Decentralization, Regulation and Models of Autonomy
A Comparative Perspective of Buenos Aires and San Pablo (1996-2002)
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Abstract:
The regulations that encompass the models of school autonomy differ in various areas of educational management and administration, basically as a function of each nation’s traditions in educational decentralization, as well as the intentional introduction of market mechanisms in educational systems. The analysis of hierarchical regulations presented in this article, however, permits sustaining the hypothesized predominance of a decentralizing rhetoric and a rhetoric of autonomy and centralizing practices. In both cases, these policies offer greater flexibility to the private sector than to the public sector. In the cases reviewed, school autonomy—understood as the legal capacity to make decisions in certain areas of management, as well as increased margins of institutional maneuverability—has progressed very little.

Key words: models of autonomy, regulation, comparison of Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo.

Conceptual Aspects of the Decentralization of Education
This section reviews some of the concepts—and their possible interrelations—frequently associated with this article’s object of study; researchers of the topic tend to differentiate among three main forms of decentralization (including Hanson, 1997, and McGinn, 1992). On one hand, they state that de-concentration generally transfers tasks and work, but not authority, to other units within an organization. On the other hand, delegation transfers decision-making authority from higher to lower hierarchical units; this authority, however, can be withdrawn at the discretion of the delegating unit.

A transfer is the third form of passing authority to a unit that may act independently or to a unit that may do so without requesting permission. According to another group of authors, including Rondinelli et al (1986), privatization would be a form of transfer in which

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responsibility and resources are transferred from public-sector to private-sector institutions. Rondinelli et al (1986) distinguish among five types of decentralization by adding devolution to the above four, by which transference is made to governmental units whose activities are not controlled directly by the central government. As a result, devolution implies transferring authority and responsibility from the central level to local levels. Power is moved to other levels of the educational system.

Authors like Casassus (1989) and Hevia Rivas (1991) differentiate among types of decentralization for Latin America. There are basically three: nuclearization, regionalization and municipalization. In the last case, start-up has generated diverse effects in nations, largely due to differences in tradition and the structural characteristics and socioeconomic conditions of educational systems, in addition to the degree of clientele-ism or bureaucratization of the local administration, among other factors.

Municipalization would offer advantages of a sociopolitical nature (Soares, 1998) since it would permit incorporating citizens into the political life of the municipality by generating opportunities for participation in elaborating, operating and evaluating public policies. In addition, it would offer advantages of an administrative nature by facilitating decision-making and shrinking the bureaucracy. In the pedagogical dimension, schools would be benefited by greater margins of maneuverability for designing and putting into practice a proposal closer to the needs and interests of the educational community. The researcher Both (1997) affirms that municipalization requires self-management in order to obtain positive results. From this perspective, the municipality should have administrative, financial and cultural autonomy as a basis for self-management. In addition, it requires the articulation of joint work between public authority and the local community.

In the light of different taxonomies, the mechanisms of these policies provide significant degrees of autonomy in the system’s intermediate organizations (e.g., municipalities, districts, communes). In some cases, the objective is also to increase autonomy at the base of the system. This interface tends to be known in specialized literature (Casassus, 2000) as “decentralization towards scholastic institutions.”

From the viewpoint of design, identification can be made of at least two broad groups of educational policies that propose increasing autonomy. On one hand is the autonomy that is concentrated at the lower levels of school administration and implies a policy of “decentralization with intervention by intermediate organizations,” such as states, provinces, districts or municipalities. On the other hand are the policies implemented in nations where decision-making involves schools and does not necessarily include “decentralization” towards local organizations and a reorganization of the system’s governing structures.

Some researchers point out that this last type has been “motivated by concerns about the deficient performance of schools and quality, equality and educational efficiency” (Winkler and Gershberg, 2000:2), along with the incidence of excessive centralism and limited autonomy at the school level in terms of their low performance, “the lack of teacher motivation and the limited participation of families in the management of the educational process” (Gajardo, 1999:8).
The detractors of municipalization and increased autonomy in schools argue that these policies would introduce elements inspired by a “neo-liberal conception of education” that would tend “...toward regressive forms of distribution of educational assets according to students’ socioeconomic origins” (Munin, 1999:9): specifically, market mechanisms, changes in state (de)regulation and a growing tendency towards privatizing the service.

Obviously, it is highly complex not only to establish general conclusions for all Latin American nations, but also to clarify the similarities and differences associated with formulating policy and concrete programs (designated in the literature as “policy problems”) among nations. Therefore, this paper focuses its analysis on the strategies and mechanisms of autonomy (and self-management) for elementary schools, with an attempt to articulate the characteristics of school municipalization in each case. The analysis is limited to one of the sources of regulatory processes (Dupriez and Maroy, 2000; Barroso, et al. 2002): the source that emanates from public power, and the temporary setting aside of other sources resulting from actors and the processes of redefining rules.

The analysis covers two systems that have put decentralization reforms into effect by involving their levels of government to various degrees. In the case of Sao Paulo, Brazil, the municipalities influence the state schools, in contrast with Buenos Aires, Argentina, whose reforms have reached the provinces. In spite of the different participation of levels and autonomous policy in schools, there is immutability in the (de)regulation and (de)bureaucratization of state-run schools. In contrast, private schools are subject to less central regulations and are thus able to generate an educational project closer to the preferences of demand. It should therefore be asked if it is possible for a process of “decentralized school management” to produce the effects mentioned in the theoretical models of school autonomy without concomitantly implementing changes in the forms of (de)regulation and (de)bureaucratization of educational institutions.

About the Concept of Regulation

This research uses an institutional and political focus for studying regulations in educational systems, in the same manner as defined by Maroy and Dupriez (2000:76): a series of procedures issued by a higher level of government to orient actors. This definition includes three dimensions: the coordination, control and influence exercised by the retainers of legitimate authority. In this sense, the definition approaches the acceptance that prevails in American literature. Regulation is understood to be the intervention of public authorities in introducing “rules” and “obligations” in social action and the market. The present article centers its analysis on the “hierarchical regulations” of scholastic institutions. In this manner, it identifies the aspects to control by utilizing a structural focus (Maroy and Dupriez, 2000); such a focus permits interpreting the way public authorities, at the system’s macro level, exercise the formal coordination that serves as the framework, coercion and context for organized action in education.

The recent appearance of the concept of “regulation” in educational literature, as affirmed by Barroso et al (2002), has different origins and meanings according to the political and linguistic contexts of reference. Synthetically, it is possible to identify two types of perspectives with
regard to the study of regulations. One comes from the Anglo-Saxon research tradition centered on the design and execution of educational policies in traditionally decentralized educational systems. The other perspective corresponds to the French tradition, which analyzes regulations from more of a sociological than a political viewpoint. In other words, it focuses on the existence of regulations that result not only from the structure of organizations and systems (whole organizations) of educational supply and demand, but also on the various activities and interaction among social actors (which are not regulated but also result in regulations).

