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GOVERNANCE OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Trust, accountability and capacity in hierarchies, markets and networks

Melanie Ehren and Jacqueline Baxter

Introduction

Chapter 1 briefly touched on the institutional structure of education systems and how systems vary in values and beliefs about opportune reform strategies. We explained how hierarchical systems are organized around a set of top-down relations of dependency and value education as a public good and for its role in contributing to a robust democracy. Markets, we argued, are premised on a different set of values where education is seen as a commodity to prepare individuals for the economic arena, and education systems are coordinated through a set of independent buyer–supplier relations. Our final archetype of network governance conceptualizes education as the outcome of collection action between for example teachers and parents, or even between schools and other service providers. A set of interdependent, high-trust, relations allow these actors to coordinate their work. The various value systems and ways of governing education systems each position actors into different roles and with different responsibilities. This chapter explores the three archetypes in more detail and how trust, accountability and capacity feature in the governance of education systems. We start with a brief explanation of ‘governance’ and how hierarchies, markets and networks have featured in the coordination of education systems over the years. We then present the main questions for this chapter before we continue to outline each of the three archetypes separately in more detail.

Governance, according to Windzio et al. (2005), is a specific form of coordination of social actions characterized by institutionalized, binding regulations and enduring patterns of interaction. These forms vary from institutionalized self-regulation of civil societal elements on the one hand, to authoritative decision-making by governmental actors on the other, with an intermediate range including cooperation of governmental, private and various collective actors.

The three main forms of governance of educational systems, according to Windzio et al. (2005), are markets, hierarchy and networks; each has a distinct structure in institutions and actor constellations (e.g. state and/or non-state), and a unique process or mode of social coordination by which actors engage in rule-making and implementation and in the provision of education (Börzel and Risse, 2010).

Hierarchical control dominated most post-war Western European education systems until the 1980s, according to Greany and Higham (2018). This style of governance, based on authority, clear division of tasks, rules, rationality and objectivity was partly replaced by market-based types of coordination in the 1980s where choice, a focus on price, efficiency and decentralization were seen as the best drivers for quality and improvement. The limitations of marketized systems, particularly for disadvantaged students and parents, led amongst other reasons to the emergence of network governance in the 1990s. Here, interdependence, trust and empathy are the organizing principles where school-to-school collaboration is seen as a viable strategy for improvement or where community-based partnerships between schools and other service providers are expected to address high inequality in the education system. The OECD (2012) emphasizes that such collaboration and the relationships between schools, parents and communities particularly matter in addressing inequality. It expects such partnerships to prevent drop-out of vulnerable children and optimize their learning, such as by improving the transition of children between school phases or by improving parental involvement in schools. A review by Aldridge (2004) highlights how cohesive communities and strong educational networks can provide safety nets and opportunities for disadvantaged children, and as such promote upward social mobility and increase children's life chances.

This chapter explores in more detail how each type of coordination has a different set of accountability relations and structures with implications for how capacity is build and (re)distributed and whether and how people come or need to trust one another. The description of hierarchy, market and network governance next follows the pattern of setting them forth as ideal types, allowing us to organize our thinking about the role of trust, accountability and capacity in each of the three types. In reality, many education systems however have a combination of two or three of these modes which means that our argument is mostly conceptual where examples are presented only for illustrative purposes to understand:

1. How does hierarchical, market-based and network governance aim to build capacity across an education system, and whose capacity and how?
2. How is accountability typically organized in each of the three types of systems?
3. What set of relations underpin each type of governance and how are high-trust relations and trust in the education system relevant conditions for capacity-building in each of the three systems?

We'll next address these questions for the three types of systems separately. Each section starts with a description of the particular governance style, the relations through which the provision of education is typically coordinated and regulated and the dominant model of accountability. We then move to explain how each system assumes to build capacity for high teaching and learning, the unintended consequences we typically find in each system and how these might reduce its overall effectiveness. Throughout our discussion we reflect on the role of trust in the coordination and accountability of various actors and how trust is, or is not, a necessity for a well-functioning system.

