

EDUCATION SERVICES LIBERALIZATION

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by Dave Hill¹

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Foreword

This chapter was written in collaboration with Karen Anjar, Chris Brown, Eero Carroll, Adam Davidson-Harden, David Gabbard, Julian Gindin, Larry Kuehn, Christine Lewis, Ahmed Mukhtar, Raul Pardinaz-Solis, Beatriz Quiros, Daniel Schugurensky, Harry Smaller, Bill Templer.

These associates wrote the 11 commissioned case studies for this chapter (nine countries from four continents, one hemispheric region- Latin America, and one economic grouping region-OECD). As such they bear part-responsibility only for the sections that they wrote rather than for the chapter as a whole. In this chapter, I have simply abstracted or summarized sections from some of them, reordering, editing and

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subtitling on occasion. The three case studies presented here, on the United States, Latin America and England and Wales, are my own summaries and abstractions from the case studies submitted. Some of the 11 case studies will subsequently be published, in full, as separate chapters.

For this chapter, 11 case studies were commissioned by the author. They provide detailed information on the types, extent and effects of the liberalization of schooling and further education. The studies are written by people who, at the time of writing, were academic writers and trade union officials and representatives.

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1. Introduction

Education, along with other public and formerly publicly owned services, is being liberalized in many countries. The extent, mechanisms and effects vary. However, this chapter suggests and tests a series of hypotheses.

- Liberalization of schooling and education services has occurred in many countries around the world.
- Particular national and international levers are promoting the liberalization process.
- Educational services are becoming “Americanized” through policies and processes such as privatization, decentralization, deregulation, “new public management” (business management methods), commercialization and marketization.
- Liberalization is making provision of services more unequal and selective rather than universal. This is intensifying race-, gender- and class-based hierarchies, reflected in formally or informally tiered systems of schooling. In less developed countries, services are available mainly to middle-class or wealthier families. In developed countries, the quality and type of schooling is increasingly stratified.
- Liberalization is eroding workers’ securities.
- Liberalization attempts to embed a shift away from universal citizenship rights and identities based on the provision of services towards a system of individual consumer rights and identities. In education, this involves treating young people as “human capital” and preparing them for “jobs” rather than providing broad-based learning and critical awareness.

These aspects and effects of the liberalization of schooling and other education services are part of a wider rejection of some of the social functions of the state by governments, international organizations and business groups. Public services such as education, health and prisons are being, or have been, transformed into “tradable commodities”.

This chapter produces evidence that the liberalization of education increases inequalities within and between countries, reduces the quality of education, is detrimental to democracy and decreases workers’ pay, rights and conditions. Despite this, liberalization has proceeded apace around the globe.

2. Liberalizing policies

Deregulation and decentralization of educational services have opened the way to privatization, commercialization (marketing of products within schools), marketization (marketization of schools within a competitive market or quasi-market), and the introduction of “new public management” (business management methods) into schools, colleges and education services. These policies have been accompanied by cuts in spending on publicly funded schools and further education services, and by a discourse of antagonism to public services, workers and unions.

2.1. Privatization

The private sector is involved in education services almost everywhere, with activities ranging from selling services to educational institutions to managing and owning schools and other facilities. “Peripheral” services such as cleaning, catering, security and reprographics have been privatized within institutions. Nationally, services such as inspection, student fees and loans, and record keeping are increasingly run by private corporations rather than by local or national governments.

Privatization takes many forms in different countries. In the United States, privatization is part of the agenda of US corporations. President George W. Bush has proposed using federal funds for vouchers that students in failing schools (determined by test scores) could use to attend private schools or to receive educational services from private providers (Lipman, 2000). Other government plans that would promote privatization include assistance for charter school start-ups, creating a fund to promote “school choice” and raising the ceiling on tax-free education savings accounts, which could be used for private schools as well as for college tuition.

In the United Kingdom, “peripheral” services such as catering and cleaning were privatized (contracted out) in the 1980s. Since then, school inspection has been privatized, as has the ownership of some state schools, the management of some functions of local education authorities (school districts) and control of the new Academies — privately run but publicly funded secondary schools. These Academies require a private sponsor to contribute £2 million, in return for which the Government contributes over £20 million in capital costs plus the school’s operating costs. Yet the sponsor appoints a majority of the school governors and has the power to vary nationally agreed staff pay and conditions, alter the skill mix of staff and modify the school curriculum.

In Pakistan, private sector involvement in education was widespread prior to 1972, from primary through college levels. In 1972 the Government nationalized all 19,432 private institutions (Niazi and Hameed, 2002). However, it later concluded that the state alone could not provide universal primary education, much less shoulder the cost of the entire education system. It called for private and community involvement in education, and in particular for more private primary schools.

Starting in the mid-1990s, public policy has aimed at mobilizing private sector and civil society organizations in the financing, management and delivery of education. Private schools have mushroomed at all levels, from pre-school to postgraduate studies. There are an estimated 56,000 private institutions currently operating in Pakistan, providing education to about 6 million students (Government of Pakistan, 2004). The Government has resolved to increase private school enrolment from 15 per cent to 40 per cent by 2010 under the Education Sector Reforms project, which is being funded by all major donors including the World Bank (Government of Pakistan, 2002, p. 34). The private institutions are typically “English medium” schools, located in urban areas, and charge high fees

Commercialism

Direct commercial penetration is evident in the increasing use of commercially sponsored materials in the classroom and around the school. Whitty (2000) suggests that some aspects of marketization contribute to privatization in an ideological if not a strictly economic sense, by fostering the belief that the private sector approach is superior to that traditionally adopted in the public sector, requiring public sector institutions to operate more like those in the private sector, and encouraging private (individual/family) decision-making in place of political and professional judgments. The increasing emphasis on competition and choice has also brought with it what Whitty calls a “hidden curriculum” of marketization.

Possibly the most consistent and thorough analysis of “schoolhouse commercialism” (Molnar, 2003; Molnar et al., 2004) identifies the following eight types in the United States, most of which are on the increase:

- corporate sponsorship of school programmes and activities;
 - agreements giving marketers exclusive rights to sell a product or service on school or district grounds;
 - incentive programmes for commercial products or services as rewards for achieving an academic goal;
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- appropriation of space to sell naming rights² or advertising on school premises or property;
 - corporate-sponsored educational materials;
 - electronic marketing for media such as radio, television and internet companies to target students through schools;
 - private management of public schools, public charter schools and the involvement of private for-profit schools in voucher programmes;
 - fundraising.

2.2. Decentralization and deregulation

Liberalized education policies promote decentralization. In Latin America, decentralization efforts have been aimed at scaling down the direct responsibility of central governments for different aspects of education and bolstering increased provincial/regional, municipal and private involvement in education (Borón and Torres, 1996; Munín, 1998; Carnoy, 2002).

Another example of decentralization is Norway, where teachers, although employed by the municipalities, had their wages, working hours and work conditions centrally negotiated by the state. This changed unexpectedly in 2003, without discussion, such that from May 2004 all negotiations were to be carried out with the municipalities (Education International, 2004, p.11).

In England and Wales, decentralization of further education colleges (for the 16-19 age group) has eroded worker securities, and there are fears that the new Academies programme will have a similar effect in the secondary school system (see Section 7.3).

2.3 “Are teachers what is wrong with education?”

Teachers are being singled out for special attention in a manner unlike anything that has occurred before. Formerly, improvements to education were often associated with the need to improve conditions for teachers — class sizes, resources, salaries, benefits, pensions and job security. Even when teachers were seen to be in need of further education themselves, governments moved to expand and improve teacher education programmes and/or to offer incentives for

² Naming rights are when a person or company sponsors or funds all or part of a project and is given the right to name the building, or facility in the building, etc.

teachers to engage in further study, whether pre-service or in-service. Today, however, teachers are increasingly being criticized. Teachers themselves, it is widely claimed, constitute the main “problem” in education (see Section 7.1).

In Canada and the United States, while prescriptions for improvement vary widely, in many cases the underlying intentions are clear: individual teachers need to be more carefully selected, trained, directed, evaluated, tested and controlled (Holmes Group, 1990; Darling-Hammond and Ball, 1998; OECD, 1998; Ontario Government, 2000). Often, these initiatives are promoted as meeting a need for increased professionalism. In at least two Canadian jurisdictions (British Columbia and Ontario), government-initiated and controlled “colleges of teachers” have been established, with a mandate to control the training, certification and practice of teachers (Ontario Government, 1995). Similar measures have been taken in other countries.

3. Education workers’ social and economic security

3.1. Impact of liberalization on teachers and other education workers

Liberalization in education affects a number of aspects of workers’ securities. It commonly results in increased casualization of labour, the replacement of national pay agreements by local or institution-based bargaining, greater difficulties in securing recognition for trade unions and their right to represent workers, lower pay, increased differentials in pay and conditions through individual performance-related pay, increased intensification of work and, for school teachers and college lecturers in further education (predominantly teaching 16-19 year-olds), decreased autonomy over curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. These developments have been accompanied by increases in levels of report writing, testing, accountability, monitoring and surveillance, both by in-house local management and by government external agencies. Where full-time permanent contracts with publicly managed employers have been replaced by casualized work, and where that work or educational service has been contracted out or otherwise privatized, there has often been a decline in public service morale and standards of provision.

In England and Wales, the experiences of workers in further education colleges since decentralization (known as “incorporation”) in 1993 show clear negative effects on a number of workers’ securities in most of the above areas, including pay, conditions, casualization, intensification of work, facilities for professional development and further training, and working under “new public

management". The experience for students has been larger classes and a lowering of standards, such as less contact time with staff (Lewis, 2004b).

