13	3	0	0		23	5	13	3	0	0		23	5	13	3	0	0	
DF	6	1	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0		6	2	3	1	0	0	
AGS	15	4	8	2	0	0		15	3	8	2	0	0		15	3	8	2	0	0		15	3	8	2	0	0		15	3	8	2	0	0	
EM	2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0		2	0	2	0	0	0	
CHL	10	11	6	6	0	0		10	11	6	6	0	0		10	11	6	6	0	0		10	11	6	6	0	0		10	11	6	6	0	0	
INTEXP							14							14							14							14							14
Total All	191	73	116	46	0	0	14	191	72	114	46	0	0	14	192	72	114	46	0	0	14	192	72	114	45	0	0	14	192	72	114	46	0	0	14
Total Without MEX & CHL	158	57	97	37	0	0	14	158	56	95	37	0	0	14	159	56	95	37	0	0	14	159	56	95	36	0	0	14	159	56	95	37	0	0	14

Country	S6d							S6e							S6f							S6g							S6h						
	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp
FIN	**15**	**4**	**7**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**15**	**3**	**7**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**15**	**4**	**7**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**15**	**4**	**7**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**	
SWD	**10**	**4**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**4**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**4**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**4**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**8**	**1**	**0**	**0**	
FRA	**6**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**6**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**6**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**6**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**6**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
UK	**10**	**10**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**4**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**1**	**5**	**4**	**0**	**0**	
ENG	*2*	*8*	*1*	*5*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*8*	*1*	*5*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*8*	*1*	*5*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*8*	*1*	*5*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*1*	*3*	*0*	*0*	
SCT	*8*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*3*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*3*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*3*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*1*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
IRL	**2**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**1**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**2**	**6**	**0**	**0**	
BEL	**3**	**11**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**3**	**11**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**3**	**11**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**3**	**11**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**3**	**6**	**0**	**0**	
FLA	*2*	*11*	*2*	*6*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*11*	*2*	*6*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*11*	*2*	*6*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*11*	*2*	*6*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*2*	*6*	*0*	*0*	
VAL	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
BEL	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
CZH	**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
SWT	**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**8**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**7**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
SWG	*9*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*8*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*6*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
SWT	*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
AUS	**9**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**9**	**4**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**2**		**0**	**0**	**6**	**2**	**0**	**0**	
NSW	*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*4*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
ACT	*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*2*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*2*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
AUS	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
NZ	**10**	**5**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**5**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**5**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**5**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**6**	**4**	**0**	**0**	
HK	**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**	
KOR	**11**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**11**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**7**	**1**	**0**	**0**	
JAP	**14**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**14**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**14**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**14**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**14**	**2**	**7**	**3**	**0**	**0**	
USA	**20**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**20**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**20**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**20**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**		**20**	**4**	**8**	**2**	**0**	**0**	
BOS	*9*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*5*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
NY	*11*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*11*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*11*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*11*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*11*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
CAN	**29**	**2**	**16**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**29**	**2**	**16**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**29**	**2**	**16**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**29**	**2**	**16**	**1**	**0**	**0**		**29**	**2**	**16**	**1**	**0**	**0**	
QBC	*6*	*0*	*5*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*0*	*5*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*0*	*5*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*0*	*5*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*0*	*5*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
MTL	*9*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*9*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
ALB	*14*	*0*	*8*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*14*	*0*	*8*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*14*	*0*	*8*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*14*	*0*	*8*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*14*	*0*	*8*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
BC	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
SGP	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
MEX	**23**	**5**	**13**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**23**	**5**	**13**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**23**	**5**	**13**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**23**	**5**	**13**	**3**	**0**	**0**		**23**	**5**	**13**	**3**	**0**	**0**	
DF	*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*		*6*	*2*	*3*	*1*	*0*	*0*	
AGS	*15*	*3*	*8*	*2*	*0*	*0*		*15*	*3*	*8*	*2*	*0*	*0*		*15*	*3*	*8*	*2*	*0*	*0*		*15*	*3*	*8*	*2*	*0*	*0*		*15*	*3*	*8*	*2*	*0*	*0*	
EM	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*		*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*0*	*0*	
CHL	**10**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**0**		**10**	**11**	**6**	**6**	**0**	**0**	
INTEXP							**14**							**14**							**14**							**14**							**14**
Total All	**192**	**71**	**114**	**46**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**190**	**71**	**114**	**46**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**191**	**72**	**114**	**46**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**191**	**72**	**114**	**46**	**0**	**2**	**14**	**96**	**25**	**116**	**44**	**0**	**0**	**14**
Total Without MEX & CHL	**159**	**55**	**95**	**37**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**157**	**55**	**95**	**37**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**158**	**56**	**95**	**37**	**0**	**0**	**14**	**158**	**56**	**95**	**37**	**0**	**2**	**14**	**63**	**9**	**97**	**35**	**0**	**0**	**14**

ANNEX 3

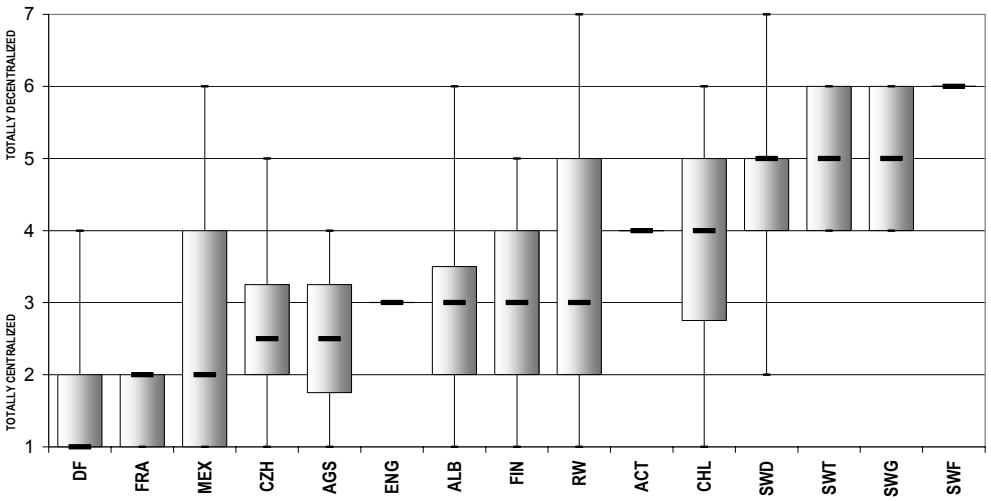
Graphs S1 to S6h of Public Secondary Schools

And

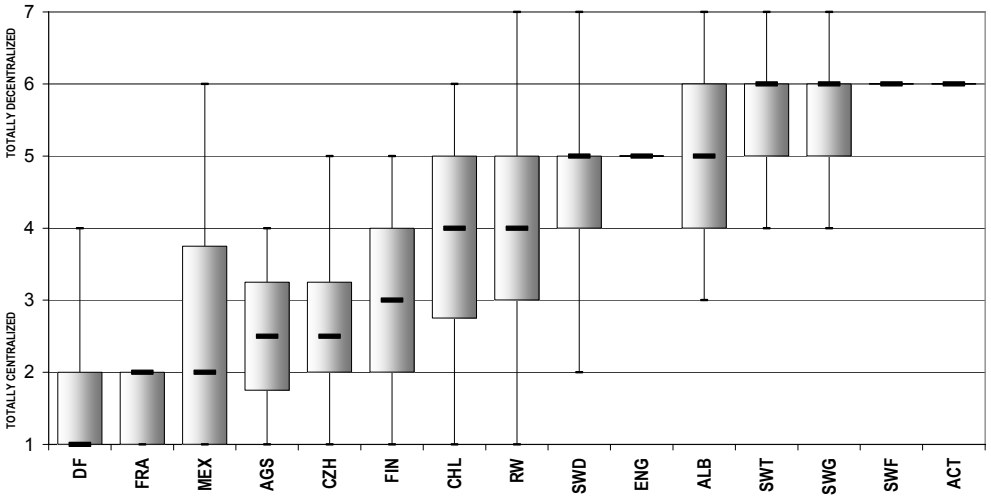
Tables with Number of Observations for Teachers and Principals

PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

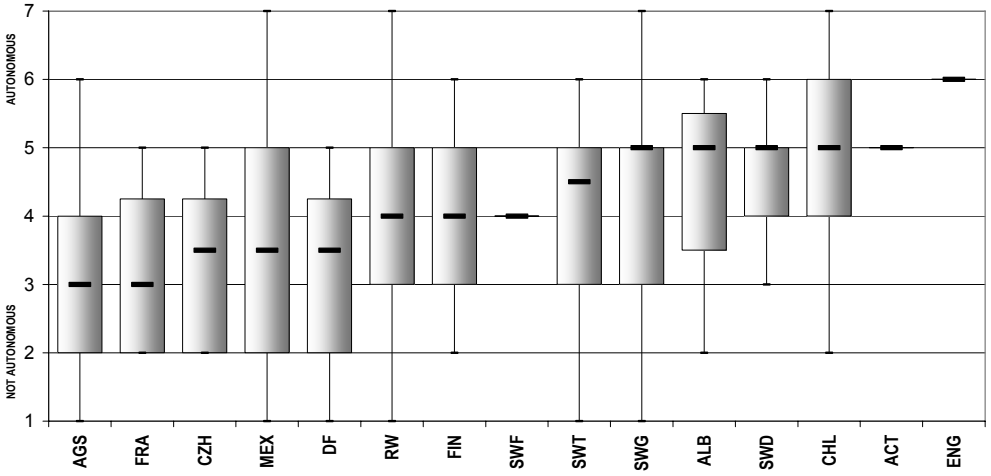
S1 : HOW CENTRALIZED IS THE EDUCATION POLICY IN YOUR REGION?



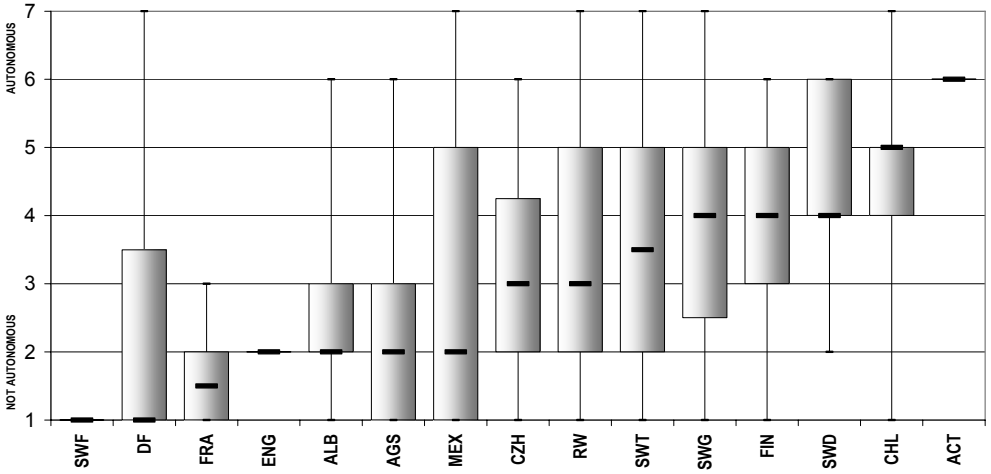
S2 : HOW CENTRALIZED IS THE EDUCATION POLICY IN YOUR COUNTRY?



