

# **The Education of Africa South of the Sahara: A Comparative Analysis of Private and Public Education**

by

Abdourahmane Barry, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, Department of Education  
D'Youville College, Buffalo, NY  
Abdo10@yahoo.com

## **Abstract**

Most nations in Africa south of the Sahara made a significant effort to promote education mainly in the years that followed their independence from colonial powers; however, the policies devised for promoting education after independence minimized or excluded the private sector. It is only recently that most African governments started to realize the limitations of public monopoly in education and since then, private schools are re-emerging in all major cities in Africa south of the Sahara. This paper therefore, after providing a brief overview of the development of private education in the Africa south of the Sahara, addresses the comparative analysis of the merits of private and public education and some policy issues that are emerging out of the current trend.

Key words: *Comparative education, educational administration, educational development, educational policy, public versus private education.*

## **Introduction**

There is a growing recognition among nations in Africa south of the Sahara that education is a critical weapon for bringing sustainable development to their respective countries and to the continent as a whole. Pursuant to this goal, most nations in the region made a significant effort to promote education mainly in the years that followed their independence from colonial powers (Kitaev, 1999). This commitment was expressed through the allocation of significant resources as well as through the development of policies and strategies for the expansion of education (Dinavo, 1995).

However, in many parts of the region, the policies devised for the promotion of education after independence suffer from the effects of state monopoly either minimizing or excluding the private sector from the provision of education. The assumption after independence was that education is too critical for national development especially for maintaining national unity and the promotion of official language and culture; therefore, the private education was seen as incompatible with the objectives of these young nations (Cutter, 2001).

It is only in the 1980s onwards that most African governments came out of their euphoria and started to realize the limitations of public monopoly in the provision of education, hence, several factors contributed to this awareness.

First, despite committing significant resources, the governments could not increase public resources, in part because of continuing demographic growth (Dinavo, 1995; Peano, 1997). As a result, attaining universal primary education, which state governments promised after their independence, became only a deceptive reality.

Second, the challenge of promoting education in Africa in the 1980s and 1990s was further frustrated by worldwide socio-economic developments. The 1980s and 1990s saw an emphasis on increasing the role of market by reducing that of the state in various sectors of public activities, including education, thereby tolerating parent/community financing of education, among other things (Bray, 1996; Dinavo, 1995; Murphy 1996).

Third, there have been amendments to the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights (UN). Hence, Article 26 of the declaration states that “education shall be free, at least in elementary and fundamental stages” indisputably, in Africa south of the Sahara moving the cost to state governments. But later declarations and conferences attempt to expose the limitations of public monopoly in the provision of education, suggesting the need for alternative schemes (Bray, 1996a). Thus, the World Conference of Education in Jomtien (Thailand) (1990) is instructive in this regard; the Conference argued that while basic education should be a priority of public spending, public funding alone is insufficient to guarantee the required access and coverage of the school age population of adequate learning conditions and quality education. Bray (1996a: 4) quotes Article 7 of this Declaration:

National, regional, and local educational authorities have a unique obligation to provide basic education for all, but they cannot be expected to supply every human, financial, or organizational requirement for this task. New and revitalized partnerships at all levels will be necessary---including partnerships between governments, and nongovernmental organizations, the private sector, religious groups, and families. (WCEFA, 1990: 7).

Since then, private education has been viewed as an alternative scheme in the provision of education in Africa south of the Sahara. After a brief overview of the development of private education in Africa south of the Sahara, this paper addresses the comparative analysis of the two sectors (private and public), and the major policy issues that are emerging out of the current trend or development of private education.

## **Private Education in Africa South of the Sahara**

Two reasons may have contributed to the development of private education in Africa south of the Sahara. The first reason can be attributed to historical and religious reasons, (Kitaev, 1999) while the second has emerged in response to recent changes in economic and social conditions in the continent.