In the context of utilization, two different types can be identified: one context associated with the debate of government administration reforms and the ability to govern current educational and political systems, and another context that opposes regulation to (de)regulation.

In the first context, the reference to the concept of regulation is commonly associated with the purpose of reinforcing the image of a less prescriptive and authoritarian state and a new form of administering public policies. There is an attempt to replace direct and a priori control of processes with a faraway control based on results. This line of research includes the work of Braslavsky (1996:9), who distinguishes two possible directions: the first, called “minimum regulation,” which disesteems the need and the functions of government intervention, and promotes the privatization of the educational supply; the second implies the existence of “necessary regulation” in which the government’s role in orientation and supply does not diminish, but is reshaped, at times with a modification of functions.

In the second context, there is an attempt to indicate a rupture from the traditional models of government intervention in coordinating public systems. This use of the concept prevails in Anglo-Saxon research and in contexts of decentralized educational systems. It would be about replacing “a government oriented to the direct production of goods and services with a government that aims preferentially at regulating the production and distribution of the goods and services supplied, in a framework of competition, by other bodies” (Gintis, 1995:19).

Therefore, some aspects of supply may be regulated and others (de)regulated (under the control of civil society) without privatizing the service. The production and generation of economic resources would not be delegated to the actors themselves (state responsibility) and the state regulation of scholastic institutions would promote the possibility of designing and proposing quality education for all schools in the system. In short, for a system of this type to function, the state would have to intervene efficiently in regulating and financing educational institutions.

School Autonomy in the Light of the Study of Regulations

This paper, part of a larger research project, attempts to permit further understanding of the generation, distribution and return of power in educational systems. In this sense, it agrees with the statement by Hevia Rivas (1991:19) that “the degree of centralization or decentralization in a country is defined by the degree of local social control and power that certain groups or social actors exercise in a particular area of public activity.” This idea includes not only municipalization as one of the means to favor the distribution of the state’s power, but also the policies of autonomy and self-management of scholastic institutions.
On the other hand, one of the primary arguments in favor of the “decentralization of school management” is that it permits greater closeness with the community it serves. Hevias Rivas (1991) points out, however, that decentralization generally has greater possibilities for success when it originates in the community and not from pressures and/or interests of central bureaucrats.

The term, “self-management,” tends to be used in organizational literature as a fundamental principle of a specific type of organizations” (Giarrica, 1994:6), such as cooperative associations. The theoretical model of cooperative schools or educational cooperatives presents various aspects that are similar to self-managed institutions. One of the benefits (Rech, 2000) of these establishments would reside in the fact that the calculation of fees or monthly amounts due—paid by the students’ parents—would be based on the needs of each school and used for maintenance and teacher salaries. There should be no profits.

On the other hand, authors from the field of educational administration (Chávez, 1995) define such concepts in managerial terms. One example of initial usage refers to management as the administration of an organization, with the fundamental purpose of “rationalizing resources”; the company image is profiled and includes a description of the directors and personnel required for the organization to function adequately.

Another angle incorporates the concept of self-management by differentiating it from autonomy: self-management adds the idea of collective participation by the members of an organization in the process of designing, decision-making and evaluating completed actions. In other words, the use of the term, self-management, will refer in its etymological sense to directing the administrative, financial and pedagogical aspects of a scholastic institution.

Researchers specialized in the legal aspects and administration of education, such as Avenarius (1999), propose referring to self-administration and not autonomy. In principle, according to this author, autonomy as a legal term refers to a legal entity’s regulation of its own affairs by dictating legal norms. In the educational sector, universities have been granted this right. For this reason, other authors sustain that:

[...] the policy of autonomy in scholastic, non-university institutions has its roots in the university tradition and in the conviction that research, the transmission of knowledge and ideological debates needs spaces of freedom and dependence with regard to civil or religious authorities (Antúnez, 1994:85).

Cooperative Schools and their Association with Self-management

This type of institutions has functioned for several decades and no reference to them is found in the documents analyzed. Their principal characteristics include having been created on the initiative of teachers and/or parents and/or community residents, having the purpose of offering formal education, as well as a high degree of “social control” by members, government and non-government sources of financing, and an educational proposal difficult to carry out in the framework of the traditional educational system.
In both cases analyzed, these institutions are “classified” by government authorities as private schools. In many cases, their creation was based on the ideas of cooperative action, although in institutional practice, they habitually present management traits and dynamics closer to those in effect in conventional private schools (Andrada, 2002a). In Brazil, the few studies on the topic (Gomez, 1996 and 2001)—in contrast with Argentina, where no rigorous research exists on the functioning of these schools, nor a quantification of them, except for a few case studies—point out that “the creation of schools of this type, of a significant number, began in the late 1980’s” (Gomez, 2001:78), and that such schools were defended by their founders as an alternative to the absence of quality public education and the high prices of tuition and fees in private education.

In 1992, the process began to experience a boom7 (Gomez, 2001) due to the increased creation of schools of this type in various states. “Between the bitter prices of private schools and the deficiencies of public schools, parent cooperatives can be an attractive and beneficial option” (Jornal do Brasil, 2001). The federal legislation in Brazil that guides the organization of educational systems recognizes, within the framework of private schools, “the community schools understood to have been created by a group of individuals or by one or more organizations, even cooperatives of teachers and students that include community representatives in their maintaining entity” (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases núm. 9394/96 art. 20, inc. ii). In Sao Pablo, there are 60 cooperatives, of which 50 are run by parents (Jornal do Brasil, 2001).

It is difficult to identify identical patterns of functioning in these schools, but some aspects of a generic nature are outstanding. Both countries have a board of directors of parents, teachers, and in some cases, students, who are elected by voting at an assembly. Economic capital is gathered by fees from associates (based on and necessarily used for school needs) and donations. Students’ families participate widely in these schools’ educational projects, basically through assemblies.

It is important to mention the polemical experience of the municipality of Maringá (state of Paraná, Brazil). There, between 1991 and 1992, the administrators of the educational system turned to the word, “cooperative,” to define the logic of a model of “private micro-management of the public school”8 (Prefeitura do Município de Maringá, 1991). The proposed term came to refer to the private management of a public asset, and not the public, “non-government” management of education.

Different Models of School Autonomy

Meuret, Broccolichi and Duru-Bellat (2001) advise studying the policies of school autonomy with regard to regulations, through which the guidance (of the state) attempts to develop and verify that autonomy is utilized to the benefit of students and to improve educational quality. Described in this document are some of the most widespread models9 that have been identified for certain American and European countries.

School Based Management
The School Based Management (SBM) movement began with the educational reforms of the state of Victoria, Australia, followed by England, Wales, Scotland, North Ireland and New Zealand, where it was implemented between the late 1980s and mid-1990s. Starting with the development of Local Management Schools, the SBM movement, based on new management parameters for institutions, proposed granting greater decision-making authority to the public schools. Leightwood and Menzies (1998) reviewed 70 research projects on school based management completed between 1985 and 1995, especially in the United States and certain Anglo-Saxon countries having most tradition in this policy (such as New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Australia). In this review, the authors distinguish among three types of SBM: low administrative control, professional control and community control. These research studies showed that administrative SBM has the fewest repercussions on the behavior and roles of actors in schools; community control has the most influence, although changes do not necessarily translate into more efficient practices; and professional SBM seems to have the most positive effects on teacher practices, and is most likely to improve teachers’ feelings of responsibility toward the community.