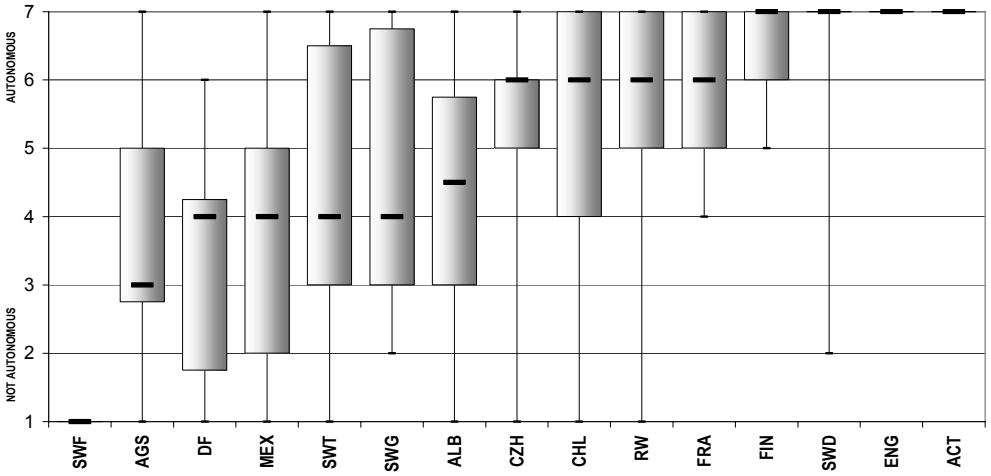
S3a : HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (OVERALL)



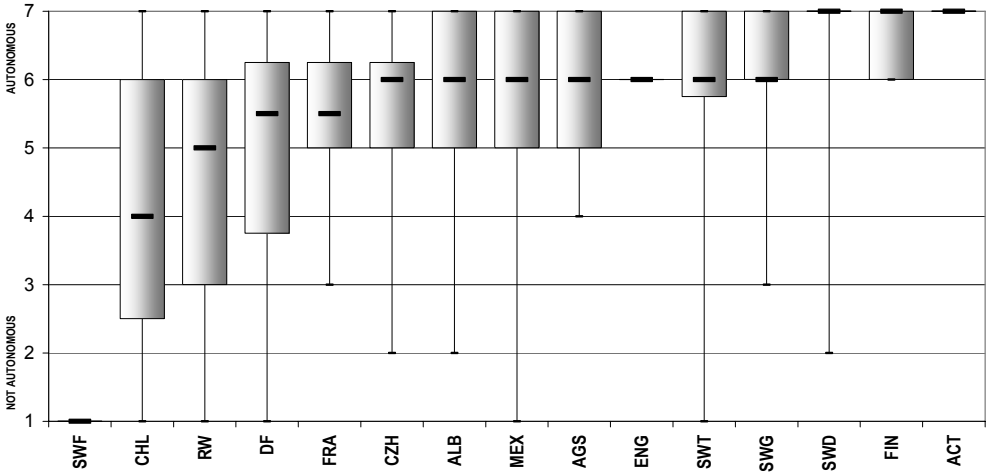
S3b : HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (CURRICULUM)



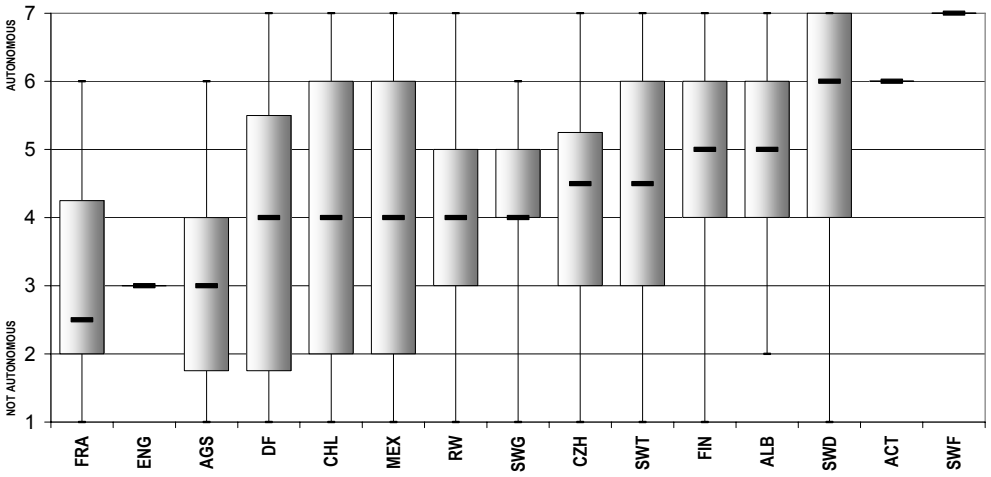
S3c : HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (TEXTBOOKS)



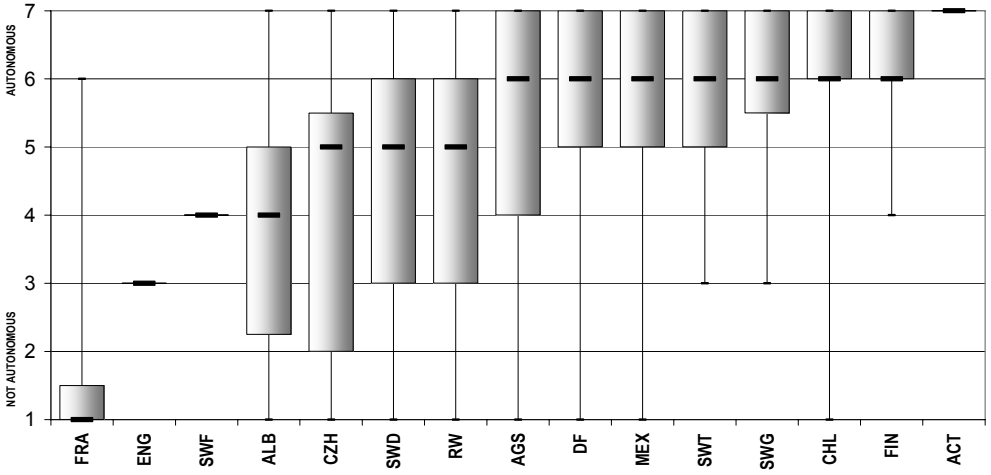
S3d: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL,WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SCHOOL MATERIALS)



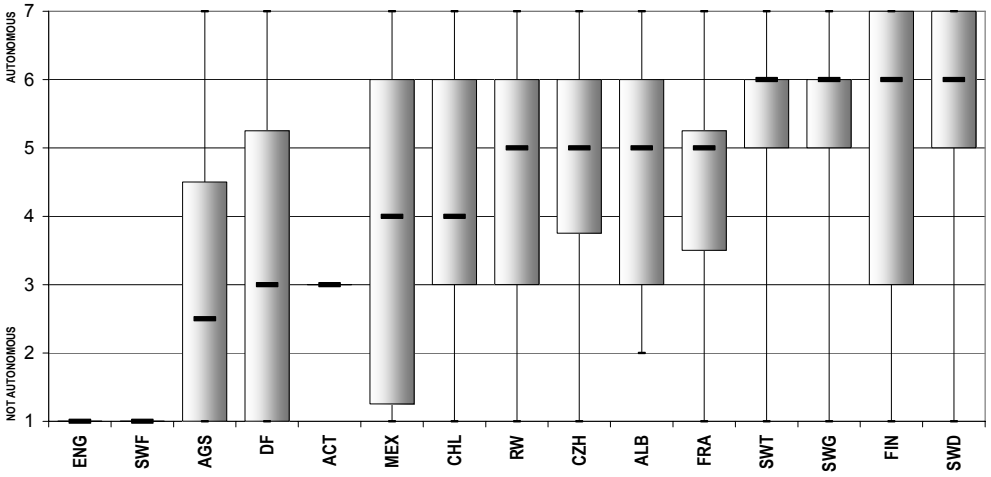
S3e: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL,WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SCHEDULES / TIME-TABLELING)



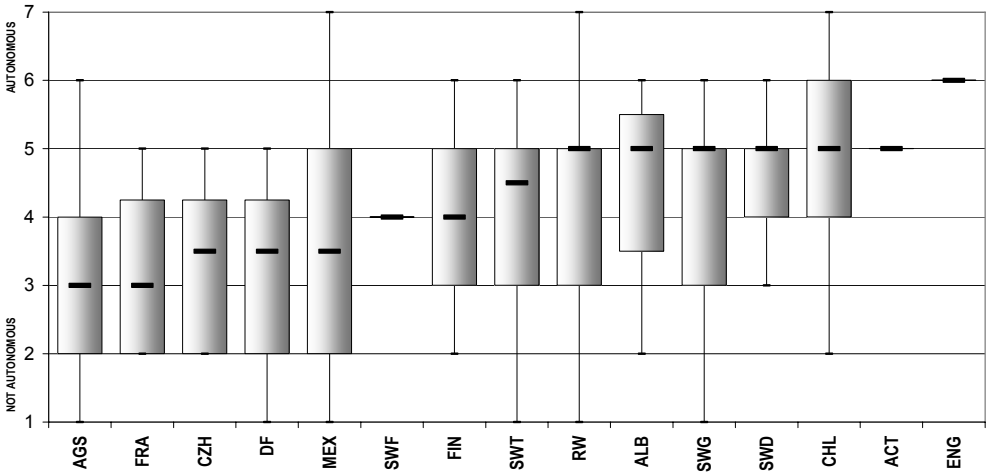
S3f: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL,WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(EXAMS/TESTS)



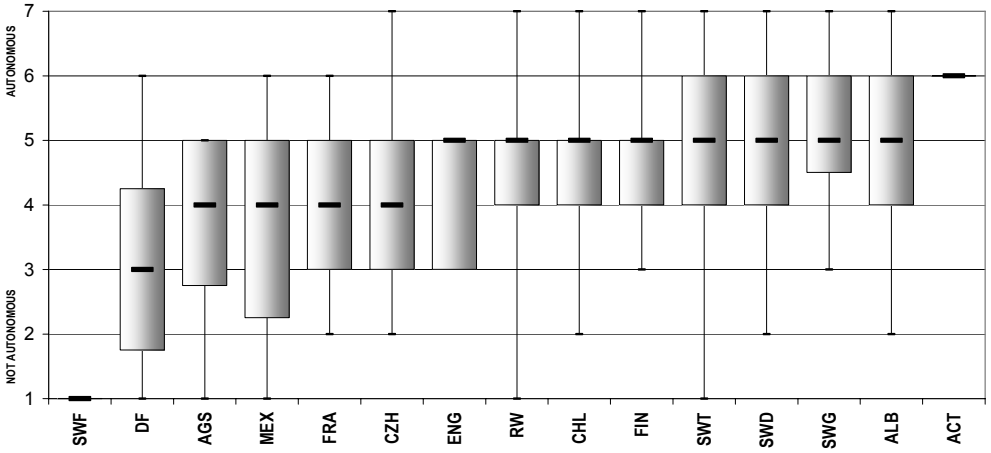
S3g : HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(FREE TIME FOR STUDENTS DURING DAY ACTIVITIES)



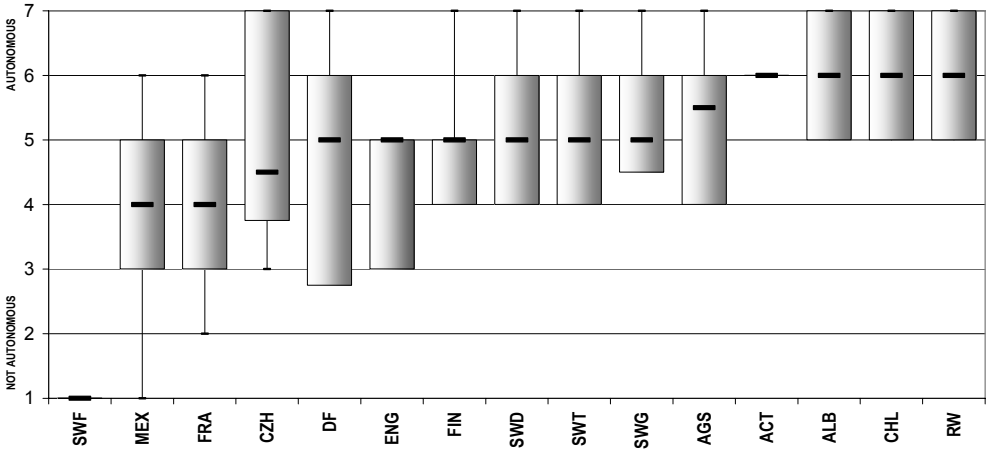
S4: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE SCHOOLS IN YOUR COUNTRY AT THE COMPULSORY LEVEL WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?



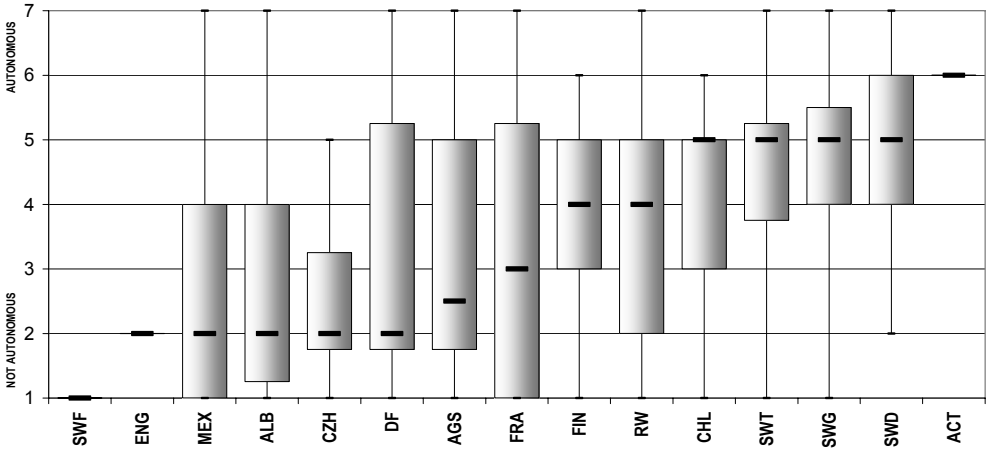
S5a: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(OVERALL)



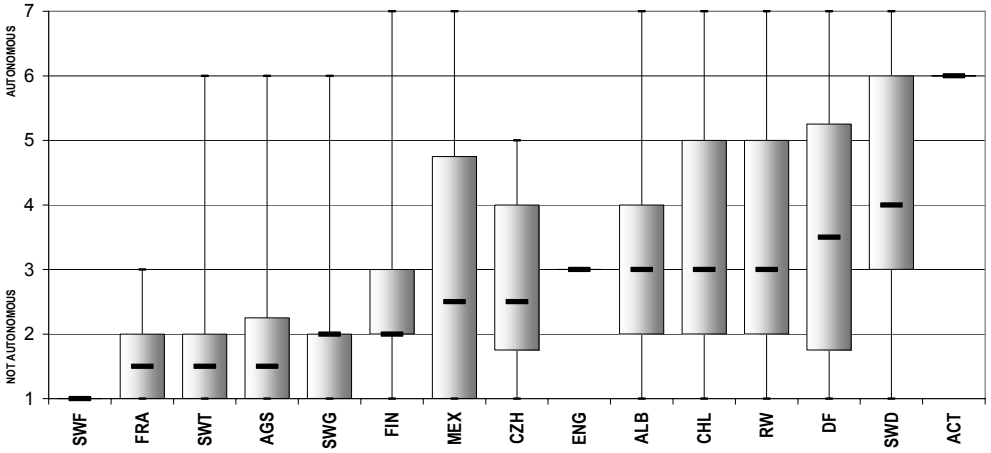
S5b: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(MEETING WITH PARENTS)



