Education Rigorous Literature Review

A rigorous review of the political economy of education systems in developing countries

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Contents

Abbreviations

ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
CMS	Community-managed schools
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
EFA	Education for All
ERIC	Education Resources Information Centre
FTI	Fast Track Initiative
GDP	Ghana National Association of Teachers
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
IBSS	International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
KNUT	Kenya National Union of Teachers
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
PEA	Political economy analysis
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
QSDS	Quantitative Service Delivery Surveys
RCT	Randomised controlled trial
RePEc	Research Papers in Economics
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SBM	School-based management
SMC	School management committee
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TTU	Tanzania Teachers' Union
UNESCO	United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Executive summary

Teachers and schools do not exist in isolation of the larger world around them. Frequently, many of their actions – and the school outcomes that they are accountable for – are influenced by incentives and constraints operating outside the schooling system. Each of these factors influences different aspects of education reform, whether policy design, financing, implementation or evaluation. Given the importance of these power relations in influencing student outcomes, there is surprisingly little literature to guide us in making related policy decisions. One reason is that examining these issues in the case of education may not be amenable to a particular disciplinary lens and is better served through an inter-disciplinary approach. A key contribution of this review is to pull together the essential literature from various disciplinary and interdisciplinary traditions and to provide a conceptual framework in which to situate the analysis of political economy issues in education research. Another contribution is to carefully review the existing literature and identify research gaps in it. The review organises the literature along five key themes and our main findings under each theme are summarised below.

Roles and responsibilities

We found that while a wide variety of stakeholder groups have roles to play, a large empirical literature shows that teacher unions exert great influence on the shaping of education policies. Teachers' bargaining power stems from their ability to influence electoral outcomes and political fortunes, their disruptive capacity to extract economic rents, extensive geographic presence, large mobilisation capacity and ability to finance demonstrations and sustain strikes. Evidently an important reason for teachers' strong bargaining power is their political power. The literature highlights that by militating for higher salaries across the board (irrespective of individual teacher performance), lobbying against decentralised school management and protecting inefficient and shirking teachers from dismissal, some teacher unions contribute to educational inefficiency and loss of local accountability. However, this is not true for all teacher unions, some of which do engage in constructive work, including actively helping with reform and/or helping with grievance redressal for teachers who suffer unfair treatment, provision of subsidised credit, and promotion of professional development of teachers. In any case, negotiation, fair treatment, constructive dialogue and cooperation with teacher unions is the only viable route since they are critically important partners with government in delivering education. By contrast with teachers, parents do not have a collective voice on educational matters since they are generally not organised. While, in principle, school accountability can be improved by involving parents in education decision-making, in practice in many developing countries the level of parental participation and voice in school management is extremely low. The literature also recognises the importance of civil society groups (especially in highly politicised countries) and government officers and international agencies as stakeholders in education whose actions impinge on the functioning and outcomes of schools.

Rent-seeking and patronage politics

Rent-seeking (by different educational stakeholders) and patronage politics are rife in the educational set-ups within the public school sector in developing countries. The literature concludes that clientelism, patronage and corruption are the three most intense political forces that push states to expand access to, rather than improve quality of, education. The politics of patronage suggests that it is more convenient to expand educational coverage, e.g. by building more schools or hiring more teachers, than to fix existing inefficiencies within the system because the former involves spending on political actors whereas the latter may involve reducing resources allocated to underperforming political stakeholders. Clientelism drives public teacher employment expansion without demanding that these employees fulfil the responsibilities of their positions. The literature shows that rent-seeking and exertion of political influence is also prevalent among teachers in a patronage-based system where powerful politicians and bureaucrats oblige politically helpful teachers with transfers of their choice, regardless of school need, which can negatively impact on the efficiency and equity of teacher deployment. Some quantitative literature, using stringent empirical techniques, finds that union membership is associated with significantly reduced pupil achievement in India, Mexico and the USA. Studies from some countries, especially India, show that teachers influence the school governance environment not only through their unions' negotiation with government but also in a more far-reaching way, through their direct participation in politics, i.e. by themselves becoming legislators. One quantitative study finds a substantial negative relationship between teachers' political connections and student achievement, and finds that low teacher effort is the channel through which teachers' political connections reduce student achievement. The literature emphasises the importance of shoring up teacher accountability through pupil assessments and other reforms.

Decision-making and the process of influence

A variety of groups influence the educational decision-making process and educational change. The theoretical literature argues that access to resources affects *which* groups will be able to negotiate change, and concludes that groups with low access to all resources will be in the weakest negotiating position. The literature on the politics of decentralisation concludes that while decentralisation is a widely advocated reform, many of its supposed benefits do not accrue in practice because in poor rural areas the local elite closes up the spaces for wider community representation and participation in school affairs. This is borne out by the experiences of Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mexico and Indonesia. At the macro level, research concludes that with a re-structuring of the governance of education at a global level, international donor agencies and global education institutions are exerting more influence on education sector decision-making in many developing countries. A small quantitative literature examines the role of institutional influence on educational outcomes. It presents evidence that international differences in student performance are considerably related to institutional as opposed to resource-level differences between countries. Some of these institutional differences are: centralised examinations and control mechanisms, school autonomy in personnel and process decisions, individual teacher autonomy over teaching methods, scrutiny of students' achievement, teacher incentive structures and competition from private schools. Thus the crucial question for education policy is not that of more resources, but of

creating an institutional system where all involved people are provided with incentives to use resources efficiently and to improve student performance.

Implementation issues

Much of the reviewed literature on education has analysed *the causes behind* policy implementation gaps and policy failures, and it blames factors such as low state capacity, poor administration, poor delivery system, poor governance, poor community information, and corruption/leakages. However, underlying these is likely to be some political economy constraint, some lack of political will or some vested interest, which hinders the reduction in corruption or hinders better administration, governance and community information. This may be because the politicians or bureaucrats that make the policy, or the vested interests that lobby for that policy, themselves benefit from that policy/corruption. Worse still, they may even have deliberately chosen to lobby/make/recommend that policy because it gives them scope for corruption. It has been suggested in the literature that that is why most education policies are associated with expanding access and providing inputs to schools, which require expenditure. Some of the evidence analysing the apparent failure of community-managed schools suggests that participatory programmes are unable to transform how rural citizens engage with education functionaries. A plausible reason given for this in India is the grossly unequal power relations between poor rural community members and highly paid teachers: civil service teachers in the north Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are paid 15–17 times the state per capita income. Some initiatives have tracked public expenditure to improve transparency in the management of education resources. The Ugandan Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) are credited with reducing leakages of primary school funds from 74% to 20%, but subsequent studies have not achieved the impact seen in Uganda, though they are still useful diagnostic tools.

Driving forces

Analysis in a large number of studies indicates that at the national level there are potential 'drivers' or agents of change – some groups and organised interests in civil society, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), pockets in the mass media, religious groups, trades unions, and reform-minded elements among the political, bureaucratic and professional elites. The literature also emphasises the importance of political will as a key force in driving educational change. However, political will is not sufficient for the implementation of education reforms, and the literature suggests that analysis of the role of political will in education reform needs to be pitched at multiple levels. Where national and local political wills are directed to the same ends in education, they can be mutually reinforcing. Where myriad local wills are moving against the ends promoted at the national level they are at best neutralising and at worst undermining. An interesting strand of the literature considers regime type to be an important political condition that impacts on educational reform. It measures the effect of regime type (democracy, degree of openness, etc.) on educational spending and finds robust and significant effects of both regime type and openness on different types of educational spending, showing that aggregate public education spending increases (and private education funding decreases) with a shift towards democracy or openness. Democracy is consistently associated with a shift in spending from tertiary to primary education. However, the effect of additional spending on educational outcomes is dependent on the type of democratic institutions in place.

The literature shows there are several other factors that may inhibit or promote educational reform. Multi-party electoral competition, political knowledge of the electorate, the extent to which the elite dominates the political arena and the extent of centralisation of governance can all be powerful forces influencing the provision of basic educational services in certain contexts. The section on 'Positive cases of reform' analyses examples where benign political economy circumstances were created by change drivers to achieve good outcomes.

1. Introduction

Much hope is pinned on education to yield enhanced productivity, economic growth, social development and poverty reduction. However, for education to deliver on these expectations, it must be of sufficient quantity and quality to lead to meaningful learning among young people, a task known to pose considerable challenges. One of the most important challenges is to make the educational macro and governance environment more conducive to reform.

The paths and outcomes of educational policies are overwhelmingly impacted by political processes and practices. Within this context, there is an overarching need to understand politics as consisting of 'all the activities of cooperation, negotiation and conflict in the use, production and distribution of resources through the interaction of formal and informal institutions and through the distribution of private and public power' (Leftwich 2006, p.10). More than 20 studies conducted across the developing world arrive at the following conclusions: patrimonialism and corruption, and elite capture, is pervasive; political parties are personalistic, there is limited political will and limited political demand for extensive reform; commitment to overarching national strategies is weak and there are very low levels of 'stateness' which generate politicised bureaucracies (Leftwich 2006). Thus, the design and implementation of effective and conducive educational (and other) policies may be significantly influenced by the political economy within which they are made.

Unfavourable political economy blocks policy reform and its implementation. This research reviews the literature examining the political aspect of educational decision-making and the manner in which the politics of the economic resources necessary for policy reform and its implementation interact. Education reform does not take place in a vacuum, but under specific constraints and opportunities, many of which are politically driven, shaped by the interests and incentives facing different stakeholders, the direct and indirect pressures exerted by these stakeholders, and by formal and informal institutions. Each of these factors influences different aspects of education reform, whether policy design, financing, implementation or evaluation.

The ultimate outcome of producing a skilled and knowledgeable population through good quality education is governed by a 'value chain' with stakeholders both making decisions and operating at various levels within both national and international environments. In most countries, teacher appointment and management and promotion decisions are also made at the ministry level. The district level (or equivalent) is usually where education services are actually delivered and is where key actors such as teachers, headteachers and other officials usually make decisions (such as teachers deciding how much effort to put into teaching on a given day) which potentially impact on educational quality. Within this chain, teacher quality is an intermediate outcome that directly impacts on educational outcomes. There are numerous opportunities along this entire chain for unfavourable

leakages and corrupt behaviours to undermine efforts to achieve the ultimate goals: delivery of educational services in an equitable, efficient and effective manner[1].

Political interests play an important role not only in education, but also in other domains such as health and infrastructure – as well as at the macro level. Indeed, this has led researchers to adopt different levels of analysis in their work, depending on the issue at hand. Macro approaches are typically adopted by researchers who are trying to link outcomes (economic, health or education outcomes, etc.) to alternative institutional structures, encompassing variation in type of elections, bureaucratic processes, legal systems and property rights. In contrast, the political economy of education has primarily been studied using a micro approach, since specific features of each sector – such as the political power of teachers – play a crucial role in explaining outcomes. However, this review focuses not only on studies undertaken in this latter tradition but also looks at the macro approaches to political economy.

It is hoped that this review will sharpen awareness about the political economy obstacles to education reform, and showcase how and why in some places, despite the odds, such obstacles are overcome.

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[1] Draws from Patrinos and Kagia (2007).

2. Theoretical framework

Since the 'new institutionalism'[2] first emerged during the late 1970s and early 1980s, it has transformed the way political scientists, sociologists and economists understand the institutions of greatest relevance to their fields, from government agencies to business firms. Political economy has been at the forefront of these developments, employing theories – agency theory, theories of collective action and cooperation, rent-seeking theory, and rational choice theory more generally – that have shed new light on the origins, structure and performance of both public and private organisations.

The understanding of educational institutions has benefited little from these advances in surrounding disciplines. This needs to change. *Our intention here is to put the theory of political economy to use in evaluating the research on education systems in developing nations*. Alternative approaches offer somewhat different analytical tools that are more or less useful depending on what is being studied.

The fundamentals of our analysis are simple and straightforward and form the building blocks of our initial theoretical framework: who are the relevant *actors*, what are their *interests*, how are their *incentives* and *strategies* shaped by the contexts in which they operate, how do they exercise *power* in pursuing their ends, and what are the *consequences* for students, schools and the larger education system?[3]

These fundamentals are consistent with the conceptual scheme outlined by Leftwich (2006) for understanding the politics of development. In its simplest form Leftwich's scheme distinguished agents/actors (organisations or individuals) pursuing interests from institutions (which define 'rules of the game') and structural features of the environment (e.g. natural and human resources, economic, social, cultural and ideological systems). And, as noted in the Introduction, our approach is also consistent with Leftwich's definition of political economy as 'all the activities of cooperation, conflict and negotiation involved in decisions about the use, production and distribution of resources' (Leftwich 2006, p.10).

Our review examines the interests, incentives, strategies, contexts and exercise of power of key stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of educational decisions. We focus on two key types of decision: those related to increasing schooling access, and those related to improving the quality of schooling. Earlier writing has suggested that access-oriented reforms tend to be easier to implement, since they provide citizens increased benefits and politicians tangible resources to distribute to their constituencies, such as an expansion of jobs for teachers, administrators, service personnel, construction workers and textbook and school equipment manufacturers. Quality-enhancing reforms by contrast often focus on accountability and cost-effectiveness and threaten the interests of many of these stakeholders who in turn block their implementation (Grindle 2004).

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[2] Pertains to the theory that develops the role of institutions, their interactions and influence on society.
[3] For work that applies this approach to education, see, e.g., Chubb and Moe 1990, Kingdon and Muzammil 2003, 2009, 2013, Moe 2011.

In the light of the above, we employ the following five themes and questions to structure our review of the literature:

1. *Roles and responsibilities*: Who are the key stakeholders with an interest in the sector? What are the interests and incentives faced by different players? Has this varied over time?

2. *Rent-seeking and patronage politics*: How significant is the extent of rent-seeking and patronage politics in the education sector, and where is it most prevalent? What does research tell us about the impact of such behaviour on education reform and school outcomes?

3. *Decision-making and the process of influence*: Who are all the participants in the decision-making process regarding education policies of different types? What is the identity of all those who exert indirect pressure on the decision-making process? What are the direct and indirect mechanisms available to different power groups to exercise their power? What are the implications of this power play for educational outcomes?

4. *Implementation issues*: To what extent are policy reforms implemented and what are the factors that facilitate and impede implementation?

5. *Driving forces*: What political and economic conditions drive or inhibit education reform, both in its formulation and implementation?

Towards the end of the review the main findings under each of these themes will be summarised and conclusions drawn. They will also be used to inform our initial theoretical framework and to extend and elaborate it. In turn this elaborated theoretical framework will form the basis of our 'theory of change' which we present schematically at the end.

3. Review methodology

3.1 Methodology

We followed a series of steps usually adopted in conducting a systematic review, while acknowledging that conducting a rigorous literature review requires adopting more flexible standards than those used in a systematic review.

Explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria were used to conduct searches of bibliographical databases, key journals, and organisational websites. Supplemental keyword searches and handsearches were also undertaken. Authors and experts were contacted to arrive at a comprehensive collection of literature covering a wide range of disciplines. For example, databases such as the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences (IBSS: covering economics, politics, sociology and anthropology), Science Direct and Web of Knowledge (covering all sciences and humanities), and ERIC (Education Resources Information Centre) were used to ensure a broad coverage of all disciplines. In addition to published literature, sites such as (RePEc), Conference Proceedings Citation Index, etc., were used to search for working papers, conference papers and PhD and Master's dissertations. An iterative procedure was adopted to search for the relevant literature using a number of keywords and synonyms to ensure the coverage of all theoretical concepts relating to the political economy of education.

Stringent inclusion and exclusion criteria were agreed for screening the evidence base. Included studies were characterised on the basis of features such as geographical region/country (giving some preference to UK Department for International Development [DFID] priority countries), appropriateness of data collection, and data analysis and study design (qualitative or quantitative), etc.

3.2 Search strategy

1. *Electronic databases*: The political economy of education reform covers a range of disciplines including economics, political science, education and sociology. As the majority of the searches would take place online, the initial stage of the process involved identifying electronic databases to conduct systematic searches for published literature broadly concerned with the topic across all of the aforementioned relevant disciplines. In addition to identifying databases containing published literature, other databases were included to capture working papers, theses, conference proceedings, etc. A full list of searched electronic databases searched is provided in Table A2.1 (Appendix 2).

2. *Organisational websites*: In addition to databases, electronic searches were conducted of the websites of several organisations with global reach, and with research or technical relevance to the political economy of education reform. A full list of these organisations' websites is provided in Appendix 2, Table A2.2.

3. *Targeted journal searches*: A number of scholarly journals covering each of the relevant disciplines were identified to conduct searches and ensure capture of relevant literature in the defined timeframe (post-2000). A full list of included journals is provided in Appendix 2, Table A2.3.

4. *Manual searches*: - Once systematic electronic searches of databases, organisational websites and journals were exhausted, manual searches were

conducted by examining the references of identified papers and directly contacting authors who frequently publish in the area of inquiry.

3.3 Search criteria

To conduct the searches, a set of search terms and keywords (and synonyms) was developed from practical and theoretical concepts and issues related to the political economy of education reform. Additionally, a list of countries was developed corresponding with countries and regions of particular interest to the study, reflecting the list of priority countries developed by DFID[4]. A full list of search terms, keywords and countries is provided in Appendix 2, Table A2.4.

Searches were conducted first using topical search terms in the search title, abstract and subject heading fields of electronic databases (Steps 1, 2, 3). The same search terms were used in for organisational websites as well as journal searches.

Next, buckets of specific keywords (education, political, issue-based) were used to form search strings to allow for focused results in database searches. The first bucket paired education and political keywords into a search strings for title, abstract and subject heading fields (Steps 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9). The second bucket paired political and issue-based keywords into search strings for title, abstract and subject heading fields (Steps 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15). Where necessary, these searches were prefixed with education, school or teacher from the education keywords.