Hierarchy

Hierarchical education systems are those which are tightly managed from the centre with strong, top-down control of recruitment, promotion, curriculum and content of classroom instruction (Levy et al., 2018). The relations in such systems are typically 'command and control' with a high level of dependence where the state regulates school quality on the basis of a set of national standards and is responsible for most of a school's daily operations. Hierarchical education systems were central to the development of the post-war world order, according to Robertson (2012), with strong states at the national or subnational level. Windzio et al. (2005) present the former German Democratic Republic as an example of a pure centralist governance form where the state hierarchically controlled and predetermined the actions of its teachers who could only organize themselves in state-controlled unions. This type of governance was highly capable of reaching collective decisions, according to these authors, but allowed little flexibility to respond to individual student needs as we'll argue next.

Pritchett (2015, p. 15) portrays the relations in a hierarchy as those of 'principal-agent' where schooling is delegated to agents (e.g. teachers, schools) who act on behalf of a principal (e.g. the state, ministry of education). The main actors in this set of relations are typically:

Citizens/Parents/Students: those who (1) ultimately control the sovereign, (2) are the direct participants and intended beneficiaries of instructional services via schooling and (3) those under whose objectives the outcomes of the system are normatively evaluated (both individually and collectively).

The Executive Apparatus of the State: the actors who control, via executive decisions like the adoption of laws, regulations, policies and the allocation of budgets, the apparatus of the state. This can, according to Pritchett (2015), be either a nation-state or, in a federal system, the tier of government with primary responsibility for schooling, both politicians and executive policymakers.

Organizational providers of schooling: schools and organizations (like Ministries of Education) that control all aspects of the operation of schools through a large bureaucratic structure.

Teachers: individuals, or direct 'front-line service providers' of instructional services.

Hierarchies, in their pure form, have a public or state model of accountability and control, according to De Grauwe (2007, pp. 14–16). In this model, employers or political power holders are in charge of monitoring: teachers are controlled by school head teachers, who are controlled by district officers, who are controlled by central ministries that in turn are directed by elected representatives. This monitoring system has democratic legitimacy because of the control chain that emanates from the political level. In this model, external forms of quality monitoring tend to prevail over internal ones, and the traditional inspection system, which can be more or less decentralized, will play a key role in motivating school improvement, according to De Grauwe (2007).

Pritchett (2015) takes a somewhat broader view in describing the accountability in hierarchical systems. He refers to four design elements through which the relationships of accountability function: delegation, finance, information and motivation. These elements include not just the monitoring and evaluation with incentives for change (which is how we often understand ‘accountability’), but also how resources are distributed across the system. Delegation is where the principal specifies objectives and goals and ‘what they want done’ to the agent. An example would be a Ministry of Education setting a national curriculum and set of performance targets that school principals have to implement and adhere to. Finances are provided up front to implement such objectives. Information and motivation further incentivize the performance of the agent towards the principal’s aims, for instance through an inspection that monitors the implementation of a national curriculum. Information, such as the assessments from inspections, allows the principal to decide on whether the agent’s outcomes and performance meet the set objective, where a set of intrinsic or extrinsic (pecuniary) motivators will inform what happens when objectives are not met. Altrichter et al. (2015) describe the consequences of eight European inspection systems which are as varied as naming and shaming low-performing schools to replacing head teachers of failing schools.

Following Pritchett’s (2015, p. 18) argument, well-functioning hierarchies are those where there is an adequate flow of accountability in the system where principal and agents work towards the same objectives. In the best possible case, politics works well so that citizen/parental demand for education is made a salient issue for politicians and their top policymakers, the executive apparatus of the state is able to convey these effectively to schools, schools are able to create the conditions in which teachers can work well, citizens and parents can also participate locally and directly and high-quality instructional services of the types that are contextually relevant are the result. In this case, the four design elements we previously referred to (delegation, finance, information and motivation) are coherent which may either build or restrict capacity for improvement, something we’ll next discuss in more detail.

Standardization (and alignment around those standards) is the main principle of hierarchical coordination, according to Freidson (2001). Hierarchical systems are expected to work well where production can be standardized and where the

monitorability of outputs and/or outcomes is straightforward. The execution of bureaucratic tasks, such as the dispensation of textbooks or the building of schools, would be typical examples for education systems (Levy, 2018), Freidson (2001) argues that hierarchies champion a mechanistic scientific model where organizations function as a machine according to a highly routinized process of work and division of labour, where government is the key player in prescribing such processes and tasks through top-down decision-making. In such models, education and high-quality teaching are seen as tasks that can be standardized and regulated from the top and compliance of educators follows from a system of rules which establish the duties of each position, occupation or job as well as their relationship (Levy, 2018).