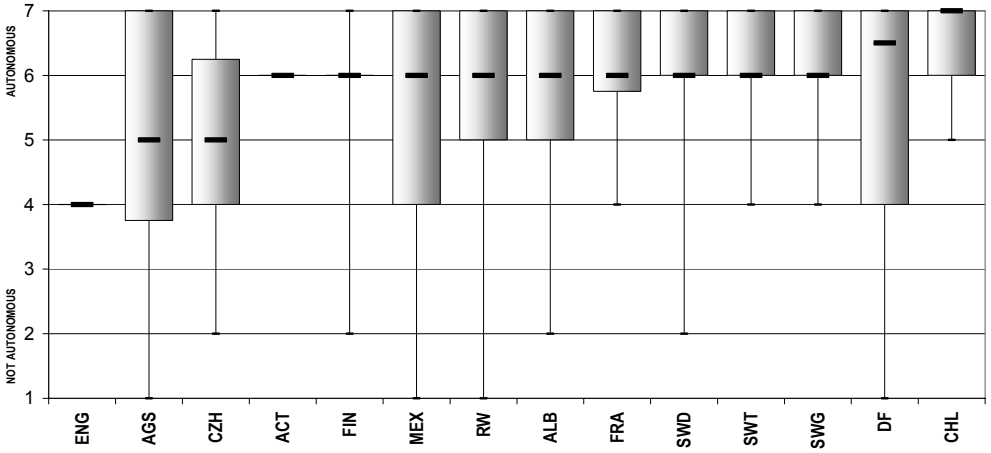
S5c : HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SETTING THE COURSE CURRICULA)



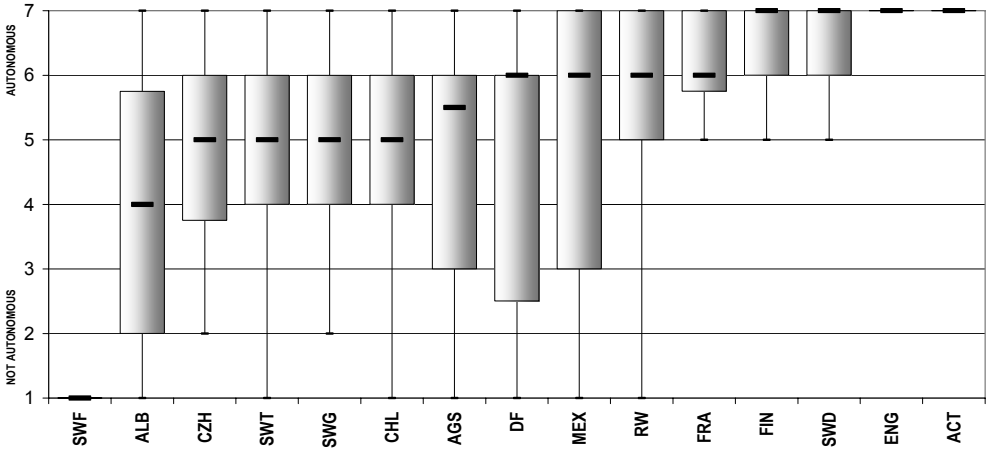
S5d: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SETTING THE CLASS SCHEDULE)



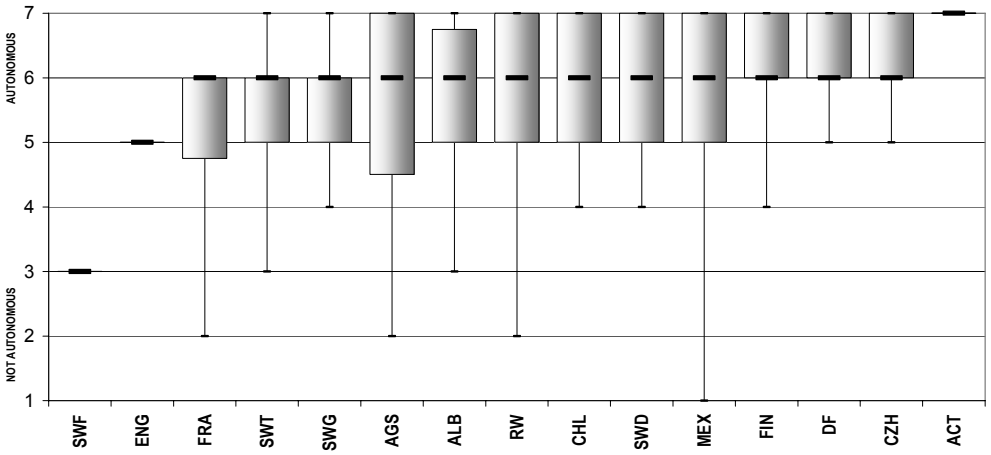
S5e: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SELF EVALUATING STUDENTS)



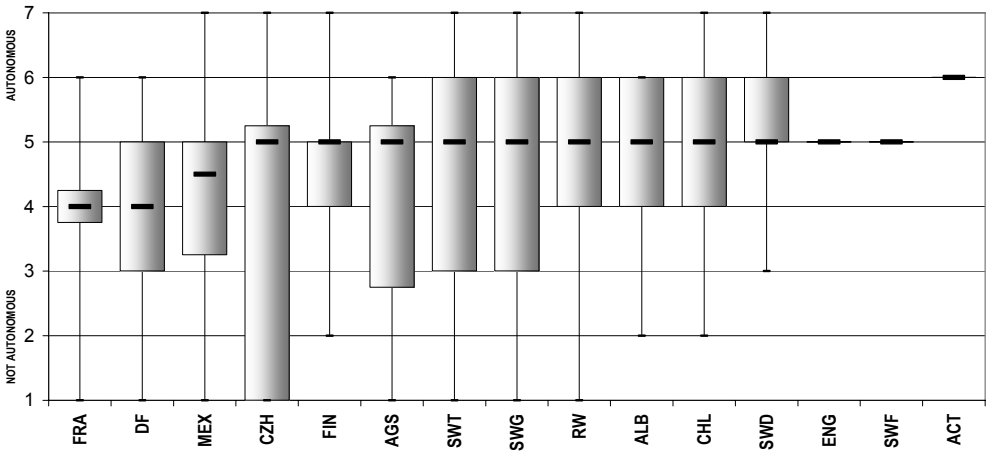
S5f: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SELECTING TEXTBOOKS)



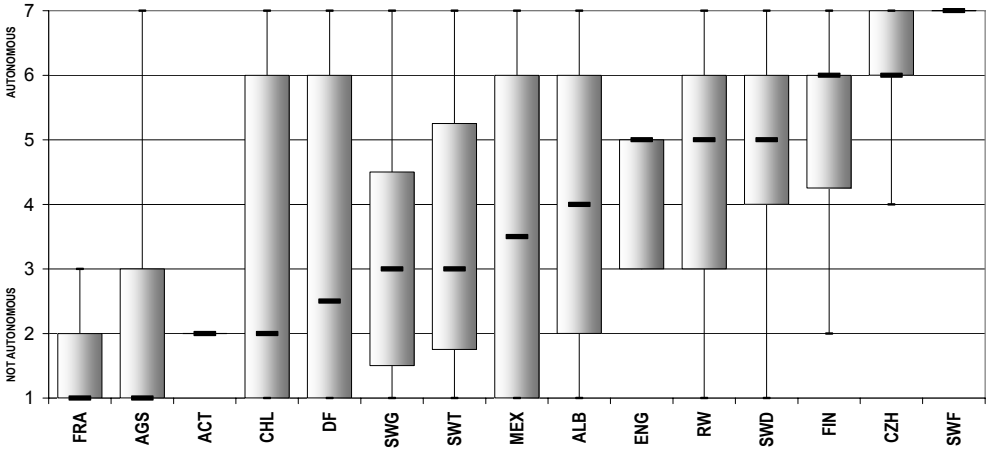
S5g: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (INNOVATION)



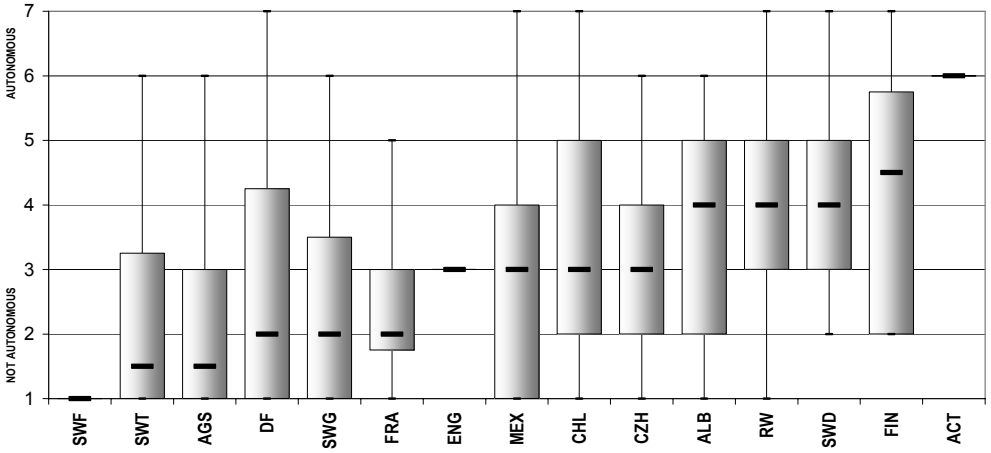
S6a: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (OVERALL)



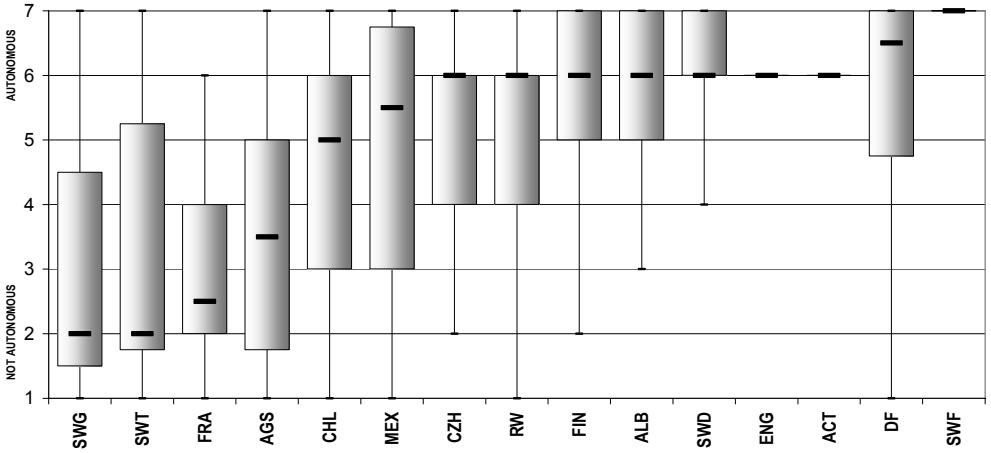
S6b: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (HIRE/REMOVE TEACHERS)



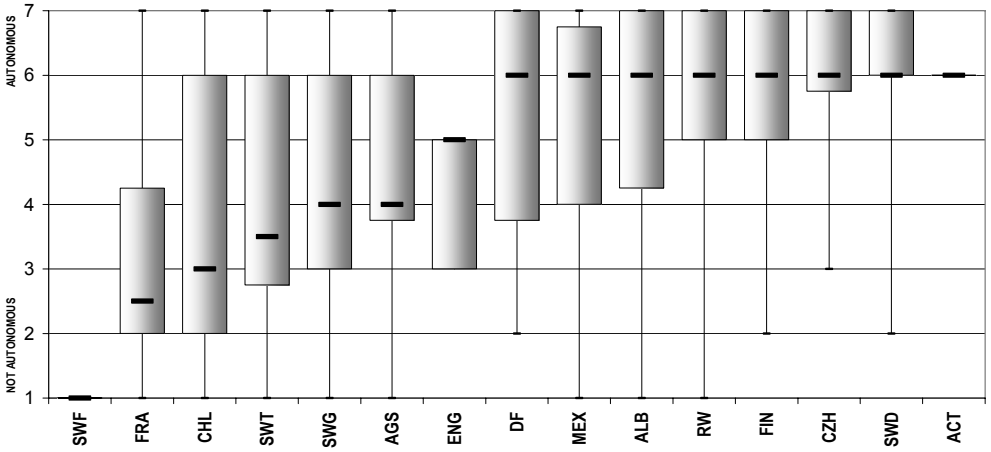
S6c: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (CURRICULUM)