### **Historical and Religious Reasons**

For both historical and religious reasons, formal private education existed in Africa long before the existence of government schools. It is reported that Arab caravans from the North and the Portuguese from the Atlantic coast introduced the first form of private education to Africa as far back as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, rapid expansion of formal education in Africa was recorded only in the eighteenth century under the influence of European missionaries (Kitaev, 1999; Peano, 1997).

Historically, the zones of colonization controlled by respective metropolitan countries largely influenced the development of education in Africa. This explains later differences in the traditions of education developments in English speaking, French-speaking, and Portuguese-speaking African countries (Kitaev, 1999).

As Kitaev further accounts, in the French speaking system, the official policy was to transplant the metropolitan model. In this model, because of the separation of the church and the state, secular types of schools emerged with some co-operation with recognized missions. In the British colonies, the policy of indirect administration tried to take into account the local traditions and adapt education accordingly. As per the British system, the missionaries were entitled to control education in return for Africa south of the Sahara. In the Portuguese colonies, Peano (1997), for example, identifies three models of schools. First, there were official government schools for the Portuguese and assimilated African population. Second, there were schools under the control of the Catholic Church. Third, there were bush schools for the native population that accommodated the third official elementary grade.

## Recent Economic and Social Conditions in Africa

Besides the historical and religious reasons described above, many writers (Bray, 1996; James in Boyd 1989; Kitaev, 1999) justify the introduction of private education as an alternative to public education on the basis of the following reasons:

- *Access and Coverage (unmet demand)*: when the number of existing public schools was not enough to guarantee sufficient coverage of the school age population, especially in Africa south of the Sahara-urban and rural areas, such as when there is no school in the surrounding area.
- *Diversified demand*: when parents are dissatisfied with the way public school system functions and aspire for better quality of education. This reason is quite consistent with the ones that motivated the need for private education in most parts of the world: parents want to ensure that their children receive the best education available in a school (Durston, 1989).
- *Redundant teaching force*: following structural adjustment packages, there are pay freezes in many African countries forcing practicing teachers to set up their own schools as a way of self employment. This is the case in many French-speaking countries facing the impact of structural adjustment programs.
- *Profit making motive among school managers*: One major motive for founding a school is the possibility of masked profit distribution and this takes place particularly in areas characterized by excess demand for education (James in Boyd, 1989).
- *Inadequate public supply or deliberate government policy (i.e. inadequate or regulated supply)*: This approach was used to reduce pressure upon the existing schools and to avoid the introduction of tuition in government schools. Zambia for example used this approach in 1976 when government revenue declined as a result of the declining price of copper, and Nigeria too in 1984 following the drop in oil prices.

## **The Merits of Private and Public Education**

The comparative advantage of private versus public education of Africa south of the Sahara is a subject of considerable debate. Major aspects of the debate revolve around the relative advantage of one over the other regarding cost effectiveness and efficiency, availability of resources, and the promotion of major educational goals such as access, equity, and quality

### **Comparative Cost-effectiveness and Efficiency**

Understanding costs incurred in private and public schools has important implications for educational policy. First, a careful estimation of costs will show all the resources required to provide alternative programs to meet unfulfilled educational demand or to serve population groups with particular educational needs (Clune, 2002; Tsang, 2002). Second, a policy in favor of private schooling may increase the reliance on family financing of education, suggesting the level of the economic burden on families by socio-economic background (Kitaev, 1999). Third, an analysis of the per-student costs of public-private schools will improve our understanding of the determinants of educational costs and show whether or not there are systematic differences in the operation of the two types of schools (Tsang, 1995). Fourth, information on costs is necessary for assessing the validity of the principal claim on the relative cost-effectiveness of private schools (Kitaev, 1999; Peano 1997).

Given this rationale, which aspect of cost requires analysis and what the term “cost” itself entails requires some discussions. The costs of education refer to the resources employed in the production of educational services (Levin, 1995; Tsang, 1995; Tsang 2002). They include both public and household expenditure on education as well as donations to educational institutions from private sources, and the economic value of forgone opportunities of education (McEwan, 2001). A brief comparison of the different costs incurred in private and public schools seems in order.

