Towards a Deliberative and Democratic Model of International Cooperation in Education in Latin America

Towards a Deliberative and Democratic Model of International Cooperation in Education in Latin America

Jorge Baxter*

Abstract:

International organizations and donor agencies have played an important role in shaping and prodding national educational reforms in Latin America through cooperation in the form of aid and technical assistance. This paper will draw from deliberative democratic theory to critically analyze the promise and reality of democratic participation in international cooperation in education in Latin America. It argues that there is a fundamental contradiction between the development discourse around the democratization of development relationships and the actual practices within the international organizations that wield this discourse. Moreover, international influence ranging from direct financial aid to more subtle actions, such as technical assistance, policy dialogues, and knowledge sharing, continue to limit the potential for a more democratic and deliberative form of cooperation in education.

Introduction

International organizations and donor agencies have played an important role in shaping and prodding national educational reforms in Latin America through cooperation in the form of aid and technical assistance. Taking stock of over forty years of such international involvement in national educational reforms, Noel McGinn (2003) argued that international cooperation in education in Latin America had failed to make a significant impact on the improvement of education,[1] had constrained local stakeholders' ability to develop and pursue their educational goals in accordance with their own development needs and priorities, and had led to an uniformization of policy options. Samoff (2004) has documented similar negative impacts of aid relationships on education reforms in Africa. In Latin America, several other scholars have documented the detrimental consequences of aid relationships, such as reductions in spending on education (Reimers, 1991) and imposed conditionalities, which undermined national debate and deliberation around policy options (Klees, 2008; Carnoy and Torres, 1992).

Most critiques of educational cooperation in Latin America have focused on structural adjustment reforms and loan conditionalities imposed by the IMF, the World Bank and, to a lesser degree, the Inter-American Development Bank during the 1980s and 1990s.[2] More recently, a shift in development discourse from donor agencies and banks has de-emphasized loan conditionality and highlighted the importance
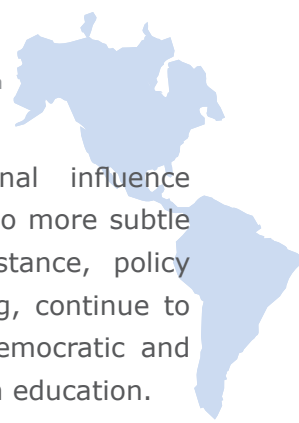
of promoting knowledge-sharing and capacity building (Samoff and Stromquist, 2001; Samoff, 2004). Scholars have shifted their attention to studying not only the material manifestations of power (e.g. resource allocation, aid and grant-making) in international organizations (IOs) but also the ways in which these institutions exert influence through control over technical expertise and information, norm-setting, determination of goals to be pursued, and legitimization of certain forms of knowledge over others (Mundy, 2006; Barnet and Finnermore, 1999; McNeely, 1995). Barnet and Finnermore (1999, pg. 79) argue that part of what makes IOs powerful is the way they create "the appearance of de-politicization by presenting themselves as technocratic and neutral-- as not exercising power but instead as serving others." This paper thus assumes that international organizations have their own autonomy, exert power over politicians and citizens, and—contrary to what is often stated by bureaucrats within these institutions—are not simply neutral forums and arenas where recipient countries can seek out their own interests. For these reasons, it is important to look at the broader development discourse that is shared across the spectrum of international organizations, from banks to inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), and to examine more closely to what degree, and in what ways, that discourse is consistent with practice, especially where it purports to be democratic.

This paper argues that there is a fundamental contradiction between the development discourse around the democratization of development relationships (e.g., an emphasis on promoting stakeholder participation, partnerships, and knowledge-sharing) and the actual practices within the international organizations that wield this discourse. Moreover, international influence ranging from direct financial aid to more subtle actions, such as technical assistance, policy dialogues, and knowledge sharing, continue to limit the potential for a more democratic and deliberative form of cooperation in education.

Participation, power, and deliberative democracy in the international order

While most democracies may govern internally according to democratic principles, their external affairs are predominately non-democratic and characterized by the pursuit of power politics (Held, 1995). Realist theories interpret nation-states as exercising raw power and pursuing their own self-interests in relations with other states (see Kissinger, 1994; Arquilla & Ronfeldt, 1999). According to these theories, the international system and organizations such as the IMF, the World Bank, and the United Nations were developed and structured by the most powerful nations in order to create on the surface what appear to be more "legitimate" forms of interaction; in reality, however, such organizations serve as mechanisms to extend their hegemony. For example, in Latin America the United States and its allies created the Organization of American States (OAS) to stop the spread of communism and further their own economic interests in region (Vaky & Muñoz, 1993). Despite the original structuring of these organizations based on a state-centric logic, there have been reforms that point to a more democratic international order (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or recent reforms at the OAS to institutionalize mechanisms for the participation of civil society).

David Held (1995, p. 135) argues that the "current international order is structured by agencies, organizations, associations and companies over which citizens have minimum, if
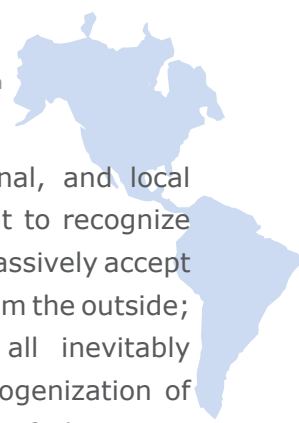
any, control." Many of these global actors directly affect local and national education policies and programs and thus indirectly the educational opportunities of everyday citizens. For example, international education interest groups in the United States, such as the National Committee for International Trade in Education (NCITE), may lobby for free-trade agreements that open up new markets for educational services and products which ultimately shape (in potentially negative and positive ways) educational supply in developing countries (Sidhu, 2007). These relationships are not necessarily unidirectional, top-down, or solely North-South, but they take numerous forms and directions and are shaped by various factors, including regional and sub-regional economic and political hierarchies, as well as political and ideological affiliations (Abdenur, 2005; Bartlett, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2006).

A political economy perspective highlights asymmetries in the world system that are tilted towards countries in the North and West, and in the global structures and institutions that represent their economic and political interests. Concentrations of power, both visible and invisible, are potential threats to the key requirement of political equality in democracy (see Bobbio, 1987; Rueshmeyer, 2005). Political decision-making is embedded in social, cultural, and economic systems where dominant groups use their resources to preserve their own interests. Therefore, any agenda for the democratization of the international order must address embedding democratic rights and obligations in each of these "sites of power" (Held, 1995).

From a pragmatic perspective, it is important to acknowledge the power asymmetries among states, groups, and networks, and to develop appropriate mechanisms and processes to equalize these asymmetries in decision-making

processes at international, national, and local levels. In addition, it is important to recognize that countries and citizens do not passively accept official policies that are imposed from the outside; globalization processes do not all inevitably lead to isomorphism, or the homogenization of education systems and institutions.[3] There is a growing body of literature that highlights the ways in which local countries and citizens borrow, adapt, and reinterpret educational policies and programs to legitimate their own interests, ends, and understandings (see Steiner-Khamsi, 2009; Anderson-Levitt, 2003). Despite this more complex picture, it is clear, including to world leaders and officials within international organizations, that the international order (composed of global institutions, organizations, and networks) requires further democratization.

Robert Dahl outlines five standards for a democratic process which may be used as a metric to assess democratization in different spaces; these including effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, control of the agenda, and inclusion of all adults (Dahl, 2000). For Dahl, effective participation allows individuals and groups affected by a decision to express their views on what policy should be adopted. Enlightened understanding deepens this participation by providing citizens an opportunity to learn about relevant alternative policies and their consequences.

The issues of effective participation and enlightened understanding are taken up and developed further by advocates of what is called deliberative democracy. While there are many definitions and schools of deliberative democracy, a basic definition might focus on "collective decision-making with the participation of all who will be affected by a decision or their representatives" (Elster, 1998, pg. 8). For advocates of deliberative democracy, the

authority to exercise power (and ultimately, the legitimacy to govern) must come from collective decisions of members who are governed by that power (Cohen, 2003). In order for collective decision-making to be "deliberative" it must be public, informed by reason, dialogical as opposed to monological, and binding (Elster, 1998; Gutmann and Thompson, 2004).

Combining elements of Dahl and deliberative democracy, David Crocker (2008) suggests a scalar account of democracy that stresses a continuum of democratization along four dimensions: breadth, depth, range, and control. Breadth refers to the degree to which a democracy is inclusive of all groups in society (females, minorities, socio-economic classes, etc.). Another dimension to democratization is what Crocker refers to as "depth," or "modes of participation." Crocker is referring here to such things as voting, participating in public policy debates, engaging in peaceful protests, participating in community town-hall meetings, etcetera. Another dimension to democracy is range, "referring to the questions that citizens should democratically decide" (Crocker, 2008, p. 5). Finally, the last dimension highlighted by Crocker (2008, p. 4) is control, or the "extent to which citizens make or influence decisions and the extent that these decisions make a difference in the world."