One of the outstanding conclusions of the study by Whitty, Power and Halpin (1998) is that self-management policy failed radically (independent from national contexts) in its intention to modify the relationships of authority among professionals and citizens at the heart of schools. And the delegation of decision-making power at the school level showed to have no consequences on the development of autonomy and teacher professionalism, and had only a weak impact on learning. In contrast, it provoked important changes in teaching.

Charter Schools

According to Solmon et al (1999), charter schools are privately run public schools that receive public funds. Charter schools are exempt from certain regulations that are obligatory for other public schools (regarding the curriculum, personnel management, financing, administrative criteria) through the approval of a charter (educational projects and proposed development plan) and the involved participation of the local population. The charter school concept includes two fundamental components: autonomy and responsibility. These schools are conceded wide margins of maneuverability in terms of organizational structure, the curriculum and educational emphasis.

Charter schools as independent public institutions operate by means of a contract between the corporation and a state agency responsible for monitoring their functioning. Brown (1999) examined the flexibility and process of accountability in the charter laws of certain districts and suggests that no adequate terminology exists to describe the usefulness of the charter status for schools. The terms that tend to be used are strong and flexible.

“Strong” suggests that the laws of charter schools should be based on standards, while “flexible” indicates that schools should distance themselves from the state regulations that guide traditional public schools. The use of the word, “flexible,” in educational policies alludes to the greater possibilities of choice for parents. Charter schools depend on different organizations or state agencies that determine which groups receive the schools, and the
regulations to which they must submit (Hassel and Vergara, 1999). These agencies are known as charter-granting agencies (CGAs) and approve the plan of functioning and monitor progress. They have a broad role in determining the rendering of the schools’ accounts. These agencies are defined as “potential laboratories” (Hassel and Vergari, 1999:20) that could help in changing the traditional impact of control, systems of responsibility and the rendering of accounts on public schools in general.

The process that permits a school to acquire the charter status is designated technically as the application. A series of requirements and documentation must be presented by the “founders” who wish to create the school. On the other hand, a traditional public school can apply for transformation into a charter school (the “conversion” process). Regulations establish that the school building must not present religious or iconographic symbols that could produce discriminatory effects. Nor may the school use the name of its founding organization or group. Students must have transportation options for reaching school, either leased or owned by the institution.

From the viewpoint of community information, state regulations require charter schools to publish their financial statements and school plan, and to share their positive experiences with students from other schools. They may administer their budget (by proposing tax control policies), and assign funds to an emergency reserve fund. The school calendar is designed at the institutional level and allows these schools to extend the number of class days and/or establish variations in the duration of the school day.

Charter schools can define the criteria for establishing teacher salaries (incentives and benefits), the number of class hours per teacher and tasks related to the school’s mission. The evaluation and training of personnel are completed at the school. On the other hand, the local board of public education is responsible for guaranteeing the existence of appropriate positions for teachers who have worked in charter schools and decide to return to the traditional system (Brown, 1999). Teachers may opt to continue to work under the traditional system of public schools—regulations of statutes, collective work agreements—or to establish their own employment policy. Some aspects such as finalizing employment contracts and salary levels (which may vary among schools based on the inclusion of incentive mechanisms such as merit, ability and training) are administered by the school itself. Teacher salary scales may vary between states and municipalities (Barro, 1998:91).

**Institutional Educational Project**

Autonomy is increased by utilizing the construction of an “institutional project” as a strategy. This is considered a tool for schools to advance towards making in-house decisions. Various versions at the national level have been generated. In France—a country with a long tradition of centralizing its educational system—the policy of school autonomy began in 1970 (Meuret et al, 2001), and pointed out that “the level of the establishment should be privileged” (France’s minister of education, 1982). In the early 1990s, the ministerial authorities established that:

> […] new contracts for schools […], in the framework of pedagogical autonomy, each school utilizes its means of teaching to contribute responses adapted to the diversity of students […] the collage—lower level secondary—can organize divisions beyond the
obligatory school schedule [...]. The project is the instrument of recognized autonomy in schools and the expression of their responsibility (Meuret et al., 2001:113).

On the other hand, in France, where school autonomy is commended, there is an effort to limit the freedom of choice (Meuret et al., 2001) at the heart of public education. The policy of autonomy is seen as a condition of the lack of choice, because choice would allow schools to adapt themselves to all publics. This policy has been based on building an “educational project of the establishment,” a strategy similar to that of various Latin American countries (Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Mexico).

The policy of school autonomy put into effect in Colombia—with various aspects similar to Argentina—began formally in 1994 with the new general law of education no. 115 and decree no. 1860, which proposed the collective construction of the “institutional educational project” (PEI). The corresponding legislation prescribes:

In order to achieve the integral formation of the student, each educational establishment shall prepare and put into practice an Institutional Educational Project that specifies, among other aspects, the principles and purposes of the establishment, the available and necessary teaching resources, the pedagogical structure, the regulation for teachers and students and the management system [...] (Article 73, Ley General de Educación, Colombia).

The policy of increased autonomy, based on the construction of an institutional educational project, was developed in Chile as well, in the 1990s. Espinola (1992) affirms that special state funds were provided for the schools to design and operate their educational projects. Methodological documents were prepared to guide the schools in preparing their project. The strategy was based on a process of reflexive planning of an intrinsically participative nature, taking into account each school’s everyday reality. The emphasized aspects are similar to those of institutional educational projects in Colombia and Argentina.

**Municipalization in Sao Pablo**

Municipalization in the Brazilian case includes three possibilities (De Oliveira, 1999). The municipality in is charge of:

1) all education at one or more levels, in the sphere of its jurisdiction
2) part of the school enrollment, located in the same territory as the state network
3) certain programs (school lunches, school transportation, school buildings) which are developed along with the state network of schools

The most widespread mechanisms for carrying out these possibilities are the agreements among different administrative levels of the system.

Researchers point to laws 4.024/61 y 5.692/71 as regulatory landmarks (in the macro-political setting) of the autonomy granted to Brazilian states and municipalities; these laws require the municipalities to make the annual call to seven-year-olds to enroll in elementary school (article
29 of law 4.024/61). Also established are the responsibilities of the states and municipalities in developing education at the different grades (article 58 of law 5.692/71). These measures would tend to make the municipalities responsible especially for “first-level” education (elementary), taking into consideration, where conditions are appropriate, the creation of municipal boards of education.

