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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the role of the World Bank and its subsidiaries in promoting the neoliberal educational reforms of privatization and decentralization globally and in El Salvador. Neoliberalism is first defined as a sociopolitical philosophy that supports concepts such as the free market, market-driven education, and the use of a voucher system to provide consumer choice to individuals and families pursuing education. Based on early evidence and existing global conditions, it appears that the neoliberal reforms of privatization and decentralization will do little to reduce poverty and improve access to schooling for the impoverished and girls. An increase in basic education will doubtless provide a growing work force of semiliterate, semiskilled workers for the subsidiaries of transnational corporations. Decentralization of local basic schools will grant more decision-making to parents and communities, but will reduce the power of national teacher unions and the national government. Standardized curricula and tests will ensure employers of a code of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that will be most useful to their demands. This knowledge will include language, science, mathematics, and communications, but very little of the students' culture, such as art, music, and literature. (Contains 56 references.) (RT)

The Politics of Privatization and Decentralization in Global School Reform: The Value of Equity Claims for Neoliberalism at the World Bank and in El Salvador

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 1-5, 2002

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In this paper, the author first defines neoliberalism and then focuses on the role of the World Bank and its subsidiaries in the promotion of the neoliberal educational reforms of privatization and decentralization globally and in El Salvador, where the author has participated in research studies on ecological sustainability. I conclude with an examination of the Bank's use of equity claims as a means of advancing its neoliberal educational reforms, the validity of these claims, and their use to cover the Bank's underlying metaphor of schooling as private commodity.

Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is based in the free market ideas of Friedrich von Hayek's defense of classical liberalism and of the free choice of individuals in the market. However, rather than relying strictly on the laisse faire approach to the market of classical liberalism, von Hayek advocated the use of the state's power to maintain market conditions for competition and to deal with social issues that lay outside of the province of the marketplace in the twentieth century (Spring, 1998). Milton Friedman extended von Hayek's conception of the market and neoliberalism to the social issue of schooling, believing that free market competition in schools would produce better quality schooling and increase educational opportunity. Friedman argued that the role of government should be limited primarily to "establishing the framework within which individuals are free to pursue their own objectives" and that the "free market is the only mechanism that has ever been discovered for achieving participatory democracy" (1994, p. ix).

To incorporate a mechanism for competition in the nearly monopolistic public school system of the United States where less than 10 percent of children attended private schools, Friedman proposed the use of a voucher system to provide consumer choice to individuals and their families pursuing education. Through a voucher granted to the consumer of the educational service, the government would finance the consumer's education but would allow for the consumer's freedom in the market place by his/her choice of a state approved public or private educational service. The voucher provided the opening for the direct public support of private schooling beyond the indirect tax subsidies given to religious and nonprofit entities by the government. Friedman's idea of vouchers excited the politically conservative Right who were attacking public schools during the 1950s, but the reality of the idea lay dormant until the 1980s when U.S. public schooling again came under attack by the political Right.

In 1983, the federal report, A Nation at Risk lambasted the poor quality of public education at a time of increasing global competition and emphasized the need for a competitive workforce for the supremacy of the U.S. industry and economy in the world. Under Reaganomics, the United States directed its attention to the private sector as the solution to nationally perceived crises in the public services such as transportation, social services, health care, education, etc. Beginning in this period, federal educational reformers touted the model of business as the solution for the problem of the mediocre quality of public schooling. These reformers in the Reagan and Bush administration believed that if schools operated more like competitive businesses, competition would increase efficiency and promote innovation in schooling and improve the overall quality of U.S. schooling. In doing so, U.S. workers would also become more competitive in the global economy.

Fitz and Beers (2001, p. 8) have identified three long term effects of this period:

First, schools became subject to the business notion of the "bottom line" with judgments of their standards or outputs being measured by public examinations and assessment performance. Secondly, the chronic underfunding of public schools, led local schools with the encouragement of state governments to seek external private revenue streams such as Channel One, vending machines, and corporate sponsored activities. Thirdly, public schools were encouraged to establish public private partnerships where private partners were urged to invest in public education as a way of keeping taxes lower and supplementing areas such as vocational equipment where the payoffs to business and industry were easily identifiable. These effects began the erosion of the wall between the public and private in U.S. schooling.

In 1989 the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc released Western governments, nongovernmental agencies, and international financing agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from the primary ideological position of a "world free for democracy" to a "world free for the market." Olukoshi (1996) has argued that this collapse led to a neoliberal triumphantism where all of humankind was now able to march toward "free" market policies and ideas. Asserting a strong anti-state bias, neoliberals advocated for reduction in the state's role in social spending, deregulation of the economy, and the liberalization of trade policies. With a free market emphasis on the importance of a return on investment, neoliberal policies encouraged the transfer of publicly collected revenues into the private sector to support private enterprise and reduce the growth of the public sector.

The application of neoliberal policies was especially evident in Latin America where debt crisis and exploding inflation was rampant through the 1980s. The servicing and repayment of external debts to banking corporations crippled economic recovery and caused nations such as Brazil and Mexico to turn to the World Bank and the IMF for loans to obtain good credit ratings and access to foreign capital. The conditions of loans under structural adjustment plans included "cuts in social spending, a tightening of the belt, and economic hardships for frequently the poorest members of a society," (Arnove, 1997, p.80) with the objective of first economic stability, followed by economic growth. Such adjustments required the examination of scant public resources for the most efficient use of revenues and efforts to reach the neediest members of the country. During the same period with the signing of trade agreements such as NAFTA and the development of the World Trade Organization, developing nations were urged to use their public revenues to support economic growth through the costs of memberships in the world trading clubs or be left behind.

Such world trade agreements reflect the current phenomenon known as globalization, an inexact term that encompasses all areas of global social life in the twenty-first century, particularly economic, political and cultural aspects. Globalization is the result of the "technological infrastructure provided by telecommunications, information systems, microelectronics machinery, and computer-based transportation" of the last two decades (Carnoy, 1999, p.13). Gibson-Graham (1996, 121) has defined globalization as "a set of processes by which the world is rapidly being integrated into one economic space via increased international trade, the internationalization of production and financial markets, the internationalization of a commodity culture promoted by an increasingly networked global telecommunications system." This global culture has a high respect for technology and industry and requires new forms of technological and symbolic language literacy that portends to create new social and technical divisions of labor. The dominant language of globalization is English reflecting the center of information technology as the United States.