The international dimension of deliberative democracy presents unique challenges of both an empirical and normative nature. The empirical challenges deal with institutional reform problems and often focus on problems of accountability and scale. Some scholars of democracy have come to the conclusion that deliberative democracy should be limited to "mini publics," where conditions can be controlled to maintain standards of critical dialogue (Chambers, 2009). The normative

challenges deal with questions around what institutions, spaces, and decision-making processes should be democratic and deliberative. Should a corporate boardroom, country club, trade union, university, church, or other types of civil society organizations be democratic? Should their collective decision-making processes be inclusive of all groups? Advocates of a more liberal and "thin" form of democracy (such as Nozick, 1974) would argue to limit application of these standards to formal public governing institutions. Advocates of a thicker and more direct form of democracy (see Walzer, 1983) would argue for the need to extend democratic standards and accountability mechanisms not only to governmental organizations but also to economic and civil society actors.

In the context of globalization, national and international decisions made by different entities (states, international governmental organizations, multinational corporations, social movements, etc.) in areas such as war, trade, culture, economics, and environment can both bind and affect citizens across and within borders (Held, 1995). As highlighted above, traditional theories of international relations rely on state-centric models for analyzing how states and their representatives engage with one another in different forms in order to resolve conflicts and cooperate. One problem with these theories is that they do not account for a growing set of global economic and civil society actors that influence and constrain decision-making at national, local, and international levels. In the context of globalization, there is a growing group of private global corporations, transnational social movements, international non-governmental organizations, and political communities that are not bound by geography. Important questions to address in an agenda for democratization of the international order include: how do these groups constrain or enhance state power and autonomy,

and how can we extend and enforce democratic accountability to all actors that operate across international lines (see Held, 1995)?

In sum, an agenda for democratizing international cooperation in education would require expanding democratic institutions and principles not only to traditional international actors such as the World Bank and United Nations but also to growing interconnected networks of economic and civil society agencies, organizations, and key groups that cut across territorial boundaries in the "changing enmeshment of the local, national, regional and global" (Held, 1995, p. 136). Democratizing international cooperation in education would also require attention to power across different sites, not only in its visible forms in place such as formal politics, but also in its more invisible and covert forms across economic, cultural, and social relations. Finally, an agenda for promoting democratization and deliberation in international relations would require expanding democratic participation of citizens and their representatives in terms of breadth, depth, range, and control.

This paper will draw from deliberative democratic theory to critically analyze the promise and reality of democratic participation in international cooperation in education in Latin America. The next section will continue with a brief historical overview of international cooperation in education in the region. I will use David Crocker's framework in order to analyze the quality and level of democratic participation in cooperation activities. The final section of the paper highlights more explicitly some of the potential critiques my paper raises, and my responses to an agenda for democratization and deliberation in the context of international cooperation in education.

Brief overview of international cooperation in education in Latin America

International cooperation in education first developed between individuals and schools at the local level over a century ago in Latin America. During this time, most education systems were organized at the local level. The main sponsor of schooling was the Catholic Church and formal education beyond basic literacy was primarily directed towards elites (Levy, 1986). Ideas and methods for educating circulated formally through institutions such as the Catholic Church and informally through the published works of prominent education theorists of the time, as well as through travel and exchanges between individual educators. In Latin America, ideas from European and American educators were diffused and reinterpreted, and took root in different forms. For example, in the early 19th century Simon Bolivar, president of the newly independent nation of Venezuela, invited the British educator Joseph Lancaster to Venezuela to promote what he called the monitorial method of schooling (Caruso and Roldan, 2005). Several decades later, an educator by the name of James Thomson traveled throughout South America, cultivating relationships with elites in governments and establishing schools based on the Lancaster model in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Brazil (Browning, 1921). Other examples of educational cooperation brought about by individual exchanges include Andrés Bello from Venezuela and Domingo Faustino Sarmiento from Argentina corresponding with Horace Mann in the United States and adopting ideas and models of schools from abroad (McGinn, 2003).

Industrialization in the early and mid 20th century led to consolidation of power within nascent nation-states in many countries in Latin America. During this time many countries in the region centralized their education systems
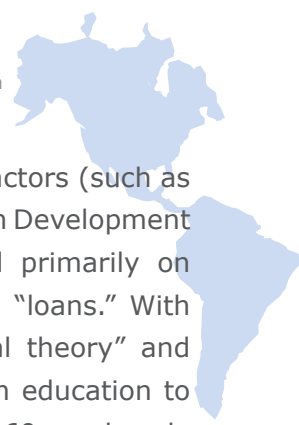
in order to gain control over the purpose of schooling and develop a citizenry that identified with the state, its official symbols, and political projects (whether it happened to be democratic or authoritarian) (Boli et. al, 1985). As education became a state project, international cooperation focused around exchanges between the newly formed national ministries of education in the developing world with those in the more industrialized countries. Towards the 1950s, many of these exchanges took place in the context of an increasingly bi-polar world order, where the United States viewed the expansion of Communism into the region as a threat to both its political and economic interests (Vaky & Muñoz, 1993). The exchanges were predominately North –South and consisted primarily of unidirectional transfer of resources (financial and technical) (Mundy, 1998). For example, in the first seven years of the Alliance for Progress (an aid program started by John F. Kennedy in the early 1960s to promote development and democracy in the region and stem the tide of communism) over 9.2 billion dollars in US aid flowed to Latin America (Smethermen and Smethermen, 1972).

With the creation of the Bretton Woods institutions (e.g. the IMF, the World Bank) and the establishment of national donor agencies (e.g. USAID, CIDA, SIDA) in industrialized countries, international cooperation in education in Latin America became more frequent, and primarily consisted of aid (transfer of grants to developing countries to develop school infrastructure), loans (targeting expansion of educational system), and technical assistance (lending of "expertise" from industrialized countries in order to assist with "manpower" planning within centralized ministries) (McGinn, 2003; Mundy, 1998).

Since the mid 1950s, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the OAS have led efforts in the region to promote international cooperation in the form of "technical assistance." Other key actors (such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and USAID) have focused primarily on cooperation through "grants" and "loans." With the emergence of "human capital theory" and research that linked investment in education to economic progress, in the late 1960s and early 1970s cooperation in education in Latin America increased. This cooperation primarily took the form of grants and loans aimed at infrastructure expansion. Technical assistance offered by IOs such as UNESCO and OAS consisted of providing countries with "experts" that could assist ministries with centralized manpower planning. The "massification" of education is the term often used for this period, implying expansion of access to all levels of education. During this period, educational aid accounted for somewhere between 5 and 10% of all aid flows around the world (Mundy, 2006).

International organizations and donor agencies became increasingly concerned with the quality and efficiency of education systems as education became "massified" in the 1970s. Recommendations to countries (often tied to loans in the form of conditionalities) aimed to introduce managerial and market mechanisms into educational systems in the region (Klees, 2008). The typical prescription coming from international donor agencies as part of a broader package of structural adjustment and economic liberalization included decentralization, focused funding on lower levels of education, promoting incentives for private sector expansion in secondary and higher education, school management reforms through the introduction of quality control (e.g. International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 2000), establishing standards and evaluations, and implementing outcome-based reforms at the national level (Arnove, 2005). Overall fiscal austerity was seen as a key reform needed to promote long-term economic growth

and competitiveness in a global economy. Thus, in seemingly contradictory fashion, even though aiming to stimulate educational "quality," new loan conditions stipulated fiscal austerity, which often led to big cuts in social spending (health and education). The 1980s were characterized as the "lost decade" in educational development in Latin America because investment in education was cut dramatically in many countries (Reimers, 1991).

Emerging from the "lost decade," international cooperation in education focused on meeting the new worldwide commitments signed in Jomtien in 1990, called "Education for All." United Nations Member States committed themselves to the universalization of primary education, basic literacy, closing the gender gap in education, and improving the quality of education. Cooperation shifted in accord with the dominant discourse in development that stressed "capacity building," institutional reform, and social participation in education. Loans also increased for sector wide reforms in education that focused primarily on quality, and such reforms included opportunities for some limited forms of consultation of citizen priorities (Klees, 2001).

In the year 2000, countries from around the world, including Latin America, met in Dakar to take stock of the advances towards the Education for All (EFA) goals. Those individuals representing Latin America issued a statement that revealed their frustration with the evolution and direction of international cooperation in education over the past 50 years, and that called for alternatives to the traditional model of cooperation in education, which had emphasized economic and technical concerns over democratic dimensions and a redistribution of power in

cooperation relationships. Their statement is worth quoting in full because it encapsulates the main problem this paper addresses:

> We require international organizations to revise their role in the definition of educational policies and in their implementation at the regional and national levels. We are concerned with the growing importance of these organizations, particularly of multilateral financial organizations, as decision-makers and actors not only in financial aspects, but also in technical assistance, research, monitoring and evaluation of education policies and programs in our region. We are concerned with the dominant thinking about education that has spread over the last few years, which is characterized by a strong economic bias and by an overwhelming predominance of administrative aspects in the understanding of education and in the implementation of educational reform. The need for reviewing the traditional model of international cooperation, especially in the field of education, is acknowledged by scholars and specialists the world over, and by international cooperation agencies themselves. The role of international organizations must be that of facilitating, promoting, communicating, and catalyzing. (Excerpt from Latin American Statement, Dakar 2000)[4]

International organizations and donor agencies have, to some degree, attempted to respond to critiques that focus primarily on the need to "democratize" international cooperation and development. The OAS and UNESCO, for instance, revised their educational cooperation

models, often with the help of those experts who previously critiqued them. The new paradigm in international cooperation in education highlighted the role of international organizations as "facilitators," "promoters," and "communicators." New terms such as "horizontal cooperation" appeared, thus signaling a more democratic and bi-directional approach. Technical assistance was often replaced with "knowledge-sharing," thereby implying a "give and take" process. Securing and sustaining the "political will" of countries was seen as paramount to the success of any development program or project. International organizations such as the OAS and UNESCO worked on institutionalizing mechanisms to consult with civil society and in general to incorporate more actors into the education policy dialogue process. One consultant hired by the OAS in 2001 to propose a new model of cooperation made the following recommendations:

1. "increase the range of policy options from which governments (national and regional communities) can choose;
2. de-link funding from bi-lateral and multilateral assistance agencies from the process of identification of policy options.
3. Increase the variety of stakeholders that participate in the process of policy formulation and decision-making." (McGinn, 2003, p. 59).