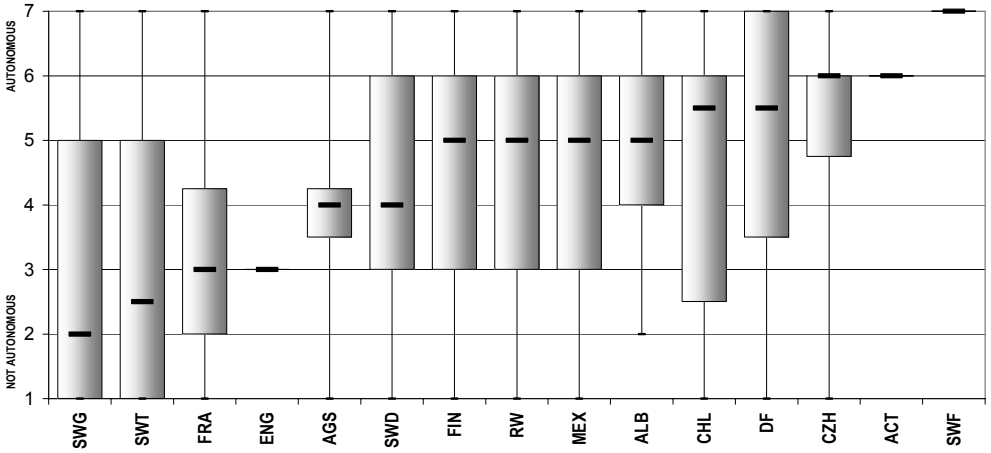
S6d: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SCHEDULING/TIME-TABLELING)



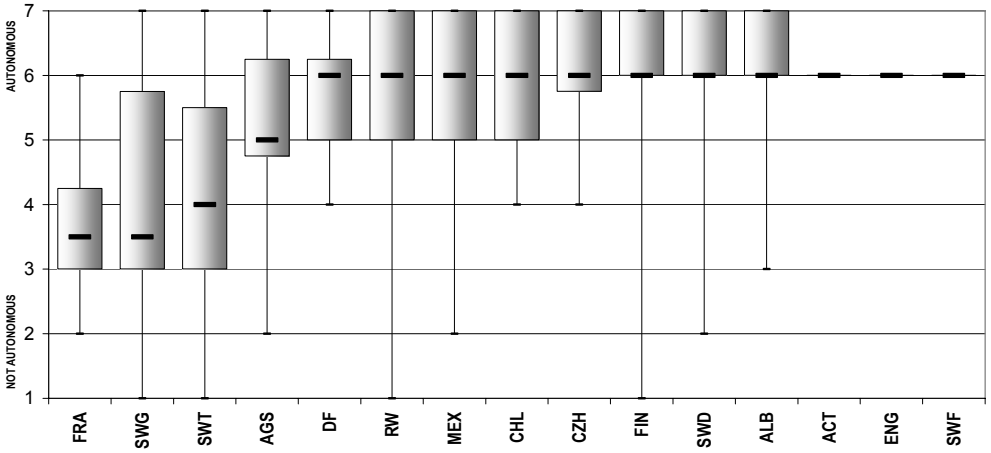
S6e : HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(EVALUATION OF TEACHERS)



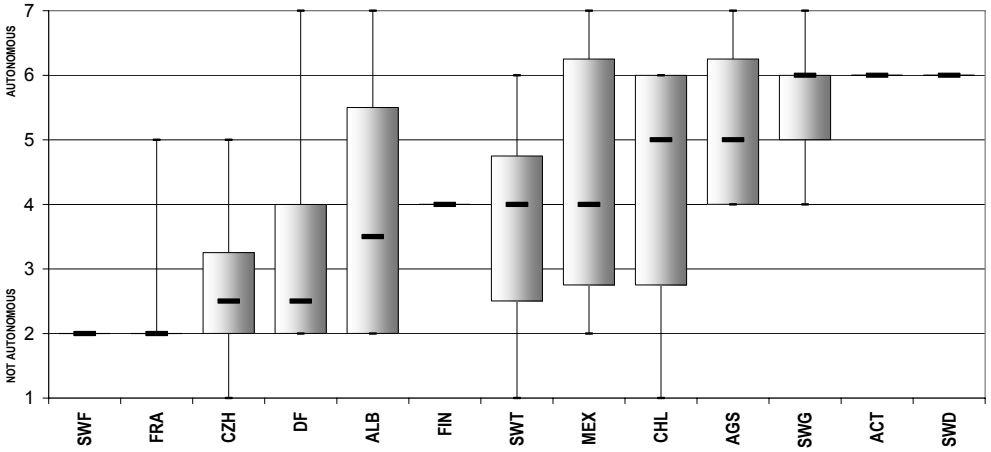
S6f: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(EVALUATION STUDENTS)



S6g: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(INNOVATION)



S6h : HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(BUDGET)



Number of observations for teachers and principals of public secondary schools

Table 1a

GENERAL	Interviews		S1		S2		S3a		S3b		S3c	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
Teachers Public	66	43	64	41	64	41	66	43	66	43	65	42
Principals Public	44	32	44	32	44	32	44	32	44	32	44	32
TOTAL	110	75	108	73	108	73	110	75	110	75	109	74

Table 1b

GENERAL	Interviews		S3d		S3e		S3f		S3g		S4	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
Teachers Public	66	43	66	43	66	43	64	41	65	42	66	43
Principals Public	44	32	44	32	44	32	44	32	43	31	44	32
TOTAL	110	75	110	75	110	75	108	73	108	73	110	75

Table 1c

GENERAL	Interviews		S5a		S5b		S5c		S5d		S5e	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
Teachers Public	66	43	66	43	66	43	66	43	66	43	63	40
Principals Public	44	32	44	32	44	32	44	32	44	32	44	32
TOTAL	110	75	110	75	110	75	110	75	110	75	107	72

Table 1d

GENERAL	Interviews		S5f		S5g		S6a		S6b		S6c	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
Teachers Public	66	43	65	42	66	43	66	43	66	43	66	43
Principals Public	44	32	44	32	44	32	43	31	43	31	42	31
TOTAL	110	75	109	74	110	75	109	74	109	74	108	74

Table 1e

GENERAL	Interviews		S6d		S6e		S6f		S6g		S6h	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
Teachers Public	66	43	66	43	66	43	66	43	65	42	0	0
Principals Public	44	32	43	31	43	31	43	31	43	31	44	32
TOTAL	110	75	109	74	109	74	109	74	108	73	44	32

Table 2: Number of observations for teachers and principals public secondary schools by country and by region

Country	S1		S2		S3a		S3b		S3c		S3d		S3e		S3f		S3g		S4		S5a		S5b		S5c	
	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub
FIN	11	7	11	7	13	7	13	7	13	7	13	7	13	7	13	7	13	6	13	7	13	7	13	7	13	7
SWD	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6
FRA	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
UK	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
ENG	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*
CZH	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	6	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5
SWT	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
SWG	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*4*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*4*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*
SWF	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*
AUS	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
ACT	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*
CAN	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2
ALB	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*
MEX	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6
DF	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*
AGS	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*
CHL	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6
Total All	64	44	64	44	66	44	66	44	65	44	66	44	66	44	64	44	65	43	66	44	66	44	66	44	66	44
Total Without MEX & CHL	41	32	41	32	43	32	43	32	42	32	43	32	43	32	41	32	42	31	43	32	43	32	43	32	43	32

Country	S5d		S5e		S5f		S5g		S6a		S6b		S6c		S6d		S6e		S6f		S6g		S6h	
	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub	TPub	PPub
FIN	13	7	12	7	13	7	13	7	13	6	13	6	13	6	13	6	13	6	13	6	13	6	0	7
SWD	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	7	6	0	6
FRA	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	0	6
UK	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
ENG	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*0*	*0*
CZH	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	0	5
SWT	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	0	5
SWG	*5*	*4*	*4*	*4*	*4*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*5*	*4*	*4*	*4*	*0*	*4*
SWF	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*
AUS	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
ACT	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*	*0*	*1*
CAN	4	2	3	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	0	2
ALB	*4*	*2*	*3*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*4*	*2*	*0*	*2*
MEX	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	12	6	0	6
DF	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*0*	*3*
AGS	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*6*	*3*	*0*	*3*
CHL	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	5	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	0	6
Total All	66	44	63	44	65	44	66	44	66	43	66	43	66	42	66	43	66	43	66	43	65	43	0	44
Total Without MEX & CHL	43	32	40	32	42	32	43	32	43	31	43	31	43	31	43	31	43	31	43	31	42	31	0	32

ANNEX 4

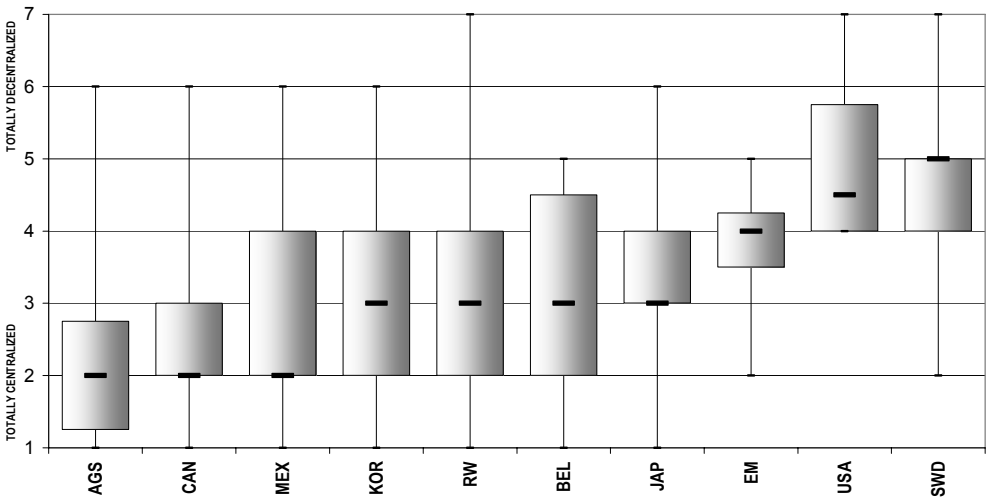
Graphs S1 to S6h All Upper Secondary Schools

And

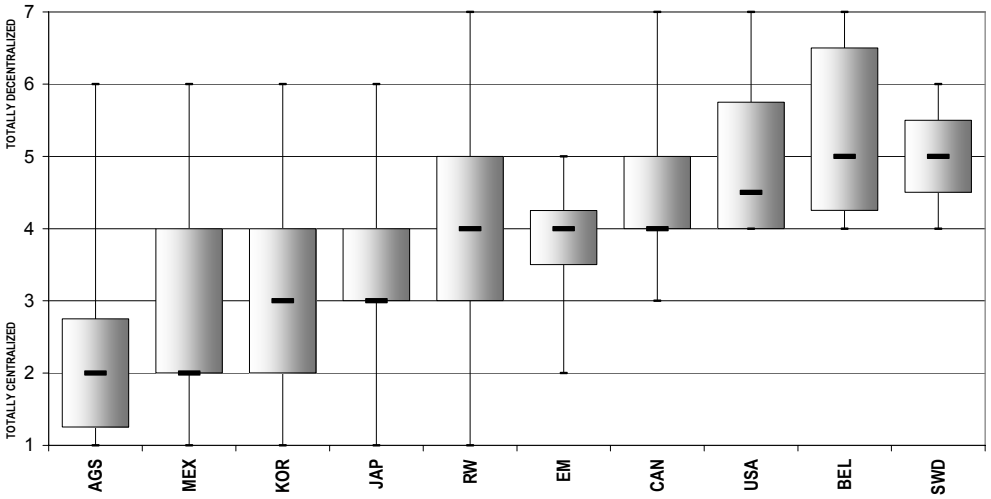
Tables with Number of Observations for Teachers and Principals

ALL UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOLS

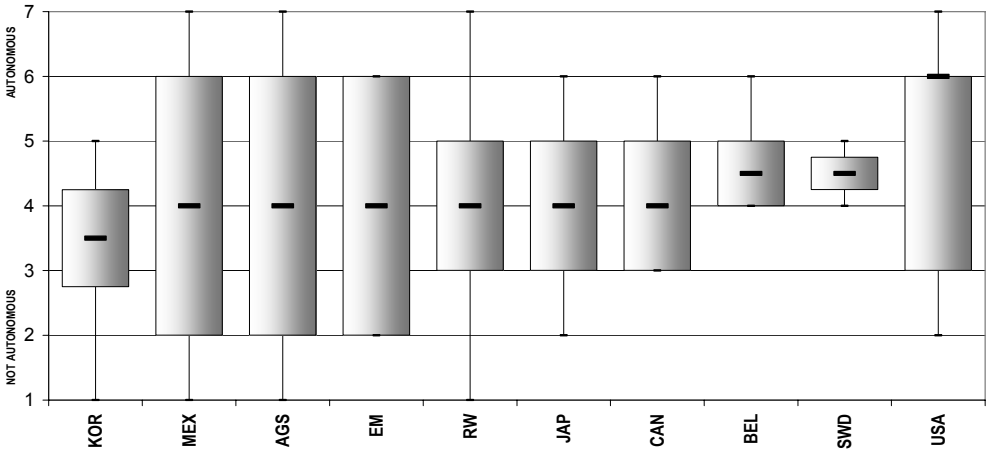
S1 : HOW CENTRALIZED IS THE EDUCATION POLICY IN YOUR REGION?