In cases where the keyword searches yielded an overwhelming number of results, the countries from the country list were added to the search strings to focus results within the scope of the study.

3.4 Testing search strategy for electronic databases

Given the range of disciplines the study covers, an initial search string of keywords was developed to gauge the both the volume and relevance of results from electronic databases in the areas relevant to the scope of the study. Appendix 3 summarises the results of these preliminary searches by (i) describing basic search syntax information for databases that were tested,[5] (ii) identifying the test search strings, and (iii) providing the results in terms of numbers of hits.

3.5 Describing the evidence

Studies identified as meeting the inclusion criteria were analysed in depth using a consistent and detailed data extraction methodology. A summary of the evidence is provided through a systematic map of the body of evidence distinguishing between the broad types of research using DFID's (2013) guidelines as a starting point as presented in Table 4.1 below. Each of the included studies is coded as indicated in Table A4.1 in Appendix 4.

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[4] Reflects list of 28 'priority countries' detailed within the *2011-12 Annual report and accounts of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development*. The report can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67353/Annual-report-accounts-2011-12.pdf

[5] Search syntax information is adapted from the search strategy described in Kingdon et al. 2013, Appendix 2.1: 'Are contract teachers and para-teachers a cost-effective intervention to address teacher shortage and improve learning outcomes?'

3.6 Assessing the quality of evidence

In addition to excluding studies that do not meet the inclusion criteria, this rigorous review carried out a quality assessment of all included studies by highlighting the strengths and limitations of the studies individually and then providing an overall weight of evidence for each of the proposed questions above.

Each individual study was assessed by at least two review members under each of DFID's six principles of high quality studies (DFID 2013, p.10). These six principles are:

1. Conceptual framing;
2. Openness and transparency;
3. Appropriateness and rigour;
4. Validity;
5. Reliability;
6. Cogency.

These six principles were applied to each study in a consistent and comprehensive manner. For example, a hierarchy of evidence was used to evaluate the validity of quantitative studies ranging from randomised controlled trials (RCTs) (high quality) to less rigorous methodologies such as simple descriptive statistics that do not allow causal interpretations (such as comparison of means). The validity of qualitative studies was also analysed by choosing those that give the wider context, based on factors such as the extent to which the study employs a methodology that minimises the risk of bias. In relation to reliability, all studies were judged on the basis of whether their findings are reproducible at some point in the future in the same place or elsewhere, while the applicability of the studies was judged on the basis of whether their findings are appropriately applicable, i.e. whether they can be applied to other low- and middle-income country contexts. Because we came across studies with varied study designs, our in-depth review of the studies and data extraction followed a rigorous process to allow synthesis and comparability. Studies judged to be of low quality were excluded from the in-depth review. However, pertinent findings from these studies may still form part of the final review write-up in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the literature in this field.

One of the key purposes of this review is to provide DFID policy-makers with a clear guideline on the weight of evidence and overall strength of the evidence in relation to each of the questions and the assumptions underpinning the literature. We describe the overall strength of the body of evidence using guidelines provided by DFID (2013) as shown in Table A4.2 in Appendix 4. The strength of the evidence incorporates an analysis of the quality, size, context and consistency of the findings for each research question By following DFID criteria, the review is able to consistently assess the strength of the evidence supporting each of the themes and assumptions.

A major strength of this review is the authors' own expertise and significant research contribution to this theme, which has benefited the entire review process and the final output. Another key strength is the heterogeneity of the types of publications, disciplines and research designs that have been incorporated. One of the key limitations of this rigorous review is drawing meaningful comparisons from studies which use differing methodologies and examine different counterfactuals. Contextual factors may also have

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hindered robust comparisons. Therefore, these will be explained since the review itself will form an important part of the evidence base.

The review process is mapped and documented as indicated in Figure 3.1. Table A4.3A in Appendix 3 provides details of the 50+ studies that were selected based on the more stringent search criteria. In addition to these studies, several further reports and pieces of evidence were included based on feedback from DFID advisors and other experts. These studies are reported in Table A4.3B in Appendix 4.

Figure 3.1: Map of the review process[6]

One-stage screening
Papers identified in ways that allow immediate screening, e.g. handsearching

Two-stage screening
Papers identified where there is not immediate screening, e.g. electronic searching

485 citations identified

54 duplicates excluded (automatically by EPPI-Reviewer)

Title and abstract screening

Citations excluded
Exclude on date=21
Exclude on relevance=265
Exclude as focus is conflict state solely=4
Exclude on location=91
Exclude on paper type=10
TOTAL Excluded - 383

48 citations (brought forward for full-text screening)

Acquisition of reports

*48 reports obtained

Full-document screening

Reports excluded
TOTAL excluded - 17

31 studies included +
20 additions from manual searches +
13 studies based on expert feedback

Systematic map and in-depth review of 64 studies

There are some additional studies that form part of the theoretical framework and general discussion but do not form the core focus of the in-depth review.

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[6] Please note that some citations were excluded on more than one criterion.

4. Rigorous review of the evidence

This section provides an in-depth review of the final set of studies that met the inclusion criteria. The evidence is presented based on the five themes identified previously, i.e. roles and responsibilities; rent-seeking and patronage politics; decision-making and the process of influence; implementation issues; and driving forces.

4.1 Roles and responsibilities

Who are the key stakeholders in the education sector?
What are the interests and incentives faced by different players in this sector?
Has this varied over time?

The political economy of education is influenced by a number of internal and external actors. The key stakeholders in education systems within a country include *inter alia* both bureaucrats and political entities: voters (parents and others), government officials (Minister of Education, other ministry officials), local government officials (local authority), school officials/school management (headteacher, governing body and teachers) and teacher unions.

Teachers as stakeholders
While teachers are perhaps the most crucial input in the educational process, their interests may sometimes deviate from societal or student interests, making them key stakeholders in the educational process. Among the stakeholders within a country, teachers are often also the most organised and vocal group with the power to influence educational policy and the system in which they operate. A large empirical literature argues that teacher unions exert great influence in shaping policies and that this effect is not always positive (Carnoy et al., 2007, Eberts and Stone 1987, Hoxby 1996, Moe 2001). Béteille (2009) states that unions' bargaining power stems from their ability to potentially influence electoral outcomes. First, they can organise an important and large component of the electorate – teachers – and influence its voting behaviour (Moe 2006, Pratichi Report 2002, Sharma 2009). Next, being widely dispersed geographically, they can undertake informal campaigns for (or against) candidates, and thereby influence the voting behaviour of the average voter (Moe 2006). Militating for higher salaries and protecting incumbent teachers from new entrants by existing teachers often organised in unions results in inefficiency within the teaching profession (Hoxby 1996). The political power of teachers is one explanation behind their large bargaining power. This is the case in many countries be they developed or developing (for example Moe 2006 for the USA, and Kingdon and Muzammil 2003, 2013 for India).

Teachers can exert their influence through a number of channels because they vote at a higher rate, are major contributors to political campaigns, form a dominant presence in electoral districts, and finally are capable of causing disruption to political leaders through enlisting their members (Moe 2006). These findings in the USA have been corroborated by quantitative and qualitative research in Mexico (Santibáñez and Rabling 2006) and India (Kingdon and Muzammil 2003, Pratichi Report 2002).

The role of teacher unions and other organised groups in the allocation of educational transfers in Mexico has been discussed by Fernandez (2011). Mexico has followed a political logic influenced both by partisan considerations and politicians' responsiveness to the influence of organised groups in the education sector. This has meant that the distribution of federal education grants has followed the interest of organised groups as opposed to the voices of the electorate. Fernandez argues that the most influential organised group in the education sector of the country is the teacher unions. These have great disruptive capacity to extract economic rents, extensive geographic presence, large mobilisation capacity and ability to finance demonstrations and sustain strikes. Teacher unions are therefore both an attractive political ally and powerful enemy. Other authors have also highlighted these factors as a reason why teacher unions have significant roles to play in educational spending (Hecock 2006). This study highlights the importance of taking public interest groups into consideration when making decisions regarding public goods provision. In the Mexican context specifically (and possibly in other Latin American countries), a change in government is often accompanied by a clearing out of the former government bureaucrats and their replacement with new appointees know to be sympathetic to the new government. In the absence of an 'independent' and permanent/continuing government bureaucracy, unions may be more able to press their interests on a new and inexperienced bureaucracy. This highlights the varying relations between political and bureaucratic interests across political systems.

Kingdon and Muzammil (2003, 2009) present evidence of significant political penetration by teachers in India. They highlight the role of teachers in the political process in Uttar Pradesh to indicate how teachers have become embedded in the political system and the way teacher associations and unions have actively pursued demands through various strikes and other forms of actions. While teachers have been successful in demanding improved pay, job security and service benefits, less progress has been made on broader improvements in the schooling system such as the promotion of education in general or improving equity and efficiency in the educational system. According to these studies, two factors explain the dynamics of the political economy of education in India. The first stems from the constitutionally guaranteed representation of teachers in the Upper House of the state legislature, which has led to a culture of political activism among teachers, many of whom wish to be elected as legislators. Secondly, while teachers in private 'aided' schools are government-paid employees, they are also allowed to contest elections to the Lower House since they are not deemed to hold an 'office of profit' in the government. Therefore, there is substantial representation of teachers in both the Lower and Upper Houses of parliament. This privileged position – teachers as legislators – has political consequences for the educational system. While in itself this may not be a problem, the papers suggest that the issues on which teachers tend to campaign have been more related to their own personal gains than to broader improvements in the educational system. Teacher unions have also lobbied extensively for centralised government management of aided schools to protect themselves from local accountability in matters of unethical behaviour such as frequent absenteeism and giving private tuition to their own students. However, while the case study provides good evidence on the political power of teachers, it is also very specific to the Uttar Pradesh context (or at best to the six states of India whose legislatures have an Upper House) where teachers are constitutionally guaranteed representation in the state legislature.

Teachers' political presence in Uttar Pradesh been significant (with on average 17% of the membership of the Upper House and 6% of the Lower House of the state legislature being made up of teachers, over the post-independence period). This presence has also been increasing over time (Kingdon and Muzammil 2013). Arguably, union membership may help teachers overcome the corruption they face in issues pertaining to their transfers, promotions and the timely payment of salaries, etc. However, Alvarez et al.'s (2007) study of teacher unions in Mexico indicates that unions may not either initiate or be supportive of educational reforms aimed at improving the quality of schooling but they are important partners for gaining support for such initiatives at the state level.

While there is little published research on teacher unions in African countries that meets our selection criteria, one paper each from Kenya and South Africa and some reports and journalistic writing are available. An illustration of teacher union opposition to education reform in Africa is recorded in Bold et al. (2013). Here a randomised trial study in Kenya showed that contract teachers significantly raised pupil test scores when tests were implemented by an NGO but not when implemented by the bureaucratic structures of the Kenyan government, because of teacher union opposition. The Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) waged an intense political and legal battle against the contract teacher programme, including a lawsuit lasting a year, street protests in central Nairobi, and a two-day national strike, demanding permanent civil service employment and union wage levels for all contract teachers. Another illustration comes from South Africa where Zengele (2013) finds that the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) leaders exert great influence on teacher appointments, placing union loyalists in promotional posts irrespective of merit. He goes on to recommend that the Department of Education must engage the service of employment agencies to handle all the advertising, shortlisting, interviews and recommendations for appointment processes to avoid all forms of subjectivity and nepotism. Finally, reports show that the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) is effective in pressing its demands before the Ghana Government by threatening – or actually going on – strike. Some 178,000 GNAT teachers participated in an eight-day national strike in March 2013 to pursue their demands. An *Education International report on Ghana* (Education International 2013) shows that GNAT has been able to negotiate salary increases above the cost-of-living index each year since 2010.

However, teacher unions are not homogeneous entities in all countries, or equally strong, or similar in nature and strength. Moreover, they are not ubiquitously perceived as interfering with school reform programmes by giving higher priority to their own 'bread and butter' issues than to students' needs. Though not on a developing country, Schleicher (2011) in a study of Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries finds that 'the better a country's education system performs, the more likely that country is working constructively with its unions and treating its teachers as trusted professional partners'. He believes it is possible to separate issues of collective bargaining from professional issues, where 'teachers and their organisations collaborate with ministry staff in self-governing bodies to oversee work on entry, discipline, and the professional development of teachers'. In some countries, teachers' unions have also developed their research capacities significantly in recent years.

Some of the literature also finds that teacher unions cooperate with government education reforms. Languille and Dolan (2012) identify the constructive role of the

Tanzania Teachers' Union (TTU) as one of several potential 'drivers of change'. They say that in contrast to other sub-Saharan (and indeed Asian) countries, the TTU is not considered to be able to block or disrupt government education reform. It is viewed as capable of playing a facilitating role in the reform process. In a similar vein, Mulkeen (2010) finds that while teacher unions have been heavily criticised for their advocacy role for better pay and conditions for teachers, unions are also responsible for engaging teachers in other activities such as policy analysis and advocacy for improved educational quality and global education campaigns. Additionally, some unions also provide teachers with professional development, access to credit and a recourse in the case of unfair treatment. The study finds that advocacy work was a significant part of teacher union activities in the eight Anglophone countries it studied (Eritrea, Gambia, Malawi, Uganda, Zanzibar, Lesotho, Liberia and Zambia), although it took different forms in each country. Even in India, where teacher unions are perceived as a strong interest group, Kingdon and Muzammil (2009) report that the secondary teachers' union in the state of Uttar Pradesh also works constructively for grievance redressal for teachers and in other ways, for example, it acted 'as a watchdog by drawing attention to government irregularities in the appointment of teachers ... and also raised its concern over malpractices in the examination system and in the evaluation of answer scripts of students. For instance it gave the Director of Secondary Education a list of 25 schools and colleges where organised copying was going on in Board examinations and also named teachers who had been issued fake identity cards for invigilation and facilitating copying'.

School management, parents, elites and civil society as stakeholders
School governors and school management are also key stakeholders within the educational system and have a key role in influencing educational outcomes particularly due to their potential effect on accountability. There are a number of studies in the literature that identify these stakeholders and investigate the incentives shaping their decision-making. Alvarez et al. (2007) identifies school governors as critical stakeholders and the relationship they have with teacher unions will play an important role in shaping education quality. This study looks at how increased accountability and assessment (student testing, school ranking and school report cards) leads to improved learning outcomes among students in Mexico in that these national tests provide constant feedback to stakeholders and can be used by authorities to design interventions to improve the quality of schooling. However, as mentioned above, the stronger influence of teacher unions can hinder these objectives. Context is important here. In Mexico and many other Central and South America countries there is no tradition of testing for selection of students (as there is in Africa and Asia). Student assessment has been introduced in the context of testing for system monitoring, not individual student monitoring/selection. In practice, system monitoring is perceived by teachers to be teacher-monitoring and hence is resisted. In systems where children are tested over and over for selection/streaming purposes, teachers may feel threatened by poor results but they can always (and usually do) pass the blame for failure on to lack of interest and ability of students and teachers.

Chen (2011) explores the relationship among Indonesian parents, school committees, schools and government education supervisory bodies from three perspectives: participation and voice; autonomy; and accountability. Using nationally representative data on public primary schools in Indonesia, the paper finds that the level of parental participation and voice in school management is extremely low in Indonesia. Therefore,

while one study clearly indicates how powerful unions block reform, another shows a lack of participation and engagement among other stakeholders as being associated with ill functioning education systems.

The role of key stakeholders and their ability to influence educational reform based on their incentives and interest may be lower among disadvantaged groups. Corrales (2005) argues that the incentives and pressures for educational expansion and improved educational efficiency are weak and sometimes even perverse for the poorest and remotely located populations. As a result, states in developing countries are often unable to achieve sufficient institutional capacity and political accountability to achieve universal educational coverage. The paper highlights how patronage remains one of the strongest incentives to expand education but is simultaneously at the root of poor quality and inefficiency. The author suggests that citizens may be important players in the political arena pushing for 'demand-driven' education, stating that the two most important ingredients to boost societal demand (income levels and organisation) are often lacking in developing countries among those who are the last to receive education. However, even where societal actors may have a strong preference for more education, demand may also falter if these actors lack capacity to pressure the state.

Little's (2010a) argument, however, is that in highly politicised societies, such as India, key stakeholder groups have played critical roles in pushing for reform. For example, civil society groups in India continue to call on government to do more for elementary education. Central government continues to appeal to state government and local government bodies to do more. And all call upon teachers and on parents to support the education of their children more. Poor parents also look to local, state and national government bodies to meet the fundamental rights of their children. Meanwhile the middle classes use private means to look after the educational future of their children. They use this education to access growing economic opportunities in the modern sector of the economy linked with the global economy.

The emergence of the private sector and its importance in educational delivery has been the subject of extensive research and is a topic of another rigorous review commissioned by DFID contemporaneously with the present review. However, in this review it is important to highlight one key aspect discussed by Day Ashley (2013) who investigates the politics of private education in the Indian context by discussing the immense growth of the private sector (particularly in relation to educating disadvantaged children) and the recognition of its role by central government (e.g. in Indian government policies such as the Right to Education Act, the role of private provision).[7] This growth of private schooling has emerged for several reasons including constraints faced by the public schooling system. However it raises concerns because in some situations this private provision of education tends to be publicly funded, therefore raising concerns relating to equity (is there a dual system being promoted and are the correct children being targeted?) as well as efficiency (are these public funds being utilised effectively through the private system?). In addition to this, the motives, incentives and interests of these schooling

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[7] There has also been an increase in the number of associations of private schools in different Indian states and nationally to defend and champion the interests of private schools. One prominent such group is the National Independent Schools' Association.

providers then become crucial in having a stake in ensuring the funds reach the rightful destination.