These recommendations to international organizations are aimed primarily at "reducing external control over policies that result from most current patterns of international cooperation, and to maximize the quality and effectiveness of national education policies" (McGinn, 2003, p. 59).

While the discourse of international organizations has changed over the past decade to emphasize more local participation, there continues to be a disjuncture between "explicit" statements embodying democratic values and ideals, and the actual practices within these organizations (Samoff, 2004). There are potentially several factors (both political and technical) that lead to disjuncture between policy and practice. Among the most commonly cited of political factors is the tendency for international organizations to co-opt discourses about participation in order to gain legitimacy, but without showing any real commitment to a democratic transformation and the devolution of power, authority, and control (see Klees, 2002). Democratization policies in these contexts are merely "symbolic," in that at a public level the problem is recognized but at the implementation level they are neither supported with adequate resources nor sufficiently specific enough to be operationalized (Stromquist, 2003). Technical factors may include the inherent limitations on representation in democratic processes, or the lack of financial resources, technical know-how, and skills required to implement changes and mechanisms that would allow for more democratic participation.

This paper argues that the problem often lies in the more intractable issues of power, control, and authority rather than in poorly implemented policies alone (Plank, 1996). What is needed is not just more participation but rather more **inclusive** (broadening) and more **quality** (deepening) participation in democratic decision-making processes in international cooperation in education. Increased democratization is first and foremost a political project involving an intentional redistribution of power, control, and authority. Yet despite the primacy of the political dimension of international cooperation in education, it is important to recognize that there are technical and institutional design issues that must be addressed. In this respect, it is useful to

look at both conceptual frameworks for analysis of democratic participation as well as particular concrete cases and institutions.

Broadening democratic participation in international cooperation in education

David Crocker (2008) suggests a scalar account of democracy that stresses a continuum of democratization along four dimensions: breadth, depth, range, and control. Breadth refers to the degree to which a democracy is inclusive of all groups in society (women, minorities, socio-economic classes, etc.). Equal distribution of power among groups is vital for a more inclusive and broader democracy. In the context of international cooperation in education, we can use the criteria of breadth to ask: Who participates in international cooperation activities? Who makes decisions on what gets placed on the agenda? Who negotiates the terms of political negotiations themselves? Who decides the objectives of educational cooperation projects? And the normative questions are, "Who should decide?" Who should determine the terms of political negotiations?, and so forth.

Due to the formalized structures of representation in international organizations and the protocols that establish "official" channels of communication through central ministries of education, expanding "breadth" in international cooperation activities is fraught with challenges. In most international organizations, such as the OAS and UNESCO, it is the national governments that decide who will represent the country at official education meetings. The degree to which these individuals represent the diverse concerns and views of local and state government, educational administrators, and citizens within their countries is an open question. Tensions evident at the national level sometimes play

out in international forums, as representatives have to negotiate competing and sometimes contradictory demands between different national and subnational actors. The extent to which an individual representative accurately channels and negotiates competing interests within his/her own country often determines the breadth of democratization in international cooperation in education. If, for example, a representative comes from the diplomatic corps representing the Department of State of a member country, then it is likely that the interests, views, and position of the presidential administration often trump the interests and views of the educational authorities.[5]

The traditional limitations of representation in government become even more accentuated at an international level as the content of deliberations and dialogues become further removed from the realities of educational communities in their local contexts. Expanding breadth in international cooperation in education would thus require inclusion not only of different groups at a national level (ministry of education officials, teachers' unions, civil society organizations, universities), but also would require ensuring representation from groups at more local levels, such as state and district level officials in Latin America, school directors, teachers, NGOs, community members, and students. In their discussion of specific case studies of deliberative democracy, Fung and Wright (2003, p. 20) highlight that "empowered participatory governance targets problems and solicits participation that is localized in both issue and geographic space." This requires restructuring the state apparatus so that it better responds to local demands, as well as the devolution of power and authority to "local action units." Deliberations in the context of international cooperation in education would

require similar restructuring of institutional mechanisms as well as devolution of decisions to units that push down past national government to more "local" units.

In Brazil, under the leadership of Ignacio Lula's administration, innovations have changed the relationship between international organizations, national governments, and civil society in the context of education. The national education ministry has worked closely with international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and OEI to ensure coordination between agencies and to make certain that international organization activities complement and support national and local policies and needs. Budgetary allocations to international organizations are made annually and kept within the country. Cooperation monies are managed through a variety of mechanisms aimed at ensuring coordination between international organizations in Brazil working on education, and with a strong emphasis on the incorporation of civil society and local municipalities into planning and implementation processes (Paolo Fontani, personal communication, December 2009; Claudia Baena Soares, personal communication, December 2009).

One of these mechanisms, called the Coordinated Action Plan or PAR, focuses on developing a reform agenda based on local needs defined by most of the 5,568 municipalities and 27 units of the Federation. The final outcome is a range of more than 40 actions and programs that include all levels of education and are available to the local municipalities. Integrated into the planning process is an assessment instrument called the Education Development Index (IDEB, Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação), which allows municipalities to track school flow and average examination results. The data generated from the system helps in setting targets and assists in matching federal and civil society programs and resources with local municipalities. All financial allocations that result from the program are published online and accessible to citizens, thereby adding a further level of accountability and citizen oversight. UNESCO and UNICEF have played a key role in supporting both the federal and local municipal governments in developing instruments for planning and assessment, and have developed studies and research designs that support the decision-making process. According to the Brazilian government and the UN, some of the initial results of these programs include improved outcomes in terms of quality indicators, increased collaboration between federal and municipal government in defining education goals and concrete targets, more transparency and social control, increased social mobilization, and contributions to more equitable distribution of federal funding for education. (UNESCO/Brazil Government Document, 2009; Paolo Fontani, personal communication, July 2010).

More research is needed to highlight similar innovations that increase democratic participation in educational cooperation at the international and local levels. These reforms in Brazil have been brought about in large part through the leadership of President Lula and his Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT). This is the same party that, in Porto Alegre, developed the innovative Participatory Budgeting reform, touted as a model for injecting citizen participation and deliberative processes into financial aspects of governance (Fung and Wright, 2003). These same principles have been applied to education reform through an initiative in Porto Alegre called the Citizen's School (Gandin and Apple, 2002). While Lula has had to make concessions and accommodate the interests of other political parties, the social equity and democratization agenda of the PT has filtered through the

political process and led to an increased focus on promoting equity, diversity, and participation of civil society in education governance.

Beyond these innovations in democratic participation, in many parts of Latin America international cooperation in education continues to suffer from lack of breadth, as indicated by a lack of inclusion of all groups in society. One of the main reasons for this lack of breadth may have to do with the structural constraints of international organizations; that is, they are inherently state-centric and work on the principle of non-intervention and state autonomy. When state units are not representative and inclusive themselves, these democratic deficiencies are often replicated at the international level. Working around these limitations to incorporate diverse local actors may in some degree be perceived as inappropriate intervention of international organizations into national decision-making processes. The question that emerges in this context is not whether deliberation in its fullest form can occur on a large scale, but rather whether it can occur at international levels without undermining autonomy and democratic decision-making at national and local levels. Replacing representation with direct participation of stakeholders in international cooperation activities is not always feasible. However, from a more pragmatic and deliberative democratic standpoint, some degree of mix between representation and direct participation, combined with an emphasis on the **quality** of participation (defined in terms of more inclusive decision-making processes and by more critical, reasoned, and ethical arguments) in international forums would be ideal.

Deepening democratic participation in international cooperation in education

Another dimension to democratization is what Crocker refers to as "depth," or "modes of participation." Crocker is referring here to such things as voting, participating in public policy debates, engaging in peaceful protests, participating in community town-hall meetings, etcetera. Deeper democracy requires modes of participation that go beyond, but do not merely supplant, electoral processes. Deliberative democrats stress the importance of public debates and the ability to "give and take opposing arguments," to pursue compromise and engage in a search for common ground that most all can accept (Crocker, 2006, p. 302). In the context of international cooperation in education, however, such "depth" is often missing from decision-making processes.