In 1988, the Brazilian constitution enlarged the autonomy of the states and municipalities (De Oliveira, 1999), by promoting them to the level of federal entities and establishing the municipal priorities of elementary and preschool teaching (article 211 of the Constitution of Brazil, 1988). Federal legislation passed in 1996 (Ley de Diretrizes e Bases N° 9394) establishes significant changes for education, associated with what some researchers call a movement of “induction into the municipalization of education” (De Oliveira, 1999). Those responsible for the design and execution of educational policy call the process an “effective stimulus for municipalization” (Neubauer, 1999: 179).

Historically in Sao Paulo, the municipalization of elementary education was not significant until 1995-1998, when it was stimulated by the creation of the Fundo de Desenvolvimento do Ensino Fundamental e de Valorização do Magistério (FUNDEF) (Arelaro, 1999 and Bassi, 1999). Schematically, its implementation establishes tax modifications with regard to the resources destined to education: 15% of the total 25% of funds that must be applied to elementary learning and 60% of the amount distributed must be utilized to pay teacher salaries. Its primary purpose is to decrease the accented lack of coordination among the various spheres of government in terms of resource distribution. According to legislation, these funds (from tax receipts) should be distributed between the state and municipality according to the number of students enrolled in each school system.

It is important to point out that the regulatory framework prescribes the existence of a board for the social control of funding in the three tiers of public power (federal, state and municipal). In Sao Paulo, the operation of FUNDEF has met with resistance from municipalities that would actually lose resources if they did not assume responsibility for elementary teaching. One of the particulars, noted by Arelaro (1999), that differentiates the state of Sao Paulo from the rest of Brazil is that the municipalities assumed total responsibility for preschool, a process that intensified in 1980.

In this context, the state government defined its educational policy in terms of three basic planks (Neubauer, 1999):

1) organizational rationalization
2) change of management patterns, with emphasis on the decentralization of decision-making power of local organizations and scholastic institutions
3) improved educational quality

Neubauer (1999) emphasizes the organizational difficulties caused by parceria and cooperation with public authorities and other sectors of civil society.

The model of parceria/municipalization is a mechanism of “co-responsibility” for education (decrease 40.673/96). The functions of the parceiro municipalities are established, as well as the
terms and conditions for entering into contracts (decree 41.054/96). The state government promises to maintain its tutelage in technical assistance, availability of personnel and training. The municipalities assume the custody and control of the school buildings maintained with resources from the state level (central) and FUNDEF. Even so, since a process of decentralization is the basis, central power will have to decrease. In other words, the granting of greater autonomy to the municipality for management and organizing its school system will be a relevant factor from the viewpoint of change in the making of final decisions. Paiva and Paiva (1986) sustain that:

[...] simple administrative municipal modernization and the transfer of financial resources are not sufficient mechanisms to promote the municipalization of education, understood as a democratic and decentralized formula...greater autonomy for the municipality can be granted through tax and administrative reforms. But increased participation from the population will not be possible without the joint implementation of mechanisms (economic, social and political) (1986:148).

Arelaro (1999: 64) affirms that “this municipalization policy in the state of Sao Paulo began to be implemented in a more direct manner in 1995 with the School Reorganization Project proposed by the state government.” This project implied changes in the division of school years and as a result, in the educational supply. Official documents emphasized that the proposal will permit guaranteeing teaching work by taking into account the differences between childhood and adolescence and improving learning possibilities as well as the attempt to respond to a “precondition” for municipalization. Thus, the state’s ministry of education argued that if the school to which students were transferred was far from their home, the school would provide transportation. In his study, Arelaro (1999) points out that historically, school buildings have not been built as a function of local demand. The official proposal suggested granted autonomy to schools for buying pedagogical materials according to need.

With regard to the second of the “reform” planks, educational policy is based on two fundamental aspects: the decentralization and autonomy of schools. In the first case, criticism was based on strong centralization and the superposition of functions of the diverse organizations. Practically “all decisions and orientations regarding school life tend to arise from central organizations” (Neubauer, 1999:173). The principal problem would reside, according to official documents, on the concentration of bureaucratic controls and the manner of transmitting “instructions” to schools. The adopted changes included the extinction of the “Regional Divisions of Learning” that mediated relations between the system’s central administrative organization (the state ministry of education) and the schools, whose officials were selected according to political criteria and not merit (school supervisors and directors); the regional divisions have been replaced by the Delegacias de Ensino, with functions similar to previous bodies although less numerous.

Educational policy emphasizes the intention of granting greater financial, pedagogical and administrative autonomy to schools to enable them to make decisions about their pedagogical project. On the other hand, autonomy implies responsibility and the rendering of accounts for the obtained results. In the case of Sao Paulo, the Sistema de Avaliação do Rendimento Escolar do Estado de São Paulo (SAREP) was implemented for this purpose in 1996. Its objectives include:
[...]reflecting on the quality of education in the system’s central organizations, of the quality of “Delegacias de Ensino” and the quality of educational units; involving civil society, by making test results known, in the promotion of improved educational quality; promoting the perfection of actions carried out in all organizations of the educational system (Secretaria de Educação de São Paulo, 1996).

On the other hand, this evaluation system includes all schools in the state and municipal networks, as well as private schools that adhere to it.

**Strategies and Mechanisms in the Macropolitical Sphere**

In Brazil, since the enactment of the law known as Ley de Directrices e Bases núm. 9.394/96, school autonomy and the pedagogical project have been linked in one legal text. It is established that the school’s primary concern is the elaboration and execution of its pedagogical project (article 12) and that this is a collective task (articles 13 and 14) that requires the participation of teachers, other professionals and the school and local communities.

Since the 1980s, an extensive process of designing and disseminating innovations in school management has been developed (Namo de Mello y Neubauer, 1993:60). This process, which has distinct intensities and velocities in the each state system, has been based on various aspects: the direct transfer of resources to schools, which will promote school decision-making and school responsibility for distributing and handling resources. The norm establishes, however, that resources cannot be used for paying teachers or for other monetary incentives; the use of some resources may be determined by the state ministries of education for specific projects.

On the supply side, private schools would seem to have wider margins of maneuverability in institutional and pedagogical matters: greater flexibility to define their mission and formulate their own educational project with regard to their public/state counterparts (see chart at end of article), in order to provide responses focused on the needs of the demand. Thus, a paradoxical tendency can be identified. Autonomy is valued in formulating policy and a rhetoric is developed with regard to the benefits of an educational project, while the margins of maneuverability granted by the regulatory structure constrict the creation and continuity over time of diversified proposals.

The competitive hiring of directors has been employed as a strategy (given the traditional primacy of clientele criteria) by introducing different methods and stages for the selection process: from contests to processes involving school officials, parents and students over age sixteen. The competitive selection of directors (SECOM) is considered an administrative innovation, with the principal ends of strengthening the school unit as a space for the participation of the school community and users in school management. Namo de Mello and Neubauer da Silva (1993) believe that lifelong appointments have been one of the causes for the impunity and lack of responsibility and rendering of accounts in Brazilian public service.