Government officials as stakeholders

Government officials are key stakeholders with significant responsibility towards the electorate in delivering education in an equitable, efficient and effective manner. The political will of government officials, often working in alliance with 'policy entrepreneurs' has been identified by Kosack (2009) to be important in relation to the provision of basic education and Education for All (EFA) using illustrative cases from Ghana and Taiwan. Pointing out that policies for, and progress on, quality basic education are to be found in autocratic as well as democratic states, the author asks: 'under what conditions might governments be more or less likely to display political will for basic education?' The first part of the answer lies in the recognition that governments want to stay in power and to do so must meet the demands of those who can overthrow them, either through democratic elections or through military might. The second part is the recognition that two main groups place demands on governments for basic education and help them to stay in power. The first group are the poor who cannot meet the direct and opportunity costs of education themselves and who rely on government and policy entrepreneurs allied with government to provide it. The second group are employers who, under certain conditions of labour and wages, will judge that investments by governments in primary education will lower the wages they must pay for skilled workers (by increasing the supply of skilled workers).

International actors and agencies as stakeholders

Finally, the literature identifies officials of international aid agencies with financial resources and foreign advisors paid for by external agencies as members of a broader elite that exert some influence over education policy in developing countries. And while they may not be the most important actors, the interests of the international aid agencies have influence through the technical lens, the bureaucratic lens and the lens of international pressure. In *Despite the odds: the contentious politics of education reform*, Grindle (2004) applies her enduring concerns with policy elites, policy choice and policy implementation to a series of education reforms in Latin America during the 1990s. She identifies 'international linkages' as an important set of interests and institutions that influence actions and choices, especially within the agenda setting arena.

The international and comparative education literature contains seminal work looking at different actors and stakeholders in policy reform. Grindle and Thomas (1991) provide a comprehensive overview of the role of policy elites and their interests and incentives in shaping policy and institutional reforms. The authors also offer a number of observations about the attitudes and behaviours of key decision-makers. The international development community is made up of individual and groups of actors who bring to their work ideas about development and the role of education within it. They also bring 'identities' which extend beyond the national and the local host context. Crucially, international development communities command resources in the form of finance, ideas, and information and social networks. While some writers (e.g. Chabbot 2003, Mundy 2006, Samoff 2003) go so far as to speak of an 'international development regime' and international control and world blueprints for education, others speak of a 'loose coalition' of structures, mechanisms and initiatives for education for all (Packer 2007).

A rigorous review of the political economy of education systems in developing countries

Many if not most of those that result in action on the ground are located within countries, while others are driven from outside a country. Undoubtedly the organisations that command substantial financial resources for education play a dominant role but other mechanisms play their part, including the 'set piece' conferences of Jomtien in 1990 and Dakar in 2000, United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) follow-up mechanisms, the UNESCO-led Frameworks and Plans; the Global Monitoring Report; the Global Partnership for Education (GPE); and campaigns and a large number of so-called global initiatives for EFA (Little 2011). Softer influence still occurs through international transfers of educational ideas and practices. For example Sebatane (2000) writes about the means by which education assessment ideas and practices are transferred.

Mundy (2006) traces the role of international consensus in formulating EFA policy and the consequent movement of international finance to support this initiative and how these developments point towards new forms of multilateralism and global governance in the 21st century. She describes the emergence and development of an international education-for-development regime in which agencies and development agents, whose identities extend beyond the national and/or local, play an increasingly important role in the determination of educational policy. Education she argues is now part of a new consensus on global development with a broad rapprochement between the neo-liberal and pro-economic globalisation approaches to development endorsed by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Part of this has involved the establishment of a process to produce EFA Global Monitoring Reports on an annual basis, a UN task force on gender equity, the Fast Track Initiative (FTI) for funding EFA plans, and EFA flagship programmes of UN agencies. New forms of donor coordination have emerged at country level that have, *inter alia*, focused around the poverty reduction papers in which education and other social development goals are integrated with plans for macroeconomic stability, liberalisation and debt repayment, sector-wide approaches to all stages of education in which bilateral agencies contribute to a coordinated plan and a sharing of its funding. There have been more systematic attempts by UNESCO to follow up and support national EFA plans. New actors and partnerships have emerged within the new regime. New types of partnership with civil society and private sector organisations have emerged. The growth of transnational organisations representing coalitions of civil society, sometimes referred to as international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), is marked. Originally viewed by the international community as an under-utilised resource in the provision of educational services, today INGOS have taken on new and unanticipated leadership in international EFA efforts. INGOs have asserted themselves as advocates and policy activists.

While the number and networks of international agencies supporting education has increased, there is scant systematic and high quality research assessing their efficacy and contributions. Examining the effectiveness of the EFA FTI, Bermingham (2011) concludes that although overall the FTI made a number of positive contributions to the expansion of the education systems and provided substantial additional financial support, poor communications between the international agencies, their competing institutional interests and consequent delays in implementation caused serious disruptions to the national policy processes especially in the early stages, so that instead of strengthening, the FTI may have weakened national education reform processes.

In summary, the evidence has shown that government officials, teachers (through their unions), parents, school-management committees and international aid agencies all have a role to play and have interests and incentives relating to the education system of a given country. However, these incentives do not necessarily align and each of these groups are differentially capable of effecting their interests. Moreover, these stakeholder groups are likely to exert their influence at different stages of the reform process. The research, mostly from the USA, India and Mexico, recognises teacher unions as playing an important role and parents as having the least power in voicing their concerns. Altschuler (2013) suggests that improvements in accountability of community managed schools in Honduras and Guatemala can be improved by involving parents in education decision-making. The rent-seeking and patronage politics of these players, and their potential to be drivers of change, may impact on school access and quality outcomes, the decision-making process and educational reform (both in the formulation and implementation stage). These issues are discussed under the themes below.

4.2 Rent-seeking and patronage politics

How significant is the extent of rent-seeking and patronage politics in the education sector, and where is it most prevalent (teaching assignments, school construction, textbooks and so on)?
What can we say about the impact of such behaviour on education reform and school outcomes?

Rent-seeking (an attempt to gain economic rent by influencing policies or their implementation) and patronage politics (support provided to specific groups, for instance rewarding individuals or organisations for their electoral support) are rife in the public sector in developing countries, including in the education sector. Corrales (2005) reviewing theoretical and empirical political science literature from developing countries argues that clientelism, patronage and corruption are the three most intense political forces that push states to expand education. It has been observed that private schools tend to invest more in class-based inputs (instructional materials) whereas public schools invest more in external resources such as wages and procurement. The latter, the author argues, are typically driven by patronage. Corruption is also seen to go hand-in-hand with misguided educational investments. Clientelism drives public employment expansion without demanding that these very employees fulfil the responsibilities of their positions. Therefore, patronage undermines the legitimacy of the state, magnifies the power of vested interests, lowers the quality of state provision of services and hinders the impact of social policy. Patronage can protect spending on salaries; however it does not initiate expenditures on non-salary items necessary for effective education such as training, infrastructure maintenance and facilities. Writing about corruption in the provision of education and healthcare services, Gupta et al. (2000) find that corruption not only depletes overall resources but can also distort the composition of government expenditure. The politics of patronage suggest that it is more convenient to expand educational coverage, e.g. by building more schools or hiring more teachers, than to fix existing inefficiencies within the system because the former involves spending on political actors whereas the latter may involve reducing resources allocated to underperforming political stakeholders.

The universality of public education may also be affected by rent-seeking (Gradstein 2003). Due to credit market imperfections, richer households may be able to exert more political pressure through rent-seeking which results in them being able to secure a larger share of the educational pie than poorer households. The extent to which such rent-seeking matters within the educational resource allocation mechanism is in itself a political decision. Using a theoretical model, the author presents the view that political bias induced by an unequal income distribution may well generate political support for social exclusion whereby rent-seeking determines the extent of access to public education.

Béteille (2009) in her dissertation discusses how rent-seeking and exertion of political influence is prevalent among teachers in many developing countries. She cites studies that show that teachers often use their influence in relation to salary increases and issues relating to recruitment and redeployment. There is some evidence on the prevalence of discretionary and patronage-based appointments and transfers in public office (Iyer and Mani 2008, Park and Somanathan 2004, Ramachandran et al. 2005, Sharma 2009, Wade, 1985). As a large evidence base indicates that working conditions and teacher satisfaction are key to retention and motivation, understanding teacher transfers is important because transfers alter teachers' working conditions. However, in this regard there is a dearth of high quality quantitative and qualitative literature on teachers in developing countries with only a handful of quality studies investigating this issue (Beteille 2009, Kingdon and Muzammil 2003, 2013). Sharma's (2009) work in particular shows how in India many states do not have stable and transparent transfer policies. A broad qualitative literature cited by this author suggests that transfers are typically kept discretionary and conducted on subjective criteria. They allegedly form the bedrock of a patronage-based system where powerful politicians and bureaucrats oblige politically helpful teachers with transfers of their choice, regardless of school need. From a school's perspective, such discretionary behaviour potentially distorts the overall allocation of teachers to schools and can potentially negatively impact on the efficiency and equity with which teachers are deployed[8].

Unlike South Asia, Bennell and Akyeampong (2007) believe that poor teacher accountability is less of a problem in sub-Saharan Africa partly because teachers in this region are less heavily involved in party politics and because patron–client relations are not as endemic in Africa as they are in South Asia. They note that while teacher absenteeism is high in most of the country studies, only a relatively small proportion of these absences in African countries are categorised as non-authorised.

Citing the African example of Nigeria, Duncan and Williams (2010) say that political parties are not guided by ideas and programmes but are 'machines driven by personalities and patronage'. Thus competition for political power ultimately depends on managing patronage relationships (p.10). However, within these limitations there are still many passionate voices calling for a higher quality of electoral democracy.

In a striking example of patronage politics in education in Africa, Zengele (2013) discusses how the teacher unions have taken over teacher appointment and promotion decisions in South Africa, in a manner similar to that observed in Mexico. Teacher union leaders were

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[8] Draws heavily from Béteille (2009).

awarded high government posts for supporting the African National Congress in South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994. Since then, SADTU representatives have been given observer status in the panel that appoints teachers but, as the author's interviews with union leaders show, when vacancies arise, these representatives pro-actively use their political muscle (their closeness to senior political leaders) to influence appointments in favour of union-backed candidates, regardless of merit.

Patronage politics may also partly explain some politicians' dislike of student assessments. Alvarez et al. (2007) using Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) achievement data from Mexico find that improving teacher accountability through assessments of student learning outcomes is a cost-effective strategy. However, governments often do not like assessments that show poor student learning levels, e.g. in India and Tanzania the education ministries do not recognise the non-governmental organisation- (NGO-) conducted Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) uwezo student tests which show lamentable learning levels. The dissemination of assessment findings leaves the government exposed if students perform poorly; it spotlights what some consider politically expedient government policies such as increasing teacher–pupil ratios (through increased teacher appointments) and increasing teacher salaries, i.e. expenditure on teacher inputs that have little demonstrated benefits for student learning[9] but which dispense patronage. Another reason for opposing testing may be that findings of poor student achievement hurt national pride and self-esteem. Examples of this include India's decision not to participate in future PISA tests for at least ten years, after it ranked 73rd out of 74 countries in the 2011 PISA test. The emergence of non-state providers and the increasing role of private tuition has also altered the political climate within which examination reforms are designed and implemented. It has been argued that the private sector providers do not always support reforms that may be in the students' best interests. In many countries, private tutors, for instance, may resist examination reforms designed to introduce continuous assessment on the grounds that this may 'undercut' their business which is to help students cram for one-off unseen written examinations. This is especially an issue when these private education providers are former public sector officials or school headteachers and teachers. A study by Silova and Brehm (2013) argues that teachers from Southeast/Central Europe and Southeast Asia who engage in private tutoring activities have often used this newly created private space to 'evade and perhaps even defy multiple (neo)liberal regulations permeating their work in public schools, such as student-centred learning and curriculum standards.

4.3 Educational decision-making and the process of influence

Which groups partake in the decision-making process regarding education policies?
Who exerts indirect pressure on the decision-making process?
What are the mechanisms available to different power groups to exercise their power?
What are the implications of this power play for educational outcomes?

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[9] See meta-analyses and overviews of developing country studies by Hanushek (2003) and Glewwe et al. (2011), and see a study on 47 countries (Altinok and Kingdon 2012) and one on India (Kingdon and Teal 2007) for evidence on the relationship between teacher–pupil ratios and teacher salaries on the one hand, and student achievement on the other.

Groups that influence the educational decision process, and the implications for educational outcomes

A variety of groups influence the educational decision-making process. Archer (1981) provides a useful conceptual piece distinguishing three types of educational politics. The first type is *broad educational politics*: attempts, conscious and organised to some degree, to influence the inputs, processes and outputs of education, through legislation, pressure group action, union action, experimentation, private investment, local transactions, internal innovation or propaganda. Broad politics can explain educational operations at any given time and the dynamics of educational change over time, at the systemic level. The second type is *high educational politics*: the analysis of interpersonal relations at government and local government levels. The third type is the *politics of aggregation*: the sum of individual decisions – to, for example, go to school, leave school, apply for university. Using this framework, Archer (1981) describes three types of transaction. The first is internal initiation by education professionals. Change is introduced from inside the system by education personnel, possibly in conjunction with pupils or students. This type includes both small-scale personal initiatives in a particular institution and large-scale professional action. The second type is external transaction: this involves relations between internal and external interest groups. This type of transaction is usually instigated from outside education by groups seeking new or additional services. A third type is political manipulation by political groups. This is the principal resort of those who have no other means of gaining satisfaction for their educational demands. This form of negotiation arises when education receives most of its resources from public sources. These three forms of negotiation add up to a complicated process of change.

Using the above framework, Archer (1981) argues that access to resources affects *which* groups will be able to negotiate change: the greater the concentration of resources, the fewer the number of parties who will be able to negotiate educational change. At all times every educational interest group will have a place on the hierarchical distributions of wealth, power and expertise. She offers the following propositions: groups with low access to all resources will be in the weakest negotiating position, groups with differential access to the various resources will be in a stronger negotiating position, groups with high access to all resources will be in the best negotiating position, and groups in this last group are most likely to introduce significant educational changes. The crucial relationship is between the position of the educational interest groups and the availability of the resources themselves.

The most well-positioned and organised interest group exerting pressure on the educational decision-making process is usually teacher unions. Kingdon and Teal (2010) state that conceptually there are two main reasons why teachers may become union members (as also indicated by Hoxby 1996). The first is that they maximise the same objective function as parents, namely student achievement, but have superior information about the correct input mixes, and union membership provides teachers with a collective voice to implement these input mixes. This may include, for instance, asking for smaller class sizes or higher salaries, which helps to attract and retain superior teachers and which, therefore, helps improve student achievement. The second potential reason for teachers joining a union is that they have a different objective function than parents or school management, possibly one in which school policies that directly affect them, such as teacher salaries, receive greater weight than policies that only indirectly affect them,

i.e. membership of a rent-seeking teachers' union. A rent-seeking union may block reform of incentives to improve instruction, e.g. by tying salaries to seniority rather than to performance and by protecting ineffective teachers from dismissal. Under rent-seeking, unions may also lower student achievement if their pursuit of higher salaries diverts resources away from other school inputs that raise achievement and if teacher union strikes disrupt teaching. Finally, since teachers interact with other inputs in order to produce education, rent-seeking unions could lower the efficiency of the other inputs, such that more money for schools may not matter (Hoxby 1996). For the above reasons, the sign of the relationship between teacher union membership and student achievement could go either positive or negative, and is thus an empirical question.

The literature investigating the implications of vested interests on educational access and quality has largely emerged through the economics discipline. More recent literature has focused largely on teacher unions and the potential negative impact on educational quality as measured by students' learning outcomes (Hoxby 1996, Woessmann 2003). Kingdon and Teal (2010), for instance, examine the relationship between teacher unionisation, student achievement and teachers' pay, with data from 16 major states of India. Using stringent empirical techniques (pupil fixed effects regression – where a pupil's achievement across different subjects is related to the characteristics of the different teachers that teach those different subjects), the authors find that union membership strongly reduces pupil achievement. In addition, union membership is shown to substantially raise pay. Thus, unions are seen to both raise costs – within a school, a union member earns a wage premium of 14.9% over non-union members – and reduce student achievement. Most recently, Lott and Kenny (2013) provide quality evidence from the USA that indicates that students in states with strong teacher unions have lower proficiency rates than students in states with weak unions.

Kingdon and Muzammil (2013) explore how teacher politicians and teacher unions influence school governance by presenting evidence on the political penetration of teachers, the activities of teacher unions and the stances of teachers' organisations on various decentralisation and accountability reform proposals over time in Uttar Pradesh, India. Using a different dataset to Kingdon and Teal (2010), they ask how student achievement varies with teachers' union membership and political connections. Teacher effort is likely to be greater in governance systems where there is a good system of school and teacher accountability. However, teachers may not be only passive accepters of that wider 'school governance' environment; they may also consciously shape it to achieve certain working conditions that determine their effort levels. Teachers may influence that environment through their organisations (unions' negotiations with government) and, possibly in a more far-reaching way, through their direct participation in politics, that is, as teacher legislators who have a say in education-related legislation. The authors find a substantial negative relationship between teachers' union membership and student achievement, as well as between teachers' political connections and student achievement. A student taught by a teacher who is both a union member and politically connected has about a 0.20 standard deviations lower score than his/her counterpart in the same school who is taught by a teacher who is neither a union member nor politically connected. Kingdon and Muzammil (2013) find that low teacher effort is the channel through which teachers' political connections reduce student achievement; however, low

effort could not be confirmed as the reason for the lower achievement of students taught by unionised teachers.

In some instances, studies have shown that the negotiation process between unions and governments can be so prolonged that it significantly undermines the achievement of educational goals. Mahlangu and Pitsoe (2011) argue that the power struggle between government and union negotiators in South Africa undermined the process of negotiation with one or both parties negotiating in bad faith with the result that public education has declined and poverty has increased and political tactics have been used to obscure the true problems.

