

**Public Private Partnerships in the Provision of Education in the local sphere**  
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**Questions**

**Why are Partnerships in Education important?**

In recent years there has been a burgeoning social science literature on the need for partnerships in the financing and provision of education. The arguments cover a broad canvas, ranging from the complementary strengths of the private and public sector in increasing the coverage of services in the local sphere (Bebbington 2003) to a reconsideration of the extent to which the current provision of education needs to take regard of the established 'public good' conception of education (World Bank/King 1999). The view that the provisioning of public goods requires a multi-provider approach emphasises the importance of recognising the differential ability of public and private providers to delivery quality services in a timely fashion (van Gaag 1995, Besley and Ghatak 2001).

The term 'private' sector in these partnerships currently covers all non-state actors with corporate entities, NGOs and faith based organisations all falling into this category. Recent research findings do point to the need to differentiate between these different players. One emergent theme signals the need to bring the private (corporate) sector to finance education to ensure that there is a rapid expansion in the supply of education (Tooley 2005). Other research evidence shows that the NGO sector is better placed to reach out to the disadvantaged and underprivileged (Hulme and Edwards 1999) so that expansion of this sector could generate access for the poorer sections of society who have been denied entry to or fallen out of the state system of education. The superior ability of various actors in the private sector to contribute to the expansion of education is a consequence of higher efficiency, performance and resource raising ability of the sector.

The early models of partnerships focussed on the gains from private financing while current thinking indicates that private provision of schools by various non-state providers such as the corporate, NGO, charity and faith schools is an area of growing interest. International and national initiatives in expanding education have examined partnerships in finance and provision of school education as a method to ensure educational access and quality (Patrinos 2005). The role of PPPs has tended to follow an economic analysis with a focus on both the supply and demand aspects of educational provision within a market context (Patrinos 2003). The importance of consumer demand in obtaining education has recently been linked to considerations of 'voice' that have begun to emphasise the political dimensions of provision (Paul 2004). The recent educational literature indicates that emerging models for public-private partnerships in education are driven by political ideology and that neoliberal social policy played a significant role in fashioning current partnerships (Common 2000). Academic evaluations of current PPPs have raised serious concerns with regards to limitations in conceptualisation of these models and inadequate analysis of

the consequences of public-private partnerships in Europe and the North America (Osborne 2000). The shifting ground of social science arguments from cost effectiveness and profitability in the economic literature to the changing nature of political commitment of the nation State provide a complex but fascinating arena of research.

### **Bringing together the political and economic aspects of the research**

The increasing synergy between economic and political tools of analysis in the educational sector provide an opportunity for undertaking interdisciplinary research on the role and impact of PPPs in developing countries engaged in pro-poor development. In particular the current interest in voice in the PPPs indicates the potential for analysing the financing and/or providing education using tools that can cross disciplinary divided.

This research project proposes to use the concepts of **exit**, **voice** and **loyalty** that were developed in the 1970s in political science to understand the behaviour of individuals in organisations, such as firms, in a market place. These terms set out by Albert Hirschman were intended to examine individual behaviour within organisations that operated under the rules of the market. The idea of **exit** drew on the mainstream economic understanding of free entry and exit with the latter occurring when individuals were no longer satisfied with what was on offer in the market. Within the context of an organisational set up the notion of **exit** relates to the market like behaviour of the consumer with regard to the decision to leave a provider on account of dissatisfaction. The term **voice** was used to describe political activity undertaken by an individual while remaining within an organisation to ensure the continued provision of a good and/or the quality of the good.

These concepts can be used to analyse how consumer behaviour affects the quantity and quality of education. If the phenomenon of exit is present it indicates **choice** by the consumer with regard to the quality of education that is being provided by current providers in the locality. Where **voice** is exercised by parents and pupils in the school system there is evidence of political activity ranging from complaints to campaigns to obtain a higher quality and wider coverage of education in the school. If exit indicates choice in a market context while voice is evidence of political responsiveness then we have two important tools to understand the relationship between consumers, the school and the providers in the local sphere.

Additionally, where both public and private schools are present in a locality the phenomenon of exit can provide an indication of the failure of the state education system to provide a sufficient coverage and quality of education. The literature already points out that exit has implications for the quality of provision as the large scaling exiting of the middle classes from the public education system may trigger a reduction in state commitment to finance state education (Easterly 2000). Similarly, research work at the level of the local educational system show that the large scale presence of the use of voice could result in an improvement of the level and type of educational provision (Chubb and Moe 1988) but might also hinder provision on account of dissension among the consumers (Fennell 2001). The impact of voice on educational provision is also useful in understanding how a large scale shift in the community between public and private schools impacts on the responsiveness of the

state provider given the understanding that the state is more amenable to responding to the demands of the articulate middle classes than that of the poor.

