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REPATRIATED STUDENTS IN CYPRUS AND THEIR PROSPECTS FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION

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Abstract – *Tertiary education is highly valued in Cyprus and this is witnessed in the proportion of high-school graduates (69% in the academic year 1999-2000) that continue their education in tertiary level institutions both in Cyprus and abroad. As a result of this demand for higher education, there are numerous state and private institutions that cater to the needs of high-school graduates. The purpose of this study is to examine whether this plethora of opportunities for tertiary education is equally accessible to all social groups in Cyprus and in particular to repatriated students. The sample consisted of repatriated students at the secondary level of education and their parents as well as repatriated students at the tertiary level. Factors that can account for the fact that repatriated students do not enjoy equal access to certain institutions were identified and discussed. Repatriated students seem to be at a disadvantage, mainly due to their limited competence in Greek, which is the language of instruction in quite a few reputable institutions of tertiary education in Cyprus and Greece. This partial exclusion from higher education reflects the limited support that the state provides to this group, which in turn creates a feeling of discontent among repatriated Cypriots.*

Introduction

Since Cyprus became an independent nation in 1960 there has been a steady increase in the demand for a more highly educated and skilled workforce. According to Eliophotou-Menon (1998) the factors that led to this development are numerous. Firstly, the Cypriot government has always accorded paramount importance to tertiary education since it was regarded as a means to improve future employment prospects. This has been reflected in the government policies of the last forty years. Secondly, societal and economic changes, which have placed greater value on professional occupations have enhanced the pursuit of tertiary education. According to Vakis, (1990) there has been a shift from more traditional occupations such as farming, agriculture and industry related jobs to more service oriented occupations like tourism, banking and new technologies. Thirdly, the fact that the woman's role in the Cypriot society has grown significantly has led to the increase in the demand for education (Demetriades, 1994). Fourthly, young Cypriots (and their parents) believe that acquiring tertiary

education will enhance their opportunities to obtain higher social status (Papanastassiou & Michaelides, 1988). All the above factors have created a positive attitude among Cypriots towards tertiary education. This positive climate towards tertiary education is witnessed by the fact that 69% of high school leavers attend tertiary education in Cyprus and abroad (Department of Statistics and Research, 2001).

Given such promising educational developments in Cyprus, the present study investigates whether this plethora of tertiary educational opportunities is equally accessible to all social groups in Cyprus. More specifically, the present study examines repatriated students' opportunities for tertiary education in Cyprus and abroad since this group of students exhibits unique characteristics (see section on subjects) that set them apart from the rest of society. It should be noted that other countries have had to deal with repatriation issues (see Yashiro 1995 for Japan; Hadjithaki 2000 for Greece) but no studies focusing on repatriated students in higher education could be located.

The current study focuses on the following issues:

- repatriated students' intentions for attending a tertiary level institution
- the opinion of the subjects on the quality of education offered by various tertiary level institutions
- factors that would prevent them from studying in specific institutions
- the likelihood of attending various tertiary level institutions in Cyprus and abroad
- equal educational opportunities.

Tertiary education in Cyprus

Education in Cyprus is both private and state-run and is provided at pre-primary, primary, secondary (general and technical/vocational), special schools and tertiary level institutions. Education provided by the state at the primary level has been free and compulsory since 1962 whereas secondary education up to the third grade was made compulsory in 1985-86. Tertiary education is offered by state and private institutions alike. State tertiary education is provided by the University of Cyprus and non-university level institutions. The latter is divided into public educational institutions and private colleges. Tertiary education, in general, is highly valued in Cyprus and as a result a great number of high-schools graduates continue further studies in tertiary education. According to the Department of Statistics and Research of the Republic of Cyprus in the academic year 1999-2000, 69% of high school graduates chose to pursue tertiary education

either in Cyprus (28%) or abroad (41%). In that year the number of Cypriots enrolled in tertiary-level educational institutions in Cyprus was 8389. Among them 2589 were enrolled in the University of Cyprus and 12147 Cypriot students were enrolled in universities abroad. The main countries of study were Greece (6416), the United Kingdom (2816), the USA (1704), Hungary (227), Bulgaria (218) and the Russian Federation (152). In 1999/2000 there were 31 state and private institutions in Cyprus with a total number of enrolment of 10414 students, of which 8389 were Cypriots and 2025 foreigners.

The Study

The subjects

The following three groups participated in the study:

- (a) repatriated students graduating from secondary education
- (b) parents of repatriated secondary education students and
- (c) repatriated students currently enrolled in institutions of tertiary education in Cyprus.

A clarification of the term ‘repatriated’ in this context is necessary. The term ‘repatriated’ refers to persons of Cypriot nationality or of Cypriot descent who returned to settle in Cyprus after a rather long stay abroad. Cypriots have traditionally emigrated to the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia and South Africa. In recent years, however, there has been a high immigration flow of Greek-Cypriot immigrants returning to Cyprus due to many reasons. The main reasons for the return were a prospering economy and economic and political problems in the host countries. With regard to the number of repatriated Cypriots there is no reliable data. The Department of Statistics and Research, which is responsible for providing statistical information reports only on numbers of short term (less than a year) and long term (more than a year) immigrants. These statistics include repatriates but do not specify their exact number because these numbers include people of various nationalities who chose to reside in Cyprus for a longer period. According to Paschalis (2000) in 1992 there were 1014 declared repatriated Cypriots. However, the 1992 national census reveals a significant discrepancy between the official numbers and the actual numbers of repatriated Cypriots. More specifically, 4351 persons of Cypriot nationality or Cypriot descent had returned to settle in Cyprus in 1992 (Paschalis, 2000). This discrepancy leads to the conclusion that the actual numbers of repatriates are at least four times higher than those reported officially. In fact, the

government figures contradict the unofficial figures quoted by the associations of repatriated Cypriots, which estimate the number of repatriates to be approximately 25000 for the years 1981-1992.

Instruments and procedure

The survey method was used for this study. Primary data was collected from questionnaires administered to the subjects. A total of 37 questionnaires were collected from repatriated students attending the three major private English-speaking secondary schools in Cyprus. Questionnaires were also distributed to the parents of the 37 students but only 16 were returned. Finally, questionnaires were administered to 14 students attending one of the two major private colleges in Cyprus. Even though the number of the subjects is small, it is nevertheless representative of the group under study. Unfortunately, there is insufficient statistical information (such as real numbers, year of repatriation and country of origin) on repatriated Cypriots and consequently on repatriated students. Therefore, due to the lack of available data by the government, the participants in the study were students attending English medium schools and colleges at the time.

The subjects were asked to respond to 16 questions pertaining to their intentions for further education, their opinion on the quality of education in various institutions, factors that would restrict their decision to attend certain institutions, the possibilities of attending various tertiary level institutions in Cyprus and abroad and their opinion on whether educational opportunities are equally available to them as compared to other Cypriot students. The discussion of the issues was based on the responses to ten of the 16 questions. The remaining six questions were of biographical nature.

Results

Previous research (Pavlou *et al.*, 1999) has shown that repatriated students face problems with regard to their education at both primary and secondary level. The major problem, however, pertains to the fact that because of their limited proficiency in Greek, repatriated students cannot attend public schools. Therefore, they have no choice but to attend institutions where the medium of instruction is English, which are often very costly. In view of this, the possibility of whether a similar situation exists at the tertiary level was examined. Therefore, the opinion of both secondary and tertiary students as well as the opinion of secondary students' parents was obtained.

Students in secondary education

The majority of the students stated their intention to attend a college or a university after graduation. Very few students said that they have no intention to do so. Table 1 shows the students' preferences with regard to tertiary level institutions. More precisely, the majority of those who intend to pursue tertiary education are going to study at a university in an English-speaking country, ten out of them will study in the country they lived before coming to Cyprus whereas very few will attend a college in Cyprus where the medium of instruction is English.

TABLE 1: Students' intentions to pursue tertiary education

University of Cyprus	
College in Cyprus – English medium	3 (8.8%)
University in Greece –English medium	
University in Greece – Greek medium	
University in an English speaking country	28 (82.3%)
University in country of origin	10 (29%)

It is apparent that the overwhelming majority of the subjects intend to study in a university in an English speaking country. The second most preferred choice is attending a university in their country of origin. Knowing that the majority of repatriated students come from the U.K., Australia, South Africa, Canada and the USA and given the fact that English is their dominant language, (see Table 4) it is not surprising that these students opt to study in an institution where the medium of instruction is English. Even when for any reason the subjects choose to stay in Cyprus, they still prefer an institution where the medium of instruction is English.

These choices are probably the result of various considerations on the part of the students. Such considerations could be the quality of education in a given institution, the cost of attending such institutions, the affiliation to a certain country, the language of instruction at this institution (in this case English) and the feeling of being accepted at a place.

Table 2 shows the students' opinion of the quality of education in various institutions.

TABLE 2: Students' opinion on the quality of education

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
University of Cyprus	6 (16)	19 (51)	9 (24.3)	3 (8.1)
Colleges in Cyprus	1 (2.7)	16 (43)	18 (48.6)	2 (8.1)
Univ. in Greece (Greek medium)	5 (13.5)	21 (56.7)	10 (27)	1 (2.7)
Univ. in Greece (English medium)	3 (8)	11 (29.77)	20 (54)	3 (8.1)
Univ. in English-speaking countries	31 (83)	6 (16.7)		
Univ. in countries of origin	24 (64.8)	5 (13.5)	4 (10.8)	4 (8.1)

Education offered by universities in English speaking countries and in the subjects' countries of origin seems to be highly appreciated by the subjects. The majority of the subjects rated education in English speaking countries as *very good* and six as *good*. Quite a few rated education in their country of origin as *very good*, and five as *good*. In addition, the subjects' opinion of the quality of education at the University of Cyprus (henceforth UCY) is rather positive. Few consider it to be *very good* and slightly more than half as *good*. The subjects rate the quality of education offered at colleges in Cyprus as *satisfactory* to *good* but not as *good* as at the university of Cyprus. Approximately half of the subjects consider it to be *good* or *satisfactory*. With regard to education offered in universities in Greece the following picture emerges: education in institutions where the medium of instruction is Greek (henceforth GMIs) is considered quite good. English medium institutions (henceforth EMIs) in Greece are considered in general quite satisfactory.

Given that the subjects regard the quality of education at the UCY to be rather good (see Table 2) and the cost of studying at the UCY is minimal, it is surprising that nobody intends to study there (see Table 1). These facts point to the possibility that the subjects' limited command of the Greek language may be a major deterrent when it comes to studying at the UCY. Therefore, repatriated students have no choice but to attend an English speaking institution either in Cyprus or abroad. This conclusion is reinforced by students' comments as can be seen in the following examples.

'If exams were offered for repatriated students, I'd be able to get in [the University of Cyprus]'.

‘They should offer us different exams [for the UCY] and lessons’.

‘Afternoon classes of Greek and/or foundation courses should be offered’.

The students’ assessment of their language skills in both Greek and English was also examined. Tables 3 and 4 show that the subjects consider themselves to be much more competent in English than in Greek in all four skills. Also, twenty-six of the subjects state that their limited knowledge of Greek would prevent them from studying in a university where the medium of instruction is Greek. Eleven out of the thirty-seven students state that their knowledge of Greek would not prevent them from studying at a university where the medium of instruction is Greek. This provides support to the authors’ assumption that language plays a major role in their decision to choose an institution where the medium of instruction is English rather than Greek.

TABLE 3: Students’ self-assessment of their language skills in Greek

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor
Reading	9 (24.3)	9 (24.3)	16 (43.2)	3 (8.1)
Writing	3 (8.1)	4 (10.8)	20 (54)	10 (27)
Speaking	11 (29.7)	12 (32.4)	12 (32.4)	2 (5.4)
Listening	19 (51.3)	12 (32.4)	5 (13.5)	1 (2.7)

TABLE 4: Students’ self-assessment of their language skills in English

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Poor
Reading	27 (72.9)	8 (21.6)	2 (5.4)	
Writing	22 (59.4)	11 (29.7)	4 (10.8)	
Speaking	32 (86.4)	4 (10.8)	1 (2.7)	
Listening	34(91.8)	3(8.1)		

There are many factors that can prevent a student from studying at an institution of their choice. Such factors include academic qualifications, the financial situation, language competence and personal circumstances of the prospective student. With this in mind students were asked to state their choice of attending a tertiary institution assuming they were not restricted by grade-related, financial, linguistic and personal considerations. The results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5: Students' intentions in the absence of restrictions

University of Cyprus	4 (10.8)
College in Cyprus – English medium	2 (5.4)
University in Greece –English medium	
University in Greece – Greek medium	1 (2.7)
University in an English speaking country	32 (86.4)
University in country of origin	6 (16.2)

The students could select more than one of these four factors. The majority of the students stated that they would like to study in a university in an English-speaking country, whereas very few opted to study in the country they lived before coming to Cyprus or at the University of Cyprus.

By comparing Table 5 and Table 1 it can be established whether the subjects' choices of tertiary institutions correspond to their actual wishes when there are no restrictions as the ones stated above. Generally speaking, their choices appear to be congruent in both cases, i.e. the subjects appear to pursue studies in tertiary education at an institution regardless of whether they were restricted by any factors. There are, however, a few discrepancies we would like to comment on. When asked where they *intend* to study, none of the subjects chose the UCY, whereas when asked where they *would like* to study if they were not restricted by any factors, four of them chose the UCY.

What factors prevent these subjects from attending the institution of their preference? Since education at the UCY is free and education abroad could be quite costly, financial considerations cannot be a factor. Therefore, the other possible determining factors are grades, language and the parents' impact on their children's decision with regard to their choice of institution. It is difficult to speculate much on the factor 'parents' since this probably varies in each individual case. Therefore, the two possible factors that could explain this situation are

grades and language. The factor ‘grades’ affects all students (repatriated or not) when deciding to pursue tertiary level education. However, the language factor affects repatriated students exclusively.

Moreover, the students were asked to rank the factors that would prevent them from studying at a university of their choice. Table 6 shows their responses.

TABLE 6: Factors according to importance

	1st most important factor	2nd most important factor	3rd most important factor	4th most important factor
Grades	12 (10.8)	5 (13.5)	5 (13.5)	
Parents	1 (2.7)	5 (13.5)	4 (10.8)	2 (5.4)
Financial	17 (45.5)	3 (8.1)	1 (2.7)	
Language		1 (2.7)	2 (5.4)	9 (24.3)
Other	2 (5.4)			

The most frequently cited factors that would prevent the subjects from studying at a university of their choice were financial constraints and grades. Language was never cited as the first most important factor. Only one subject ranked it as the second most important factor, two as the third most important factor and nine as the fourth most important factor. It seems that language is not a major obstacle to their future educational plans and this is not surprising since the majority of the subjects (Table 1) intend to study in an English speaking country. The subjects rank financial constraints as the major obstacle to their future plans. Theoretically, this should not have been a consideration since they have the option of studying at the UCY without having to pay tuition. However, this seems to be no option for most of them. At the same time the subjects consider the quality of education at the UCY to be high. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that language is a major obstacle in their educational plans since this excludes them from studying at an admittedly reputable and inexpensive institution such as the University of Cyprus.

The subjects were asked explicitly to state whether they feel ‘disadvantaged’, in any way, as far as their university education prospects are concerned. The majority of the students stated that they do not feel disadvantaged and very few of them feel that they are disadvantaged in that respect. On the contrary, with

regard to their future educational plans the students seem to consider themselves to be in an advantageous position over Cypriots who have lived all their life in Cyprus. The major advantage they mention is the fact that they are bilingual with English being their dominant language. Their excellent knowledge of English will make it easier for them to be admitted at a college or university abroad. Quite a few subjects adopt this position. Another advantage that students mention is their ability to easily adapt to various environments such as that of Cyprus and that of the host country. This is mostly due to their exposure to and wider understanding of other cultures.

Another issue that was investigated was the repatriated students' perception of the state's obligations towards them. It is interesting to note what repatriated students thought the state should do in order to eliminate the inequality between repatriated students and local students in the case that repatriated students considered themselves to be disadvantaged. As the students themselves state:

'We feel disadvantaged because we cannot get into Greek secondary institutions even though we would prefer...'

'Opportunities should be equal for all Cypriots'

Even though, in general, they do not think that they are disadvantaged, the majority of repatriated students believe that they should be offered financial or other help regarding their university/college education. Repatriated students feel 'there should be more information, more counsellors to help with decisions regarding further education' and 'more insight into actual university/college life in Cyprus so that we can decide whether or not to apply'.

Parents

Since personal considerations (such as parents' opinion) can influence the repatriated students' choice of tertiary level institution, it was deemed crucial to establish the view of the repatriated students' parents on the issue.

The overwhelming majority of the parents of repatriated students state that they intend to send their child to a college or university after graduation. Quite a few parents intend to enrol their children at a university in an English-speaking country while less than half will send their children for further studies to the country they lived before coming to Cyprus. Finally, three of them intend to send their children to a college in Cyprus where the medium of instruction is English.

It was also important to find out where the parents would like their children to study if the latter were not restricted by grades, money and language. One in three parents stated that they would like their children to study in a university in an English-speaking country, and an equal number in the country they lived before coming to Cyprus, three of them in a college in Cyprus where the medium of instruction is English.

In addition, the factors that would prevent parents from sending their child to the institution of his/her choice were identified. We suggested three possible factors: grades, financial constraints and language while the parents were also to free to supply additional factors. The parents were also asked to rank these factors in order of importance. The results of the ranking are presented in Table 7.

TABLE 7: Factors according to importance

	1st most important factor	2nd most important factor	3rd most important factor	4th most important factor
Grades	2 (12.5)	4 (25)	2 (12.5)	
Financial	8 (50)	2 (12.5)	4 (10.8)	2 (5.4)
Language	1 (6.25)		1 (6.25)	
Other			1 (6.25)	

The most important factor that would prevent parents from sending their children to a tertiary level institution is financial constraints. Half of the parents state that this is the first most important factor. Grades seem to be the second most important factor. Two parents state that grades are the first most important factor and four rank grades as the second most important factor. Finally, language comes third in order of importance.

‘Language’ as a determining factor in the parents’ choice of tertiary education was further investigated. The majority of the parents believe that their child’s knowledge of Greek *would* prevent him/her from studying at a university where the language of instruction is Greek. One in four do not consider that their child’s limited knowledge would hinder them from attending a Greek-medium university.

Another issue that concerned us was whether the parents felt that their child is in any way advantaged or disadvantaged compared to other Cypriot students as far as his/her university education prospects are concerned. Slightly more than half of the parents do not feel that their child is in any way disadvantaged and

slightly less than half feel that their children are in fact disadvantaged with one parent stating explicitly that the child's Greek is 'not good enough for her to attend a university where the medium of instruction is Greek'. Another parent states that 'the child is limited only to English-speaking universities' and finally a third parent states that the child 'cannot attend a Greek university' most probably due to the language factor. Finally, a parent points to the fact that 'Cypriots have more advantages regarding further education than repatriates'.

Parents were also asked to indicate the advantages that their children have over Cypriots who have lived all their lives in Cyprus as far as their future educational plans are concerned. The majority mentioned the fact that their child's command of English is better. Two of them consider the fact that their child had had at some point in the past the opportunity to experience various cultures and different lifestyles as another advantage. It was mentioned that since repatriated children were born in another country, they enjoy the same rights as the citizens of those countries. One of the most important benefits that these children have is that they can attend an institution of tertiary education with reduced or no tuition fees.

Table 8 shows the parents' opinion on the quality of education in various institutions.

TABLE 8: Opinion on the quality of education

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
University of Cyprus	3 (18.7)	8 (50)	3 (18.7)	
Colleges in Cyprus	1 (6.25)	10 (62.5)	3 (18.7)	
Univ. in Greece (Greek med.)	9 (56.25)	1 (6.25)	2 (12.5)	3 (18.7)
Univ. in Greece (Engl. med)	1 (6.25)	8 (50)	4 (25)	1 (6.25)
Univ. in Eng. Speaking countries	15 (93.7)	1 (6.25)		
Univ. in countries of origin	7 (43.7)	3 (18.7)	3 (18.7)	2 (12.5)

Education offered by universities in English speaking countries and in the subjects' countries of origin seems to be highly appreciated by the subjects. The overwhelming majority of the parents rated education in English speaking countries as *very good* and one as *good*. Almost half of the subjects rated education in their country of origin as *very good*, three as *good*, three as *satisfactory* and two

as poor. In general, the subjects' opinion of the quality of education at the University of Cyprus is rather positive.

With regard to education offered in universities in Greece, education in GMIs is considered very good and EMIs in Greece are considered in general good.

Finally, the parents were asked to state whether they thought that their child should be offered any help regarding his/her college education. Quite a few parents think that since their child is a member of a repatriated family s/he should be offered help regarding their university/college education. Parents make a distinction between concrete financial help and provision of psychological support and guidance. In terms of financial aid they believe that their children should be offered grants and scholarships. Moreover, repatriated students' studies should be subsidized since the students' limited competence in Greek forces them to attend private schools which are often quite expensive. Besides financial aid, the parents suggest that their children are provided with ample and useful information about the colleges and universities they are considering attending. This form of counselling would enable them to make a more solid decision. In addition, they offer a very concrete suggestion with regard to the UCY. Since the current university entrance exams are held in Greek and therefore exclude repatriated students from taking them, the parents suggest that these exams should be given in English as well. One in four parents do not think that their children need any kind of help.

We were also interested to see how parents feel other Cypriots regard their children. Almost half of the parents think that their child receives the same treatment as other Cypriots while very few parents believe that since members of repatriated families are partly foreigners, and naturally are in some ways different from other Cypriots, they are treated differently.

Another comment was that 'some Cypriots look down on repatriated children because of fear of the unknown', something the parents consider as a form of racial discrimination either experienced by themselves or by other repatriates. According to one parent, 'it [discrimination] occurs everywhere; in schools, colleges even on the streets'. The subject who made this comment identifies jealousy as a factor contributing to this kind of behaviour. Another parent recognizes that Cypriots are trying to help but at the same time she pessimistically states 'that these children will always be outsiders'. According to one parent 'Cypriots are friendly towards them but not many have attempted to become good friends'.

Students in tertiary education

Another aim of the study was to establish whether the subjects were attending the tertiary institution of their choice and if not what were the factors that prevented them from doing so with special reference to linguistic problems. The

subjects were asked to evaluate the standard of education in various institutions in Cyprus and abroad and what had been the possibilities of studying there upon graduation from high school. Finally, the subjects stated their opinion on whether they should receive any help with regard to their university or college education.

All subjects were enrolled at a college in Cyprus where the medium of instruction was English. It was deemed useful to establish whether this institution constituted the subjects' strongest preference. A small number of subjects stated that attending a college in Cyprus was their preferred choice. They explained that they made this choice because of the fact that their Greek was not good enough to study in a GMI. Another factor was that they wanted to study in such an institution so that they can study, work and be with their families in Cyprus. Finally, attending an English medium college in Cyprus was the only feasible solution because of unstable circumstances in some of the subjects' countries of origin (e.g. South Africa, Zimbabwe).

Slightly more than half of the subjects stated that their first choice was to attend a university in an English speaking country because of the fact that they felt more competent in English than in Greek and because they believed that they would receive a better quality of education there, something that would secure them greater career opportunities. Another issue that concerned them was the realization that some degrees offered by Cypriot colleges were not accredited by the Cypriot authorities.

The fact that the subjects showed a strong preference towards institutions in English speaking countries can be further explained by their evaluation of the standard of education offered in various institutions.

The responses of the subjects show that the overwhelming majority consider education in English speaking countries to be *very good*. The fact that universities in English speaking countries are quite reputable in Cyprus and the fact that repatriated students' dominant language is English could possibly explain the high rating these institutions received by the subjects.

As it can be seen in Table 9 EMIs in Cyprus also received high ratings possibly because of the fact that the subjects are already students in such institutions and have had the opportunity to experience and evaluate the level of education in these schools. It is surprising that although the subjects are excluded from Greek universities due to their limited competence in Greek, they still have quite a high opinion of such institutions. Another interesting result is that in a number of cases where the students had no opinion on the standard of education in certain institutions, they chose not to rate the institution in question or declared that they had no opinion. The subjects mostly seemed reluctant to evaluate the institutions in the cases of the UCY and Greek speaking universities. In the seven cases that the students evaluated the UCY and the nine cases that the subjects evaluated

TABLE 9: *Opinion on the quality of education*

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
University of Cyprus	4 (28)	2 (14.2)	1 (7.1)	
Colleges in Cyprus	2 (14.2)	11 (71)	1 (7.1)	
Univ. in Greece (Greek med.)	8 (57.1)	1 (7.1)		
Univ. in Greece (Engl. med)	2 (14.2)	6 (42.8)	3 (21.4)	
Univ. in Engl. speaking countries	13 (92.8)			
Univ. in countries of origin	7 (50)	2 (14.2)	3 (21.4)	

Greek universities, the ratings were quite positive. The subjects regard the education in these institutions to be of high standard despite the fact that they cannot attend these schools.

Having established that for some subjects the institution they currently attend does not represent their first choice, the likelihood of attending various tertiary level institutions, in Cyprus and abroad, upon graduation from high school was determined. The students were presented with a list of schools and they were asked to state how likely it was to attend these schools. The results are shown in Table 10.

TABLE 10: *Likelihood of attending tertiary education*

	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Poor
University of Cyprus		1 (7.1)		
Colleges in Cyprus (Engl. med)	11 (78.5)	2 (14.2)	1 (7.1)	
Univ. in Greece (Engl. med.)	2 (14.2)	1 (7.1)	2 (14.2)	9 (64.2)
Univ. in Greece (Greek med)				14 (100)
Univ. in Engl. speaking country	5 (35.7)	4 (28.5)	3 (21.4)	2 (14.2)
Univ. in country of origin	3 (21.4)	7 (50)		4 (28.5)

It is evident that the overwhelming majority of the subjects consider it impossible to attend the University of Cyprus. In addition, all subjects indicated that there was no possibility to attend any other Greek speaking university in Greece.

The possibility of attending a college or university in Greece where the medium of instruction is English is also quite low. More than half of the subjects deemed this impossible. It seems that the subjects see greater possibilities of studying in universities in English speaking countries and in universities in their countries of origin (the majority of them being English speaking).

One in three of the subjects believed that there was *great possibility* to study in a university in an English speaking country, four thought it was *fairly possible* while three considered it *impossible*.

With regard to attending universities in their countries of origin, half thought that there was *fair possibility* of doing so.

The subjects were asked to rank the factors that prevented them from studying at the institution of their choice. Their responses are displayed in Table 11.

TABLE 11: Factors according to importance

	1st most important factor	2nd most important factor	3rd most important factor	4th most important factor
Financial	3 (21.4)	2 (14.2)		2 (14.2)
Grades	1 (7.1)	1 (7.1)	3 (21.4)	
Parents	3 (21.4)	1 (7.1)	1 (7.1)	1 (7.1)
Language	1 (7.1)	2 (14.2)	1 (7.1)	1 (7.1)
Other*	4 (28.5)			

* *safety(2), location(1), different entrance requirements(1).*

According to the subjects, financial constraints and parents were equally ranked i.e. three subjects identified these two factors as the first most important factor that prevented them from attending the institution they preferred. Even though these two factors (financial constraints, parents) were equally cited as the first most important factor, financial constraints are the most crucial factor, overall, in their choice of tertiary level institution. Financial constraints was

identified as the first most important factor three times, twice as the second most important factor and twice as the fourth most important factor.

The factor 'parents' is the second most important factor overall. It was identified three times as the most important factor, once as the second most important factor, once as the third and once as the fourth most important factor.

The factors 'grades' and 'language' are equally ranked as the third most crucial factors overall but with different frequency of assigned importance. Grades were ranked once as the most important factor, once as the second most important factor and three times as the third. On the other hand 'language' was ranked once as the most important factor, twice as the second most important factor, once as the third and once as the fourth most important factor. Safety also seems to be an important factor. The students who indicated this factor commented on the high crime rate in the countries they grew up in namely South Africa and Zambia. The limited safety that exists in their countries of origin often deters them from studying in these countries.

Factors such as grades and financial constraints, which were mentioned above, could be of concern to any individual who would like to pursue tertiary education. However, in the case of repatriated students the language factor was identified as a significant constraint that would play a decisive role in their plans. According to the subjects' self-assessment of their language skills in Greek and English, it is obvious their skills in English are far better than their skills in Greek.

As mentioned earlier, repatriated students attend EMI private schools. Consequently, repatriated students are excluded from state institutions of tertiary education (where the language of instruction is Greek) since private English schools do not prepare them for the entrance exams, which are in Greek. Moreover, the students' limited Greek would make it extremely difficult for them to attend classes taught in this language. A subject commented that 'It is difficult to get into the University of Cyprus because I do not know Greek well enough' and another one that 'I had limited choices because of my Greek. I do not know Greek well enough.'

However, repatriated students are not excluded from studying at the UCY since special provisions for admitting repatriated students exist. Repatriated students who wish to be admitted to the UCY are required to have 3 GCE A Levels with grade 'A', an aim which is difficult to attain. As one subject indicates 'when I graduated from high school, the UCY required 3 A levels with grade 'A'. Abroad, a grade C' and above is required'.