### **Private Resources in Public and Private Schools**

Private costs generally refer to expenditures families and communities incur (such as for tuition, textbooks, uniforms, etc) in private and public schools (Tsang, 1995). It is argued that private household resources are high where demand for schooling is strong, but government inputs are inadequate. Given limited government resources compared to the demand, household and community resources have always been high in some parts of Africa.

Findings generally show that private resources are much higher in private schools than in public schools (James, 1996; Kitaev, 1999). The reason is that tuition constitutes a relatively large spending item for households in private schools as opposed to households in public schools where tuition is either non-existent or small (Tsang, 2002). Higher direct private costs of private schooling may also be due to non-tuition fees that most private schools charge, but which most government schools do not. The other most important factor, which explains the higher private cost of schooling in private schools, is the fact that public and private schools might serve children from very different socio-economic backgrounds that have different capacity for spending on education. After documenting studies in 10 developing countries, Tsang (1995) reports a very large difference in private educational spending among households such that expenditure is much higher for households with high income and consumption. However, poor families also contribute significantly to private and public schools, although partly this contribution comes in kind rather than in cash.

It should also be noted that beyond the private versus public dichotomy, there are inter-sector variations that must be taken into account in assessing direct private costs of schooling. In Chile, for example, private schools are classified according to whether or not they receive government funding in the form of vouchers. In voucher receiving schools, as in government schools, there is no tuition but the non-tuition cost in voucher private school is 37 percent higher than that of government schools (Tsang, 2002). The direct private cost is even higher in non-voucher receiving schools, apparently because they charge tuition in addition to requiring non-tuition expenses. In Chile, the study shows, these schools are meant for children of the highest socio-economic background and as such, tuition is their main source of funding.

Embedded in the cost rubric of private and public schools is also the opportunity cost of education, which is the function of time to and from school and the nature of home production (Bray 1996). Findings (Tsang, 2002, Tsang; 1995) generally show that the opportunity cost in private schools is higher than that in public schools. The major reason for this variation is the demand for child labor resulting from the socio-economic background of parents. Findings are generally that higher income families have a lower demand for child labor, and thus schooling represents a smaller sacrifice for them. It is argued that the value of labor generally becomes greater as children get older and those in rural areas involve higher opportunity cost than those in urban areas (Bray, 1996). Since public schools as opposed to private schools enroll more students from low-income families, Tsang (1995) for example argues, that the demand for child labor is more important in government schools than in private schools. For example, in Thailand in 1987, Tsang and Kidchanapansich (1992) report that the indirect cost of primary education as a proportion of household income amounted to 7.2 percent in government schools and 0.62 in private schools because government schools enrolled more students from disadvantaged and rural communities. However, these findings may not hold in some countries, mainly in Africa south of the Sahara where children from low income families concentrate in low quality private schools (Peano, 1997).

## **Institutional Costs in Private and Public Schools**

A common way to estimate the costs of private and public schools is to do it on the basis of unit cost or per student institutional expenditure at the school level. Tsang (2002) defines institutional expenditures as the spending that school personnel and policy makers deal with on a recurrent basis and over which they have some control. On the basis of data from five developing countries, Tsang (2002) finds out that private schools generally have lower institutional cost than public schools. This finding supports the assertion held by advocates of private schools that private schools have a strong incentive to lower costs (Kitaev, 1999). Advocates speculate that private schools are economically more efficient, in part because they have more autonomy than public schools regarding their spending decisions and with respect to the mix of educational inputs they employ (James in Boyd, 1988; Tsang, 1995).