The seven forms of socio-economic security identified by the ILO's Socio-Economic Security Programme (ILO, 2002) are:

- labour market security;
- employment security;
- work security;
- job security;
- skill reproduction security;
- income security; and
- representation security.

There is overlap between these types of security; they are analytical categories and affect each other. For example, casualized workers (reduced employment security) are usually paid less and have fewer rights to sick pay, holiday pay and pension and other benefits (reduced income security), and fewer rights to in-service training and career progression (reduced skill reproduction security).

Not only is there an overlap between these different types of securities; all of them are threatened by privatization. In private schools in Pakistan, for example,

The workforce employed in the education sector is inevitably facing a "corporate" rather than a "social" employer. The private schools are mostly profit-seeking entities, thus ignoring workers' rights to a great extent as in Pakistan private sector employment lacks the international benchmarks of workers' socio-economic security. Private schools offer 35-80 per cent less salary while pensions, medical and other facilities and group insurance etc. are not taken care of by most schools in the private sector (Mukhtar, 2004).

Information on workers' securities (salaries, conditions of employment, employment structures, stresses/pressures at work, work identity/status) is often hard to obtain. One reason is that in decentralized systems it is more difficult for unions to gather information (Lewis, 2004a). Another reason is that a number of companies simply refuse to provide it (see Molnar et al., 2004, with respect to the United States). However, some information is collected by, among others, Education International (a federation of teachers' unions), Public Services International (a federation of public service unions) and the International Labour Organization.

3.2. Labour market security

Labour market security refers to the provision of adequate employment and work opportunities, through high levels of employment ensured by macroeconomic policy. While globally there does not appear to have been a reduction in the full-time equivalent teaching workforce, there has been an identifiable trend in many countries to reduce the number and ratio of full-time jobs in both teaching and ancillary educational services. This is developed under “employment securities” in the next subsection. However, it affects labour market security, insofar as there is decreasing opportunity for full-time and permanent contracted work.

3.3. Employment security

Employment security refers to the terms and conditions of employment, including protection against arbitrary dismissal and employment stability compatible with economic dynamism. This concerns contractual issues in particular, such as full-time or part-time contracts, permanent or short-term contracts, flexi-time, levels of staffing, turnover rates and issues of employment protection.

Employment security has been weakened by liberalization, in particular by casualization. Staff on fixed-term contracts have the least employment security in the sector, and often have inferior terms and conditions to their permanent colleagues. Fixed-term (temporary) contracts, as opposed to permanent contracts:

- leave many staff feeling exposed and undervalued;
 - lead to difficulty in obtaining loans, mortgages and other financial benefits;
 - lead to significant recruitment and retention problems;
 - are discriminatory, as their use disproportionately affects women and minority groups;
 - destroy or damage career progression, as individuals find themselves stuck on the lowest pay grades on a succession of short-term contracts that offer little or no room for staff development;
 - mean staff coming to the end of contracts must inevitably spend time applying for funding or other posts.
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Part-time staff may well not be invited to staff meetings, and in various countries are not entitled to institutional benefits such as holiday pay, paid sick leave or maternity/paternity leave. Finally, most part-time workers are hourly paid rather than on permanent fractional or full-time contracts and hence have no job security other than that commonly agreed for the year (or other short-term period) ahead. They are second-class citizens in the workplace.

Liberalization of further education (for the 16-19 age group) in England and Wales has taken the form of decentralization of power from democratically elected local authority control to individual boards of governors running further education colleges. At the same time there has been a decline in core funding. This has resulted in increasing casualization, a growing part-time workforce, more use of temporary contracts and an increase in the use of (private) agency staff, who are not eligible for the same employment benefits as staff directly employed (Lewis, 2004b).

In 1995-96 the Further Education Funding Council estimated that 55 per cent of all college staff and 39 per cent of teaching staff worked part-time. This compares to an estimate by the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) (the college lecturers' union) of 15 per cent part-time working prior to incorporation in 1993.

As well as more part-time employment, the post-incorporation further education sector has made greater use of temporary staff. Using the census returns to the funding council in 1994-95, NATFHE estimated that 42 per cent of staff employed for more than 15 hours per week had temporary contracts. This compared to a national average across all sectors of 9 per cent. NATFHE also suggested that the use of agency staff avoided contractual obligations, citing examples where colleges had dismissed their part-time lecturers and re-employed them through a third-party provider. Many were on lower pay, self-employed and responsible for their own professional indemnity (House of Commons, 1997, col. 1133).

Ten years after incorporation NATFHE noted that core funding had declined by 10 per cent, a 12 per cent gap in pay had opened up between colleges and schools, 30 per cent of full-time lecturers had been made redundant and casualization had increased (NATFHE, 2003).

3.4. Work security

Work security refers to occupational health and safety (protection against accidents and illness at work) through safety and health regulations, including limits on working time and unsocial hours. Deteriorating working conditions,

greater stress and intensification of work are likely to be reflected in high rates of labour turnover.

The main effects of liberalization on work security have been the intensification of work and more accountability. Many countries have required teaching staff to meet externally imposed standards, accompanied by increased levels of monitoring and surveillance.

For example, since 1979 the real autonomy of state education structures in England and Wales has diminished substantially as a result of increased surveillance and control mechanisms (Hill, 2004 and 2006). These include: compulsory and nationally monitored externally-set assessments for pupils/students and trainee teachers; publication of performance league tables; a policy emphasis on “naming and shaming”, closing or privatizing “failing” schools and local education authorities (school districts); and merit pay and performance-related pay systems for teachers, usually dependent on pupil performance in tests (Jeffrey and Woods, 1998).

The drive towards performance improvement places enormous pressures on teachers and pupils. Teacher disaffection, stress-related illness and early retirement have led to a recruitment crisis. Teachers face increasing surveillance, whilst their workload increases.

The consequences in terms of lowered morale of schoolteachers and university lecturers between 1992 and today are clearly measurable. In 1992 only 10 per cent of teachers and lecturers thought that they had to “work at high speed all or most of the time”, compared with 18 per cent for other occupations. By the end of the decade this position was reversed (33 per cent versus 25 per cent), with teachers and lecturers experiencing a hefty rise in stress. Over the same period, the proportion of teachers who were “dissatisfied with their job” more than doubled from 6 per cent to 13 per cent (Beckman and Cooper, 2004).

The increase in the proportion of part-time and hourly paid staff means that more of the administrative workload is falling on the shoulders of fewer full-time workers. There has been increased “managerialization” of schooling and intensification of teachers’ work, with “teachers ... driven to burnout” (Whitty, 1997, p. 305).

In the United States, major aspects of schooling policy are “standards, accountability, and regulation of schools, teachers and students” (Lipman, 2000). In the US teaching profession, the very high attrition rate appears to be rising further. The National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future (NCATF) found a national attrition rate of about 75 per cent from the beginning of an undergraduate teacher education programme through the third year of

teaching (NCTAF, 1996). The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning in California estimates that 40 – 60 per cent of those who earn teaching credentials in the state do not seek employment as teachers. Working conditions and salaries in the US continue to deteriorate at a time when both teachers and the unions to which they belong have come under sustained political attack.

This problem is exacerbated in the privately run public schools known as charter schools. These are state-funded schools that have been handed over to private control, typically to an “edubusiness” corporation, such as Edison Schools. Edison Schools describes charter schools as

Independently operated public schools that must meet the same academic requirements as traditional public schools but are free from most of the bureaucratic and regulatory constraints of their traditional counterparts. The charter establishing each such school is a performance contract detailing the school's mission, program, goals, students served, and ways to measure success. A charter school is accountable to its sponsor — usually a university, state board, or local board (Edison Schools, 2005a).

Research suggests that teachers choose charter schools for reasons such as working with like-minded colleagues in innovative educational settings. However, it is difficult to create this environment when, according to the Schools and Staffing Survey, teacher turnover exceeds 35 per cent at charter schools compared with about 15 per cent in regular public schools (Nelson et al., 2003, p. 9).

In Canada, the intensification of teacher workload at the basic and secondary levels, accompanied by persistent underfunding, has led to considerable strain on teachers across the country (Smaller et al., 2000 and 2001).

3.5. Job security

Job security is defined as “a niche designated as an occupation or “career”, the opportunity to develop a sense of occupation” (ILO, 2002). This refers to the existence of a career progression structure and opportunity for promotion, as well as the sense of being a part of a profession, with a shared professionalism.

Teachers and other educational workers on short-term and temporary contracts do not have much job security. However, for all workers there is, in many countries, a declining level of job security and status for teachers and other education workers.

Many governments are centralizing certain educational services, setting national goals, agendas, curricula, standards and evaluations. Examples include the 1988 Education Reform Act in England and Wales, and the No Child Left Behind legislation of 2001 in the United States. A centralized curriculum leads to a loss of professional autonomy, and reflects in part the deprofessionalization of a vocation that has lost both autonomy and collegiality (Beckmann and Cooper, 2004).

The culture of “New Public Management” entails complementary and increasing control by management bodies. Intensified formal assessments require teachers to produce detailed and prescriptive “learning aims and outcomes”. This managerial approach has direct implications for the work of educators. There is no attempt here to balance issues of professional autonomy with issues of control. “Trust” in a teacher’s professionalism is displaced by a requirement to meet specified performance standards (Alexiadou, 2001, p. 429).