A consequence of these quite demanding admission requirements coupled with the students' limited competence in Greek (especially at the academic level) is that repatriated students are forced to study abroad, mostly in English speaking countries, a fact which poses substantial financial burden on their families. One of the subjects stated that 'local students have an advantage of not having financial constraints and getting a degree without going out of Cyprus'. The financial aspect

is also broached in the following comment: 'Yes [we have limited choices] because of the language; and we pay; they [local Cypriot students] don't'.

Overall, the students stated they felt they had limited choices compared to other Cypriot students as far as their university prospects were concerned. Six students stated that they did have limited choices whereas seven thought that this was not the case. Those who thought that they had limited choices provided justification for their opinion some of which is presented here.

'Cypriot students have opportunities to study in local and Greek universities as well as the Higher Technological Institute building upon material they learned in government school whereas private schools only focus on GCEs for the UK'.

From the students' comments a feeling of discontent is evident since they feel that the current system is not completely fair towards them. As they characteristically state 'we are regarded as strangers and outsiders' or 'we are regarded as foreigners with an attitude when we are just different culturally'. Therefore, the students had a lot of suggestions when asked whether they felt they should be offered any help regarding their university/college education. The subjects stated that they should receive financial help from the state since, as one of them claimed, 'it is difficult to start your life over in another country'. This may imply that these students are forced to go abroad for their studies or since repatriation is a very costly ordeal (both psychologically and financially) the state should help these families by providing financial support for the children's education. Another statement that clearly alludes to the unfairness of the current system is that 'Cypriots are not excluded by English Speaking Institutions because of their English but repatriated students are excluded from Greek Universities because of their limited Greek' which is a form of discrimination. A subject suggested that 'examinations taken to enrol in the university should also be given in English' as a measure to counteract the restrictive admission requirements. Finally, repatriated students feel they should be given the basic guidance with regard to their education like any other Cypriot student. As they point out 'repatriated students should be given basic guidelines about higher education'.

Conclusion

It is evident that tertiary education is highly valued in the Cypriot society and that the prospects for pursuing tertiary education are abundant. This is witnessed in the great number of students studying both in Cyprus and abroad. The current study indicates, however, that, to a certain degree, repatriated students do not

have equal access to opportunities for tertiary education when compared to other Cypriot students especially with regard to the University of Cyprus and state universities in Greece. This is the case despite the fact that the UCY is not only the most reputable institution of tertiary education on the island but also the least costly. Moreover, Greek universities are of high standard and do not charge tuition fees.

The study has revealed certain factors that account for the fact that repatriated students do not have equal access to certain institutions of tertiary education. Academic qualifications, financial constraints, personal circumstances and limited competence in the Greek language are such factors. The first three considerations apply to both repatriated and non-repatriated students. However, limited competence in Greek is a factor that affects repatriated students only since it prevents them from taking the national exams for the UCY and the state universities in Greece.

The limited opportunities for tertiary education presented to repatriated students have led to a feeling of discontent among them since they feel that the current educational system does not adequately address their needs. This further exacerbates the overall feeling of not being accepted in the Cypriot society and not having received any substantial help from the government.

It is hoped that this study will draw the attention of the authorities to the special needs of this group. The state should, in turn, consider ways of providing equal educational opportunities to these students. More specifically, the state should inform repatriated students and their families on educational issues before and after their repatriation. Such timely guidance may influence the decision of Cypriot immigrants' to return home since being aware of the problems they may face will allow them to prepare better while still in the host country. Such preparation could include the improvement of their skills in Greek and the choice of primary or secondary school.

Upon repatriation the state should subsidize the education of repatriated students in the same way other minority groups in Cyprus are assisted in this domain. Also, the Ministry of Education and Culture should either administer university entrance exams in the language in which repatriated students are more competent (in this case English) or offer preparatory courses in Greek for the universities in Cyprus and Greece that would be specially designed for these students. Such courses would facilitate their admission in the UCY and state universities in Greece.

Cyprus is a country which has witnessed great waves of repatriation in the last decades. Repatriation has often been problematic for those Cypriots who decide to return to their homeland. Many of these problems could have been eliminated or minimized provided that there was more communication and information

between Cypriot immigrants and the state regarding issues of repatriation. It is hoped that other countries with repatriated populations may also benefit from the situation in Cyprus and the findings of this study.

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A LOOK AT SCHOOL CHOICE IN SPAIN

ANA VILLARROYA

Abstract – *This paper looks at how school choice policies implemented by the Spanish government have functioned in practice. These changes, introduced in the educational system during the eighties, included the introduction of a right to enrol in any school funded by the public sector (public and private agreement schools) and the establishment of a system of finance where user choice directs government funds. The empirical research, focused on the Catalan community, shows how providing public subsidies to private schools in order to ensure choice has mostly benefited the middle classes. Payments for complementary and extra-curricular activities, foundation contributions and uneven access to information among different social groups have minimised the shift of pupils from the public to the private agreement sector.*

Introduction

The eighties brought the introduction of school choice policies to numerous developed countries. With these policies, governments have attempted to extend the opportunities for school choice to a wider section of the population. They have also sought to increase the range of choices available, and thus to encourage diversity and educational pluralism. Governments have also attempted to increase parental participation in education and to create a new discipline in schools that improves the quality of the services by allowing the better schools to attract more customers and, therefore more resources.

The implementation of such policies has entailed the incorporation of market logic in the delivery of educational services. In that sense, numerous governments have aimed to enhance competition among schools, responsiveness to user preferences, and efficiency in the process of educational delivery.

Often, policies designed for increasing school choice possibilities have gone hand in hand with changes in processes for distributing pupils. Automatic allocation to public schools closer at hand has been replaced by the freedom of individuals to choose. Only in cases of oversubscribed schools do there still exist criteria for allocating pupils across schools; the most widespread of which is the closeness-to-home criterion. The implementation of these policies has also involved the diffusion of information between parents and pupils. With this measure, on the one hand, governments have pursued avoidance of benefits

accruing to more privileged families – those with easiest access to information – and, on the other hand, they have tried to encourage the use of academic criteria in decision-making processes.

The level of effectiveness of these policies, like the way in which they have been established, differs from one country to another. To a large extent most of the evaluations of these policies come from the United Kingdom and are based on the reforms introduced in the eighties in England and Wales.¹ The UK experience and that of other countries (basically the Netherlands and the United States)² indicate that in spite of the establishment of policies aimed to expand school choice possibilities, most parents tend to choose the nearest school. Transport, children's desire to be with their friends, the cost of private schools where they are not subsidised, and a bare minimum of ambitious expectations are determining factors involved in choosing the closest school. Only in cases where there are specific reasons not to go to the school nearest home (such as the lack of confidence in a particular school or the preference for a special school), or in cases in which transport is made available or governments finance private schools, have these policies made it easy to choose an alternative school – at least for certain groups of users.

Measures to improve parents' and pupils' choice of school have also been implemented in Spain. In the middle of the eighties the Spanish government started to implement a range of measures aimed at making the freedom of school choice effective. The aim of this article, then, is to look at the implementation of such policies in Spain and the level of attainment of their objectives in practice. We begin by describing the rules delimiting the freedom to choose a school in Spain. The results of a qualitative analysis which will allow us to assess the extent to which public funding for private schools in Spain has provided effective choice for all users will then be presented. Finally, we consider the lessons that can be drawn from this analysis, and their potential relevance for other communities.

Measures applied by the Spanish government to widen school choice opportunities

The public-private choice is significant in Spain because around 30% of primary and secondary pupils attend private schools, and because approximately 90% of these pupils attend private schools receiving government funds.

The size of the Spanish private sector and its capacity to influence policies such as those related to subsidising private education can only be understood by considering the historical specificities of the Spanish education system. Thus, one of the most significant features of the Spanish education has been the configuration of a dual education system, which before the arrival of democracy

in the mid-seventies was the main basis for the inequality of educational opportunities and results. While private schools (mostly religious) were able to provide a good quality of education for more privileged families that could afford school fees, children from poorer backgrounds attended low quality public schools. When democracy arrived, the simultaneous process of economic crisis and development of mass schooling in Spain forced successive governments to take the private sector into account in defining educational policies.³

Article 27 of the 1978 Constitution establishes the main goals for the development of a democratic education system. This article was the result of difficult negotiation between left-wing and conservative political parties. While left-wing parties had to assume a significant presence of publicly financed private education, parents' right to choose religious education for their children, and a margin of parental choice of schools, the conservatives accepted some type of control over the subsidised private sector, the non-compulsory character of religion, teacher's academic freedom and the participation of the educational community in school decision-making (Bonal, 2000: 204).

Despite the constitutional consensus, article 27 left a significant margin for interpretation in subsequent legislative developments. So, at first, the centrist government interpreted article 27 in favour of private schools. Nevertheless, in 1985, as part of the 1985 *Education Rights Act (Ley Orgánica del Derecho a la Educación)*, the first socialist government replaced the previous policy of indiscriminate public subsidies for private schools by a new system of agreements (*conciertos*) between the public sector and private schools. In contrast to the previous system, the new one currently in force consists in an agreement between the two parties which sets up reciprocal rights and responsibilities relating to economic requisites, length of time, deferment and extinction of the agreement.

Concerning the establishing of reciprocal rights and responsibilities between the public sector and private schools, the public sector contributes to the funding of private schools, applying the amount of money fixed for every classroom in the public budget. This amount is annually determined in line with the level of the running costs of the school to guarantee that education is imparted without charge. The responsibilities of the schools include the following: they must provide free education in the school level agreed, they must impart the courses specified in the agreement, they must supply people with information about the economic status of the school (if it is a private agreement school or not), they must respect all rules established in matters of community participation in educational affairs, and they must also people with optional, non-discriminatory and free complementary activities⁴ and services.⁵

Through this system of agreements between the public sector and private schools – agreements which presently finances around 75% of all private schools

at the primary and secondary level – the Spanish government sought to widen the possibilities of school choice for all parents. In recent years, the Spanish government has continued implementing measures to guarantee parents and pupils the possibility of choosing schools outside the public sector. Among the measures implemented, the following appear to us to be of special interest:

- The extension of the areas served by the schools financed by public funds (public and private agreement schools). With this measure, introduced in 1997, the Spanish government intended to increase educational supply and, therefore the opportunities for parents and pupils to choose a school. This implies a certain flexibility in the interpretation of the closeness-to-home criterion and would allow parents and pupils to choose from among more than one school.
- The indiscriminate use of the family residence or the work place of either parent in order to apply closeness-to-home criteria to allocate pupils in case of oversubscribed schools. This measure, introduced for the first time in 1989, represents the Spanish government’s attempt to introduce greater flexibility into the school-to-home proximity criterion and to facilitate the schooling of children.
- The possibility of primary education students applying to more than one secondary school.
- The dissemination of information among users. The effectiveness of measures designed to extend the range of choices available to parents will depend on the information parents and pupils receive regarding the way school operates. To this end, schools are obliged to inform parents and pupils about the contents of their educational project, their policies, and their pedagogical characteristics. The public sector is obliged to publish a list of those schools financed by public funds (public and private agreement schools) located in each area. The list must include the educational levels and services each school supplies. The public sector is also obliged to ensure that information about schools is objective and free of references to the cultural and socio-economic level of families with children attending the school.

However, at present, the Spanish legislation contains some limiting factors of school choice possibilities. Like the greater part of countries that have implemented these kinds of policies, the main restriction on choice appears in situations of excess demand. In these circumstances, two criteria determine pupils’ admission in Spain: priority and complementary criteria. Priority criteria

are closeness-to-home, family income and sibling enrolment in the same school. After a period of comparison of the family income criterion to the closeness-to-home criterion, new regulations currently in force prioritise proximity of the school to the pupil's home and the fact that a sibling attends the same school.

The priority given to the closeness-to-home criterion, which has been criticised in other countries, has also been questioned in the Spanish context. In that respect, some criticisms focus on the perverse effects of these measures in limiting choice to the nearest school. Others emphasise the fact that quality differs from area to area and depends on factors intrinsic to the school rather than on the amount of resources coming from the public sector. Finally, some other criticisms cite the reduction in emphasis given to criteria of equity, especially of those related to family income.

The Spanish system of admission also includes other elements that tend to restrict the right of parents and pupils to enrol in any school. For example, schools can determine complementary criteria. Besides the public sector,⁶ schools can determine complementary criteria. Although these criteria should correspond to objective, non-discriminatory, and outstanding circumstances, their application restricts the freedom to choose, since it is up to the school to define these circumstances, which in turn determine admission.⁷

Approach to school choice opportunities in a system of publicly funded private education

This section presents a qualitative analysis,⁸ based on the views of a group of school inspectors regarding the possibilities of school choice among the users of compulsory education. The analysis is of an exploratory character and will be of use in beginning to evaluate the level of effectiveness of the measures introduced by the Spanish government to widen school choice possibilities. The importance of this analysis lies, on the one hand, in the opportunity of having the views of a group of experts and, on the other hand, in its potential for illuminating an area in which the empirical evidence is limited. The principal restriction of the analysis arises from the fact that it is not a representative sample and, hence its results cannot be generalised to apply to all of Spain, where the differences in powers transferred to the autonomous regions and the idiosyncrasy of each region have led to differences in the implementation of the system of agreements within the private sector.⁹

The results of the qualitative analysis, which is presented below, have been systematised in thematic blocks.

1. Reasons for choosing a school

As in other countries that have implemented school choice policies, in a context of competition for students, the behaviour of a school depends, to a great extent, on the criteria used by parents to decide which school their children will attend.

With the purpose of ascertaining the criteria that the Catalan community apply in choosing a school, the questionnaire contained a set of questions addressed to the choice of parents and pupils. The majority of school inspectors agreed that the main criteria for decision-making are situational (i.e. outside the school's control) as, for example, the proximity of the school to the home, or the desire to go to the same school as one's neighbours and friends. In addition to these factors, school inspectors pointed out that parents usually choose schools taking into account the physical aspects of the school or the fact that access to it is difficult. Thus, if it is difficult to obtain access, parents conclude that it is a 'good' school. In relation to the image and reputation of schools, inspectors pointed out that the determining factor is more the opinion of people living in the area than the image the centre itself attempts to promote.

As to underlying reasons for the decision for choosing a private agreement school, numerous school inspectors mentioned the importance of 'environmental' factors, such as discipline and safety inside the school, the extent of the timetable (including extra-curricular activities), familiar treatment, continuity in the educational itinerary (i.e. the possibility of attending the same school at both primary and secondary levels), the school's atmosphere, certain social or ideological (religious) differentiation, the socio-economic status of other pupils attending the school, social expectations, family tradition, and the prestige involved in paying a certain amount of money.

Social expectations and the socio-economic status of pupils are reasons that influence the choice of private agreement schools, for both high and low income groups. Low income groups usually believe that enrolling their children in schools in the private agreement sector (something that very frequently involves the payment of certain sums of money) offers guarantees that are absent in public schools. In that sense, families with higher incomes in poor areas prefer to enrol their children in private agreement schools because that gives them an opportunity to leave the area and also to protect their children from 'bad influences'.

Interviewees also stated the limited interest of parents in the school project, in curricular subjects, in pedagogical techniques applied by the school, or in other kinds of considerations related to the performance of the school. The most immediate consequence, then, is that parents and children rarely choose schools on the basis of well-informed comparisons of educational quality. The limited importance of educational criteria in the decision of which school to send their

children to corroborates the conclusions of studies undertaken in other countries regarding the reasons which usually determine school choice.¹⁰

2. The impact of public funding of private education on the school choice possibilities of parents and pupils

With the aim of finding out if the system of agreements, established in 1985, has increased school choice possibilities of all users of compulsory education or whether, on the contrary, it has benefited the most privileged, the questionnaire included a set of questions about the effects of this system in practice.

Almost all school inspectors agreed that the system of subsidies to private schools has mostly benefited the middle classes.¹¹ This is due to the fact that higher income groups would have continued enrolling their children in private schools, irrespective of whether private schools were financed by the public sector, and lower income groups in most cases continue to be unable to enrol their children in these schools, despite the fact that they are subsidised. In that sense, it is possible to conclude that the processes of choice are to some extent related to social class.

There are other studies in Spain which point in the same direction. This is the case of the analysis undertaken by Molina & Jaen (1993), Calero & Bonal (1999), or Villarroya (2000) about the distributive incidence of public expenditure in private schools. From quantitative approaches, they reach the same conclusion: subsidies channelled to private schools have mostly benefited the better off.

The system of agreements with the private sector, then, has not removed all barriers to the access to private schools and, therefore low income groups have continued, in most cases, limiting their choices to the public sector. The payment for complementary and extra-curricular activities, foundation contributions or the easiest access to information of higher income groups make entry to private agreement schools specially difficult for lower income groups. Consequently, it is possible to conclude that the system of agreements with the private sector has not involved an important shift from pupils enrolled in the public sector to the private.

Many school inspectors also pointed out the identification that low income groups usually make between private agreement schools and fee-paying schools. These groups usually have a mistaken perception of the reality of the situation because of their lack of information about the fact that education is free in private agreement schools and complementary activities and foundation contributions have a voluntary character.

Some school inspectors pointed out the fact that in some locations the decrease in birth rate has increased the real possibilities of choosing a school. These demographic changes have thus, in many cases, affected schools' behaviour as they now have to compete to attract students.

3. Effects of the expansion of the areas served by the schools on the school choice opportunities of parents and pupils

One of the measures introduced by the Spanish government to increase school choice possibilities was the expansion of the areas served by the schools financed by public funds (public and private agreement schools). Through the definition of areas, which is re-examined each year by the local authorities, school inspectors and the schools themselves, the public sector plans the educational services for each area and introduces criteria to allocate pupils in case of oversubscribed schools.

There were different opinions about the effects that the expansion of the areas served by the schools can have on the school choice opportunities of parents and pupils. On the one hand, some inspectors stated that the definition of areas is a limit *per se* to the freedom of parents and pupils to choose a school, since they see their choice restricted by the area. This definition by area can also increase social segregation; cases of excess demand where choices are reduced to the nearest school reproduce the socio-economic segregation of population. On the other hand, some inspectors pointed out that the true limits of a school stem from the demand of the school, since zoning criteria apply only in cases of excess demand. The expansion of areas in these cases entails a loss of weight of the proximity-to-home criterion and, therefore a revaluation of the remaining criteria. Finally, other groups of school inspectors maintained that the expansion of areas mostly benefits those parents that can cover transport and food expenses and, hence those families with higher income levels.

4. Information provided by schools

One of the principal limiting factors of the choice opportunities is that parents and pupils have no access to cheap and accurate information. Most of the interviewees stated that information about schools is insufficient and unevenly distributed among social groups. They also pointed out that information is mostly based on rumours and not on objective assessments about the quality of teaching or about the academic results of the school. In these cases, information is distributed among users through indirect channels, such as, conversations with neighbours, friends or relatives.

About the information provided by schools, many of the school inspectors interviewed indicated that for many years some private schools have frequently failed to divulge their subsidised status in order to get money from the families by charging school fees. At present, and mainly as a result of the decrease in the birth rate, the vast majority of schools inform users about their subsidised character,

given the positive effects of this for attracting pupils. However, information about the specific conditions of the agreement, such as the educational levels agreed or the approved amount of fees in the case of complementary and extra-curricular activities, continues to be inadequate.

In general, we can conclude that information supplied by schools is insufficient. Schools rarely inform families about the voluntary nature of complementary activities and foundation contributions. Such concealment allows schools to obtain monthly income from almost all families with children attending the school. Moreover, schools usually do not inform families regarding what they are paying; in general, they give parents the overall amounts, without specifying the different types of expenses. In relation to admission rules, many schools do not provide adequate publicity on extra places, which means that access is restricted to a privileged group of users.

In recent years, the public sector has conducted an active publicity campaign addressed to the schools, insisting on the obligatory nature of informing parents about the voluntary character of complementary activities and foundation contributions.

5. Information used by parents and pupils

In spite of the campaigns conducted by the public sector of late, the information that parents and pupils have at their disposal is insufficient and is unevenly distributed among different social groups.

It is true that the prescriptive information – such as the period of matriculation in schools financed by public funds, or a list with all schools financed by public funds located in each area – is distributed among the entire population. However, due to their condition as a social class, not all social groups gather information in the same way. Thus, groups with a higher socio-cultural level have better access to information, an easier understanding and interpretation of that information, and are consequently better placed to take advantage of those additional choices that are, theoretically, open to all. In contrast, families with lower socio-cultural levels basically put their trust in the information provided by neighbours, friends or relatives. The majority of these families are acquainted with private agreement schools, but tend to identify them with fee-paying schools. But private agreement schools also exist in poor areas, where most of these schools are religious and where the families who most frequently send their children to these schools are among the highest income group in that area. In general, the subsidised schools in poor areas are frequently similar to the public ones, with regard to customers, facilities and the extremely low amount of payments for complementary activities.

As a general rule, the vast majority of families are unaware of the voluntary nature of complementary and foundation contributions. This ignorance spreads among all social groups, so that the identification between private agreement schools and fee-paying schools is equally common among the entire population.

6. Restrictive factors of the school choice capacity of parents and pupils

There is a range of factors that limit the choice opportunities of parents and pupils. Most of these factors are economic and are especially likely to limit the choice of low income groups, who see a reduction in their opportunities of gaining access to private agreement schools. Some of these factors are the result of activities of doubtful legality; this includes the collection of money for reserving places, payments for matriculation, or payments for covering heating expenses or other running costs, as well as the payments for the expansion of the school or for the implementation of new programs. These practices are increasingly less frequent but they remain an indirect source of funding for the schools, and make it more difficult for certain groups to obtain access to them.

In regard to the principal economic factors, inside the legal framework, and which also limit the possibilities of choosing private agreement schools, most of the school inspectors interviewed mentioned the collection of money for complementary activities and foundation contributions. Concerning the schools that have become foundations, which are the majority, school inspectors pointed out the fact that they usually receive monthly payments from the families whose children attend them and a certain amount of money deposited when the child enters the school that may be returned when he/she leaves the school. In spite of the voluntary character of both contributions, they still remain as two of the main obstacles to lower income groups' access to these schools, since parents are ignorant of the voluntary nature of both payments.¹¹

In addition to these practices, private agreement schools have developed another set of mechanisms which allows them to obtain income from the families and which also contributes to the identification of private agreement with fee-paying schools. Mechanisms of this sort include payments for extra-curricular activities, for complementary services or for teaching materials. Regarding this issue, most interviewees pointed out that the kind of extra-curricular activities and teaching materials differ among private agreement schools, the differentiation frequently being due to the population attending the school. Thus, the kind of activities, teaching materials or their payments differs according to the area. In well-off areas, for example, the payments for complementary or extra-curricular activities are higher than in more deprived areas. In the latter, the conditions in private agreement schools are similar to

the conditions established for public schools located in the same area. In contrast, the differences between private and public schools are usually greater in well-off areas.

There also exists another set of restrictive factors, some of which arise from the local conditions, such as when there is only one school in the locality. Others arise from the structures of the educational system, such as the fee-paying status of the pre-school education or the excess demand in certain schools.

Concluding comments

This paper has looked at how school choice policies implemented by the Spanish government have functioned in practice. As in other countries, the changes introduced by the Spanish government in the educational system during the eighties included the introduction of a right to enrol in any school funded by the public sector (public and private agreement schools) and the establishment of a system of finance where user choice directs government funds.

But the Spanish education system has certain particularities. On the one hand, Spain has a long tradition of shared public and private provision of education, and this has resulted in a comparatively large number of private schools. At present, 30% of pupils at primary and secondary levels attend private schools in Spain. On the other hand, most private schools (around 65% of private agreement schools) are run by Catholic organisations, which have played a key role in the evolution of educational policy in Spain.

Both features are especially relevant in the Catalan region, where the nationalist party has clearly developed an educational policy to protect the private education system (Calero & Bonal, 1999). This protection has led to a growing flow of public resources to the private sector, which has been discussed at length from more progressive positions (see Villarroya, 2000).

The evidence, focused on the Catalan region, has clearly indicated that providing public subsidies to private schools in order to ensure choice has mostly benefited the middle classes. Payments for complementary and extra-curricular activities, foundation contributions and uneven access to information among different social groups have minimised the shift of pupils from the public to the private agreement sector. These results have also been corroborated by other studies, so analyses of the distributive incidence of public expenditure on private schools show a privileged position of the middle class respect to other groups (see Molina & Jaen, 1993; Calero & Bonal, 1999 and Villarroya, 2000).

This analysis has also pointed out how the effects of demographic changes, which have been especially notable in recent years, have caused a change in the

behaviour of schools, which in certain localities now have to compete to attract students, thus increasing the choice available to parents and pupils.

Concerning the factors that mostly determine the choices open to parents and pupils, this analysis has shown, on the one hand, the diversity of opinions about the effects of the extension of the areas served by the schools on the choice possibilities of users. There are those who consider that zoning is a limit *per se* to the freedom of users to choose a school, since they see the opportunities available to them restricted by the closeness-to-home criterion. There are also those who think that this extension implies a loss of weight in the closeness-to-home criterion and, hence a revaluation of the rest of the criteria involved. On the other hand, most school inspectors interviewed agreed that inadequate information is one of the key factors that constrains the exercise of choice. Information about schools is insufficient and unequally distributed among social groups. In general, schools do not inform families about the voluntary nature of complementary activities and foundation contributions, or about the number of extra places. In addition to the economic limits, there exists another set of restrictive factors, some of which arise from the local conditions, such as when there is only one school in the locality. Others arise from the structures of the educational system, such as the fee-paying status of the pre-school education or the excess demand in certain schools.

Consequently, we conclude that policies for increasing school choice in Spain have brought risks as well as opportunities. The analysis of these results, although limited to the Catalan community, shows how public controls need to be introduced in order to deal efficiently and equitably with the present system.

Notes

1. See, among others, the following studies: Ball (1993), Gewirtz *et al.* (1995), Walford (1993, 1996, 2000, 2001), Bowe *et al.* (1994a, 1994b), Glatter & Woods (1994), Ball *et al.* (1996), Ambler (1997), West & Pennell (1997), Whitty (1997), Williams (1997), and Whitty & Edwards (1998).
2. With regard to this see, among others, the following studies: James (1991a, b), Edwards & Whitty (1992), OECD (1994), Ambler (1997), Lodewijks (1997), Louis & van Velzen (1997), Ritzen *et al.* (1997), Sturm *et al.* (1998), Karsten (1999), Vijlder (2000), Walford (2000, 2001) and Dronkers *et al.* (2001).
3. See Bonal & Rambla (1996), Calero & Bonal (1999), and Bonal (2000) for a detailed analysis of the contemporary Spanish education policy and the role played by educational interest groups.
4. According to the Spanish regulations, complementary activities have a voluntary character, have to be imparted within school hours, have to contribute to the attainment of the educational aims and the charging of any amount of money for these activities needs to be authorised by the educational authorities. Extra-curricular activities also have a voluntary character, but they have to be carried out outside school hours, have to deal with non-curricular subjects, and the amount of money involved must be made known to the educational authorities.
5. According to the Spanish regulations, complementary services are, for example, transport, food,

and medical and psychological services. The charging of money for these services has also to be authorised by the educational authorities.

6. The criteria fixed by the public sector include the following: belonging to a large family, having persons with special needs, taking care of parents, coming from a school that is about to close, etc.
7. Some of the criteria fixed by the schools are: having studied in the school or having chosen the school as a first option.
8. The principal features of the chosen methodology are the following:
 - A qualitative approach was applied. This methodology allows, among other aspects, the description and identification of especially complex social phenomena and the identification of unforeseeable consequences or weaknesses and conflicts inherent in the design and application of school choice policies.
 - The sample consisted of twenty-one school inspectors distributed in different places of the Catalan autonomous region.
 - The method employed for data collection was a specific type of interview, the elite interview (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). This specialised form of interview consists in interviewing especially well-informed individuals or groups selected for their experience in areas that are relevant to the research. In this case, school inspectors have the responsibility of ensuring that regulations are fulfilled and that the members of the community are informed as to their rights and responsibilities.
 - The principal advantage of this type of interview lies in the opportunity of collecting valuable information that ensures the quality of data and the credibility of the study. Interviews were organised in thematic blocks by means of a questionnaire. The format of questions was open and the format of answers was not structured. The average period of interviews was one hour and the interviews were conducted from February to October of 1998. The first were pilot interviews, which allowed modification and removal of those questions that seemed to generate little data for the research.
 - The data-collection method applied was to take notes during the interview. The advantage of this technique is that it allows an increase in the comfort of the interviewee and the rapidity of data transcription (see Saran, 1988; Bryman & Burgess, 1994a, b; Kvale, 1996).
 - The method of analysis involved, firstly, organisation of data by means of consecutive readings; secondly, data transcription and systematisation in thematic blocks and, finally, the writing up of results and the preparation of commentary on results. In that sense, see Ritchie & Spencer (1994), and Marshall & Rossman (1995).
9. The case of the Catalan autonomous region is especially interesting since the private sector has a significant presence in education (around 40% of primary and secondary pupils attend private schools). This is a result of the conservative ideology of the nationalist government and the existence of powerful organizations defending private interest (Calero & Bonal, 1999; Bonal, 2000).
10. With regard to this see Edwards *et al.* (1989), Edwards & Whitty (1992).
11. Analyses applied to Anglo-Saxon countries tend to support the hypothesis about the privileged position of the middle classes in the operations of the welfare state (Goodin & Le Grand, 1987; Boyd-Barret, 1995).
12. These opinions have recently been corroborated by a report undertaken by the School Inspection Body on the Catalan community. From a quantitative perspective, Villarroya (2000) shows how private agreement schools still receive an important part of their funds from parents in spite of the public resources channelled to these centres.