What mechanisms are available to different power groups?
Murillo et al. (2002) state that the impact of unions on student performance depends on the channels and kinds of political markets in which unions operate, and not necessarily on the existence of the union itself. They highlight key channels that have been used by unions in Argentina to influence decision-making. First, union characteristics have an important effect on teaching days lost to strikes; as teaching days are one of the stronger explanatory variables in determining student outcomes, one could argue that unions have a negative impact in this regard. However, unions would counter this argument with the view that strikes are instrumental in improving teachers' working conditions and education budgets and therefore improve learning outcomes. This paper does not confirm or refute the counter-argument, but it does show that the means used by unions to have their demands met have strong and negative effects on student learning. The second channel relates to the tenuring of teachers which has an uncertain net effect on learning because, while tenured teachers may display higher student outcomes, they are also seen to be more absent. While unions may be able to increase the share of salaries in the education budget, there is no strong union effect on increasing public expenditure on education or on increasing teacher salaries. The authors present evidence that union strength is positively correlated with lower pupil–teacher ratios and that union participation and job satisfaction are negatively correlated. An additional channel through which unions can influence decision-making is discussed by Santibañez and Rabling (2008). The authors find that the number of teachers increase (despite no equivalent rise in child population numbers) with every election period which, indicates the union's influence over elections and the concessions it is able to obtain from the government in exchange for increasing its membership. In another paper, Murillo and Ronconi (2004) empirically analyse teacher strikes and increasing militancy of teachers across the 24 Argentine provinces during the 1990s.

Similarly, Santibáñez and Rabling (2006, 2008), using Mexico as an example, suggest that union strength alone cannot fully explain the relationship between unions and educational quality. There are other factors such as union fragmentation and political alignment with mainstream factions. These factors in particular seem to be associated with student test scores. Additionally, a union's influence, when measured by things such as whether teachers constitute a more highly paid group in the state (similar to professionals), appears to affect test scores and increases or attenuates the effects of union strength. State-level factors also play an important role; for example, whether an effective accountability system has been implemented, whether the state has instituted progressive

reforms (such as competitive teacher recruitment processes), etc., all appear to impact on student outcomes.

Other studies have examined how the mechanism of the power play between and within teachers and politicians has influenced decision-making within weak accountability systems. Béteille (2009) argues that rapid school expansion in India and in much of the developing world has had to contend with limited financial resources and poor accountability measures. Allocating limited resources across competing uses is itself difficult, but when these resources are misused and political pressures undermine educational accountability mechanisms, universal schooling programmes are severely compromised. The two key accountability problems discussed by this author are widespread teacher absenteeism and the manipulation of teacher transfers, and how these are influenced by political factors. Using representative primary data from government school teachers in seven district-level teacher labour markets in India, the author finds strategic linkages between teachers and politicians which potentially complicate policy attempts at influencing teacher accountability. Evidence suggests that teachers who are politically active are also more likely to be absent. This lends support to the theory that at least some teachers believe they can get away with absences because they are protected by powerful connections. The manipulation of transfers suggests another type of accountability breach because it involves the circumvention of formal rules. Evidence in this regard suggests that transfers are typically characterised by informal transactions between teachers on the one hand, and politicians, bureaucrats or politically connected people on the other. This undermines the ability of the system to function along professional lines and by official criteria. Patrinos and Kagia (2007) confirm the existence of these political dynamics among teachers and suggest some solutions as highlighted in the conclusion of this review. Iyer and Mani (2008) argue that the power play between politicians and bureaucrats is also a factor generating significant inefficiencies within the systems in developing countries.

Building-in incentives into the teacher salary structure
High quality studies in recent years have indicated that building incentive mechanisms into teacher salary structures can help improve student outcomes. For example, Muralidharan and Sundararaman's (2011) evidence from a randomised evaluation of a teacher incentive programme in Andhra Pradesh, India, shows that implementing teacher performance pay in government-run schools led to significant improvements in student test scores, with no evidence of any adverse consequences from the programme. Additional school inputs were also effective in raising test scores, but the teacher incentive programmes were three times as cost-effective. Duflo, Hanna and Ryan (2010) also find that attendance-related bonuses to teachers boost both teachers' school attendance rates and student learning outcomes in Rajasthan, India. Bruns et al. (2011) assess evidence on two kinds of policies that can be used to make teachers more accountable: contract teachers and performance-related pay. The evidence on the short-term impact of contract teachers is fairly consistent and strong in that it indicates that the use of contract teachers can improve accountability, resulting in higher teacher effort, which produces equal or better student learning outcomes than for regular teachers, and at a lower cost per student. However, these findings are subject to the caveat that learning was assessed on a very narrow basis and contract teachers were paid very low wages. It is often not clear in these contexts how many teachers stay in the system and how long they are prepared to stay as fixed-

term contract teachers before migrating to more secure state systems. However, generally speaking, teacher bonus initiatives in developing countries (in contrast to previous US evidence) suggest that bonus pay incentives can work particularly in some contexts. Bruns et al. (2011) also seem to indicate that information on accountability has the potential to be a powerful means of improving school quality in developing countries but this is strongly dependent on context. However, strong opposition to such reforms and elite capture may significantly undermine these initiatives as seen in their review of India. There is also the possibility that when combined with other interventions, there is a further aggravation of existing inequalities.

The politics of decentralisation in education

The politics that surround decentralisation in education may be especially problematic when accountability systems are weak, and there is little parental information or awareness of how to hold schools responsible. In this regard, political economy issues arise when politicians, for instance, give school management committees (SMCs) a role in theory but not in practice (i.e. by giving them very few funds or powers) in order to devalue accountability checks and balances. Several studies have shown how this plays out in practice. Chen (2011), examining Indonesia's schooling system, states that there appears to be more emphasis on top-down and central supervision and monitoring as compared to school-based management (SBM) and decision-making with the latter having been found to have had positive effects on learning when measured using test scores. The author finds that despite frequent interaction between the district and school level, the lack of rewards and sanctions related to performance leave the system weak. The author attributes this to the differing levels of power and voice among the actors within the educational system as well as the interplay between asserting rights and enforcing responsibilities to ensure the delivery of positive educational outcomes. Increased autonomy at the school level translates into greater efficiency based on the idea that those who work at the school level and are involved in the day-to-day operation of the school have greater knowledge and management control of the needs of the school and therefore have a better ability to make decisions that are productive in terms of academic results and efficient spending (Barrera-Osorio et al. 2009). Bruns et al. (2011) also assess evidence regarding SBM and conclude that these reforms generally take time to produce visible outcomes. Several studies present evidence that SBM has a positive impact on repetition rates, failure rates and drop-out rates. Some studies have found SBM to change the dynamics of the schools but studies that have access to test scores have presented mixed evidence.

Several authors have examined how decision-making and the process of influence operate both when decentralisation is an example of a particular type of policy reform and when the process of decentralisation influences the process of making policy decisions. Reforming critical educational issues is dependent on context (Buchert 1998). In some countries, there may be a need to focus on educational quality, while in others on access, equity and/or efficiency, etc. However, Buchert (1998) states that the implications for both government and external actors appear to be the same in that 'critical support must come from below, and successful and sustained reforms must rely on local rather than central and on national rather than international initiative and determination'. Donor supported initiatives for school improvement implemented from above appeared to undermine autonomous local initiatives in Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Decentralisation in Mexico involved transferring the operation of an underfunded education system to those who deliver and receive the education service with the consequence that while there is equity in educational distribution, the quality of education provided remains low and inadequate. This view is corroborated by Alvarez et al. (2007) who state that school-level autonomy and school governors as well as the relationship of all actors with teacher unions is critical in facilitating reforms.

Essuman and Akyeampong (2011) claim that while international decision-making and power play may advocate decentralisation, much of that policy advocacy is not borne out in practice. In poor rural locales in Ghana, the local elite and relatively more educated community members tend to take on the role of being the new brokers of decision-making and, through their actions, close up the spaces for representation and participation by community members in the affairs of schools. Additionally, 'social contracts' based on principles of reciprocity of roles between the community and schools determine the extent of community-engagement in that increasingly teachers feel accountable to the traditional hierarchical educational structure, and not to the community. The paper argues that the realisation of decentralisation policy in education has to contend with the realities of local politics of influence in the community, and tap into the positive side of this influence to improve education service delivery. In a similar vein Mulkeen (2010) cites several examples: from Lesotho, where community pressure has resulted in schools employing a local person in preference to a better qualified outsider; from the Gambia and Uganda, where he reports that headteachers find it difficult to take disciplinary action against teachers living in the community; and from Uganda where he shows that teachers working in their district of origin were more likely to be absent, by 3.5 percentage points.

At the international level, decision-making and power play may be undertaken in more covert ways. Mundy (2006) concludes that recent years have seen the opening up of an important and active phase in the re-structuring of governance of education at a global level. It is a phase that will almost certainly involve the redefinition of the appropriate scale, modes and extent of global action in the field of education. With all its limitations and diverse interpretations, universal public access to free basic education has now achieved status and legitimacy as a global public good not realised during the 20th century.

Woessmann (2003) examines the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) database of more than a quarter of a million children from 39 countries, some of which are developing countries (such as Iran and Thailand), and presents evidence that international differences in student performance are markedly related to institutional as opposed to resource-level differences between countries. Among the many institutional elements that combine to yield a positive effect on student performance are: centralised examinations and control mechanisms, school autonomy in personnel and process decisions, individual teacher influence over teaching methods, teacher unions' influence on curriculum scope, scrutiny of students' achievement, and competition from private schools. The author finds that student-level estimates reveal that, while the differences in the incentive structures determined by the institutional features of the education systems strongly matter for student performance, not all of the individual institutional effects are particularly large. However the large number of institutional effects combine to yield

important consequences for institutional arrangements on students' educational achievement. The study reveals that about two-thirds of the variation in average TIMSS scores at the country level can be accounted for once institutional effects are recognised. The author therefore suggests that the policy measures which particularly matter for schooling output do not seem to be simple resource inputs and that spending more money within an institutional system which does not set suitable incentives does not promise to improve student performance. What does seem to be the crucial issue for education policy is not that of more resources but of creating an institutional system where all the people involved are provided with incentives to use resources efficiently and to improve student performance.

4.4 Implementation issues

To what extent are policy reforms implemented as per design?
Is this failure of technical design, failure of capacity, or a failure due to political economy issues?

The literature on education reform and its implementation within the international and comparative education discipline is wide ranging, and its concerns/focuses have also varied over time. From the 1960s to the present, educationalists have identified myriad characteristics and processes that influence the formulation of reform programmes and their implementation in developing countries (for a review see Little 2008). Most evaluation studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s focused on the implementation of relatively small-scale educational innovations on the ground. They also focused more on why innovations failed rather than on why they succeeded (e.g. see the review by Hurst 1983). Lewin (1991) identifies six broad approaches to educational policy and implementation: systems, bureaucratic, scientific, problem solving, diffusionist and charismatic. Through an analysis of 15 case studies from North America and Europe, Fullan's (1989) review recognises the importance of political factors in the implementation of education policies. It identifies four main determinants of the implementation of educational innovations – the *clarity and complexity of the innovation*, *strategies employed* (in-service training, resource support, feedback and participation), the *characteristics of the adopting unit* (the decision process, organisational climate, environment-support, demographic factors) and *the characteristics of external systems* (design, incentives, evaluation and political complexity). In doing so, it highlights the key political factors aiding or hindering educational policies.

A second phase of evaluation studies, undertaken from the late 1970s to the late 1980s focused more on successful educational innovations, designed to impact, variously, on student achievement, teacher behaviours and commitment. Again, most of the studies reviewed by Fullan (1989) are drawn from North America. Fullan (1989) offers a conceptual framework for the process of change, focusing on education policy implementation.

This snapshot of some of the education evaluation literature highlights a wide range of factors involved in the implementation of educational innovations and reform that would, in principle, need to be considered in the development of a *theory of change* linked with any education intervention. Within these frameworks, *political factors are noted as one of several that impinge on education policy implementation*. And for the most part much of

the education evaluation literature from the period to the late 1980s focused more on national and intra-national factors and processes than on interactions between these and international factors, including foreign aid.

Problems of education policy implementation also formed the foundation for a programme of work by political scientists. Grindle's early edited work (Grindle 1980) focuses on the characteristics of policies and programmes the impact of political regimes on policy implementation. Although her early work does not focus on education, she describes how the implementation of education policy and monetary policy implicates different groups of actors with different interests. The implementation of monetary policy involves a limited number of decision-makers in the national capital. The implementation of education policy by contrast relies on a large number of widely dispersed individual decision-makers. Where Grindle's early work (1980) focused on policy *implementation* during the 1960s and 1970s, the work by Grindle and Thomas (1991), *Public choices and policy change: the political economy of reform in developing countries*, focuses on policy *formulation* and the scope for the exercise of choice by 'decision-makers'.

Psacharopoulos's (1989) study claims that insufficient implementation is the key factor behind the failure of educational policies in East Africa. The study reviews a number of educational policy statements from East African countries. An assessment is made of how successful the policies have been in achieving their original intention. The study concludes that policy outcomes fail to meet expectations mainly because of insufficient or zero implementation. This, the author argues, may be either because the designed policies are not sufficiently 'concrete' and are often vague or because they are not based on research-proven cause and effect relationships (p.193). This is reiterated by Somerset (2011) who argues that initiatives to achieve universal primary education are unlikely to succeed unless the tension between access and cost, and its implications for quality, are recognised and taken into account. If the programme does not incorporate viable plans to meet the additional costs and prevent quality being compromised, its prospects will almost certainly be in jeopardy from the outset. Thus, insufficient planning (vaguely stated policies and a lack of planning for the financial implications of proposed policies) appears to be one of the key reasons for the failure of educational policies. Another reason is that the content of the policies is based on empirically unsustained theoretical relationships between instruments and outcomes. The author calls for the formulation of concrete, feasible and implementable policies based on documented cause and effect relationships rather than weak and ill-designed ones that are doomed to fail.

The need for education policies to be formulated based on strong evidence is emphasised by Kremer (2003) who argues that political factors undermine the usage of randomised evaluations which are considered a more superior evaluation tool (RCTs are considered the 'gold standard' in evaluating/testing the efficacy of medicines in the pharmaceutical industry, before a medicine is cleared for human use) and may be 'far cheaper than pursuing ineffective policies'. One explanation for this political influence is that politicians who wish to promote/advocate a particular educational programme systematically mislead swing voters into believing exaggerated estimates of programme impacts. Advocates block randomised evaluations since they would reveal a programme's true impact to voters. The author proposes a complementary explanation in which swing voters (or policy-makers) are not systematically fooled, but simply have difficulty gauging

the quality of evidence. Thus, stakeholders' incentives and interests as well as the inability to effectively gauge the quality of evidence may undermine the development of concrete and implementable educational policies.

More recent work reviewed here has looked at the issues surrounding the implementation of policy reform across a range of developing countries. Some of this evidence stems from conclusions drawn from a review of specific programmes. An example of this is the study by Altschuler (2013) whose analysis of community-managed schools (CMS) in Honduras and Guatemala indicates that part of the reason for their failure is that while participatory development programmes are capable of stimulating parents' individual engagement in community life, they are unable to effectively transform how rural citizens organise and engage with the state. States must do more than just pay lip service to increasing citizen participation and there is a critical need for material support, especially for training, and for allowing greater organisational autonomy if effective implementation is to be achieved. In a similar vein, Rawal and Kingdon (2010) suggest that a plausible reason why community participation in education (through community/parental representation in school development committees) is ineffective in India is that the power relations between poor community members and highly paid teachers are grossly unequal. They cite Kingdon (2010) which shows that civil service teachers in rural north India are paid 10 to 15 times the average per capita income of the community members in the village (also see Table 5.4 in Dreze and Sen 2013, p.133), and this is due to the Sixth Pay Commission's pay recommendations which nearly doubled teacher pay in one go in 2009. Kingdon (2010) shows that while the Pay Commission, in making its recommendations for pay increases, took into account the views of teacher unions, it did not take into account the implications of the massive pay inequality that their recommendations would engender.

A study by Evans et al. (1995) presents six case studies of education reform in Africa, in Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritius, Mozambique and Uganda. Two main themes emerge from the comparative analysis of case study evidence: the need for publicly stated education policies understood and supported by both government and civil society, and the importance of participation by the diverse groups in society who will be affected by the policies. Moreover, the authors acknowledge that, in practice, the process of policy design and implementation is an interactive rather than a discrete process. Because stakeholders' incentives and interests shape policy reform at all stages, the implementation of a policy is affected by the various changes that occur at different points even after a particular policy option is adopted. The authors argue that implementation is hindered and sometimes blocked even well into the implementation stage when mid-level bureaucrats and school personnel seek to influence and resist the translation of policies into effective regulations and actions.

Patrinos and Kagia (2007) note that the failure of effective implementation of educational investments lies partly in ill-targeted policies and the misallocation of public spending which is insufficiently focused on quality. These may arise either as a result of poor capacity or poor governance, though the ultimate outcome is reduced education effectiveness. Education effectiveness is also reduced when spending decisions are improperly guided, i.e. when decisions are not based on information, tools and mechanisms that improve outcomes. Corruption in education is particularly important because the sector usually accounts for a large share of public expenditures. Corrupt

education practices across the world contribute to inefficient use of resources. Many education stakeholders argue that the Millennium Development Goals for education will not be achieved without developing and strengthening the instruments needed to control corruption in education (Transparency International 2005, cited in Patrinos and Kagia, 2007). The authors cite several examples where corrupt practices in education not only result in a less-than-optimal allocation of limited government resources (for example through reduced spending on key inputs such as textbooks) but also undermine access, quality and equity in education.