Another aspect of deprofessionalization is the loss of critical thought within a performance culture (Ball, 1999; Mahoney and Hextall, 2000; Boxley, 2003). School principals have become “distracted from the core purposes of improving the quality of learning and the lives of the pupils because of the unfamiliar and overwhelming demands placed on them” (Walker and Stott, 2000, p. 67). They have become focused on short-term economic objectives, failing to acknowledge the role of education in promoting a caring, cohesive, democratic society, built on notions of “citizenship” where “critical participation and dissent” are viewed as desirable (Bottery, 2000, p.79).

3.6. Skill reproduction security

Skill reproduction security refers to the existence of opportunities to gain and retain skills, through innovative means as well as apprenticeships and training courses.

As noted above in connection with the decline in employment security, workers on fixed-term temporary contracts, and those on hourly paid contracts, have little opportunity for career progression. Managements, whether public or private, are less willing to pay for in-service training for staff they may not re-employ.

It is obvious that casualization will lead to a training deficit. From the support staff point of view, and looking at, say, the school meals service, contracting out has led to demanning and deskilling ... Most catering assistants work 10-15 hours a week and employers will not invest in them. They are just units of labour (Lewis, 2004a).

In England and Wales, the increased use of casual staff in further education colleges affects the quality of the service as “casual staff are disconnected from wider college matters, curriculum issues, student welfare and extra-curricula activities” (Lewis, 2004b). The Further Education Development Agency (FEDA) has also expressed concern that not all colleges are applying the full range of development opportunities to part-time staff (House of Commons, 1998, para 179).

There are similar concerns in other countries. In Australia, casual teachers “have no capacity to plan their futures. They have reduced access to professional development, reduced capacity to form collegial relationships with their fellow teachers and little if no opportunity to participate in the community life of their workplace” (New South Wales Teachers Federation, 2004; see also Hester, 1998). Temporary and agency staff are likely to be even more disadvantaged.

In privatized schools, managements and owners are less likely to bear the costs of in-service training (or, indeed, of other benefits) than in publicly run schools. In Pakistan, for example, there is no concept of on-the-job training and retirement benefits in private schools (Haq, 2004). “Private schools as employers do not pay attention to job security, on-the-job training, better working conditions and long-term growth options etc. since they are not sure of the tenure of such employees” (Mukhtar, 2004).

3.7. Income security

Income security refers to the provision of adequate and reliable incomes. This relates not only to wages and salaries, but to other benefits and rewards with a cash value including pension rights, health insurance, statutory sick pay, and all-year contracts as opposed to “term-time” contracts and pay.

Teachers and school support services are expensive. The climate of fiscal restraint in recent years has threatened income security as well as employment security in many countries. For instance, in Latin America:

Salaries remain the biggest chunk of education budgets, even though teachers have been underpaid. Primary school teachers in Latin America earn between USD100 and USD400 a month in countries where the minimum wage is between USD80 and USD120. In nearly all countries, teachers earn only about as much as unskilled workers. Neo-liberal economists do not address this problem because fair wages for teachers would require permanent increases in school budgets. Instead, the [World] Bank recommends paring down teachers’ already measly salaries (Puiggrós, 2002).

Localized/decentralized pay bargaining can lead to lower local pay deals. This power over workers' pay and conditions is given to the managements of Academies in England and Wales and privately managed public sector charter schools in the United States.

A survey of 500 US school districts found that average teacher salaries had declined by nearly 2 per cent over the past ten years (Education Week, 2004). Charter schools pay teachers less than publicly run schools. One recent study (Allegretto et al., 2004, p. 2) reveals that since 1993 teacher wages have fallen 11.5 per cent relative to workers with similar education and skills, with no improvement in benefits to offset this increased wage disadvantage. However, the salaries of teachers in charter schools lag even further behind. According to the 1999-2000 Schools and Staffing Survey, 41 per cent of charter school teachers had total yearly earnings under USD30,000, compared to 20 per cent in regular public schools.

In other countries, teacher pay in private schools is markedly inferior to that in publicly provided and funded schools. For example, in Pakistan, a primary school teacher in the public sector receives on average 4,000 rupees per month while a secondary school teacher's average pay is 8,000 rupees (Mukhtar, 2004). The private sector pays less — on average, 2,500 rupees for primary school and 5,000 rupees for secondary school teachers (Haq, 2004). There are certain exceptions, since elite schools that charge high fees can offer higher pay to teachers.

In England and Wales, the widespread contracting out of school meals, school cleaning and other services to schools and colleges in the 1980s led to severe deterioration of pay and conditions for thousands of low-paid, mainly women workers.

3.8. Representation security

Representation security refers to the protection of workers in the labour market through independent trade unions and other bodies able to represent the interests of workers and working communities. This means the right of workers to organize in trade unions, and the recognition by managements of the right of bona fide unions to represent their members. By contrast, the "company unions" or "professional associations" often preferred by management may be "tame" associations, for example, committed to no-strike action and/or less effective in negotiating on behalf of members.

Representation security is under attack through a number of liberalizing policies, especially decentralization, privatization, and individualized pay

bargaining (for instance, through performance-related pay). A fourth policy is the deliberate weakening of trade unions, for example, by removing their national bargaining rights (England and Wales) or vilifying them in the public debate (the United States).

Effects of decentralization and privatization on representation security

The basic idea that runs through the World Bank's *Making services work for poor people* (World Bank, 2004) is that educational services can be made to work for the poor by giving more power to poor parents at the local level, including the power to hire and fire and to "discipline" teachers. The report also suggests building market mechanisms within public school systems, removing the negotiating role of teachers' unions, and hiring unqualified people as "teachers" at very low levels of pay. The only examples of education union interventions cited by the Bank are negative. By contrast, Education International, which represents teachers' unions, points out that education unions can be "reform champions" (to use the Bank's term) — but for real reform, not just measures to cut costs and shift political responsibility away from governments (Education International, 2003b, p. 8).

Torres et al. (2004), in their study of Latin America, note that decentralization erodes the bargaining power of teachers' unions. Decentralization, together with privatization and quasi-privatization, "are fragmenting constituencies and thus inhibit the possibilities of building large and powerful organizations". Unions are not sure how to respond — "whether to resist the waves of reforms, or to accept them and adapt their structures to better serve teachers in decentralized schools" (pp. 3-4).

These problems have been documented in a series of complaints to the ILO by education workers, and are reflected in the lack of progress towards the goals set out in the ILO/UNESCO *Recommendation concerning the status of teachers* (ILO/UNESCO, 1966). The following excerpt from a report of an ILO-sponsored meeting on educational personnel illuminates the concerns:

A Worker member referred to a dichotomous situation in a number of Latin American countries where freedom of association existed, but where workers in education did not enjoy the right to engage in trade union activities, giving as examples Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala and Peru. Meetings and assemblies of trade union leaders to discuss provincial and national level issues were prohibited as were strikes and similar collective action. Workers attached the greatest importance to effective participation of the educational community in decision-making and in the implementation of school curricula.

Under the principle of democratic participation many governments, such as those of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, applied World Bank-financed or assisted programmes aimed at enabling small local associations of parents to hire and fire teachers. Teachers' organizations were committed to resisting these programmes, which, in a subtle way, were leading to privatization and decentralization of education.

These developments were in clear violation of laws which regulated working conditions at the national level. They also hindered national level negotiations involving trade union organizations as they had the effect of pushing such negotiations to the level of local school centres. While teachers' organizations and trade unions wished to avoid confrontation with both parents and governments, there was a need to defend the principle of education as a public right (ILO, 2000, pp. 26-27).

This excerpt testifies to the threats to representation security and an increasing lack of job security and status for educators across the region. At a more extreme level, threats to teachers have reached tragic proportions in the conflict in Colombia, where paramilitary death squads have targeted and murdered many teacher union members (Schierenbeck, 2004).

The transfer of negotiations from the national to the provincial or local (school and college) level leads to different pay scales for workers in comparable institutions. This strikes at the heart of the concept of professional equity, under which teachers with similar qualifications can expect the same pay and conditions at any education institution of the same level across the country. It also weakens trade union bargaining power. Without strong unions, the pay and working conditions of education workers will further deteriorate, except for the few who receive performance-related pay enhancements or other "merit rewards".

Prior to "incorporation" in 1993, the pay and conditions of lecturers in further education colleges in England and Wales were bargained nationally. However, the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, which established colleges as publicly funded independent bodies,

...was to open the door to pay bargaining chaos, significant attacks on working conditions, increased casualization and instability for the sector. Staff were to suffer from the impact of working for "little businesses", funded precariously by a giant quango (the Further Education Funding Council) and bedevilled by targets and a bureaucratic inspection regime. Trade unions struggled to protect their members in this corporate environment (Lewis, 2004b).

Liberalization entails not only variations in pay and conditions between workers in different institutions, but also between workers of similar status within the same institution, through individualized performance-related pay schemes that have been introduced in a number of countries.

In Latin America, examples include Mexico's Carrera Magisterial programme, which rewards individual teachers on the basis of measured performance, and Chile's *Sistema Nacional de Evaluación del Desempeño*, which pays monetary rewards to schools for distribution among the staff (Di Gropello, 2004, p.31).

Box 1 EDUCO and the loss of teachers' securities

Some of the interconnected effects of school decentralization programmes can be illustrated by one particular World Bank-supported project, the *Educación con Participación de la Comunidad* (EDUCO) schools plan in El Salvador, which has created schools in rural areas run by community councils. While in principle the reform was intended to provide free education, councils were also granted the power to raise funds locally. This has resulted in inequity among EDUCO schools themselves, as well as in comparison to traditional public schools, as different forms of local "cost-recovery" in ancillary fees have developed (Marchelli, 2001, p. 23).