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PARADOXICAL IMAGES OF THE STUDENT IN SPANISH EDUCATIONAL REFORMS (1990-2002)

JUAN CARLOS GONZÁLEZ FARACO

Abstract – *After the Franco dictatorship was over, Spanish education entered into an era of educational reforms that culminated in 1990 with the establishment of a new legal regulation of the system that has a distinctly social democratic nature. This situation has encouraged the proliferation of discourses about education, and especially about its principle actors whose identities and functions continue to be discussed. In this paper we study the contradictory images about the student (and about childhood in general) that appear in discourses concerning educational reform. We draw upon data taken from interviews with diverse actors in the politics of Spanish education that were conducted as part of a research project supported by the European Commission. This analysis finally extends to the foreseeable and drastic reorientation of these reforms that is being proposed at present by the new conservative government with the Law of Educational Quality.*

Introduction

The second half of the 20th century was an era of great educational reforms in Europe (Lindblad & Popkewitz, 1999). Because of its recent political history, in Spain these reforms were concentrated in the last third of the century and they have had legal expression in three laws of the highest order. The first, the *Ley General de Educación* (LGE, 1970), was issued in the waning years of the authoritarian regime of General Franco. The other two, the *Ley de Ordenación General del Sistema Educativo* (LOGSE, 1990) and the *Ley Orgánica de Calidad de la Educación* (LOCE, 2002), were enacted once democracy was restored. In this article, I will review the cycle described by these two most recent reforms, focusing particular attention on the evolution of the political discourse about education. Reproduced in other European countries, each with its own distinctive nuances (Green, Leney & Wolf, 2001), this cycle begins with modernizing, leftist governments of general social democratic tendencies, whose reformist pretensions are gradually moderated over time. It culminates in a conservative politics of greater or lesser intensity. From proclaiming principles such as ‘comprehensivity’, ‘equity,’ and ‘social integration’, politicians pass inexorably to quite different watch-words such as ‘efficiency’, ‘competence’ or ‘quality’

(Kenway, 1997; Whitty, 2000; Whitty, Power & Halpin, 2000; Bartlett *et al.*, 2002).

The socialist reforms of the nineties (LOGSE) emerged as the great reform of the new democratic state, as a grand civic and modernizing impulse intended to enhance the equality of educational opportunities for all without regard to social origin or personal capacities. For its detractors, among whom could be counted many teachers, these initiatives constitute an historic error that could only lead to the deterioration of education and chaos in the classrooms, above all in the case of secondary education. From the very beginnings of these reforms, criticisms of this sort (and others) germinated and grew into widespread discontent that the conservative government of the *Partido Popular* (the Popular Party) canalized and promoted in order to realize its own telling modification of the educational system.

Above all they attacked the notion of 'comprehensivity' considered as the key concept of structural and curricular organization. This turn has its legal basis in the already cited *Ley de Calidad de la Educación* (LOCE), or Law of Educational Quality, still in the developmental stage at this time and under parliamentary discussion. This legal project was presented, on the one hand, as a rectification of the 'egalitarian policy' (a phrase usually uttered with a critical and ironic tone) of the socialist reform and, on the other hand, as a necessary response to the challenges of a global, knowledge-based society. It is in secondary education that one may observe most clearly this conservative 'counter-reformation' (Viñao, 2002), particularly in its vision of distinct and parallel educational tracks (*itinerarios*) into which the students would be sorted according to their academic performance.

Nevertheless, if we examine this development a bit, we can observe that the opposition and rupture suggested by these two moments in the reformist cycle is more rhetorical than real. At least, the transit between one and the other has ended up being much less radical and drastic than one would be led to believe either by listening to their promoters or by reading their respective doctrinaire texts. Educational reforms often serve as arguments for political legitimation and, as such, are not sparing in their rhetoric in order to affirm their necessity and flaunt their alleged coherence and effectiveness (Rodríguez Diéguez, 2001; Pereyra, 2002). Nevertheless, once they encounter resistance they do not hesitate in accommodating political realities to such a degree that ambiguities, paradoxes, and contradictions emerge as they increasingly come to approximate that which at the beginning they criticized. Therefore, and not only in this social terrain, it is evident that with each passing day during this stage of global capitalism, the distance lessens between the educational politics of the moderate left and the conservative right.

This phenomenon is clearly manifest when we observe the processes of identity construction of the subjects implicated in the educational system. For example,

when we analyze the images and ideas entertained about ‘the student’ and the rules that regulate scholastic success and failure, we encounter reliable guides for interpreting and understanding both the equalizing and the discriminating capacities of the system. This subject will be at the heart of this article.

Educational reform and the construction of the subject: sources and guidelines for investigation

My analysis considers two sources of information. The first, and most important, is a long-term project¹ of comparative research financed by the European Commission, *Education Governance, Social Integration and Exclusion in Europe (EGSIE)*, conducted during 1998-2000. With this project we attempt to explore the consequences of socialist efforts at educational reform in Spain during the 1990s and to do so in terms of a wider, comparative European context. The second source focuses on the text of the Law of Educational Quality (*Proyecto de Ley de Calidad de la Educación*), which was promoted by the conservative government of the *Partido Popular* in order to modify some of the essential elements of the socialist reforms. I have also included various reports evaluating the educational system and other relevant documents.

EGSIE is a TSER (Targeted Socio-Economic Research) project of the XII General Direction of the European Commission, that was coordinated by the Department of Education of the University of Uppsala, Sweden, led by Professor Sverker Lindblad with the expert collaboration of Professor Thomas S. Popkewitz of the University of Wisconsin at Madison. In addition to the eight European universities participating in the project, an Australian team from the University of Newcastle was involved from the beginning.

Temporally speaking, the project is situated in the postmodern stage of globalization and covers the last decade of the 20th century. From a theoretical perspective, it moves within two conceptual fields that are as complex as they are problematic: *equity* and *knowledge* (Popkewitz, Lindblad & Strandberg, 1999). In speaking of ‘equity’ we are alluding to ‘questions of representation and access of individuals and groups to social and educational practices. Governance, within this perspective, is a concept used ‘to think about and judge the means by which activities are controlled or directed to deliver an acceptable range of outcomes according to some established social standard’ (Popkewitz, Lindblad & Strandberg, 1999: 2). Inclusion and exclusion are defined in relation to the level of participation that any particular group attains with respect to these standards. With respect to the problematic nature of ‘knowledge’, we are referring to ‘the systems of reason through which identities assigned to actors are *fabricated* to order and

divide'. The consequences that these systems of reason have on social inclusion and exclusion are evident in that they produce rules and principles of distinction and differentiation that regulate action and the participation of subjects in the diverse social spaces in which their lives are traced out.

The general hypothesis of this project begins by verifying that the framework of the restoration of global capitalism and the attendant re-examination of the relations between education and the economy have recently produced a cascade of changes in European educational systems. In many cases, such as the Spanish one (Pereyra, Sevilla & Castillo, 1999) this process has included wide ranging educational reforms. The EGSIE project professes to analyze comparatively these changes and reforms that have resulted from the educational politics of the various European nations. The project takes into account, on the one hand, that the process of globalization is producing similar and new forms of governance of educational systems, with problematic implications for every level of decision making. On the other hand, the project considers that all of these processes have a direct impact on the capacity of education to promote integration and combat social exclusion in those nations which are reclaiming themselves as 'Welfare States.'

The objectives and, therefore, the contents of the project focus on determining and analyzing these recent changes in the governance of European educational systems, establishing the correspondences and contradictions between these new patterns and the historical traditions and presuppositions of education in Europe. This project attempts to determine the implications of the new forms of political direction developing in the organization and differentiation of those systems and, finally, to determine the results that these different political-educational strategies have had on the balance of social integration and exclusion, especially for young people. A small sample of the extensive and meticulous research activity thus far realized on these topics is reflected in the published reports (*inter alia* Lindblad & Popkewitz, 1999; Popkewitz, Lindblad & Strandberg, 1999; Lindblad & Popkewitz, 2000), not to mention the countless reports generated by each team and the voluminous ethnographic material that has been compiled (texts, statistical compilations, taped interviews, etc.). It is neither necessary nor desirable to present here a detailed list of the activities already developed that have been provided in a succession of reports and other publications, but it might be worthwhile to cite the goals of the broad phases of the research project, as follows:

- First, accomplish a detailed description of the educational systems in question and develop national reports.
- Second, analyze the discourse of the institutions and actors in the educational system, including international bodies, politicians and administrators, high

level executives, school principals, teachers, members of civil society (e.g., boards of directors of parents' associations, unions, businessmen, etc.).

- Third, conduct fieldwork in some European regions, based on the use of questionnaires, administered to students of secondary and pre-university education.
- Fourth, produce a final comparative study by constructing a comparative typology for the relevant countries, formulating hypotheses about the change in governance in education and about its impact on social inclusion/exclusion.
- Fifth, and finally, present the results of this work to educational agents of different sorts and discuss conclusions with them.

As can be easily deduced, one cannot address all these goals in the constraints of space imposed by a journal article. I will therefore limit myself to considering the second phase of study outlined above, and even then, that area will not be treated exhaustively. This article centres attention on our analysis of the discourse of political actors relevant to the central questions of our research, but principally I focus on those issues that concern the construction of the subject: that is to say, the role and the image of the student with special reference to the student of secondary education. For over a year we interviewed a large number of politicians in order to evaluate the reforms of 1990. At the time, the majority of these politicians occupied important positions in the educational administration of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia, which was governed by the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista Obrero Español*, PSOE). One cannot forget that at the very same time the central government of Madrid was controlled by the conservative Popular Party (*Partido Popular*, PP), and that although the control of education in Spain generally falls to the autonomous communities, the general pattern of the educational system are established centrally.

My comments, as I have already noted, are derived not only from the EGSIE project, but also from an analysis of Spanish educational politics since 1996 as they developed under a conservative central government. I want here to observe the progressive development of the reformist ideas of the socialists up to the point that they came to resemble, in part at least, those of the conservatives. These ideas are reflected in the text of the Law of Quality in Education (*Ley de Calidad de la Educación*) and in the reports and documents that led up to the establishment of that legal norm.

At the end of 1996, the Ministry of Education, through its entity, INCE (National Institute of Quality and Evaluation) undertook an extensive study in order to diagnose the educational system, whose manner of functioning had attracted criticism from both inside and outside of the system. This study included almost the whole of the country with the exception of Andalusia, whose

autonomous government (*Junta de Andalucía*) had decided not to take part in it, reflecting the difficult relations that it maintained with the central government. From the very first democratic elections after the dictatorship ended, the Socialist Party has been the most popular party in the Andalusian Community, maintaining control of the autonomous government without interruption during the last two decades. From the moment that the socialists lost the government in Madrid, the confrontation between the new conservative government and the Andalusian government has been a constant.

The evaluation of the school system was organized by a group of University teams led by prestigious professors, albeit those somewhat allied with the *Partido Popular*. They centered their efforts on the obligatory level of secondary education (12-16 years), above all on the second cycle of this stage (14-16 years). They subjected to analysis five problematic aspects of education: student success, the plans and methods of instruction, the functioning of the schools, teacher effectiveness, and relations between the school and the families of the students. After a little more than one year, a number of reports were released about each of these aspects of education. From these a global diagnostic instrument was derived that reviewed the weaknesses of the educational system born of the socialist reform and some changes were proposed that they believed would improve it, especially in the area of compulsory secondary education (*Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*, ESO). In the judgement of these evaluators, the most preoccupying symptoms are the poor success rates of the students, the increase in discipline problems at schools, the insufficient initial and subsequent teacher training and the lack of communication between the family and the school (Ministerio de Educación, 1998; García Garrido *et al.*, 1998; Ibáñez Martín *et al.* 1998). It was possible to deduce from the recommendations of the evaluators that while it was certainly necessary to correct these problems and proceed to make the pertinent changes, it could be accomplished without significantly altering the structure of the system and without resorting to a drastic process of juridical revision. Nevertheless, soon after these evaluations and others produced by international institutions (for example, the OECD) came out, the conservative government decided to initiate a reform process that led to the already cited Law of Educational Quality and other measures that, in the long run, would entail structural modifications (Escolano, 2002).

In the midst of an incendiary public polemic, the government produced a 'Statement of Principles' (*Documento de Bases*) for their proposed law in March, 2002. With this theoretical document as its instrument, the Ministry of Education submitted to public opinion its assessment of the school system and its ideas about how to reform it. What relatively little criticism this government initiative aroused among the teachers, emanated from the leftist unions, the pedagogical vanguard

among the teachers, and those associated with socialist educational politics. The bulk of the teaching corps cautiously saw in these changes the possibility of recuperating both order in the classrooms and their lost authority as teachers. On the political plane, however, this development fed a schismogenic spiral² that erupted into a very heated confrontation. The Socialist Party responded to the document of the governing Popular Party with its own, entitled *To Educate Citizens: Everyone's Task*, in which it expressed its political alternative for education. The socialists accused the conservatives of favouring policies that were elitist, segregationist and bound to weaken the public school.

Shortly after making its 'Statement of Principles' public, the government approved its proposed version of the Law of Educational Quality. At present this legislation is moving through the parliamentary process and attracting various criticisms from the different groups opposed to the Popular Party. This dispute has spilled out of Parliament and into the street, where it inspires public protests in a renewal of what in earlier times was known as the 'education war'. To understand the reformist cycle in Spanish education in the last decades of the 20th century, one must analyze the legal text itself, the theoretical works which preceded it, and the vast amount of information about its social impact collected through a process of continual observation.

The socialist reforms of the 1990s: the history of an illusion?

If we attend to its texts and public declarations, the socialist school reform (LOGSE, 1990) was presented as a very ambitious attempt at educational change and social transformation. Its proponents did not hesitate to pronounce it to be a crucial turning point in the history of Spanish education and the beginnings of a new era in education. Socialist rhetoric was replete with the millenarian arguments so common to other reformist narratives of that era. (Popkewitz, Pitman & Barry, 1986).

With this educational revision, the socialist government sought to respond to what it regarded as the pressing needs of the Spain of the 1980s: the development of democracy and the welfare state in a country that had just emerged from a dictatorship, the construction of a state composed of Autonomous Communities, the historical convergence of its school systems with those of the European Union (which Spain had joined in 1986), and the improvement of Spanish education in a manner appropriate to its new social and economic context (Boyd-Barrett & O'Malley, 1995; Pereyra, Sevilla & Castillo, 1999; Puelles, 2000; Escolano, 2002).

Without a doubt, one of the most important novelties of the democratization processes has been the desire to convert a state with an ancient centralist tradition

into a decentralized polity with a structure situated mid-way between federalism and regionalism. This new political framework necessarily generated a new educational map, which required a programme of reforms in order to canalize the demand for regional autonomy, improve the management of the system and adapt curriculum to the diverse sociocultural contexts of the country. It is necessary to note that the anti-franquist opposition, in addition to calling for the restoration of conventional political liberties, had considered the right to autonomy for the Spanish 'Nationalities and Regions' to be a fundamental element of its vision of democracy which had been frustrated by the outcome of the Civil War (1936-39) (Boyd, 1997). For many, the struggle against the dictatorship was interpreted as a struggle against the historical centralism of Madrid.

Although the Constitution of 1978 recognized this right, the process of producing political autonomy did not develop at the same pace in all of the Spanish communities. Indeed, only a few chose to implement the procedures necessary to govern education within their respective territories. For a long time the majority of the communities continued to depend upon the central government and only very recently have they begun to take charge of their schools in an autonomous manner. As a result, the current scheme of the autonomies reveals very definite asymmetries and a deficient overall articulation.

On the other hand, although the educational system had been slowly decentralizing, it continued to have a singular organizational structure supervised by the Ministry of Education. Inevitably, jurisdictional conflicts between the regional authorities and the central government are quite frequent. Socialists and conservatives continued to be divided by the level of state intervention that each considered appropriate in matters concerning education, but they coincided in seeking to maintain a national backbone for the system that would be compatible with a decentralized form of management. This basic unity in the system (involving, among other things, a homogeneous structure and some basic elements of curriculum common to all of the country's schools) generally was the object of consistent criticism from the nationalist parties governing some of the communities, especially the Basque Country and Catalonia. For a number of years these parties have sustained a string of conflicts with a succession of central governments about such central issues as language, the teaching of history and the selection of teachers. Indeed, these parties, some of which have a secessionist agenda, have promoted programmes of linguistic immersion in the regional language that have included making the teaching of Spanish difficult within their territories. Moreover, they have substantially altered the content of the humanities curriculum in an effort to construct their own nationalist consciousness in direct confrontation with Spanish identity, which they consider to be an unacceptable historical imposition.

The rapid transformation of the family in post-franquist Spain is another fundamental sociological factor that must be appreciated to understand fully the development of educational reform during the 1990s. This transformation follows a pattern common to the other Western nations (including the massive incorporation of women into the work force, changes in the organization and functioning of family life, the emergence of new familial formats, etc.), but it was produced in less time and more rapidly, in concert with the democratizing process of national political life. In a country with a long Catholic tradition, but one that is experiencing urbanization and economic development, the decline of the classic form of the nuclear family did not occur without conflict (Murphy, 1978, 1983). The most conservative sectors of society have even interpreted these changes as an alarming symptom of the weakness of this institution and of a general deterioration of Spanish society. Nevertheless, the data available to us demonstrates that despite an increase in variety of alternative familial formats and the number of divorces, the greater part of the children of Europe, and this is even more true of Spain, are raised by their parents until they attain adulthood. The family, even when it is mono-parental, continues to play a basic role in the primary socialization of children (Junta de Andalucía, 1999a; Goody, 2001; Luzón y Luengo, 2002). Naturally, this crucial task is increasingly shared by the family with other social agencies.

The decline of the traditional domestic life of women, the instability of married couples, the increasing number of single-parent households (as well as other factors) have combined with the growing delegation of educational functions from the family to the school in causing the school's centrality in the educational process to soar. The school has colonized extra-scholastic spaces, once the privileged domain of families, and the school as an institution is relentlessly exported its typical and preferred patterns of behaviour to the social world beyond its classroom walls. This 'pan-educationalism' not only did not go unnoticed in socialist circles, it was encouraged, as can be discerned in the following words of a highly placed official of Andalusian educational administration:

'I believe that the model [of reform] is good to the extent that it is capable of socializing those customs, modes of being and habits that formerly were performed by the family (...) The school has to make up for its deficiencies.'

Nevertheless, and despite a growing convergence, the situation of the family is far from homogeneous within Europe. According to Crouch (1999), marked differences can be observed between the North and the South. For example there is a greater asymmetry in the distribution of household tasks among men and

women in such countries as Italy, Greece, or Spain. In these countries, as well, familial tradition has changed less and there are lower rates of divorce and illegitimacy. On the other hand, their fertility rates are very low.³ In Andalusia, which is situated at the geographical and social periphery of the south of Europe, most of these tendencies are quite pronounced. One must take into account that Andalusia, despite its manifest evolution, is still below the Spanish average in the principal indicators of development (including, of course, educational indicators), and is distant from the European averages (Iglesias y Ruiz, 1999; Zoido *et al.*, 2001). As was affirmed in the last Report on Territorial Development (*Informe de Desarrollo Territorial*), ‘Andalusia continues to harbour one of the greatest concentrations of poverty in the country’ (Zoido *et al.*, 2001: 145).

Nevertheless, as I commented earlier, in Andalusia specifically and Spain more generally the demand for education and the level of instruction of the population has improved a great deal in a few years. Of course, the attitudes toward and behaviour of Andalusian families with respect to this area of social life (money expended on education, expectations about children’s participation in it, the involvement of the family in schools, etc.) varies noticeably according to social position, cultural capital and the kind of habitat in which the family home is located (Junta de Andalucía, 1999a). For that reason, Andalusia still registers high levels of potential illiteracy in many areas of the region⁴ (Zoido *et al.*, 2001: 218).

As is only logical, the widespread perception of this socioeconomic trend in family life has conditioned the objectives of socialist reform. The socialists have been encouraged to convert school reform into something that transcends vanguardist pedagogical change. The reforms of the 1990s were also conceived as an ambitious *political* reform (*politicized* according to its critics) that was intended to transform the whole of society (Bonal, 1998). The concept of ‘comprehensivity’ was to become the fundamental pedagogical instrument of this effort:

‘Comprehensive instruction aspires to offer the same educational opportunities to all students without regard to social class distinctions and to act as a compensatory mechanism (to combat the inequalities of economics and social origin’ (*Ministerio de Educación*, 1989)

In addition to ‘comprehensivity,’ the reform would also be guided by three other fundamental intellectual concepts: ‘democratization,’ ‘constructivism,’ and ‘modernization.’ Inspired by these ideas, the socialists put into play a variety of structural changes (Pereyra *et al.*, 2001):

- *The period of compulsory instruction was extended by two years to 16 years of age.* This measure represents a significant increase in the comprehensiveness

of the system, at least legally, and it now corresponds to the minimum working age that is determined by Spanish law. This development not only lengthens the period of basic education for all Spaniards, it converts it into a very open social space capable of forging a new kind of citizenry.

- *The selection criteria for admitting students were reduced and integrationist educational measures were implemented*, based on the principal of *attention to diversity*, whatever be its origins: psychobiological, socioeconomic, geographic, or cultural.
- *Educational institutions were democratized*, by which was supposed, among other things, that the Principal (*Director*) would be elected, that the educational community would participate in the administration and the governance of schools, that there would be an increase in functional autonomy and that the rules of participation would be determined by reaching accord among all participants, and do on.
- *An integral reform of vocational education (formación profesional, FP) would be undertaken with the creation of a new level beyond compulsory education*, parallel to the traditional secondary education (*Bachillerato*) and a superior level paralleling university instruction. They sought to enhance the social prestige of courses of study that in Spain enrolled far fewer students than in the countries of northern and central Europe. Moreover, vocational education would be adapted to the requirements of the productive system, thus improving the likelihood that its graduates would find appropriate employment.
- *A reform of the teaching function was advanced that favoured a change in the role of the teacher, above all the secondary education instructor*. An effort was made to redefine the teacher as a mentor tasked with developing of the personality and civic awareness of the student, rather than as a mechanism for transmitting information. Additionally, the traditional, hierarchical organization of teachers was modified, especially in secondary education.
- *An open and flexible curriculum was established*, with some general features of curriculum (*Diseño Curricular Base*) that the different autonomous communities, the instructional centres, and even each professor, could adapt to the local context by developing particular educational projects and programs.
- *This educational plan contemplated diverse objectives, in which traditional cognitive considerations did not even predominant*. These plans sought to improve the wider social environment of the student in order to promote personal motivation and to facilitate the student's personal and social development. The use of the new electronic technologies was to be encouraged as a pedagogical instrument.
- *Measures of evaluation, fundamentally qualitative in nature, were to be employed* as a system of control and would be applied to a variety of variables,

including the teacher, that were implicated in the educational process. A system of evaluation that was limited to the final results of the learning process was entirely rejected.

- *New modalities of educational counselling were rehearsed by teachers and by experts in psychopedagogy.*

The reform just described was preceded in the 1980s by a period of experimentation that in a few schools that had voluntarily solicited it. These schools, whose teachers in many cases were participants in even earlier pedagogical reform movements, had been granted exceptional human, technical and financial resources and they were subjected to rigorous scrutiny. But the process of effectively implementing this reform only began for the entirety of the system in 1990. One of the first measures put into practice was the extension of the period of compulsory education (and its structural modification), that included for the very first time in Spanish history a portion of secondary education. This inclusive measure delivered a strong jolt to the academic and pedagogic traditions of this particular level of the educational system (Ruiz Berrio, 2001).

The socialist reform created a new educational tier called Compulsory Secondary Education (*Educación Secundaria Obligatoria*, ESO) that spanned the ages of twelve to sixteen. Half of this new level of education used to form part of primary education. Although this new stage of education was now defined as part of secondary education, some of its curricular and organizational features actually remained more typical of the primary school. It did not take long for the secondary teachers to protest against this development (Ruiz Paz, 1999; Esteve, 2000), especially those who were older and enjoyed a certain professional status. This reform ‘violated’ a classic element of the structure of the educational system: the traditional and sharp division between primary education, which was intended to be general, basic, and for everyone, and secondary instruction, which was not compulsory and was more prestigious, academic and selective.

As could be expected, the reaction among teachers of primary education has been very different. The pedagogical changes undertaken were quite consonant with the historical antecedents of primary education: remodelling the classic distribution of the disciplines with interdisciplinary formulas, introducing cross-curricular areas of study (e.g. multiculturalism, gender, environmental education, education for peace, etc.), opening up the secondary schools to all manner of students, including those who were neither motivated nor well prepared for additional study, and other similar innovations. But these same policies clashed with the traditional guidelines of secondary education, whose teacher corps shared a professional *habitus* that was deeply rooted (Perrenoud, 2001) and that presented

a very corporative professional image. In the face of the proposed curricular reforms, they defended, for example, the restoration of the primacy of cognitive objectives of performance and the traditional, instrumental bodies of knowledge (language, mathematics, etc.). Likewise they believed that the disorder and chaos that had taken hold in secondary education was due to having converted it into a massive and excessively heterogeneous phase of the educational cycle. And they were, of course, convinced that the level of preparation of the students had declined to an alarming degree.

To complicate matters further, the socialist reform put together both primary and secondary teachers in the first cycle (i.e., the first two years) of the new compulsory stage of secondary education and they even put them together in the very same schools (IES, Institutes of Secondary Education) and gave them similar professional rights. At least at first, they sought to group together in one single professional category the old teacher corps of secondary teachers that had historically been hierarchialized into administrative categories (e.g. '*Catedrático de Bachillerato*' or Professor of Secondary School) which had a venerable history in the guild-like organization of teachers. The addition of *maestros* (primary teachers), instructors with less academic and social prestige, to the first two years of secondary education could not easily be accepted by the historical segment of its professoriate who sought to defend to the end certain prerogatives. They had already begun to lose some privileges as a consequence of the modernization of the country in the final years of the dictatorship, especially since the rate of matriculation into secondary education had improved noticeably in the 1970s, years before the socialist reforms had been proposed. But, in addition to a widening gap in secondary education, the most important effect of this reform was its radical reorientation of the role of the teacher, a reorientation that collided with some of the key components of the professional culture of the traditional secondary teacher (Viñao, 2002). Ironically, this defensive, and essentially nostalgic, attitude is intensifying precisely at a time when secondary education is enjoying massive demographic growth and when the real difference between the different strata of pre-university Spanish teachers is diminishing in terms of salary, image and social prestige (González Faraco, 2002).

The socialist reform tried to overcome these and other forms of resistance, but they only grew with time. By reorganizing the curriculum in order to adapt it to the diversity of the student body, the importance of the classical areas of knowledge declined in favour of attitudinal and instrumental objectives which were implemented with the goal of constructing a new educational subject, a 'new child' who would be critical and creative, socially responsible and solidaristic. In other words, the goal was a new citizen for a more just, democratic state. This was educational reform's message of social redemption.

In parallel fashion, another intellectual referent of this reform was the quality of 'modernization.' To 'modernize' it was deemed necessary to adapt the school system to the vertiginous dynamism and the sheer complexity of postmodern society, marked as it is by information technology and the swift movement of goods and ideas on a global scale. The ideal student, the citizen with some genuine opportunities in this kind of world, would be one who can handily navigate through a space that is simultaneously virtual, transnational, and fiercely competitive (Brown & Lauder, 1997). This 'modern' image of the 'new citizen' would complement that of the 'socially conscious' image already discussed, but it would also produce a contradiction. Civic values and 'the ideology of competence,' as Pierre Bourdieu (1998) describes it, generally diverge into two quite different educational paths. Of course, this was not the only contradiction besetting the socialist reform, nor would the resistance of professors be the only obstacle that it would encounter along the way. After an initial expansive and enthusiastic stage, Spanish educational reform entered into a period of progressive recession and retreat. To a certain degree, this is also a period marked by illusion and self-deception.

The new student's paradoxical identity: by way of epilogue

This admittedly pessimistic assessment is clearly supported by the interviews we conducted with Andalusian politicians, undertaken just before the end of that cycle (1999-2000). Their discourse assumed a notably quixotic air: educational realities overcame their reformist dreams and giants were quickly transformed into windmills. Curiously (but perhaps not coincidentally), this development reproduces one that Spanish political life suffered generally as the enthusiasm of the transition gave way successively to democracy, to the first socialist victory, and finally to the disenchantment and scepticism that was to follow.

The teachers did not cease grouching about their lost authority while the mass media disseminated images of chaotic classrooms, breakdowns in discipline, and poor test results, especially in secondary schools. The civic-minded, constructivist, autonomous, and cosmopolitan 'ideal student' of the reformers could not have differed more from the passive, apathetic, and maladaptive 'real student' of the media (Pereyra *et al.*, 2001: 301). As is the norm in Spanish political history, the reformers – self-styled as misunderstood dreamers – blamed the failure of their measures on those who were its subjects (Viñao, 2002). In their view, educational reform was well conceived; all of the aforementioned problems were located squarely with those who had the task of actually realizing reform in the schools. They pointed to the resistance of teachers, the unfortunate

characteristics of students, the implacable routines of school culture, and so on and so forth.