However, the efficiency of private schools over public schools leaves several caveats, and their presumed efficiency might not be as advocates tend to claim for some of the following reasons. One major problem is that while institutional costs are part of the total cost of schooling, they however omit data on direct private costs, private contributions, and indirect private costs both in private and public schools. This means that the relative cost could change when all resources are accounted for in the production of public and private schooling Tsang (2002). In Thailand, for instance, the average per student cost of private primary school amounted to 53 percent of that of the average cost of government primary school. However, the relative cost ratio increased to 78 percent when private resources were also included. Jimenez and Lockheed (1995) argue that without taking account of private resources, the costs of private schools relative to public schooling will be overestimated.

The other problem comes from aggregating data on the system of private schools on the one hand and that of public schools on the other without taking into account the various mix of private and public schools. This deficiency can lead to misleading results about the relative costs of government schools and private schools (Tsang and Taoklam, 1992). Rural –Urban variations and aided and non-aided schools are some of the categories that must be factored out to determine the efficiency of private schools. For example, the cost of private schools relative to public schools is 93 percent in municipal settings as opposed to 53 percent when aggregated data are considered, reducing the efficiency of private schools by half. Similarly, in India, Kingdom (1996) finds out that private aided schools are almost twice as expensive as private unaided schools but are comparable to government schools in terms of per student recurrent cost. In the Dominican Republic, high status private schools were found to be more expensive than government schools while low status private schools were less expensive in terms of per-student institutional cost (Jimenez, Lockheed, Luna and Paqueo, 1991). In sum, treating government schools and private schools as homogeneous systems will miss the large variation in costs among different types of government schools and among private schools.

Lack of information on some of the institutional costs for private schools is the other problem leading to the imprecise estimation or underestimation of costs in private schools (Levin, 1987). In religious schools, Tsang (2002) for example argues that private schools receive substantial donated inputs in kind such as free instructional services provided by the clergy (or at below market salaries) and use free facilities owned by religious organizations. This all suggests that the reported instructional expenditure will not represent the true institutional cost of operating such schools.

There is also imprecise estimation of cost resulting from economies of scale as well as the type of technology used in the operation of private schools. It is generally held that relative unit costs may change if there is a large change in the scale of one or more of the two sub sectors (Tsang, 2002). This is also in part the function of input prices and the technology of educational production. McEwan and Carnoy (2000) suggest that the cost of educating students in the private sector may go up when the sector serves more students with undesirable attributes, and when free and low-cost instructional services become scarcer. Thus, the cost analysis has to make an assessment of the relevance of existing cost estimates.

The problem is further complicated by the fact that efficiency function of school cannot be easily separated from funding function. In other words, it is difficult to interpret the effects of public funding in private schools, and on the contrary, the effects of private funding on public schools (Kitaev, 1999). Further educational effectiveness is subjected to many other factors. For example private and public schools serve student populations with varying ability, suggesting selection bias in the statistical estimation in the production function of schools (Tsang 1995).

From here, an important question that follows becomes the degree to which the two sectors are performing in terms of promoting essential educational goals such as access, equity, and quality. The relative cost-effectiveness of the sectors becomes meaningful only when these goals are properly addressed.

### **Private versus Public Schools Ability to Expand Educational Access**

Many authors (for example Bray 1996b; Kitaev 1999; Peano 1997; Psacharopoulos, 1987) believe that judging the merits of private schools in terms of the access goal is rather difficult. The reason is that most private schools are unregistered and thus their enrollment is unknown to determine their level of contribution to the overall student enrollment in a given country. Nevertheless, many studies attempt to determine the share of enrollment in private schools on the basis of data from registered private schools.

Findings support the fact that the share of private education in Africa south of the Sahara is higher than the share of the sector in the rest of the world (Peano, 1997). Within the region, however, the share of the sector is greater for English Speaking countries than for French-speaking countries. In 1990s, for example, Kitaev (1999) documents the following enrollment figures for English-speaking countries: Lesotho (100% at primary); Zimbabwe (88% in primary and 85% in secondary); Mauritius (79% in secondary); Botswana (74% in secondary); Tanzania (53% in secondary). By contrast, countries with the highest rate of private education in French-speaking Africa south of the Sahara include: Madagascar (21 % in primary and, 45 in secondary); Cameroon (24% in primary, and 49% in secondary); Gabon (29% in primary and, 40% in secondary) Togo (25 % in primary, 14 % in secondary), and Cote d'Ivoire (12 % in primary, 36 in secondary).