A global economy as Manuel Castells (1996, p.92) has stated, "works as one unit in real time on a planetary scale." The causes and effects of globalization create a new way of thinking about economic and social space and time that Castells calls "the space of flows," an electronic open, decentered space where geographically based borders and time are transcended into a fluid time of connection. While viewed positively by many because of its ability to connect people and money almost simultaneously, others view globalization as a new form of informational and technological colonization: beguiling, attractive, necessary, and oppressive. Amin (1996) has argued that this space is highly fixed by a center comprised of the most powerful, industrialized nations who hold five monopolies: technology, worldwide financial markets, global natural resources (in terms of access), media and communications, and weapons of mass destruction.

The dominant economic discourse of globalization is centered in the principles of neoliberalism which recommend the use of finance driven reforms to limit the control of the state and to reduce public expenditures on social services such as education. The two primary finance-driven reforms within education are privatization and decentralization. Privatization is a process whereby the institutions of schooling are increasing operated by nongovernmental entities such as the church or for-profit entities such as the Edison Corporation. These entities may or may not be supported by publicly collected revenues in the form of vouchers, scholarships, or outsourcing contracts. The entities are regulated by state policies such as curriculum standards, assessments, safety, etc. and national legal requirements, but otherwise operate independently or quasi-independently such as U.S. charter schools. Via privatization, a publicly operated school becomes just one of the choices open to the consumer.
Decentralization is a process that places decision making control over the educational entity,

primarily public schools, into the hands of the consumer, i.e. the parents and the community where the school is located. Privatization limits the amount of public revenues used for schooling and encourages the use of public monies for private sector investment and return. Decentralization limits the political control of the state entity and also reduces the political influence of unions.

Arnove (1997) examined the arguments in favor and against the two neoliberal policies of privatization and decentralization in light of the three central challenges to global education: equity, quality, and efficiency. He determined that the arguments in favor of these neoliberal policies were that a decentralized and privatized education system was likely to be more democratic, efficient, and accountable than a centralized, state-directed system. Decentralized schools would be more responsive to local communities, would empower parents and communities, would be more likely to lead to effective school reform, and presented the possibilities of additional revenue streams to increase teacher salaries and to improve the physical plants of schools. His arguments against the policies of decentralization and privatization raised issues in four areas: 1) the consequences of the diminished role of the state and of public schooling to forge national identity and consensus-formation; 2) the accompaniment of neoliberal policies with neoconservative policies that dictated curricula and textbooks, instilled a cultural "canon" of family values, and established national standards that allowed little room for dissent by local teachers, schools, or communities; 3) the impact of user fees on the attainment of universal primary education in developing nations, and 4) the threats to the quality of higher education when scarce resources were directed to primary education and away from tertiary schools and universities.

According to Carnoy (1999, p. 51), the main advocates of the neoliberal policies of privatization and decentralization in education are international agencies such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and its allied organizations. "The IMF and the Banks are financial institutions, concerned primarily with reducing the cost of public service delivery," freeing this capital for private investment. As an international banking and donor agency supported by government payments worldwide, the World Bank plays a prominent role in the direction of policies throughout the world and especially in nations that are the recipients of its project aid or loans. Carnoy contends that these lending institutions' primary focus in the implementation of finance-driven reforms in education is the shift of public funds for schooling to the primary or lower levels of education through the privatization of the secondary or higher education. Since the primary and lower levels of education are cheaper, these reforms will also reduce public expenditures on education.

The Role of the World Bank in Global Educational Reform

"A World Free of Poverty," is the running head of the World Bank's website (http://www.worldbank.org, 2/15/02), a prominent display of its intention to pay attention to equity through the reduction of poverty worldwide. Conceived during World War II at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, as a financing agency for the reconstruction of Europe, the World Bank quickly became a financial conduit through which the nations of the First World directed economic development in low and middle income countries and bolstered loyalty to the First World during the Cold War. Its sister, supra organization, the International Monetary Fund, defines itself as "cooperative institution that 182 countries have voluntarily joined" much like a credit union which "lends money to members having trouble meeting financial obligations to other members, but only on condition that they undertake economic reforms to eliminate these difficulties for their own good and that of the entire membership" (Driscoll, 2000).

Prior to the end of the Cold War I 1989 – 1990, the main focus of World Bank projects throughout the world was the support of leaders, governments, and infrastructures that promoted the allegiance of governments to the "First World" and enabled the growth of capitalism to prevent the spread of communism and the influence of the "Second World." With the end of the Cold War, its purposes shifted from the shoring up of nations for the "free World" to shaping an market-driven world primarily controlled by "first nations," one whereby free trade helps to maintain the imbalance of resources and consumption that favors nations such as the United States, Canada, the European Union, Japan, and Australia and works against the "developing" nations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

In his analysis of trade associations such as the North American Free Trade Association, Shaeffer (1995) has argued that the reduction of tariffs on imported goods will reduce government revenues – so much needed in countries like El Salvador, Mexico, and Canada. The elimination of income from this source comes at a time when each country is facing deficits and when they must actually increase government spending to facilitate the implementation of the agreement. Ironically, tariff reduction provides tax relief for US corporations (Washington Post, 10/20/00.) US firms control 40% of the Mexican and 40% of the Canadian export economy. In turn, this reduces tax revenue and tariff revenue for governments.

New free trade agreements have opened doors and markets to large scale transnational corporations (TNC) (p. 206). TNCs control 70 percent of world trade with the top 500 TCNs controlling 2/3s of the world trade (1990 figures). They capture most of the economic benefits provided by free trade agreements. They, ultimately, may lead to less competition rather than more, since the new free trade agreements do not include antitrust provisions. The volume of world trade has increased ten times since the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was formed in 1947. Yet, the developing nations share of global wealth fell from 22 percent between 1980 and 1988, a figure not only attributed to trade imbalances but also to falling commodity prices, indebtedness, and inflation. Shaeffer concludes, "Not only are free trade agreements expected to produce economic losers, they are supposed to prevent governments from taking steps that might "protect" the losers from the impact of the agreements (p. 211).