The process for selecting directors in the state of Minas Gerais was divided into three stages. The first stage consisted of tests to evaluate the degrees, knowledge and administrative ability of job candidates; the second consisted of the school community’s verification of the aptitude
for leadership; the third stage was candidate training for the job. Each school created a selection committee that represented the different scholastic segments, in order to plan and execute the system.

Paro’s research (1996) presents a detailed analysis of the selection of public school directors in various states of Brazil. This study establishes a distinction between the forms of filling the position: assignment through political mechanisms, public contests, and selection processes such as more democratic instruments for school management and the exercise of citizen rights. The selection of directors is a strategy for increasing school autonomy since it favors a certain form of social control of schools and not centralized control. The institutionalization process, which began with the enactment of legal instruments by the executive branch, has presented numerous contradictions for the democratization of school management with the specific aspects of each state.

The main impact of the innovation\textsuperscript{15} was the decreased or eliminated influence of agents of governmental policy in the process. School personnel had diverse reactions, including the resistance of some, conflicts among process participants and the increased political awareness of school personnel and users who would not accept other forms of naming a director. Rodrigues de Oliveira (1996) emphasizes that selecting the director made possible the school community’s participation in each school’s project.

The implementation of “collegiate structures” of government in each institution has been another strategy: organizations of a consultative and deliberative nature, with responsibility for coordinating and evaluating pedagogical, administrative and financial activities at schools. The structures are formed by the director, teachers and community representatives, parents and students in percentages that differ according to the type of structure. The rights and duties of members also depend on structure type.

The study carried out by Parente and Lück (2000) identifies thirteen types of structures of collegiate management, distributed among the state schools of ensino fundamental (formerly elementary). The structures found most often, in descending order, were: school board, parent/teacher association, school collegiate community and school fund. The researchers also identified the existence of more than one ongoing collegiate structure (for example, a school board and a parent/teacher association) in a single state.

Decentralization in Favor of the Municipality of Buenos Aires

In the educational system of the Province of Buenos Aires, “municipal schools” precede the enactment of the first Law of Common Education in 1875. Historical review has contributed to finding evidence on the origins of the organization and administration of a certain circuit of schools run by the municipalities of the time (Andrada, 2001). Although a school department already existed at the national level, numerous files, resolutions and bulletins refer to the creation, opening, maintenance and teaching in “municipal schools”—free schools that were supported and financed with state resources.
Such schools currently operate in cities like La Plata, Mar del Plata, Avellaneda, San Antonio de Areco, Chascomús and Lomas de Zamora. However, in the Province of Buenos Aires, educational policies throughout the 20th century have not implemented municipalization as a generalized policy for the administration of the school system.

From an historical viewpoint, district school boards have existed in the province since 1875 (one per district), but they depend directly on the general director of culture and education (central level of the educational system). Munin (1993) analyzed the history and present situation of such local bodies of educational administration and established an evolution of three key moments in their history: the construction of school boards in 1875, the modifications of school boards during their uninterrupted functioning (1875-1949), and lastly, a period in which they functioned alternately as administrative offices and school boards (1949-1992).

The conclusions of Munin’s study (1993:32-33) are centered on the following aspects:

[...] one of the elements of conflict of this organization is the contradiction of its hierarchical subordination to a larger organization, and the autonomy it is granted by direct popular elections; [...] this process implied the administrative bureaucratization and its almost complete absorption by the central level of the system; [...] corporate interests of board members filtered in; [...] they ended up becoming a body that mediates between interests at the central level and the interests of the district community; [...] the central level subordinated them as an administrative office [...].

Since the restitution of a democratic government in 1983, school board members have been elected in general elections. During the previous administration, they were incorporated as a “political charge”, making the “real” representation of community interests in municipal education highly complex.

Andrada and Narodowski (1999) carried out an historical review of some of the key aspects of decentralization and (de)regulation in the educational system. Outstanding are: 1) the intensification of a process of provincialization of education (Tenti, 1995), 2) the transfer of schools from the national to the provincial system, rather than decentralization, and 3) the new impression (since the mid 1990s) that operates in the system’s functioning—the macropolitical proclaim of reordering the supply of schools based on specific demand. For this purpose, the strategy of educational policies is the autonomy of scholastic institutions.

Beyond these historical considerations, since late 2000 there has been a resurgence of one of the complex weaknesses of existing state regulations, which directly affect the form of distribution of the limited existing economic resources for the educational sector. Thus there have been revived demands from the numerous “municipal schools” currently functioning in the Province of Buenos Aires and from the public authorities, given the serious difficulties in the criteria for assigning public funds to private schools.

The statistics indicate that the province covers 63% of the total expenses of teachers in private schools, and almost 15% less in “municipal schools” (approximately 220 schools); i.e., 50% of the teachers of these public schools.16
In other words, this situation represents one paradox more in the history of the educational policies of the Argentinean government. We are presented with the still unsolved dilemma that, yet worse, continues evading a determination of the mechanisms and regulations that are the most adequate, efficient, transparent and fair for public resources to benefit students, educators and the most disadvantaged educational communities in the public school system.

Given the renewed debate, in late 2000, discussion in the provincial Senate was centered on establishing its own regulatory framework for municipal educational systems and on recognizing these systems as a government-run educational service; however, the project was rejected early this year. Regulations from the office of the general director of schools recognize “municipal” schools as public schools; i.e., these schools supposedly enjoy government backing through norms of the “third order.” Budget constrictions were used as an argument to oppose the law, although in reality the heart of the matter—reviewing the distribution of public resources—was set aside.

As a result, “municipal schools” in Argentina and municipal school systems to an even greater degree, have little to do with the growing process of educational privatization, except (at least for the moment) for reform processes in other Latin American countries, such as Chile, where school municipalization is widely different from the Sao Paulo case. Although these schools admittedly receive perverse effects in a direct manner, not only from the continually growing privatization process, but also from the mediations and bureaucratic and legislative unevenness in designing and carrying out educational policies.

A new proposal for “transferring educational functions to the municipalities” was included in a project of the general director of provincial schools in Buenos Aires and discussed during 2001. The “transfer” was planned in gradual form, with pilot experiences in municipalities enjoying a “better” financial situation, and an increase in school board member responsibilities in formulating and carrying out changes at schools. The document produced at the system’s central level proposed “broader decentralization in the municipality and the redefinition of school boards.” The framework of the previously mentioned project makes obvious a decrease in the centralized control of the system and a favoring of autonomy at the local level in designing and putting into practice programs and plans; also evident is the stimulus of the “executing” character of these policies for the municipality and the educational community. The previous governor of the Province of Buenos Aires sustained: “Indicative planning and strategic action must be in the hands of the nation and the province, and the execution in the hands of the municipality [...] decentralization means more efficiency and less expense...”