With regards to their affiliation and type, most of the registered schools that make the largest share of enrollment in Africa south of the Sahara are non-profit making community schools and religious schools rather than profit making and other types of private schools (Kitaev, 1999). With the diminishing role of the state in the provision of education and the ever growing social demand for it, many analysts (Bray, 1997), however, predict the dynamics of growth for profit – making and spontaneous schools in the years to come.

In terms of level of schooling, the private sector is more dominant at the secondary rather than the elementary level in the context of Africa south of the Sahara. This is due to past government commitments in Africa to basic education with the hope of guaranteeing universal primary education for all (Dinavo, 1995; Peano, 1997). More recently, however, owing to student flows from primary to secondary education, this trend has started to change, activating the need for private education at the primary level, too (Kitaev, 1999). The expansion of private schools at the primary level can also be explained by more tolerant government policies towards achieving universal primary education or its expansion with the help of private schools.

### **Private Schools and Educational Quality**

School quality is, for the most part, measured either in terms of educational inputs or educational outputs. Educational inputs are human and other material resources that are factored into the production function of schools while outputs are the performance of students on achievement tests or the number and type of graduates coming out of the educational system (Tsang, 2002).

Studies that have assessed the relative quality of private schools over their public counterparts in terms of input variables do not provide conclusive answers yet. In Colombia, for example, Psacharopoulos (1987) finds out that diversified public secondary schools (that aim for vocational and academic objectives) have better educational inputs, such as teacher-student ratio and teacher qualification compared to private schools.

Yet, the same study shows that these schools have a higher operating cost, relative to private schools and other conventional public schools. According to the writer, the standard that these schools were designed to meet is the reason for the higher cost associated with these schools. Similar findings were also obtained in Tanzania that public schools score better in three conventional measures of quality: they employ more teachers per student, their teachers are better qualified, and they spend more per student (Peano, 1997).

In terms of external outcomes researchers assess the relative performance of public and private schools on the basis of the quality of graduates and their earning potential. Findings are that private school students appear to be better off in finding employment after graduation from secondary schools, although there is virtually no difference in the earnings received by graduates of the two types of schools (Psachropoulos, 1987).

The performance of private versus public schools in terms of mean scores in various achievement tests is rather mixed. In Colombia and Tanzania, for example, private schools are better at enhancing academic achievements while public schools are better in boosting student performance in vocational subjects. Bashir (1997) and Psachropoulos (1987) hold that private schools attempt to satisfy the demands of their customers, which is stronger for academic rather than vocational subjects. The reason for such demand preference is that students and their parents view academic subjects as leading to more opportunities after graduation, such as entering universities or following a non-manual career. Therefore, through the power of the fees they pay, analysts (Bashir, 1997; Psachropoulos (1987) argue, pressure is exercised on private schools to tacitly emphasize the academic subject matter. Thus, as far as element of choice is concerned, as in the case of private schools, the customers obtained what they wanted.

An alternative view of the relationship between families' schooling choices and school effectiveness is that some of the factors affecting families' schooling choices also influence the effectiveness of school programs. Control over admission and dismissal policies may not only help a school to attract talented students but also improve a schools' program by making it easier to attract high quality teachers, many of whom do not want to work with disruptive students.

### **Private Schools and Educational Equity**

Whether private schools promote educational equity is subject to considerable debate among scholars. On the one hand, advocates argue that the private sector could address unmet demand of parents for additional schooling of their children because of limited capacity in the public sector, expand the choice in schooling to meet the varied educational preferences of parents, and enhance efficiency in the utilization of limited national resources through market-based competition in education (Tsang, 2002). Proponents also suggest that through the private arrangement, alternatives to traditional government schools could be created to serve children from marginalized backgrounds so that such children are not trapped in low performing government schools (Erickson, 1989).