Beginning in 1990, the World Bank's most visible strategy for reducing poverty became education as it recognized that," Investment in education contributes to the accumulation of human capital, which is essential for higher incomes and sustained economic growth....Basic education encompasses general skills such as language, science and mathematics, and communications ... [and] includes the development of attitudes necessary for the workplace" (1995, pp. 1, 2).

The World Bank has become the largest single source of external finance for education in developing countries, accounting for about a quarter of all external support. Since its first education project in 1963, the Bank has continuously expanded its financing of education projects in both absolute and relative terms, as part of its mission to reduce poverty. Total lending for education from 1963 -1994 amounted to US $19.2 billion, with more than 500 projects in over 100 countries. Lending commitments are currently around $2 billion each year. Since 1980, the total volume of education lending has tripled and its share in overall Bank lending has doubled to eight percent. Lending increased by fifty percent in 1990 and has maintained levels of $2 billion since then. Since these levels still only account for 0.5 percent of the "developing" countries total spending on education, the World Bank sees its "main contribution as advice, designed to help governments develop education policies" (pp. 145-156.)

To assess the contribution of education to the "accumulation of human capital," the World Bank continually has estimated its impact of education on economic productivity. It does this by comparing the difference in earnings over time of individuals with and without a particular course of education. By 1990, it recognized that progress in education, determined by expanded enrollments and longer schooling, had contributed to world economic growth and reduced poverty in all developing countries except in Sub-Saharan Africa. By 1995, it had identified the challenges for education in the developing world "to increase access to education in some countries, to improve equity, to improve quality, and where needed, to speed educational reform" (p.2).

With its policy agenda for world education in place, it began funding projects that advanced the adoption of the following six key reforms:

> a higher priority for education; 2) attention to outcomes; 3) concentration of efficient public investment on basic education, coupled with more reliance on household financing for higher education; 4) attention to equity; 5) household involvement in the education system; and 6) autonomous institutions that will permit the flexible combination of instructional inputs (p.89).

In its analysis of the rate of return to investment in public education in low and middle income-countries, the World Bank concluded that the rates of return are greater in basic (primary and lower-secondary) education than those in higher education. Although public spending on primary education generally benefited the poor, its research found that total spending on education in low and middle-income countries often favored the non-poor and those in urban areas, largely because relatively fewer poor children attend secondary and tertiary schools (World Bank, 66; Mingat and Tan, 1985; Lopez-Acevedo and Salinas, 2000).

The Bank claims that the "public sector is not doing an adequate job at targeting the poorest students" (IFC, 1999, p. 5), the Bank began to advocate increased spending at the basic education level. However, the World Bank did not advocate increasing the overall public expenditure of developing countries on education in line with its neoliberal principles. Plus increasing demands on existing public revenues for debt payments, much of these payments going to the World Bank and other lenders; for trade obligations incurred through the IMF and the WTO, and for infrastructure that facilitates trade such as transportation and manufacturing required increased efficiency within the public education sector. Rather, it advocated for the shift of current public expenditures in secondary and tertiary education to basic education and for increases in the internal efficiencies of public spending. To support its claim that educational expenditures are inefficient, it cited the efficiency of East Asia in educating its youth. While public spending in education in 1990 equaled 5.2 percent of gross national product (GNP) in the Middle East and North Africa, it only demanded 3.4 percent of GNP in East Asia. Public spending in Africa, with the lowest enrollment ratios of any region, was 4.2 percent. In Latin America, real public expenditure dropped to 3.7 percent by 1990 after a decade of First World initiated, debt-induced recession in the 1980s. It contended that nations in all of these areas should emulate the internal efficiencies of East Asian nations as Thailand, Korea, and Hong Kong.

In the name of increasing efficiency and lowering the per cent of GNP dedicated to education, the World Bank began supporting in 1995 the following neoliberal policies: 1) the decentralization of education, defined as the assignment of responsibility for education to an institution or level of government other than the central government, primarily the private sector; 2) the implementation of user fees for secondary and higher educational levels; 3) the shift of the costs of vocational and technical skills to the private sector; and 4) the increase of household responsibility for schooling through parental choice of schooling for their children via vouchers and capitation grants as in Chile and through informal parental participation through advisory councils (World Bank, 1995, pp. 120-134). In regard to the role of teachers in educational reform, the Bank recommended that teacher involvement in decision making be increased, but it emphasizes only in the area of instruction. It concluded that the best external direction for focusing teachers strictly on instruction and preventing diversion to "areas only tangentially related to instruction", (i.e. professional organizations and unions) is a national or regional curriculum whose outcomes are assessed nationally in standardized examinations (129).

To facilitate privatization in all sectors including education, the Bank created in 1999 the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a private investment affiliate of the World Bank. Whereas the World Bank is a supranational lending agency that promotes "sustainable development" (As defined by the World Bank, development is sustainable when its investments continue to produce economic return) by lending to governments, the IFC is the world's largest multilateral organization providing financial assistance directly in the form of loans and equity to private enterprises in developing countries (Conference Proceedings, 1999, copyright page). Since 1999, IFC's investments in education have continued to grow, comprising 10.5 percent of its total social approvals for loans or guarantees.

Through the IFC, the World Bank has promoted its agenda for the privatization of education. According to Javed Hamid, Director of East Asia and Pacific, IFC, and founder of the Lahore University of Management Sciences, the IFC uses long-term loans, equity investment, guarantees, and syndications to support the private sector; as an example, the IFC will bring other banks such as Citibank into their loans. The IFC operates without any governmental guarantees, but its financing is often long term, and it is willing to look at investment opportunities where others might not. The IFC will not finance more than 25 per cent of a project, which can be as small as $1 million or as large as $100 million. According to Hamid, its presence brings reassurance to a transaction, especially to other investors, internal or foreign. Its total annual investment is approximately $6 billion, about $3.5 million of which is from its own account, and about $2.5 billion from participating banks. In 1999, the IFC had about 230 investments in over a hundred countries. Its profits in 1998 were bout $250 million on equity of about $2.2 billion. Hamid states that the IFC "is a bank which is owned by governments, and therefore they feel that IFC will play a neutral role and will try to give good advice" (p. 87). The IFC's first educational loan was to the private Rainbow Academy Secondary School in Uganda in 1944. As of June 1999, the IFC had invested in eleven private sector education projects, totaling about $44 million, and began assisting the World Bank on several regional conferences on private education throughout the developing world beginning in December, 1999.