One of the main roles of international organizations in promoting cooperation in education is to offer a space for countries to share experiences at the policy and program level and to inform decision-making with research on innovations and best practices. The World Bank, for example, has developed what it calls a "knowledge management strategy" that is built on the premise that knowledge and information is crucial for good policy and development (World Bank OED, 2003). Other important actors in the region (such as UNESCO and OAS) have developed similar strategies that focus on the identification, documentation, and promotion of best practices. While these efforts may seem to add value from economic and technical perspectives, they often fail to adequately address the political dimensions of managing and controlling knowledge production and circulation (Samoff and Stromquist, 2001). While international organizations argue that they are creating increased flows of knowledge
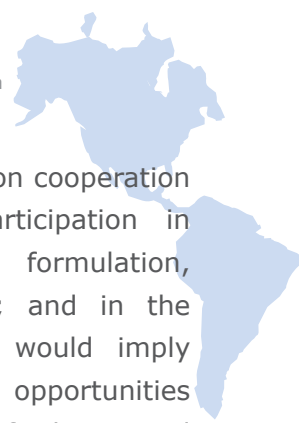
between member states, to a certain extent they have increased the asymmetries in information between states and international organizations themselves, thus perpetuating dependencies (Samoff and Stromquist, 2001; King and McGrath, 2003).

In addition to issues related to the flows of information and knowledge in and among countries, there is the issue of the quality of that sharing, understood in terms of how the information is selected, presented, and incorporated into policy and practice. There is little unequivocal evidence to suggest that much of the resources spent on the dissemination of knowledge and research has led to increased learning and application on the part of recipients (King and McGrath, 2003). From a deliberative democracy perspective, sharing different forms of knowledge should involve some degree of reasoning and critical analysis of lessons learned that highlight not only successes but also failures in implementing education policies and programs. In addition, the quality of exchange in democratic forums is dependent upon the inclusion of different types of knowledge from diverse perspectives (Sen, 1999). Finally, the question of whose knowledge gets shared becomes of critical importance in international cooperation activities in education.

Research plays an important role in informing decision-making but cannot replace deliberation, understood in this context to mean joint analysis of alternative policy options and possible interpretations and assessments of research findings. In addition, participation from a variety of stakeholders with different perspectives on educational policy is vital for promoting a more critical dialogue. This deeper participation implies expanding participation of various stakeholders in the different phases of international cooperation projects and policy

forums (In the context of education cooperation projects, this would imply participation in problem identification, policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation; and in the context of policy forums, this would imply participation in agenda setting, opportunities to make interventions, comment, facilitate, and evaluate policy forum meetings).

Finally, more depth requires moving beyond the limitations of the traditional consensus model of international organizations such as the OAS and UNESCO. Critics often point to the diluted and "thin" outcomes from a consensus model, and its lack of responsiveness in situations that require urgent action. Another commonly cited limitation is that small minorities are able to block the consensus building process. Injecting deliberation into the consensus making process is a challenge in international policy forums, especially in a context where individual country positions are sometimes predefined, and there are few incentives for considering opposing views and then changing positions. Deliberation does not always lead to consensus, but it may help in moving from "thin" versions of consensus based on aggregative preferences to a "thicker" version of consensus that reflects a more substantive and well-reasoned outcome. A thicker version of consensus emerges from a process of knowledge construction and is greater than the sum of its parts.[6]

There are some examples of international organizations in the region, such as the UN and the OAS, responding to these critiques around knowledge management and political dialogue. For example, between 2001 and 2005 the OAS Unit for Social Development and Education attempted to develop a new model of knowledge sharing and technical assistance in education that stressed local participation in the identification of policy-priorities, regional consensus building
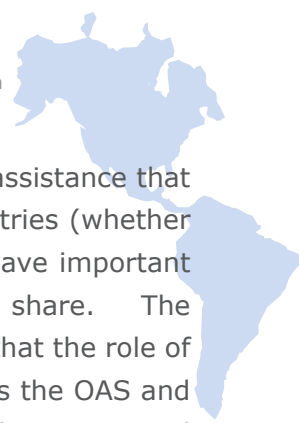
around common educational problems and policy-options, and the inclusion of a broader range of actors beyond just government officials in the policy formulation process. Underlying the model was a vision of a more deliberative process of "consensus building" that opened up spaces for dissent, critical thinking, and constructive joint analysis of alternative policy options.

The approach focused on countries themselves identifying policies and programs that merited further study, sharing, and potentially support for replication in other sites. Officials and experts interested in learning about a program travelled to a country together in order to interview a variety of stakeholders and engage in a critical dialogue with fellow international visitors and local participants. Workshops promoted dialogue and sharing of multiple perspectives on both the perceived successes and failures of the program, as well as a joint reflection on the conditions required to promote similar innovations in other settings (OAS, 2006). The idea was to identify and value local contextual factors that contributed to the success of the program as well as those factors that may have limited its success, thus encouraging a more critical stance and avoiding a "cookie cutter approach" to educational reform. The experience of sharing the program was intended not only to benefit the visitors from abroad but also to contribute to internal reflection on where the program could improve. Critical reflection was enhanced through the inclusion of research from different disciplines and traditions, and not limited to those quantitative research studies typically prevalent in international donor agencies. The final step in the process was to secure seed funding from donor agencies in order to help support replication of these experiences in new sites. Underlying the model was an attempt to create a more horizontal approach to

knowledge sharing and technical assistance that emphasized the idea that all countries (whether "developed" or in development) have important experiences and knowledge to share. The model was based on the premise that the role of international organizations such as the OAS and UNESCO should be limited to facilitating critical encounters among countries and diverse groups of stakeholders which, in national settings, do not always have the incentives or opportunities to come together. Finally, the model was unique in that it explicitly promoted a self –awareness in the staff of the Unit of Social Development and Education of the OAS and participants in member countries of the potential asymmetries of power that arise through the deployment of expertise and authority, as well as the legitimizing power to define best practices, frame and categorize development problems, terms, and processes, and rank countries according to pre-selected criteria. With the change in political leadership at the OAS in 2005 and the end of grant support from the World Bank, this promising experiment in deliberative international cooperation in education eventually ended (OAS, 2006; Sofialeticia Morales, David Edwards, Rosana Martinelli, Maria Claudia Camacho, and Christian Medina, repeated personal communications, 2005-2007).

With regards to examples of new, more deliberative and democratic directions in policy dialogue and summit processes, there are some examples worth citing. One possible strategy that is emerging at the OAS in the face of critiques that international declarations in education have led to few real changes in the way education systems operate at the national and local levels has been to move away from traditional education declarations into international "plans of action."[7] A move away from mere abstract statements of commitment towards more concrete statements of joint action with clearly defined roles, financial
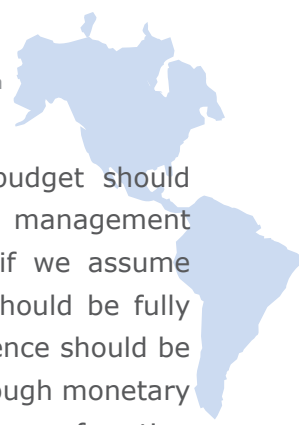
contributions, and benchmarks may move countries away from power politics towards more collaborative and concrete forms of cooperation. One of the three principles of Fung and Wright's model of empowered participatory governance is practical orientation towards solving concrete problems, "such as providing public safety, training workers, caring for habitats, or constructing sensible municipal budgets." This practical orientation does not eliminate the vital importance of spaces for dialogue, debate, and critique; but as many advocates of deliberative democracy have pointed out, such an orientation does help determine where deliberation is most appropriate for decision-making, or where other democratic forms of decision-making may be more useful (Guttman and Thompson, 2004).

Expanding democratic participation in international cooperation in education

Another dimension to democracy is range, "referring to the questions that citizens should democratically decide" (Crocker, 2008, p. 5). Within range there is the issue also of which institutions should be democratic, and how. Some questions pertinent to "range" that emerge in the context of international cooperation in education include: Should country participation in international forums be limited to voting on important global, regional, and multilateral political issues that impact them, or should this participation extend into the organizational and operational aspects of international organizations? To what extent should countries be able to "define" the terms of educational cooperation (grants, loans, technical assistance)? For example, from a democratic perspective it would be important to address the issue of voting rights and power imbalances between countries in decision-making in organizations such as the IMF, World Bank, UN, and OAS. Often one hears the argument that member states that contribute

more resources to the overall budget should have more voice over internal management and external policies. However, if we assume that international organizations should be fully democratic, then power and influence should be **checked** rather than licensed through monetary contribution, not only by reforms of voting mechanisms but also through other mechanisms that make transparent the ways in which richer and more powerful countries work the system behind closed doors in order to pursue their own interests.

There seems to be an overwhelming consensus in the region (see Latin American statement on EFA above) that international cooperation in education should be more democratic. However, hierarchical structures and vertical decision-making within international organizations undermine democratic possibilities; and depending on the distance between the rhetoric of participation and democratization and actual practices, this may even affect the legitimacy of a particular international organization's efforts to promote democracy among its member states. At the national level, hierarchical and vertical structures of decision-making may limit the breadth and range of citizen participation from the bottom-up in international cooperation.