Educational financing is deemed to be high quality when the systems in place can be judged to be adequate, efficient and equitable. Internationally there have been several initiatives used for tracking public expenditure to improve transparency in the management of education resources. Foremost of these are Public Expenditure Tracking Surveys (PETS) first developed in Uganda in the 1990s that trace funds through the different administrative structures managing those funds. The Ugandan PETS study is cited as best practice in anti-corruption literature due to the success it apparently achieved in reducing leakages of primary school funds from 74% to 20%. Subsequently, several similar studies have been commissioned in other countries and while PETS have often proved to be useful diagnostic tools where they have been implemented, they have not been as successful in achieving the impact seen in Uganda. The main objective of expenditure tracking surveys in education, whether they are PETS or Quantitative Service Delivery Surveys7 (QSDS) or those undertaken by civil society organisations, is to identify key leakages and bottlenecks in the flow of funds, in order to understand the factors behind any inefficiency, inadequacy or inequity present in the educational financing system. The various surveys commissioned across the developing world have achieved this with differing levels of success. While the pioneering Uganda PETS is cited as a tremendous success story, later initiatives have not met with the same resounding appreciation. However, these studies can still provide guidance on potential pitfalls and weaknesses that can help guide future efforts.

A recent example of an expenditure-tracking survey is the PAISA report in India[10] (PAISA, 2012). Given the PAISA report is a very recent publication, the true 'impact' of this initiative on policy and practice cannot be adequately assessed as yet, However, this citizen-led social audit – albeit with much room for improvement – has put in the public domain some evidence on the financial management of public education expenditure and, as such, has opened up a space in a hitherto closed subject, and has attracted media coverage in India. It has also brought the issue of good financial management, transparency and accountability to the fore in public discussions. One of the key recommendations to improve financial planning relates to capacity building of personnel at both the centre and state levels since low levels of capacity both undermine fiscal planning and effective implementation of educational policies.

Pedley and Taylor (2009) argue that several factors undermine effective implementation of educational policies aimed at universal access as envisaged under EFA. Using the example of Ghana, they argue that the strong influence of the economic and political elite on both educational policy and the allocation of resources affects educational policy and

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[10] PAISA literally means money in Hindi. It is the equivalent of 'cent' in the USA or 'pence' in the UK.

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places demands on the educational system that pursues their own interests rather than those of the poor. Secondly, the use of private schooling by elite families strengthens their chances of securing access to higher levels of state education which means that the demands on public resources at higher levels of education arise from this pressure from the elite. Thirdly, due to increasing primary and secondary education, tertiary education numbers have also increased greatly. As a result, while governments could be committed to EFA, elite pressure on limited resources diverts them from primary education and from pro-poor policies. However, Little (2010b) also notes that in Ghana while there is strong political will for educational reform, the supply of trained teachers struggles to keep a pace with the numbers of children enrolled, and, as more and more children complete primary and junior secondary education the goal posts of what constitutes EFA will shift. So too will the ideological preferences of political parties in a democratic system. Thus, it is a combination of factors that appear to hinder and often block effective reform implementation.

Pedley and Taylor (2009) also claim that donors are operating in a world where it is more difficult to influence policies. King (2007) presents a discussion on the trade-off between basic and post-basic education agendas in Kenya showing the complexity of policy-making and implementation when national priorities are entangled with international agendas. King argues that while Kenya's national 'preoccupation' has been with the whole of the education and training system, external donors have often prioritised particular sub-sectors such as primary schooling. It is inevitable that countries with a high dependence on external funding potentially end up paying substantial attention to the investment priorities of their principal development partners to the detriment of national priorities.

Similarly, Kempner and Loureiro (2002) question the cultural neutrality of policies imposed by major international monetary agencies. The policies of key donors and agencies, they argue, are based on perceptions that all developing countries are cultural variations of the same problems and hence are assumed to require the same solutions. Through an analysis of the failures of the World Bank's programmes in Brazil and other developing countries, they call for a greater recognition of the need for solutions in localised contexts. It appears that it is inappropriate policies that are formulated out of ignorance of the local culture and context that are most doomed to failure. This view is supported by Kosack (2009) who reiterates that one of the key implications of his analysis for aid effectiveness is that donors need to understand the country contexts in which they are working and to judge whether a government is likely to display the enduring political will to provide basic education. This likelihood increases when a political entrepreneur of the poor is affiliated with the government. Thus, it would seem that it is inappropriate design as well as ineffective implementation that hinder policy reform.

Some of the literature discussed in this section analyses the factors behind policy implementation gaps and policy failures, and blames factors such as low state capacity, poor administration, a poor delivery system, poor governance, and corruption leakages for failing policies and poor outcomes. However, even if the apparent reason for a policy failure is (say) some leakages/corruption such that the policy is not implemented as intended, behind that is some political economy constraint, some lack of political will or some vested interest, which does not want to reduce the corruption. This may be perhaps because the politicians or bureaucrats that make the policy, or the vested interests that

lobby for that policy, themselves benefit from the policy[11]. So they have an incentive to not clean up corruption. Worse still, they may even have deliberately chosen to lobby or recommend or even make that policy precisely because that policy gives them scope for corruption. It has been suggested in the literature that that is why most education policies are to do with expanding access to education, and providing inputs to schools, which require expenditure.

4.5 Driving forces

What political and economic conditions drive or inhibit education reform, both in the formulation of reform and in its implementation?

Drivers of educational change

As we have seen above once a reform process is in motion many stakeholders exert influence. But what are the forces that create the imperative for reform in the first place? These will vary from country to country. In the 1990s in some countries education reconstruction and reform were conducted within a framework of economic 'structural adjustment'. Buchert (1998) presents examples of countries where economic reorganisation has been largely internally determined and of countries driven to do this because of their dependence on international aid. In other countries the underlying driver has been political transformation. In some cases national political transformations have preceded, in some been an adjunct to, and in others have followed the economic reform process. The role of international financial institutions, technical and funding agencies and intergovernmental organisations in national policy-making has varied.

Political drivers for change are of several types. In Ghana the need for reform of the basic education system stemmed from a political transformation from a military to a democratic regime and attendant constitutional change. While the reform was supported over many years by the international community, the fundamental driver was national and political. In practice the content of the reforms echoed those proposed in the 1970s under a military regime but lack of economic resources at that time impeded their adoption and implementation (Little 2010c). In Sri Lanka major reforms of education, in 1972 and 1997, were driven by political instability. In 1971 a youth insurgency from among disaffected, unemployed youth compelled the government to promise a radical overhaul of the education system to make education more relevant to the world of work. In 1994 after years of civil strife between different groups the government once again committed itself to an overhaul of the education system (Little, 2011).

In their comparative study of African countries Evans et al. (1995) underline the role of political imperatives and contexts in 'triggering' reviews of education policy between the 1970s and early 1990s. National reviews of education arose in Benin, Mali and Uganda after a new, often revolutionary and/or newly elected democratic government came to power (Benin, Mali, Uganda). They also arose at the end of a period of conflict or war (Mozambique, Uganda), when public dissatisfaction with the condition of education could no longer be ignored (Benin, Ghana, Guinea), or when macroeconomic adjustment, often linked with reliance on external development financing, obliged the government to

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[11] Tanzania is a good example of major over-expansion of a secondary network since 2006 due to political party/MP interests.

reorient its financing and budgetary strategies and practices (Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritius).

Regime type
Regime type is considered by some authors to be an important political condition that drives on educational reform. Ansell (2008), for instance, argues that the effectiveness of education policies will differ depending on regime type with autocracies potentially having a vested interest in curtailing foreign aid earmarked for education purposes and targeting funds to preferred political agendas and subsidise higher education for the elite over and above the interests of the masses. Ansell looks at the relationship between regime type (openness, democratisation, etc.) on educational spending. The author finds that there are robust and significant effects of both regime type and openness on different types of educational spending. Private spending is also strongly negatively affected by democracy. Democracy is consistently associated with a shift in spending from tertiary to primary education although the effect of openness is reversed when moving from developing to developed countries. Hicken and Simmons (2008) finds that while (as several other authors have found) democracies may spend more on education than non-democracies, the effect of this additional spending on educational outcomes is dependent on the type of democratic institutions in place. Bourguignon and Verdier (2005) note that opening up a developing economy may have unexpected consequences for investments in human capital through education. The basic argument of this paper is that a ruling capitalist elite has a political interest in subsidising domestic education as long as the return on financial and physical assets is positively affected by local human capital endowments. However, globalisation may reduce the elite's incentives to fund domestic education. Thus, macroeconomic policies such as openness may also be significantly linked to the political economy of education and the associated outcomes. Additionally, the relationship between education and democracy does not necessarily work in any one specific direction (Harber 2002). Harber's study provides specific examples from Africa where education has not played a significant role in furthering democracy and provides some further examples of African countries where serious attempts are being made to try to change education systems in a more democratic direction.

There are several other factors that may either inhibit or promote educational reform. Multiparty electoral competition may prove to be a powerful force influencing the provision of basic educational services in certain contexts (Stasavage 2005). Additionally, an important aspect in relation to education decision-making is political knowledge and unless the electorate has a basic understanding of the political system and the key political issues, they will be making choices based on ignorance which can be argued to be no choice at all (Harber 2002). The extent to which elites dominate the political arena can also be an important force in determining educational reform. These may differ depending on when political systems are centralised or decentralised. Archer outlines a number of important differences between centralised and decentralised systems: in centralised systems the greater the superimposition and unity among the relevant elites the more standardised are the educational changes introduced or the existing practices which are defended. Political manipulation is also usually the dominant process of negotiation in centralised systems. If solitary governing elites dominate the political arena the measures introduced reflect its restricted interests. In decentralised systems, on the other hand, standardised measures are infrequent because those seeking change do not have to

accommodate their goals with others, thus diluting their precise requirements in order to be able to exert greater political pressure.

Others have suggested that education reforms oriented to increasing educational access are not confined to democratic regimes. Studies of Ghana suggest that it has been populist, rather than democratic regimes that promoted access (e.g. Kosack 2009, Little 2010b). Equally, it is not inevitable that a regime change towards democracy will necessarily have benign effects on the education sector. Pherali et al. (2011) suggest that in Nepal since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, education has become highly politicised and an arena for politicians to declare ideological commitments serving their needs rather than those of the children and without considering implementation implications, with SMCs increasingly used as vehicles to mobilise voter support. The greatest strides made in basic education in China in the 20th century – and which formed the basis for China's current educational record – occurred during Mao's mass-oriented but highly non-democratic regime (Lewin et al. 1994).

The importance of political will
In recent years political will has been seen as a key driving force in both designing and implementing effective educational reform. In 2010 the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said: 'We do not need more pledges. If nations deliver on the financial commitments they have already made, we can achieve the goals. There is clearly a lack of political will' (D'Angelo 2010). The concept and term political will is used most commonly by the international community to exhort and berate national governments. However it might equally be used to exhort the international community itself (e.g. Birdsall et al. 2005).

Political will has been defined as 'a sustained commitment of politicians and administrators to invest the necessary resources to achieve specific objectives and a willingness to make and implement policy despite opposition' (Little 2011). Several studies stress the importance of political will in driving change. To take one example, Barber (2013) emphasises the criticality of political will in the large and ambitious Punjab School Reform programme in Pakistan, where he cites the very strong commitment of the Chief Minister in the design and implementation of the programme, leading to rapid and significant improvements in educational outcomes. However, others have expressed some scepticism about the adequacy of political will as a driver of change. In any case, political will is 'endogenous', i.e. not usually originating from outside, but created by the system itself. CfBT (2011) highlights how limitations in coherence and consensus at the political level undermine the sustainability of education reform programmes despite the political will of those within the education arena and among development partners.

A more nuanced example is from Sri Lanka, which also helps to resolve the apparent tension between the Barber and CfBT views, and it highlights the importance of distinguishing between national and local political wills. In a very detailed analysis of the comprehensive 1997 Education Reforms in Sri Lanka, Little (2011) describes how national-level political will, manifested through the President's personal involvement in both policy formulation and the early stages of implementation, gave the reform process considerable momentum. It was particularly influential in the reform component judged to have enjoyed most success – primary education – where good technical design, the involvement

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of the provincial administrations, wide-scale teacher training and domestic and foreign financial support also played their parts. The analysis of five components of the reform underlined the need to analyse political will – both at the national and local level – in relation to particular reform content. However not all components attracted the same mix of national and local political will and interest. The reform of junior secondary education attracted neither national nor local political will at both the formulation and implementation stage. Little's analysis extended the arenas in which political will is exercised to include the sub-national level, from province to school level. Two of the reforms (school rationalisation and the equitable distribution of school facilities) attracted myriad political wills at the local level that in turn generated so much resistance that they impeded reform implementation. Even in primary education that had enjoyed so much political will at the highest of levels, local political wills influenced the selection of teacher advisors on non-merit criteria and slowed the pace of implementation.

Conceptually, the findings from this case study resonate with other writings on the politics of policy formulation and policy implementation, and suggest a more general application. Political will pervades both policy formulation and policy implementation and is a necessary but not sufficient ingredient for the implementation of education reforms. Where policies are not subject to public or parliamentary debate then a culture of programmatic politics, involving an exchange of votes for public goods of benefit to large numbers, is muted. The remoteness of the policy formulation process encourages a culture of patronage politics in which citizens exert their agency in the implementation process through exchanges of political support for private and/or club goods (e.g. teacher appointments and transfers, selections of schools for intervention programmes).

The case study suggests that any analysis of the role of political will in education reform needs to be pitched at multiple levels – from the national-level interests, commitments and actions of Presidents, Ministers of Education, Ministers of Finance and political parties to the local-level interests, commitments and actions of citizens, local politicians, teachers, parents and officials in local and provincial government administrations. Where national-level and local political wills are directed to the same ends in education, they can be mutually reinforcing. Where myriad local wills are moving against the ends promoted at the national level they are at best neutralising and at worst undermining. Political will is a double-edged sword (Little 2011). This is also apparent from Little's (2010a) analysis of India where she argues that the role of political will for and commitment to elementary education in India has shifted over time and reflects broader political shifts in the definition of development and in commitments to overcoming social and economic inequalities.

While political will may be present, the rhetoric is often far removed from reality. Sørensen (2008) provides the example of Sri Lanka where the government attempted to combat conflict and foster social cohesion through education. A key strategy within this was to eliminate discriminatory contents from learning material and to develop a new curriculum including subjects such as peace, tolerance, and citizenship. The author argues that although textbooks incorporated elements of citizenship and notions of tolerance, in reality the hiring of teachers, allocation of resources, distribution of books, etc., were examples that contradicted the notion of equal citizenship and replaced it with a sense of partial citizenship due to the influence of politics on education. Political patronage based

on ethnicity and socio-economic status is prevalent and recognition and resources can be seen to be exchanged for votes and other favours. The author highlights the limitations of merely using a curriculum as an agent of change by stating that as long as students experience deprivation, discrimination and a system where 'politics and not policies' count, then the curriculum is unlikely to induce the notion of equal citizenship with any credibility.

Positive cases of reform
In much of the above we have identified specific factors and forces that have impeded education reform. In this section we focus on more positive accounts of reform through three comparative studies and one detailed case study.

Grindle (2004) considers 39 reform initiatives in the content and structure of basic education in Latin America (but with a particular focus on Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil) between 1977 and 1996. Most of the reforms of the 1950s – 1970s in Latin America involved the expansion of education in rural areas and of facilities for poor children in urban squatter settlements. These reforms encountered relatively little resistance and were generally considered to offer positive cases of reform. Access reforms 'provided citizens with increased benefits and politicians with tangible resources to distribute to their constituencies. They created more jobs for teachers, administrators, service personnel, construction workers, and textbook and school equipment manufacturers, they increased the size and power of teachers' unions and central bureaucracies. In fact unions were often among the principal advocates for broader access to public education. Given these characteristics it is not too much to argue that these reforms were 'easy' from a political economy perspective' (Grindle 2004, p.6). These positive cases however stand in stark contrast to the quality-enhancing reforms of the 1990s. These 'involved the potential for lost jobs, and lost control over budgets, people and decisions. They exposed students, teachers and supervisors to new pressures and expectations. Teachers' unions charged that they destroyed long existing rights and career tracks' (Grindle 2004, p.6).

Grindle's (2004) book is probably the most cited source in the political economy of education. It is a seminal analysis (based on 16 case studies) of how positive education *quality* reform took place in Latin America despite strongly mobilised interests opposed to change. She concludes that whether reforms succeed or not depends on how they are introduced, designed, approved and implemented. For example, in Mexico President Salinas waited three years to establish his power and negotiate with the unions, to time his reforms in a manner optimal for their success. Another factor behind reform was the successful leaders' use of their ability to appoint ministers and technical teams in order to promote their initiatives. Based on a detailed analysis of the design teams in the reforms that took place in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and Mexico, Grindle shows that while the role of the reform-design team is often overlooked in political economy discussions (with the widespread assumption that their work primarily involves the mechanical application of expertise), in fact such teams balance choices and options in devising a solution and frequently engage in political conflicts. For example, in Minas Gerais in Brazil, the backgrounds of the reform team members were similar and it ensured that they came to agreement relatively quickly on what the education problem was and how to solve it). Grindle highlights that success also depends on how reform leaders manage their

opposition, with negotiation yielding superior outcomes compared to confrontation: Salinas was able to negotiate with the Mexican teachers' union instead of antagonising it. Successful reform also rests on systematically weakening the opposition. Finally Grindle shows that successful reform efforts are led by people who find opportunities to 'set the terms of the debate' about reform. For example, in Mexico and Bolivia, the Presidents stressed the importance of reforms for modernising the countries' economies, implicitly suggesting that entities opposing education reform were opposed to modernisation, economic growth and poverty alleviation.

In a comparative study Mehrotra (1998) analyses countries in the 'developing world' that appear to be successful in achieving major improvements in access to education at relatively early stages of their respective development trajectories[12]. He suggests that the countries furthest from EFA have not adopted policies that would increase access, such as (demand side policies) increasing the physical proximity of schools, mother-tongue education especially in the first few years and school-feeding programmes, and (supply side policies) equitable public expenditures by level, low unit costs and adequate expenditures on materials for teachers and students.