Mechanisms for Increasing the Autonomy of Scholastic Institutions

Ministerial documents at the national level define an institutional educational project (PEI) as a tool that will serve to guide and orient decisions made at the heart of the scholastic institution. The following project components are suggested: a series of general orientations (which will guide institutional life), curricular programming (agreements on the processes of teaching
and learning) and institutional regulations. In addition, the development of these elements would permit each scholastic institution to prepare the responses it needs to approach the specific problems of its context, and permit (because of its collective and participative nature) all to become familiar with the process, while each participant determines its place in this process. Emphasis is placed on the fact that elaborating the PEI must involve the educational community:

The elaboration of the PEI is not the exclusive responsibility of the director. It is a project in which at least some if not all members of the educational community must participate. [...] It may be possible to organize participation for elaborating the PEI based on surveys or reports [...].

The PEI is conceived as the school’s cultural and educational offer for the community, through which school autonomy would become effective, in which “each school’s degree of freedom would be given by each institution’s capacity of initiative.”

The so-called “educational transformation” in this jurisdiction proposed, among other objectives, the “transformation of educational institutions in their organizational aspects as well as in their circuits of internal and external communication, strengthening their autonomy” and “modernizing internal norms to adapt to the demands of a new pedagogical and technical/administrative model in the structures of the provincial educational system.” In this sense, it was believed that “the change for transformation implies a substantial modification in pedagogical, organizational and administrative models, which means not only a change of course, but also a change of sign in the overall proposal.” Based on jurisdictional prescriptions, each school should collect proposals from the educational community and select pertinent and viable proposals through the PEI. The scholastic institutions of the Province of Buenos Aires must organize their PEI based on three organizational dimensions of the interrelated task: pedagogical/didactic, community, and administrative/organizational dimensions. “With this the institution starts on the path of using autonomous criteria.”

The second dimension alludes to paying attention to the characteristics of the social surroundings and promoting exchanges with these surroundings. The final dimension should take human and material resources, time and space, and actions into account.

These projects will reflect the criteria of autonomy that will provide it with identity and the ability for pedagogical self-management and social insertion. School autonomy is understood to be decision-making authority in the areas of the school’s own competence, without its losing the sense of belonging to an educational system that contains it. The ability to manage itself will open the way for training personnel, implementing learning experiences and innovations in teaching situations—making the school a unit of pedagogical research.

An analysis of the ministerial documents concerning school autonomy in the Province of Buenos Aires reveals a strong emphasis on “pedagogical self-management.” Unequal importance is assigned to institutional self-management in aspects linked to the administration
of economic resources, to personnel management, and to the organization and administration of time and municipal spaces, among other factors.

Public state schools, in addition to scarce financial resources, are increasingly “bureaucratized,” as revealed in another article (Andrada, 2002b), and this aspect represents a type of state limitation in applying new administrative and pedagogical tools (Narodowski and Andrada, 2001a). In any case, these schools must “adapt” to bureaucratic mandates by constructing an institutional educational project to address the characteristics of their social surroundings and promote exchanges with such surroundings.

Norms in effect for state schools emphasize the formation of a teaching team for making the project complete and including family requests. However, a detailed analysis of regulations (summarized in chart below) in Buenos Aires reveals that the development of a PEI in schools is seriously limited by the need for institutions to comply with provincial norms relevant to purely pedagogical aspects (curriculum, evaluation criteria for students and teachers, the lengthening of the school day and days of the week of school attendance, etc.).

These regulations obstruct, on one hand, the progress of the “decreed model” of autonomy and increase the bureaucratization of schools, which prevents the making of strategic decisions in everyday aspects of institutional life. Independent from the type of prevailing regulation that constrains (and does not stimulate) autonomy, are numerous examples of schools that avoid bureaucratic administrative rationale and exercise a certain autonomy—which may be called “constructed autonomy” and which enables carrying out an educational project directly linked to the needs and interests of the population. Most cases show an implementation of local non-institutionalized processes of agreement and negotiation with the organizations of inspection responsible for process control. These “successful experiences” do not enjoy political and legal support that would allow them continuity over time.

The analysis of state regulations of schools shows the margin of maneuverability that public and private schools have to operate while designing their educational proposal (Andrada, 2002b). This analysis does not imply a direct and definite response to real processes within these schools, given that institutions with wide margins of maneuverability may reproduce bureaucratic practices, while excessively regulated institutions may broaden their margin of maneuverability through transgression.

On the other hand, if diverse management “styles” are considered—regulatory, laissez faire, democratic, authoritarian—the problem acquires still more relevance, given that each management style values differently the strict compliance with hierarchical regulations in daily school life. In school micro-policy, this proposal adds one bureaucratic tool more to state schools, without providing significant changes aimed at granting power to scholastic institutions, to educators, to students and their families. In other words, the PEI would seem to become an administrative act more in line with those used by state schools.

Final Considerations

This paper has examined the insertion of strategies of self-management and autonomy in formulating policies in Sao Paulo and Buenos Aires, especially in the 1990s. In Sao Paulo, the
municipalization of schools as a form of decentralization has a longer tradition than in Buenos Aires, where recent proposals are associated more with the attempt to reduce costs and increase the administrative efficiency of the system as a whole, and with symbolic processes more than with real processes involving the transfer and return of power.

On the other hand, strategies to implement “co-responsibility” in Sao Paulo to manage schools would seem closer to the possibility of providing a certain distribution of power to local organizations of control (see chart below) than in Buenos Aires.

Mechanisms used to carry out a policy of school autonomy have various similarities: they set the objective of increasing the participation of social actors, of increasing the pedagogical, administrative and financial autonomy of schools and the control of results through evaluation systems at the central level. However, in both cases, the programs for operating these policies have not modified state regulations at the local level, and key aspects of the potential benefits that could be incurred by decentralization (such as social control) reveal deficiencies.

To judge from the detailed study of hierarchical regulations, both cases show that the decisive aspects of final decision-making in state schools continue to be reserved for the central organizations of each system. In pedagogical matters, student evaluation, student attendance, and the school calendar in state-run schools are defined by the norms produced by the central administration. This does not prevent actors from achieving a certain degree of autonomy to use the limited margins granted by the regulatory structure. The process in operation is the (de)regulation of the private sector, the increase of bureaucratization and the immutability of public sector regulations.

In both cases, policy formulation insists on the need for control through school results. However, the same policy blocks the publication of results and does not advance in the (de)bureaucratization and (de)regulation of key aspects of institutions’ obtaining their own identity. Regulation continues to limit the margins of maneuverability of state schools in dimensions such as the curriculum, administration of resources and the construction of their own institutional ideas.

Public schools in Buenos Aires and Sao Paulo are prevented from selecting the human resources that best fit the needs and objectives of the institutional educational project. These schools are also affected by the performance of teachers who work limited schedules in more than one school: teachers have difficulty in identifying with a single school and assuming an institutional commitment, and are an obstacle in the institution’s creation of an educational proposal.

Differences exist between the established school year and vacation periods, and the regulations for different types of schools. Curricular documents specify that the same design “should” be used for state and private schools. Differences seem to arise from flexibility in the incorporation of extracurricular spaces, the institution’s ideas or mission, the distribution of resources and institutional times.