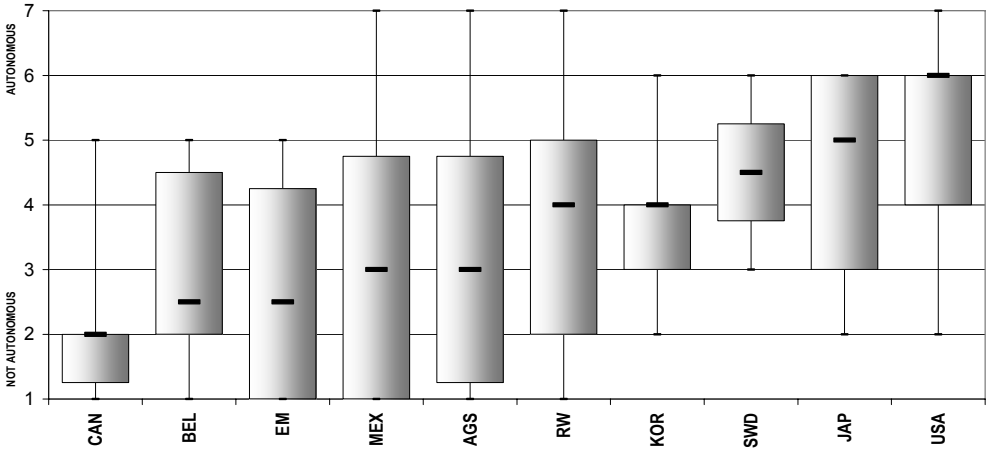
S2 : HOW CENTRALIZED IS THE EDUCATION POLICY IN YOUR COUNTRY?



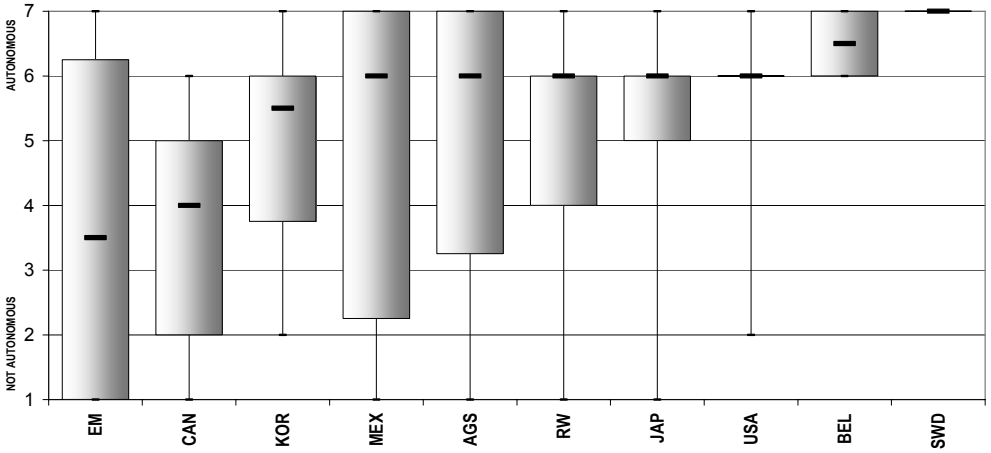
S3a : HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, IN YOUR COUNTRY WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(OVERALL)



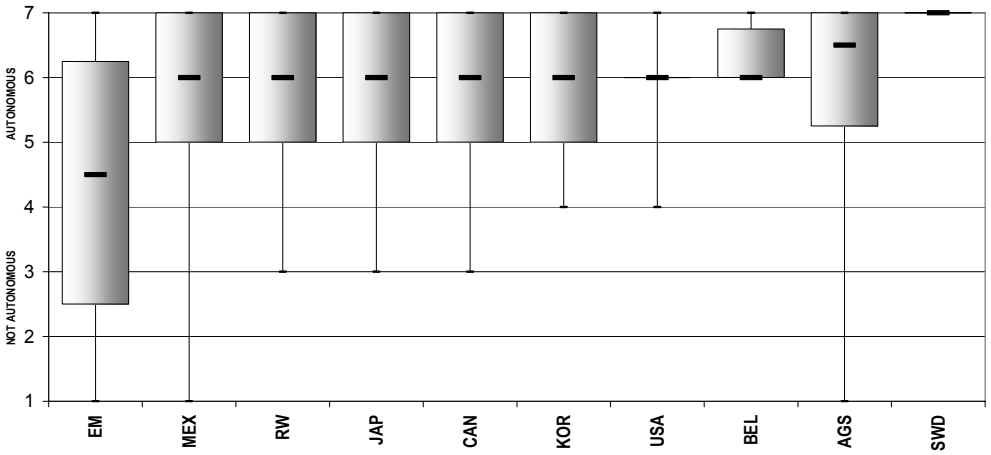
S3b : HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(CURRICULUM)



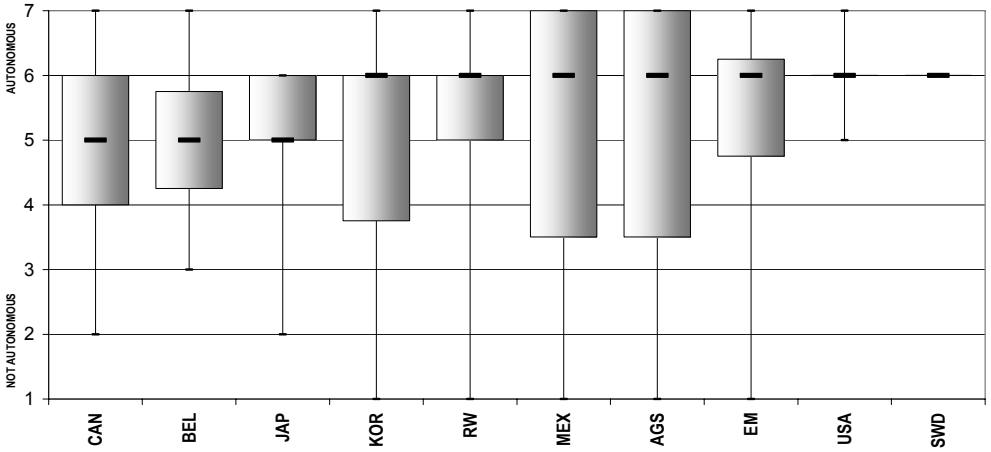
S3c : HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(TEXTBOOKS)



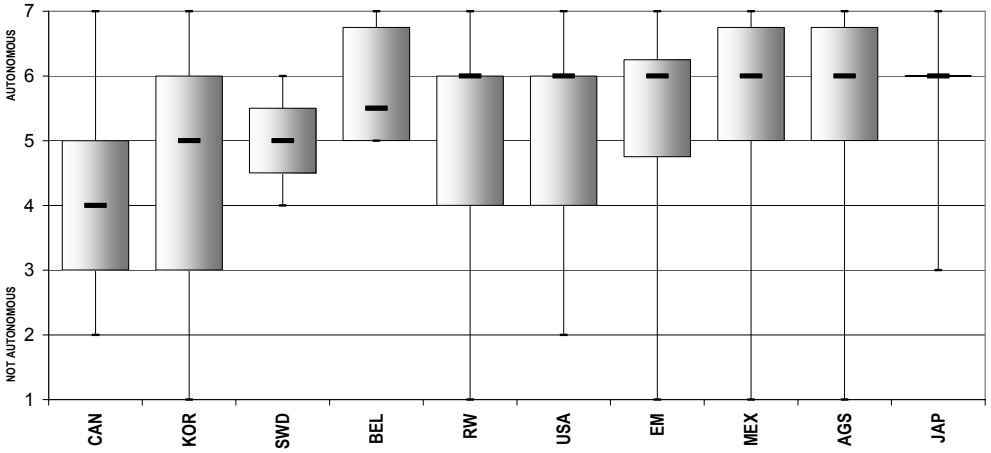
S3d: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL,WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SCHOOL MATERIALS)



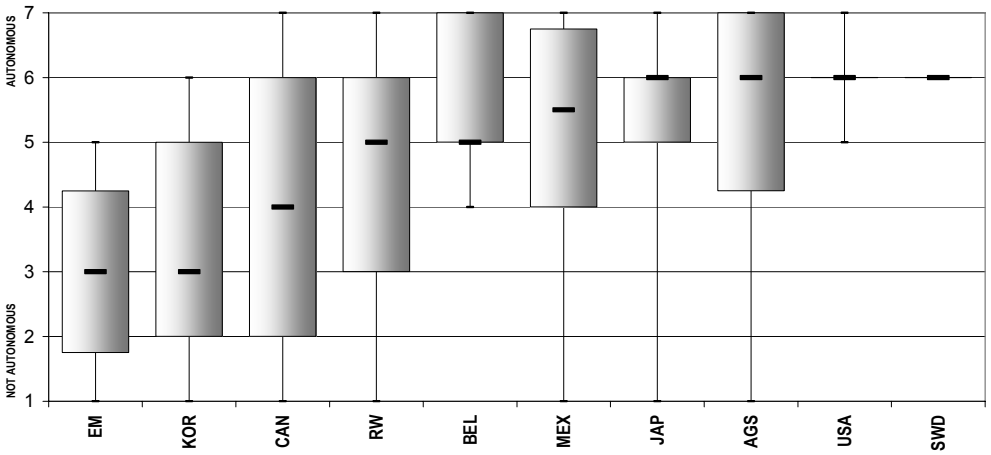
S3e: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL,WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SCHEDULES / TIME-TABLELING)



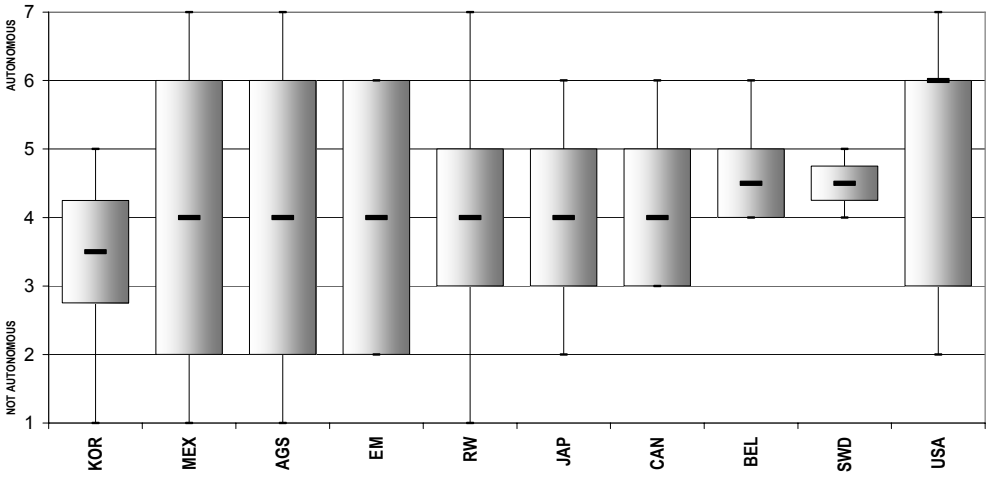
S3f: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL,WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(EXAMS/TESTS)



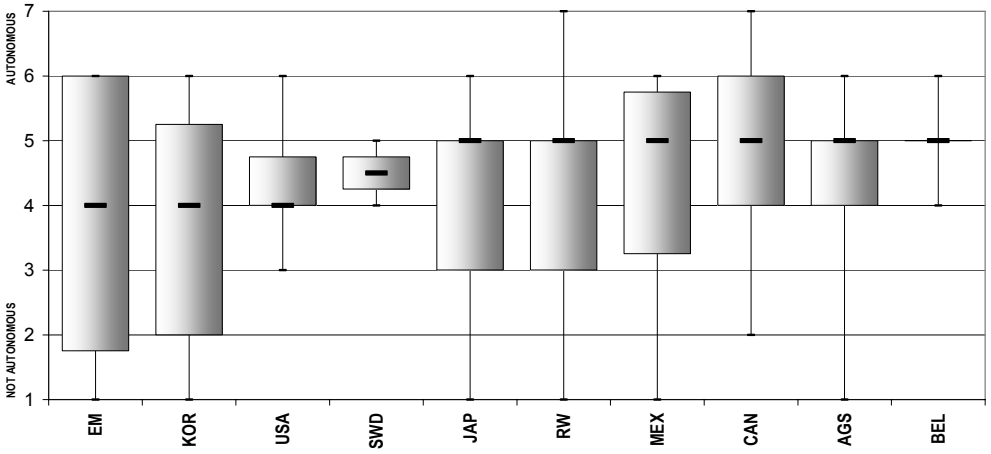
S3g : HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(FREE TIME FOR STUDENTS DURING DAY ACTIVITIES)



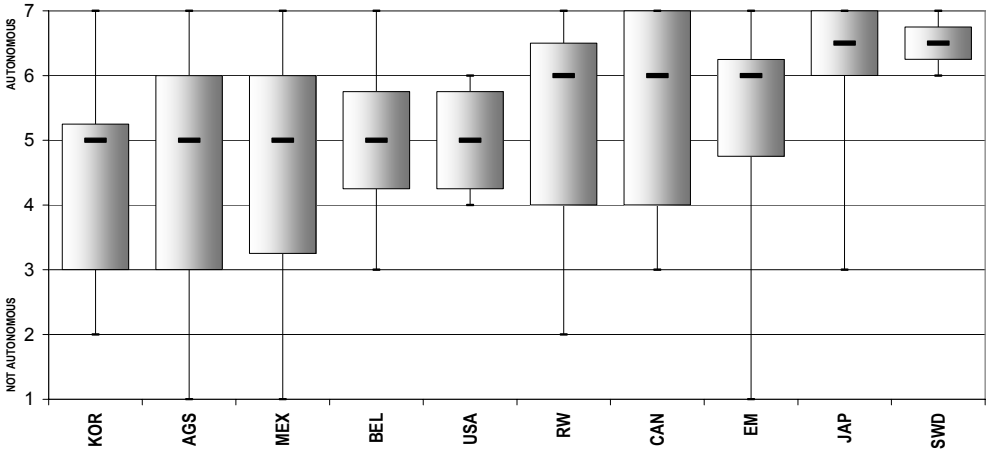
S4: HOW AUTONOMOUS ARE SCHOOLS IN YOUR COUNTRY AT THE COMPULSORY LEVEL WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?