The range of decision options that individual countries and representatives have available within the context of international cooperation is one of the crucial questions that still needs to be addressed. As I already highlighted in the overview of cooperation in education, countries have limited policy options in a context of loan conditionality. Increasing the range of policy options from which governments can choose would require more decentralized approaches to cooperation (including promoting more south-south cooperation and increased

valuation of local knowledge), as well as the de-linking of funding by bi-lateral and multilateral assistance agencies from the process of identification of policy options (McGinn, 2003).

A natural tension between international civil servants/expert consultants working within international organizations and individuals/groups within countries sometimes emerges in agenda setting and resource allocation in international political and technical forums. International organization bureaucrats will often state that countries "drive" the agenda, but many times the process of establishing policy priorities and project design and development is done through less transparent and democratic decision-making. Unfortunately, there are many examples where international organization bureaucrats have developed projects and programs without consulting the intended beneficiaries, or where consultations are undertaken in token fashion in order to give the appearance of participation, while the beneficiaries are given no real voice in how they will participate (Klees, 2002).

The process of establishing policy priorities in the context of international cooperation in education in the region is thus both a political and a technical challenge. Each country has its own education policy priorities and interests, but in the international context the challenge is to promote a joint reflection and deliberation on the part of all countries in order to define where it makes sense to work together and invest resources at regional and multilateral levels. This process of constructing a regional agenda in education must be deliberative and continual. I have already outlined what it would mean for this process to be deliberative; for it to be continual would mean that the outcomes of the deliberation are never definite or complete, thereby opening the possibility for the agenda to change as realities and understandings evolve.

Devolution of control in international cooperation in education

Finally, the last dimension highlighted by Crocker (2008, p. 4) is control, or the "extent to which citizens make or influence decisions and the extent that these decisions make a difference in the world." Local citizen control and "impact" of decisions are more evident with local grassroots governance structures.[8] For example, in discussing governance reforms in public education in Chicago, Fung and Wright (2003) stress the importance of devolution of real authority, power, and autonomy to local school boards. This devolution was accompanied by support in the form of training and resources, and each local board was held accountable for results. In this case, accountability and feedback loops were an integral part of the reform. Similar experiments in decentralization have occurred in Latin America in places such as Porto Alegre with the Citizen's School (Gandin and Apple, 2002); however, it is important to clarify that many decentralization reforms in the region were not designed to empower local citizens but had other aims, such as decreasing the national financial burden for education, or redistributing political power and fragmenting the collective bargaining power of strong interest groups such as teacher unions (Tatto, 1999; CEPAL, 1998).

Establishing mechanisms of "accountability" that can promote participation of ordinary citizens in decision-making and evaluation of the education policies and programs of international organizations and donor agencies is a complex task. One reason for this complexity mentioned above is that governance structures in international organizations and donor agencies are removed from local realities. In addition, at the state level representation in international organizations is usually channeled through formal processes of official representation that

prevent most ordinary citizens from having opportunities to participate in international cooperation activities; and where participation is made possible, citizens are often prevented from having knowledge about such opportunities for participation.

The central question that emerges is, "To whom should international organizations and donors be primarily accountable (global communities, states, or local citizens)?" The need for accountability of global governance and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) has emerged with an increase in their numbers; there are now over 300 intergovernmental organizations in the world, and their growing influence on different aspects of citizens' lives, from economic to political, has increased the visibility of protests against the policies of some of these organizations, such as the World Trade Organization and the World Bank. Critics state that IGOs should be accountable not only to member state administrations but also to local citizens who are affected by the policies and projects of international organizations and donor agencies. Key requirements of deliberative democracy are that of "reason-giving" and "reciprocity"; such norms apply to those everyday citizens who are affected by decisions, policies, and laws:

> Persons should be treated not merely as objects of legislation, as passive subjects to be ruled, but as autonomous agents who take part in the governance of their own society, directly or through representatives. In deliberative democracy an important way these agents take part is by presenting and responding to reasons, or by demanding that their representatives do so, with the aim of justifying the laws under which they must live together. (Guttmann, and Thompson, 2004, p. 3)

Guttmann and Thompson (2004) go on to explain that reason giving should be "accessible" to all citizens. This accessibility to reasons and its accompanying norms of transparency become a challenge for international organizations operating in diverse cultures. In addition, another challenge to transparency and accountability is the complex bureaucratic cultural codes and technical jargon prevalent in international organizations (Barnett and Finnemore, 1999). The OAS and UNESCO have made attempts to address multiple education stakeholders in the field with differentiated strategies of communication. For example, UNICEF has a website that provides a space for youth and children to express their ideas and opinions and presents important information on related UN policies, projects, and rationales (see http://www.unicef.org/voy/). Both OAS and UNESCO have made limited attempts to "translate" technical reports of education systems into language that is accessible and understandable to teachers, parents, and students.

Another strategy for shifting control to citizens would be for international organizations to pay much more attention to how they identify and engage with (educational) stakeholders, to ensure these stakeholders are representative of diverse national and local groups, and to make these criteria transparent and available (Burall and Neligan, 2005). In international cooperation in education, it is often a small group of elite academics/consultants, international bureaucrats, and ministry officials who develop policy and programs. Giving more control to teachers, school directors, families and school communities, and students would broaden and deepen democracy in international cooperation.

Another strategy would be to foment more citizen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms (Burall and Neligan, 2005; Torres, 2001), both

at the local and international levels. There are several examples of civil society organizations in Latin America that have the mission of monitoring their own country's education policies, such as Acao Educativa in Brazil and the National Observatory for Education in Mexico (Torres, 2001).[9] There is an increasing group of civil society organizations that monitor the work of international organizations in the region, but most of these are not necessarily just focused on education. Some of these organizations include the Regional Coordinator of Economic and Social Research (CRIES), the Bretton Woods Project, and the Active Democracy Network.[10] At the international level, groups such as the Global Campaign for Education have played an increasingly important role in monitoring compliance with EFA by UN Member States and in keeping UNESCO and other lead international organizations and donor agencies accountable. In Latin America, the work of the Active Democracy Network is especially worth noting. This network of NGOs was established in 1997 with the mission of increasing civil society participation in the Summit of the Americas Process. One of the most important contributions of the network has been the development of a monitoring tool called the ECGI, or Evaluation Government Compliance Index, which consists of 232 indicators across four dimensions that include access to public information, freedom of expression, decentralization and local governments, and strengthening of civil society participation. Their annual report includes both country level reports and a regional report on progress and setbacks in implementing Summit of the Americas mandates; on promoting alliances between government and civil society; on diffusion of information on the Summit of the Americas process to citizens; on increasing the influence of civil society in the Summit process;

and on monitoring progress towards gender equity (Active Democracy Network, 2009a; Informe Colombia 2009a).

New directions?

The section above highlights some initial challenges and opportunities for increasing democratization of international cooperation in education across four dimensions: breadth, depth, range, and control. Some of the challenges are more practical and immediately feasible (enhancing communication strategies), while others would require deeper strategic and structural change (expanding mechanisms of representation to include local actors). There is evidence of some incremental change, at least at the level of discourse, and there are some concrete examples, highlighted above, of promising experiments within and outside of international organizations and donor agencies that attempt to democratize international cooperation in education.

While today there may be some cases within international organizations and donor agencies where departments and/or divisions are working to democratize (broaden and deepen) international cooperation in education and development, most of these are isolated efforts and there appears to be no systematic and widespread effort to restructure international organizations and donor agencies to make them more responsive to citizens' demands. While some restructuring has been suggested of organizations such as the OAS and the United Nations, certain countries with an interest in the status quo have blocked any substantive reform (the most commonly cited example is the Security Council of the United Nations). As highlighted above, even if international

organizations change, states themselves would need to change to align themselves with these global IGOs if a broader and deeper participation of citizens in governance is to occur.

Despite these obstacles to change, there are signs that certain aspects of globalization (e.g. the spread of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)) and the growth and coordination capacity of civil society and social movement networks are promoting changes in global governance and the configuration of power and accountability between states, civil society, and the market (Mundy, 2006; Arnove, 2005). Fung and Wright (2003) describe these checks on entrenched groups in control as "countervailing power." According to the authors, countervailing power is a "concept that describes how powerful actors with privileged access to decision-making venues may be challenged and even defeated from time to time by the weak and less organized." Fung and Wright point out that the challenge in many contexts is to deploy countervailing power in both its top-down and bottom-up form and to promote more collaborative as opposed to adversarial politics.

Potential Critiques, Responses, and Final Summary

If we are to move towards a more democratic and deliberative model of international cooperation in education in the Americas, then it is important to also assess the potential drawbacks and critiques that will emerge. Some of these critiques, and my initial responses, are presented below:

1. *Reasoning critique*: One potential critique could involve questioning the seemingly core assumption of deliberative democracy that policy-makers must publicly justify their decisions with reasoned arguments. A critic

may say that not all reasons are equal and that some rationales may be more objective than others-- in particular, those backed by rigorous science. A more cynical perspective may argue that all decision-making is ultimately a form of political bargaining and that even if rationales are given through deliberative exercise they are merely "a cover for the exercise of power politics" (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004, p. 46). In the context of international cooperation in education, many organizations such as the World Bank have traditionally favored "scientific" reasoning and evidence for adopting a certain policy approach. From a critic's standpoint, democratic dialogue and deliberation in educational cooperation should therefore be limited to certain pre-selected options that have been evaluated by scientists through (the usually preferred) quantitative and qualitative research.