Ironically, at the very same time, a genuine longing flourished for the more committed teacher of an earlier era with his equally nostalgic counterpart, the 'old' student who worked harder, was more motivated and more obedient than is the case with the contemporary pupil. A widespread denunciation of the 'excesses' of the politics of diversity and democratization in schools ensued:

'There has been an excess of the revolutionary spirit of the France of May 1968 and perhaps this has brought with it a teacher-student egalitarianism that has relaxed their relationship too much', confessed a socialist member of parliament. 'Previously education created guidelines intended to produce acceptance of a social, scientific and religious hierarchy. Today, this is reckoned to be a poor understanding of democracy in the classroom. And, clearly, from this comes all of the tumult,' a leading socialist politician commented to us.'

Only two years after recording these words in 2000, we can read a very similar diagnosis, but emanating from the Popular Party, in the Ministry of Education's new 'Statement of Principles' (*Documento de Bases*, 2002), that serves as a prelude to its own reform:

'...we cannot turn a blind eye to such realities as the deterioration of a climate of mutual tolerance and cooperative striving in the schools and the classrooms, the declining reputation of the figure of the teacher, the demoralization and malaise of the teachers or the inability of school directors to establish the minimum necessary conditions for the adequate functioning of the school.'

Confronted with this apocalyptic situation, continues the text, 'inescapably, a reform must be imposed.' Some months afterwards, we can read in the preamble of the Proposal for the Law of Educational Quality of 2002:

'These are deficiencies that ought to be corrected, because the future of our youth, the aspirations of their families, and the requirements of our economy and society require it.'

For the second time in a decade, political discourse returns to the message of social redemption through education. Now, however, the talismanic term is not

‘equity’ (*equidad*), but ‘quality’ (*calidad*) described in terms of effort, competence, merit, opportunities, control and authority, all in the framework of the technological society of the 21st century.

This perfunctory description of some aspects of the reformist cycle in Spanish education in the last decade of the 20th century allows us to verify, among other things, that political discourse about education acquires over time a paradoxical tinge, both concealed and explicit. Thus, the very same people who applaud the wonders of cultural change and technological innovation do not hesitate to indulge in nostalgic representations of the past as a means for recovering lost order by exorcising the chaos that afflicts the educational system. This drift in the rhetoric of the reformist cycle, with this ‘double play’ reasoning that is so paradoxical, can be observed and described in various aspects of the educational discourse of the present. Let us examine some of them which refer directly to the identity of the ‘new student’:

(a) Ideas about the knowledge that should be learned in school have been modified and as a result so have notions about what constitutes excellence in the classroom.

In line with modern pedagogy, reformist discourse detests memorization and is inclined, in the word of one of the politicians interviewed, towards ‘learning how to live’ as the preferred objective of education ‘so that the students learn how to confront life, to criticize, to evaluate, to choose, to be free and responsible’. Another interviewee was even more insistent about a similar idea, alluding to ‘understanding through scholarly success’:

‘If by scholarly success is meant getting good grades...does this really imply a capacity for comprehension, a reflexive capacity, a critical capacity, or does it mean simply a capacity to memorize as has always been the case?’

But little by little this perspective has been diverted into an ‘academic apprenticeship’ model, believed to be more competitive in the framework of the contemporary market. The relative failure of some curricular innovations promoted by the reforms seem to have pushed some of our interviewees to reconsider a model that gives pride of place to the branching out of the curriculum and that favours allowing students more choice in the choice of the topics to be studied, while, at the same time, reducing the time spent learning basic bodies of knowledge. For example, a socialist politician highly placed in the educational system, noted the following:

‘The average citizen will change occupations between six or five times during the course of his life. He will adapt and acquire the knowledge necessary for a new occupation more easily if his knowledge base is basic and general. I have the feeling that it would be good to reconsider the divisions of the *bachillerato* (post-compulsory secondary education), the great catalogue of different professional titles. Because I do not understand why, if young people must leave the educational system with basic, general knowledge, we are boxing them into courses of study that are so specific.’

Inevitably, in a dual-system like the Spanish one (with historically quite different primary and secondary educational traditions), this produces a significant experiential disjunction. The first experience is of teachers attempting to instruct one how to *learn to live* and is associated with public instruction and its ideal student type. The second ‘apprenticeship’ seeks to instil academic knowledge (and discipline) and is consonant with private instruction and its own, very different, ideal student type. In recent years, the recovery by the private sector of a greater part of the educational market, that is to say, of the students themselves, has become very significant in Spain (Rambla, 1998). Some believe that prescribing the principle of competence is the medicine necessary to avoid putting public education at a distinct disadvantage with respect to its private counterpart:

‘To have public education, the strength of the State, is both good and bad. It is good because it generalizes education and it is bad because often it does not compete...’

Naturally, this principle constitutes a central feature of the texts of the projected reforms of the Popular Party, as I have just argued. Similar ideas are also present in the educational platform of the Republican Party of the United States, as can be regularly observed in the speeches and pronouncements of President Bush.

(b) The production of nostalgic images about the teacher and the student has grown slowly but surely.

As I have noted, the very same people who insisted upon the necessity of educational transformation in a world of accelerated change presume also to quiet the restlessness that this change instils by means of an obsessive quest for reassurance in educational tradition and the personal models of a bygone time.

They laud the restoration of rules of discipline and they question the retention in basic education of disinterested students, who they accuse of being ‘educational objectors’. The once almost reverent image of youth has begun to come into question.

‘Today the problem,’ commented one interviewee, ‘is that the youth do not accept norms of behaviour, young people have decided to party until dawn and do as they please. Perhaps in earlier generations they were not like that... At the beginning of the democratic era in Spain, the school was modelled on a system of education dedicated to freedom and this produced an educational experience with scarcely any rules, or with very lax rules at best. I believe that we have to evolve towards an educational system with rules.’

The complementarity of these ideas with those expressed in the text of the proposals for the Law of Educational Quality (2002), as part of the new conservative reform, is clear:

‘The new reformist impulse that this Law promotes is sustained by the conviction that the values of sustained effort and personal commitment constitutes the basic conditions necessary to improve the quality of the educational system, values which have been weakened as to undermine the concepts of duty, discipline, and respect for the teacher.’

Certainly, this is not the first time that education has been conceptualized as a tool for producing order out of social chaos, or, as T. Popkewitz puts it (1998), as a system for the social administration of liberty (see also Hunter, 1998; Viñao, 2002).

(c) An ‘essentialist’ vision of the educational subject has returned, a vision based on the ‘theory of the rotten apple.’

We listened attentively to the following text taken from one of the interviews, specifically one that was conducted with a high official of the socialist educational system during the middle of the nineties, shortly before the electoral victory of the conservatives:

‘I believe that always there are some students who are difficult and others who are easy to teach. There is no good student or bad

student. The question is: Is it better to separate them or integrate them? This is the great problem. A teacher with whom I was speaking last week told me, 'Look, I believe that the notion of the rotten apple is certainly true, and that if in a class of thirty good students we place two bad ones, they will ruin the entire class.'

The conservative reform outlined in the new Law of Educational Quality (LOCE, 2002) clearly opts for a path that is only insinuated in the words of this socialist politician. In the preamble of the Law one may read the following:

'The educational system seeks to acquire a flexible configuration, that adapts to individual differences in the aptitudes, needs, and rhythms of maturation of the people... The very diversity of the student body counsels for a certain variety of educational trajectories.'

Some authors, such as B. Baker (2000: 163-164), ask if today, at the beginnings of the twenty-first century, we are not returning to a certain 'essentialism' in our conception of childhood, relegating to a secondary plane, or even forgetting altogether, its historical and social context (Rodríguez Pascual, 2002; Hultqvist & Dahlberg, 2001). After decades of predominantly Marxist analysis of the school and of the relations between scholastic success and social context, this turn arrests our attention. In a parallel manner, the social sciences also appear to be ceding territory before the advances of the genetic sciences. Everything indicates that a certain neo-naturalism has retarded political discourse about education in order to clarify and guide the variegating course of educational differences. The effort to 'mainstream' those students with learning difficulties is a noble proposition and a beautiful theory of pedagogy that clashes with the inevitability of human differences. As one socialist politician involved with the administration of Andalusian education affirms:

'This is an impeccable discourse that is not debatable. What was unexpected is that in practice it is disputed... We have begun to have students in the system who do not want to study but they are in the system and this produces problems. We have to give them special help and everyone has to dedicate special effort for them and this produces distortions that are difficult to accept.'

Another interviewee is even more trenchant:

‘...society will not function and the educational institutions are impotent in the face of the social problems that this is producing.’

Perhaps, this recognition of the great distance between the desired state of affairs and the current reality can serve as justification for the failure and weaknesses of the egalitarian politics undertaken by the socialist reform, but it is more important that it demonstrates an absolute divergence from the utopian thought that serves as the foundation for contemporary socialist movements and, as a result, of the reformist pedagogical tendencies that, to a certain extent, have been inspired by them. We are left, then, to sketch out a contradictory discourse that simultaneously calls for a civic and inclusive institution that is also an efficient and productive school, from which new generations of our electronic society depart well-prepared for combat in the battlefield of the global market. These comments, rather than serve as conclusions, perhaps will cause us to ask new questions: Are we confronted with a simple unprincipled accommodation of reformist theory to economic facts? Are we left, instead, to note the conservatizing effects of time on the principal agents of educational politics, who are both aging and coming to enjoy too much the luxuries of power? Are we observing yet another example of the decline of ideology, of the end of egalitarian utopias, of the deteriorating ideology of the left and its convergence with more conservative elements? Does this situation represent, on the other hand, a real demonstration of the hybrid political model that the sociologist A. Giddens baptized as ‘the third way’? Can it be that in this era of globalization we are installing among ourselves a singular and monolithic educational discourse that presumes to have struck the perfect balance between productive efficacy and systemic equity? Are we not witnessing, at last, the death of the educational utopia of modernity?

Notes

1. University of Helsinki (Finland); University of Iceland; University of Uppsala (Sweden); University of Keele (Scotland); J.W. Goethe University (Frankfurt, Germany); University College of Westhill (Birmingham, Great Britain); University of Lisbon (Portugal); University of Athens (Greece); University of Granada (Spain). The chairman of the Spanish research team was Dr. Miguel A. Pereyra, University of Granada.
2. G. Bateson (1958: 175) defines the expression ‘schismogenesis’ as ‘a process of differentiation in the norms of individual behaviour resulting from cumulative interaction between individuals.’ He refers to the *progressive differentiation* that can characterize the behaviour of two persons or social entities, as one responds to the intervention of the other with a reaction that is similar or somewhat more intense. A good and, in the context of this article, relevant example would be a dispute between children that breaks out in the playground of a school: the shove of the first child provokes another shove, a bit stronger than the first, a behavioural cycle which ultimately results in a full

scale fight. To appreciate fully the anthropological impact of 'schismogenesis' one should refer to the excellent work of Charles W. Nuckolls, *The Cultural Dialectics of Knowledge and Desire*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1996, pp. 49-78.

3. In Spain this rate has reached truly alarming rates, for today it is one of the lowest in the world. This fall in birth rate is very patent in the evolution of the student population. In the last ten years (1991-2001), despite a notable increase in the number of university students and the sustained growth in pre-school education, the total number of students inscribed in the educational system has declined by more than one million (from 9,400,000 students to 8,300,000) (CIDE, 2002: 99-100) The demographic recuperation of Spain (with approximately 41 million inhabitants) detected in the last census is due above all to immigration, whose volume has been increasingly rapidly in recent years.
4. *Potential illiteracy* refers to the percentage of people older than ten years old, with respect to the total number of people in this age group, who cannot read or write or who have not completed compulsory primary schooling. In Andalusia, despite the great advances that have occurred in education in recent decades, fully a third of the population is potentially illiterate.

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AN EMIS FOR PALESTINE – THE EDUCATION MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

RONALD G. SULTANA

Abstract – This article provides an account of the introduction of an Education Management and Information System in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The initiative, led by the Palestinian Ministry of Education, and supported by UNICEF, is described in terms of the educational goals targeted, the usefulness of an EMIS for the rational organization and management of an educational system, and the impact that the availability and sound use of data can have on improving quality provision. The particular political and educational circumstances of Palestine up to the start of the second Intifada in September 2000 are described in some detail in order to better highlight the challenges that had to be faced by the Ministry of Education, and to appreciate more thoroughly the extent of the successes achieved against the odds.

Introduction: the search for quality in education

Education systems the world over – and particularly so in developing countries – are increasingly concerned not only with extending and consolidating access, but also with improving the quality of their educational services. Quality has become an issue for several reasons. Most importantly, the explosive growth in the education systems of many countries during the 1970s and 1980s, often in a context of increasing social demand but decreasing budgets, led to situations where less qualified teachers had to deal with larger classes, frequently in poor facilities, without textbooks or any source of instructional assistance (Hallak, 1990). Quality declined to such an extent that the social and economic benefits that parents and governments expected from their investment in education failed to materialize.

The shift in emphasis from quantity to quality in education can be seen in the stress that is increasingly being placed on learning outcomes. In other words, systems are paying much more attention to *indicators of successful schooling* – including increasing completion levels, declining gender and geographic gaps, and rising learning achievement – than to a spurious satisfaction with the fact that education services are being offered, without any serious attention to how successfully educational objectives are being reached. This shift is related to

notions of educational entitlement, as well as to notions of accountability – both towards core ministries and to external donors who are keen to have proof of the cost-effectiveness of their investment in education.

Quality of education and information systems

This shift towards results-based management of education systems has major implications, for the attainment of that goal depends on the availability of reliable data that are immediately retrieval and usable, and that are comprehensive and relevant. In other words, the close monitoring of educational quality requires an information management system, with a set of structures and procedures governing the collection, processing, analysis, presentation and use of information within the organization (Windham, 1994; Billeh, 2001).

FIGURE 1: The Functions of an Education System Database

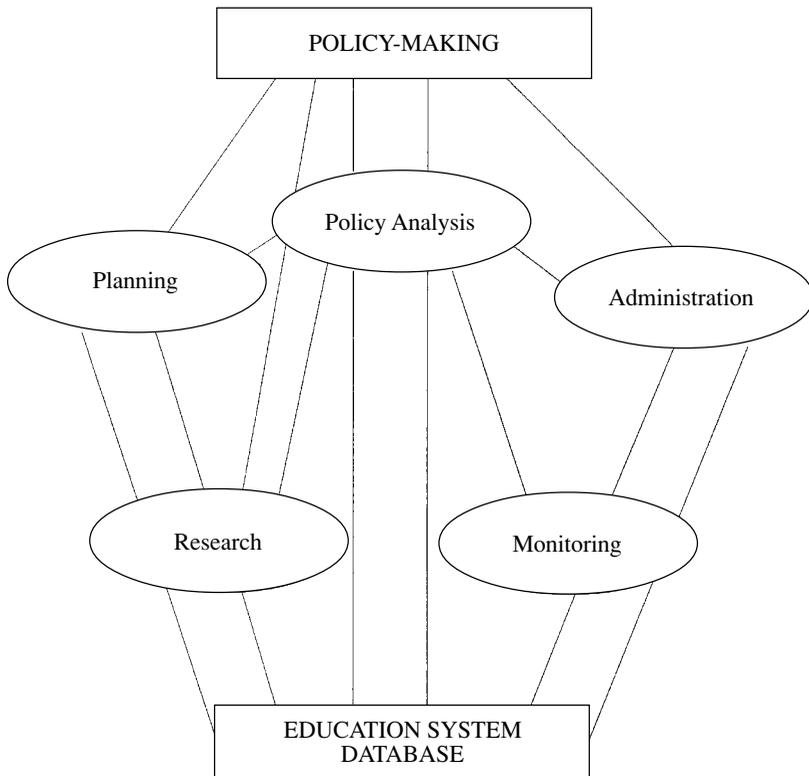
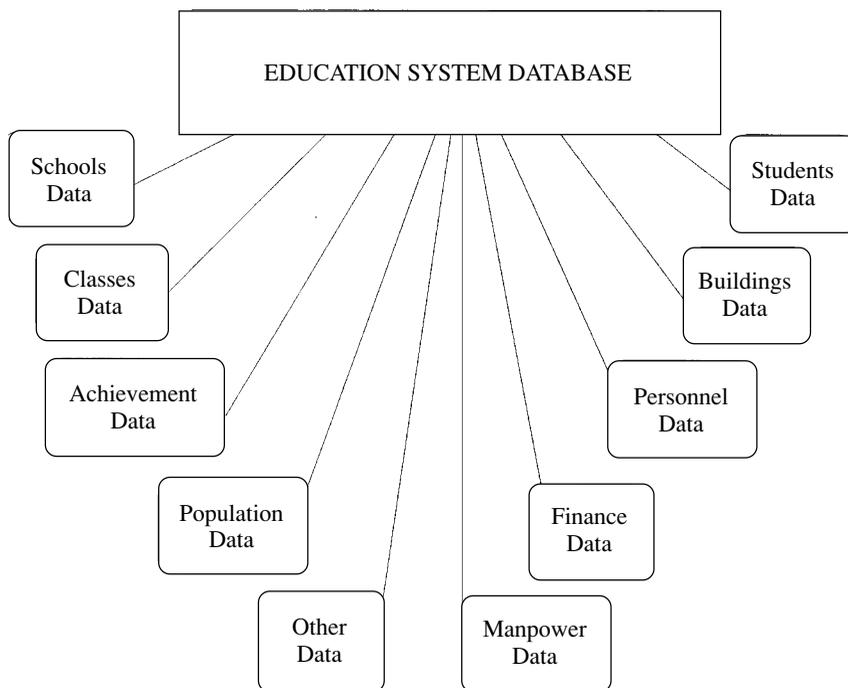


FIGURE 2: Kinds of data in an EMIS



The development of an information system requires a significant financial and human resource investment, an investment which, in contexts of deprivation, can only be justified if the benefits gained clearly outweigh the costs. In other words, one has to ask whether the improved collection and analysis of data leads to insights about the quality of the learning process and to its improvement. It is equally important to consider the extent to which information systems help avoid the expansion of irrelevance with the education system and the consequent waste of resources and human potential (Welsh 1993: 95). The literature on education information systems suggests that education planners and managers can benefit from comprehensive data because priority areas of concern can be more easily identified, education sector performance more readily monitored, and the impact of specific interventions more effectively assessed (Chapman, 1990; Chapman & Mählick, 1993; Billeh, 2001). Four inter-related elements of the education process are critical here, namely *curriculum*, *teacher training*, *instruction*, and *assessment*. Integrated data on these four different aspects can be used in strategic

planning of different policy scenarios, so that possible options are judged against such criteria as feasibility, affordability, relevance, sustainability, and effectiveness (Billeh, 1994).

Education management information systems in the MENA region

Such comprehensive and integrated data systems are not readily found in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Indeed, several analysts of educational development have noted that educational statistics in MENA countries are often either unavailable or unreliable – even with respect to basic information about enrolment and progression, let alone concerning expenditures, learning, or labour market outcomes (Heyneman, 1997). Typically, the weaknesses of information systems in the MENA region include one or more of the following (Billeh, 1994, 2001; Heyneman, 1997; Sultana, 1997; Human Development Network, 1998):

- Data forms are not comprehensive in the information they collect and which is needed for policy planning and management;
- Data collected are not integrated;
- Different Ministries – and occasionally even Directorates within the same Ministries – develop their own forms, and end up collecting data which overlap each other's domain, and which are not necessarily utilized in a way that contributes to a cumulative understanding of the educational issues at stake. Data elements, definitions, and methods end up varying between the different directorates and ministries;
- There is a lack of attention to the collection of data on a gender disaggregated basis, leading to difficulties in monitoring progress in the achievement of gender equality;
- More energy is spent in collecting than in utilizing the data, so that despite the availability of statistics, their impact on management, planning and policy analysis is minimal. In many cases, no education indicators are developed from the data;¹
- It is rare to find a situation where qualitative and quantitative data complement each other, in such a way that information about processes complements that about the dimension and nature of the issue/s under consideration.

Such weaknesses are compounded by the fact that, generally speaking, there is not only a dearth of material resources, but of trained human resources as well, so that there are major challenges to overcome both in terms of designing and

running the information gathering system, and in interpreting the statistics. Related to this is another problem, namely the lack of a culture of planning on the basis of information rather than political and partisan whims. This leads to instability in policy frameworks, when the achievement of mid- to long-term educational goals requires that the educational system is insulated against major policy shifts caused by relatively minor changes in government (Human Development Network 1998: 25).

Developments in the MENA region

The factors that provide a context for the development of information systems and referred to earlier – namely rapid expansion in the reach of education services, increased complexity in educational activities, heightened pressure for more efficient use of resources, greater accountability requirements, and the improved availability of relatively low-cost technologies for handling large data-sets (Chapman, 1990) – have also started to have an impact on the MENA region. Jordan has led the way, and its national EMIS framework has served as a starting point and model for others in the region (Ahlawat & Billeh, 1997). Egypt has not only established an EMIS, but has also overcome an initial focus on hardware, in order to incorporate the different elements in an overall framework where the use to which hardware is put has become the main concern (Human Development Group 1998: 26). The United Arab Emirates has also shown a keenness to make progress in the development of its own management information system (Francis, 2001; Sultana, 2001).

In the context of this article, our main focus is on the way EMIS has been used to further the search for the qualitative development of the educational system in another territory in the region, namely the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS).

An EMIS for the West Bank and Gaza Strip

It is impossible to provide an account of the contribution of EMIS is making and can make to the development of the education system in Palestine, unless a background about the state of education there is also presented. In the next section, therefore, some of the most pertinent features of the Palestinian education sector are briefly described, in order to better appreciate the challenges that the Ministry of Education (MOE)² has had to face since August 28th 1994, when Israel's civil administration transferred responsibility over education in the WBGS³ to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The present article does not take into

consideration the devastation caused to Palestine generally, and to the education system in particular, both in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, since the outbreak of the second *Intifada* – also known as the *Al-Aqsa Intifada* – in September 2000.⁴ The account presents developments in the EMIS up to July 2000. The most recent information – obtained in January 2003 – was that, despite the damage sustained in the interim period, the database at the Ministry had been more or less salvaged intact due to the backing of files, and the EMIS was up and running again.

*Education in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*⁵

When the MOE was set up, it found that it had to face a situation which was critical in more ways than one. During the 27 years of occupation of the WBGs, the Israeli Civil Administration only provided the minimum funding required to run the existing educational institutions, with the construction of school premises and additional classrooms being left to the municipal councils, village councils or local and international NGOs. As a result, not only did the existing educational institutions deteriorate, but they also became insufficient to cater for the increasing number of students and developing needs of the Palestinians. The PNA therefore inherited a deteriorated educational infrastructure with a serious lack of schools and classrooms, run-down buildings, and inadequate equipment and furniture. The following excerpt from a UNESCO (1999) brochure describing a project for the rehabilitation of 17 schools in the WBGs provides a striking picture of the prevailing situation:

‘Ramshackle buildings, leaking roofs, outdated wiring, broken furniture and inadequate equipment... the general condition of the existing schools had deteriorated from lack of maintenance for years. Many worked in double and in some cases in triple shifts, especially in the Gaza Strip. Classrooms were heavily overcrowded, lacked proper electrical installations and had poor natural lighting. Teaching materials were lacking, as were specialized rooms and proper sanitary facilities, storage space and outdoor playing areas. In many cases these conditions created safety problems and were detrimental to learning.’

While in 1995, not all 137 government and 159 UNRWA schools in the GS and the 884 government and 103 UNRWA schools in the WB were dilapidated to the same extent, most were old structures providing unattractive, unstimulating, even unsafe learning environments. Many schools were rented, and not purpose-built. The situation in the 105 private schools was generally better, while UNRWA

schools, unlike public ones, followed set standards for construction. The majority of buildings, however, generally fell far below the requirements that educators recognize as hallmarks of child-friendly environments.

In addition to that, curriculum, textbooks, assessment strategies, credentialling systems and so on differed between the WB and the GS, since these two territories had followed – ever since the Arab-Israeli hostilities of 1948 – the educational system of Jordan and that of Egypt respectively. While this had enabled Palestinian students in the WBGS to continue their education at higher levels in state institutions of Jordan in the first case, and Egypt in the second, it also meant that in 1994, the new PNA's Ministry of Education had virtually two education systems on its hands.⁶ Needless to say, one of the first challenges for the Palestinian Authority was to develop a unified curriculum as an important step towards improving and normalizing educational standards, not to mention towards creating a sense of national identity.

This is not to say that the educational background of Palestinians is necessarily poor. Indeed, various reports attest to the fact that the population and labour force of the WBGS is highly educated by regional standards, with good literacy rates (84% for WBGS) relative to the MENA region as a whole (57%) for those 15 years and over (Diwan & Shaban, 1998), and with one of the best enrolment rates in higher education in the Arab world (Unesco 1995: 7). Palestinians are known to value the pursuit of education, with several associations, societies, foundations and religious bodies playing a vital role in the provision of educational opportunities. Nevertheless, and despite the dearth of comprehensive and reliable data, a tentative base-line survey of the Palestinian situation in 1995, together with other documents⁷ revealed that:

- Due to the first Intifada, around 50,000 individuals dropped out of education, and many have still not been re-integrated into the system. Between 30-40% of school time was lost for many institutions between 1988 and 1991, and 15-30% during 1991 to 1994, with many school closures leading to deterioration in student achievement. As many as 7% of the population may never have attended school.
- Teachers had not received any significant in-service training during the 27 years of occupation. Of the 11,066 teachers, 67% had no more than a two-year post-secondary diploma. Weaknesses were not only in teaching methods, but also in knowledge of the subject matter taught.
- Tests using national and international assessment instruments showed up considerable weakness in writing, estimation skills and problem-solving, with very low achievement in IIEA math and science tests when compared to other countries. One study found that Palestinian students performed consistently

and significantly lower than their Jordanian counterparts, regardless of subject, school authority, gender or location.

- While data regarding the percentage of enrollment of school-age children were unreliable, it was estimated that in 1994, 15-30% of children aged 6-11 years, 35-55% of children aged 12-14, and 65-75% of children aged 15-17 were not enrolled in school.
- There were significant drop-out rates across all sectors of the education system, with clear indications of a low internal efficiency.
- With school enrolment for WBSGS growing at the rate of 2% annually, the problem of classroom overcrowding was attaining grave proportions, with as many as 60 children per class in an area not larger than 20m². Three-quarters of schools in GS were operating on double or triple shifts, and average class size exceeded 45.
- Curricula not only differed between the WB and GS, but were limited in their relevance to the social, cultural and economic needs of the Palestinian people.
- Schools had a very meagre – and often rudimentary – supply of educational resources and equipment, including up-to-date textbooks.
- Differences between the three systems of administration (public, private and UNRWA) represented a major obstacle in the development of a unified national education system.
- There was an uneven and under-developed system for developing high quality vocational and technical skills.

The MOE, therefore, had a very serious situation to deal with, and it had to do it under rather grim adversarial conditions. Not only had the MOE to take over the responsibility for the educational system in a very short period of time, but it had to do so in very tight financial circumstances where most initiatives required donor support, with an understaffed complement of personnel, many of whom were untrained and inexperienced in management. As if that were not enough, the MOE had – and indeed still has to face – a steep incline in student numbers.⁸

As we will note in greater detail in a section below, quick policy decisions have had to be made in crisis situations without having any reliable knowledge of the situation in schools. However, egged on no doubt by the sheer reality of the lack of natural resources in the Palestinian territories, education and training have had to be clearly identified as the foundation stone upon which a development strategy can be built. In all this there has also been a sense of an opportunity that must be seized: the years of neglect and deprivation, while extremely damaging, have led to a situation where one feels one can ‘develop a radically new educational scenario’, where ‘systematic initiatives in

management and organization [could] ensure the development of an integrated and progressive education system to serve the Palestinians now and in the years to come.’⁹

Achievements

In less than a decade since being established, the MOE has achieved a great deal. I will here detail some of the more relevant achievements briefly, in order to both bring the background account of the educational sector in Palestine up-to-date, and also to be in a better position to highlight the role that EMIS played in the whole process.