Praising EDUCO schools in its 2004 World Development Report, the World Bank ignores these social equity consequences. It sees the EDUCO as a potential means of restructuring teacher compensation through increased "decentralized" control over teacher hiring, firing and salaries. (Teachers at EDUCO schools are hired on one-year renewable contracts.)

Educo's more flexible compensation scheme resulted in greater variability in teacher earnings, which suggests that parent associations used compensation to motivate greater effort among teachers. Offering or withholding future employment itself was an incentive, and one that ACEs [Associations for Community Development] used. Turnover among Educo teachers was high, which suggests that job loss was not an idle threat (World Bank, 2004, p. 132).

Support for this mode of restructuring of schools, entailing a shift to uncertain working conditions and decentralized, lower salary systems, is a consistent thread running through the discussion of education in the 2004 World Development Report, which points to EDUCO as a model for other countries.

Discussing EDUCO and a similar scheme in Nicaragua, Di Gropello (2004) emphasizes that decentralized teacher management was made particularly effective by parents' enhanced control of teachers, that is, by the expression of "client power". Such measures reduce the role of teacher salaries as overall cost drivers in education funding, support pay based on performance accountability measures for teachers, and erode the collective pay bargaining role and power of trade unions (Torres et al., 2004, pp. 3-4).

4. Forms and levers of liberalization

4.1. Free trade, the WTO and the GATS

The move towards global liberalization implies freer trade, in services as in goods. The main global mechanism for liberalization of services trade is the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO), though there are many other global, regional and bilateral/multilateral levers.

The GATS covers four modes of supply of services, including education services:

- *Mode 1*: provision of services from abroad, for example, through distance education or the internet (cross-border supply);
- *Mode 2*: provision of services to foreign students (consumption abroad);
- *Mode 3*: establishment in a country of foreign education service providers, for example, to set up schools and other institutions (commercial presence);
- *Mode 4*: movement of workers between countries to provide educational services (movement of natural persons).

Under GATS rules, WTO members decide which services they will open to foreign competition, under which modes of supply and subject to which limitations if any. There is also an exclusion clause for “services supplied in the exercise of governmental authority”, which are outside the scope of the GATS. However, the GATS goes on to define such a service as one “supplied neither on a commercial basis nor in competition with one or more service suppliers”. This could imply that where public and private sectors co-exist, as they do in most countries, public services are covered by the agreement. Some argue that public institutions requiring the payment of fees could be deemed to be engaging in “commercial activity” and would thus fall outside the GATS exception. Though the WTO and member governments say there is no intention to apply GATS to public education and health services (WTO, 2003), the distinction between public and private services is becoming increasingly blurred (see, for example, the case study on England and Wales in Section 7). In strict legal terms, only when a service is provided entirely by the government does it unambiguously fall outside the GATS rules. This could make countries vulnerable to pressure in current and future GATS negotiations to open up areas of the public education system as well as the private sector.

In the face of widespread opposition to the GATS liberalization agenda, the WTO has sought to respond to what it calls “scare stories and misunderstandings”. These are: first, that the new round of services negotiations will force WTO member countries to open all their services sectors to foreign competition; second, that all public services will have to be opened to foreign competition; third, that liberalization under GATS means deregulation of services; fourth, that once made, GATS commitments are irreversible; fifth, that GATS negotiations are secretive and anti-democratic (WTO, 2003).

The WTO states: “The objective of the GATS is to liberalize services trade, not to deregulate services, many of which are closely regulated for very good reasons.” It continues: “The GATS specifically recognizes ‘the right of Members to regulate, and to introduce new regulations, on the supply of services within their territories in order to meet national policy objectives’”. It concludes its rebuttal of this “scare story” by asserting that “the only circumstances in which a country could be asked to demonstrate that a given measure is not more trade-restrictive than necessary would be in the event of a dispute with another Member ...Only then could the necessity or the trade restrictiveness of a measure become an issue” (WTO, 2003).

GATS disciplines

As Steve Kelk (2002) notes, the GATS cuts deepest into services regulation through its national treatment, most-favoured nation (MFN) and market access disciplines.

The “national treatment” rule requires that foreign services providers be treated at least as well as domestic service providers. If a country commits itself to opening its education sector to foreign suppliers, any subsidy, financial incentive, fee-paying scheme or tax incentive directed at the public education system could be considered unfair competition by private educational providers. WTO members such as the European Union have included in their GATS schedules a specific limitation exempting subsidies from the national treatment provision — but others have not, and there could be pressure in future negotiations for the limitation to be relaxed.

Under GATS rules, once a country signs up to the GATS for a specific services sector such as education, it also has to provide a “level playing field” for companies of any nationality under the most-favoured-nation (MFN) principle. So privileges granted to one or more countries with which a country has reached an agreement have to be extended to all, unless the WTO member specifically takes an MFN exemption. The MFN rule means “the best treatment accorded to any foreign service provider must be accorded ‘immediately and

unconditionally' to all foreign service providers"(Grieshaber-Otto and Sanger, 2002, p. iv).

The "market access" rule means that governments are prevented from "introducing quantitative restrictions on the amount of trade activity in a sector" (Grieshaber-Otto and Sanger, 2002, p. iv). Hence, governments' economic policy options are curtailed.

Finally, the transparency rule stipulates that members must publish details of all measures — local, regional and national — that may affect the operation of the GATS treaty (Grieshaber-Otto and Sanger, 2002, p. iv). These "top down" rules complement the "bottom-up" commitments in which members agree to open up all or some service sectors to GATS disciplines.

The irreversibility of GATS

Once a country commits itself to opening a service to foreign competition, it cannot escape. The WTO is "the only global institution that even the United States and the European Union are supposed to obey", whereas the World Bank and the IMF have influence only over "weak developing countries" (Wolf, 1999).

In the WTO dispute settlement process, tribunals operate in secret to settle disputes between member states. Only national governments are allowed to participate. In the case of an adverse ruling, countries must either comply (which may require legislation) or pay compensation (in the form of trade benefits). Refusal or inability to do either can result in trade sanctions imposed by the winning side.

The WTO argues that this claim of irreversibility is another "scare story" (WTO, 2003) and lists a number of circumstances under which a country can permanently or temporarily suspend or cancel specific GATS obligations. However, it does admit, "on request, 'compensation' may need to be negotiated with Members whose trade is affected". Where a municipality, or a local or national government, wants to take back into public ownership a service that has been privatized and opened to competition under the GATS or a similar free trade agreement, it may be almost impossible to do so.

GATS commitments

In practice, relatively few WTO members have so far made commitments under GATS in education services, and even fewer have made commitments on primary and secondary education (as opposed to tertiary education and other

education services). Of 148 WTO members, 47 (59 counting 12 EU members separately) have made commitments in education services, lower than in any sector except health services (46, or 58 counting the EU12 separately). The number of WTO members making specific commitments for primary education is 31 (43 including EU12) and for secondary education 34 (46 including EU12). All countries have imposed restrictions of one kind or another, and very few have made any commitments at all in Mode 4 (movement of workers). The United States, though it has pushed for other countries to take commitments on schools, has taken none itself in primary and secondary education (WTO, 2005).

4.2. Other levers for liberalization

It is not only the WTO and GATS that are levers for “liberalization” of trade in services. Regional and bilateral trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) and the European Union (EU) play an important role. The World Bank and the OECD are also significant bodies in promoting the liberalized education agenda (see, e.g. Rikowski, 2002; Puiggrós, 2002; Leher; Delgado-Ramos and Saxe-Fernández, 2005; Halimi, 2004; Hirtt, 2004). They are supported by national and international business organizations such as the International Chamber of Commerce, the Confederation of British Industry and the Institute of Directors in the United Kingdom, the European Round Table of leading multinational companies, and the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas (PREAL), which comprises public and private organizations.

At the same time, there is opposition to free trade in services from trade unions, political parties, civil society groups and some governments. These recently combined to force the withdrawal, at least temporarily, of the so-called Bolkestein Directive, the EU’s draft Services Directive seeking to open up trade in services. The draft Directive sought to expose almost all services to market-based competition. Though public education services were specifically excluded, the draft Directive would have applied to “peripheral” services supplied to schools and, like the GATS, was unclear where the line between public and private services would be drawn.

Under the “country of origin” principle, a company providing services would follow the rules and laws of the country in which it was based or “established”, rather than the country in which the service was provided. A US education multinational, for example, could “establish” itself in Latvia, simply by registering its presence there. It would then be able to trade in the rest of the EU, whilst conforming only to Latvian law on matters such as health and safety, employees’ rights, or environmental protection. Latvia, not the country where

the service was provided, would be expected to send inspectors to ensure compliance with its laws.

Critics say the draft Directive would encourage “social dumping” since companies would have an incentive to opt for establishment in the least regulated EU member requiring the lowest standards. The Directive “would have been quite a blow to national level regulation, as it would tend to make services available in the least regulated way, rather than bringing all services operators up to best standards” (Malins, 2005). However, the current EU Internal Market Commissioner, Charlie McCreevy, says he is committed to re-introducing the Directive in some form during his five-year term, which ends in 2009. With 70 per cent of economic activity in Europe being in services, “you don’t have to have a degree in economics to know that if you can open up the services market you’re going to have an impact on economic activity and we need increased economic activity in the EU” (McCreevy, cited in McLauchlin, 2005).