On the other hand adversaries doubt the claimed benefits of private school, favoring public provision to promote equity in education. They suggest that public provision is instrumental to reduce inequality, open opportunities for the poor and the disadvantaged, compensates for market failures, and make information about the benefits of education more generally available (Burnett, 1996; Durston, 1989; Kitaev, 1999). In other words, for adversaries of private school, the private sector restricts access depending upon income, encouraging inequity and inequality in the provision of education. In addition, while private schools consider improving the educational opportunity of children from marginalized backgrounds as one of their desirable goals, opponents doubt the feasibility thereof, arguing that private schools may attract the most motivated families, leaving government schools to deal with the less motivated ones (Bashir, 1997; Tsang, 2002).

Despite the claims of either side, there has been recently an increased awareness challenging the border line separating the two sectors, as far as the goal of equity is concerned, dismissing the previously conventional assumptions dividing the two sectors.

One conventional claim for example is that the poor and the underclass usually go to government schools and, thus, these families receive the benefits of education through such government arrangement (King, 1997). King (1997), however, argues that there are several reasons why the poor may not be able to afford or may even be excluded from public education, in which case private schools become more accessible at times. For example, while public schools charge minimal fees, there are multitudes of other costs beside school fees that are associated with school attendance, and which have to be balanced against perceived benefits to schooling. As a result, public education may be too costly to draw the poorest students. This is even more compelling, according to the writer, in most developing countries, given the high concentration of secondary schools in urban centers that become inaccessible to poor families and students from rural areas.

Another conventional claim is that, while private schools charge fees, public schools are free; this makes the private sector inaccessible for poor students. However, in most developing countries today, public schools do charge fees, officially or otherwise. Non-official fees might include a one-time registration fee or mandatory contributions in cash or in kind from families. For example as Tsang (1995) reports, private spending accounts for about 30 percent of the total cost of public primary schools in Thailand and Colombia.

In a similar fashion, there is a tendency to see private schools as profit making enterprises, demeaning their roles as public entities. As a matter of fact, in many developing countries, private schools are instrumental in serving populations not adequately served by the public school system, such as remote rural areas, girls, ethnic, and linguistic minorities (Kitaev, 1999; King, 1997). These schools, as King argues, are not necessarily for profit schools, but they are simply non-government schools. Still, for profit schools also they can play a role in broadening access to education.

Particularly at the post primary level, the supply of public school places are rationed to the best students who mostly belong to the richer groups, while low-cost, lower quality private secondary and tertiary institutions meet the excess demand from less able students. The fact that there is usually two types of for profit private schools –one heavily funded and controlled and the other, unsubsidized and unregulated –is often forgotten (James, 1991). Thus, numerous private schools do not fit the stereotype of high-fee, high quality private schools (King, 1998). In many instances these are low cost schools of dubious quality to meet the requirement for registration. It remains that, for the poor, they are the only options available to pursue secondary or tertiary education (Kitaev, 1999; King 1997).

Findings from many countries also reject the stereotype that private schools attract the rich, relegating the poor to public schools (for example Doyle, 1989; James in Boyd, 1989). Evidence is generally that the relationship between income and school enrollment is more the function of the quality of the schools, irrespective of whether the schools are private or public. In the US for example there are many public schools in wealthy enclaves serving only upper middle class white students and they are still public while on the contrary there are dozens of inner-city private schools that serve the poor and racial minorities (Doyle, 1989). Similarly, in his survey in Indonesia, King (1997) documents a slight preference among those in the richest 20 percent as well as the poorest deciles for private schools. This explains that while the richest groups are attending the high-cost, high quality schools of their choice, the poorest group is likely to be attending the only primary schools available to them, whatever the quality might be.