- The harmonization, to the extent that is possible, of the double education system in the GS on the one hand, and the WB on the other, together with the planning of a new curriculum, scheduled to be introduced over a period of five years, starting with Grades 1 and 6 in the 2000/2001 school year. Syllabi for Grades 1 and 12 have been completed, and the preparation of textbooks and teacher guides is under way.
- The articulation of a five-year education development plan for 2000/2001 to 2004/2005, around which the MOE has managed to mobilize consensus and international support.
- For the 1998/99 school year, the number of students enrolled in Government schools totalled 549,404, of whom 49.57% were girls. 88.71% of the total were in basic education, and 11.29% in secondary education. The number of students enrolled in 1998/1999 represents a 40% increase, at the rate of 7.1% per year, over the number enrolled at the time the MOE took over the school system in 1994. Enrolment rates are 91.8% (92.6% for girls and 91.1% for boys) at the basic level, and 57.0% (56.9% for girls and 57.1% for boys) at the secondary level.
- The number of Government school buildings increased by 10.4% (reaching a total of 1,096), but despite of this, double shift schools had to be increased by 85% in the WB (from 33 to 61) and by 53% in the GS (from 45 to 69). By 1999, 73% of all schools were governmental (catering for 67.6% of all students), 16% were run by UNRWA (catering for 25.9% of students), and 11% private (catering for 6.5% of students).
- Drop-out rates for the whole education sector and for both genders were brought down from 2.9% to 2.1%. For the basic education sector alone, the rate dropped from 2.5% to 1.7%.
- The activation of an extensive teacher-training program involving 28,300 teachers and administrators in 1,241 workshops and courses, and the

establishment of minimum requirements for the recruitment of new teachers, who now have to be in possession of at least a first degree. Between 1995 and 1998, the number of teaching staff increased by 42.3%.

- The construction of 125 new schools, the adding of 1842 classrooms and 152 sanitary facilities to existing schools, and the rehabilitation and maintenance of 412 classrooms – to the tune of \$US129.4 million, not including the contributions of local communities through the donation of land, building materials, labour and cash.
- A number of schools have been provided with modern equipment and materials, though 65% of schools are still without library rooms, 60% are without, 60% without laboratories, 86% without audiovisual equipment, and 82% without computer labs.
- Extra-curricular student activities have been introduced as an integral part of the educational process.

Over and above these considerable achievements, and indeed often contributing to the identification of goals as well as of strategies to achieve those goals, is the MOE's introduction of a computer-based EMIS. In what follows I will first provide an account of how the MOE developed its EMIS, and then focus on the way this system contributed to the process of qualitative educational development in Palestine.

The information gathering exercise concerning EMIS revolved around three strategies:

- (a) gathering *documentary evidence* about it – in terms of descriptions, reports, correspondence, questionnaire forms used to generate data, etc.
- (b) *interviewing key people* from the MOE, both at the central level and the district level, as well as from UNICEF.
- (c) *observing the manipulation of EMIS data*, both at the MOE in Ramallah, and at the district level in Nablus.

Establishing an EMIS in the WBGs

Given the scale of the task of building a national education system from the ground up, the MOE immediately felt the need for a standardized and comprehensive educational database which would enable it to assess the situation with a view to responding to needs and to planning both in the short and the long-term. The MOE found little to build on. Between 1967 and 1994, only the Israeli authorities could collect educational data, largely through circulating questionnaires to schools. These surveys mainly focused on such

quantitative aspects of education as the numbers of student, classes and classrooms, and generally neglected qualitative aspects such as dropout rates, the quality of teaching and teachers' qualification. Whole education sectors were ignored – including vocational education, literacy and adult education, and the education of children with special needs – while data concerning expenditure levels, as well as data pertaining to East Jerusalem were missing. In addition, only a small fraction of the data collected were published by the Israeli authorities, and what was published did not generally dovetail with or correspond to the statistics put out by other organizations such as UNRWA, the Arab Thought Forum, the Birzeit University Literacy and Adult Education Office, and so on (Ministry of Education, 1996). In short, there was not much in terms of information available, and the little that there was, was generally unreliable.

On the one hand, the lack of a statistical information system meant that the MOE could start out afresh, without being burdened by an already existing model, and having the opportunity to design a framework from the ground up, in response to the demands and needs of the situation. In a sense, WBS found itself in a unique situation where a strategy could be developed in order to collect, verify, computerize, classify and categorize data in a scientifically consistent manner – practically at the same time as the very education system itself was being established. On the other hand, the challenge to do so is terribly daunting when one considers the odds that were against its success, given the sheer lack of material and human resources.

Indeed, early attempts at setting up an education information system of sorts reflected most of the weaknesses that were noted for the MENA countries. A report dated November 1994 noted, for instance, that (Billeh 1994: 2-4):

- Different directorates were designing their own forms without consultation with each other, and without using a unified coding system and manual in order to avoid collecting the same piece of information by more than one Directorate;
- No coding scheme was envisaged or developed before designing the forms;
- No data were collected on ages of students, an essential requirement if one is to calculate enrolment ratios;
- The forms also did not cater for the regular collection of information regarding school facilities and their maintenance and rehabilitation needs;
- Information on teachers and other employees were collected on a separate form that was not linked to the school data form;
- The overall use of data to feed into the construction of the education system was minimal.

That the situation was this critical was partly due to the fact that there were no personnel with a background in planning at the MOE, except one or two who had an academic interest without, however, having the benefit of practice and experience in the field.

The need for the design and implementation of an EMIS was deeply felt, with donor agencies such as UNICEF arguing that it was essential for WBSG to strengthen its national capacities for collecting, storing and retrieving educational data in a systematic manner, so that once the data collection tools were in place, the inclusion of a sample frame for measuring achievement at each school level could follow (UNICEF 1997: 17). With the support of UNICEF and other agencies, and with the training offered by IIEP,¹⁰ the project of establishing an EMIS took off in earnest in 1995.

Beginnings

The setting up of an EMIS in WBSG received support from a number of donors, including the Swedish International Development Aid (SIDA) besides UNICEF, and also fell within the overall scope of the 1991 Madrid conference where different countries entered into a multilateral agreement to offer help to Palestine. As we will have occasion to note, one of the key ingredients of success in the introduction of the EMIS in WBSG – one attested to by many of the interviewees – was the excellent relationship between UNICEF as ‘godfather’ to the project, and the MOE. That relationship was often described in terms of a ‘partnership’, with material being drafted together, with workshops run collaboratively in a way that facilitated the sharing of learning experiences, and with several key encounters around such central tasks as the articulation of the first 5-Year Education Plan. As one interviewee noted, ‘... It started a great partnership between the MOE and UNICEF – a small project with big visibility: it made the MOE staff feel proud of what they were doing, in an impossible situation.’

Technical advice and support came in from various quarters, including a UNICEF-sponsored consultant from Jordan in 1994 who had IIEP training and experience in setting up an EMIS for his own country. Victor Billeh proposed a two-stage strategy for the establishment of EMIS and the development of planning capacity in the MOE, one addressing immediate and short-term needs which enabled the Ministry to develop the basic infrastructure for collecting school census data, the other targeting training at both central and district levels. The first stage would in effect provide the opportunities for training and experience in data collection, entry, cleaning, manipulation and analysis. A relational database (R: Base) was adopted on the basis of its successful use in

Jordan, together with other off-the-shelf software packages in terms of EMIS tasks related to spreadsheets, statistical analysis, word processing, and maintenance of computer system resources. Training was planned in such areas as the restructuring of data files, the creation of 'policy' files, the transportation of data to host programs, the preparation of statistical reports, the computation and derivation of educational indicators from a combination of proxy variables, EMIS analysis and applications, and the production of sophisticated reports and graphic presentations of data.

Between 1995 and 1997, the MOE benefited from a second UNICEF-sponsored consultant, an Australian Palestinian whose travel was funded through the project TOKTEN (Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals) of UNDP Jerusalem. Ibatisam Abu-Duhou practically adopted the role of director of planning, and oversaw the establishment of the EMIS, including final decisions about computer specifications and software, as well as identifying training needs.

The EMIS project had to face a number of difficulties. One of the main challenges was the problem already alluded to in a previous section, namely the fact that the MOE practically had two different education systems on its hands in two distinct geographical areas. Depending on the fluctuations of the political situation, freedom of movement between WB and GS was more or less limited and restricted, with at times being prohibited altogether. This created enormous problems in the process of setting up an EMIS, and necessitated a lot of duplication of work, structures and training. One major advantage of having a consultant with an Australian passport was that she was allowed to travel between WB and GS, but this did not minimize the challenge of transferring knowledge – and creating a national system from a context of fragmentation.

This fragmentation could have easily deteriorated to the extent of having two 'ministries' of education in the different territories. In order to avoid such a situation, a strategic decision was made so that, irrespective of the educational background and experience of applicants to a particular vacancy at the MOE,¹¹ there would be a representation of both the WB and GS in key posts. Thus, if a General Director in any area of the MOE was from the WB, the Deputy would be from the GS; and vice-versa. It was also decided that no formal meetings of key Education Committees would be held if members from the GS could not attend because of restrictions on mobility imposed by the Israelis. Such decisions have ensured that the MOE function as one body, and in the case of EMIS, that this be adopted and 'owned' in both territories. Generally speaking, Gaza Strip personnel have the same capacity as West Bank ones, and have been offered the same opportunities for training, even though they have not always taken up those opportunities to the same extent as their West Bank counterparts.¹²

Progress and procedure

With the goal of establishing a comprehensive educational database for all educational levels, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the MOE and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). Several interviewees from both the Ministry and from the Regional Offices noted that this collaboration was critical to the success of the establishment of the EMIS, and while the relationship was sometimes marked by competition, collaboration was generally the norm. This ensured efficiency in the collection and processing of data, including the annual publication of the *Education Statistical Yearbook*. Indeed, work teams were delegated by both the MOE and the PCBS to manage the database project, which aimed at:

- Standardizing the Palestinian educational statistics by applying standard data collection, verification, computerization, classification and categorization on a scientifically consistent basis;
- Facilitating data circulation and accessibility by educational decision-makers as well as educational specialists, researchers and other parties concerned with educational development and qualification;
- Translating the educational situation in different types of educational institutions into statistical figures and enabling educational planners and policy-makers to explore the future perspectives through comprehensive statistical indicators;
- Standardizing the data pertaining to different MOE directorates according to their respective needs and data computerization by special software for easy access as required;
- Retrieving numerical reports of qualitative indicators through cross-tabulation of several variables from the educational questionnaires and the publication of annual educational statistical reports (MOE 1996: 3).

The project management team designed five questionnaires to collect comprehensive survey data from the educational institutions, and addressed to schools and kindergartens, community colleges, universities, vocational institutions, and informal education/cultural centres. The questionnaires were designed in a way that met Palestinian needs and reflected the real situation, while at the same time conforming to international standards. They were field-tested, and personnel in charge of filling questionnaires were trained through workshops offered in the district Directorates of Education. A team was also trained in data verification prior to data entry. Questionnaires are computerized on the data entry program, and statistical reports can then be retrieved after the required statistical outputs are determined, and the primary tabulations of these outputs designed.

School databases cover such aspects as background information on the institution (name, year established, location and address, etc.); detailed information on students, and classes; information on classrooms and other rooms such as laboratories and workshops by size and property; information on school library, teaching aids, sports playgrounds, school services and facilities, and budget; and personnel statistics on school teachers, administrative staff, employees, technicians and janitors by personal data, qualifications, experience, number of lessons they teach, subjects and other relevant information.

The idea is to have both the individual districts – of which there are 16 – and eventually the school as the unit of analysis, with all the databases feeding in the information about that school. Presently, data bases include information on buildings, libraries, laboratories, inventories, training courses, archives, and so on. Other MOE departments use similar databases, and all databases are linked together through Access software.

At the stage of carrying out the present research, the questionnaires had been in use for six years. They had been modified a number of times, both to correct errors (e.g. duplication of information), and to address specific needs. Focusing on the questionnaires addressed to schools, it is important to point out that the forms are filled in by the Head. The entries are audited by the Head of the Education Division at the District level, leading to a high degree of reliability. Mistakes arise when certain terms are not understood in the way they are meant to be, and when the coding categories are not fully grasped (e.g. coding ‘secretary’ under the category ‘technician’). Generally the forms are filled in at the end of October or beginning of November, when schools have settled down, and there are few changes that can render the questionnaire invalid. Heads are made aware of the fact that the filling in of the form is an instrument for diagnosis, and not a ‘shopping list’, in order to make sure that they do not dissimulate the situation in their schools (in the hope of obtaining more resources, for instance). While Heads have got used to filling the form, the MOE is moving in the direction of having most of the answers already coded and entered, with the schools simply verifying.

The completed questionnaires are then handed to the district Directorate of Education offices, where trained personnel enter the data. Two problems that generally arise are that: (a) computers have to be borrowed from schools, and this means that the PCs are not available for teaching during this time; and (b) those who enter the data are generally teachers, who are therefore not available in their classrooms for that period. The role of the MOE is to consolidate the data which reach it on diskettes, and to clean them and validate them. After doing this, the data are returned to the District office.

Data are verified in a number of stages, including sample initial verification, office verification of questionnaires and computer verification by using special software. There is also comprehensive verification of the statistical tables.

Information is retrieved for different purposes, such as to the drawing up of the annual education statistics reports. However, other data can be easily accessed by linking multiple variables from the different questionnaires and databases, and in response to specific inquiries by policy-makers, planners, and educational researchers. Some idea of the use of the EMIS databases will be provided in the sections below. At this stage it is important to give a sense of both the positive and less positive aspects of the EMIS in place.

Positive outcomes

There is little doubt that the claim by several MOE staff that Palestine is – or used to be until the Israeli reprisals following the second *intifada* – a leader in the MENA region when it comes to the collection of educational statistics is justified, particularly when we consider the expertise and experience that has been garnered in using those statistics for simulation purposes in the exercise of planning. The databases have achieved both a high degree of reliability and validity, as well as stability, so that it is now possible to have a time-series database with all the variables about schools that one would usually need to plan. This is not an insignificant achievement for any country by any means, let alone when six years earlier – as we have taken pains to document – the territory in question could only count on emergency planning, and had little if any reliable basic knowledge concerning its educational structures. Certainly, with 110,000 new students a year – of whom 65,000 enrol in state schools – and therefore with 300 new classrooms needed every year, and with the highest fertility rate in the world (at 6.8), one could simply not do without some form of efficient planning based on rational information systems.

The EMIS that the WBGS has established generally overcomes several of the problems that are common to the MENA region, and which we have identified earlier. The following is a list of achievements – one that is not necessarily comprehensive.

- The information provided is *reliable* to the extent that statistics provided by the Planning department of MOE are used by other Ministries and departments, avoiding the costly and counter-productive trap of having different entities collecting overlapping data which are not even comparable due to the use of different criteria or coding systems. Reliability had been established to such a degree that several interviewees were wondering

whether it was still necessary to have educational statistics generated by EMIS published annually, since the difference between one year and the other was minimal.

- There is also a good relationship with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and hence a good connection with national statistics, facilitating the link between school data and national data.
- The information is quickly accessed, and can therefore be used to make projections fast. It can deal with changing scenarios, and facilitates the process of analysis, the answering of questions that arise and that require speedy answers.
- The EMIS takes into account the local context, including the challenge involved in planning in a context of deprivation. This comes through most of all in the flexibility offered by EMIS in allowing the possibility of playing around with different scenarios to see the effect specific choices had on costs (see Table 1). Tough questions such as: ‘Should we reduce double shifts or keep them at their present level?’ or ‘Do we oblige pupils to travel to area schools in order to make more efficient use of resources?’ are very difficult to answer when resources are minimal, and where choices between directing funding towards one service or another have to be made. EMIS has provided the opportunity to consider the implications of each choice in a three-dimensional and complex manner, so that decisions can be made in the most informed way possible. Such challenges had to be faced when considering the issues raised by the new curriculum, which has major implications for the kinds of resources that will have to be placed in schools.
- EMIS has encouraged rational educational planning and policy-making on the basis of information, rather than on the basis of political whims whose implications have not necessarily been thought through. As we will have occasion to note further on, this does not mean that decision-making is to be reduced to either a merely rational or a technocratic exercise. But, as one interviewee noted, EMIS data provide the fund-seeker with the ammunition to make a strong case in favour or against particular policies or projects, whether the fund-giver is nationally or internationally based. Policy-makers cannot get away with making claims in favour of specific projects when EMIS data can be used to immediately cost the initiative, and to spell out the implications – in terms of needs for classrooms, teachers, equipment, and so on – in detail. Donors are also more likely to support projects if the financial and resource implications are clearly identified in advance. The staff working on EMIS work out alternative scenarios, and if these are rejected, it is the onus of the policy-makers to come up with their own scenarios in terms of specific hypotheses or plans.

TABLE 1: Examples of simulation using EMIS

- Policy-maker wishes to remove all double shift schools, and remain within the parameters of a 200 million dollar budget. EMIS shows how, if other priority commitments are to be met, the number of double-shift schools has to increase, and not decrease.
- The idea of increasing vocational education from 3% to 15% had been broached by the policy-makers, This however meant that another \$100 million were needed to pay for that. EMIS data showed that if the increase of the VET sector was 7% rather than 15%, the overall cost of the exercise would be reduced 60%, and was therefore a more attractive policy option in the short- and medium-term.
- The impact on schools – and the implications for costs – when a new curricular area which required the use of computers is introduced, could be easily worked out because EMIS provides all the necessary data as to which school have a constant supply of electricity as well as computer labs, and which do not.

- Unlike some donor-promoted projects which recipients end up not identifying with, or which become unsustainable when external funding dries up, the MOE staff had made a clear commitment to EMIS. This commitment comes through in a number of ways. When UNICEF’s contract in relation to the EMIS project came to an end, Palestinian staff took the responsibility for developing the system further, be it in terms of modifying questionnaire forms, coming up with improved strategies in collecting and analyzing data, or in the use of software. When, after the initial two years, funding for data entry was no longer forthcoming from UNICEF, the exercise was transferred to the district level, leading to a distribution of tasks that made the whole exercise simpler, less costly, and within the Department’s capability. While UNICEF had supported the use of R: Base, the Department of Planning eventually opted to shift to Access, which gave them more flexibility in the use of data without losing the possibility of working with the statistics held in the R: Base. One UNICEF interviewee noted that Department staff were very proud of their achievements, and felt they were doing something useful and contributing to the educational development of their country. Being involved with the EMIS project provided them with opportunities to develop themselves, to travel and learn, to go on study visits, to be creative. ‘When I go to the MOE’, a UNICEF member of staff said, ‘they call me and want to show me what they have done... It’s like they’re talking about their family!... If things were not like

that,' she added, 'how could they tolerate the coldness of the numbers?!' One of the MOE staff noted that despite all the trials and tribulations he had to cope with – including a miserably low salary – he nevertheless had a major commitment to his work: 'I actually enjoy it... because I feel I can create something – I believe in the benefit of building the country, of doing something for my people.'

- EMIS data are used. Staff calculated that on average, 3 to 4 questions per week are asked with answers having to be drawn from EMIS data. Other users of data include educational researchers, who on average made one request per week.
- Despite the pride there was in the technical accomplishments of the EMIS, there was a good number of MOE staff who were not mesmerized by statistics to the extent of losing sight of their purpose. Several noted that educational planning required persons who understood education, who had a vision for it and who were not engulfed by a civil servant mentality. The management of an educational system required leadership and not just technical skills: it was only a visionary leader who could use the statistical information in order to tell others where the possibilities, pitfalls and problems lie.

Problems and challenges

A number of challenges and problems concerning EMIS were either observed or reported during the fieldwork. It is useful to preface that account with a valuable insight provided by one of the interviewees, who noted three major difficulties in the field of educational planning in the Palestinian context. Two of these – namely lack of political stability and lack of financial resources – have already been referred to in different sections of this article. A third one is worth highlight further: namely what the interviewee referred to as 'lack of vision'. This does not mean that the planning department of the Ministry does not have a vision of where it wants to go – indeed, the first 5-Year Educational Development Plan sets out to do precisely that. Rather, the interviewee was referring to the absence of an organized community in the context of a state, where people are fully empowered to decide their own destiny. He noted that 'as a planner, you sometimes really need the community to tell you where it wants to go – and at times there is a vacuum', referring to the establishment of a national curriculum as an example.

- Some of the problems and challenges concerning EMIS were outside of the control of the MOE staff, related as these were to the situation of instability, both political – and often as a consequence – administrative. District borders could shift, with one particular town being attached to District X, and then to District Y, thus affecting aspects of the programming of the database.

- Others challenges are similar to those found in other small ‘states’ or territories with vulnerable economies. Staff at the MOE complained that they had to wear several hats at the same time, and that as ‘multi-functional administrators’ (Farrugia & Attard, 1989) they not only had to fulfil their role as supervisors and trainers, but also actually do a great deal of the data manipulation and analysis themselves. As with administrators in other low-income countries, staff interviewed were underpaid to the extent that many had to hold down a second job, or were increasingly tempted by higher paid employment with the private sector. Some of the technical people also felt that their skills were being under-utilized at the Ministry, and that the Ministry was not investing enough in their own development. They were therefore obliged to pay for their training courses themselves. As a consequence of this, the MOE had lost some highly skilled people in the IT area.¹³
- A key problem identified was related to fast-changing technology. This presents challenges linked not only to finance, but also to compatibility between systems. A case in point is the project of connecting the MOE with districts, and hence the need to set up servers, intranet, and possibly internet and a Ministry domain. A key problem here was not just buying the equipment, software and services, but also the technical challenges of linking with districts which were working with different versions of database software.
- Several interviewees noted that while the reliable data are now there, the capacity to generate data is greater than the capacity for its use. This seems to be true in terms of its application both by the policy makers at the central level, as well as by those at the district level. At the central level, there is still a lack of culture among decision-makers to develop policy based on evidence rather than on hunches and their past experience. The required culture change will obviously take time to come about, but at this stage many simply do not know how to read the data that EMIS generates and are not as aware as they could be of its potential. One case in point was when policy-makers decided ‘behind closed doors’ (as one interviewee put it) to decrease the formal age of entrance to school by one month. Suddenly they found 10000 more children eligible to attend school, with the implications that has for teachers, classrooms, furniture, and so on. ‘We could have told them all that from our data base, had they asked us,’ noted the interviewee.

While EMIS tends to be most frequently used in relation to specific projects or questions, it is not being utilized in a systematic manner. One interviewee noted: ‘What we need is the constant review of our policies based on information systems. We need to conduct policy-oriented research dealing with specific issues such as the unit cost of education; decentralization and its

prerequisites; surveying our capacity for printing and publishing; printing of textbooks in Braille...’

Part of the way to change that culture among policy-makers involves a concerted effort to help politicians understand and deal with statistics. One interviewee noted how at first, some politicians had exclaimed ‘Take all these numbers away!’ Now MOE staff are more careful when they present statistics, taking care to not only make paper copies of the statistics, but to also present slides to simplify and explain, emphasizing visual formatting to facilitate reading. They summarize information about each particular area, drawing connections between that and the main domains of the overall education strategy and plan. They present the statistics in the context of real problems and possible solutions. One example was the issue of access, and the pressure on space that could result from such factors as the doing away with double shifts, natural increase, or reducing the number of students in crowded classrooms. That issue could be looked at in terms of different angles. One could involve a focus on buildings, whereby calculations could be easily carried out through the use of EMIS data in order to calculate how many new classes were needed, the costs involved, and whether one builds more classrooms in existing schools or builds new schools.

It was through concrete examples such as these that many of the staff involved with EMIS communicated their intense desire to be of more use to their Ministry. They wanted to see all the MOE departments use the data effectively in planning, with their own staff carrying out policy research and analyzing data in a way that impacts on policy. They also hoped that other departments would use their services to help answer questions: ‘The problem’, noted one interviewee, ‘is that everybody thinks he knows everything... that he does not need a research department... thinks he can do it himself’, referring to a particular study of drop-outs which, in his opinion, was not carried out as efficiently or effectively as they could have done with EMIS data.

The same problem was being encountered at the district and school level as well. Generally, even though the head of statistics at the district level has been very well trained, there is little use made of the data generated – and the expertise of the statistician is not made use of. There seems to be little realization of the importance of the data, of how to exploit it, to the extent that when staff were asked to propose ideas as to what data they needed, in order to include this in the questionnaire, few if any answered.

- A further challenge concerns the potentially misleading nature of statistics which are not sufficiently disaggregated. One example of this concerned the

apparently high enrolment figures for the WB, when the average was actually hiding the fact that real enrolment in camps and villages could be very low. Similarly, unless one had enrolment rates for every grade, an overall fall in the drop-out rate could mask other problems, including, for instance, the fact that boys at the Grade 6 level were more prone to dropping out, or that Grade 9 was a critical year for girls who dropped out in large numbers at that level. The point was made that advocacy requires strong, disaggregated data, showing the difference between camp, village, city levels, or where the community is small. However, even when data were disaggregated according to certain criteria – such as on the basis of gender – it was clear that that was not enough. While data collected by EMIS are fully gender-disaggregated in accordance with international education data norms, gender considerations are not systematically integrated into the design and implementation stages of the project. Nor were the data systematically analyzed from a gender perspective – or socio-economic background one, for that matter. This is a key step to identifying means of improving the access to education and training opportunities of at-risk groups.¹⁴ There was general agreement that these kinds of concerns had to be addressed more directly in the way the data were collected, with one interviewee noted that while they were not using EMIS ‘to a satisfactory level for dealing with equity issues, the fact that they are there as categories suggests that training has to be offered to help people make more sense of them.’

Aspirations

Dynamic leaders of equally dynamic projects consider problems as challenges to be overcome, and lead to aspirations that improve the situation. Several of the persons interviewed throughout the fieldwork articulated aspirations for EMIS, and these are outlined systematically below.

- One of the key aspirations is *decentralization*. As the central functions of the MOE are strengthened and consolidated, there increasingly is an organized centre to decentralize from, as it were. As one of the General Directors noted, once the functions of the different units at the centre became more clear, one could more readily decide which of these functions could be ‘exported’ towards the local level. Decentralization encourages a sense of ownership, the identification of goals at the district level within the umbrella of a national policy, and in response to the needs of the community that the district serves. In addition, it is the proximity to the community that ensures that that community becomes involved. This is of critical importance in Palestine,

given that the biggest donor to education is the community itself (through donation of land, labour, money). UNICEF in particular is supporting this process of decentralization, considering it as a valid strategy to monitor the attainment of the 'Education for All' targets, as well as to ensure improved learning achievement across the board and access to education for underprivileged groups.

- Presently there are 16 regional offices in the WBGS. All regional offices have access to computers, and networks are being set up to facilitate transfer of data. Staff have been trained, and are increasingly ready to take on additional responsibilities. UNICEF has supported training, sponsored study visits, and provided some of the equipment needed, including computers and servers. 1999 had seen the first attempt at district-level collection and analysis of data. District officers appear to have been hesitant at first because decentralization implies a larger work load for them. However, they had ultimately been very satisfied since it gave them authority to manage their system. The district could, for instance, generate its own annual plan on the basis of the data collected.
- Decentralization had another aspect to it, namely the move from the district level to the school level. The aspiration is for schools to start entering and even manipulating the data themselves. This could not happen yet because many schools are still without computers and without trained staff. The idea of having schools linked to districts, and both linked to the MOE, also has technological implications. Between 1996 and 1999, the Ministry had built internal networks utilizing a main server and four other servers. That was the first level of networking. The second level of networking went beyond the Ministry to include the district level, where dial-up modems connect to the main server. In 1997/98, network cabling was set up so that in the future, instead of one computer only at a time, you could now have LAN to LAN, through the use of a lease line - different districts could connect to the main server at the same time. The aspiration now is to reach a third level of networking, where the idea is to connect schools, and to do so through the use of an Integrated Service Digital Network, which is better than a modem since the latter has to use a telephone line. Such aspirations cannot be attained in the immediate future given that some villages do not even have electricity yet, with 10% of schools not being in a position to have guaranteed electricity supply throughout the day. The 5-year plan does specify, however, that every school is required to have a computer so that each school can connect with the district office. This connection between schools, districts and MOE is very important given that at any moment Israelis can decide to stop people from travelling out of the Gaza Strip, or soldiers can be ordered to close a city or a

town, with staff ending up unable to travel to the MOE for several weeks if not months.

- Another key aspiration of MOE personnel involved in the EMIS is the development of even more comprehensive and integrated databases, through two strategies: (a) first, MOE staff hope to develop base-line indicator systems, and the introduction of the latter at district level. This facilitates opportunities to compare the national level with district levels, in order to identify priorities for action (in terms of national targets), and to provide guidelines for further development at the school and district level. The idea is also to integrate different data bases into one, including the general one on schools, the specialized ones (referring to information about buildings, for instance, or furniture, libraries, labs, educational technology, and so on), the qualitative databases (providing details on health, lavatories, state of drinking water, environment of school, and so on), and the information that had been collected on learning achievement, as well as on the in-service teacher training that had been offered. All this data need to be integrated within a unified system, with 120 indicators that are more focused on specific performance and real outcomes. (b) Secondly, MOE staff are aware that they need to have more information on the quality of educational services, rather than just quantity. Several interviewees noted that the challenge was to develop insights into the process of schooling, and to be able to understand better the extent to which, for instance, the level of teacher training, the educational background of parents, the presence of laboratories and libraries in schools, the following of private tuition classes, to mention just a few examples, had an effect on achievement levels of pupils. EMIS would thus be used to help identify zones for action, focusing more directly on specific targets linked to the 5 year plan. It would also harness information related to the 80 indicators established in the Education for All declaration.
- Another EMIS-related aspiration that MOE staff are presently turning into a reality is *School Mapping*, which is 'a set of techniques and procedures used to identify future education needs at the local level and to plan for measures to be taken to meet them.'¹⁵ In the Palestinian context, the objectives for a school mapping database are closely linked to the process of decentralization, and are expected to allow districts and the MOE to develop multi-year plans for new school construction and to determine the site of these new schools. The database will also facilitate the use of the information to create a maintenance schedule for use at the MOE and district levels. School mapping therefore facilitates the identification of educational needs at the local level in order to plan for meeting them, thus creating a bridge between the planning of education and its administration on an annual basis. The exercise has three

elements: diagnosis, projection, and the preparation of proposals. The process takes place at the district level, with the proposal being the core of the school mapping exercise. One example of this would be the case where an increase of students is anticipated. School mapping helps identify the implications that that has for everything else at school (including budget, building, shifts). Given that with school mapping the locality is the unit of planning, one could more easily take into account important factors such as whether the sector was a high-population, average or small and remote one. On the basis of this kind of information, one could plan for the most efficient way of using scarce resources – such as whether it would be more feasible to bus students to another school in a locality close-by, rather than provide the same service in two different schools.