Another influential study describes and analyses successful education reforms in 20 education systems (McKinsey 2010). In this study, education systems are divided into four categories, those that have improved from poor to fair, fair to good, good to great and great to excellent, these categories being based on levels of student achievement. All the developing country examples – Chile, Ghana and the states of Madhya Pradesh in India, Western Cape in South Africa and Minas Gerais in Brazil – fall into the 'poor to fair' category. In some countries several episodes of reform are studied, yielding a set of 34 'reform journey' cases. The evidence base for the analyses of reform journeys are interviews with approximately 200 system leaders and the descriptions of around 600 interventions which they led. Of greatest interest for our review is the analysis of the five developing country reform journey cases: Chile (2001–2005), Madhya Pradesh (2006+), Minas Gerais in Brazil (2003+), Western Cape (2003+) and Ghana (2003+). The report presents 11 examples of interventions common to these five countries' reform cases. These are 'scaffolding and motivation for low skill teachers and principals' (prescriptive teaching materials, teacher technical skill building, external coaching, school visits from officials from the centre, increases in instructional time); minimum quality standards (outcome targets, assessments, school infrastructure development, textbook provision, additional funding for low performing schools); and access (increase school places, meet basic needs of students – meals, clothing, transportation, toilets).

Alongside the analysis of education interventions is a description of political factors that 'ignited' some of the reforms. In Chile the transition from the Pinochet government to stable democracy was considered an important spur for reform. In Ghana the shift to democratic government and a new constitution provided the framework for education reform. No significant political or economic events are identified as igniters of reform in Madhya Pradesh, Minas Gerais or Western Cape. The report also identifies the role of technical and political leadership in 'igniting reforms'. In Chile and Minais Gerais new

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[12] The ten cases were Cuba, Costa Rica and Barbados in the Caribbean and Central America region; Botswana, Mauritius and Zimbabwe in Africa; Kerala state in India and Sri Lanka in South Asia; and Malaysia and the Republic of Korea in East and South East Asia.

technical and political leaders assumed office at the beginning of the reform period, while in Ghana and Western Cape only the technical leaders were new (p.97 of the report incorrectly describes King Abdullah bin Al Hussein as the new political leader of Ghana in 2003). Madhya Pradesh was excluded from this part of the analysis because interviewees failed to reach agreement on the leadership role. Beyond this, however, little is said about the broader political economy within which the reforms occurred nor how tensions between stakeholder groups were managed and resolved. Only one mention of teacher unions appears in the report and this in relation to Hong Kong.

While this report is presented in an extremely upbeat and persuasive style, its analysis is flawed in at least one major respect. It focuses only on improving systems. It fails to study systems whose student performance was stable or in decline. Many of the interventions mentioned by the leaders and improvers, the political changes associated with the onset of reforms and the assumption of office by new technical and political leaders are not uniquely associated with improving systems. These can be found in many other systems, where less or no success was achieved. Only through a comparison with systems deemed to have stayed in one place or gone into decline could the authors assert with any confidence that they have identified the most important reform drivers. The report acknowledges this when it says: 'the systems that have been unsuccessful in trying to improve may carry out the same types of intervention that successful system undertake', but it goes on to assert 'but there appears to be one crucial difference, that they are not consistent, either in carrying out the critical mass of interventions appropriate to their performance stage, or in pursuing them with sufficient rigour and discipline' (McKinsey 2010, p.20). Unfortunately, the report presents no evidence in support of this latter assertion, which somewhat undermines its instructional value.

A detailed case study of the political factors and driving forces underpinning positive educational change is provided by Little (1999). This analysis focuses on increases in education participation among the children of the minority Indian Tamil community residing in tea and rubber plantations in Sri Lanka. Historically this community had suffered much lower levels of educational participation than other social and ethnic groups. During the period 1977 to 1994 access to primary and secondary education rose dramatically. The analysis considers an array of political, economic and social forces that drove forward plans to increase educational access. Among the political drivers were the nationalisation of plantation schools, which removed the control of teachers and schools from private sector employers interested mainly in maintaining a supply of low price and unskilled labour, and the passing of legislation on citizenship which enabled a 'stateless' community to gain some stake in the future of their children in the country. Other factors responsible for the increased schooling access were the growth of a labour surplus in the plantations and a decline in the plantation economy which drove an interest in education among the parents, but significantly also on the part of plantation owners who preferred children to be in school rather than unemployed and 'roaming around' the plantations. A growth in foreign aid, much of it focused on the poorest and marginalised groups, supplemented meagre government resources. The foreign aid was used for the building and rehabilitation of schools and for a range of 'quality inputs' such as increases in the numbers of teachers, teacher training and upgrading, learning and teaching materials and supervisory support. Alongside these factors was the 'will' and determination on the part of several groups who wanted to see change on the ground, including education officials

and teachers who were themselves of plantation origin and who participated actively in planning for the development of plantation schools and drove those plans forward at the school level. Officials (all of them former teachers) and school teachers worked together as a group for the same ends. The final, but by no means the least, influence was the broader political and ethnic crisis and the specific position of plantation Tamils within it. The political crisis and the growing civil war through the 1980s created the conditions in which 'windows of opportunity' opened up. This part of the analysis will come as no surprise to those who understand the political tapestry of Sri Lanka. But external audiences are often puzzled by a story of progress among Tamils during this period. How and why, outsiders ask, did the state promote educational expansion in plantation areas during a period in which (i) the Sri Lankan state had been accused internationally of human rights violations against minority Tamils; (ii) there had been open warfare between Tamil extremists and the Sinhala-dominated state security forces as Tamils repeated their calls for an independent state of Tamil Eelam; and (iii) thousands of young and educated Tamils and Sinhalese died. Moreover, they ask, why would a government encourage investments in plantation people's welfare when the economic contribution of the plantations was waning? Surely, the odds were stacked against educational expansion?

Resolution of this conundrum lies in an analysis of the political position of the plantation Tamil community within the broader conflict, and the strategic actions of political leaders. The leaders of the two main political parties in Sri Lanka had long understood the importance of votes from minority constituencies. The vote of the plantation community was important in the deliverance of the United National Party to power in 1977 and its maintenance to the mid 1990s. Subsequently it was also important to the opposition People's Alliance in the mid 1990s. Much of the support to the two main political parties was delivered by supporters of the trade union-cum-independent political party, the Ceylon Workers' Congress, via their unrivalled leader and political entrepreneur, Mr Thondaman. Rather than joining the calls for Eelam from sections of the Tamil communities in the north and east of the island, Mr. Thondaman chose instead to accept ministerial positions and to promote the interests of the plantation community from within government. Seizing every window of opportunity to wring concessions from the state, he promoted increases to the minimum wage, housing, income generation, the resolution of the citizenship issue – and education. The broader political crisis faced by the President and his government and the strategic choice exercised by a specific political agency provide a major part of the explanation for increased access to education among the plantation community over the 1977–1994 period.

Hoffman (2013) provides an example from Tanzania and suggests that the limited impact of reform in the country is partly attributed to capacity constraints and to 'deliberate design flaws' (p.24). The author argues that the strong role of the President and party ties have also debilitated reform. And despite strong political will and commitment to transparency, poor quality information undermines the reform process. However, the author notes the emergence of new 'drivers of reform' in the form of increased political competition, internal factions within the ruling party, emergence of civil society organisations and the ability of the ruling party to transform itself with changing times.

4.6 Evidence map and strength of evidence Table 4.1 provides an evidence map of the reviewed literature. The five main themes addressed in this review are: roles and

responsibilities, rent-seeking and patronage politics; decision-making and the process of influence; implementation issues; and driving forces. These are depicted along with the predominant research design used in the analysis and the country context within which the study was undertaken. The quality of the studies is indicated using a colour-coding system which represents medium, medium-high and high quality studies. Low quality studies did not meet the inclusion criteria and have been excluded in the earlier stringent selection processes adopted, described in section 3.

Broadly speaking, among the studies reviewed, there is only one 'high' quality study in India addressing one of the themes reviewed in this study. A majority of the studies are medium quality and are clustered around themes 4 and 5: implementation issues (13 studies of medium quality) and decision-making and the process of influence (11 studies of medium quality), followed by 11 studies of medium quality in the 'Driving forces' theme. The studies cover a broad geographical base and employ a range of techniques in terms of their research design.

Theme 1, Roles and responsibilities: There are 12 studies that broadly address the first theme. Of these, half are of reasonably high quality and have been given the medium-high assessment. Seven of the 12 studies in this theme use quantitative approaches. Finally, half of the studies reviewed under this theme are on India and there is limited geographical coverage of this theme in the literature reviewed.

Theme 2, Rent-seeking and patronage politics: Very few studies (eight) appear to be addressing this theme directly or indirectly in their analyses. However, the quality of the evidence, when it exists, is reasonably strong.

Theme 3, Decision-making and the process of influence: There are numerous studies directly or indirectly addressing this theme. Studies employ different types of research design but are clustered either in the 'empirical + broadly quantitative' design or in case study evidence. The only high quality study reviewed in the analysis, an RCT design, addresses theme 3 and is based on India. There is a relatively broad geographical coverage among the studies and while a majority of the studies have been assessed to be of medium quality, some good quality evidence (medium-high) does exist especially in the 'empirical + broadly quantitative' and 'empirical + broadly qualitative' domains.

Theme 4, Implementation issues in education: There are several studies that delve into theme 4 and have been assessed to be of a medium quality. However, much of this evidence is qualitative in nature and there appears to be only one purely quantitative study addressing this theme albeit a multi-country one. The geographical coverage is reasonable.

Theme 5, Drivers of educational change: Evidence on the final theme is reasonable in terms of quantity, is well distributed across the research designs and geographical coverage is varied.

Strength of evidence: Overall, there is modest evidence with respect to each of the themes. More robust evidence is warranted and some specific areas of potential future research are highlighted in the following section.

A rigorous review of the political economy of education systems in developing countries

Table 4.1: Evidence map of 64 studies

Research design	Theme				
	1. Roles and responsibilities	**2. Rent-seeking and patronage politics**	**3. Decision-making and the process of influence**	**4. Implementation issues**	**5. Driving forces**
RCT			India (39)		
EMP-Quant	India (20, 24, 25) Mexico (15, 19) Indonesia (11) India (23, 59) Ghana (57) Kenya (54)	Mexico (2) Multi-country (3)	Multi-country (51) Mexico (2) (9) Indonesia (11) India (20, 24, 25) Argentina (40,41) Mexico (45, 46) Multi-country (42)	Multi-country (56)	Multi-country (28) Mexico (19) Africa (50)
EMP-Qual	India (5) Tanzania (60)	India (47) (14) South Africa (64)	India (6) Multi-country (7) Ghana (13)	Multi-country (7) Ghana (14)	Sri Lanka (35) Tanzania (58) Zimbabwe (55) Nepal (63)
TP	(12, 38)	(4) Nigeria (56)	(4, 38) South Africa (36)	Kenya (22, 48) India (37) Ghana (43) East Africa (44)	(4, 17) Sri Lanka (49) Brazil (21) Pakistan (52)
MX	India (42) Taiwan, Ghana (26) Multi-country (62)	Multi-country (52)	Chile, Colombia, Mexico, South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe (10)	Benin, Guinea, Mauritius, Mozambique, Uganda (14) Ghana (26, 32) Taiwan (26)	Sri Lanka (30, 33) Ghana (32) India (34) Multi-country (61)

Research design	Theme				
	1. Roles and responsibilities	2. Rent-seeking and patronage politics	3. Decision-making and the process of influence	4. Implementation issues	5. Driving forces
IE		Honduras (1) Guatemala (1)		Honduras (1) Guatemala (1)	
THE		(16)			(8, 29) Multi-country (28)
LR				Multi-country (27) (31)	

Research design: RCT = randomised controlled trial; EMP-Quant = quantitative analysis of observational data; EMP-Qual= qualitative analysis of observational data; TP = think piece; MX= mixed methods (see Tables A4.3A and A4.3B for details); IE = impact evaluation; THE = theoretical; LR = literature review.
Study code: 1, 2, 3…64 (please see Tables A4.3A and A4.3B for details).
Quality of individual studies: Medium-low, Medium, Medium-High, High.

*Some studies do not relate to specific countries and therefore only the study number appears in parenthesis.

4.7 Gaps in the literature

The literature on the political economy of education is under-developed in geographical scope, robustness of methods utilised and theoretical richness. Moreover, the array of theoretical frameworks developed since the emergence of the 'new institutionalism' of the 1980s – principal agent theory, agency theory and the theory of repeated games – has not been well utilised in the reviewed literature.

This review makes clear that large parts of the world, especially most countries of Africa and South-east Asia, remain virtually untouched by research on the ways in which political-economy forces affect their education-sector decisions, processes and outcomes in areas as diverse as planning, budgeting, curriculum, law, regulation, fees, textbooks, salaries, etc. As highlighted by many of the authors of the reviewed studies, where research does exist, the findings are very context specific and non-generalisable, which underlines the need for countries and regions to have their own locally relevant analysis. Among published research the quality of the research varies, with few rigorous studies. Kremer (2003) and Muralidharan and Sundararaman (2011) stress the importance of ensuring that the quality of political economy analysis (PEA) is more easily distinguishable by policy-makers. They suggest this can be done by a certification organisation that would help policy-makers identify credible studies to ensure that reform is informed by strong theory and evidence, to improve design and implementation. However, PEA is not easily amenable to randomised experiments. Political economy constraints and variables are not random and usually occur selectively, largely depending on context. It would, therefore, not be possible to assign such variables to control and treatment groups for randomised evaluations. More rigorous research, however, is possible by using good quality panel data and quasi-experimental methods and combining a more mixed-methods approach in researching the political economy of education.

The review has indicated that teachers are politically active in several countries. However, it was difficult to infer the extent of political involvement of teachers in different countries let alone the impact this political involvement could potentially have on educational outcomes. DFID could do well to commission studies that aim to gather information on the level of political involvement of teachers in DFID priority countries. Additionally, simple descriptive studies that aim to identify teacher salaries (at various education levels) and average per capita GDP in different countries would allow a deeper understanding of whether teachers lobby for higher salaries or for other outcomes. If teacher salaries are less than average per capita GDP (of equivalent persons in the country), then it could be argued that teachers could potentially be lobbying to better the lot of underpaid teachers. If, however, the average teacher salaries are found to be several times more than the per capita GDP in a country, teachers' political engagement is likely to be to achieve other (perhaps less desirable) objectives.

Mixed results of the effect of teacher unions on student outcomes (or on teacher absence) call for a better understanding of the internal structure and dynamics of unions. There is a need for systematic analysis of the role of teacher unions and teachers' participation in politics in different countries, and to understand these issues: to what extent and why these are perceived as constructive in some countries/regions but apparently negative in others; whether the relationship between teachers and politicians operates mainly through unions; to what extent middlemen – the private intermediaries and government clerks –

are an important phenomenon in teacher labour markets; and how patronage politics and teachers' political power ultimately affect student learning across the income distribution. In order to do this, not only do we need better measures to capture political relationships, but we also need credible measures of student performance in elementary grades, measures that are free from manipulation and can be compared across settings.

Our review has also indicated that there is insufficient evidence specifically addressing where rent-seeking is most prevalent and why, i.e. whether it is in teacher assignments, school construction, textbooks and so on. This is a significant gap in the literature which future research could aim to address.

From a more theoretical standpoint, Leftwich (2006) calls for a more intensive focus on the political dynamics of change. He highlights that although many of the studies in his report contain richness of detail, not many employ conceptual/theoretical tools to analyse political practices and trace their pathological relations with economic activities/institutions. Studies have tended to employ a very general understanding of 'political economy'. We echo Leftwich's view that future work needs to develop more conceptual clarity and more nuanced political theories about change and particularly about how alternative structural, historical and institutional conditions determine varied possibilities and constraints within which actors in different polities have to work thereby generating differing developmental paths.

5. Conclusion

Unfavourable political economy blocks educational reform. This review confirms that education reform takes place under circumstances that in many cases are politically driven, and shaped by the interests and incentives facing different stakeholders, as well as by formal and informal institutions. Insights from the literature urge consideration of the interests, actions and choices of a wide range of actors, working in a wide range of institutions across a number of interacting stages, in the process of education policy reform – from agenda setting, to programme design, to adoption, to implementation to institutionalisation and sustainability.

We have reviewed both the macro political economy literature which tries to link education outcomes to alternative institutional structures encompassing variation in types of election and bureaucratic processes, and also the micro political economy of education literature which uses a *sectoral* approach, since specific features of the sector– such as the political power of teachers – play a crucial role in explaining outcomes. We have put the theory of political economy to use in evaluating the research on education systems in developing countries. Focusing on developing countries, we examined the relationship between politics and education outcomes from multiple disciplinary lenses, including economics, political science, sociology and education.

To avoid the pitfalls of simple meta-analyses (which give equal weight to all studies, good and bad), stringent inclusion criteria were applied when selecting the papers and articles to be included, and the included literature was then graded by quality, based on DFID's six principles of high quality studies. We carried out extensive searches through bibliographic databases, journals, organisational websites and consultation with experts to arrive at a comprehensive collection of the quantitative and qualitative literature on the political economy of education in developing countries. A hierarchy of evidence was used to evaluate the validity of quantitative studies ranging from RCTs (high quality) to less rigorous methodologies such as simple descriptive statistics that do not allow causal interpretations (such as comparison of means). The validity of qualitative studies was also analysed by choosing those that give the wider context, employ a methodology that minimises the risk of bias, and whose findings are reproducible.

The review found that the theoretical themes of the literature focus on the effects of regime type (e.g. democracy), degree of openness, the role of competing parties, and concentration of resources. In addition, we discovered a growing literature on the role played by vested interest groups, such as teachers' unions, which has been crucial in furthering our understanding of how power is exercised by different players.