As a result of the IFC's Global Study of investment opportunities in developing countries, the World Bank Group also created a online forum to enhance private sector development in education in June 1999: http://www.worldbank.org/edinvest. Edinvest identifies investment opportunities in developing countries, conducts market surveys, organizes training events and conferences, and produces toolkits on private sector development in education. In this relatively short period, it has become a substantial clearinghouse for studies and information on private investments in education; printing monthly newsletters; and linking readers to other websites that advocate private investment; and providing publications of World Bank groups and case studies funded by the World Bank online.

At the June 1999 IFC Conference, Peter Woicke, Executive Vice President of IFC and Managing Director of the World Bank, stated the World Bank's recognition of the private sector as being of "considerable importance." He added, "The World Bank, driven by its President, James Wolfensohn, is becoming more and more a knowledge bank, increasingly advising governments on how best to privatize services (p.3)" Woicke noted that there was considerable debate within the IFC on the questions of whether investing in private education in developing countries helped to further the World Bank's mission of reducing poverty and of whether it increased benefits for the elite and middle classes. Woicke and others within the Bank have determined that it is an essential role for the IFC to build a strong middle class and that its presence will contribute in a major way to promote development. In effect, the World Bank has no problem with subsidizing the education of the non-poor as noted by Lopez-Acevedo and Salinas (2000) but want to direct this subsidy through private investment rather than public expenditures. We need to note here that much of the monies used to support the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, and the International Finance Corporation include public monies collected by national governments.

Maris O'Rourke, former Secretary of Education from New Zealand and head of the World Bank Education Network since 1996, presented her advocacy of a minimalist role for government in education as illustrated in the reform efforts of New Zealand. Reforms implemented in New Zealand have included decentralization, accountability for public funds; choice; and the targeting of funds to ensure equity, through per-capita funding. O'Rourke predicted that governments are and will become less and less the direct producers and providers of the goods and services and more the facilitators and regulators, which is "something the World Bank is seeking to encourage, working hard with the IFC to this end p.15)." O'Rourke indicated that the World Bank intends to facilitate the role of the private sector by financing private supply, providing an enabling environment, financing innovation, and managing knowledge.

As one of the main presenters, James Tooley of the United Kingdom reviewed the findings of the global education study conducted in 1997-99, revealing "huge, untapped markets for private education in the 12 countries studied (pp. 5-7)". Tooley concluded that an important factor in the profitability of such education was the promotion of a brand name. The study found that many private sector companies spent perhaps ten percent of revenues on marketing and the promotion of a brand name. The study found that many private sector companies spent perhaps ten percent of revenues on marketing and the promotion of brand names. Tooley cited the successful practices of educational brand name endorsement of athletes and personality contests in Zimbabwe and of a private sector computer education company in India.

El Salvador as a Case Study for World Bank Educational Reform

El Salvador is the smallest country in Central America, located along the Pacific Ocean with Honduras and Guatemala as its neighbors. With a population of 6.2 million people in 1999 sharing an area of 8,124 square miles, it is one of the most densely populated countries in the Western Hemisphere. It has a limited natural resource base, no remaining agricultural frontier, with 90 percent of its land deforested. The destruction of its forests has contributed to extensive soil erosion throughout the country. Since 1970 substantial shifts have occurred in the population from the rural areas to the cities. In 1970, 39 percent of the population lived in cities; by 2010, estimates indicate 60 percent will be urban dwellers. This migration has occurred as the result of a 12 year civil war, reliance on monoculture agriculture that does little to protect rural communities from the effects of globally depressed prices on such products as coffee, and little national support for rural communities. National revenues have focused on debt payments, trade organization memberships, attracting foreign-owned factories that offer low-paying jobs, and developing an infrastructure for transportation and trade. There are no figures on the percentage of the population that has access to safe water and sanitation; estimates indicate that 90 percent of water is polluted. With environmental problems and other social indicators such as the poverty index, infant mortality, and malnutrition prevalence among the worst in Latin American and a per capita income of US $1,580 in 1995, it ranks as one of the poorer countries in the region.

On January 16, 1992, the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) signed a Peace Accord putting an end to the 12-year conflict. El Salvador's civil war had no winner but many losers. The conflict lost some 75,000 lives, leaving thousands of people displaced, orphaned, or disabled, and provoked a mass migration which eventually left about one in five Salvadorans living outside the county. The war also caused large materials losses --- war-related damages are estimated to have totaled some US $1.5 billion in infrastructure alone. These figures do not reveal the fraying of the social fabric, the political polarization, and the weakening of institutional structures throughout the country as a result of the war. One major after-effect of the war and the consequent availability of guns has been a dramatic increase in violent crime.

Since 1992, the government and the people of El Salvador have endeavored to rebuild the country's economic, social, and institutional structure. In national elections, the Republic

National Alliance (ARENA), representative of the radical right in El Salvador and the US-backed military regime during the civil war, has elected El Salvador's president since 1992 and has dominated its legislature although the left wing party, the FLMN, has maintained a strong loyalty from the electorate and has gained an increasing number of legislative seats and municipal posts.