- Linked to school mapping is the Geographic Information System (GIS) which provides opportunities to make links with any type of database. In Palestine, GIS is being used to link EMIS with geographic data. Information is represented visually on maps, so that details related to services or resources within schools in a particular district or community can be immediately grasped. Planners can thus see at a glance which schools in a particular locality, for instance, do not have access to electrical power, or the distance that there is between schools in an area (represented as concentric circles representing 1, 2, or 3 kilometres, for instance) from a particular service (e.g. a laboratory). Maps can clearly show catchment areas, so that one could rationalize costs, and achieve equality of access to resources. In conjunction with EMIS, therefore, GIS provides the planner with a powerful tool to identify the needs of specific schools given curricular demands, and to develop a well-informed, flexible strategic plan for the future distribution of educational resources in the district. As with EMIS, such strategic planning allows for the manipulation of data to take into account multiple scenarios, so that an informed decision can be made with educational and financial consequences in mind.

Success stories

It is useful to describe some of the successes that Palestine has experienced in the use of EMIS, in order to give a better sense of its usefulness in educational planning.

- At the most basic level, EMIS has been successful in providing a computerized system where questions linked to several aspects of the education system can be answered with alacrity and precision. MOE staff are understandably proud of this achievement, with one noting that when a French consultant visited the

Ministry, and asked questions related to the teaching of French in Palestine, 'We gave him the answer in 5 minutes flat! He was so surprised, saying that even in France he would have needed at least an hour to get an answer... It's a good system of information – it helps us to continue our process. It is the foundation of the education system.' The speed and flexibility with which data can be retrieved served its purpose when, for instance, Palestine had to produce the Education for All report in a very short period of time, something which they were able to do most efficiently. In relation to that, a 'Learning Achievement Test' analysis could also be carried out thanks to EMIS, facilitating an understanding of the quality of education in Palestine in comparison to 21 other countries.

- More importantly, obviously, is the fact that EMIS provides information at different levels – it was generally acknowledged that without information on completion rates; without disaggregated statistics on the basis of age, gender; without knowledge of which services are being offered at the district level – and so on and so forth, one could not develop insights as to which areas of the education system needed urgent attention. As such, therefore, EMIS facilitates the demands of policy research. Interviewees referred to a number of examples in this regard, such as the study focusing on teachers' qualifications, which revealed the high number of unqualified teachers in the kindergarten sector. Another study carried concerned the relation of the teacher's specialization and qualification to the subjects s/he taught, as well as the distribution of teachers and subjects to the school levels, both primary and secondary (MOE 1997: 7-11). The study raised the dilemma of teachers who teach subjects which they are not specialized in, and the equally important dilemma of the nature and true extent of surplus and deficit specialization fields in schools. Another example of a good use of the EMIS data refers to the comparison that was carried out between those schools where learning achievement is high, and those where it is low, in order to identify elements in the environment which could explain the difference. In this case, it was observed that the variable did not seem to be either resources available or teacher qualifications, and that therefore one had to look at other possible contributing elements, such as, for instance, parental background of students.
- EMIS also provided the data to help carry out a gender audit, another UNICEF initiative. The fact that the data are disaggregated on the basis of gender – even if, as has been noted earlier, the framework underpinning EMIS has not been greatly influenced by an awareness of gender issues – has helped Palestine understand the fortunes and misfortunes of girls in the education system.
- It was also instructive to see how EMIS worked at one of the districts. It was very clear that EMIS data were not only being used, but were proving to be

vital in planning at that level, with school buildings and of using catchment areas in order to make the most efficient use of scarce resources – to mention only two of the issues addressed – surfacing immediately as areas of concern which EMIS had helped deal with. In the district visited, EMIS was being used in conjunction with GIS. On the basis of EMIS data, the person in charge of the system was in a position to project how many classrooms will be needed, the posts (for secretaries, teachers, deputy principals, principals) that will need to be filled on the basis of policies set by the Ministry. A profile of each school is built into EMIS, enabling future planning and simulation. In this particular case, the district officer had projected the number of teachers required in each area of specialization and the number of posts which were required for each subject – all on the basis of a set formula that took into account the number of periods in a subject per week, and the number of lessons a teacher has to teach. This enabled them to claim, with the utmost credibility and on a scientific basis, that these were their needs. Given that they had integrated school mapping into the exercise, they were also in a position to identify furniture and other resource needs in each school.

- It is probably correct to claim that EMIS proved to be most useful in the preparation of the first 5-Year Education Development Plan. Several interviewees who had been involved in the drawing up of the Plan stated that it would have been impossible to carry out the simulation exercises that the project entailed had it not been both for the data and the flexibility offered by the EMIS. The database was used as a tool to develop a simulation model to be able to calculate, and on the basis of which projections are made for the future at all the levels referred to (students, teachers, textbooks, etc.). Data were used for two purposes: (a) to see what the achievements were from 1994 to 1999, and (b) to project for the next 5 years. Different scenarios could be quickly inputted into the database, with a very quick response in terms of the implications of that scenario for costs, recruitment, resources, and so on. This had been essential, given the very high aspirations of the MOE and the community more generally, but the low budgets available.

Concluding comments

It seems clear that EMIS has helped the MOE make a solid contribution to the monumental project of state-building. Those involved in the technical aspects of EMIS are clearly aware of the educational aspects of the work they are doing – they are not just crunching numbers, but are thinking of educational processes and the implications that decisions based on statistical information can have on the real

lives of real pupils. The fact that many of them have come through schools themselves – as teachers and heads – shows through the comments they made, the evaluation of the usefulness or otherwise of the data, and their ability to distance themselves from the specificity of the data to reflect on the general educational picture. EMIS has been useful at the top administrative levels, in terms of planning and administration of resources. It has also clearly proved to be a major tool in the articulation of the first Five Year Plan. It has yet to filter down to the level of district and the school, though there are clear signs of an awareness of this need (particularly through school mapping), and some preparation and steps in that direction.

But perhaps the most important achievement of the Palestinian EMIS has been the quiet revolution it has initiated, in the shift that it has encouraged towards policy-making and educational planning and management on the basis of reliable and relevant data. This shift suggests that increasingly, the attainment of quality can be carefully measured and closely monitored, heightening the possibility that more learners have access to their educational entitlement. It has been pointed out by some analysts that the link between education information and educational quality in many societies is marked by a tension between what Welsh (1993) would refer to as two contrasting organizational cultures. One such culture privileges *informal* information structures that serve as a basis for sorting and channelling information and converting it to policy, plans, tactics and operations. The use of and access to this information are the product of relationships – and the latter are particularly close, complex and dynamic in small Mediterranean territories where the sociological dimension of scale creates ‘face to face societies’, and where the cultural reality of patronage networks constitute a key characteristic of the region and a matrix for much social interaction. In contrast to this informal information structure are *information systems*, which tend to be formal, following a set of clearly articulated rules governing information access, flow and use. The issue is not whether ‘modern’ and ‘rational’ information systems are necessarily ‘better’ than the more traditional information structures. The issue rather is the manner in which the values underpinning both approaches lead to the definition of what information is relevant and appropriate as a basis for decision-making. The fact that Palestine has opted for an EMIS and has made an exemplary commitment to its realization is a clear reflection of a deeper reality: the political pledge towards ensuring a quality education as an entitlement for all learners.

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Notes

1. For one example of the capacity for collecting data outstripping the capacity to use it, see M. Altet & M. Develay's (1999) account of a Tunisian initiative.
2. Initially, the Ministry was also responsible for post-secondary education. That responsibility was transferred to the Ministry of Higher Education, created in 1996.
3. The Gaza Strip covers 378km² and, with a population of around 1.2 million, is one of the most densely populated territories in the world. The West Bank covers 5879km², and has a population of around 1.9 million.
4. For an account of the impact of Israeli reprisals on Palestinian education, see Sultana (2002), among others. By November 2001, the uprising and reprisals had caused the death of 797 Palestinians, 190 Israelis, and 11 foreign citizens. A total of 194 children under 18 years of age had been killed, with 166 being Palestinian, 27 Israeli, and 1 foreigner. As many as 16,570 Palestinians had been injured, including more than 7,000 children (PRCS, 2001), while the corresponding number for the Israelis was 1,810, of which 517 were soldiers, 1,240 civilians, and 53 children. 275 schools are situated close to flash points in the current conflict, and as a result, by November 2001, 93 Palestinian schools had been shelled, with 6 schools being obliged to close down for a period of one to two months. An estimated 31,117 student school days were lost in the West Bank, and 7,400 in Gaza.
5. Several sources were helpful in the writing up of this brief description. Among these, the most important were UNESCO (1995), and MOE (1999).
6. To this must be added the UNRWA schools which, since 1950, have been offering education services to Palestinian refugees throughout the region, and where the policy is to use the same curriculum as that of the country which is hosting the refugees.
7. Data cited in this section refer to several studies referred to in Unesco (1995). See also UNICEF and Palestinian Authority (1995).
8. The main reason for the increase in numbers is a steep birth rate. The numbers can multiply even further if refugees return in large numbers to the state of Palestine, once this is founded. The 1948 and 1967 wars saw over 750,000 Palestinians seeking refuge in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt and the Gulf, and it is likely that several of these will want to return home.
9. Unesco (1995), p.51. One must keep in mind the insight shared by one of the interviewees, namely that Palestinians have to face this adversity with one major assumption in mind: 'as if it will work – that one day they will be a nation.'
10. IIEP has provided training courses in EMIS for MOE staff from several developing countries. For information about this see, *inter alia*, D. W. Chapman and L. Mählcck (1993).

11. For a variety of reasons – not least because the GS had always been subjected to stricter control than the WB – staff from the latter area had had more opportunities to develop an international orientation as well as educational knowledge and leadership. The situation in the GS had been more difficult in other ways too, with Gaza often being in need of emergency assistance.
12. As a result of this, only 1 person from the GS had gone for training to the IIEP, while 4 WB staff had done so by the year 2000.
13. While it seems that such losses were replaced, the situation can easily be envisaged where the departure of key trained personnel has catastrophic consequences on a particular project. This has apparently happened recently in Oman, where MOE staff trained to introduce school mapping had left the Ministry.
14. The need for MOE staff to be trained in gender issues was identified in a gender audit document by UNICEF (1998). The document also notes that ‘in the absence of a written policy of gender, the gender dimension of the EMIS project, and of MOE activities generally, was dependent on the attitudes of individual MOE staff members involved, and therefore was vulnerable to staff turnover.’ The same is true of other inequality issues, such as those based on socio-economic backgrounds.
15. See T. Deeb (2000). The School Mapping Project was launched in October 1997 with the technical and financial support of the Australian government. During a second visit to the Occupied Territories on another project in 2001, I was shown evidence of the use of school mapping at the Ministry of Education.

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L'IMPACT DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT DE LA BIOLOGIE SUR LA CONSTRUCTION DE LA DISTINCTION ENTRE NORMAL ET PATHOLOGIQUE CHEZ LES ELEVES DU SECONDAIRE MAROCAIN

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Résumé – *Les représentations de la distinction entre normal et pathologique ont été étudiées chez des élèves de l'enseignement fondamental (6^{ème} et 9^{ème} année), de l'enseignement secondaire (3^{ème} année) et chez des enseignants de biologie au moyen d'un questionnaire, suivi par une analyse comparative entre ces 3 niveaux. Les représentations des enseignants ont également été analysées afin de mettre en évidence d'éventuelles corrélations avec celles des élèves. Cette analyse a permis de relever des similitudes et des différences dans ces représentations entre les élèves des différents niveaux et entre les élèves et les enseignants. Les représentations des élèves révèlent des confusions entre le registre 'normal/anormal' et le registre 'sain/pathologique' et ne paraissent pas directement en rapport avec les conceptions actuelles des spécialistes de la biologie. En revanche, il semble exister un lien entre des valeurs propres à la société marocaine et les représentations des élèves que les enseignants de biologie pourraient contribuer à entretenir à leur insu. Enfin, une proposition prenant en compte les résultats de cette étude dans la formation des enseignants est suggérée.*

Introduction

L'objectif de cet article est de déterminer comment, et dans quelle mesure, l'enseignement de la biologie permet aux élèves de l'enseignement secondaire marocain de construire, tout en les différenciant, les notions de normal et de pathologique.

Les finalités assignées par les textes officiels marocains à l'enseignement de la biologie (Ministère de l'Éducation, 1991) se résument ainsi:

- Participer à la formation des élèves pour en faire des citoyens capables de comprendre le monde qui les entoure et de participer à son évolution.
- Leur permettre d'acquérir des connaissances spécifiques à cette discipline.

Les connaissances biomédicales font partie du corpus des savoirs biologiques, et leur acquisition est un objectif à atteindre. Seulement cette acquisition ne se fait pas d'emblée, elle demande une activité et une construction de la part des élèves.

Malgré le grand développement des études en didactique se rapportant à l'analyse des représentations, de nombreux domaines restent peu explorés comme le domaine biomédical. Aucune étude, à notre connaissance, n'a encore été réalisée en rapport avec la construction de la représentation du normal et du pathologique en relation avec l'enseignement de la biologie.

Le choix que nous avons fait d'étudier les représentations de la distinction entre normal et pathologique a été au départ, justifié par les raisons suivantes:

- Pour les enseignants en sciences de la vie et de la terre, cette distinction semble aller de soi, et il semble que les élèves partagent cette même idée.
- Les chercheurs spécialisés considèrent que la séparation entre normal et pathologique est une notion qui doit faire l'objet d'un débat (en génétique en particulier).
- L'analyse des programmes de biologie et des manuels scolaires (de la 1^{ère} à la 9^{ème} année de l'enseignement fondamental et de la 1^{ère} à la 3^{ème} année de l'enseignement secondaire) nous a montré qu'on oppose implicitement normal et pathologique.
- Les représentations du normal et du pathologique semblent en rapport avec la société, l'individu, son comportement, son regard sur l'autre et donc elles pourraient intervenir dans la relation interindividuelle en favorisant l'acceptation ou le rejet.
- La compréhension de ces notions fait partie d'une formation de base de l'élève dans la mesure où elles sont liées aux problèmes de la vie quotidienne.

Ainsi notre objectif a été de répondre aux questions suivantes:

- Comment les élèves construisent-ils au cours de leur scolarité la distinction entre 'normal' et 'pathologique'?
- Les représentations des élèves sont-elles en rapport avec les données actuelles de la biologie et/ou correspondent-elles aux représentations de leurs enseignants?

La construction de cette distinction est sans doute influencée par des déterminismes sociaux. En effet, les contenus des cours des sciences véhiculent des valeurs propres à la société (Fourez, 1985) et révèlent les choix éthiques d'une société (Develay, 1992). Les valeurs, les intérêts et les normes propres à un groupe social peuvent constituer un antécédent sur lequel s'élabore ensuite une représentation.

Ainsi, il n'y a pas moyen d'enseigner les sciences sans proposer des valeurs. Seulement, les enseignants de sciences ont souvent de la peine à concevoir que leurs cours véhiculent des valeurs propres à la société.

C'est ainsi que tout au long de cet article, une question importante retiendra notre attention: Existe-t-il un lien entre les représentations des élèves à propos de la distinction entre normal et pathologique et les valeurs véhiculées par l'enseignement de la biologie? Et dans l'affirmative comment, dans un contexte d'enseignement, utiliser ce constat?

Nous exposerons dans la première partie quelques considérations théoriques concernant les concepts du 'normal' du 'pathologique'. Dans une seconde partie, nous présenterons les aspects méthodologiques de cette recherche (populations étudiées, construction du questionnaire, collecte des données). Une troisième partie sera consacrée à la présentation des résultats et à leurs analyses. Enfin, nous terminerons par une discussion concernant ces résultats et leurs impacts possibles dans le cadre de la formation des enseignants en biologie.

Aspects théoriques: les notions de normal et de pathologique

Dans son usage courant, le mot normal recouvre une multiplicité de sens tels que naturel, habituel, régulier, adéquat ou encore légitime.

Le mot normal est lié à celui de norme, lequel vient du grec *nomos* qui, avant de dire ce qu'est la loi, désignait ce qui est attribué à chacun, ce qu'il aura en partage. Cette idée du partage nous permet de faire un lien avec la racine latine de norme, *norma*, qui signifie équerre (formée par deux pièces perpendiculaires), suscitant un rapport parfait entre deux traits (angle droit), au partage égal de l'espace, lorsque ceux-ci se recoupent et, de là, le sens attribué au normal, c'est à dire qui se tient dans le juste milieu.

Dans le domaine de la science, un des premiers à l'utiliser est Auguste Comte en 1830, qui va définir les lois relatives à l'état normal (in Brandy, 1999).

D'un point de vue général, le concept de norme est produit selon deux types de procédures différentes a priori: soit à partir des méthodes classificatoires qui régissent les sciences positives, soit à partir des perspectives axiologiques qui sévissent dans l'éthique ou la politique.

Canguilhem reconnaît et distingue à juste titre ces deux types de normes, en particulier dans les nouvelles réflexions concernant le normal et le pathologique où il oppose les normes organiques, internes et régulatrices, et les normes sociales, externes et législatives.

La question du normal et du pathologique était discutée dès le XIX^e siècle (et même avant). Canguilhem (1966) en étudiant les écrits de Claude Bernard rapporte que la thèse essentielle dans la pensée de Bernard, selon laquelle 'l'état pathologique est homogène à l'état normal dont il ne constitue qu'une variation quantitative en plus ou en moins'. Bernard définissait une maladie comme le

diabète sucrée comme une modification quantitative du métabolisme du sucre. Les racines de cette thèse remontent au-delà le XVIII^e siècle et elle a été vulgarisée avant Claude Bernard par Broussais (un clinicien) et par Auguste Comte.

Canguilhem dans son ouvrage de 1966 et à partir d'exemples de maladies génétiques a montré que l'état pathologique n'est aucunement dérivable de l'état normal. Selon lui, le vivant établit ses propres normes de vie et il est également capable de les modifier. L'individu qui est dans l'incapacité de changer de normes dans une situation critique donnée va basculer d'un état normal vers un état pathologique. Ainsi, Canguilhem paraît opposer le normal au pathologique.

À travers le débat actuel,¹ le normal et le pathologique ont deux origines sémantiques différentes. Le normal est un terme de géométrie, pathologique est un terme de médecine. Ces deux termes n'appartiennent pas au même registre. L'opposé de pathologique est sain, l'opposé de normal est anormal. Cependant et au cours du débat, l'anthropologue (Faizang, 1999), contrairement au généticien (Lyonnet, 1999) et à d'autres intervenants, croit que le terme 'normal' a beaucoup d'opposés: différent, marginal et 'pathologique' en constitue un également.

D'un point de vue génétique, nous savons que chaque être est différent à l'exception des jumeaux homozygotes, et par conséquent être normal, au sens d'être conforme à une moyenne normative n'a pas de sens d'un point de vue des spécialistes en génétique.

Les caractères normaux qui nous constituent sont codés par des gènes. Certains gènes prédisposent à des maladies ou à des anomalies. On parle alors de caractère normal, on parle aussi d'un organe à fonctionnement normal (ou anormal), mais pas d'un individu normal. Le spécialiste en génétique est parfois dans l'impossibilité de trancher entre ce qui est normal et ce qui est pathologique, sauf dans des cas extrêmes où vraiment on peut parler d'état pathologique.

Les idées et les données avancées par les spécialistes (généticien, épidémiologiste et autres) constituent pour nous le savoir savant qui est transposé en savoir à enseigner à travers les programmes de biologie.

Dans cet article, nous allons chercher à établir si l'enseignement de la biologie a permis aux élèves de construire ces notions de 'normal' et de 'pathologique' en rapport avec les conceptions des spécialistes actuels en biologie.

Aspects méthodologiques

Populations étudiées

Les populations retenues pour notre étude sont composées par des élèves marocains de sixième (11-12 ans), des élèves de neuvième année (14-15 ans), et

des élèves de troisième année (17-18 ans) secondaire ainsi que par des enseignants marocains en sciences de la vie et de la terre.

Les effectifs de nos échantillons sont représentés dans le tableau suivant:

TABLEAU N° 1: Présentation des quatre populations de la recherche

Populations	Correspondance avec la France	Effectifs
6 ^{ème} année	6 ^{ème} (collège)	40
9 ^{ème} année	3 ^{ème}	30
3 ^{ème} année	Terminale (lycée)	30
Enseignants		15

Construction du questionnaire

Suite à l’approche théorique précédente, il apparaît que ‘normal’ et ‘pathologique’ ont été, au cours de leur évolution historique opposés, alors qu’ils appartiennent à des registres différents. Il convient donc de les séparer en utilisant deux différentiels correspondant au registre normal/anormal et au registre sain/pathologique.

Chacune de ces échelles comporte quatre positions:

A PA PN N et S PS PP P

Indications : **A = anormal, PA = peu anormal, PN = peu normal, N = normal**
S = sain, PS = peu sain, PP = peu pathologique, P = pathologique.

Afin d’identifier comment les élèves construisent la distinction entre normal et pathologique, nous avons ensuite formulé six questions se rapportant à des thèmes différents se rapportant à des individus porteurs d’anomalie ou de pathologie: l’albinos, le séropositif, l’alcoolique, le malade mental, le trisomique 21 et la femme stérile.

Nous avons demandé aux répondants d’exprimer leur opinion en choisissant, en l’entourant, pour chacune des six question, le degré d’anomalie et l’intensité de la pathologie.

Cette méthode semble permettre de mieux cerner et inférer les représentations des répondants relatives aux notions de ‘normal’ et de ‘pathologique’ dans la

mesure où elles permettent de repérer les contradictions internes entre ces deux registres mais aussi externes, en relation avec le savoir ‘savant’ que les enseignants sont mandatés à transmettre.

Pour chaque question, il est demandé de justifier sa réponse selon les deux registres.

Le questionnaire a été pré-validé auprès d’élèves et d’enseignants, appartenant aux différentes populations étudiées, ce qui a permis de reformuler certaines des questions.

La passation du questionnaire dure 30 minutes.

Analyse des données recueillies

À partir des questionnaires remplis par les élèves, nous avons analysé les justifications des réponses des élèves des différents niveaux. L’analyse a été effectuée sans recourir à un traitement informatique des productions langagières mais en utilisant à une classification manuelle selon les types de réponses des élèves.

Les positionnements des élèves sur les deux différentiels ont fait l’objet d’un traitement statistique en fonction de chacune des questions. Les variations des réponses entre les 3 groupes d’élèves ont été identifiées par des tests de χ^2 en fonction de 2 variables :

- niveau scolaire/ degré de normalité pour chaque cas (albinos, séropositif, ...)
- niveau scolaire/intensité de pathologie pour chaque cas (albinos, ...).

L’hypothèse nulle pose que la représentation des élèves est la même dans chaque niveau scolaire. Elle peut être rejetée au seuil 0.01 ($\alpha=1\%$).

Résultats

Les données quantitatives concernant les deux types de comparaison que nous avons effectuées seront rapportées dans le tableau n° 2 dans la synthèse finale.

Dans chacun des six cas, nous rappellerons la question posée, puis nous présenterons une synthèse correspondant aux réponses des élèves et ensuite celle concernant les réponses des enseignants.

L’analyse des résultats nous conduira à nous intéresser particulièrement à la relation entre des valeurs véhiculées par l’enseignement de la biologie et les représentations des élèves.

L'albinos

Question n° 1: L'albinisme, c'est peu ou pas de pigmentation dans la peau, les yeux, les cheveux. Selon vous, un albinos est-il

A PA PN N et S PS PP P

Justifiez votre réponse en 2 lignes

Réponses des élèves

Dans les réponses des élèves à la question 1, il apparaît que:

- Plus de la moitié des élèves de la 9^{ème} année (53.33%) pensent que l'albinos est *normal*. 63.33% le considèrent comme *peu sain* à *sain*.
- La majorité des élèves de la 6^{ème} année estiment que l'albinos est *anormal* et *peu sain* à *pathologique*.
- Les élèves de la 3^{ème} année dans leur majorité (respectivement 23.33%, 33.33% et 33.33%) affirment que l'albinos est *peu normal* à *anormal*. Selon eux, il est aussi *peu sain* à *pathologique*.

La valeur calculée du c^2 est de 43.23. Elle est supérieure au point critique. La différence est donc significative entre les 3 groupes d'élèves. Le niveau scolaire semble avoir un effet sur la perception d'un albinos à propos de sa normalité et de son état pathologique ($c^2 = 20.85$).

Cependant les arguments avancés par les élèves ne permettent pas d'expliquer cette différence:

- Il est différent des autres.
- Il ne ressemble pas à tout le monde.
- C'est un phénomène rare.

Réponses des enseignants

A travers les réponses des enseignants, il apparaît que près de la moitié des répondants (7 sur 15) pensent que l'albinos est un individu *normal*. 10 enseignants le considèrent comme *sain*.

Les exemples présentés pour expliciter cette représentation sont:

- Vu que toutes les personnes normales ne possèdent pas cet aspect,, l'albinos est *anormal*.

- Car il sort de la normale, ça frappe aux yeux qu’il sort de l’ordinaire.
- Son incapacité à s’exposer au soleil l’handicape par rapport aux autres.
- Il ne produit pas la mélanine, donc il est anormal.

Le séropositif

Question n°2: Une personne séropositive (sans symptômes de la maladie), est-elle à votre avis?

A PA PN N et S PS PP P

Justifier votre réponse

Réponses des élèves

Le séropositif est perçu comme *normal* par 46.66% des élèves de la 3^{ème} année secondaire, contre 20% pour ceux de la 9^{ème} année, et seulement 12.5% pour ceux de la 6^{ème} année.

Il apparaît ainsi une probable influence des programmes et des sujets traités relatifs aux maladies sexuellement transmissibles. Les élèves du secondaire possèdent plus d’information sur le sujet que les autres.

La valeur calculée du c^2 est de 14.4 et elle est inférieure au point critique. Il n’y a donc pas de différence significative entre les 3 niveaux. En effet, les arguments avancés par les élèves montrent que le côté affectif et émotionnel influence beaucoup cette représentation du séropositif. Pour eux, le séropositif est une personne condamnée qui inspire la pitié.

Sur le registre S/P il apparaît à travers les réponses que le séropositif est considéré par 50% des élèves de la 6^{ème} année comme *peu sain*. La majorité des élèves de la 9^{ème} année et de la 3^{ème} année pensent qu’il est *peu pathologique* à *pathologique*.

Le niveau scolaire semble avoir un effet sur la perception d’un séropositif à propos de son état pathologique ou pas ($c^2 = 20.78$).

Réponses des enseignants

Pour environ la moitié des enseignants (40%) le séropositif est *normal*. Pour les autres (soit respectivement 26.66%, 6.66% et 26.66%), il est considéré comme *peu normal* à *anormal*.

Les arguments avancés pour expliquer les dernières réponses:

- Il reste toujours une source pour la transmission de la maladie.

- Il risque la maladie à tout moment.
- Il est craint de tout le monde.
- Il inspire la pitié.

Sur le registre S/P, il apparaît à travers les réponses que le séropositif est fortement associé par la population des enseignants au pathologique. La séropositivité est synonyme de maladie.

L'alcoolique

Question n° 3: Comment vous considérez un alcoolique?

A PA PN N et S PS PP P

Justifier votre réponse.

Réponses des élèves

La majorité des élèves des 3 niveaux (73.5%, 73.33% et 77.66% respectivement) perçoivent l'alcoolique comme *peu normal* à *anormal*.

Il est important de remarquer que la fréquence des élèves qui considèrent l'alcoolique comme *anormal* diminue de la 3^{ème} à la 6^{ème} année. Fait intéressant à noter: il semble qu'il y aurait une évolution de l'influence des valeurs véhiculées par l'enseignement de la biologie de la 6^{ème} année du primaire à la 3^{ème} année du secondaire.

Cependant la valeur calculée du c^2 (6.9) est inférieure au point critique. Il n'y a pas de différence significative entre les 3 niveaux. Le niveau ne semble pas avoir d'effet.

Les arguments des élèves sont:

- Il est dépendant de l'alcool.
- Il est atteint psychiquement.
- Il ne maîtrise pas ses actes.
- Il est différent des hommes normaux.

Par ailleurs, il semble qu'il y a une dépendance entre le niveau scolaire et la représentation d'un alcoolique selon son état sain ou pathologique ($c^2 = 18.22$).

Réponses des enseignants

Pour la plupart des enseignants (12/15), l'alcoolique est une personne *anormale*. Un seul le considère comme sain.