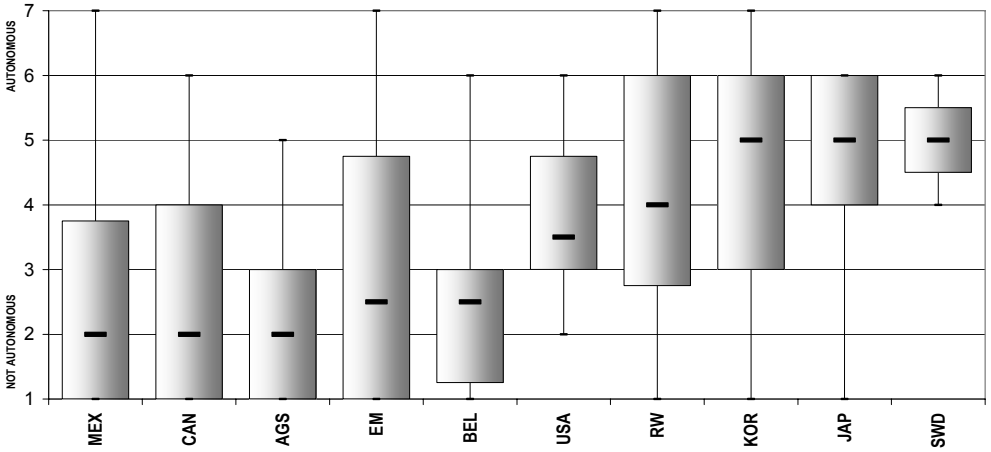
S5a: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (OVERALL)



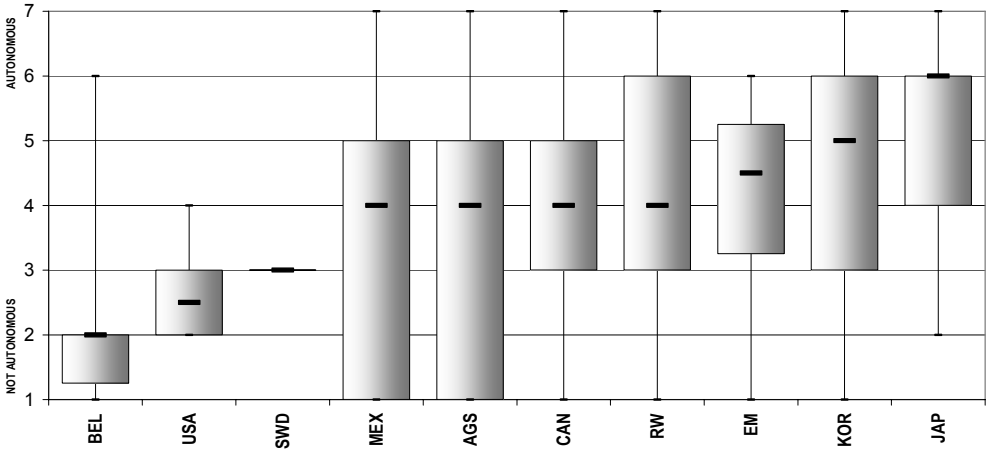
S5b: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (MEETING WITH PARENTS)



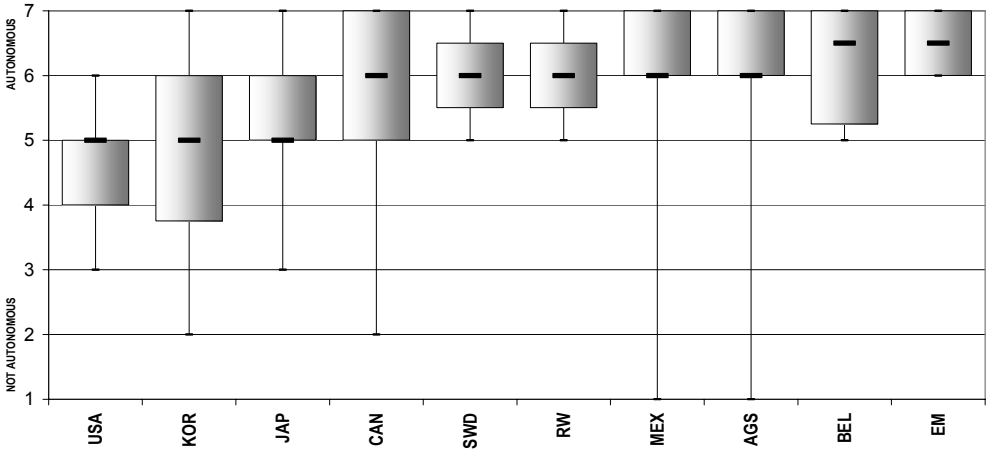
S5c : HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SETTING THE COURSE CURRICULA)



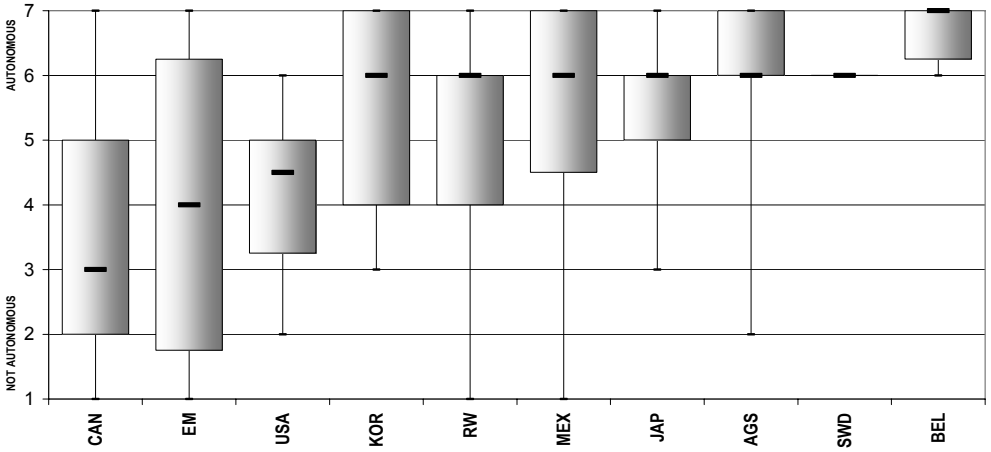
S5d: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SETTING THE CLASS SCHEDULE)



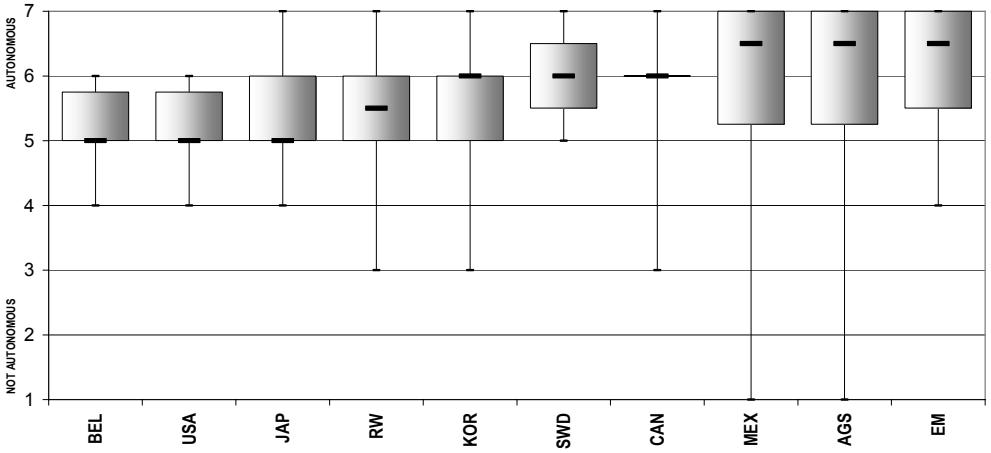
S5e: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(SELF EVALUATING STUDENTS)



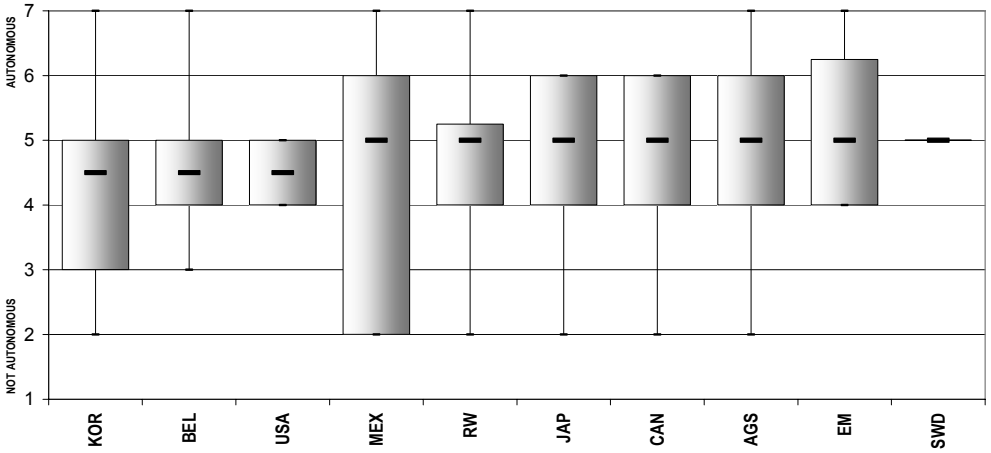
S5f: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SELECTING TEXTBOOKS)



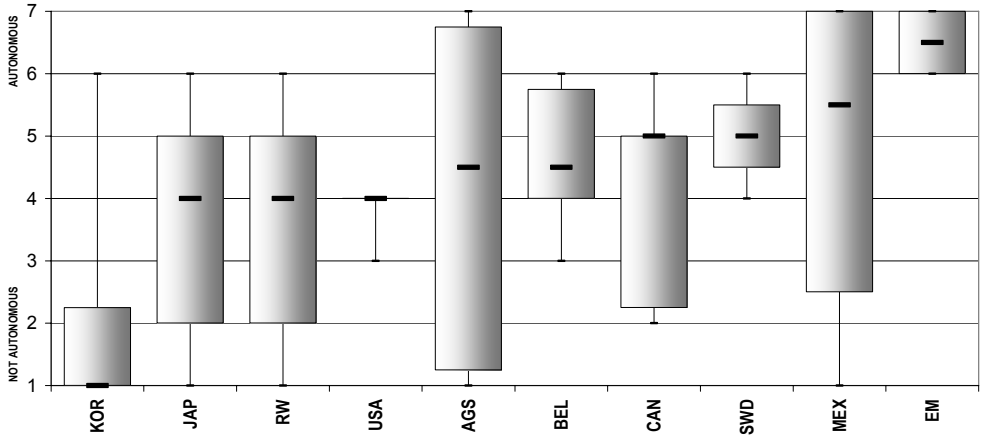
S5G: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE TEACHERS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (INNOVATION)



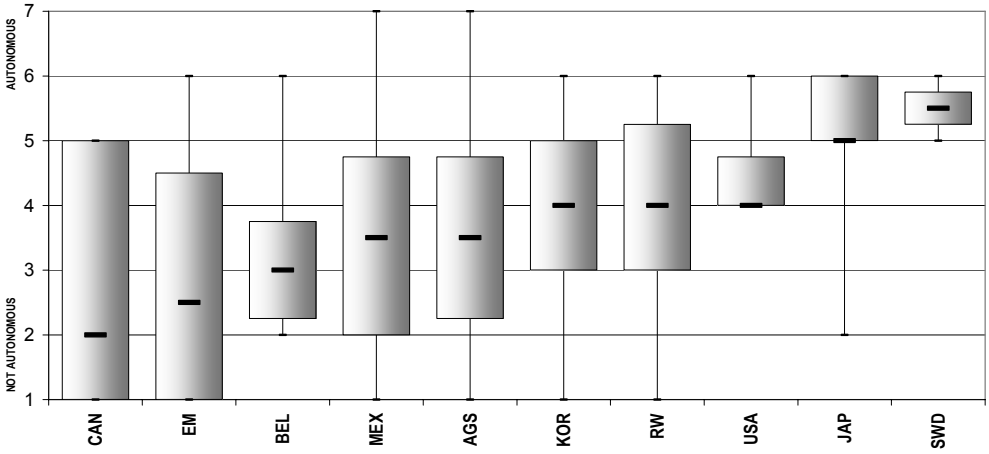
SS6a: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (OVERALL)