The country has been striving to transform itself from a war-driven highly divided society into society based on greater economic and social participation within the dominant structure of the ARENA party, and into a market-based economy. "The government has identified four challenges in addition to ensuring a stable macroeconomic environment: 1) modernizing the public sector, 2) creating an enabling environment for private sector and export-led growth, 3) reducing poverty and investing in human capital; and 4) strengthening environmental and natural resource management"(World Bank website, 10/25/99). Currently the World Bank has eight loans under implementation and although its dept load is amongst the lowest in Central America, as a result of these loans, short term debt increased 60 percent from 1995 to 1998, and with the borrowing has come an increase in its debt service payments to be the World Bank and the IMF. The Pan-American highway runs the course of the country, causing it to be a strategic link in the transportation of goods to and from North and South America. Since 1997, the widening of this highway has been a strong priority in terms of capital investment. It serves as the artery for the products made in rapidly growing number of maquilas (factories), built along its path in the most fertile areas of the country.

As noted by the World Bank (1991, 1) "El Salvador is currently undertaking bold economic reforms to become a more open economy with dynamic export-oriented private sector keyed into international markets and a small and strong State facilitating private sector activities," all economic policies that mirror the agenda of the World Bank and its sister multilateral lending and trade institutions.

The illiteracy rates for both males and females have gradually declined during the 1990s, but were 18.7 for males, fifteen years and older, and 24.4 for females, fifteen years and older, in 1999. In 1989, only Guatemala and Haiti had higher illiteracy rates. Approximately 80 percent of the school age population is enrolled in primary school and 35 percent in secondary school. The rates of primary and secondary school enrollment rates for boys and girls are nearly equal. Nearly two-thirds of its labor force is unskilled with an average of 4.4 years of education; only 12 percent of the population has more than 10 years of education. Comparing the periods before and after the war beginning in 1980, spending on education as a percentage of GDP, sharply decreased from a 3.6 percent share of GDP in 1981 to 2.0 percent share in 1994. Teacher salaries, in real terms, have steadily declined since 1980. The purchasing power of the teacher's wage in 1992 was 32 percent of its level in 1980. Per capita income rose 5.4 percent between 1984-1992 while teacher wages fell 50 percent during the same period. This decline has led to increased absenteeism and a decrease in the quality of education offered. The education system throughout the country is controlled by the Ministry of Education and is highly centralized. The National Teacher Organization (ANDES) has been historically strong in El Salvador and remains so, although membership is not obligatory, the majority of teachers belong. Teachers within the union have generally been supporters of the left wing and were historically active in the push for more democratic reforms from the military governments throughout the 20th century.

In light of its strategic position within Central America for the transport of goods, the multilateral lending agencies and trade associations have taken a strong interest in the educational development of the labor force, human capital, in El Salvador. Since the end of the civil war, World Bank educational loans to El Salvador have supported the Government's program to extend basic education to all children in the country, especially to those in rural areas that simply had never had schools or whose educational services had been disrupted by the war. Approximately 58 percent of the schools throughout the country need rehabilitation while a much larger percentage of schools lack equipment and furniture. The destruction wrought by the January 2001 earthquakes to schools added substantially to the needs for rebuilding its educational infrastructure of El Salvador.

The Government with the assistance of the World Bank has had a threefold strategy for education: 1) the focusing of human, financial, and material resources on basic education, 2) the decentralization of education and participation of communities in basic education, and 3) the provision of services through the private sector (World Bank Report No. 14129-ES, 1995).

World Bank loans have emphasized the strategies of basic education to all school age children and of decentralization and community participation through the "EDUCO" program. The Bank has cited the lack of skilled workers and low productivity as major impediments to accelerating economic growth. The "EDUCO" program was launched with World Bank support immediately following the war. Eighty percent of the EDUCO projects are financed through World Bank assistance (Report 17415-ES, 1998, p. 5). Teachers under the EDUCO program are not formal employees of the Ministry of Education; they are selected, hired, supervised, and dismissed by parent associations. Their salaries are higher, but they do not have the job stability of regular teachers. The community associations are the key management system;

they transfer funds to 1) managing the schools, 2) select qualified teachers, hiring and firing them (no labor unions here), 3) maintain schools, and 4) negotiate with different agencies. The EDUCO reforms were originally directed to rural areas, where support for the insurgency of the FMLN was strongest during the war, but are being extended to more urban areas. According to the World Bank (1998, 2), expansion of coverage, quality improvement measures, decentralization of management, and community participation through the Community Education (ACES), School Councils (CDEs) and Catholic School Councils (CECEs) have boosted enrollments and increased accountability to all levels. By 1998, all of the 1,696 EDUCO schools had ACEs; 99 percent of the traditional schools had CDEs and all 95 of the parochial schools subsidized by the Ministry of Education had CECEs.

Jimenez and Sawada's (1998) evaluation of the El Salvador's EDUCO Program indicated that the projects were successful in expanding educational opportunities for the poor in rural areas and were instrumental in getting families and communities more involved in schooling. In an analysis of student performance, the authors found that the EDUCO performed no better or worse on achievement scores than their rural traditional school counterparts, even when the factors of the distinctly disadvantaged EDUCO students were held constant. The most important socioeconomic background determinants that had a positive effect on student achievement were being male, coming from a family with access to electricity and sanitary service, being an older third grade student, and having fewer siblings (p. 19). At the school level, the availability of infrastructure services and being in a multiage classroom had a positive effect on achievement. Their most significant finding was the lower number of teacher absences in EDUCO schools and with this effect, fewer school days were missed by students as compared with teachers and students in the rural traditional schools. The authors concluded that decentralization did not necessarily deliver higher achievement schools, but that parental involvement in these schools increased student attendance and put pressure on teachers to reduce their own absenteeism.

At the secondary level, Bank supported assistance has emphasized improving the academic skills and capabilities of graduates in order to respond to the changes in labor market. The curriculum has also been reformed to respond to these needs emphasizing technical curriculum over traditional academic curricula. For technical education, the Bank is promoting the participation of the private sector with loans to support a scholarship fund for students with limited resources to pay for private education. The World Bank Report 18952 (1997, p. 15) on secondary education analyzed the costs of secondary education and found that the public schools spent a larger share of their resources on teaching and non-teaching salaries, in contrast to the private schools where less money is spent on salaries and more on resources such as libraries, laboratories, and physical infrastructure. They also found that public schools spend more money per student and have recommended that privatization will decrease public expenditures at this level, allowing for more financial support for basic education. The Bank also has encouraged user fees, primarily for public secondary education, and to a smaller extent for basic education for the cost of supplies. Any user fees, in a country where the average per capita daily income is US $4, impacts significantly on the household income. To increase privatization in El Salvador, the World Bank has also funded improvements in teacher training and curriculum programs for private schools and has supported the creation of private sector, post secondary vocational/technical training schools.