Annex
Level of Decision-making by Administrative Organization
### Decisions grouped by category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Buenos Aires</th>
<th>Sao Paulo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1) Rendering of Service</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of institution</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorization of opening</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>P, I M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naming of institution and its offices</td>
<td></td>
<td>M P, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of symbols (coat of arms, institutional logos, etc.)</td>
<td>P, S Sb M</td>
<td>R, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary or definitive closing</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>P, I M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical location</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of address</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>P, I M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level served</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal requirements (finances and reforms)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum and maximum number of students per class</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of school building</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>P, I M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of schedule and working hours</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase of furniture and teaching equipment</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Option of transportation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2) Administration and Management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of director</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P, I M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of assistant director</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P1; M, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of type of collegiate structure</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P2 M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of composition of collegiate structure</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P3 M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of rights and duties of members</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of incentives and sanctions</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of type of associations</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P4 I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3) Organization and Planning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of methodology of institutional planning</td>
<td>Ph; S</td>
<td>P5; M, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of (outside) supervision of activities</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>P, I M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of student/teacher ratio</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>R6; I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Division of scholastic cycles</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>P7 M7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for grouping students</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>R8; I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for promoting students</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>R9; I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for forming new groups</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>P M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and structuring of school calendar</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>R10; I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of length of school day</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>P11 M11; I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of class hours</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>P12 M12; I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of daily rest periods (recess)</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>R13 I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structuring of rules for attendance and behavior</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>R14; I14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design of information policies for families</td>
<td>P, S</td>
<td>P15 M I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design and issue of school bulletins</td>
<td>Pk</td>
<td>S</td>
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### 4) Financing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
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<th>I</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Composition and administration of economic resources</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of spending priorities</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P18</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection, generation and savings of own funds</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt and handling of real estate, donations, etc.</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of scholarship and/or tuition discount systems</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of enrollment system and amount of tuition</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>X</td>
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### 5) Personnel and Teaching Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<th>S</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for hiring and terminating teachers</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition and selection of orientation team</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring and termination of director</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P19</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of duties, rights and functions</td>
<td>P; S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determination of sanctions</td>
<td>P; S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of incentives and merits</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>SI</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage composition</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for inter-institutional mobility</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>Mobility and relocation throughout system</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>System of evaluation and rating</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher training</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria for promotions</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of expulsion and re-acceptance</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filling open positions</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of clothing</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
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### 6) Student Body

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>I</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative requirements for enrollment</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Sm</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipulation of age for enrollment</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria for enrollment (priorities, radio, etc.)</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Sn</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requirements for admissions</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>System of expulsion and re-acceptance</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance policy</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporation in other institutions</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of clothing</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
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### 7) Proposed Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>M</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition of ideology and mission</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specification of structure and content</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of text books</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom time for each area of obligatory curriculum</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Option of religious teaching</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection and insertion of foreign languages</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of teaching methods</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria and scale of evaluation and grading of students</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>M</td>
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Establishment of agreements, contracts or parcerias

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<th>Establishment of agreements, contracts or parcerias</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>P; M; I</th>
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Determination of the need and type of consulting

8) Monitoring and Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition of measurable curricular objectives</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>P; S</th>
<th>P; M; I</th>
<th>P; M; I</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Follow-up on institutional performance</th>
<th>P; S</th>
<th>P; I</th>
<th>M</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System of bonuses and sanctions for institution</th>
<th>X</th>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application of standardized achievement tests</th>
<th>P; S</th>
<th>P; S</th>
<th>P; M; I</th>
<th>P; M</th>
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<th>Production of reports for teachers</th>
<th>P; S</th>
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<th>Distribution of reports of results for families</th>
<th>P</th>
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<th>Public distribution of school ranking</th>
<th>Xo</th>
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SOURCE: Based on work by Narodowski and Andrada (2001a), Andrada (2002b) and Narodowski and Nores (2002).

REFERENCES: P = public, M = municipal; S = private with direct state subsidy; I = private with direct or indirect subsidy; R = state and municipal; X = decision or aspect not present in model

Sao Paulo


2) They must have a school council and class and series boards.

3) The board may write its own statutes and create commissions and sub-commissions.

4) Each school should have a parent/teacher association and a student organization. Other associations may be created.

5) They must prepare a management plan that operates the pedagogical proposal, taking into consideration a set of minimum aspects.

6) An adequate student/teacher ratio is the responsibility of the respective authorities. Article 25 LDB/96. The ratio is conditioned by various factors: teaching method, curricular objectives, etc. Article 3.3.5 Process CME 027/97.

7) Schools must be divided into two cycles. Cycle I corresponds to the first four series and cycle II to the last four. Parecer CEE 67/98. Municipal schools may be organized in diverse forms. Article 3.4.2 Process CME 027/97. Private schools are not obligated to adopt the Article.

8) They may be organized into annual series, semester series, non-serialized groups, age-based groups, etc. Article 23 of LDB/96.

9) They may establish their own criteria, adopting the system of continual progression. Articles 44 and 50 Parecer CEE 6/79 and Indicação CME 04/97.

10) With adjustment to local characteristics. Article 2 LDB/96 and according to ministry directives, including board meetings. Indicação CME 04/97: Each municipal school prepares its own, based on the directives of the SME.
11) The class schedule in state schools must be from four to five hours per day. Res. SE 3/03/98. The option depends on the number of shifts. Municipal schools: a minimum of 240 minutes. Indication CME 04/97.

12) Each class hour is 50 minutes. Res. SE 3/03/98. Municipal schools: Duration is flexible, may assume any duration: Process CME 027/97.

13) Minimum time of 15 minutes included in the duration of the school day. Res. SE 4 of 15/01/98. For every 5 hours per day, 20 minutes will be reserved for recess, and for every 4 hours, 15 minutes. Res. SE 49 del 3/03/98.


15) Meetings with parents must be planned every two months to reflect on teaching and attained results. Parecer CEE 67/98.

16) The school must issue them, along with diplomas or year-end certificates. Article 24 LDB 9394/96 and article 81. Parecer CEE 67/98. Article 4.8.3 Indication CME 04/9: The director and administrative personnel are responsible for their preparation and issue.

17) They may receive public resources in the form of student scholarships due to a lack of openings in the public sector. Article 77. LDB 9394/96.

18) Resource administration by preparing and executing the plan of application, in accordance with specific legislation. Article 10. Parecer CEE 67/98.