We return to our theoretical framework. At the outset we suggested its fundamentals revolved around actors, their interests, the shaping of their incentives and strategies by contexts, the means by which actors exercised power in pursuing their ends, and the consequences for students, schools, and the larger education system[13]. Our review of the

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[13] For work that applies this approach to education, see, e.g., Chubb and Moe, 1990; Moe, 2011; Kingdon and Muzammil, 2003, 2009, 2012.

literature provides evidence for an extended and more elaborated formulation of theoretical propositions as follows.

Because we are interested here in the prospects for educational change, we put special emphasis on the key theoretical importance of vested interests. Vested interests are universal. They arise in all government institutions, and in all countries of the world, because certain people and groups benefit from the institutions' operation: clients who receive services, employees who occupy institutional jobs, administrators or politicians who control the money, businesses that reap revenues as contractors, and so on.

As universal forces, vested interests are likely to be especially important to the politics of change for three main reasons. First, they have strong incentives to resist any reforms that alter, reduce, or eliminate their benefits, or render them uncertain—which most major reforms would do. Second, they have strong incentives to become organised for political action, and to invest in political power, in order to protect their institutions from change. And third, they typically have incentives to do these things even if the existing institutions are performing badly, and thus are in desperate need of reform—because, as job-holders or administrators or contractors, their benefits depend on the continuation of existing arrangements, not on performance. When major reforms are proposed in any nation, in any realm of policy, vested interests are likely to be the prime source of resistance.[14]

We should emphasise that not all reforms are good, and vested interests are not necessarily a negative force preventing positive change from happening. Sometimes, politicians may promote reforms that are self-serving or unwise, and vested interests may be doing society a service by resisting such reforms. Also, the mass constituencies that receive governmental services are vested interests too; but unlike job-holders or administrators or contractors, they may see virtually no benefit from existing arrangements and demand major reforms that improve performance. The problem, however, is that they are a large, diffuse group, and are unlikely to wield the kind of power that other vested interests can wield, unless they form alliances with powerful political and/or policy entrepreneurs who can promote their interests Our point, then, is not that all vested interests always behave in ways that are bad for society. It is that, as interests that are intensely affected by existing arrangements and very often resistant to change, they are of key theoretical importance – and we should be focusing on them if we want to understand the political dynamics of reform.

The application to education is straightforward. Every school system gives rise to various kinds of vested interests. As we have seen, the most obvious are children and parents, who are the direct recipients of services; but as a large, diffuse group, the barriers to effective collective action are high for them, and they are at a disadvantage in the larger politics of education. Other vested interests are likely to be much better organised and politically much more powerful – and these interests will typically have a deep stake in existing arrangements, and thus in resisting change, even if performance is very bad.

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[14] For a more extensive treatment of the logic underpinning a theory of vested interests, see Terry M. Moe (2013) *Vested interests, theory, and the political dynamics of American education.* Stanford University. The application in that paper is to the American context, but the logic is quite general and can readily be adapted to any country.

The most notable of vested interests are teachers. They are likely to be quite numerous, and intensely concerned about protecting their jobs (and incomes, careers, security, etc.) from the threats entailed by major reforms. In many countries – not all – they may also belong to teachers' unions, and thus have a potentially powerful means of bringing those interests to bear in the politics of education. When that happens, they can be expected to resist reforms that radically change the existing system, require higher standards, or put accountability pressures on them to perform. On the other hand, they can also be expected to support reforms that work to their advantage – most notably, expansions of spending and access that will produce more teaching jobs, and possibly higher pay and benefits. The nature of the proposed reform is key to its sustained implementation.

The other major category of vested interests includes 'officials' of various kinds – national politicians, local politicians, and national and local bureaucrats who have administrative roles in managing the education system. The bureaucrats have vested interests in their jobs, in the money they control, and in their autonomy to allocate money and make education decisions as they see fit. They will resist reforms that threaten their jobs and sources of power – as school choice and genuine decentralisation tend to do, for example – and support reforms that do the opposite, such as those that expand the size of the system. Politicians are more complicated. Because the education system is a giant reservoir of jobs and money, politicians are in a position to use those resources for patronage, clientelism, and their own profit. This is particularly true in very poor developing nations, where the entire political culture may be fraught with corruption, nepotism and rent-seeking. Many politicians in these settings, then, may see themselves as having a deep vested interest in maintaining and expanding education systems for reasons that have nothing to do with providing a quality education for children, and everything to do with propping up their own political power and security.

Politicians are complicated, however, because – depending on the larger political system and its institutions – they may also have incentives to be good, popular leaders of their people, and thus to pursue reforms designed to bring about effective schools and the efficient expenditure of money. It might seem that this 'good leader' role – and thus the political will to promote high quality education reform – would be more likely to emerge the more democratic a system's institutions, but this is not necessarily so. Democratic politicians are often driven to engage in clientelism, to use public money for payoffs to powerful interest groups, and so on, in order to buy votes and stay in office, and these incentives may induce them to plunder educational resources and refuse to engage in productive reform. Democracy may also induce leaders to support reforms that expand educational spending and access – thus pleasing ordinary people and vested interests at the same time – while refusing to carry out structural reforms that are necessary (but opposed by vested interests) to ensure that the schools are actually effective and the money well spent.

Nevertheless, institutions do matter: they structure incentives – and thus behaviour. Even though politicians in developing countries will often be faced with strong incentives to use education systems toward their own material ends, their incentives will also be shaped by the larger political system – and thus by the type of regime in which they are embedded. The specifics of political regimes vary considerably from country to country, and we cannot say in the abstract how they affect the incentives of particular leaders. We can

simply say that, in any given context, what we expect of leaders will be a combination of knights and knaves– and that, in the absence of 'correcting' incentives from the larger political system, politicians are likely to see their educational systems in opportunistic terms, and to resist major reforms that aim to bring improvement.

Finally, we should emphasise that the set of actors is not homogeneous in its approach to reform. A nation may be fortunate enough to have national political leaders with the political will to enact real education reform, but these reforms may be eviscerated at lower levels as local political and bureaucratic officials, together with teachers' unions, use their power in the educational trenches to make the reality of reform a total failure. Similarly, the teachers' unions may see professional training for their members as a path to higher pay and status (and performance), yet politicians may insist on using teacher jobs for patronage and nepotism, ensuring that the movement toward greater professionalism goes nowhere. What matters is how the whole system and all of its various actors, together, operate to produce outcomes. And almost all systems are inherently stacked against successful reform: because there will be vested interests – somewhere, at some level – that are against change, and use their power to obstruct major change and its successful implementation.

How, then, can major reform of the education system be brought about? It would be comforting to think that there is a simple formula that can be followed, but this just is not so. Given the theory we have outlined – which, we think, captures the essence of the problem – the starting point of any serious analysis should be: most reforms of any consequence will tend to fail, or be watered down or distorted, because they will be resisted by powerful vested interests, including most political leaders. There are not any real solutions. The vested interests are not going to go away. Their power is not going to go away. Politicians cannot be counted upon to have the necessary political will. The best reformers can do, typically, is to pursue strategies that generate a modicum of progress against difficult odds. How can they do that? The theory points to various avenues that are worth discussing. We will discuss four here – three that are not very promising and one that is.

The three that are not very promising are fairly obvious. (i) Reformers can try to reduce the power of the vested interests – by, for example, outlawing teachers' unions (or outlawing strikes and other union weapons), or shifting authority from 'problematic' public officials to others who are more trustworthy. But if these vested interests are genuinely powerful, then they will use their power to prevent anyone from taking their power away. And such efforts are unlikely to work. (ii) Reformers can accept the power of vested interests, and cooperate with them to arrive at potential agreements about reform. But the problem is that major reform is threatening to their interests, and they will demand steep payments and compromises in return. The resulting reforms are likely to be weak (and expensive). Once they have been adopted, moreover, the vested interests will take action on the ground over time to weaken the reforms still further. (iii) Reformers can try to mobilise parents and citizens to give massive political weight to their interests in high quality education. This may work in some contexts – in some villages or localities, or in some party systems in reasonably democratic systems. But in general, this strategy is likely to prove disappointing, because the great majority of citizens – especially in developing nations, where poverty is endemic – are simply not interested in becoming

politically active, certainly not on an ongoing basis. They work, they have difficult lives, the collective action problems are enormous. In most countries most of the time, they cannot be counted upon to drive education reform unless they form the constituency of powerful political entrepreneurs and can work in concert with them.

There is a fourth strategy, however, that shows much more promise. This one involves taking advantage of unusual windows of opportunity to make specific kinds of structural changes in the education system. A window of opportunity can open up, for example, when a nation undergoes a political transition – say, from authoritarian to democratic government, or from one party to another, or from one leader to another – and the new leadership (for its own reasons) finds it advantageous to pursue serious education reforms. This, again, is not the norm. But it can happen in the midst of changing incentive conditions. A window of opportunity can also open up when outside funders – the World Bank, say – offer money and expertise for education reform, and induce national leaders to go along. Here too, there are no guarantees, as there may be strong vested interests at work to siphon off money and undermine reform or interests that strongly oppose the reforms promoted by the outside funder. But the intervention of vigilant, strong outsiders who are committed to reform, and who are not embedded in a country's vested interests, can be a driver of changes that would not happen otherwise.

If these windows of opportunity open up, what structural changes would then work to bring about genuine reform? The answer is to be found in formal rules designed to try to eliminate the discretionary, individualistic decision-making on which the existing vested interests thrive. These formal rules might require such things as transparency in the expenditure of money, in hiring and firing, and in all aspects of the organisation of schools; a formal merit system that disallows nepotism, patronage, and other such approaches to school personnel policy; high formal standards for teacher certification; formal examinations of students to provide a basis for assessing school performance; serious performance-based evaluations of teachers, including monitoring of absenteeism; and so on. These are precisely the kinds of rules that teachers' unions and other vested interests tend to oppose. But with an appropriate window of opportunity, leaders who strike while the iron is hot may be able to put a new formal structure in place. And if they can do this, it will not only shape behaviour and outcomes within the education system, but it will also generate its own vested interests – new interests with a stake in the new system. National and local bureaucrats, for example, will now have jobs making and administering tests, running the merit system, evaluating teacher performance, monitoring absenteeism, and the son on – and their jobs and vested interests will become tied to these new formal structures. Teachers hired under a merit system will probably see it as beneficial to them – and will have an interest in supporting it. And so on.

This strategy is not a silver bullet. Windows of opportunity are rare. New structures will face resistance (although less than usual – as that is what makes a window of opportunity what it is). And once they are in place, there will still be resistance from vested interests, politicians will still have incentives to use education's resources for their own ends, and the larger culture of corruption, patronage, and clientelism may still persist and continue to threaten the operation of the new structures. But this is what 'good reform' looks like in a difficult setting. Once it is in place and operating, it has a decent chance of becoming more entrenched and gaining greater support. One would hope that long-term economic

growth, for example, or long-term movement toward a healthier political system can be achieved through education reform and can actually bring major change, and work to the great benefit of children and their societies.

We capture much of the above in the theory of change presented below in Figure 5.1. In column 1 we nest our concerns with actors, incentives, disincentives and strategies within a discussion of the underlying drivers of or imperatives for reform. While the precise nature of these will vary from country to country our review of the literature has generated examples likely to be found in several settings (e.g. political instability, constitutional change, economic policy shifts). We also nest our understanding of the political economy of education within the underlying social, political, economic and educational structures of the country within which reforms are promoted (and resisted). The examples here include the structure of the education system, the political regime, constitutional and legal frameworks and the nature of recent reform experiences. Both the imperatives and underlying structures for reform generate the need and political legitimacy for reform. In column 2 we identify a range of actors with vested interests in reform. We divide these into internal and external actors to distinguish those whose identities and spheres of influence are largely internal to a country and those whose identities are less rooted in particular countries and who work across countries, including the country in question. In column 3 we identify incentives that promote reforms and threats that generate resistance to reforms, both of which will have more or less salience for the different actors identified in column 2. The balance between incentives and threats will lead (or not) to policy decisions (column 4), which in turn vary in terms of content, clarity, complexity, and strength of intrinsic technical design. The timing of policy decisions and the ability to take advantage of windows of opportunity are critical here. While in general policy decisions lead to policy implementation we express the relationship between decision and implementation reciprocally in recognition of the fact that implementation sometimes precedes formal decision and that initial implementation frequently leads to adjustments in the policy itself. During the implementation process actors employ a range of strategies to promote and resist implementation (column 5). It should be emphasised that these same strategies may also be employed prior to policy decisions being made and formalised. Policy implementation not only influences adjustments to decisions but also brings to the fore vested interests that may have been silent during the process of policy formulation. For example local politicians and administrators may participate little in the dialogue and negotiation surrounding policy decisions; they may become vocal and called upon to act by teachers and parents once policies manifest themselves for implementation at the local level. Policy implementation may also lead to shifts in the constellation of incentives that promote and resist reform and changes in the strategies employed to implement reform.

In principle, all of these actions have implications for the access and quality of learning experiences of students and the characteristics of schools and/or education systems (column 6).

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Figure 5.1: Theory of change

Underlying drivers for Education Reform
e.g.
Political instability
Regime shift
Transition from conflict
Constitutional change
Economic instability
Economic transformation

⇓

Legitimacy and creation of political agenda

⇑

Underlying structural characteristics:
e.g
Regime type
Education system
Economic
Constitutional/legal frameworks
Current international climate for reform
Economic/cultural/political divisions
Demography
Human resources
Recent history of education reform

Actors with Vested Interests

Internal
e.g
National politicians
National bureaucrats
Policy entrepreneurs
Parents and children
Teachers
Teacher associations
Teacher unions
Teacher politicians
Local politicians
Local bureaucrats
School managers
Elites and Masses
Civil Society organisations
Private sector schools and associations
Class, caste, ethnic groups
Manufacturer
Examination bodies

Alliances between two or more of above

External
e.g.
Funders
Policy entrepreneurs
Information networks
International trade unions, professions and civil society organisations

Incentives that Promote reform
e.g.
Perceived material, status and power gains
Expansion of jobs, budgets, trade unions, bureaucracies
Expansion of patronage

Threats that Resist reform
e.g.
Perceived threats to pay, status, power, jobs
Perceived increased pressure on students, teachers, parents, teacher supervisors, school managers

Policy Decisions

Characteristics
Nature of policy
Clarity
Complexity
Strong technical team
Timing and Windows of opportunity

Policy Implementation

Strategies employed

To promote reform
e.g.
Allocation of financial resources
Seizure of 'windows of opportunity'
Generation of political will
Incentives for reform implementation
Negotiation with opposition
Formal rules and legislation
Enhance professional identities of teachers

To resist reform
e.g.
Ideas/discourse
Strikes
Absenteeism
Votes

Access and Quality Consequences

For students

For schools

For education systems

54

The review found that research on the political economy of education is confined mainly to developed countries, Latin America and South Asia. There is much less systematic work on this topic in Africa and East Asia. Additionally, the political economy of education literature is characterised by theoretical, descriptive, correlational and qualitative work. Work examining the causal effect of political interests and power play on educational outcomes is virtually non-existent, the empirical challenge being compounded by the problem of selection and simultaneity between educational outcomes and political and institutional processes. The major findings of the review are summarized below.

- Among all stakeholder groups, teachers and their organisations have great political power because of their ability to influence electoral outcomes and political fortunes. By militating for higher salaries not tied to performance, lobbying against decentralised school management, and protecting inefficient and shirking teachers from dismissal, some teacher unions cause educational inefficiency, though others are milder and work constructively to improve the welfare of teachers. By contrast parents do not have a collective voice on educational matters, since they are not organised. Government and international agencies are recognised as the other major stakeholders in the education sector.

- Rent-seeking and patronage politics are rife in educational set-ups in developing countries. The politics of patronage suggests that it is more convenient to expand educational coverage, e.g. by building more schools or hiring more teachers, than to fix existing inefficiencies within the system because the former involves spending on political actors whereas the latter may involve reducing resources allocated to underperforming political stakeholders. Some literature using stringent empirical techniques finds that teachers' union membership and political connections are both associated with significantly reduced pupil achievement in India, and that teachers there also influence the school governance environment through their direct participation in politics, i.e. by themselves becoming legislators. This highlights the importance of shoring up teacher accountability through pupil assessments and other reforms.

- A variety of groups influences the educational decision-making process and educational change. The literature concludes that the supposed benefits of decentralisation do not accrue in practice because in poor rural areas the local elite captures all the space for participation in school affairs. At the macro level, international donor agencies and global education institutions are exerting more influence on education decision-making in many developing countries. There is some evidence that international differences in student performance are considerably related to institutional as opposed to resource-level differences between countries.

- Much of the reviewed literature on education analyses *the causes behind* implementation failures, and it blames factors such as low state capacity, poor administration, poor delivery system, poor community information, and corruption/leakages. However, underlying these are likely to be some political economy constraints, some lack of political will or some vested interests. This may be because the politicians/bureaucrats/vested interests that lobby for a policy may themselves benefit from the policy/corruption. Evidence suggests that participatory programmes (such as CMS) often fail and a plausible reason suggested

is the prevalence of grossly unequal power relations between poor rural community members and well paid teachers. While the Ugandan PETS is credited with reducing leakages of primary school funds from 74% to 20%, subsequent studies have not achieved the impact seen in Uganda, though they are still useful diagnostic tools.

- Analysis in a large number of studies indicates that at the national level there are potential drivers or agents of change. The literature also emphasises the importance of political will as a key force in driving educational change. However, political will alone is insufficient for driving change. An empirical strand of the literature finds robust and significant effects of both regime type and openness on different types of educational spending, showing that aggregate public education spending increases with a shift towards democracy or openness. Democracy is also consistently associated with a shift in spending from tertiary to primary education. However, the effect of additional spending on educational outcomes is dependent on the type of democratic institutions in place.