5. Schooling access, equity and quality

5.1. World Bank claims for equity³

World Bank policies and publications exhibit a tension between equity and privatization. While nominally seeking equity, the Bank encourages the growth of an “educational private sector”, the mandate of which may be to charge for access to “basic” as well as other (including tertiary and adult) educational services. The Bank rejects the view that multi-tiered systems of education based on the ability to pay have negative effects on social or educational equity. Instead, it argues that in developing countries the market mechanism produces equity, in line with a conception of equity based on choice.

The World Bank’s corporate lending arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), has also claimed that fee-paying educational institutions can “improve” equity.

Private education can indirectly benefit the lowest socio-economic groups by attracting families who can afford some level of fee away from the public system, thereby increasing capacity and per student spending for the students who remain in the public system. Similarly, the emergence of private tertiary institutions allows governments to reduce funding in such institutions and instead to invest in lower levels of education, thus improving distributive efficiency (IFC, 2001, p.5).

³ This section is based on Schugurensky and Davidson-Harden (2004).

This argument rationalizes both the reduction in education funding through “efficiency” measures, as well as the introduction of privatization to improve equity. It is based on the assertion that, through privatization of education, “subsidies” for wealthier families are removed as these groups transfer their education “investment” into the private sector, leaving state funding for the rest of the public school system.

Evidence from Latin American countries such as Chile (Carnoy, 1998; Carnoy and MacEwan, 2001) shows that these ways of increasing the role of private (including for-profit) education at primary, secondary and tertiary levels create unequal access to schooling based on social class, despite compensatory measures intended to limit the stratifying effects of vouchers (Carnoy, 2002). Private schools “cream off” the children of wealthier families who are more equipped to succeed at school, leaving the public school system to absorb students with greater needs and challenges. In this way, existing negative equity effects in education based on social polarization are exacerbated by market-style restructuring efforts.

The idea that the transfer of wealthier families’ children and students’ “education investments” away from the public system somehow increases equity is therefore based on a highly contestable argument. Moreover, principles of universal access, for example, as enshrined in international covenants such as the UN convention on economic, social and cultural rights, reflect a quite different notion of educational equity than that based on “choice” promoted by the World Bank and the IFC (Schugurensky and Davidson-Harden, 2003).

5.2. Increased and increasing inequalities

The liberalization of schooling and further education is playing a significant part in widening inequalities within countries, intensifying differences in access and attainment between different groups (for instance, between races, between girls and boys, between social classes and, in developing nations, between rural and urban areas).

Increasing inequalities: Polarized schooling

One common criticism of the liberalization of schooling, training and university education revolves around loss of equity, economic and social justice and the polarization of the labour force. There has been an increase in (gender-, race-, language-based) social class inequalities in educational provision, attainment and subsequent position in the labour market. For example, the movement to voucher and charter schools, as well as other forms of privatized

education such as chains of schools in the United States (Molnar, 2001; Molnar et al., 2004), has proved disproportionately beneficial to those groups who can afford to pay for better educational opportunities and experiences, leading to further social exclusion and polarization (Whitty et al., 1998; Gillborn and Youdell, 2000). Reimers notes that

... the poor have less access to preschool, secondary, and tertiary education; they also attend schools of lower quality where they are socially segregated. Poor parents have fewer resources to support the education of their children, and they have less financial, cultural, and social capital to transmit. Only policies that explicitly address inequality, with a major redistributive purpose, therefore, could make education an equalizing force in social opportunity (Reimers, 2000, p. 55).

Hirtt suggests that the apparently contradictory elements driving liberalization of education, “to adapt education to the needs of business and at the same time reduce state expenditure on education”, are resolved by the polarization of the labour market. Thus, from an economic point of view, it is not necessary to provide high-level education and general knowledge to all future workers. “It is now possible and even highly recommendable to have a more polarized education system.... education should not try to transmit a broad common culture to the majority of future workers, but instead it should teach them some basic, general skills” (Hirtt, 2004, p. 446).

In other words, manual and service workers receive cheaper, inferior, transferable-skills education and knowledge, in contrast to the elite workers, who receive more expensive, superior education. Thus the outcome of liberalization is a more hierarchical school system that militates against the principle of equal access to education for all.

Cherry-picking and undermining public schooling

One of the greatest sources of weakness for public services is “cherry-picking”, “where the affluent are able to purchase better quality services for themselves alone and avoid contributing to the public service” (Hall, 2003, p.28). This undermines the financial solidarity on which public services are based, and the political consensus needed to sustain them. It draws resources away from those services into a consumer-oriented market. The impact on public services may be exacerbated by cuts in public sector resources, which reduces the quality of the public service and encourages those who can pay to buy more resources for themselves from the private sector.

In Costa Rica, quality public education has been a major factor in social equity and high living standards. Now, however, a private school boom is drawing better-off students away from public schools with declining resources. Education has thus “changed from being a mechanism for social mobility to becoming an instrument of status and exclusion”. In Malaysia, “two systems have emerged: higher quality private education for those who can afford it and poorer quality public education for those with low incomes” (Hall, 2003, p.26).

In South Africa, social bifurcation is exacerbated when schooling has to be paid for. Since 1994, schools have been permitted to charge fees according to family means.

In practice, principals and school government bodies are also charging those who cannot afford to pay. More privileged schools charge much higher fees (thus improving the quality of school resources) and at the same time deny access to the poor. This has created a two-tier system within public schooling: schools for the rich and schools for the poor (Education International, 2003a, p.11).

In Brazil the educational system reflects the country’s glaring income inequalities. Even though more people than before have access to education, the system is still highly segmented. At the basic education level public schools, which are free of charge, are for poor people and private schools are for the rich. For establishments providing the first four years of primary education, 20 per cent of public schools have a library, compared with 79 per cent of private schools (Da Silva Aguiar, 2004). The poor are systematically excluded from higher education. In Latin America as a whole, by the age of 25 the richest 10 per cent of the population have had between five and eight more years of schooling than the poorest 30 per cent (PREAL, 2001).

In Pakistan, private education fees have been widely criticized as too high, making private schools inaccessible to poor but talented students. As a result, they are not developing as institutions of equal opportunity. Most are established as commercial or for-profit ventures, and their fees reflect business rather than altruistic or public service considerations. However, the schools argue that, in the absence of grant-aid from the Government, fees have to be high since they are the only source of income to maintain the institution and the quality of the education provided.

Three of the largest school chains are owned by leading political families with an influence on public policy. The World Bank has been supporting the largest private school chain in Pakistan (Niazi and Hameed, 2002), and financial institutions are lending to such schools on terms better than offered to any

industrial undertaking. This has led to a race among the rich and powerful to open private schools and “educate” middle-class students.

Private primary schools in Pakistan are concentrated in urban areas where participation rates are already high. Students going to private schools would participate in education regardless, so these schools are not expanding the reach of education to include those who did not previously have access, mainly the rural poor. Their role in universalizing primary education is therefore marginal at best (Haq, 2004).

On the contrary, one can argue that private schools are impeding access to schooling for poor children, because the Pakistan Government is implicitly putting the onus of primary education on the private sector and thus absolving itself from a core social responsibility. In the last few years, the increase in the number of public sector primary schools has lagged well behind needs. With an increase of 2.8 per cent a year in population, the number of primary schools is increasing by less than 2 per cent annually (Niazi and Hameed, 2002).

Box 2 Chile's 20-year experience with vouchers⁴

Possibly the most comprehensive example of the effects of a privatized school system is Chile, which has operated a national system of vouchers for the past 20 years. Combined with information on smaller voucher plans and charter school expansion in the United States, the Chilean data provide a "fairly clear picture of a privatized choice reality" (Carnoy, 2000, p. 18). About 43 per cent of Chilean children attend private primary schools. Nearly all of these (all but 8 per cent) attend private voucher schools. About two-thirds of the private voucher schools are for-profit and the others are religious schools (almost all Catholic). The remaining 57 per cent of primary pupils attend municipal public schools, which are also largely financed by vouchers.

According to Carnoy, "our estimates show that, when we correct for students' socio-economic background differences, average test scores in for-profit private voucher schools are slightly lower than those in municipal schools, and the scores in Catholic voucher schools, somewhat higher." He notes that the for-profit schools spend less per pupil, mainly because they pay their teachers somewhat less than public schools do, and can do so because they are more likely to employ moonlighting part-time teachers. "This makes such schools more cost effective than public schools, not because they are more effective (their achievement is lower), but because they spend less per pupil".

Catholic primary schools in Chile, however, spend more per pupil than public schools. They charge higher tuition fees, on average, and have more expensive, largely donated facilities. They apparently "add" more academic value, thus, suggests Carnoy, they are about as cost effective as public schools.

Carnoy notes the difficulties in isolating the effects of private school competition on the performance of students in public schools. The usual measure of competition is the density of private schools in a district (in Chile, a municipality). If competition has a positive effect on public school performance, public school students should do better in those districts with a higher proportion of private schools. But Carnoy makes two caveats. First, it is necessary to correct for the possibility that private schools move into districts where public school performance is especially poor. Second, private schools tend to "cherry-pick"—that is, to take the best students from public schools. Having made these caveats, Carnoy "found no significant effects on overall test scores (public and private schools together) in those municipalities where private school density increased more rapidly".

His conclusion is that there is no evidence from Chile that a national voucher plan, operating there for almost 20 years, has had a positive effect on the achievement of the millions of students who went through the system during that time. With respect to claims about increased efficiency resulting from liberalization, he concludes "the plan may have saved some tax money in the 1980s and early 1990s but it did so mainly because private for-profit schools were able to pay teachers less than public schools, not because of greater efficiencies in using resources" (Carnoy, 2000, p. 18).