Our research proposes to use voice and exit to identify the relationship between provision by state and non-state providers in the local sphere. Our particular interest will be to explore whether the rising number of non-state initiatives to provide education in many low income countries is a response to the inadequacy or absence of state provision of education. In the current environment where the non-state sector in education comprises a number of distinct providers with very different resources, ranging from the established private schools that cater for the well off middle classes who have opted out of the public system of education to the private organisations that operate religious establishments such as church schools, madrasahs, Buddhist schools and Hindu schools, it would be a worthwhile exercise to explore how schools across this wide spectrum had been affected by the presence of market and political pressures using notions of voice and exit.

The difficulties of viewing public and private schools as competitors on a single playing field was recognised by Hirschman, in the context of the U.S.A in the 1960s-1970s, in relation to the difficulty of making choices where the measurement of quality was difficult and largely subjective.

“public schools have several strikes against them in their competition with private schools: first, if and when there is deterioration in the quality of the public school education these schools will lose the children of those highly quality-conscious parents who might otherwise have fought deterioration; second, if thereafter, quality comes to decline in the private schools, then this type of parents will keep their children their for much longer than was the case when the public schools deteriorated. Hence, when public and private schools coexist, with the quality of education in the latter being higher, deterioration will be more strenuously fought “from within” in the case of the private than in the case of the public schools. And because exit is not a particularly powerful recuperation mechanism in the case of public schools-it is far more so in that of private schools which have to make ends meet” (Hirschman 1972: 51-52)

The relationship of voice and exit to economic and political responses to educational provision is set out as a table below.

**Table 1: Using the notions of exit and Voice in Education**

		Voice	
		Yes	No
Exit	Yes	political response	neoclassical market
	No	community	excluded groups

The table shows for scenarios with the following configurations. In the north-east configuration is the case of exit and no voice which (Case 1) results in a market based approach. In the north-west configuration is the case of the presence of exit and presence of voice (Case 2) where political representation results. In the south-west configuration is the case of voice but with no exit (Case 3) which could be deemed as characteristic of traditional communities who tend to regard their group identity as a social marker and do not use exit as an option except in very extreme circumstances, on account of limited or no spatial and/or social mobility. Finally the south-east configuration is the case of no voice and no exit (Case 4) which approximates the inadvertent status accorded to excluded groups who are do not have or are even denied access to these services. If educational provision is not a possibility for a particular group or family it is unlikely that there would be any use of exit or voice and the group is already outside of the domain of provision.

These four scenarios provide a starting point to mapping out how the economic logic of the market and the power of political representation affect the financing and provision of education by a range of providers, both state and non-state. It would be valuable to learn whether the market driven solutions are equally effective in obtained both finance and physical provision by non-state providers in Case 1. In the instance of political representation it would be worth exploring whether there was greater attention to improvements in current provision and how such quality improvements were measured. In the case of traditional communities (Case 3) with little or no knowledge of market based processes it would important to know whether there was deterioration in the quantity and quality of provision. In the case of exclusion, it

would be critical to explore the implications of being denied access to the educational system.

### **Proposed Research**

The intention of this project is to draw on the concepts of voice and exit to evaluate the provision of education by public and private providers in the local sphere. The proposal is to undertake a number of school level studies to identify the manner in which demand and supply factors operate within a school in relation to the use of voice and exit. Research will examine how demand and supply aspects of provision are affected by the ability of parents, pupils and providers to use and respond to voice and exit respectively.

On the **Demand Side** the research will examine the impact of parental and pupil influence on school behaviour by using the mechanisms of voice and exit. In particular, there will be an attempt to identify how the social status of the parents, pupils and school affect the effectiveness of the mechanisms of voice and exit with regard to improving coverage and quality of education. On the **Supply Side** the focus will be on the extent to and manner in which the school responds to phenomena of voice and exit. It will be particular interest whether the providers regard the degree of a 'public good element' as an important feature in their decision regarding the quality of provision and whether large scale shifts in the pupil population affect this perception.

The research will draw on existing data collection within the urban/rural setting and public/government documents on the performance of the school to establish the context of providing education in the local sphere. The household survey will be consulted, where possible, for additional data on the income levels of households, educational decisions of parents and children and the types of schools that operate in the area. The mapping provided by national statistical sources within possible support from the household survey will be used to identify the particular schools that will become part of the study.