The Bank has also supported incentives to modernize the Ministry of Education and increase its efficiency via reforms in its budgetary process, building on the decentralization model of EDUCO and revising the legal framework of the educational sector to make it suitable for the reorganization of the Ministry (1995, p. 12).

El Salvador has become an important laboratory for the World Bank's educational "priorities and strategies." Starting from scratch in a country, desperately trying to recover from the economic devastation of war, the Bank and its affiliates have found a government willing to accept the Bank's agenda for a market-driven economy.

The World Bank's Use of Equity Claims in its Promotion of Neoliberal Education Reforms

In 2001, Ayesha Vawda, a World Bank analyst, concluded that in "most countries, governments remain the largest financiers and providers of education. Public sources account for more than half of the education spending in developing countries as a group and most governments generally spend between 10 and 20 percent of their budgets on education (between 3 to 7 percent of GNP) (p. 2)." Using benefit incidence analysis, a technique for assessing how efficiently public spending is targeted to the poor through the identification of who benefits from public expenditure on education in different income groups, Vawda's research on Brazil, France, and Kenya confirmed earlier World Bank studies. Studies of these countries concluded that poor families finance the education of children of high income families since the children of wealthier families in middle income and low income countries often attend private primary schools but disproportionately attend the more heavily subsidized public higher education institutions. At the higher education level, input costs per pupil are higher than at the primary level. In African countries, on average, government spending per higher education students is 44 times that on the primary education student (World Bank, 1995). Even at the primary education level, the distribution of government expenditures is less equitable than it seems, according to World Bank studies. Two-thirds of primary education budgets are spent on salaries, leaving little for other inputs that have a direct impact on student learning, including textbooks and adequate teaching and learning materials. Rural schools are the most disadvantaged in terms of expenditures. In Uganda, for every dollar spent on primary education, only 36 cents reach rural schools (Castro-Leal et al, 1999). Awada recommends that improved targeting of public expenditures to the poor is essential to achieve more equity in the distribution of scarce government resources.

Using these equity arguments to direct public expenditures to the poor, the World Bank has strongly endorsed the neoliberal reform of privatization, claiming private support of education can help governments overcome financial, administrative, and fiscal constraints. It also maintains that private education can "indirectly benefit the lowest socioeconomic groups by attracting families who can afford some level of fee away from the public system, thereby increasing capacity and per student spending for the students who remain in the public system," ergo improving access and equity for the impoverished. In addition, its policy to support the development of private tertiary institutions allows governments to reduce funding in such institutions and to invest what capital it has in the lower levels of education, in the name of improving distributive equity. Acknowledging that multi-tier systems of education serving different socioeconomic levels exist and most likely will always exist to some extent in developed and developing countries, the Bank claims that private education that caters to the non-elite will help "blur the existing and often very stark disparities between rich and non-rich access to quality education" (IFC, 1999, p.6). The Bank purports that private education will strengthen the capacity of the whole system and in turn, increase equity for the poor. These equity claims for the increase of educational opportunities for poor students are increased when privatization policies that encourage networks of schools where higher-fee charging schools cross-subsidize low- or no-fee schools. Other ways to extend access occur when companies and employers' associations provide schooling or internships for their employees, employer's children, or students in the community. In addition, private sector provision of student loan programs can help poor students gain an education.

The benefits of private education also expand educational opportunities to the middle and lower-middle classes and the poor, claiming education is the only reliable means of upward mobility for low income groups into the middle class. The Bank recognizes that a strong middle class is a necessary component for development and that education can provide the middle class to withstand some degree of uncertainty from social or economic conditions. The Bank also claims that private schooling is more cost-efficient that the public system when efficiency is measured by per student costs. The Bank concludes, however, that the challenge is not only to reduce costs of education and its drain on public revenues, but to improve the effectiveness of education. Alluding to the "savage inequalities" of public education worldwide, it states that "effectiveness in the public sector is often highly variable, with schools in poorer areas generally receiving fewer and poorer quality resources, less support from parents and more difficult-to-educate children" (p.6).

Similar to the World Bank, the IFC considers its most significant role in educational investment is its ability to expand access to quality education to the underserved lower-middle and middle classes, thereby enhancing social mobility and strengthening the developmentally vital middle class. It cites the example of a project its sponsors in Mexico, for "helping hand" schools which are subsidized by the earnings from other profitable schools in the network and which offer primary and secondary education to lower income students without burdening them with significant fees (1999, p.12). By encouraging private investments in higher education, the public sector can utilize its funds for lower levels of education with greater social returns. The IFC has concluded that being "pro-poor" and financially viable are not incompatible goals. In addition to its support of initiatives for networks as described above, the IFC has encouraged entrepreneurial activities by NGOs and corporate sector sponsorship of low income schools. Such investments by "good corporate citizens" not only generate significant good will, but as the IFC notes, corporations are "directly investing in the education of their future work force" (p.15). For the World Bank Group, the focus of public education should be on the development of a literate work force through the primary level.

In addition to providing a basic education to everyone, a government has to ensure that qualified potential students are not denied access to institutions because they are poor or female, are from ethnic minorities, live in geographically remote regions, or have special education needs (World Bank, 1995, p. 113). Increasing attention to equity will also increase efficiency. Investing in the education of girls from poor backgrounds sets off a process of intergenerational poverty reduction: educated women have lower fertility rates and are more likely to send their own children to schools. Recognizing the importance of educated women at the primary level, the World Bank has funded girls' scholarship programs in several countries including Guatemala; Pakistan, and Bolivia. Such projects target underserved indigenous rural girls to enhance their level of school attainment.