As the same study further shows, the preference of rich and poor parents for public or private schools is influenced by whether children go to primary or secondary schools. At the primary level, there is roughly an equal split in enrollments between public and private schools, but in the secondary schools, the pattern of richer students preferring private schools strongly emerges, with about 65 percent of them preferring to join private schools. The increased preference of rich families to private schools, King (1997) explains, shows their desire to prepare for free university education. In Indonesia, as in many developing countries, the public universities tend to be of higher quality than the private institutions because they have limited enrollment capacity and, thus, ration their places through entrance tests. By investing in private secondary education, the rich families get a passport for free higher education.

## **Key Policy Issues in Private Education**

### **Educational development and degree of privatization**

Privatization of education as a policy instrument allows administrative, managerial and funding responsibilities to organizations, and individuals for the provision of primary and secondary education that would have otherwise gone unaddressed through government intervention (Murphy, 1996). However, there are different forms of privatization depending on the level of decentralization introduced to manage the system and other contextual factors. The continuum ranges from rigid private authority ownership of educational institutions (Johnstone, 2001; Doyle, 1994; Kitaev, 1999; Murphy 1996) to softer forms of combining public authority with private management, institutional autonomy, and mixed funding of schools.

There is a debate regarding the type of policies government needs to enact in educational privatization. On the one hand, there is a proposal which allows individuals and private institutions to enjoy the autonomy of managing their schools while still receiving the support of public funds, and entering into partnerships with other educational providers (such as church and non-government organizations). According to this arrangement, the state is no longer a direct operator of schools and training centers (Peano, 1997). The role of the state instead becomes that of a promoter, an animator, and a regulator, fixing standards, distributing funds, according to different criteria including performance, and promoting equality of opportunities and results (Kitaev, 1999).

On the other hand, there is a recommendation that encourages an extreme form of privatization and entitles private schools to public subsidy. This proposal, however, is contested for its complex implications for equity. It is argued that even when the state feels the need, it refrains from affecting this policy as it always becomes subject to attack among major stakeholders such as parents and teachers in public education (Kitaev, 1999; Murphy 1996a).

Thus, in practice, instead of going for an extreme form of privatization, state and public authorities tend to regulate the degree of privatization even in the decentralized context (Kitaev, 1999; Bray 1996; Jimenez and Lockheed, 1995). As such, today privatization is seen as a process with range of starting points and a wide array of models as opposed to a final result (Kitaev, 1999). It is also argued that in some systems, privatization comes as a result of deliberate government policy (planned) while in others as a result of unplanned (organic) change.

A regulated form of privatization in which the government maneuvers its growth by either privatizing existing public schools or by encouraging parallel private schools or by promoting privatization within public schools has severe implementation problems. Colclough and Lewin (1993), for example, argue that the encouragement of private schools may frustrate national redistributive policies and diminish equitable access.

They further argue that depending upon how it is implemented, the encouragement of private schools may result in exodus from the public school system by children of relatively wealthy parents, and possibly also by better teachers. The abandonment of public schools by certain social groups in the community is seen as an erosion of support for public schools, particularly on the part of more affluent, articulate, and politically aware members of society who would be expected to be vocal in seeking improvements in public education and the resources to implement them (Durstun, 1989). Such policy impoverishes public schools and becomes regressive, particularly if significant public subsidy were to be given to selective, effectively private, elite schools, notwithstanding the capacity of their clienteles to support them. Thus, findings show that policies which aim at impacting public expenditure in order to affect private contribution seldom meet their desired objective because private demand for education is an independent variable and thus difficult to estimate or predict.