The methodology of this project will be to conduct interviews with the key stakeholders in the school using both questionnaires as well as semi-structured interviews. The intention will be to identify the elements of voice and exit that are currently apparent in the school. The interviews will guide the research towards constructing indicators of voice and exit that can be related to policy and financial shifts within the school. The implications of these will be explored in relations to on the level and quality of educational provision. These indicators, possibly ranging from the now well-established report card to fractious protest, shall be drawn upon to create a classification of responses by school type and resource availability.

Voice and exit will become the tools for developing a typology of market and political influences on the school. The relative frequency of use of voice and exit will provide a measure of the demand-related aspects of provision. The pattern of educational and financial reforms adopted by the school will highlight the extent to which market, political and public good features affect the provision of education. As the study will be restricted to **ten** schools in each area the implications of the research will not be to

provide a generic picture of the public and private schools in the area with regard to political and market behaviour: it will however generate a detailed school-level understanding of mechanisms of voice and exit in relation to provision of education in the context of specific social structures, political configurations and economic characteristics. A study across the four countries across the RPC will allow for a comparative element of public and private provision that will indicate how economic and political dimensions of financing and provision have emerged in the primary and secondary education.

We will be looking to study government, private and public-private partnerships where they are present in the district. The intention is to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data at the district and the school level. Data at the district level will be with regard to enrolment, retention by gender/ethnicity/religion/other categories. There will also be elite interviews conducted with the local education officers and other district officials. At the school data would be collected on the expenditure patterns and educational programmes. There would be interviews with the headteacher and key members of the community. It would be helpful if focus groups discussions could be held with the parent-teacher association or other such community based body.

### **Identifying the outcomes of provision**

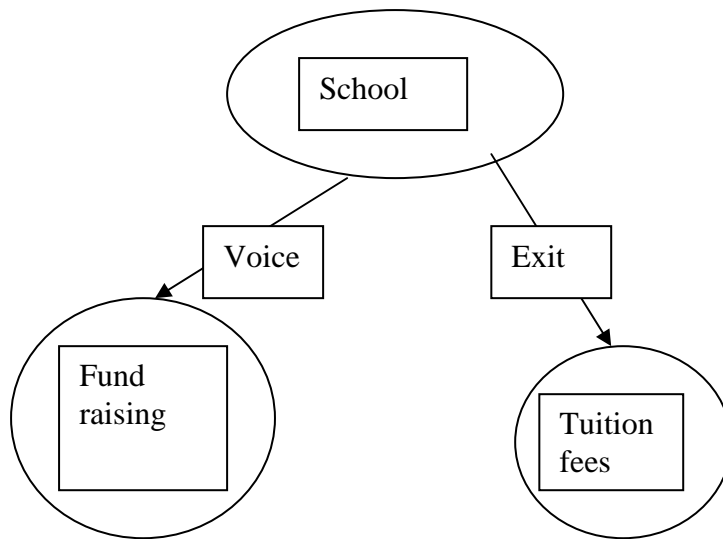
The guiding principle is that

Voice represents the political: to make claims, to demarcate rights

Exit represents the economic: to purchase preferred type of educational provision

### **Financial dimension**

The tuition/tutoring fees charged by the school represent a financial cost on the parents. Fund raising might, on the other hand, be regarded as an activity that is supported by the parent body. If this is the case, the former could be viewed as a proxy for exit/entry and the latter as a proxy for voice. The financial outcomes of schooling could be developed from these trends in relation to data that will be collected from the school regarding enrolment, retention by gender, ethnicity, religion and information on school level initiatives, interventions and affirmative action programmes.



**Teaching dimension**

The literature indicates that teacher absenteeism is a major reason for exit from the state school. If data can be collected from the school or district on the absenteeism rate and also on the extent to which para-teachers/ supply teachers are employed there could be a starting point for generating a teaching outcome of education. This data could also be read in relation to the questions that we ask in our elite interviews in relation to interventions and ethos –whether meals, morals or other programmes.

**Thoughts on Instruments**

There has been a growing interest in the use of score-card systems for evaluating the performance of schools. This could provide a useful starting point for looking at the educational outcomes of school provision.

**Data collection**

Information to be collected at the district level

**(Score card?)**

Enrolment	Retention	Gender/Ethnicity	Religion/affirmative action initiative

Data at the school level

The thinking is that budgets might provide a useful instruments (in an manner similar to the use of educational budgets under the FTI)

**Budgets**

Salaries	Building	Curriculum	Fees/Subsidies	Other

**Interviews**

With District Education Officers  
Headteachers

**Focus groups**

Parent-teacher meetings