Les arguments avancés pour expliquer cette représentation sont:

- dépendance vis-à-vis d'un facteur perturbant le fonctionnement normal de l'organisme.
- La personne concernée reste dépendante de l'alcool, ce qui anormal.
- Il faut être inconscient et anormal pour nuire à soi-même et aux autres.
- Car, c'est contre l'islam.
- Il sort de la norme.

Le malade mental

Question n° 4: Comment considérez vous un malade mental?

A PA PN N et S PS PP P

Justifiez votre réponse

Réponses des élèves

À travers le recensement des réponses à cette question, il apparaît que 30% des élèves de la 6^{ème} année considèrent le malade mental comme *normal*. Le reste de la population (70%) le voit comme *peu normal* à *anormal*. Il en est de même pour les élèves de la 9^{ème} et de la 3^{ème} année.

La valeur calculée du c^2 (19.6) est supérieure au point critique. Il y a donc une différence significative entre les 3 niveaux. Le niveau scolaire influence donc l'opinion des élèves sur la normalité du malade mental.

Sur le registre S/P, la majorité des élèves des 3 niveaux pensent qu'il est *peu sain* à *pathologique*. Et il n'y a pas de différence significative ($c^2 = 11.28$) entre ces niveaux.

Réponses des enseignants

La majorité des enseignants (73.33%) perçoivent le malade mental comme *anormal* et estiment qu'il est *pathologique* (80%).

Exemples d'arguments présentés pour expliquer cette réponse:

- Il a un comportement différent des autres individus et il sort des normes de la société.
- Quelqu'un de normal, c'est justement celui qui est équilibré psychologiquement.
- Les personnes normales ne sont pas atteintes de ces troubles.

Parce qu'il présente des comportements différents ou une façon de raisonner différente de la majorité des personnes vivantes dans une même société, le malade mental est qualifié d'anormal par les enseignants. La majorité des répondants sont d'accord pour voir le cas du malade mental comme un cas pathologique.

Le trisomique 21

Question n° 5: Un enfant qui a une Trisomie 21, est-il, selon vous

A PA PN N et S PS PP P

Justifiez votre réponse

Réponses des élèves

25% des élèves de 6^{ème} année et un seul élève de la 9^{ème} pensent que le trisomie 21 est une personne *normale*. Alors qu'aucun élève de la 3^{ème} année secondaire ne le voit ainsi. Les élèves de ce niveau en majorité (80%) le considère *anormal*.

La valeur calculée du c^2 est de 26.72 et elle est supérieure au point critique. La différence observée est donc significative et le niveau scolaire semble influencer la représentation des élèves à propos de sa normalité.

Sur le registre S/P, la majorité des élèves estiment qu'un trisomie 21 est *peu sain à pathologique*. Il n'y a pas de différence significative entre les 3 niveaux ($c^2 = 11.64$). Il n'y a donc aucune évidence d'une relation entre niveau scolaire et représentation de la pathologie d'un trisomie 21. La perception d'un trisomie 21, selon le degré de sa pathologie, ne semble pas dépendre du niveau scolaire.

Réponses des enseignants

Tous les enseignants interrogés jugent l'enfant atteint d'une trisomie 21 comme un enfant *anormal*.

La majorité (73%) le considère comme *peu sain à pathologique*.

Les arguments présentés pour expliquer leurs réponses:

- Anormal dans le sens handicapé, son anomalie est un obstacle à son adaptation.
- C'est une personne marginalisée.
- Sa morphologie est différente.
- Son intégration est difficile dans la société.

Le cas du trisomie 21 peut être lié à celui de l'albinos par le fait que lui aussi a une apparence physique différente. Par conséquent, les enseignants répondent qu'il est anormal.

La femme stérile

Question n° 6: Comment vous considérez une femme qui ne procréé pas (stérile)?

A PA PN N et S PS PP P

Justifiez votre réponse

Réponses des élèves

67.5% des élèves de la 6^{ème} année perçoivent la femme stérile comme *normale*. 53.33% des élèves de la 9^{ème} année estiment qu'une femme stérile est *normale*, et seulement 33.33% des élèves du secondaire la voit ainsi.

Nous constatons que le nombre d'élèves qui la jugent *normale* diminue de la 6^{ème} à la 3^{ème} année secondaire.

La valeur calculée du c^2 (11.97) est inférieure au point critique. La différence constatée n'est donc pas significative.

Par ailleurs, dans les réponses des élèves, il apparaît que la stérilité est assimilée à un état pathologique au fur et à mesure qu'on passe de la 6^{ème} année à la 3^{ème} année.

60% des élèves de la 6^{ème} considèrent la femme stérile comme *saine* contre 36.66% pour la 9^{ème} et 16.66% pour la 3^{ème}. Cette différence constatée est significative ($c^2 = 58.22$).

L'influence des connaissances scientifiques acquises par les élèves du secondaire pourrait expliquer ce résultat, seulement les exemples d'arguments présentés pour expliciter cette réponse ne confirment pas cette hypothèse.

Les élèves estiment qu'elle est différente des autres femmes et que c'est la volonté divine qui veut qu'elle ne procréé pas.

Réponses des enseignants

La plupart des enseignants (10/15) considèrent la femme stérile comme *normale* et *saine* (8/15). Cependant pour expliquer cette position, le registre religieux est le seul pris en considération: 'c'est la volonté de Dieu qui la créée ainsi'. Sur ce plan, il n'y a pas de différence avec les élèves.

Synthèse

A priori, il serait possible d'affirmer que pour un même cas (trisomie 21 par exemple), le niveau scolaire semble un facteur déterminant dans la représentation des élèves sur la normalité et/ou le degré de pathologie. Cependant, les arguments avancés pour expliquer telle ou telle représentation démontrent clairement l'impact de facteurs autres que le niveau scolaire.

A propos d'un autre cas, (l'albinos par exemple), il n'apparaît aucune différence entre les 3 niveaux scolaires étudiés.

Ainsi à propos de la distinction entre *normal* et *pathologique*, nous constatons qu'il y a des similitudes et des différences notables dans les représentations des élèves des 3 niveaux montrant une certaine confusion entre ces deux registres. Cependant, à propos d'un cas (l'albinos par exemple) les élèves (et les enseignants) associent normal et sain; à propos d'un autre cas (l'alcoolique par exemple), anormal et pathologique sont associés. Nous pouvons avancer que ni les élèves ni les enseignants ne différencient les 2 registres N/S et A/P.

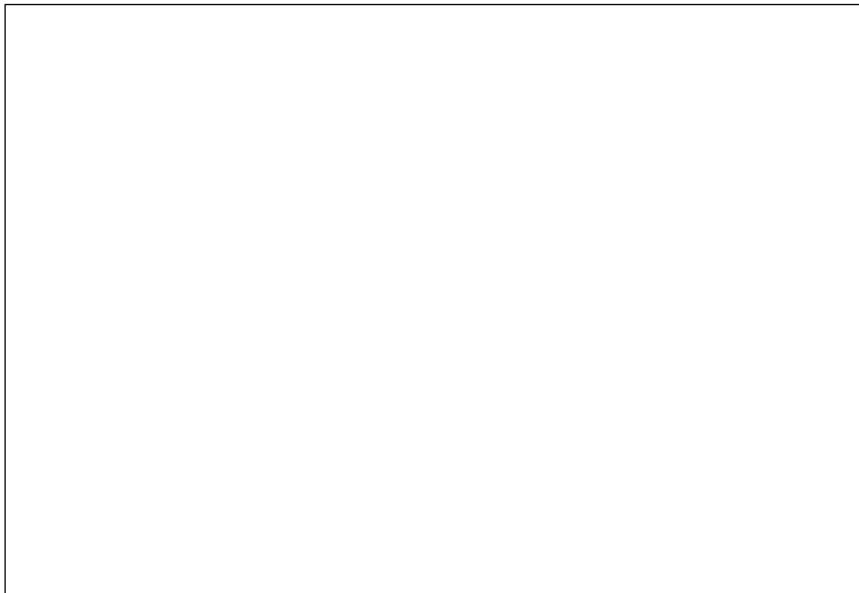
Dans le tableau n°2, les résultats concernant les réponses des élèves et des enseignants aux 6 questions ont été exprimés en pourcentage et les valeurs du χ^2 sont rapportés avec les repères suivant: **A** = anormal, **PA** = peu anormal, **PN** = peu normal, **N** = normal, **S** = sain, **PS** = peu sain, **PP** = peu pathologique, **P** = pathologique; **Ech.N** pour désigner l'échelle qui va de Normal à Anormal et **Ech.P** pour désigner l'échelle qui va de Sain à Pathologique; **S** veut dire que la différence est significative et **NS** que la différence n'est pas significative.

Nous proposons d'examiner séparément ces résultats en fonctions des domaines de connaissances concernés.

L'albinos

L'albinisme est une anomalie sans gravité, mais comme c'est un phénomène rare et que les albinos représentent des cas peu fréquents, une partie de nos 4 populations les considèrent comme anormaux. Leur apparence est différente de celle des gens 'normaux'. Ainsi aux yeux de ce groupe le peu fréquent est conçu comme l'équivalent d'anormal. Ces enseignants comme ces élèves possèdent une approche socioculturelle de la normalité, qui mobilise une conception statistique des faits sociaux. Ce qui est normal dans une société renvoie à la tension entre ce qui est fréquent et ce qui est acceptable (Caron, 2000). Il semble logique, selon cette conception, de faire une description de l'homme normal. Le normal a une expression statistique : à un instant donné, le nombre de gens qui ont la même apparence, ou le même comportement ou la même attitude et qui représentent la

TABLEAU N° 2: Comparaison des résultats des 4 populations en rapport avec les 6 cas: pourcentages et valeurs du c^2



majorité, alors ceux qui se différencient de ces 'normaux' sont considérés comme 'anormaux'. Dans cette perspective, l'écart à la normalité (la valeur la plus fréquente) d'un individu est conçu comme une anormalité.

Cette attitude qui consiste à considérer celui qui est en marge de la norme comme anormal, pourrait constituer un obstacle à l'acquisition d'un concept pertinent, à la compréhension d'un savoir en biologie. On pourra avancer pour expliciter cette idée, l'exemple proposé par Canguilhem (1966) à propos du concept de mutation: 'quand on définit le normal par le plus fréquent, on se crée un obstacle considérable à l'intelligence du sens biologique du concept de mutation. En effet, dans la mesure où une mutation, dans le monde végétal ou animal, peut être à l'origine d'une espèce nouvelle, on voit une norme naître d'un écart par rapport à une autre. La norme, c'est la forme d'écart que la sélection naturelle maintient'.

En conséquence, cette représentation du normal par les élèves en rapport avec la fréquence, risque d'induire, d'une part, des comportements de rejet de tout ce qui paraît rarissime, et d'autre part, s'opposera à l'acquisition d'un savoir pertinent si comme c'est le cas ici, l'albinos est représenté comme pathologique par les élèves de la 6^{ème} année et ceux de la 3^{ème} année.

Pour Canguilhem, l'anomalie ne s'assimile pas forcément à la pathologie. Par exemple, une anomalie morphologique doit être évaluée du point de vue de ses conséquences : si elle ne perturbe ni les fonctions vitales, ni la vie de relation avec tout ce que celle-ci comporte de relations sociales, elle ne peut pas être considérée comme pathologique.

Le séropositif

Le séropositif est un individu 'peu normal' à 'anormal' pour près de la moitié de nos répondants, la moitié également tend à le trouver 'peu pathologique' à 'pathologique'. Ils estiment qu'il faut avoir pitié de lui et qu'il mérite un sentiment de charité. Nous remarquons que le côté affectif et émotionnel influence beaucoup l'apparition de cette représentation chez les élèves.

Cette représentation du séropositif pourrait être expliquée par le fait que la séropositivité est associée à l'homosexualité et que dans une société telle que la société marocaine, les personnes homosexuelles sont vues comme perverses et malsaines. Dans ce cas, l'influence sociale est donc prégnante. Mais nous devons nous attacher à expliquer un paradoxe: comment se fait-il que les élèves ont eu pitié du malade du sida alors que l'homosexualité est prohibée par l'islam?

Le côté affectif et émotionnel, la sympathie, est-il tellement prégnant? ou bien, le non-respect des prescriptions religieuses par certains, pourrait-elle être une explication ?

L'alcoolique

Selon nos résultats, des élèves et des enseignants perçoivent une partie de la population (les alcooliques) comme anormale parce qu'elle n'est pas dans la norme statistique. C'est la même approche socioculturelle qui apparaît. Ce qui est normal dans la sphère sociale est définie à partir d'une norme qui s'exprime explicitement selon des règles et des lois ou implicitement selon un idéal (Caron, 2000). En définitive, le vivant normal est celui qui est conforme à des normes sociales. Les élèves tiennent tout écart à ces normes pour anormal. Ce type de jugement risque de bloquer les élèves dans des comportements et attitudes d'exclusion de l'autre. Un individu se voit rejeter parce qu'il ne répond pas aux critères institués par la société. Cette perception négative ne pourra jouer aucun rôle sur l'avenir social et thérapeutique de l'individu alcoolique. Son exclusion sociale risque de le précipiter dans 'l'abîme' de la dépendance alcoolique encore plus. En effet, nos attitudes, nos relations dépendront de la représentation qu'on se fera d'une personne alcoolique.

Le malade mental

La psychiatrie classique distingue nettement les sujets 'normaux' des sujets atteints de pathologies névrotiques, psychotiques et démentielles. La pensée psychanalytique a évolué dans un autre sens, en effet, on est passé du concept de folie à celui de vésanies, puis à celui de démence, d'aliénation mentale et enfin à celui de maladie mentale. La relativité est introduite par la médecine actuelle.

En médecine donc, il est difficile de trancher entre qui est normal, et qui ne l'est pas. Alors que les enseignants et les élèves de la 9^{ème} année et de la 3^{ème} année en majorité considèrent un individu qui a des troubles psychiques comme anormal. Et ils précisent qu'il est anormal parce qu'il est différent des autres. Il y a une intolérance manifeste à travers leurs arguments qui ne sont relativisés par aucun groupe.

Par contre, les élèves de la 6^{ème} année se différencient des autres. 30% considérant le malade mental comme normal. Ils estiment, comme Canguilhem, que ce type de malade est capable d'instituer des normes nouvelles.

Le trisomique 21

Les enseignants (15/15) et la majorité des élèves de la 3^{ème} année (24/30) considèrent l'individu porteur d'une anomalie comme celle d'un trisomique 21 comme *anormal*. Alors qu'en fait c'est surtout son génotype qui est différent du 'modèle' général des humains.

Il semble que les connaissances acquises en génétique humaine n'ont pas eu beaucoup d'influence sur les élèves. Par contre, les valeurs véhiculées par cet enseignement pourraient être à l'origine de cette représentation du trisomie 21.

Par ailleurs ce qui pèse lourdement sur les personnes atteintes d'anomalies c'est le regard des autres, plus que 'l'handicap' lui même. Le regard des gens qui semblent considérer l'enfant atteint d'une trisomie 21 comme 'une forme manquée'. A ce propos, Canguilhem(1992) souligne que: 'si l'on tient le monde vivant pour une tentative d'hierarchisation des formes possibles, il n'y a pas à priori de différences entre une forme réussie et une forme manquée. Il n'y a pas à proprement parler de formes manquées'. Et Canguilhem d'ajouter qu'il ne peut rien manquer à un vivant, si l'on veut bien admettre qu'il y a mille et une façon de vivre.

La stérilité

La femme stérile est perçue par certains enseignants et certains élèves comme saine et anormale. L'influence sociale dans ce cas est prégnante. En effet, dans une société telle que la société marocaine, les femmes ne sont socialement reconnues

et valorisées qu'en fonction de leur aptitude à procréer. La fécondabilité apparaît comme un vecteur de prestige et de reconnaissance sociale. D'ailleurs, la répudiation de la femme qui ne procréé pas est un phénomène fréquent dans cette société.

Pour d'autres enseignants et élèves, elle est normale. Seulement les explications données pour éclaircir cette position montrent que le registre religieux est le seul pris en considération: 'c'est la volonté divine, la femme n'y peut rien'. On peut remarquer que les élèves tunisiens en biologie recourent eux aussi à l'argument religieux pour expliquer la théorie de l'évolution (Chabchoub, 2000).

En résumé, l'étude des représentations des élèves montre que la distinction entre l' 'anormal' et le 'pathologique' n'est pas très nette or ces deux registres concernent l'un le domaine quantitatif et l'autre le domaine qualitatif.

Concernant l'aspect quantitatif: les enseignants et les élèves ont une approche socioculturelle de la normalité, une approche qui utilise une conception statistique des faits sociaux: ce qui est normal dans une société est ce qui est fréquent (albinos, nains).

Ce qui est conforme à une norme sociale (alcooliques, homosexuels) mais dans ce cas, cette anormalité est souvent associée à du pathologique c'est-à-dire au registre de ce qui n'est pas sain.

Concernant l'aspect qualitatif: le normal est celui dont la santé, la physionomie ne souffrent d'aucune faille donc à celui qui est idéalement sain. Cette perception s'appuie sur les mœurs de la société (exemple de la femme qui subit l'ablation du sein et qui se voit répudier par son mari) sur des aspects affectif et émotionnel associé à la sympathie ou à la compassion comme dans le cas du séropositif.

Les résultats de cet article pourraient s'expliquer, d'une part, par l'absence de définitions des concepts de santé et de maladie (constatée lors d'une analyse des différents programmes d'enseignement), et d'autre part, par l'impact des valeurs de la société véhiculées par l'enseignement scientifique. Ces valeurs implicites peuvent s'opposer à l'acquisition des concepts scientifiques et dans ce cas s'opposer à la construction du savoir par les élèves. En effet, les élèves entrent en classe de sciences biologiques bien décidés à croire et accepter toutes les vérités qu'on leur enseigne. L'esprit critique des élèves est, dans les cours de biologie, limité au raisonnement de la discipline, alors que tout un travail d'analyse, de critique et de discussion paraît nécessaire pour questionner le domaine de validité

des savoirs qu'on leur propose et montrer que le contenu enseigné est relié au monde concret. Le travail de l'enseignant pourrait consister à rendre explicites des valeurs implicites et permettre aux élèves à travers une discussion d'élucider ces valeurs, qui autrement passeraient inaperçues et pourraient s'opposer à une construction d'un savoir adéquat.

Conclusion

Dans leur ensemble, les résultats des analyses soulignent qu'à l'examen de l'évolution des représentations des élèves de la distinction entre normal et pathologique, il se dégage des similitudes et des différences entre les élèves des 3 niveaux et entre ces élèves et les enseignants, ces deux notions semblent souvent appartenir au même registre.

Dans l'ensemble, les représentations des élèves ne convergent pas avec les conceptions des spécialistes actuels en biologie. La perception du chercheur scientifique (généticien et autres) est différente de celle partagée par une majorité de marocains, l'anomalie n'est pas synonyme de pathologie et inversement il existe des pathologies fréquentes donc normales.

Par contre, elles sont en accord avec celles de l'anthropologue Faizang (1999) qui considère que le normal c'est l'adapté socialement, celui qui s'accommode à la société. En effet l'analyse des données a mis en évidence la dominance dans la pensée des élèves, des représentations sociales dominantes.

Les représentations, en plus de fonctionner comme un modèle explicatif, un mode de raisonnement, viennent nourrir nos attitudes, nos comportements, et nos façons de voir le monde. Considérant les opinions avancées par les élèves, cette réalité s'avère quelque peu préoccupante, du moins en ce qui concerne la distinction entre le normal et le pathologique.

Comme ces deux registres, faute d'être suffisamment explicités, s'interpénètrent et se parasitent mutuellement, le risque est grand que le 'peu fréquent', l'anormal' bref le 'différent' soit rejeté, en même temps que la personne qui l'incarne car ressenti comme 'pathologique' c'est à dire 'malsain' par la majorité.

Alors, que faire, en situation d'enseignement de la biologie pour prendre en compte ces représentations des élèves mais aussi celles des enseignants?

La réponse à cette question devrait être à rechercher du côté de la formation des enseignants. Il semble en effet indispensable que les enseignants prennent conscience que les cours de biologie véhiculent des valeurs. L'étude de ces valeurs dans l'enseignement de la biologie constitue un axe de recherche qu'il nous paraît urgent d'approfondir. Les résultats présentés dans cet article pourraient servir à

sensibiliser les concepteurs de programmes de biologie à la pertinence de prendre en compte les valeurs véhiculées par cette discipline dans le cadre de l'éducation à la santé, à l'environnement et par là au rapport avec l'autre.

De son côté, l'enseignant pourrait acquérir lors de sa formation des outils d'analyse de son enseignement. Un effort pourrait être fait pour former des enseignants capables d'assumer les différentes dimensions de leur profession et ainsi réussir les missions que nous avons rappelées dans l'introduction.

Pour notre part, nous proposons l'élaboration d'une nouvelle recherche qui permettrait d'établir des relations entre les contenus de l'enseignement et les valeurs sociales qui sont importantes en biologie comme c'est le cas en génétique et en immunologie. Cette approche devrait constituer un facteur de motivation des élèves et favoriser leur engagement dans un processus de discussion sur la différence entre les faits, les opinions et les valeurs. Ainsi, nous semble-t-il, la séparation des registres du 'normal' et du 'pathologique' en serait facilitée et avec elle une meilleure construction des savoirs par les élèves pourrait être obtenue.

Notes

1. Cf. Conférence-débat du pôle universitaire européen de Montpellier et du Languedoc-Roussillon (1999): *Normal et Pathologique, où se Trouve la Frontière Aujourd'hui?*, Numéro 1, 32 pages sous la direction de Dominique Joubert : joubert@u469.montp.inserm.fr

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CARING FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS: AN INTER-RELIGIOUS MEDITERRANEAN EDUCATIONAL AGENDA

RONALD G. SULTANA

Introduction

Following on from a conference jointly organised in the year 2000 by the University of Malta's *Future Generations Programme*, the *Comparative Education Programme* and Unesco, representatives from the three monotheistic religions from around the Mediterranean have embarked on the first phase of an ambitious and at the same time eminently practical project: to produce a teaching text which would help adolescents learn about and reflect upon the knowledge and beliefs of the three Abrahamic religions, with a view to promoting the values announced by Unesco regarding the responsibilities of present generations towards the generations of the future. To do so in a way that engages the frameworks of relevance of young people, and to speak to them in contemporary 'language', entails the planning of a 'text' which has written, visual, and information technology-based elements. The ambition is to provide a teaching resource pack for teachers of the Mediterranean region, who can draw upon the material prepared in order to include it in carefully selected curricular spaces – dedicated to religious instruction or otherwise – in both formal and non-formal educational settings.

The team put together by the project leader, Rev. Professor Emmanuel Agius, was required to have two key strengths: members of the team had to be pedagogues, with an understanding of the psychological, sociological, philosophical and methodological aspects of teaching adolescents; and they also had to have an intimate knowledge of at least one of the three monotheistic religions.

Each member of the team prepared a paper which addressed different aspects of the Unesco declaration for Future Generations, and developed a pedagogical presentation that could be integrated within the parameters of the overall project. Many of these presentations are contextualised in a solid theoretical framework, making important connections between general philosophical and theological principles, and their practical application within pedagogical situations.

Challenges

Several challenges had to be overcome almost from the very outset of the project. As different papers and pedagogical material were prepared, it soon became obvious that, despite the deeply rooted affinities between the three religions, the question of dealing with differences within the context of what ultimately is an ecumenical text had to be addressed. The setting is clear: the project is really about an essentially *human* journey, where believers and non-believers alike share a quest for dignified living, both for themselves and in their role as custodians of the earth for future generations. The question – and challenge – is: What do the Abrahamic religions bring to this journey, to this quest? The three faiths reflect a common heritage, and draw on common – or should one perhaps say *uncommon* – wisdom. They act as a *prism* through which to reflect on fundamental matters of regional and global concern. As such, they add value to the human search for meaning, one with which adolescents can easily and readily connect. While emphasising the similarities between the three faiths, it is also considered important to acknowledge, respect and ultimately celebrate the differences both within and between the religions, with each faith being presented as providing plausible insights and signposts for the journey, and with each faith being worthy of respect. It is also considered important that the text resonate with the non-adherent, and that religion is therefore not presented as dogma, but rather as a cultural phenomenon, as an experience and a relationship that is lived in an intense and meaningful manner. The text that has to be prepared must therefore strive to be a ‘multi-perspectival portrait, one that is collaboratively constructed and acceptable to the non-adherent as well’ (Serracino Inglott, 2000).

Language and communication: a central leitmotif

Despite the number of issues raised by the Unesco declaration on the Rights of Future Generations, and despite the different insights that the respective faiths represented at the Malta workshop generated, it is nevertheless possible to identify a common thematic that provides the connective tissue for all the contributions to the project. First of all, the fact that the text-in-process is being targeted at adolescents means that the theme of ‘identity’ becomes particularly central. Different schools of psychology – particularly those which emphasise a life-stage, life-task approach – highlight the fact that identity-formation and the discovery and nurturing of a sense of self-identity is of critical importance in adolescence, and that this holds true across a variety of cultures (see, *inter alia*,

Coleman & Hendry, 1996; Couger & Galabos, 1999). Social psychological approaches also highlight the importance that the project of self-identity has for adolescents in the context of solidary relationships. Despite the fact that adolescence is constructed differently in different cultural and social settings, that phase in life does seem to signal, across the Mediterranean region, a time for both intra- and inter-personal discovery, for reaching in and reaching out in ever more meaningful ways. The reality of 'multiple identities' and of 'cross-border identities' in an increasingly complex world makes the challenge of 'knowing oneself' and 'communicating with others' more acute (McLaren & Giroux, 1997).

This dynamic and challenging process of communication with the self and with others recalls a fundamental thematic: that of language. For all the three Abrahamic faiths, the central distinguishing reality is that 'God speaks to humanity' – God has revealed Himself, and that revelation is recorded in a Book. That is what sets the three religions apart from several other faiths, and places them within the same revelatory tradition. It is not only God who talks to humanity, but also humanity that 'speaks' to each other, developing a code of conduct that induces and facilitates respect for the worth and dignity of others, across space and time. And over and beyond the religious context for such communication, education acts as a vehicle for the learning of 'languages', a tool for the induction into the stance and skills of dialogue with different communities.

That dialogue – between God and humanity, and humanity with itself – has to be represented in the text in such a way that it interpellates and connects with critical socio-economic and cultural issues as these are reflected in the Unesco declaration. What did it mean to be stewards of the earth in terms of our obligations to future generations? What sorts of relationships have to be fostered – under the guidance of the three faiths, and inspired by God's revealed truth – so that the dignity of persons, the right to cultural diversity and heritage, the freedom from discrimination, and so on can be guaranteed for tomorrow's citizens? More specifically, the text has to connect with concrete issues, such as the difficulties of teaching multiculturalism to, say, Italian adolescents whose employment prospects are threatened because refugee workers from the South of the Mediterranean accept to work for lower wages.

In that sense, therefore, the text has to present the rights of tomorrow's world citizens as the *obligations* of the citizens of today. Adolescents would therefore be challenged to reflect on the Unesco Declaration via grounded texts which start from every-day experiences, and through references to contemporary socio-economic, political and cultural realities.

Teaching goals

Taking their cue from the recent report on education by the Unesco commission chaired by Jacques Delors (1996) the team of pedagogists have highlighted the need for adolescents to be guided in terms of the four main pillars of education, namely:

- **To know:** i.e., the cognitive element, since it is ignorance that leads to fear and intolerance;
- **To be:** i.e. it is not enough to know: knowledge has to be inspired by values and wisdom;
- **To do:** i.e. these values have to become visible through actions in the real world: a commitment towards promoting the rights of future generations
- **To be together:** i.e. the ultimate skill in increasingly complex and heterogeneous social formations.

Each unit of learning in the Teaching Pack on the *Three Faiths and our Obligations to Future Generations* will be structured along these four pillars, with adolescents being encouraged to understand the complexity of the issues, but also to develop the skills and personality structure required to confront the challenges of the Unesco declaration, in the light of faith.

Pedagogical/representational tools

The theme of communication, the awareness of the importance of the medium as the message for communication (McLuhan, 1996) the acknowledgement of the exposure of contemporary adolescents to the stimulating communicative strategies of the media – one and all have led members of the team to highlight the importance of developing pedagogical and representational tools that are both attractive and effective in vehicling the message of the text.

The educators are drawing on their experience and expertise to both propose and give examples of interactive and modern pedagogies that could breathe life into the text. Among the several ideas that have been discussed thus far, one can highlight the following:

- An inter-religious laboratory, where, following Dewey's (1916) insight, tolerance – like democracy – could be learnt by living in a tolerant environment.
- Experiential learning, where values are appreciated through social games, such as role play, simulation, and so on.