<u>How Valid Are These Claims?</u>

Independent evidence on the effects of the World Bank's promotion of privatization and decentralization to reduce poverty and improve the education of girls is limited since many of these projects are currently underway and may take years to access. However, the following research calls into question the validity of these claims:

"The Scorecard of Globalization 1980-2000" (Weisbrot et al, 2001, cited in Herman, 2002) reports that the poorest of the five groups of countries went from an annual per capita growth rate of 1.9 percent from 1960-1980; the middle group, which was mainly poor countries, suffered a decline from 3.6 percent to under 1 percent; and the other three groups also suffered declines in per capita growth. Who has benefited? Excluding China, the richest 10 percent of the world population had on average, 90.3 times as much as the poorest 10 percent in 1980, 135.5 times more in 1990, and 154.4 times more in 1999. The poorest 400 million, living on 78 cents a day in 1999, were worse off in 1999 than they were in 1980. As the World Bank acknowledged, "in the aggregrate, and for some regions, all measures suggest that the 1990s did not see much progress against consumption poverty in the developing world" (cited in Herman, 2002, p. 51).

As reported by Carnoy (1999, 51), a number of empirical studies of debt-ridden Latin American countires, including those done by the World Bank, show that policies recommended by the IMF and the Bank under structural adjustment programs are associated with "increased poverty, increased equality of income and wealth, and slow (or negative) economic growth."

As the World Bank projects in El Salvador demonstrate, public expenditures are to be directed to basic education, where the production of skilled workers is accomplished and monitored through national assessment. Shifting the resources to basic education helps to bolster a cheap supply of skilled workers in developing countries for TNCs, workers who are accustomed to and easily accept lower wages than unionized workers in nations such as the United States do for the TNCs. Developing nations generally do not have the environmental and health regulations that restrict or prevent the TNCs to use of natural resources and are less likely to reveal through the media the destruction of natural resources. Degradation of the natural environment, of the water supply, and to sanitary system can not be measured by per capita growth, but are indicators of a decreased quality of life for inhabitants and further burden the poor through illness and infant mortality.

With the bulk of public resources directed to basic education, efforts to privatize reduce the quality of the secondary and tertiary educational levels. In Latin America, privatization at the tertiary level also has political implications. The free national university, initiated under Spanish colonial rule, has historically provided a place where academic freedom for intellectuals including professor and the students occurred without the fear of the reigning government's direct intervention. As a result, the national universities in Latin America including El Salvador have often been a green house for opposition to the existing regimes and the fomenting of revolution. During the Salvadoran civil war, this principle of a "free" state supported university was violated, when the military government bombed the National University of El Salvador. Privatization of tertiary education and the shift of public expenditures away from the secondary and tertiary levels undermine not only the amount of resources available to the National University, but also works to limit the number of lower income students who can afford to attend tertiary institutions because of user fees. Historically, national Universities were free of charge to all who, regardless of income, met the academic entrance requirements. Privatization favors the shift of resources to the more conservative, often religious universities such as the University of Central America, which attract students who are politically more conservative and students who are less likely to undermine the political support of the government.

In assessing the effects of privatization, McEwan and Carnoy (cited in Carnoy, 2000), found that for-profit voucher schools in Chile were less effective than public schools when socioeconomic factors were held constant. Private schools that catered to students from less-educated families were least likely to better than their counterparts in public schools although these schools were more cost-effective than the public schools because they maintained higher student/teacher ratios. Efficiency was also increased in the private schools through the hiring of cheaper, part time teachers, and through the selecting out of more difficult-to-teach students who required more resources such as special education.

Privatization and the neoliberal belief that an individual will seek the greatest value in his/her own self interest may also not always hold true in educational reform. In education, high academic achievement is often believed to have the highest value for the individual. However, the individual may take a different view of the highest value. In a phenomenon he termed the "peer effect," Lubienski (2000) found that when parents have the opportunity to choose schools for their children, they are more likely to base their decisions on factors other than the value of increased achievement for their children. Although market theory assumes rational individuals would act to maximize self interest for their children by choosing a school that would add the most value to the child's achievement. However, Lubienski and others (Goldhaber, 1997, 2000) found that the parents paid closer attention to the social characteristics of the other students attending the prospective schools and that one of the most important factors for consumers in adding value for a school was the socioeconomic status of the fellow students. Parents associated SES with academic success, further reinforcing class structures within and between schools and confounding efforts to increase access and equity across class divisions. McEwan and Carnoy also found that private schools in Chile tended to skim off the better performing students from public schools.

Decentralization through parental involvement in community advisory groups such as the Advisory Councils of Educations in the EDUCO initiatives in El Salvador or those in New Zealand, Canada or elsewhere are not elected by the public and do not include mechanisms that hold them accountable to the public. "Forced to concentrate only on their school's market share and competitive advantage, parents soon lose interest in what misfortune befalls other schools and other people's children" (Robertson, 1999, p.731). Decentralization reinforced parents' natural tendency to attend to their own child's school at the local level and promoted a negative perception of other children's schools. This perception was enhanced by the media who continued to promote the notion that public schools were failing. Robertson contends that in the way, the "public is groomed to accept privatization because privatization starts with a widely held perception that public schools are failing (p.731)."

Analyses of the World Bank's policy statements on the promotion of girls' education as a means of increasing equity and reducing poverty have found these statements to be overly simplistic. Jejeebhoy (1995) summarized the studies of fertility and girls' education in 38 countries and concluded that there are "thresholds of development, below which education has little effect on fertility." Several complex factors cause the relationship of fertility to girls' education, indicating that lowered levels of fertility are associated with higher levels of development, urban settings, egalitarian gender relationships, age of marriage, choice of partner, and higher degrees of autonomy for women. A brief period of primary schooling does not appear to change desired family size, attendance at secondary school is necessary to do so. Jeffrey and Basu (1996, p. 13) have declared the high profile policy making of the World Bank for increasing equity for girls through schooling is a "patronizing assumption that rural, illiterate poor are deluded by the belief that they need large families." Schooling as contraception is a "facile notion" especially when the schooling that is promoted is at the basic levels of education as advocated by the finance-driven reforms of the World Bank Group. Heward and Bunwaree (1999) assert that fertility rates have fallen in countries where investment has been made in the quality of the lives of women and children, a much more complex solution than the sole solution of increasing girls' access to 3 – 4 years of schooling. They conclude, "The World Bank has ignored these wider contexts, advocating a single narrow policy that takes no account of the realities of women's lives (p. 8)."