There is evidence that privatization increased stratification in the 1980s, as private schools cherry-picked better students from public schools and tended to locate in higher-income municipalities. Of Chile's 330 municipalities, 90 still have no private schools; these are the most rural and lowest-income localities. Studies in other countries with voucher plans, such as New Zealand, also suggest that they increase stratification among students (Lauder and Hughes, 1999).

⁴ This box is based on Carnoy (2000).

5.3. Gender- and race-based social class inequalities

When schooling is not universal, compulsory and free, disadvantaged groups, including girls, suffer. UNESCO (2004a) condemns the imposition of school fees as deterrents for poor families, which “force them to make the choice to reserve education opportunities only for boys”.

The UNESCO report also notes that the UN goal of achieving gender parity in both primary and secondary education by 2005 will not be attained in more than half of the 128 countries studied, and that gender equality will not be attained in 40 per cent of the countries by 2015 without major political change. “The multiple barriers that obstruct girls’ access to education remain numerous even though most of the countries have ratified the conventions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and on the right of the child” (UNESCO, 2004a).

Literacy rates and attendance rates of indigenous children are also generally lower than the national average in many countries. In Bolivia, for example, indigenous children receive about three years less schooling than non-indigenous children (Educational International, 2003b, p. 5).

6. Curriculum, critical thought and democratic control

6.1. Effects of liberalization on curriculum and pedagogy

One set of effects of liberalization concerns the loss of democracy and democratic accountability. Ownership and control are transferred to unelected and democratically unaccountable private companies and corporations. Private business and shareholders own and/or manage schools and educational institutions instead of locally or nationally elected representative bodies.

A second set of effects is the loss of democracy and collegiality among teachers and other education workers as a result of “New Public Management” (NPM). This replaces collective collegiality and decision-making (or decision-influencing) with individualistic competitive and hierarchical work relationships. There is the siphoning upwards of power to senior management teams — or the senior manager, head teacher or principal — who may have no educational experience or background at all (as in the United States, and as envisaged in England and Wales).

As noted in the discussion on work security, stress and deprofessionalization arises from increased control and monitoring of the curriculum. Teachers have little time to devote to alternative visions and versions of the curriculum, when intensification of school and college work is so tightly tied to testing of pre-specified learning.

Standardization of the school curriculum and pedagogy

In some countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, pedagogy and the curriculum are being standardized. In McNeill's view, "standardization reduces the quality and quantity of what is taught and learned in schools... Over the long term, standardization creates inequities, widening the gap between the quality of education for poor and minority youth and that of more privileged students" (McNeil, 2000, p. 3). McNeil's research revealed the emergence of:

... phony curricula, reluctantly presented by teachers in class to conform to the forms of knowledge their students would encounter on centralized tests. The practice of teaching under these reforms shifted away from intellectual activity towards dispensing packaged fragments of information sent from an upper level of bureaucracy. And the role of students as contributors to classroom discourse, as thinkers, as people who brought their personal stories and life experiences into the classroom, was silenced or severely circumscribed by the need for the class to "cover" a generic curriculum at a pace established by the district and the state for all the schools (McNeil, 2000, p. 4).

In England, increased standardization of pedagogy — with teachers teaching to the test — is taking place across the curriculum. It is a teacher-centred pedagogy, giving little space for pupil/student "talk" and feedback, and thereby less space for validation and recognition of different social-class, ethnic and religious subcultures.

Within schools as well as universities and vocational further education, the language of education has been widely replaced by the language of the market. The concept of education is being redefined and standardized in economic rather than educational terms. Teachers and lecturers "deliver the lesson" or "deliver the product", "operationalize delivery" and "facilitate clients' learning", within a regime of management by tightly pre-defined objectives, subject to "quality management and enhancement", where students have become "customers". In vocational and higher education, "customers" select "modules" on a pick'n'mix basis. "Skill development" at universities has surged in importance, to the detriment of development of critical thought.

6.2. Effects on critical thinking skills and opportunities

Some analysts argue that liberalizing education is suppressing oppositional, critical and autonomous thought (e.g. Hill, 2003). As McMurtry (1991) noted, this leads to “opposite standards of freedom”.

Freedom in the market is the enjoyment of whatever one is able to buy from others with no questions asked, and profit from whatever one is able to sell to others with no requirement to answer to anyone else. Freedom in the place of education, on the other hand, is precisely the freedom to question, and to seek answers, whether it offends people’s self-gratification or not (McMurtry, 1991, p. 213).

The emphasis on education for marketable skills, uncritically embraced, can only promote a consumerist, individualistic approach in which “human capital” becomes another tradable commodity. The ILO has argued that it would be “a deplorable outcome if the commercial and labour market aspects of schooling and training crowded out other aspects of education” (ILO, 2004).

In Thailand, Templer (2004) reports that all areas of education are traditionally marked by a low emphasis on critical thinking. However, this is now being reinforced in Thai secondary and tertiary education, especially in the more prestigious “tier”, as the consumerist ethos permeates student and parental value systems.

6.3. From social and political democracy to “economic consumer democracy”

In liberalized school systems throughout the globe, the economic goals of education are sidelining social and collective goals, and have also replaced education and learning for its own sake. What matters now is how many years and credits we have accumulated, in order to get a better job.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, there was a real, if limited, commitment to greater equality in many governments and state educational institutions in western Europe, North America and elsewhere. In the United Kingdom, the avowed aims of education policy were “education for a fairer society” and “education for education’s sake”. In the United States, education was seen as a democratizing force by an increasingly activist civil society, associated, for example, with the civil rights movement, women’s groups, environmental groups and labour unions. As a result, schools and universities began “allowing too much freedom and independence of thought, and that cannot be tolerated in a

‘democracy’, because it might lead to consequences” (Chomsky, 2004). Starting in the 1970s in the United States, policy began to shift towards liberalization strategies such as voucher schemes, tax tuition credits and charter schools.

In the United Kingdom, government policies on education and training have increasingly focused on education’s role in human capital development. The former UK Education Secretary, David Blunkett, said the work of his Department “fits with a new economic imperative of supply-side investment for national prosperity” (cited in Jones, 2003, p.144). Educational priorities are now tied to market-driven growth and the more active involvement of private interests in education provision. The cultural meaning of schooling is being changed; it is now explicitly geared to performance, results and efficiency. Schools have become “places where management authority, rather than collegial culture, establishes the ethos and purpose of the school” (Jones, 2003, p.161).

7. Three case studies

7.2. The United States: Vouchers, charter schools and the attack on public schooling⁵

Though free market ideas for “school choice” date back to 1955, the current drive to privatize US schools began in the 1970s as a reaction against efforts to harness the power of public education to the expansion of American democracy during the 1960s. By the end of the 1970s, numerous conservative funding agencies collaborated to create a host of think tanks and institutes designed to advance a pro-business agenda across a spectrum of policy issues, including the privatization of public schools. Two of the major liberalizing policies, forms of partial privatization of the public school system, are the use of education vouchers and the establishment of charter schools.

Vouchers

A voucher system provides a sum of money for each student that can be “spent” on education services at any school. In effect, this provides a huge public subsidy for private schools, because public funding that previously went exclusively to public schools can now be spent anywhere within a schools market. Many students (or their parents) take this funding out of the public school system and enrol at private schools, part-paying the private school fees with the public money given to them under the voucher system. The result is a

⁵ This subsection is based on Anijar and Gabbard (2004).

boost in enrolments and revenue for private schools, and a corresponding loss of revenue for public schools.

Charter schools

The second element of efforts to dismantle public schools involves establishment of charter schools. Unlike the private schools that serve voucher students, charter schools are mainly funded with public money. Nevertheless, they are not regulated by the same structures as other more “traditional” public schools, and enjoy far more autonomy concerning hiring and firing practices, curricula and budget spending. The first charter school opened in Minnesota in 1991. Today, there are more than 2,695 charter schools in 41 states and the District of Columbia, attended by nearly 685,000 students.

Charter schools have attracted Educational Management Organizations (EMOs), such as Edison Schools, which attempt to run these schools “for-profit”. Edison’s website proclaims that it is “the nation’s leading partner with public schools and school districts, focused on raising student achievement through its research-based school design, uniquely aligned assessment systems, interactive professional development, (and) integrated use of technology”. It claims that: “Edison students are achieving annual academic gains well above national norms.... Edison Schools Inc. now serves more than 250,000 public school students in over 20 states across the country and in the United Kingdom” (Edison Schools, 2005b).

When Arizona State University’s Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL) began issuing its annual Profiles of For-Profit Education Management Companies in 1999, 13 EMOs managed 135 for-profit schools in 15 states. By 2004, 51 companies managed 463 schools in 28 states and the District of Columbia, 81 per cent of which are charter schools. The EPSL reports that the for-profit management of public schools takes two major forms: in one, local school districts contract with an EMO to manage existing traditional public schools (termed “contract schools”); in the other, the EMO manages a public charter school as the charter holder or under the terms of a contract with the charter holder. In the early 1990s, EMOs tended to pursue the contract school approach. In the latter half of the 1990s, EMOs have taken the opportunity afforded by permissive charter school legislation and focused on the management of publicly funded charter schools (Molnar et al., 2004, p. 2).

The assault on teachers, teacher unions, and public schooling

Proponents and financial backers of privatization view teachers and teacher unions as major impediments. Indeed, one of the advantages of “school choice” as seen by proponents is that privatization will seriously undermine the collective power of teachers and teacher unions. In recent years the media have been saturated with negative “anti-teacher” and “anti-union” messages that have tended to define the terms of national dialogue surrounding education.