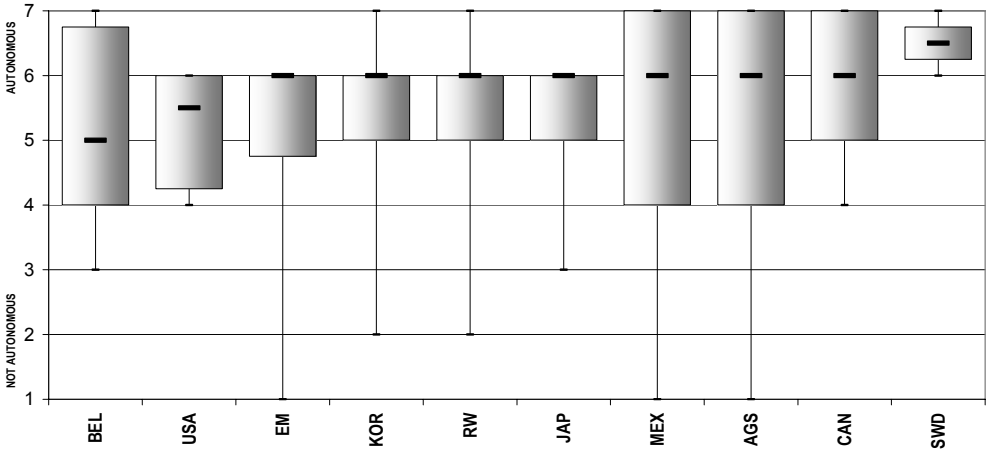
S6b: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (HIRE/REMOVE TEACHERS)



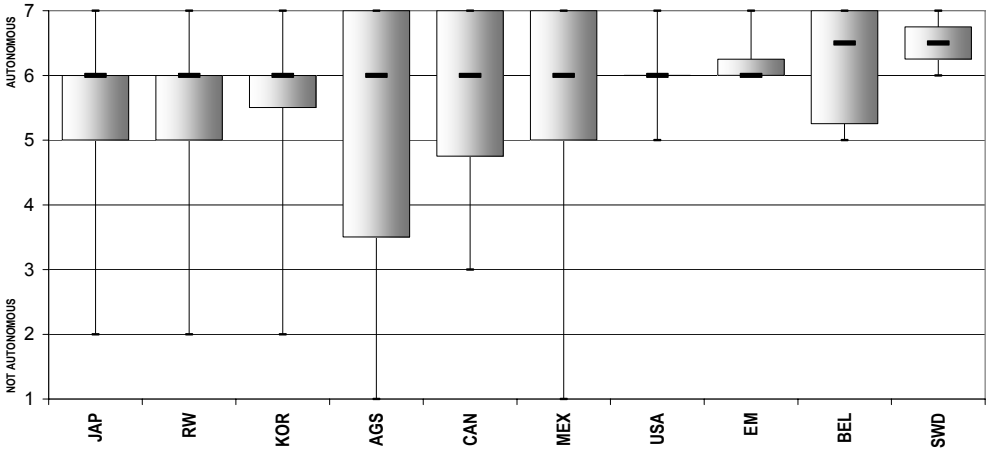
S6c: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (CURRICULUM)



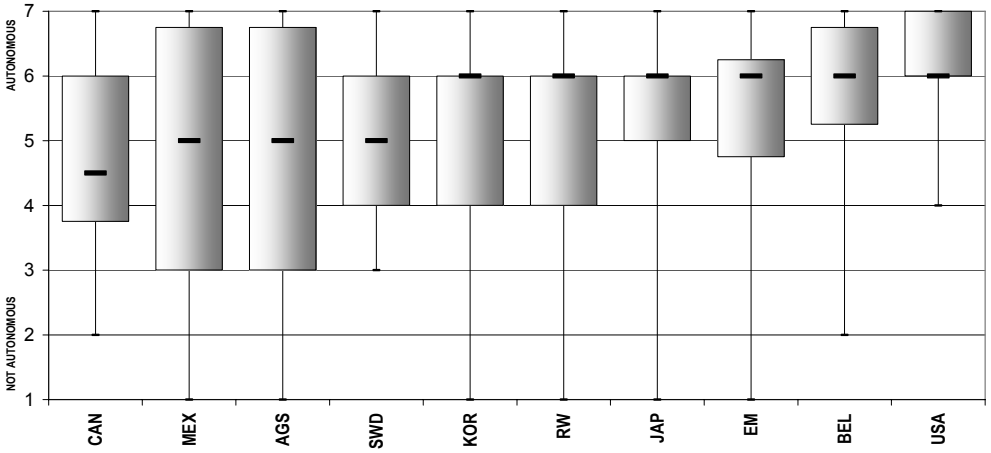
S6d: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS? (SCHEDULING/TIME-TABLELING)



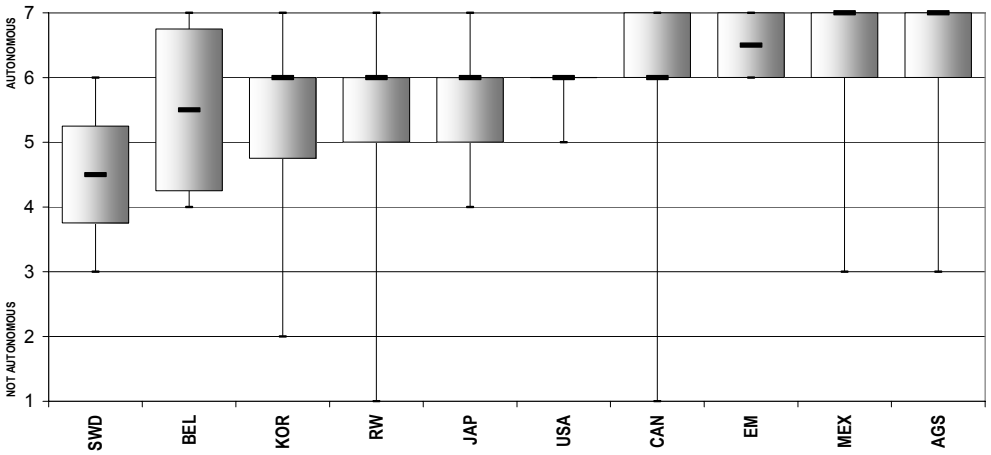
S6e : HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(EVALUATION OF TEACHERS)



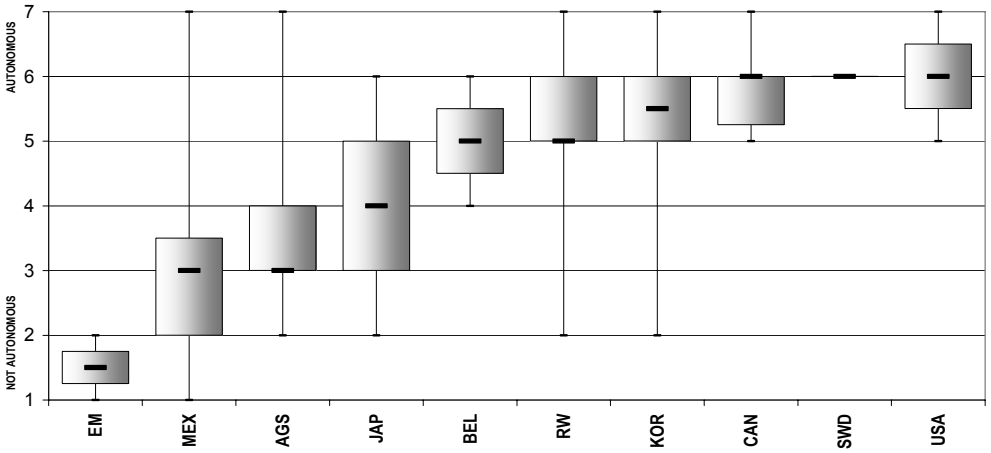
S6f: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(EVALUATION STUDENTS)



S6g: HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(INNOVATION)



S6h : HOW AUTONOMOUS OR INDEPENDENT ARE PRINCIPALS OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE SCHOOLS, LIKE YOUR SCHOOL, WHEN MAKING DECISIONS?
(BUDGET)



Number of observations for teachers and principals all upper secondary schools

Table 1a

GENERAL	Interviews		S1		S2		S3a		S3b		S3c	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
Teachers Public	48	39	48	39	48	39	47	38	47	38	47	38
Teachers Private	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5
Principals Public	29	23	29	23	29	23	29	23	29	23	28	22
Principals Private	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3
TOTAL	88	70	88	70	88	70	87	69	87	69	86	68

Table 1b

GENERAL	Interviews		S3d		S3e		S3f		S3g		S4	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
Teachers Public	48	39	47	38	47	38	47	38	47	38	47	38
Teachers Private	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5
Principals Public	29	23	28	22	28	22	28	22	28	22	29	23
Principals Private	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	2	4	3
TOTAL	88	70	86	68	86	68	86	68	85	67	87	69

Table 1c

GENERAL	Interviews		S5a		S5b		S5c		S5d		S5e	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
Teachers Public	48	39	48	39	46	37	48	39	48	39	45	36
Teachers Private	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5
Principals Public	29	23	28	22	28	22	28	22	28	22	28	22
Principals Private	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3
TOTAL	88	70	87	69	85	67	87	69	87	69	84	66

Table 1d

GENERAL	Interviews		S5f		S5g		S6a		S6b		S6c	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
Teachers Public	48	39	48	39	48	39	48	39	48	39	48	39
Teachers Private	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5
Principals Public	29	23	28	22	28	22	28	22	29	23	28	22
Principals Private	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3
TOTAL	88	70	87	69	87	69	87	69	88	70	87	69

Table 1e

GENERAL	Interviews		S6d		S6e		S6f		S6g		S6h	
Origin	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL	Total	Without MEX&CHL
Teachers Public	48	39	48	39	46	37	47	38	48	39	0	0
Teachers Private	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	7	5	0	0
Principals Public	29	23	28	22	28	22	28	22	28	22	29	23
Principals Private	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	3
TOTAL	88	70	87	69	85	67	86	68	87	69	33	26

Table 2: Number of observations for teachers and principals all upper secondary schools by country and by region

Country	S1				S2				S3a				S3b				S3c				S3d				S3e			
	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv
SWD	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
BEL	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2
KOR	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1
JAP	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0
USA	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0
CAN	8	0	6	0	8	0	6	0	8	0	6	0	8	0	6	0	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0
MEX	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1
AGS	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*
EM	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*
Total All	48	7	29	4	48	7	29	4	47	7	29	4	47	7	29	4	47	7	28	4	47	7	28	4	47	7	28	4
Total Without MEX & CHL	39	5	23	3	39	5	23	3	38	5	23	3	38	5	23	3	38	5	22	3	38	5	22	3	38	5	22	3

Country	S3f				S3g				S4				S5a				S5b				S5c				S5d			
	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv
SWD	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
BEL	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	1	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2
KOR	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1
JAP	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	13	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0
USA	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0
CAN	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0	8	0	6	0	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0
MEX	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1
AGS	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*	*7*	*2*	*4*	*1*
EM	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*	*2*	*0*
Total All	47	7	28	4	47	7	28	3	47	7	29	4	48	7	28	4	46	7	28	4	48	7	28	4	48	7	28	4
Total Without MEX & CHL	38	5	22	3	38	5	22	2	38	5	23	3	39	5	22	3	37	5	22	3	39	5	22	3	39	5	22	3

Country	S5e				S5f				S5g				S6a				S6b				S6c				S6d			
	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv
SWD	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0
BEL	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2
KOR	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1
JAP	13	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	6	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0
USA	3	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0
CAN	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0	8	0	6	0	8	0	6	0	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0
MEX	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1
AGS	7	2	4	1	7	2	4	1	7	2	4	1	7	2	4	1	7	2	4	1	7	2	4	1	7	2	4	1
EM	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0
Total All	45	7	28	4	48	7	28	4	48	7	28	4	48	7	28	4	48	7	29	4	48	7	28	4	48	7	28	4
Total Without MEX & CHL	36	5	22	3	39	5	22	3	39	5	22	3	39	5	22	3	39	5	23	3	39	5	22	3	39	5	22	3

Country	S6e				S6f				S6g				S6h			
	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv
SWD	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
BEL	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	2
KOR	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	11	1	7	1	0	0	7	1
JAP	13	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	15	0	7	0	0	0	7	0
USA	4	0	2	0	3	0	2	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
CAN	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0	8	0	5	0	0	0	6	0
MEX	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	9	2	6	1	0	0	6	1
AGS	7	2	4	1	7	2	4	1	7	2	4	1	0	0	4	1
EM	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0
Total All	46	7	28	4	47	7	28	4	48	7	28	4	0	0	29	4
Total Without MEX & CHL	37	5	22	3	38	5	22	3	39	5	22	3	0	0	23	3

ANNEX 5

Template Questionnaire for Principals

S2 How centralized is the education policy in your country?