In its own studies and those of independent researches, the World Bank have as yet to produce compelling evidence that targeting public education to the most basic levels, decentralization, and privatization will improve equity for the impoverished and girls and will reduce poverty. This "attention to equity" has remained just that, a public relations campaign that directs public attention to the existing inequities of the public system in an effort to erode support of the public system and to rally support for private investment. By advancing the reforms of privatization and decentralization as a means to equity is a rhetorical process for limiting public expenditures on education and limiting the state's power over education within respective countries throughout the world.

Carnoy (1998, 2000b) in his analysis of the student achievement effects under national voucher plans in Chile and of globalization and educational reform (2000a) determined that globalization in this century will increasingly push for parental "choice means educational privatization, means, in effect, public subsidies for religious education" (2000b). He predicted that education will become less of a public service and more of a private good to be supported by the household. Carnoy (2000) has stated that the evidence in comparative achievement data from public and private schools does not support these claims by the proponents of privatization. It neither solves the gap in achievement between low-income and higher income children not the gap in achievement between low-income and higher-income children not the gap in access o high-quality schools. Low-income children will still get less than adequate education in the United States and elsewhere, even though some will switch schools. Privatization will not decrease educational inequality overall. It may improve efficiency in terms of the use of public funds. Ultimately, it leads to a decline in public financial support for education by turning it into a private responsibility with limited government assistance.

McGinn (1996) concluded that the rise of transnational corporations and banks with the parallel growth of supranational organizations such as the IMF, NAFTA, and the WTO "reduces the sovereignty of even the most powerful nation-states (p. 350)". He declared them, antidemocratic institutions whose members are neither elected by the majorities from the countries they represent nor are they accountable to elected officials in those countries. Questioning the claims of the U.S. government and international lending agencies such as the World Bank that "democracy is the free market plus capitalism and that democracy's growth is to be measured by the increase of private wealth (p. 341)", McGinn contends that there is scant evidence for equity and social justice in globalization. To support the importance of political democratic ideals at a time when they are being undermined by free market determinism, he challenges comparative educators to focus their work on increasing rather than diminishing the role of public in social and economic life.

In his examination of the arguments for and against neoliberal educational policies, Arnove concluded that the impositions of such conditions by the World Bank and the IMF were the "antithesis of democratic decision-making" and that these policies have led to increasing inequalities of educational access and outcomes (p.97).

Conclusion

Based on early evidence and existing global conditions, it appears the neoliberal reforms of privatization and decentralization will do little to reduce poverty and improve access to schooling for the impoverished and girls. But, if the World Bank group through educational reform projects in various countries, is able to increase access for the 150 million children across the globe to the basic levels of education up to four years and if these countries are able to offer more and cheaper public education without spending any more public monies, what does this mean?

The increase of basic education will, undoubtedly, provide a growing work force of semi-literate, semi-skilled workers for the roving subsidiaries of the TNCs. Maquilas will be able to find more obedient, more educated workers, more cogs tooled in an educational reform movement that has as its root metaphors, student as worker, and schooling as commodity. Decentralization of local basic schools will grant more decision making to parents and communities, but will reduce the power of national teacher unions and the national government. Standardized curriculum and tests will ensure employers of a code of knowledge and skills that will be most useful to their demands. Most likely, these knowledge, skills and dispositions will include very little of the culture of these children, very little art, music, drama, and literature, for basic education defined by the World Bank, "encompasses general skills such as language, science and mathematics, and communications...[and] includes the development of attitudes necessary for the workplace" (1995, p.2).

The privatization of secondary and tertiary levels will, certainly, limit access to these levels to the poor since user fees and selection will determine the composition of the schools. If scholarship programs funded by the private sector may allow access for a small number of the poor and possibly, girls, if the dominant society allows for higher levels of education for girls. Privatization of schooling employs the root metaphor of schooling as a commodity to be purchased by the individual consumer, with the emphasis on the iconic language of the individual, freedom and choice. Competition between private schools will increase the efficiency of these schools and possibly lead to specialization in the vocational/technical area if job placement is highly valued within the society.

Overall, education will become two tiered, containing a box of public basic education, with a parallel track of private basic schools already attended by the middle and upper classes; and an upper level of choices for the middle class and upper classes. Chet Bowers (2002) argues that "the root metaphors of the Industrial Revolution are being continued today under the new metaphor of 'globalization' which has replaced the older and highly criticized methaphor of 'colonialization' (p. 404). The root metaphor of globalization relies on the iconic metaphors of individual, freedom, consumer, marketplace, commodity, technology, linear progress, and economism. The dominant use of these metaphors by others and ourselves shape our language and our thought and clearly influences the choices we make and do not make.

Jacques Halleck, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Education, has maintained that education is a basic right for everyone and argues that education must train workers, but also citizens and responsible individuals. He contends that the "commercialization" of education through neoliberal policies will lead to discrimination against the most disadvantaged countries, groups, and individuals and to the inculcation of a unitary set of values that will deny and destroy the language, culture, and teaching traditions of the people for whom they are intended. He writes,

> It is the opinion of UNESCO, and of its member states, that neither a wholly public nor an entirely commercial education system can overcome the education crisis, which is tangible. The organization is convinced that public and private education sectors each have something valuable to contribute, and that by combining their efforts and forging partnerships, they can boost the educational system's overall effectiveness – under one condition: primary responsibility for teaching must remain in the hands of public authorities, because they alone are guardians of the common interest. Above all, education must be a means to train responsible citizens....we would be straying from our mission by envisaging the impact of globalization only from a business perspective, and therefore ignoring its effects on – and potential for – human freedom and self-fulfillment through education, science, and culture (p.17)"

The educational reforms of the World Bank have not included the metaphors of citizen, culture, equality, democracy, self-fulfillment, and community. The shaping of these identities and meaning will be developed within formal institutions such as the church or religious group or by the government or within the informal categories of race, ethnicity, gender, geography, and community as public schooling becomes limited to a right to a basic education.

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