Non-unionized teachers are portrayed as being more capable (working for merit) than “government teachers” or “unionized teachers”. “Media campaigns”, sponsored by interested parties, have attempted to popularize vouchers as a “democratic” move. In the repositioning of language, public schools become “government” schools. And the argument is advanced that those schools were failing miserably, because they were part of big government, bureaucratic state monopolies contributing to the erosion of family values by teaching secular humanism and promoting perverse sexuality, while children were unable to read, write and do arithmetic.

These campaigns frame the language for vouchers in seemingly benign, benevolent and idealistic terms such as “individualism”, “parental rights and freedom”, “political and economic freedom”, “limited government”, “individual liberties”, “free markets” and “strengthening democratic capitalism”. Vouchers seem to provide a pragmatic utilitarian solution emanating from the “manufactured crisis” of failing schools.

The Heartland Institute (a conservative think-tank devoted to the privatization of American education) has declared public schools “islands of socialism in a sea of competition and choice”. It states that “soon, most government schools will be converted into private schools or simply close their doors.” The Heartland Institute has succeeded in forming a “board of legislative advisors” that includes more than 240 elected officials from nearly all the 50 states (People for the American Way, 2003, p.4).

Such revealing comments contrast with the public message of many pro-voucher groups. They publicly state that vouchers will actually help strengthen public schools by forcing them to improve through the magic of competition and market forces. Among themselves, voucher advocates acknowledge “the complete privatization of schooling might be desirable, but this objective is politically impossible for the time being. Vouchers are a type of reform that is possible now, and would put us on the path to further privatization” (People for the American Way, 2003, p. 7).

Do voucher systems and charter schools in the United States get better results?

There is considerable evidence that there is no difference in academic results from private or public schools. Ladd reports that, based on three years of data from New York and Washington, DC, and two from Dayton, Ohio, there is “no evidence of an overall achievement difference between the public and the private schools either in the aggregate or for any of the individual cities”. This finding that the private schools are no better at raising the performance of low-income students “flies in the face of well-known claims ...that the autonomy of private schools will make them more productive than the more bureaucratic private schools” (Ladd, 2002).

There is also evidence that the achievements of charter schools are no better than, and are sometimes worse than, those of public schools (Schemo, 2004). According to the American Federation of Teachers, charter school students demonstrated lower achievement than students in regular public schools. “The achievement gap between students who were and were not eligible for free or reduced-price lunch was similarly substantial in both subjects and both grades, but the gap was slightly larger in charter schools than in regular public schools in grade 4 reading and grade 8 math” (Nelson et al., 2004)

7.3. Latin America: US and local “edubusiness”⁶

“Eduventures.com” is a company that provides research and information services to investors and entrepreneurs aspiring to join the “global education market” (Newman et al., 2000; Stokes, 2001). Although the market for Eduventures is still largely confined to the United States, Stokes (2001) mentions two initiatives, “Edunexo” and “contenidos.com”, which represent attempts to break in to the Latin American market for online education. Primedia, owners of the controversial and commercially driven “Channel One” school programme in the US, announced a Latin American development programme in 1998. Other US service providers interested in the region include Sylvan Learning Systems and the Apollo Group.

The move into for-profit educational markets in Latin America by US companies has been aided, directly and indirectly, by the World Bank (Schugurensky and Davidson-Harden, 2003). The Apollo Group, known in the United States and Canada by its brand name as the (private) University of Phoenix, told potential investors that by autumn 2001 it expected to have a “K-

⁶ This subsection is based on Schugurensky and Davidson-Harden (2004).

12 [kindergarten to age 16] feeder system in place in Brazil composed of over 250 affiliated schools serving 110,000 students” (De Alva, 2001).

As far as local companies are concerned, the Brazilian education company Objetivo/UNIP is often held up as the best example of a very profitable educational services company. Having started as a preparatory course for university in 1962, Objetivo/UNIP in 1999 boasted a USD384 million turnover and USD40 million profit, with over 500,000 students enrolled at franchised campuses and sites throughout Brazil (Tooley, 1999a, pp. 6, 11).

With the exception of Colombia, Brazil boasts the highest proportion of private education enrolments of any Latin American country. According to figures available in 2001, private enrolments as a percentage of total enrolments were: Colombia, 61 per cent; Brazil, 60 per cent; Nicaragua, 41 per cent; Peru, 31 per cent; Chile, 28 per cent; Guatemala, 19 per cent; Mexico, 17 per cent; and Argentina, 16 per cent (Patrinos, 2001).

Expansion of the private education industry in Latin America continues at a breakneck pace. Argentina in particular boasts an active private educational sector, with 30 per cent of secondary school enrolment in privately run institutions (Tooley, 1999b). In 1994, 37 per cent of all private schools in Argentina were fully funded by the Government for teacher payroll costs, while 29 per cent received a partial subsidy.

7.4. *England and Wales: Pay and conditions, privatization and the GATS*

Impact of liberalization on teachers’ pay and service conditions⁷

Prior to the 1988 Education Reform Act, local education authorities (LEAs) in England and Wales had financial and managerial responsibility for schools, and national collective bargaining machinery determined teachers’ pay and conditions of employment. Since then, the national framework has been broken up in various ways with a considerable impact on teachers’ pay and conditions of service. The most recent, perhaps greatest, threat is the establishment of the Government’s Academies programme.

⁷ Based on Brown (2004).

The abolition of national collective bargaining

A key step in the programme of “liberalization” in the schools sector pursued by the current New Labour and previous Conservative Governments was taken in 1987, with the abolition of the national collective bargaining machinery covering pay and other conditions of employment relating to working time and duties. Subsequently replaced by the present Review Body system, this has allowed the Government to impose other changes to teachers’ pay and conditions that it could never have secured through collective bargaining.

Since 1987 the main developments in the teachers’ pay structure have been the expansion of “flexibility” and discretion over teachers’ pay, and the promotion of performance-related pay and payment by results.

The National Union of Teachers has consistently expressed concern about the loss of its national collective bargaining rights. The ILO found in 1990 that the UK Government was in breach of the relevant ILO Convention by continuing to deny negotiating rights to teachers.

The delegation of staffing powers to schools and the impact of pay flexibility

Soon after the abolition of the national negotiating machinery, the Education Reform Act 1988 introduced local management of schools. Under the Act, many financial and managerial responsibilities previously under the LEAs’ control were delegated to the governing bodies of schools. These included the ability to determine the school’s staffing structure, to make appointments and to take discretionary decisions with regard to teachers’ pay.

There is now more scope in the salary structure for pay differentiation. The level of discretion available in schools means that placement and progress in the pay structure can depend on factors unrelated to the merits of the teacher, such as the school’s financial position. Teachers doing effectively the same job can receive very different salaries in different schools.

The impact of these discretionary elements has been compounded by the introduction of performance-related pay. Access to a new higher pay scale beyond the main scale has been made subject to an application-based “performance threshold” assessment, and progression on the higher scale is also performance-related.

Delegated powers of management, combined with budgetary constraints in schools, have led to an increase in “casualization” by way of short-term contracts and agency-supplied temporary teachers. The use of short-term contracts deprives teachers of job security and, in the case of agency teachers, also deprives them of other entitlements since few agencies apply the national pay and conditions.

Workload

In 1994 the School Teachers’ Review Body commissioned the first in a series of surveys on teacher workload in response to lobbying from teacher unions. They highlighted the “deep and continuing concern about teachers’ workloads and the effect that heavy workloads were having on morale” (School Teachers’ Review Body, 2002, p. 11). Although teachers have annual contractual limits on working hours, these do not cover marking and lesson preparation, which are subject to an additional working-time obligation. Between 1994 and 2000, primary school teachers’ hours increased by 8 per cent and secondary teachers’ hours by 5 per cent. For both groups, time spent on planning, preparation and marking increased by 17 per cent and teachers were working on average about 52 hours a week (UNESCO, 2004b, pp.12-15). Workload has been a leading factor in making teaching an increasingly stressful occupation. Stress is now the main health and safety concern; 82 per cent of school safety representatives cite it as a cause for concern in their school (TUC, 2000). Teachers are the most stressed occupational group, with over 40 per cent reporting high stress levels (Health and Safety Executive, 2000).

The Academies programme

The newest, perhaps greatest, threat to teachers’ securities is the Academies programme, formerly called “City Academies”. Statutory pay and conditions do not apply in Academies, which are publicly funded independent schools with voluntary or private sponsors. They can set their own pay and service conditions for teachers. Although there are at present only 17 Academies, the first having opened in September 2002, the Government has recently announced as part of its Five Year Plan for education that it aims to have 200 Academies by the end of the decade.

Research on the pay and service conditions for teachers in the 17 operational Academies show that most do not apply the national conditions of employment in full or even in part. Longer working hours are common. The initiative also poses a threat to trade union rights, since some Academies do not recognize unions for negotiating purposes.

Privatization, contracting out, and the pay, rights and conditions of the mainly female ancillary schools workforce⁸

School staff have been affected by significant changes in local government in the last 20 years in England and Wales. As in other parts of the public sector, there has been a drive since the 1980s to decentralize management and funding and to maximize the autonomy of institutions. The local management of schools since 1988 has blurred employer responsibility and led to legal challenges over who employs school staff: the local education authority (LEA) or the school. It has also led to local variations in terms and conditions of school support staff and difficulty in monitoring them. At the same time, statutory and policy measures have been taken to maximize the involvement of the private sector in delivering education services.