Response: Despite calls for more informed policymaking rooted in evidence, the literature shows that each research paradigm has its own methodological limitations and normative assumptions (Klees, 2008). In addition, 30 years of studies on research-utilization has shown that quantitative research is only one of several inputs into the policy decision-making process (Reimers & McGinn, 1997; Bujazan et. al, 1987). One example where the use of "scientific" reasoning to justify policy has its limitations is the case of applying neoclassical economic frameworks to public goods such as education and health. Neoclassical frameworks in economics are based on models of individual consumption in markets that do not adequately account for public goods, such as health and education, which produce collective social and political benefits for communities (Klees, 2003). Another
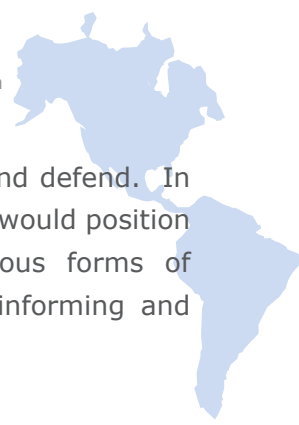
much-discussed example is the case of "rate of return research." Rate of return models overemphasized private returns on education and underestimated the social benefits of education (Klees, 2008; Carnoy, 2000; Carnoy, 2005). As a result, many countries in Latin America reduced public funding of higher levels of education (Schwartzman, 1991). This miscalculation could potentially constrain national development in the new knowledge economy, where research and development generated in higher education institutions drive economic, social, and cultural development.

There are other forms of reasoning that are critical for deliberation in education and development. For example, policymakers must also be able to consider the ethical and moral implications of their decisions. Reasoning about policies often tends to be framed in utilitarian terms, meaning that a policy would be judged in terms of its ability to maximize utility, measured through indicators of individual happiness and pleasure. Yet such a framework interprets human behavior in a reductionist way that emphasizes our narrow self-interest and assumes that we are well enough informed and capable of calculating the consequence for each alternative course of action. In the context of international cooperation in education, a human capital approach (which similarly has an individualistic/utilitarian dimension) has been predominant for many decades, and an utilitarian/consequentialist approach[11] to international cooperation in education would not necessarily hold states accountable for failing to provide quality education to all segments of society, including marginalized populations and minorities. Meanwhile, UNESCO has been an important defender of a "rights based approach," which posits that education is an intrinsic human right and an end in itself, which most societies

have reason to value, promote, and defend. In any case, a deliberative approach would position **moral** reasoning alongside various forms of scientific reasoning as valid for informing and justifying educational policies.

2. *Excessive logistical demands on governance*: One common critique that may emerge centers on the excessive burdens and demands that deliberation and increased participation could place on democratic governance. The argument is that deliberation would require too much time and consume too many resources if it is to meet the criteria of breadth and depth outlined above. In a context of scarce resources for international cooperation in the region of Latin America, increased democratization in the form of active citizen participation and deliberation may not be feasible.

Response: This type of cost-benefit analysis of participation often takes a short-term view and does not consider the fact that many reforms in Latin America in education lack sustainability and have little long-term impact on learning outcomes because they do not have the input and buy-in from those responsible for implementing them--namely school directors and teachers. Noel McGinn argues that the prime reason why so many innovations and reforms in education in Latin America have failed to achieve their potential is that they do not receive adequate support:

> Good ideas abound, and even bad ideas can be improved through learning, but without nurturing no idea thrives. The critical support is that that which comes from below, not from powerful patrons and sponsors, but from those responsible for implementation. External agents can and often do impose reforms

in the education systems in developing countries, and these reforms are not without their [negative] effects. (McGinn, 1998)

Therefore, while recognizing that more inclusive and deeper participation and deliberation does exact certain demands and resources, one could argue that in the long term the benefits outweigh the costs when one considers the countless reforms that have failed to take root and transform the system because they have not adequately incorporated local citizens in the process. In addition, many deliberative democrats themselves have recognized that deliberation is not always the best process for decision-making (and in some cases may even be redundant), and that it should be combined with other democratic mechanisms such as representation. Finally, the forms of participation can be structured together with participants in order to set out certain parameters (time, space, stages) that are agreeable to all.

3. *Certainty of outcome critique*: Critics may highlight that deliberative processes and increased citizen participation do not always ensure certain outcomes (see Stokes, 1998). For example, deliberation may not necessarily lead to consensus but may spur further disagreement, especially when dealing with topics that tend to produce opposing ideological and moral positions (e.g. sex education).

Response: From one standpoint, this critique could be viewed as weak in the context of education reform and policy, which involves complex social processes (as opposed to a controlled scientific process). Causal links between inputs, processes, and outcomes cannot be established in complex social systems such as education. From this perspective, it is unreasonable to place a prior burden on the process of deliberation to produce certain outcomes.

In more theoretical and philosophical terms, this critique is related to the debates on whether deliberation should be procedural or substantive. Proceduralism places an emphasis on applying deliberative principles to the process, and does not "prescribe the substance of the laws." Substantive theorists would emphasize that process is not sufficient and that procedures (such as majority rule) can produce unjust outcomes (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004, p. 23). Therefore, there are certain pre-requisite rights that must be secured (equality, non-discrimination, etc.) alongside procedural rights (voting) (Gutmann and Thompson, 2004).

In the context of international education cooperation and international development in Latin America, where there are great asymmetries in power and resources, it seems that this critique could have some validity. However, rather than concluding that deliberation and participation should be reduced, one could conclude (as is argued in this paper) that they should be enhanced and expanded. Those that advocate for a "thicker" democratization in the region would likely advocate for a more substantive approach to deliberation in policy which establishes certain parameters such as "education is an intrinsic human right," and which would place an emphasis **on achieving quality education outcomes for all** as the goal. This does not mean that they would not advocate for deliberation but rather would set parameters for deliberation in order to ensure that the outcomes do not

lead to "unjust" policy (e.g., a policy that might promote more inequity in education). Those that advocate for a "thinner" approach to democratization would tend to advocate for a procedural approach to deliberation in education policy and would most likely place emphasis on **equal opportunity of access** to quality education.

4. Instability critique: Education in Latin America suffers from too much instability and is too politicized. Increasing participation and deliberation would only further politicize the situation and polarize those who advocate for educational reform and those who block it. The average term of a minister of education is one-and-a-half years; each time a new minister comes to office, new policies are passed which, according to deliberative democratic theory, would need to be reasoned and debated with citizens. Deliberation in this context would promote even more instability and would lead to further politicization of education reform.

   Response: Political instability and lack of continuity in policy reform are serious limitations that to some degree are inherent in democratic institutions and processes. The reality is that if any education reform is to succeed in the long term, it needs more than the efforts of governments or international organizations. It needs the sustained support of stakeholders across sectors (public, private, and civil society) and over time. It has been argued that the main problem in basic education in Latin America is the **lack of a broad social consensus**, recognizing that there is a problem of equity and quality in the provision of education (Schiefelbein, 1997). This lack of broad social consensus is especially challenging where there is, as noted in the critique, a **lack of continuity in education reform**. Reform in education takes time, sometimes decades. Ensuring continuity in education reform policies is therefore crucial, and this requires public consensus. Deliberative forums convening government, private sector, and civil society groups can contribute to developing this public consensus and to providing more continuity in policy. Deliberative forums combined with collaborative projects can help promote learning, distribute institutional memory, support capacity-building efforts, and bring more resources to bear on the education reform process. Creating a space for citizens to deliberate on the role of education is fundamental for promoting broad social consensus around education reforms. In Latin America, the most innovative and successful reforms have all created multiple and continuous opportunities for diverse groups across the education sector and society to provide input and to have opportunities for meaningful collaborative action. International organizations, leveraging their regional and international position, can contribute by promoting policy dialogue and collaborative actions among ministries and also with key stakeholders across sectors. The challenge is to develop a better understanding of how deliberation can be used to promote more collaborative as opposed to more adversarial and partisan forms of politics. This is perhaps one area which deliberative theorists need to explore more.

5. *Power critique*: The final critique relates to the possibility that increasing deliberation and participation can lead to increased inequality. Fung and Wright (2003) note that deliberation can turn into domination in a context where "participants in these

processes usually face each other from unequal positions of power." Every reform in education creates winners and losers, and very few create "win-win" situations. Those in power would have to submit to the rules of deliberation and relinquish "control" over the various dimensions of democratic decision-making. This is naïve and not politically feasible.