19) Estatuto do Magisterio Paulista

Buenos Aires


c) Reglamento para las Escuelas Privadas, Resoluciones 3599/ y 53 /63

d) The owners’ proposal must be approved at the regional level. Stipulation of the Director of Private Education of the Province of Buenos Aires. Number 524, 27/6/95.

e) Ibid.

f) They may determine the building’s aesthetics, architecture and type of decoration.

g) Based on the minimum and maximum requirements of provincial law. Small groups may be established.

h) A strategic/situational focus should preferably be used to design an institutional educational project (PEI).

i) They have the possibility of modifying their school year, including religious holidays.

j) Families sign a contract with the school that details the behavior standards and internal rules of the institution. Noncompliance may lead to the student’s expulsion.


m) A private school may determine its admission standards. It should be clarified that this is one of the functions of its legal representative, although not habitually exercised.
n) Private schools do not have a priority list for student admissions; their only admissions restriction is the maximum number of students per grade. Regulation for the Private Schools of the Province of Buenos Aires, Resolutions 3599/ and 53 / 63. Some private schools of the Province of Buenos Aires utilize this “order of priorities” as the criteria for student admission; such schools have a high demand for enrollment.

o) Educational authorities in Buenos Aires have declared their intent not to make public a ranking of school results. Nonetheless, research by Narodowski, Nores and Andrada (2002) shows how other organizations have constructed and distributed such a ranking.

p) In Sao Paulo, educational authorities inform institutions of their status through the use of colors. For example, green is for schools with very good results, while orange is for schools with low results. The magazine, Véja, published its own ranking of the best private schools in Sao Paulo by hiring a consultant to evaluate the schools.

Notes

1 The project by Rondinelli et al (1986), prepared for the World Bank and published by the same organization, has been the object of conceptual criticism regarding the classification presented. Objections include those of Hevia Rivas (1991:15-16): “They tend to identify centralization with state activity and decentralization with private activity, like the extreme poles of a continuum.” In other words, these authors seem to find a close relationship between property (public or private) and the type of administration and management.

2 A review of the different currents and concepts of regulation utilized in the studies of English- and French-speaking researchers in the 1990s, in the field of educational policies, can be found in Andrada’s research (2002).

3 The analysis is based on the existence of an “autonomous regulation” (a horizontal process of producing standards) in an organization (Reynaud, 1988) versus “hierarchical or controlled regulation.” The first alludes to regulations that rest on interaction with students, the influence of colleagues with seniority in the institution, and the cooperation action of younger teachers and school directors is using and reinterpreting “hierarchical or controlled regulations.” Hierarchical regulations are linked directly with the structure of the regulation, and autonomous regulations with the adaptation of the regulation to the actors.

4 An example of these analyses is given by van Zanten, A. (2001). This research shows different elements that act on the professional socialization of teachers in France and the type of regulation on which they depend.

5 The data presented in the case of Buenos Aires are part of the evidence analyzed in the author’s master’s thesis. For the case of Sao Paulo, sources were compiled during a stay made possible by a PRA scholarship from the OAS 2001-2002. In both cases, unstructured interviews were held with directors and teachers from public and private schools, as well as field notes (not included in this analysis due to the methodological option).

6 In 1995, the members of the Alianza Cooperativa Internacional (ACI) systematized a set of seven principles to serve as a basis for functioning: 1) free access and voluntary adherence; 2) control, organization and democratic management; 3) economic participation of associates; 4) autonomy and independence; 5) education, training and information; 6) cooperation among cooperatives; and 7) commitment to the community. Some researchers from cooperative organizations like Daniel Rech (2000) emphasize the close existing relationship between one self-management model and
cooperativism, basically because such a model would eliminate the classic structure between employer and employee. Thus self-management would begin when a group of people decides to organize itself as “autonomous entrepreneurs” to carry out its own (economic) initiative, in which the members themselves plan and perform the (productive) activity.

7 This increase in Brazil is identified with a “boom” fundamentally because of the drop in new schools of this type from the mid 1960s to the 1980s; in contrast, from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, increased numbers of such schools were identified. Some additional events should be mentioned, such as the creation of the Federação das Cooperativas Educacionais do Estado de São Paulo and the Federação das Cooperativas de Ensino de Minas Gerais.

8 Two groups of conclusions should be emphasized in the research studies that have been carried out. On one hand, the critics (Azevedo, 2002) point to increased private-sector profits and heightened competition for public resources among private-sector groups, the misuse of public funds by the associates of each school, and the lack of assurance by the system that resources destined to education will be applied exclusively to the maintenance and development of the educational proposal. On the other hand, researchers such as Gadotti and Ramão (1993) sustain that experience could contribute greatly to discussions on overcoming the dichotomy of the public and private sectors—currently one of the greatest problems of Brazilian education.

9 The development of this synthesis has been based on the analysis of the different models of autonomy found in the research of Andrada (2002b).

10 Difference associated with the category of actors having most power in decision-making: the school's director, teachers and/or users.

11 They do not charge an enrollment fee and are affordable for students and families from any socioeconomic level: Solmon, Block, and Gifford (1999).

12 There is no literal translation of the term into Spanish. It may be translated as responsibility and rendering of accounts.

13 The term, “parceria,” comes from the Latin partiaric: he who has a part, who participates. This participation is based on one of the parties' inaccessibility to resources to take a certain action, or a lack of desire, due obviously to different reasons, to dedicate itself entirely to its management. A key element in parceria is the existence of a contract—formal or informal depending on the type of activity to be carried out—to designate tasks to parties.

A parceria implies a certain type of relationship between the public and private sector; in other words, the delegated state action for the decentralized management of public action is found “outside of the state.” This system is the result of the set of different public and private elements in which it would be possible to create alternatives of public management (e.g., for educational services). From a legal point of view, an agreement is one of the instruments that can be used by the public power to associate with other entities, either public or private.

14 In Brazil, responsibility for supplying public education is divided among three spheres of government: federal (central), state and municipal. Even in elementary schools, municipal administrations have a high formal degree of responsibility. This is one of the essential differences regarding the supply of education in different countries. In Argentina, municipal governments have no direct influence on education, except in the jurisdictions that contain municipal school systems, like Mar del Plata or Córdoba.
The synthesis of conclusions was based on the work by Paro (1996).


The “third order” rating alludes to legislation of lower hierarchy than a law or national decree.


Organization responsible for the administration and control of the educational system in the territory of the Province of Buenos Aires. In this sense, it represents the central level of the system at the legal level.


Denomination used to designate the third level of establishing basic common contents in schools. This level implies formulating an Institutional Curricular Project (PCI) (Consejo Federal de Cultura y Educación, 1995).


Ibid., p. 29.


Dirección General de Cultura y Educación, Anexo I de la Resolution núm. 4947, October 9, 1995.

Ibid.


However, in an interview conceded to the media in 2000, the Director General of Schools expressed that “the purpose of advancing in the process of school autonomy without the need to promote changes in legislation or in teaching statutes, a topic that would cause a short circuit in the relationship with teachers’ unions [...], will make it possible to eliminate the obsession on administrative obstacles if we intensify the authority of school directors to solve administrative questions and school maintenance [...], the director has the ability to handle a petty cash fund and foresee expenses, and at the end of the year it will be verified [...] It would be necessary to begin to talk in order to guarantee the right of public school teachers to select the school where they will work and develop their vocation”, De Vedia, M. “Bordón, por la autonomía escolar”, diario La Nación, Buenos Aires, July 19, 2000.


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Legislation

Buenos Aires


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San Pablo


Ministerio da Educação (Brasil) (1971), Lei de Diretrizes e Bases do Ensino núm. 5.692.


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