Among countries in Africa south of the Sahara, Tanzania is a typical victim for its inadvertent policy that encouraged privatization without sound checks and balances. For example, Kitaev (1999) documents private secondary schools, which numbered 84 in 1984, compared to 85 public schools suddenly increased to 124 in 1986, and by 1990 to 213 against 135 public schools. In terms of pupils' enrollment, the study further shows, private schools that represented only five percent of total secondary enrollment in 1965, accounted for more than half of all secondary school pupils by 1990. However, even with this enrollment drift, the privatization of education in Tanzania exacerbated disparities.

The question at this point becomes whether privatization occurs by default or through deliberate strategy. Bray (1996a) believes that privatization takes place in most countries more through default, i.e. "despite rather than because of government interventions". This is common, according to the writer, particularly in areas where there is excess demand for secondary education, or where minorities exert a strong pressure for various religious, cultural, or political reasons.

### **State Regulations and Private Schools**

One major issue in privatizing education concerns the relationship between government funding and government regulations. The question at this point remains whether more funding implies more regulations. The usual practice in many countries is that there is indeed a considerable amount of both funding and regulations, although the correlation is not necessarily perfect (James, 1986). Government support to private schools generally include subsidies, subventions, and tax exemptions in turn for a certain degree of regulation and control over curricula and learning conditions (Randall, 1994). It is argued that government intervention could prevent some of the advantages (and disadvantages) of the private sector that stem from independence, flexibility, and differentiated product (Inbar, 1989).

As such, both society, in choosing their system and private schools, in choosing where they fit into the system, would then face a trade-off between autonomy and more funds (James, 1986). However, government willingness to financially support schooling, and the degree of regulations it imposes on private schools varies among national contexts.

## **Conclusion**

For many years in the past, education was monopolized by the state in most African countries south of the Sahara. In recent years, however, there has been more recognition at the level of decision making in African countries that, given the obvious constraints to expanding public education mainly at secondary and tertiary levels, private education is being viewed as complementary to public education (James, 1989; Kitaev, 1999).

Despite this awareness, what can be delegated to the private sector in the chain of ownership, funding, and management of schools and what is left to the public sector is far from conclusive. But one thing seems clear from the work of many scholars (Bray 1996a; Bray 1996b; Kitaev, 1999) there is no argument in favor of a completely private education system. As discussed earlier, there are areas in which private education seems more advantageous and where its intervention becomes essential and those in which it is less commendable. The important issue for policy makers is then to maintain the proper mix or balance between the sectors after identifying the relative advantages of each sector. Yet, one should also note that neither the private nor the public sector is a single category. There are varieties of private and public schools and thus the presumed advantage of one sector over the other must be considered case-by-case instead of as a categorical entity.

As eluded elsewhere, among its many advantages, the main claim for privatization in public education is that greater choice by parents will provide better oversight than the current system does. This is quite analogous to other sectors of public interest such as airlines and telecommunication services in which privatization has proven most successful hitherto. However, Rosen and Weinsberg (1998) caution that the incentive for individual oversight in case of public goods is weaker; the costs are certainly higher and the oversight gain from competition among providers is usually much smaller. Arguably, when public finance suffers from austerity and when the political climate does not allow the government to introduce or raise fee and charges within the public sector (which is the reality in most countries in Africa south of the Sahara) then the coexistence of public and private education systems would allow more flexibility to expand available resources.

However, the coexistence of private and public education or more presumably, delegating the private sector to provide public education does not entail government abdication from monitoring the activities of the private sector. In other words while actual provision of education is being delegated to the private sector, one should not forget the important role public authorities play in the private sector. To the extent that public funds are involved, Doyle (1989) argues, some form of public accountability is also needed. Areas of government intervention could be diverse and might include, among others, curriculum development and teacher training, certification and definition of standards as well as partly financing the private sector (Kitaev, 1999). In other words public authorities need to ascertain that the development of private education should not violate policies, norms, standards, and regulations established in education for all formal institutions (UNESCO, 1998). Bray (1996a) and Kitaev (1999) capitalize that in the interests of uniformity and quality control, the government can retain the right of inspection and supervision of private schools ---as it has always done for public schools.

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