How are education systems, reforms and learning outcomes shaped by political context?

Joseph Wales, Overseas Development Institute
Conceptual framework – political settlements

DFID (2010: 22): the ‘expression of a common understanding, usually forged between elites, about how power is organised and exercised’.

They place a set of drivers of, or contextual constraints around, such things as:

- Political stability
- Relations among elites and between elites and non-elites
- The culture and orientation of the bureaucracy

Affects: (i) what you can hope to achieve and (ii) how you achieve it.
Meso-level construct

- Long term historical change
- The political settlement
- Day to day decision making
Key political settlement variables

- Degree of elite inclusion (inclusive-exclusive)
- Means of elite inclusion (purposive coordination-spoils)
- Bureaucratic culture (personal-impersonal)

Source: Kelsall (2016).
Common or ideal types of political settlement

Three ideal types of political settlement:

- Developmental settlements (e.g. Chile, Rwanda)
- Predatory settlements (e.g. South Sudan, DRC)
- Hybrid settlements (e.g. Kenya, Tanzania)
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## Mapping case studies by settlements, outcomes and incentives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Political settlement</th>
<th>Case studies</th>
<th>Nature of Progress</th>
<th>Incentives observed</th>
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</table>
| Developmental        | Chile, Ethiopia | Quality Access     | • Long term economic development (skilled workforce)  
                       |              |                    | • State legitimation  
                       |              |                    | • Electoral incentives (largely programmatic) |
| Mixed Hybrid         | Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia | Quality Access     | • Long term economic development (skilled workforce)  
                       |              |                    | • Electoral incentives (programmatic & patron-client)  
                       |              |                    | • Historic perception of education provision as duty of state  
                       |              |                    | • Building and maintenance of patron-client networks |
| Spoils-driven Hybrid | Benin, Kenya, Mongolia | Access             | • Electoral incentives (programmatic & patron-client)  
                       |              |                    | • Building and maintenance of patron-client networks  
                       |              |                    | • Access to development financing |
How does this matter for education systems?

Thesis – Political settlements impact on coherence:

• Across relationships
• Between functions
• Within their intersection
Contrasting examples – Reforms in Chile and Indonesia (I)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chile</th>
<th>Indonesia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>Mixed Hybrid</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990-2010</td>
<td>2000-2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rising investment</td>
<td>Rising investment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum reform</td>
<td>Curriculum reform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased teacher salaries</td>
<td>Increased teacher salaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raising teacher standards, certification and incentives</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Contrasting examples – Reforms in Chile and Indonesia (II)
Contrasting examples – Reforms in Chile and Indonesia (III)

Chile – Developmental Settlement

• Coherence in system and long term focus
• Successful implementation of education reforms
• State-led process, but with citizen pressure
• Strong and sustained impact on learning outcomes

Main challenge – Building and maintaining political consensus for reform
Contrasting examples – Reforms in Chile and Indonesia (IV)

Indonesia – Mixed Hybrid Settlement

• Incoherence and resistance to reforms
• Range of actors with conflicting aims at different levels
• Consensus on increasing financing, but conflict on teacher accountability
• Mixed and fluctuating impact on learning outcomes

Main challenge – Developing a reform coalition that integrates or outmanoeuvres teachers’ unions and elites focused on short term rents
Mapping onto the 4x4 matrix

**Chile** – Strong coherence across relationships & functions

**Indonesia** – Power of principals bleeds across relationships; incoherence across functions; and multiple principals & agents within intersections.
Conclusion

Potential for political settlements analysis to inform systems thinking in education in terms of:

- Extent of coherence across relationships and functions
- The causes of incoherence and coherence
- The potential routes and mechanisms for achieving reform
Questions and comments