Response: This is a valid critique worth considering. Structural inequalities and asymmetries of power in governments and international institutions in Latin America have facilitated domination by elites in terms of authority, power, and control in politics. Asymmetries of power in international cooperation in education are also clear, especially when powerful financial (World Bank, IDB, IMF) or political (OAS, UNESCO) organizations engage with local stakeholders and condition policy options with funding or political support. What this paper has argued is relevant again here: that instead of rejecting further democratization in the face of these challenges, including the challenge of elite "domination," what is needed is more and better democracy, defined in terms of its breadth, depth, range, and control. Finally, dealing with elite domination in international deliberative forums will require conscious and skilled facilitation on the part of international organizations, which themselves are often elitist and hegemonic.

Final Thoughts: So What?

Perhaps the most critical question that emerges in the argument for increased democratization and deliberation is simply: So what? Does increased democratization and deliberation actually lead to better outcomes in education? More empirical research on this

critical question is needed. However, experiments in deliberative democracy in education reform in Brazil through the UNESCO and Ministry of Education Coordinated Action Plan and Porto Alegre's Citizen School, and also to some degree at the international level with the OAS pilot experiment in developing a more democratic model of international cooperation from 2001-2005, have shown that deliberative processes can enhance learning on the part of those participating. Fung and Wright (2003) refer to these experiments in deliberation as "schools of democracy" because participants exercise their capacities of argument, planning, and evaluation. Deliberation promotes joint reflection and consideration of others' views. Citizens who participate in deliberative forums develop competencies that are important not only for active citizenship (listening, communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution, self-regulation skills) but also crucial for managing change and school reform. Many of the same skills that are developed through citizen deliberation and participation are also essential for transforming school cultures, promoting "learning organizations" (Senge, 2000), fostering communities of reflective practitioners (Schon, 1991) and developing communities of practice (Wenger, 2001). There is evidence from some research that democratic interactions can create knowledge that is more rigorous, precise, and relevant than that produced in authoritarian environments (Jaramillo, 2005). Another important aspect of enhancing deliberative democracy and democratization is that it moves from a focus on individuals and their own preferences towards more collective forms of learning and collaboration.

Up to now, international organizations have endorsed a "thin" version of democratization that is content with formal and centralized mechanisms of "representation" and "policy
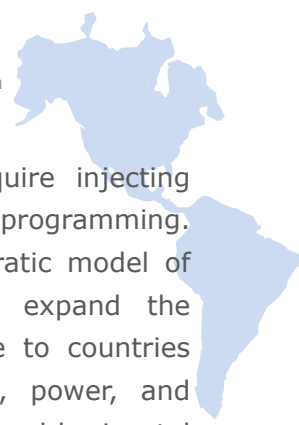
dialogue." If a new, more deliberative and democratic model of cooperation in education in the region were to emerge, what would it look like?

First of all, a more deliberative and democratic model of international cooperation in education would involve more direct and deeper forms of participation from everyday citizens, including teachers, school directors, families, school communities, students, and meso-level actors such as civil society organizations. This participation would move beyond simple consultation to more authentic forms of joint decision-making and deliberation. The model would involve more accountability on the part of international organizations in terms of transparency, and would require injecting ethical reasoning into policies and programming. In addition, a new more democratic model of international cooperation would expand the range of policy options available to countries through devolution of authority, power, and control, combined with oversight and horizontal accountability mechanisms. A more democratic model of international cooperation would stress valuing, systematizing, and disseminating local knowledge and innovation. Finally, democratization and deliberation in international cooperation in education would lead to enhanced learning and agency on the part of participating countries, groups, and individuals, and thus contribute to better outcomes in terms of quality and equity in education at national and local levels.

Endnotes

1. Here McGinn is referring to the quality and equity of the system as opposed to expansion. Latin America lags behind other regions of the world in terms of learning outcomes in math, science, and civics. In addition, equity in education continues to be a problem at all levels in the education system.   While there have been advances in terms of expanding access to greater number of students at all levels (pre-primary, primary, secondary, higher), high levels of repetition and drop-out continue to plague the system. Children and youth from lower socioeconomic levels, from rural areas, and from indigenous groups have the lowest levels of educational attainment (see UNESCO yearly reports on education).

2. In looking at educational cooperation in the region it is important to distinguish between types of international actors involved in promoting educational cooperation and the various types of educational cooperation (from aid, to grants, to technical assistance). Some of the more prominent of these institutions include: donor agencies such as the World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB); government aid agencies such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); and inter-governmental organizations such as the United Nations (various agencies like UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP), the Organization of American States (OAS), and the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI). In addition, international civil society and private sector organizations are playing an increasingly important role in influencing education reforms in the region.

3. Isomorphism refers to the "world culture theory" premise that the diffusion and institutionalization of policies and programs around the world is leading to the homogenization of education systems.

4. http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/research/edu20/moments/2000dakar.html

5. Within the OAS, department of foreign affairs officials from each member country often represent their country in education policy meetings. When countries send mixed delegations it is common to see differences in agreement and position between representatives of a department of foreign affairs and representatives of a ministry of education on particular policy positions.

6. Knowledge construction here is understood as process of learning from the experience of failure and from a constructivist perspective (that learners construct knowledge out of their lived experiences) (Freire, 2000).

7. The OAS ministerial meeting in 2007 in education and the ministerial meeting in culture in 2006 are recent examples.

8. It is important to clarify that decentralization can contribute to increased inequities in education, and/or reproduce undemocratic tendencies at local levels, such as elite capture. See Izquierdo, C. and Sanchez, R. (2000); Schmelkes, S. (1997); Fiske, E. (1996).

9. See www.observatorio.org; www.acaoeducativa.org/

10. See www.cries.org/; www.brettonwoodsproject.org/project/about.shtml; www.democraciaactiva.org/

11. A consequentialist approach views a morally right action as one that produces a good outcome or consequence.

References

Abdenur, Adriana. (2002). Tilting the North-South Axis. The Legitimization of Southern Development Knowledge and its Implications for Comparative Education Research. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, Vol 4 (2): 57-69.

Active Democracy Network. (2009a). *The Summits must not end up as empty promises: Hemispheric Report 2006-2008*. Retrieved August 1, 2010 from www.sociedadcivil.net

Active Democracy Network. (2009b). S*eguimiento de la sociedad civil colombiana a los compromisos presidenciales adquiridos en las Cumbres de las Américas. Informe Colombia Periodo 2006-2007*. Retrieved August 1, 2010 from www.sociedadcivil.net

Anderson-Levitt, Kathryn, (ed.) (2003). *Local meanings, global schooling: Anthropology and world culture theory*. New York: Palgrave McMillan

Arnove, Robert. (2005). To what ends, educational reforms around the world. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 12 (1): 79-95.

Arquilla, John, Ronfeldt, David & Zanini, Michele. (1999). Networks, netwar and information-age terrorism. In Lesser, Ian (ed.) et al. *Countering the New Terrorism*. California: RAND.

Barnett, Michael & Finnemore, Martha. (1999). The politics, power, and pathologies of international organizations. *International Organization*, 53 (4): 699 – 732.

Bartlett, Lesley. (2003). World culture or transnational project? Competing education projects in Brazil. In Anderson-Levitt, Kathryn. (ed). *Local Meanings, Global Schooling: Anthropology and World Culture Theory* (Pp.183-200). New York: Palgrave McMillan.

Bobbio, Norberto. (1987). *The future of democracy.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Boli, John, Ramirez, Francisco & Meyer, John. (1985). Explaining the origins and expansion of mass education. *Comparative Education Review*. 29 (2): 145-170.

Brinkerhoff, David & Crosby, Benjamin. (2002). *Managing policy reform: Concepts and tools for decision-makers in developing and transitioning countries*. Bloomfield CT: Kumarian Press.

Browing, Webster. (1921). Joseph Lancaster, James Thomson, and the Lancasterian system of mutual instruction, with special reference to Hispanic America. *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 4 (1): 49-98.

Bujazan, Michael E., Hare, Sharon, LaBelle, Thomas & Stafford, Lisa. (1987), International agency assistance to education in Latin America and the Caribbean, 1970-1984: Technical and political decision- making. *Comparative Education, 23* (2): 161-71.

Burall, Simone & Neligan, Caroline. (2005). *The accountability of international organizations*. Global Public Policy Research Paper Series (2) retrieved December 22, 2010 from www.gppi.net/fileadmin/gppi/IO_Acct_Burall_05012005.pdf

Carnoy, Martin. (2000). Notes on the production and use of knowledge in the education sector. In *Knowledge Management in the Learning Society*, OECD: Paris

Carnoy, Martin. (2005). *Globalization, educational trends and the open society*. Paper for OSI education conference 2005: "Education and open society: A critical look at new perspectives and demands." Retrieved August 2, 2010 from www.soros.org/initiatives/esp/articles.../carnoy_english.pdf
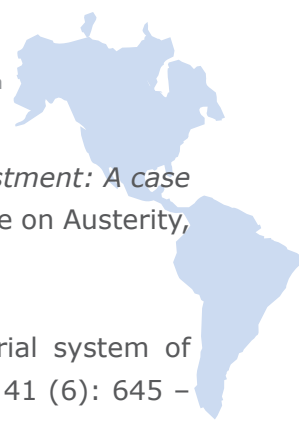
Carnoy, Martin & Torres, Carlos Alberto. (1992). *Educational change and structural adjustment: A case study of Costa Rica*. Monograph prepared for the Unesco-ILO Inter-agency Task Force on Austerity, Adjustment, and Human Resources. Occasional paper series. Paris: UNESCO.