- The literature shows there are several other factors that inhibit or promote educational reform. Multi-party electoral competition, political knowledge of the electorate, the extent to which the elite dominates the political arena and the extent of centralisation of governance can all be powerful forces influencing the provision of basic educational services in certain contexts. The section on 'Positive cases of reform' analyses examples from Sri Lanka and some Latin American countries where benign political economy circumstances were created by change drivers to achieve good outcomes. The cases illustrate the many factors that ultimately converged to create an environment conducive for education reform.

- The literature shows that decentralisation policy in education has to bear in mind the realities of local politics of influence in the community, and tap into the positive side of this influence to improve education service delivery. It also indicates that the crucial question for education policy is not that of more resources, but of creating an institutional system where all involved people are provided with incentives to use resources efficiently and to improve student performance.

DFID would do well to address each of our five questions for the countries where it works. To be effective in-country, DFID advisors need to know how to position themselves in relation to the various constellations of stakeholder groups, and to understand the recent history of policy reform processes in education and others sectors in that country. Our findings provide a guide to the types of answers that might arise. The evidence we have provided is overwhelmingly country-based. In the absence of comparative studies addressing similar questions and employing similar designs it would be incautious to translate findings from one context to another. Modestly costed country-based research programmes could generate evidence on the political economy of education reform of enormous strategic value to DFID advisors working in-country.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Authorship of this report

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Appendix 2: Search Strategy

Table A2.1: Electronic databases

Name
1. EBSCO
a. EconLit
b. Education Full Text
2. EconPapers
3. JSTOR
4. ProQuest
a. ERIC
b. International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
c. PAIS International
d. ProQuest Dissertation
e. Worldwide Political Science Abstracts
5. Science Direct
6. Social Science Research Network
7. Web of Knowledge
Web of Science
8. Google Scholar
9. Research Papers in Economics

Table A2.2: Organisational websites

Organisational websites
1. Centre for International Development at Harvard University
www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/cid/publications
2. Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE)
www.create-rpc.org/database/
3. International Labour Organization (ILO)
www.ilo.org/sector/lang--en/index.htm
3. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage.html
4. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
www.unesco.org/new/en/unesco/resources/publications/
5. World Bank
http://publications.worldbank.org
6. Department for International Development, UK (DFID)
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development

Table A2.3: Scholarly journals

Journals
International and Comparative Education
Comparative Education Review
Comparative Education
International Journal of Educational Development
International Review of Education
Prospects
OECD Education Focus
Journal of Education Policy
Oxford Review of Education
Education, Knowledge and Economy
Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies
Peabody Journal of Education
Educational Policy
Journal of Educational Change
Journal of Education and Practice
Globalisation, Societies and Education
British Journal of Sociology of Education
Sociology of Education
Educational Researcher
Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis
American Educational Research Journal
Economics, Political Science and Sociology
Political Research Quarterly
Political Science Quarterly
The American Political Science Review
Political Research Quarterly
Journal of Political Economy

Review of International Political Economy

Review of African Political Economy

American Sociological Review

International Journal of Social Economics

Table A2.4: Search terms, keywords and countries

Search terms
"political economy of education"
"teacher(s) unions/organizations"
"block(ing)/resist(ing)/oppose(ing) reform in education"
"enable (ing)/advance (ing)/partner (ing) reform in education"
"implement (ing) reform in education"
"teacher(s) strike"
"politicization (politics) of education"
"politicization (politics) of schools"
"politicization (politics) of teachers"
"education and principal agent theory"
"teachers and principal agent theory"
"rent-seeking and education"

Keywords		
Education	**Political**	**Issues-based (prefix)**
education,	political economy	governance (school, education)
schools, schooling	politics, political	transfers (teacher)
teacher (s)	politicisation	reassignments (teacher)
educator (s)	policymaking, policy-making	funding (school, education)
students	policy formulation	(de) (re) centralization (education)
school boards	policy implementation	accountability (school, education, teacher)
school management committees	decision-making, decision-makers	dismissal (teacher)
	reform	testing, (student, school, education)
	resist (ing) reform	finance (school, education)
	block (ing) reform	assessment (school, education, teacher, student)
	union(s), unionism	efficiency (education)
	rent-seeking	equity (education, school)
	principal agent theory	evaluation (school, teacher)
	strike (s)	achievement (student, school)
	politicians	outcomes (education)
	opposing reform	quality (teacher, school, education)
	conflict	parents, parental involvement
	corruption	community, community involvement
	special interests	inspection (school)
	patronage	aid, foreign aid (education)
	patron client	donor (s) (education)
	policy, reform agenda	privatisation (education, school)
	legislation	bureaucracy (education, school)
	legislators	NGOs (education)
	enable (ing) reform	practice (education, teaching)
	advance (ing) reform	curricula (reform)

implement (ing) reform	management (education, school)
partner (ing) reform	recruitment (teacher, principal)
politicians	vouchers (school, education)
parties (political)	
party concentration	
voter (s)	

Countries
Afghanistan
Bangladesh
Burma
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Ethiopia
Ghana
India
Kenya
Kyrgyzstan
Liberia
Malawi
Mozambique
Nepal
Nigeria
Palestine (West Bank, Gaza)
Pakistan
Rwanda
Sierra Leone
Somalia
South Africa
Sudan
South Sudan
Tajikistan
Tanzania
Uganda
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Table A2.5: Search strategy sequence

Search String Groupings
1.   Topical search terms TITLE
2.   Topical search terms ABSTRACT
3.   Topical search terms SUBJECT
4.   Education AND Political TITLE
5.   Education AND Political ABSTRACT
6.   Education AND Political SUBJECT
7.   Education AND Political AND Country TITLE
8.   Education AND Political AND Country ABSTRACT
9.   Education AND Political AND Country SUBJECT
10. Political AND Issue-based TITLE
11. Political AND Issue-based ABSTRACT
12. Political AND Issue-based SUBJECT
13. Political AND Issue-based AND Country TITLE
14. Political AND Issue-based AND Country ABSTRACT
15. Political AND Issue-based AND Country SUBJECT

Appendix 3: Search syntax

1. EBSCO

Search syntax
- Boolean operators can be used within and between fields – AND, OR, NOT
- Searches are run separately in title, abstract and subject – TI, AB, SU. Searches can also be run separate by database, to allow individual searches of thesauruses.
- Wildcards are entered as ? (1 missing character) or # (0 or 1 missing characters).
- Proximity searches are implemented using Nx (within x words of each other, any order) and Wx (within x words of each other, in order specified in search).
- Parentheses ( ) are used to group terms. If search for (x) and (y), the database first finds x, then within those result, finds y.
- Exact phrases can be searched for using quotation marks "x". Quotation marks as in the search string below will not be recognised when copied and pasted. They must be entered manually in the search window.
- Punctuation internal to phrases does not affect searches e.g. "decision making" will find "decision-making."

Initial search
- Search mode set to 'Boolean/Phrase'
- Searches are run separately in title, abstract and subject – TI, AB, SU.
- Results limited to 2000–13.
- No filter by Source type was applied (e.g. Academic Journals and Books).

EconLit
TI (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator")) AND TI (("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political"))
112 hits

AB (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator")) W3 AB (("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political"))
92 hits

SU (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator")) AND SU (("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political"))
124 hits

Education Full Text
TI (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator")) AND TI (("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political"))
485 hits

AB (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator")) W3 AB (("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political"))
298 hits

SU (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator")) AND SU (("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political"))
111 hits

2. EconPapers

Search syntax
- Search fields: the available search fields are author, keywords and title, JEL code, and free text.
- Exact phrases: these can be searched for using quotation marks. These need to be manually typed into the engine; copy and paste will not input quotation marks, which the search engine recognises.
- Combining terms: the standard Boolean operators AND, OR, NOT are supported.
- The default setting is AND. Parentheses are also supported.
- Proximity searches: the operator NEAR is supported.
- Wildcards: the * wildcard is supported. This indicates any string of characters, including none.

Initial search
- Search in Keywords & Title among working papers and articles and books & chapters
- Date restrictions are not possible.

("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator") AND ("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political")
439 hits

3. JSTOR

Search syntax
- Search fields: JSTOR is non-bibliographic, and does not contain any thesaurus. It also contains abstracts for only 10 percent of articles contained on the database.
- Exact phrases: quotation marks are used to define exact phrases, and brackets to delimit search fields.
- Combining terms: standard Boolean operators apply – AND, OR, NOT. The default operator is AND.
- Proximity searches: are implemented using the tilde symbol, with ~x denoting 'within xX words of each other, in any order'". However, such searches can only be implemented across single terms, not in terms using Boolean operators, so cannot be applied here.
- Plurals: adding & at the end of a word specifically searches for both singular and plural forms at the same time. This includes cases where plural and singular are spelled entirely differently.
- Wildcards: ? searches for a single character, * searches for multiple characters, # finds all variations on a given word, e.g. operate# finds operator, operating, operation, and so on. However, only four wildcards can be included in any given search.

Initial search
- Do not restrict by languages, or by type of publication
- Results restricted by date: 2000–13.
- Restricted to journals in the following fields: economics, education, political science, public policy and administration, sociology
- Used one initial string, searching separately in title and abstract:

(ti:(("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher&" OR "educator&") AND ("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political")) AND ab:(("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher&" OR

"educator&") AND ("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political"))) AND disc:(economics-discipline OR education-discipline OR political science-discipline OR public policy-discipline OR sociology-discipline)
147 hits

4. ProQuest

Search syntax
- Databases: Proquest is a platform with access to a number of databases. The search strategy proposes initially searching ERIC, IBSS, PAIS International, ProQuest Dissertation, and Worldwide Political Science Abstract.
- Thesaurus terms are database specific, so each database must be searched individually.
- Separate codes with commas can search two fields at once, e.g. TI,AB (education) will search both title and abstract for education.
- Descriptors are referred to as subject terms, and can be searched using the field DE.
- Exact phrases: exact terms are specified using "x", and brackets can also be used.
- Quotation marks must be typed directly into the search engine, the versions appearing below are not recognised. Punctuation marks inside quotation marks are ignored.
- Combining terms: standard Boolean search terms apply – AND, OR, NOT. These can be applied across or within fields.
- Proximity searches: can be implemented as within searches, which ignore word order, using W/x. Can also be implemented as pre-searches, which retain word order, using P/x.
- Wildcards: standard wildcard characters can also be used, with * for any number of characters, and ? for one character only.

Initial search
- For the purpose of the test search, ERIC and IBSS are searched.
- Search in title, abstract and subject, and separately in thesaurus,
- Restrictions by date: 2000–13.

ERIC
TI (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator") AND ("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political")) AND YR(>=2000)
538 hits

AB (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator") P/3 ("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political")) AND YR(>=2000)
407 hits

SU (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator") AND ("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political")) AND YR(>=2000)
7027 hits

Given the large amount of hits from the preceding search string process, a simplified, targeted search of pre-identified search terms was employed. The results are as follows:

TI (political economy of education)
22

AB(political economy PRE/3 education)
47 hits

SU (political economy of education)
5 hits

SU ("Politics of Education") AND ("political economy")
38 relevant hits

International Bibliography of the Social Sciences
A high volume of results returned from the following search strings:

TI (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator") AND ("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political")) AND YR(>=2000)

AB (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator") P/3 ("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political")) AND YR(>=2000)

SU (("education" OR "schooling" OR "teacher" OR "educator") AND ("political economy" OR "politics" OR "political")) AND YR(>=2000)

In turn, the test process employed a targeted search of pre-identified search terms. The results are as follows:

TI ("political economy of education")
11 hits

AB ("political economy of education")
1 hit

SU (political economy PRE/3 education)
22 results

A secondary "unbounded" search using these search terms was then employed:

TI (political economy of education)
25 hits

AB (political economy of education)
371 hits

SU (political economy of education)
103 hits

Appendix 4: Describing the evidence

Table A4.1: Describing studies

Code	Types of research design
RCT	Randomised controlled trial
QE	Quasi- experimental
IE	Impact evaluation
EMP-Quant	Quantitative analysis of observational data
EMP-Qual	Qualitative analysis of observational data
CS	Case study (like books, case studies may include several designs, most usually EMP-Quant and EMP-Qual)
ETH	Ethnography
SR	Systematic review
THE	Theoretical
TP	Think piece
BK	Entire book (may include several designs)
LR	Literature review

Table A4.2: Assessing the strength of evidence

Quality of the body of evidence	Definition
Robust evidence	Many/the large majority of single studies reviewed have been assessed as being of a high quality, demonstrating adherence to the principles of rigour, validity and reliability.
Modest evidence	Of the single studies reviewed, approximately equal numbers are of a high, moderate and low quality, as assessed according to the principles of rigour, validity and reliability.
Insufficient evidence	Many/the large majority of single studies reviewed have been assessed as being of low quality, showing significant deficiencies in adherence to the principles of rigour, validity and reliability.

Source: adapted from DFID (2013), p. 16.

Table A4.3A: Summary of studies reviewed (from initial searches)

Paper #	Author (date)	Research design	Country	Quality rankings
1	Altschuler (2013)	IE	Honduras/Guatemala	Medium-high
2	Alvarez et al. (2007)	EMP-Quant	Mexico	Medium-high
3	Ansell (2008)	EMP-Quant	Multi-country (113)	Medium-high
4	Archer (1981)	THE		Medium
5	Day Ashley (2013)	EMP-Qual	India	Medium
6	Béteille (2009)	EMP-Qual	India	Medium-high
7	Bermingham (2011)	EMP-Qual	Multi-country	Medium
8	Bourguignon and Verdier (2005)	THE		Medium
9	Bruns et al. (2011)	EMP-Quant		Medium-high
10	Buchert (1998)	BK	Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe	Medium
11	Chen (2011)	EMP-Quant	Indonesia	Medium-high
12	Corrales (2005)	TP		Medium
13	Essuman and Akyeampong (2011)	CS EMP-Qual	Ghana	Medium
14	Evans et al. (1995)	CS EMP-Qual	Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritius, Mozambique and Uganda	Medium
15	Fernandez (2011)	EMP-Quant	Mexico	Medium-high
16	Gradstein (2003)	THE		Medium
17	Harber (2002)	TP		Medium
18	Hicken and Simmons (2008)	EMP-Quant	Multi-country (40)	Medium-high
19	Hecock (2006)	EMP-Quant	Mexico	Medium-high
20	Iyer and Mani (2008)	EMP-Quant	India	Medium-high
21	Kempner and Loureiro (2002)	TP	Brazil	Medium
22	King (2007)	TP	Kenya	Medium
23	Kingdon and Muzammil (2009)	EMP-Quant	India – Uttar Pradesh	Medium
24	Kingdon and Muzammil (2013)	EMP-Quant and EMP-Qual	India – Uttar Pradesh	Medium-high
25	Kingdon and Teal (2010)	EMP-Quant	India	Medium-high
26	Kosack (2009)	CS EMP-Qual and EMP-Quant; also THE	Ghana/Taiwan	Medium

27	Kremer (2003)	TP/LR	Multi-country	Medium
28	Leftwich (2006)	THE	Multi-country	Medium-high
29	Levacic (2009)	THE		Medium
30	Little (1999)	BK/EMP-Qual and EMP-Quant	Sri Lanka	Medium
31	Little (2008)	LR		Medium
32	Little (2010b)	EMP-Qual and EMP-Quant	Ghana	Medium
33	Little (2010c)	EMP-Qual and EMP-Quant	Sri Lanka	Medium
34	Little (2010a)	EMP-Qual and EMP-Quant	India	Medium
35	Little (2011)	EMP-Qual	Sri Lanka	Medium
36	Mahlangu and Pitsoe (2011)	TP	South Africa	Medium
37	Mukundan and Bray (2004)	TP	India – Kerala	Medium
38	Mundy (2006)	TP		Medium
39	Muralidharan and Sundararaman (2011)	RCT	India – Andhra Pradesh	High
40	Murillo and Ronconi (2004)	EMP-Quant	Argentina	Medium
41	Murillo et al. (2002)	EMP-Quant	Argentina	Medium
42	Patrinos and Kagia (2007)	BK	Multi-country	Medium
43	Pedley and Taylor (2009)	TP	Ghana	Medium
44	Psacharopoulos (1989)	TP	East Africa	Medium
45	Santibáñez and Rabling (2006)	EMP-Quant	Mexico	Medium
46	Santibáñez and Rabling (2008)	EMP-Quant	Mexico	Medium
47	Sharma (2009)	EMP-Qual	India	Medium
48	Somerset (2011)	EMP-Qual and EMP-Quant	Kenya	Medium
49	Sørensen (2008)	TP	Sri Lanka	Medium
50	Stasavage (2005)	EMP-Quant	Several African countries	Medium-high
51	Woessmann (2003)	EMP-Quant	Multi-country	Medium-high

Table A4.3B: Summary of studies reviewed (from additional searches – expert advice)

Paper #	Author (date)	Research design	Country	Quality rankings
52	Barber (2013)	TP	Pakistan	Medium-low
53	Bennell and Akyeampong (2007)	MX	Multi-country	Medium
54	Bold et al. (2013)	EMP-Quant	Kenya	High
55	CfBT (2011)	EMP-Qual	Zimbabwe	Medium
56	Duncan and Williams (2010)	TP	Nigeria	Medium-low
57	Education International (2013)	EMP-Quant	Ghana	Medium
58	Hoffman (2013)	EMP-Qual	Tanzania	Medium
59	Kingdon and Muzammil (2009)	EMP-Quant	India	Medium
60	Languille and Dolan (2012)	EMP-Qual	Tanzania	Medium
61	McKinsey (2010)	MX	Multi-country	Medium
62	Mulkeen (2010)	MX	Multi-country	Medium
63	Pherali et al. (2011)	EMP-Qual	Nepal	Medium
64	Zengele (2013)	EMP-Qual	South Africa	Medium