Very centralized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very decentralized

S3 How autonomous are public or private schools in your country at the lower secondary level when making decisions?

S3a **Overall**
S3b **School curriculum**
S3c **Textbooks**
S3d **Materials**
S3e **Schedules**
S3f **Exams**
S3g **Free time for students during day activities**

Zero autonomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total autonomy

S5 How autonomous or independent are teachers of public or private schools (like your school) when making decisions?

S5a **Overall**
S5b **Meeting with parents**
S5c **Setting the course curricula**
S5d **Setting the class schedule**
S5e **Self-evaluating students**
S5f **Selecting text books**
S5g **Innovation: such as, new school materials, activities for the children, new ideas**

S6 How autonomous or independent are the principals of public or private schools (like your school) when making decisions?

S6a **Overall**
S6b **Hiring and removing teachers**
S6c **Setting the school curricula**
S6d **Setting the school schedule**
S6e **Evaluating teachers**
S6f **Evaluating students**
S5g **Innovation: such as, new school materials, activities for the children, new ideas**
S6h **The management of the school budget**

S7 How do education authorities react to international and national evaluation outcomes?

Zero importance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very important

S8 How do school principals and/or school boards react to international and national evaluation outcomes?

S9 How do teachers react to international and national evaluation outcomes?

S10 How do the media react to international and national evaluation outcomes?

S11 How do the parents react to international and national evaluation outcomes?

S12 How do the students react to international and national evaluation outcomes?

S13 Under your criteria how important is the application of international standardized evaluations for the overall education system of your country?

S15 The results of domestic and international evaluations are disseminated and publicized

Very poorly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Thoroughly

S16 Do you think that results of international and domestic evaluations should be made public including the names of the schools?

Not publicized	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Totally publicized

S18 Under your criteria, how important is the participation in domestic evaluations for the improvement of the overall quality of education in your country?

Zero importance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very important

S20 Does your school have policies, programs or practices to support innovations in teaching among teachers?

Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very supportive

S21 Are teachers in your school very innovative?

Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very innovative

S23 Does your federal or national government support free choice?

Not at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very supportive

S24 Do your local or state authorities support free choice?

S25 Are the students (parents) in your district free to choose the modality or type of schooling (vouchers, independents schools, private school, public school in a different district, home schooling) and still receive public support?

S26 How important are the teachers' unions in defining education policy goals?

Zero importance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very important

S27 How often do teachers' unions strike?

Very Seldom	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very often

S28 How often are classes suspended by teachers' unions strikes or demonstrations?

S29 How open are teachers' unions to changes in education policies by federal, state or local authorities?

Not open	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very open

S30 How supportive are the teachers' unions in your country to innovations or changes at school level?

Not supportive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very supportive

S31 How supportive are the teachers' unions in your country to free choice? (i.e. vouchers)

S32 How supportive are the teachers' unions in your country to teachers' assessments or accountability?

S33 How violent can your teachers' unions become in defending a position?

Not violent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very violent

S34 How would you rank parents' participation in education in your school?

S34a **Overall**
S34f **At the classroom level in public schools**
S34g **At the classroom level in private schools**

Very low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very high

S35 Do parents of students in your school help with homework?

Very little	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very much

S36 If "Yes", are those associations or organizations influential in education policy decisions?

Non-influential	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very influential

S37 The teacher's salary at the primary level in your country compared to other salaries in your country is

Very low	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very high

S38 The teacher's salary at the secondary level is

S39 The teacher's salary at the tertiary (university) level is

S40 How well equipped is the school in ICT (information technologies) for teaching purposes?

Not equipped	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very equipped

S41 Teachers' accessibility to ICT in the school?

Not accessible	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very accessible

S42 Students' accessibility to ICT in the school?

Annex 6
All Questions and Respondents

	Question	TPub	TPriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp
S1	How centralized is the education policy in your region?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S2	How centralized is the education policy in your country?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S3	How autonomous are public or private schools, like your school, in your country when making decisions?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S3	***Autonomy in schools is key to education quality (such as performance in international evaluations)***							✓
S3a	Overall	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S3b	School curriculum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S3c	Textbooks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S3d	School Materials	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S3e	Schedules / Time-tableling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S3f	Exams / Tests	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S3g	Free time for students during day activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S4	How autonomous are schools in your country at the compulsory level when making decisions?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S4	***Autonomy in schools is key to education quality (such as performance in international evaluations)***							✓
S5	How autonomous or independent are teachers of public or private schools, like your school, when making	✓	✓	✓	✓			
S5	***Teachers autonomy is key to education quality (performance)***							✓
S5a	Overall	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S5b	Meeting with parents	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S5c	Setting the course curricula	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S5d	Setting the class schedule	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S5e	Self-evaluating students	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S5f	Selecting text books	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S5g	Innovation: such as, new school materials, activities for the children, new ideas	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S6	How autonomous or independent are the principals of public or private schools, like your school, when making	✓	✓	✓	✓			
S6	***Principals or schoolmasters autonomy is key to education quality***							✓
S6a	Overall	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S6b	Hiring and removing teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S6c	Setting the school curricula	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S6d	Schedules / Time-tableling	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S6e	Evaluating teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S6f	Evaluating students	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S6g	Innovation: such as, new school materials, activities for the children, new ideas	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S6h	The management of the school budget	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
S7	How do education authorities react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S8	How do school principals and/or school boards react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S9	How do teachers react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S10	How do the media react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S11	How do the parents react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S12	How do the students react to international and national evaluation outcomes?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S13	Under your criteria how important is the application of international standardized evaluations for the overall			✓	✓	✓	✓	
S14	Under your criteria how important is the application of domestic standardized evaluations for the overall education					✓	✓	
S15	The results of domestic and international evaluations are disseminated and publicized?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S16	Do you think that results of international and domestic evaluations should be made public including the names of	✓	✓	✓	✓			
S17	Under your criteria, how important is the participation in international evaluations for the improvement of the	✓	✓	✓	✓			
S18	Under your criteria, how important is the participation in domestic evaluations for the improvement of the overall	✓	✓					
S19	Does your country at the federal, state or local level have specific policies or programs to reward innovation in the					✓	✓	
S20	Does your school have policies, programs or practices to support innovations in teaching among teachers?	✓	✓	✓	✓			
S21	Are teachers in your school very innovative?	✓	✓	✓	✓			

	Question	TPub	Tpriv	PPub	PPriv	Acad	Govt	IntExp
S22	Factors that affect education outcomes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22a	School ambience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22b	Class ambience	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22c	Number of hours devoted to teaching in the school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22d	Number of hours devoted to studying at ahome	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22e	Parent's involvement in school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22f	Parent's involvement in homework	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22g	Level of training of teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22h	Number of years of experience of teachers	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22i	Library in the school	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22j	Number of books in te library	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22k	Public library in town or district	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22l	Socioeconomic level of the student	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22m	Level of education achived by mother	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22n	Level of education achived by father	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22o	Student's own outstanding abilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22p	Student in class with pals or friends	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22q	Class divided by level of attainment of students (ie. High performing students with high performing students only)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22r	Class size	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22s	School size	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S22t	Number of students per teacher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S23	Does your federal or national government support free choice?			✓	✓	✓	✓	
S24	Do your local or state authorities support free choice?			✓	✓	✓	✓	
S25	Are the students (parents) in your district free to choose the modality or type of schooling (vouchers, independents schools, private school, public school in a different district, home schooling) and still receive public support?			✓	✓	✓	✓	
S26	How important are the teachers' unions in defining education policy goals?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S27	How often do teachers' unions strike?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S28	How often are classes suspended by teachers' unions strikes or demonstrations?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S29	How open are teachers' unions to changes in education policies by federal, state or local authorities?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S30	How supportive are the teachers' unions in your country to innovations or changes at school level?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S31	How supportive are the teachers' unions in your country to free choice? (i.e. vouchers)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S32	How supportive are the teachers' unions in your country to teachers' assessments or accountability?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S33	How violent can your teachers' unions become in defending a position?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S34	How would you rank parents' participation in education in your school?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S34a	Overall	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S34b	In primary public schools	✓		✓		✓	✓	
S34c	In primary private schools		✓		✓	✓	✓	
S34d	In secondary public schools	✓		✓		✓	✓	
S34e	In secondary private schools		✓		✓	✓	✓	
S34f	At the classroom level in public schools	✓		✓		✓	✓	
S34g	At the classroom level in private schools		✓		✓	✓	✓	
S35	Do parents of students in your school help with homework?	✓	✓	✓	✓			
S36	Are parents' associations or organizations influential in education policy decisions?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S37	The teacher's salary at the primary and lower secondary level in your country compared to other salaries in your	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S38	The teacher's salary at the secondary level is:	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S39	The teacher's salary at the tertiary (university) level is:	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S40	How well equipped is the school in ICT (information technologies) for teaching purposes?	✓	✓	✓	✓			
S41	Teachers' accessibility to ICT in the school?	✓	✓	✓	✓			
S42	Students' accessibility to ICT in the school?	✓	✓	✓	✓			
S43	All things considered, how independent are principals of public schools in the management of their bidgets in your					✓	✓	

ANNEX 7
International Experts' Equivalent Benchmark Questions

Questions for Teachers, Principals, Academic & Government Experts	Equivalent for International Experts
S3 How autonomous are public or private schools, like your school, in your country when making decisions?	Autonomy in schools is key to education quality (such as performance in international [national] evaluations [assessments])
a) Overall	a) Overall
b) Curriculum	b) Curriculum
c) Text books	c) Text books
d) School materials	d) School materials
e) Schedules / Time-tableling	e) Schedules / Time-tableling
f) Exams/ Tests	f) Exams/ Tests
g) Free time for students during day activities	
S4 How autonomous are schools in your country at the compulsory level when making decisions?	Autonomy in schools is key to education quality (such as performance in international [or national] evaluations [or assessments])
S5 How autonomous or independent are teachers of public or private schools, like your school, when making decisions?	Teachers autonomy is key to education quality (performance)
a) Overall	a) Overall
b) Meeting with parents	b) Meeting with parents
c) Setting the course curricula	c) Setting the course curricula
d) Setting the class schedule	d) Setting the class schedule
e) Self evaluating students	e) Self evaluating students
f) Selecting text books	f) Selecting text books
g) Innovation: such as, new school materials, activities for the children, new ideas	g) Innovation: such as, new school materials, activities for the children, new ideas
S6 How autonomous or independent are the principals of public or private schools, like your school, when making decisions?	Principals or schoolmasters autonomy is key to education quality
a) Overall	a) Overall
b) Hire/ Remove teachers	b) Hire/ Remove teachers
c) Setting the school curricula	c) Setting the school curricula
d) Schedules / Time-tableling	d) Schedules / Time-tableling
e) Evaluating teachers	e) Evaluating teachers
f) Evaluating students	f) Evaluating students
g) Innovation: such as, new school materials, activities for the children, new ideas	g) Innovation: such as, new school materials, activities for the children, new ideas
h) The management of the school budget	h) The management of the school budget

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ANMEB	Acuerdo Nacional para la Modernización de la Educación Básica en México. [National Understanding for the Modernization of School Education in Mexico]
BLTT	Borrowing, lending, translating, and transferring
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
DIPF	German Institute for International Educational Research
ESIO	Education and School Inputs and Outputs
ESPP	Education and School Policies and Practices
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IEA	International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement
INEE	Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación [National Institute for the Assessment of Education]
INES	Indicators of National Education Systems
ISERP	International School Effectiveness Research Project
ISTOF	The International System for Teacher Observation and Feedback
LLECE	Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación [Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (under the auspices of OREALC)]
OCDE	Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económicos
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OREALC	Oficina Regional de Educación para América Latina y el Caribe [UNESCO's Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean]
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RW	Rest of the World
SACMEQ	Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SEP	Secretaría de Educación Pública [Department of Public Education, Mexico]
SERCE	Segundo Estudio Regional Comparativo y Explicativo [Second Comparative and Explicative Regional Study]
SNTE	Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación [Nacional Union of Education Workers]
TIMSS	Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Countries' and Regions' Abbreviations

ACT	Australian Capital Territory
AGS	Aguascalientes
ALB	Alberta
AUS	Australia
BC	British Columbia
BEL	Belgium
BOS	Boston
CAN	Canada
CHL	Chile
CZH	Czech Republic
DF	Mexico City
EM	State of Mexico
ENG	England
FIN	Finland
FLA	Flanders
FRA	France
HK	Hong Kong
IRL	Ireland
JAP	Japan
KOR	South Korea
MEX	Mexico
MTL	Montreal
NSW	New South Wales
NY	New York
NZ	New Zealand
QBC	Quebec
RW	Rest of the world
SCT	Scotland
SGP	Singapore
SWD	Sweden
SWF	French Switzerland
SWG	German Switzerland
SWT	Switzerland
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States
VAL	Valonia or Wallonia

Other abbreviations

Acad	Academic Experts
Govt	Government Experts
INTEXP	International Experts
PPriv	Principals Private Schools
PPub	Principals Public Schools
TPriv	Teachers Public Schools
TPub	Teachers Private Schools