Compulsory competitive tendering in local government was introduced in 1980. It first applied to highways and building maintenance and was then extended to all ancillary services, such as catering and cleaning, in the Local Government Act 1988. Within the OECD countries, the United Kingdom was unique in its compulsory model of competitive tendering, and studies, including those commissioned by the UK Government, found that exposure to tendering led to the often dramatic erosion of terms and conditions of employment (Sachdev, 2001, p.5). The Equal Opportunities Commission (1995) looked at 39 authorities and four companies between 1989 and 1993. It found greater use of temporary workers with fewer employment rights like holidays and sick pay. There was a 22 per cent fall in female and 12 per cent fall in male employment, a decline in hours for female part-timers and an increase in multiple job-holding (Lewis, 2002, p.11). The figures for the education sector are likely to be higher as women make up 84 per cent of the workforce.

The Thatcher Government paved the way for contracting out in 1983 by denouncing ILO Convention No. 94 and repealing the Fair Wages Resolution, in place since 1891. It was thought that in labour-intensive public services, access to a cut-price workforce would be essential to attracting private bids. A downward spiral of pay and conditions followed for staff, mainly women, who were already the lowest paid in schools (Wing, 2003).

Compulsory competitive tendering forced local authorities to compete on the basis of cost. Contracts were often retained in house, but with worse pay and conditions. A survey for the Department of the Environment reported that 15 per cent of authorities had withdrawn bonus schemes, 7 per cent had cut wages, 18 per cent had changed sick pay arrangements and 12 per cent holiday

⁸ Based on Lewis (2004b).

entitlements. Workforce reduction and rearranged hours were the most common response to competition, with manual staff bearing the brunt of changes in working methods, pay and conditions (Walsh and Davis, 1993).

The Labour Government elected in 1997 adhered to its promise to abolish compulsory competitive tendering but replaced it with a “Best Value” programme. This consisted of 12 principles in a performance framework, to apply to a wider range of services, without the necessity of an in-house bid. Unlike local authorities, schools did not have a statutory duty to obtain Best Value, but were required to adhere to its principles. Since January 2000, Ofsted, the inspection body, has included this requirement in its framework for schools.

Research by the UNISON public services trade union indicated that privatisation resulted in lower pay and that protection for staff transferring from the public sector contrasted with the inferior pay and conditions for recruits. Wing (2003, p.4) suggests that gender had re-emerged as an issue, and that there had been no policy appraisal of the gender impact of the various policies that had led to the contracting out of thousands of jobs held by women.

UNISON established a Best Value Intelligence Unit and surveyed 190 private contracts in 2001. Comparisons were difficult as new staffs in white-collar jobs were often on personal contracts, but the findings suggest that basic pay in 62 per cent of contracts had worsened, mainly affecting ancillary staff. For school meals contracts, in Nottinghamshire, for example, pay for new staff was £4.60 an hour for 34 weeks as opposed to £4.80 an hour for 38 weeks paid to transferred staff. Conditions of service had also worsened for new starters: 73 per cent had less leave, 58 per cent worse sick pay arrangements, 51 per cent inferior pensions, 44 per cent had lost unsocial hours’ payments and 44 per cent reported less job security (UNISON, 2002, p.6).

The EU, the UK and the GATS⁹

GATS incorporate four modes of service supply. Mode 1 (cross-border supply) is the “supply of a service from the territory of one Member to a consumer in the territory of another”. Under Mode 2 (consumption abroad), the consumer of the service travels to the service supplier. Under Mode 3 (commercial presence), the service supplier establishes in the foreign market as a legal entity in the form of a subsidiary or a branch. Mode 4 relates to temporary migration of foreign workers to supply a service in another country.

⁹ Based on Rikowski (2005).

In primary and secondary education, in the first three modes of supply, the EU has committed itself not to impose or maintain “restrictions which are inconsistent with GATS rules covering participation in the market by foreign service suppliers” (EU GATS-Infopoint, p. 2; also Yu, 2002).

In the United Kingdom (unlike some other EU members), there are no notified “limitations on market access”. Thus UK primary and secondary education “markets” seem open to foreign suppliers. WTO members committing themselves to opening up primary and secondary education through GATS (as the EU has) must show any limitation on access for foreign suppliers, which may then be open to challenge through the WTO’s disputes procedure (Rikowski, 2001, p.11).

The United Kingdom (via the EU) also has no limitations on the national treatment provision of the GATS regarding primary and secondary education. Under this GATS rule, member states must acknowledge any limitation in the treatment of foreign suppliers that puts them in a less favourable position than domestic counterparts. For example, Edison Schools (based in the United States) must be alerted to any differences in the way it is treated compared with UK education services suppliers if it enters the UK schools market.

Only in Mode 4 supply, the “presence of natural persons” from another country, does some limitation regarding foreign primary and secondary education suppliers possibly apply. Mode 4 is “unbound” for EU primary and secondary education, meaning that the EU has made no commitment to open its market or keep it as open as it was when the GATS came into force in 1995. If Edison Schools wanted to set up operations in the UK the company would have to use UK employees, as immigration rules would still apply. It is unlikely that US teachers could be just flown to work in Edison UK schools. However, by the same token, no clear barrier to US teachers being jetted into Edison UK schools is established on the basis of the EU’s GATS commitments.

Public and private money and the deregulatory framework

From the above account, it might appear that the UK (via the EU) has a more or less “open door” policy regarding the foreign supply of primary and secondary education services. This is a misleading impression. Section 5 of the EU’s Schedule of Commitments for education services under GATS indicates that, in relation to education, the EU is referring to “privately funded education services”. This suggests that the only education services under threat from the GATS are independent and private schools. They are in the “education market”, so must take the consequences and face competing foreign providers.

However, once again, the GATS language is cleverly crafted. The Schedule does not pinpoint private education “institutions”, but privately funded “services”. It is not the case that a whole education institution has to be a for-profit outfit for the GATS to apply. Any of its constituent services — from frontline ones such as teaching to cleaning, school meals services and the school library — could fall under the GATS if private capital is involved. Furthermore, private operators in school improvement, equal opportunities and recruitment, and other school services previously supplied by the local education authority, may also fall under the GATS.

One could argue that these services are still “publicly funded” even though education businesses like Nord Anglia and school meals providers like Initial Services are delivering the service? Several points are relevant here.

First, the argument assumes that “public” money remains “public” even when transferred to a for-profit private service provider. However, it could be argued that, once the contract is signed to deliver frontline teaching, school management or improvement services, the “public money” undergoes transformation into private capital.

Second, in the Academies, specialist schools, and in some education action zones, private finance forms an element of start-up capital. The foundational significance of private capital is even clearer in the case of schools built under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI), where money to build a school is raised at commercial rates in the money markets by private companies. In all these cases, private involvement opens up schools or, at minimum, educational services to the GATS.

Third, under the Education Act 2002, school-governing bodies can set themselves up as companies. They then have the power to invest in other companies. Furthermore, school companies can merge to form “federations” to gain economies of scale, thereby increasing profit-making capacity. In September 2002, David Miliband (then Schools Minister) indicated that business leaders running school federations did not need teaching qualifications (Kelly, 2002). Schools can enter into deals with private outfits, and can sell educational services to other schools.

Finally, under the 2002 Act, around 1,000 schools are to be given the freedom to vary the curriculum and change teachers’ pay and conditions. These powers result from the new “earned autonomy” status that top performing schools can gain. This gives private sector operators some control over staff costs through manipulating teachers’ contracts of employment.

Overall, the 2002 Act provides a regulatory framework for the business takeover of schools, and hence also for the application of GATS throughout the school system. Of course, the Government can still argue that the school system is “publicly funded” but, in instances of outsourcing, the Private Finance Initiative and strategic partnerships with companies, public finance is transfigured into private capital. Sponsorship by companies involves injections of corporate cash. Through these mechanisms, schools are exposed to the GATS and school workers to a reduction in their social and economic securities.

8. Concluding assessment

This chapter has provided evidence to substantiate each of the hypotheses set out at the beginning.

- Liberalization of schooling and education services has occurred in many countries around the world.
- Specific identifiable levers are resulting in the liberalization of education services.
- Education services are becoming “Americanized” through policies and processes such as privatization, decentralization, deregulation, and the use of “new public management” (business management methods).
- Liberalization is making provision of education services more unequal and selective rather than universal. This is intensifying race-, gender- and class-based hierarchies, reflected in tiered systems of schooling, with good quality schooling for the rich and the middle classes and poor quality schooling — or none — for the poor.
- Liberalization is eroding workers’ pay, rights and securities.
- Liberalization is accompanied by, and attempts to embed, a shift away from universal citizenship rights and identities based on the provision of services to individual consumer rights and identities. In education, this involves treating young people as “human capital” and preparing them for “jobs” rather than providing broad-based learning and critical awareness.

In sum, liberalization of schooling and other education sectors such as further (post-16) vocational education threatens: first, workers’ pay, conditions

and securities; second, equity and social justice (with a notable increase in gender- and race-based class inequalities): and, third, critical thought and democratic control.

By contrast, the aim of education policy should be to secure a “race to the top”, rather than a “race to the bottom” with ever poorer conditions for workers, students and general populations. This means it is important to develop schools and education systems with the following characteristics. First, workers’ pay, rights and securities must be levelled up rather than down. Second, access to good education must be widened, by increasing its availability and by broadening access for under-represented and under-achieving groups, to reduce inequalities between groups. Third, local and national democratic control over schooling and education must be enhanced. And fourth, policymakers should recognize and seek to improve education systems that are dedicated to education for wider individual and social purposes than the production of quiescent workers and consumers in a liberalized world. There is more to education than that.

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