Caruso, Marcelo & Roldan Vera, Eugenia. (2005). Pluralizing meanings: The monitorial system of education in Latin America in the early nineteenth century. *Paedagógica Histórica*, 41 (6): 645 – 654.

Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL). (1998). *La descentralizacion de la educación y la salud: un análisis comparativo de la experiencia Latinoamericana.* Retrieved December 22, 2010 from www.cepal.org/cgi-bin/getProd.asp?xml=/publicaciones/xml/4/4644/P4644.xml&xsl=/tpl/p9f.xsl&base=/tpl/top-bottom.xsl

Chambers, Simone. (2009). Rhetoric and the public sphere: Has deliberative democracy abandoned mass democracy? *Political Theory, 37(3)*: 323-350.

Crocker, David. (2006). Sen and deliberative democracy. In *Capabilities equality: Basic issues and problems*. Alexander Kaufman (Ed.) New York: Routledge: 155-97.

Crocker, David. (2008). *Ethics of global development: Agency, capability, and deliberative democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dahl, Robert A. (2000). *On democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Elster, Jon (ed). (1998) *Deliberative democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

Fiske, Edward B. (1996). *Decentralization of Education: Politics and Consensus*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

Freire, Paulo. (2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed. 30th anniversary edition with introduction by Donaldo Macedo*. New York: Continuum International Publishing.

Fung, Archong & Wright, Erik Olin. (2001). Deepening democracy: Institutional innovations in empowered participatory governance. *Politics and Society* 29 (1): 5-41.

Fung, Archong & Wright, Erik Olin. (2003). *Deepening democracy: Institutional innovations in empowered participatory governance*. London: Verso.

Gandin, Luis Armando & Apple, Michael. (2002). Thin versus thick democracy in education: Porto Alegre and the creation of alternatives to neo-liberalism. *International studies in Sociology of Education*, 12 (2): 99 – 116.

Gutmann, Amy & Thompson, Dennis. (2004). *Why deliberative democracy?* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Held, David. (1995). *Democracy and the global order: From the modern state to cosmopolitan governance*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Muñoz-Izquierdo, Carlos & Ahuja, Raquel. (2000). Function and value of a compensatory program directed at the poorest Mexican States: Chiapas, Guerrero, Hidalgo, and Oaxaca. In Reimers, Fernando (Ed.) Unequal schools, unequal chances: *The challeges to equal opportunity in the Americas* (Pp. 340 – 375). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Jaramillo, Rosario. (2005). *Relaciones democráticas y aprendizaje verdadero*. Paper presented at Seminario de Educación y formación de una ciudadanía democrática. San Jose, Costa Rica, August 2005.

King, Kenneth & McGrath, Simon. (2003). *Knowledge sharing in development agencies: Lessons from four cases. OED paper series. Washington, DC*: World Bank. Retrieved from: www.worldbank.org/oed/knowledge_evaluation/

Kissinger, Henry. (1994). *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Klees, Steven J. (1993). *Resource allocation and social choice in education: The need for alternative criteria and processes*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Klees, Steven J. (2001). World Bank development policy: A SAP in SWAP's clothing. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 3 (2): 1-11.

Klees, Steven J. (2002). World Bank education policy: New rhetoric, old ideology. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 22: 451-74.

Klees, Steven J. (2008). Presidential address delivered to the comparative and international education society annual meeting. New York City, March 17–21. Published in *Comparative Education Review*, 35 (4): 721 – 734.

Levy, Daniel. (1986). *Higher education and the state in Latin America: Private challenges to public dominance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

McGinn, Noel. (1998). Resistance to good ideas: Escuela Nueva in Colombia. In Buchert, L. (Ed.) *Education reform in the south in the 1990s* (Pp. 29-51), Paris: UNESCO.

McGinn, Noel. (2003). *Towards international cooperation in education for the integration of the Americas*. Washington DC: OAS.
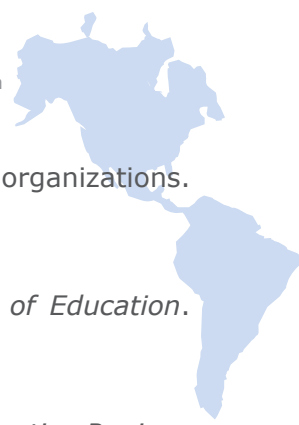
McNeely, Connie. (1995). Prescribing national education policies: The role of international organizations. *Comparative Education Review*, 39 (4): 483-507.

Mundy, Karen. (2006). Education for all and the new development compact. *Review of Education*. 52(1): 23-48.

Mundy, Karen. (1998). Educational multilateralism and world (dis)order. *Comparative Education Review*. 42(4): 448-478.

Nozick, Robert. (1974). *Anarchy, state, and utopia*. New York: Basic Books.

Organization of American States. (2006). Conocimiento y Asesoría en Red (Conared) websites retrieved July 20, 2010 from http://www.oas.org/udse/espanol/conared/mapas.html and http://www.oas.org/udse/espanol/conared/

Plank, David. (1996). Rethinking progressive school reform: Organizational dynamics and educational change. *American Journal of Education*, 104 (2): 79-102.

Puryear, Jeffrey. (1999). The Americas: Educational reform, external forces, and internal challenges. In Morales-Gomez, Daniel (Ed.) *Transnational social policies*: The new development challenges of globalization. IDRC/Earthscan.

Reimers, Fernando. (1991). The impact of economic stabilization and adjustment on education in Latin America. *Comparative Education Review*, 35(2): 319-353.

Reimers, Fernando & McGinn, Noel. (1997). *Informed dialogue: Using research to shape educational policy around the world*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Rueshmeyer, Dietrich. (2005). Addressing inequality. In Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino (Eds.), *Assessing the quality of democracy* (Pp.47-61). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Samoff, Joel. (2004). From funding projects to supporting sectors? Observations on the aid relationship in Burkina Faso. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 24(4): 397–427.

Samoff, Joel & Stromquist, Nelly. (2001). Managing knowledge and storing wisdom? New forms of foreign aid? *Development and Change*, 32(4): 631-656.

Schiefelbein, Ernesto. (1997). Chile: Generating social consensus for a long-term reform of education. In *Education reform: The decision makers approach. Prospects*. Paris: UNESCO. XXVII (4): 103-115

Schön, Donald A. (1991). *The reflective turn: Case studies in and on educational practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Schwartzman, Simon. (1991). Latin America: higher education in a lost decade. *Prospects: quarterly review of education*. XXI (3): 363-373.

Sen, Amartya. (1999). *Development as freedom*. New York: Random House.

Senge, Peter. (2000). *Schools that learn: A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education*. New York: Doubleday/Currency

Schmelkes, Silvia. (1997), The problems of the decentralization of education: a view from Mexico. In Torres, Carlos Alberto and Puiggros, Adriana (Eds.) *Latin American education* (Pp. 149-164). Boulder: Westview Press.

Sidhu, Ravinder. (2007). GATS and the new developmentalism: Governing transnational education. *Comparative Education Review*, 51(2): 203 – 227.

Smetherman, Robert & Smertherman, Bobbie. (1972). The alliance for progress: Promises unfulfilled. *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*. 31 (1): 79-85.

Steiner-Khamsi, Gita. (2006). The economics of policy-borrowing and lending: a study of late adapters. *Oxford Review of Education*. 32 (5): 665-678.

Stokes, Susan. (1998). Pathologies of deliberation in deliberative democracy. In Elster, Jon (Ed.) *Deliberative Democracy* (Pp. 123-139). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stromquist, Nelly. (1993). The political experience of women: Linking micro- and macro- democracies. *La Educación*. 116 (3). Retrieved December 22, 2010 from www.educoas.org/portal/bdigital/contenido/laeduca/laeduca_116/articulo3/index.aspx?culture=en&navid=221

Tatto, Maria Teresa. (1999). Education reform and state power in Mexico. *Comparative Education Review*. 43 (3): 251-282.

Torres, R. Maria. (2001). *From Dakar to Cochabamba: Education for all follow-up in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Report prepared for Action Aid UK. Retrieved from www.fronesis.org

UNESCO / Ministry of Education. (2009). *Towards education for all. UNESCO Brazil Cooperation. Four Main Initiatives*. Retrieved August 3, 2010 from unesco.org/images/0018/001852/185219e.pdf

Vacky, Viron & Muñoz, Heraldo. (1993). *The future of the Organization of American States.* New York City: Twentieth Century Fund Press.

Walzer, Michael. (1983). *Spheres of justice.* New York: Basic Books.

Wenger, Etienne. (2001). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

World Bank OED. (2003). *Sharing knowledge, innovations and remaining challenges*: An OED Evaluation. Retrieved from www.worldbank.org/oed/knowledge_evaluation/

World Bank. (2000). *Higher education in developing countries, peril and promise. Task force on higher education and society*. World Bank: Washington DC. Retrieved August 1, 2010 from siteresources. worldbank.org/EDUCATION/.../peril_promise_en.pdf