- Visual stimuli, including cartoons, photographs and video excerpts that would increase the opportunity for students to make the connection between abstract principles and everyday experiences and concerns.
- New technology, such as CD-Rom-based material and hypertext, media which are greatly appreciated by young people and which provide a degree of interactivity which is an advantage over traditional, one-dimensional, static texts.
- Dilemma-based pedagogy, with real case-studies helping students appreciate the complex nature of the values upheld by the Unesco declaration, and with the faiths contributing insights as to how such values can be safeguarded.
- Careful and wise choice of texts – whether sacred or other – which encourage reflection and thought.
- Research projects as a strategy to engage with the world as it is, in order to imagine a world as it could – and *should* – be.
- The use of common symbols and key images which members of the three faiths can recognise and associate with, and which mark the text at regular intervals in order to facilitate cultural
- Developing a Mediterranean pedagogy, through the use of Mediterranean cultural resources, the use of ‘parables’ as the archetypal pedagogical resource, and the celebration of regional teaching traditions.

An agenda to complete

Now that the parameters of the teacher’s resource pack have been established, the different learning units have to be written, drawing on the knowledge and pedagogical approaches proposed in the different papers presented at the workshop. Teams of pedagogues with experience in text-book production for young adolescents have to meet; model units have to be composed and piloted; and art work, illustrations and IT-based material have to be prepared. The challenges ahead seem arduous, as many textbook authors have noted (see, *inter alia*, Venezky, 1992), but the task – which from the outset promised to be well-nigh impossible, now increasingly appears to be feasible, and certainly well-worth the effort, and can become a reality if further funding is secured. For ultimately, it is through education that we can enhance the openness to each other, to the generations that are yet to be born, and to the transcendental arch of caring that, in the Abrahamic religions, is given the name of God. And it is through education that prejudice can be overcome, so that faiths become a bridge towards furthering understanding rather than a trigger for discord in this troubled region.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Victor Billeh & Ezzat Abd-El Mawgood (eds), *Education Development Through Utilization of Technology*, UNESCO Regional Office for Education in the Arab States, Beirut in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Youth, UAE, 2001, 374pp. ISBN 92-990012-0-0.

The second International Conference on Education Reform in the UAE, held in Dubai between the 13th and the 15th May 2001, focused on the impact of technology on development in education. Besides serving as an international forum, this conference had the more specific objective of promoting the development of the educational system within the UAE in the light of the *Vision for Education 2020* initiative. Papers were selected with the aim of addressing areas of concern to the education reform initiative in the UAE, and conference participants adopted a number of recommendations for the consideration of the Ministry of Education and Youth. Nevertheless, the issues raised and the concerns addressed are pertinent to any current education development initiative anywhere in the world, and to underline this international perspective the third section of the conference was dedicated to international case studies (mostly of middle and far eastern countries, with the notable exception of Greece and the UK).

For this reason, this publication should be seen not just as the proceedings of a conference, but as a corpus of knowledge and experience aimed squarely at informing education policy makers and leaders. Education is arguably the only field where heavy investment in ICT has not produced appreciable returns in terms of improved processes and outcomes, and many are starting to show concern if not scepticism. Evidently the interaction between technologies and institutionalised education is far more complex than initially suspected, and after the first flush of enthusiasm it may be time to rethink. This has led to a general shift of focus away from the technology itself—with the exception of the keynote speech by John Kuglin and Alex Philip ('Science fact, science fiction: a 2001 technology odyssey', p.23), which showcases some of the emerging technologies, the papers in this volume are remarkably free of purely technical content. The focus is mostly on the cultural and pedagogical issues surrounding the adoption of technologies. Equally refreshingly, the papers here are free of what Cynthia Selfe and Gail Hawisher (1991) have called the 'rhetoric of technology'—the overly rosy pictures of a brave new educational world peddled by many ICT visionaries in the past.

The 25 papers are grouped into three broad categories, focusing respectively on the use of technology in educational planning and management, the use of technology in the teaching and learning process, and international case studies of

technology in educational development. Nevertheless, this division is not strictly enforced.

Many of the papers in the first two sections deal, directly or indirectly, with the issue of technological appropriation at the various levels and sectors of the educational system. Although Bakhtin's concept of appropriation originally applied to language, it can be applied equally well to technologies, and specifically to the transformation of educational systems and practices to assimilate technologies¹. However, like language, technology is infinitely malleable and constantly in a state of flux. Ahmad Sultan, in his paper 'The need to go beyond 'technocentrism' in educational technology: implementing the electronic classroom in the Arab world' (p.165), makes the very pertinent point that technological appropriation transforms technologies too—that technology is 'an interactive entity: affecting and being affected by the users'. Sultan speaks of the need for users (teachers and learners) to intervene in the design of technology. Similarly, Byron Massialas ('Technology and leadership in instruction, curriculum development and assessment', p.119) emphasises the role of both educators and learners as active producers of information, in contrast with the passive information consumer role traditionally ascribed to them.

Ronald Sultana's paper 'Changing conceptions of 'ability' and educational reform—can technology make a difference?' (p.85) discusses the reconceptualisation of ability and how ICT can, in principle, realise many of the visions for education which have been advanced down the years. Of course, in the past many technologies have been heralded for their potential to transform (some would say reform) education, yet television, radio and video have had little appreciable impact on schools. It is not clear why ICT should succeed where other technologies have largely failed—in another paper ('Building the human capital through educational technology', p.129), Adnan Badran argues that the reason may be that earlier technologies placed the learner in a passive role, which fitted well with the prevalent transmission model of learning and facilitated the 'taming' of the technology (as Sultana puts it). If so, then one can deduce that unless the interactive potential of ICT is exploited, there will be little hope that the new technologies will succeed in transforming current educational models and practice. Elsewhere, Mitch Resnick (2002) has put this very succinctly:

' ... until we start to think of computers more like finger paint and less like television, computers will not live up to their full potential. Like finger paint (and unlike television), computers can be used for designing and creating things.'

The solution is certainly cultural—a shift from a transmission to a constructive model of education is required before the potential of ICT can be realised—but it

may also be that the technology is not yet sufficiently mature, or access to it is not sufficiently ubiquitous (at least within the school)² for the critical mass required for cultural appropriation to occur. So while on the one hand many look to ICT for its potential to transform education, many argue that the potential of ICT cannot be realised before the educational culture changes from a curriculum-centred one to a learner-centred one.

While most of the papers in this volume show a healthy disinterest in purely technical matters, I feel that in a few cases the backgrounding of technology is taken too far—Al-Karam's and Al-Ali's discussion of e-Learning ('e-Learning: the new breed of education', p.49) is technically very sparse. In this case new technological developments are sufficiently important to have warranted more elaboration—certainly the e-Learning content models currently being developed by the IEEE's Learning Technology Standards Committee deserved more than an incidental reference.

Two papers deal with management information systems for schools, systems which provide the communication channels, information sources and data processing capabilities an educational manager needs to facilitate decision making. Managing an educational enterprise is no different from managing any enterprise, and the technologies are identical—a centralised or distributed DBMS acts as a data source over which operations are performed and from which a variety of reports are generated. Although both papers are very competently written, what's most remarkable about these two contributions is that they should be included at all. In any other enterprise most of the issues raised here have long since been resolved or at least identified and the role of MIS would have been taken for granted. Not so in education—even at the managerial level, the educational sector still generally lags behind almost all others.

The third part of the proceedings is dedicated to international case studies about a variety of projects involving in some way or other the use of ICT in an educational context. Some of the case studies give very specific examples of how technology is being used in the classroom—Nahla and Sulieman Al-Kindy ('Integrating I.T. into primary Math and Science', p.337) discuss the integration of technology in Omani primary science and mathematics classes, while Alan Pritchard ('The observation of classroom practice in England and Wales', p.351) gives an account of a small-scale project which uses e-mail to support student teachers on school placement. Of particular interest is Seng Chee Tan's paper 'Electronic classrooms in Singapore', (p.291) which systematically traces, in documentary fashion, the computerisation of Singaporean schools through the conceptualisation, design, development and implementation stages.

What emerges from the variety of issues raised in these papers and the multitude of perspectives provided is the realisation that the ICT revolution is

neither about technology nor about information, but about cultural appropriation and educational paradigm shifts. People like Seymour Papert and Andrea di Sessa have of course been saying this for at least twenty years, yet educational establishments have generally persevered in pushing the technology into educational systems whose culture has tended to be hostile—not to the technology itself, but to the learning model it promotes.

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Notes

- ¹ See Adreas Lund (forthcoming). Papert also mentions technological appropriation in passing as a force which can transform educational practice in *A Critique of Technocentrism in Thinking about the School of the Future*.
- ² C. Norris *et al.* (2002) have claimed that the impact of ICT on primary and secondary education will be negligible until such time as the child to computer ratio in the schools is 1:1.

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Athanasios Gagatsis (ed.) *A Multidimensional Approach to Learning in Mathematics and Sciences*, Nicosia (Cyprus), Intercollege Press (Cyprus), pp.511, 1999. ISBN 960-312-063-4

The book consists of an extensive collection of papers resulting from the first Socrates Institutional/contract application of the University of Cyprus for the academic year 1998/9 for which the first intensive programme on the Didactics of Mathematics with the title 'New Concepts and Methods of Didactics of Mathematics' was organised. The main characteristics of the meeting were: the multidimensional character of the study of learning in mathematics; support for the learning of foreign languages; the European dimension of the approaches related to teaching and learning in mathematics and the sciences; and the large number of participants (about 250) who attended the Intensive programme.

The book is subdivided into five main sections: Didactics of Mathematics; History and Didactics of Mathematics; Technology in Education; Psychological foundations of Mathematics and Sciences learning; and Evaluation in Mathematics – Statistical Methods. The papers are presented in different languages, mainly English, French and Italian while contributors come from a number of European countries, namely Cyprus, Italy, the U.K., France and Germany.

The first section on Didactics in Mathematics includes a number of papers in English and French. D'Amore and Martini write on the process of solving problems. D'Amore also discusses the need for children to get the most complete and correct model of a situation described in a text before being capable of solving problems. Grenier contributes three articles focusing on the use of didactic concepts in analysing problems of proportionality. Gray and Pitta focus on the quantitative differences in children's thinking about arithmetic with a perspective from cognitive development, integrating the representation of numerical symbols and the way in which imagery can mediate between the two. Gagatsis and Koutselini discuss issues concerning Curriculum development at the micro level and their impact on the teaching of mathematics. They argue that curriculum development at micro level and action research are necessary processes for effective teaching in a mixed ability class. Finally, Spagnolo presents research on epistemological obstacles in mathematics.

Section Two focuses on the History and Didactics of Mathematics. Bagni tackles the concept of continuity of a set of real numbers and the idea of integral numbers in the learning of mathematics. He also writes about pupils' educational passage from the early stage of a concept to a mature one through a process of doubts and reactions similar to the development which can be traced in the historical passage from an early stage to the more mature one of today. Together with Gagatsis, he also tackles the teaching of geometry where social issues in

history can strengthen the curriculum and pedagogy. Schubring talks about the use of theoretical categories for investigations in the social history of mathematics education. Rogers examines claims regarding the ‘principle of parallelism’ where individual development is claimed to mirror the historical development of the subject matter. Philippou and Christou describe the implementation and evaluation of a pre-service teacher training programme based on the history of mathematics while Papademetri talks about recreating historical events in the mathematics classroom.

The third section focuses on Technology in Education. Laborde presents the integration of dynamic software in the teaching of mathematics while Makrides *et al.* present findings of a pilot study on the use of mathematics software ‘Cabri-Geometri’. Together with Papagianni, Makrides also discusses the mathematics software ‘Derive’. Constantinou talks about the use of a computer-based tutorial as a means of collecting data to evaluate student conceptual understanding on the photoelectric effect. In another paper, he gives other examples of the use of computers in the teaching of light and shadow phenomena. Finally, Kyza discusses virtual learning communities and the use of distance education.

Section Four considers the Psychological Foundations of Science and Mathematics Learning. Two interesting papers are included in this section. Diakidoy discusses comprehension and learning from scientific text while Raftopoulos discusses the development of the concept of the logical connective ‘or’.

The last section of the volume is dedicated strictly to Mathematics Evaluation, and specifically to Statistical Methods. Kyriakides deals with the purposes, processes and policies that drive or follow from baseline assessment. Together with Gagatsis and Savva, the same author also discusses educational effectiveness. Finally Papanastassiou and Christou write about the development of a mathematics achievement test.

Overall, the book is highly technical and offers a diverse choice of papers. However, the focus lies mainly on mathematics. Consequently, such a book would be more suited to mathematics educators than to science educators. Mathematics educators concerned with difficulties encountered by children in learning mathematics would find the book worth reading.

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Panayiotis Persianis. *Prokliseis kai Provlimata tou Panepistimiou Kiprou Nicosia* (Challenges and Problems of the University of Cyprus), Nicosia, S. Livadiotis, 2002. 231pp. ISBN: 9963-8116-2-0.

In the 1930s, British policy aimed to limit the education of Cypriots to that of primary schools to avoid the trouble of having too many unemployed graduates. Sixty years later, and despite various ideological challenges, the University of Cyprus was founded to provide educational opportunities to those who could not afford to study abroad. The story Panayiotis Persianis tells in his book, *Challenges and Problems of the University of Cyprus*, is partly a story of postcolonial liberation and intellectual emancipation. It is also a story of unexpected developments and continuous political and ideological strife, which was rewarded with a belated awareness of the pedagogical vision of the university.

I will discuss Persianis's book by starting from the end. The 'supplement,' which concludes its ten chapters, describes the educational policies in Cyprus from the British rule onward. An important historical account, it ought perhaps to be the preface to the book, as it highlights the historical dynamics that shaped the debate about the university after the 1960s. Drawing upon resources from the Public Record Office, Persianis notes how the Advisory Committee on Education for the Colonies aimed to educate civil servants and technicians, while access to university education was limited in order to avoid trouble for unemployed graduates. Primary education was emphasized under the justification that Cypriots were too poor to make use of higher education.

In the 1930s, the British, sensing that higher education could solidify their rule, came up with the idea of a 'British University' in Cyprus in order to resolve political tensions in the Middle East and disseminate British culture. The university would not compete with the American University of Beirut, and, since Cairo was out of the question given the mounting tensions between the British and the Egyptians, the Near East Committee of the British Council for Cultural Relations with Other Countries suggested a university in Cyprus ('The British University in the Middle East') which would emphasize schools such as medicine, forestry, industry, law, etc. The plan never materialized because other historical developments, mainly the erosion of British rule in the colonies, forced the British to spend their energies in areas more strategic than education.

The next stage of the story takes us to the United States thirty years later. At the suggestion of John F. Kennedy to the Archbishop Makarios, the idea of establishing a university in Cyprus was proposed again. This time the university would be under the auspices of UNESCO or the UN and would aim to attract students from the Middle East. Local unions and progressive forces protested, supporting instead a university that would give opportunities for higher education

to the lower classes, free from foreign interference. Many, however, continued to entertain doubts as to whether the community needed a university.

The final stage of Persianis's story takes place after the Turkish invasion in the north in 1974. Persianis begins his book at this moment because the events following the division of the island (Turkish north and Greek south) triggered critical debate about national identity, international rights, and the legitimacy of southern Cyprus in the international community as opposed to the illegitimacy of the north. Even then, however, political parties maintained a mostly inactive stance in relation to the formation of the university. The final stroke for those who wanted the University of Cyprus was the establishment of three universities in the north. New questions emerged: Should the University of Cyprus advance a new Cypriot mentality (aiming to bring the two ethnic communities together)? Should it promote a Greek identity, or should it promote the view of the financial elite and graduates of foreign universities, who sought a university with an international orientation?

In 1988, the Preparatory Committee was formed to examine the curriculum of the new university and address the emerging debates about the university's language of instruction, which was eventually decided to be Greek and Turkish. Applied sciences were emphasized instead of humanities. What seemed to be missing, even from the beginning, Persianis notes, is the realization that as a peripheral institution, the university had a mission of comprehending the immediate need for the development of a public sphere in Cyprus.

Here it must be noted that Persianis's use of the word 'peripheral' is close to the Gramscian notion of the 'organic intellectual,' that is, a local intelligentsia that resists becoming subservient to a dominant ideology, whereas in the late 1970s, the American Ambassador David Popper had suggested the establishment of a 'peripheral' university in Cyprus that would be modelled along the lines of other 'provincial centres' (216). Persianis emphasizes the (postcolonial) responsibility of the peripheral university, a responsibility that includes solidifying the intellectual identity of its students and involving the faculty in the social and cultural affairs. Instead of becoming aware of this historical responsibility, however, the University of Cyprus found itself caught in a still-unresolved conflict between its ambition to become internationally known and its desire to play an important role in the development of the public affairs of Cyprus.

The preoccupation with publication in international journals, though commendable, notes Persianis, isolated academics and hindered their capacity to contribute to the larger formation of social identities in the community. By modelling itself along the lines of mainstream universities, the Preparatory Committee adopted utilitarian and positivistic approaches to education. In 1992, the university admitted its first students. Ten years later, the University of Cyprus

numbered four schools, thirteen departments, postgraduate and undergraduate programs, research units, with a school of engineering, a school of medicine, and a department of law in the process of implementation. Yet, despite its quick development and a prolific research publication profile, the pedagogical philosophy of the university, many agreed, remained unclear.

Aiming to restore a holistic education that addresses the ‘whole human being,’ Persianis challenges the University of Cyprus to explore what role it can play as a peripheral university in the era of globalization, when the demand for skilled knowledge and technical expertise is so well covered by mainstream universities (e.g., Cambridge and Oxford). Persianis clearly believes that the University of Cyprus has failed to think through the specific demands placed upon it, especially in contributing to the broader social sphere of Cyprus.

Drawing upon the university’s newsletter, academic memos and newspaper articles, Persianis examines faculty divisions about the pedagogical philosophy of the university. Some consider that the university should make contributions to industry and agriculture in order to produce wealth, whereas others insist that the university’s primary mission is to develop a broad humanistic view that contributes to the growth of the public sphere. The EUA evaluation report (European University Association) took a middle-of-the-road approach, emphasizing the need for the university to offer leadership in the areas of finance and industry as well as its obligation to contribute, through the humanities and social sciences, to the social affairs of Cyprus.

But even the EUA failed to see that the university’s central shortcoming is its inability to infuse in students the spirit of autonomy and intellectual independence. In Persianis’s view, the university has failed to establish interdisciplinary programs, especially in the humanities, which has weakened students’ motivation to develop a critical perspective and assume a creative approach to knowledge: ‘The University of Cyprus fails to address the challenge of the postmodern era that wants the social scientist [to be] interpreter of culture’ (112, my translation). Unable to develop a critical understanding of social reality, students cannot experience their community as a whole but instead can only antagonize each other. Their attachments to various political parties, their emphasis on the vocational value of their degrees, and their anxiety about grades all demonstrate their dependency upon models of utilitarian knowledge.

Persianis defends nontraditional models of teaching (student-centred rather than teacher-centred models) and alternative models for the role of the intellectual. It is clear that Persianis is more indebted to Gramsci than to Lyotard, whom he quotes in the context of postmodernist views on education. He insists on the formation of a class of intellectuals who will be able to bridge the international demands with the local needs. He also differentiates between various types of

intellectuals, especially the civil servants (remnant of the British policy) and the ‘local’ intellectuals. Hence, he echoes strongly Gramsci’s analysis of the intellectuals’ task of addressing the social and local problems of their immediate environment.

One could suggest that Persianis is looking for those ‘organic’ intellectuals to supersede traditional intelligentsia, who, hindered by past ideological agendas, cannot comprehend the need for promoting dialogue in the community. In the context of Cyprus’s entry to the European Union and the proposed plan by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, to resolve the divide between the two ethnic communities, Persianis’s book and the questions it raises assume a timely and urgent political significance. Will the university, under the pressure of the current political developments, succeed in assuming the responsibility of intellectual leadership? Will this leadership go beyond that of the ‘expert’ knowledge and become one that, as Persianis states throughout, will address the local affairs of the community? It will be only a matter of months before we see if the University of Cyprus will succeed in taking up the challenge on such a significant political issue as the future of the two ethnic communities. It remains to be seen to what extent the University of Cyprus has comprehended the role it has been called to play in relation to mainstream universities – a role Persianis defends throughout his book with the same courageous spirit he challenges the University of Cyprus to take up the task.

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Nada Moghaizel-Nasr *D'Autres Images Écrites*. Beyrouth: Éditions Dar An-Nahar, 1999, 192 pp. [2^{ème} édition]. ISBN 2-84289-122-8

Dilemme: vais-je structurer ce compte-rendu de livre ou pas? Eh bien, non! Je veux prendre ici, à écrire spontanément, autant de plaisir que j'ai pris à lire *D'Autres Images Écrites*. C'est la petite fille du livre qui m'en donne le courage. Elle non plus n'aimait pas les jeux comme 'Jacques a dit' et 'Les chaises musicales'.

Tout d'abord, à la lecture de ce livre: un intense phénomène d'identification. A chaque page tournée, je me dis: 'Ça, c'est moi!' Et un sentiment de reconnaissance en trouvant, si bien écrit, ce que je ressens, pense, sans savoir forcément l'exprimer ou sans avoir le courage de prendre la plume pour le dire. Oui, on se ressource si bien auprès des enfants qui reposent la mère physiquement... Oui, moi aussi je butte sur la même phrase du 'Notre Père', celle du pardon... et tant d'autres images encore.

L'émerveillement donc de découvrir que dans un coin du monde j'ai une âme soeur. Comme un écho littéraire de *La double vie de Véronique*. 'Uncanny', comme on dirait en anglais... (parfois je ne trouve plus les mots français pour m'exprimer, après tant d'années à vivre dans une autre langue, une autre civilisation). La langue, c'est quelque chose d'étonnant. Plusieurs fois, au cours de ma lecture, je me suis reportée à la couverture du livre et j'ai relu ce nom, Nada Moghaizel-Nasr, incrédule; et puis je suis allée chercher l'éditeur sur la deuxième page, Dar An-Nahar à Beyrouth. C'est donc cela, la francophonie! Des gens qui, par la langue, la culture, l'éducation, sont devenus des frères? Avant, ce mot était pour moi vide de sens. Mais avec une phrase de Cocteau, quelques vers d'Aragon et la voix des muezzins, nous nous retrouvons toutes deux inscrites dans une même filiation. Avec Nada, j'ai expérimenté tout cela, et en plus le jour même de la fête de la francophonie ... à Beyrouth, m'annonce TV5! Il y a des coïncidences amusantes, parfois.

Dans ce livre, des 'images', des petits récits, minuscules parfois. On ne sait même pas comment les appeler. Ils sont, comme leur auteur, en rupture avec les conventions. Ce sont des moments de vie précieux que l'on lit, que l'on relit pour une pause-fraîcheur, une pause-poésie, tant leur forme y est propice. Comme une friandise pour l'âme, au sein des journées si remplies. On y rencontre un enfant. On y retrouve l'enfant que l'on a été un jour, que l'on est peut-être encore. Un enfant qui pose un regard neuf, original sur le monde; pas encore appauvri par les critères réductifs des adultes. 'Un ami vert' évoque le racisme avec une fraîcheur inaccoutumée pour un tel sujet!

Je n'ai pas résisté au plaisir de faire entendre certains récits à mon enfant de douze ans, le soir, à cette heure précieuse où il va s'endormir et qu'il parle à sa

mère. Chez Nada cohabitent l'adulte et l'enfant. Mon enfant a reconnu en elle son porte-parole: 'Même les élèves intelligents peuvent être bons en maths', quand le problème est simple pour les élèves soumis mais si complexe pour les autres...; et ces 'deux jours ouvrables', car 'on a parfois besoin de sortir des rangs pour y adhérer de nouveau'.

Je ferai aussi partager ce livre à mes élèves de seize ans, mes 'filles' qui, pour la plupart deviendront enseignantes. Car ce livre est aussi pédagogique. Un écho de mes années d'Ecole Normale. Ces beaux textes à la taille idéale pour loger en une heure de cours: 'Agenda', 'Le geste était le même', 'L'école est une saison', 'La réponse juste', qui les aideront à devenir des enseignantes plus aptes à développer chez leurs élèves l'originalité, l'esprit critique, l'insoumission parfois nécessaire... C'est un livre que les élèves-maîtres auront du plaisir à lire et aussi un livre essentiel. Ils y feront la rencontre de l'enfant, au cas où leur éducation l'a étouffé en eux, comme cela arrive parfois. Car, encore une fois, il est écrit par une enfant. Une enfant qui a pu grandir car elle a été aimée. Et cela l'a rendue 'responsable, exigeante envers elle-même, ayant une dette à rendre aux autres.' Une enfant qui n'a pourtant pas été épargnée par les soucis, la guerre ('Hors sujet'). Mais elle a eu de bons guides, ses parents, à qui elle dédie le livre.

Nada est mère à son tour, 'ange gardien' des enfants, des élèves. Elle nous offre une réflexion sur la Maternité (celle de la mère et celle du père), sur la construction d'un être avec pour elle en parallèle la construction d'un pays, le Liban, une réflexion sur les valeurs humaines. C'est le livre de la transmission. Nada 'avait trop reçu à sa naissance. Il lui fallait rendre,' Elle a écrit ce livre. Elle l'a donné à mon mari. Il me l'a donné. Je le transmets à mon tour. C'est un beau livre que l'on n'oublie pas.

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CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Czech Republic: *Accrediting Lifelong Learning: Classroom, Workplace ... or Life?*
Brno 14-17 May 2003 - <http://www.eucen.com/conferences/future.html>

Finland: *Teaching and Learning for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and a Culture of Peace*, Jyvaskyla. 15-18 June 2003. Organiser: UNESCO - <http://www.jyu.fi/ktl/unesco2003/top.htm>

Germany: 3rd International Conference on *Technology in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, Heidelberg, 14-16 July 2003 - <http://www2.nl.edu/conferences/>

Germany: International Conference on Conceptual Structures (ICCS 2003): *Conceptual Structures for Knowledge Creation and Communication*, Dresden. 21-25 July 2003 - <http://www.math.tu-dresden.de/~iccs/>

Germany: IASE Satellite Conference: *Statistics Education and the Internet*, Berlin 11-12 August 2003. Organiser: International Association for Statistical Education - <http://www.ph-ludwigsburg.de/iase/>

Italy: *Improving Learning, Fostering the Will to Learn: 10th Biennial EARLI Conference*, Padova, 26-30 August 2003. Organiser: European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction - <http://earli2003.psy.uipd.it/home.html>

Malta: 28th Annual ATEE Conference – *Becoming Teachers in a Learning Organization – Meeting the Challenges of the Learning Society*. 24-27 August 2003.

Norway: Computer Support for Collaborative Learning (CSCL 2003): *Designing for Change in Networked Learning Environments*, Bergen, 14-18 June 2003 - <http://www.intermedia.uib.no/cscl/>

Portugal: *Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: New Trends and Innovations*, Aveiro, 13-17 April 2003. Organiser: ICHEd.

South Africa: 13th Biennial SAARDHE Conference: *Rethinking and Re-Imagining Higher Education*, Stellenbosch, 25-27 June 2003; Organiser: South African Association for Research and Development in Higher Education Submission - <http://www.saardhe.ac.za/events/index.htm>

Spain: *European Societies or European Society? Euroconference on the Causes and Consequences of Low Education in Contemporary Europe*, Granada, 18-23 September 2004. Organiser: ESF - http://www.esf.org/esf_euresco_home.php

Switzerland: 5th International Conference on New Educational Environment, Lucerne 26-28 May 2003 - <http://www.icnee.ch>

Scotland: eLearn International 2003: *Global Directions in eLearning: Assessing 'Promising Practices' and the Future(s) of eLearning in Organizational Transformation*, Edinburgh, 9-12 February 2003 – <http://www.elearninternational.co.uk/callfor.html>

Scotland: *Experiential-Community-Workbased: Researching Learning Outside the Academy*, Glasgow, 27-29 June 2003. Organiser: Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning - <http://hp1.gcal.ac.uk:7777/crll/index.html>

UK: *The Learning Conference: What Learning Means*, London, 15-18 July 2003 - <http://learningconference.com/2003/index.html>

UK: 10th Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance Education: *The Future of Open and Distance Learning*, Cambridge, 23-26 September 2003. Organiser: The Open University – <http://www.edusite.nl/ict-congressen/congressen/>

USA: New Technologies Conference: *New Technologies in Training and Technical Skills*, Orlando, Florida, 19-21 February 2003. Organiser: Society for Applied Learning Technology - info@salt.org

USA: SITE 2003 International Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 24-30 March 2003. Organiser: Society for Information Technology and Teacher Education - <http://www.aace.org/conf/default.htm>

USA: ED-MEDIA 2003: *World Conference on Education Multimedia, Hypermedia and Telecommunications*, Hawaii, 23-28 June 2003 - <http://www.aace.org/conf/default.htm>

USA: AHEAD 2003: *Advancing Our Profession: Refining Our Vision*, Dallas, Texas, 15-19 July 2003. Organiser: Association on Higher Education and Disability - <http://www.ahead.org/conference/2003/callfor.html>

USA: Seventh Annual Workplace Learning Conference, Chicago, Illinois, 8-10 December 2003 <http://www.workplace-learning.net/intro.htm>

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The manuscript can be submitted as an e-mail attachment, to be sent to: ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt Alternatively, **three** complete copies of the manuscript can be submitted, typed double-spaced on one side of the paper. A diskette version of the article (preferably formatted on Word for Windows) should be included with the manuscript.

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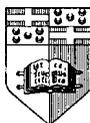
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