The implementation and monitoring of the national curriculum in South Africa provides a good example of how hierarchical systems aim to improve education through the standardization of teaching and learning. Here, teachers are provided with an annual teaching plan which sets out detailed guidelines on the content that needs to be taught each week and the activities students need to complete. Monitoring by the district is put in place to ensure compliance to these prescriptions.

The rule-based nature of such arrangements, where agents are, as in the South African example, expected to follow a system of rules, does not necessarily value trust as an important principle for the functioning of such systems. Tyler (1990) has however argued that general trust in government would promote voluntary compliance of those the government aims to regulate. Their work suggests that trust in government leads to large-scale consent with government regulation, reducing the need to enforce compliance through frequent monitoring and control. In the example of South Africa, we would expect teachers to implement the curriculum as prescribed when they trust their government to provide them with relevant and legitimate guidelines. In this case, general or system trust acts as a mechanism to converge objectives. Ferris (1992) explains how similarity of objectives between principals and agents reduces the need for intense monitoring as principals (e.g. the Ministry of Education) will have little reason to be concerned over potential opportunistic behaviour of agents, in this case teachers.

Opponents of hierarchical systems however argue that educational outputs are more heterogeneous and cannot easily be captured in a set of standards and objectives. Robertson (2012) and Looney (2009) for example argue that teaching requires a level of professionalism which doesn't sit well with a high level of standardization. Robertson (2012, p. 590) refers to an ILO/UNESCO report which states that 'teaching is a form of public service which requires of teachers expert knowledge and specialized skills, acquired and maintained through rigorous and continuing study'. Teachers should enjoy academic freedom in the discharge of professional duties to include the choice and adaptation of teaching material and pedagogy; only when they have a degree of autonomy and flexibility can they improve performance of students with various learning needs and backgrounds. Standardization is, according to Looney (2009), at odds with

supporting individual differences and interests and, although it would provide a fair and equal teaching offer to all, it doesn't value students for their individual needs and learning styles. Our example from South Africa provides a case in point. A principal in Paterson et al.'s (in prep.) case study work explains how the annual teaching plan, prescribed by government, prevents teachers from reteaching content to students who failed to understand it in the first round of instruction:

And another challenge that is there is this one – you know with our ATPs (annual teaching plan) and the curriculum, like the CAPS ... we're told in workshops – teach ... if the kids did not understand, re-teach, re-assess. You see ... however in the ATP there is no time for that.

The example highlights how hierarchical control, by definition, reduces teachers' flexibility to adapt their work to local context and needs. As Freidson (2001) argues, when the logic of a bureaucracy is fully developed, professional tasks that require discretion based on schooled knowledge as well as experience are transformed into a standard set of routines which fail to take into account individual human needs. The reduction of professional agency also features in Hadfield and Ainscow's (2018) work in Wales. They describe how the strong hierarchy there created a professional context where the majority of school leaders deferred to those in higher positions and, when conflict arose, tended to resist passively rather than actively. Following Freidson's (2001) argument, in a hierarchy 'workers' tend to be particularly motivated by their desire to hold on to their job and their prospects within the school, rather than by their commitment to any particular kind of work.

How does the high level of standardization and reduction of professional agency affect trust, and particularly trust between students and teachers? Here we refer back to our definition of interpersonal trust in [Chapter 1](#) and the three elements in our trust definition:

- Competence: the perceived ability, or expectation that the other party has competence to successfully complete its task.
- Benevolence: the expectation that the other party cares about the trustor's interests and needs.
- Integrity: the expectation that the other party will act in a just and fair way.

The rationale for a high level of standardization is to maximize the predictability and reliability of services and prevent any 'favouritism' or preferential treatment of students. This would support the integrity aspect of the trust relation. However, the lack of commitment to individual student learning and/or lack of opportunity to appropriately serve those students who fall outside of the norm would likely violate the competence and benevolence aspects of our trust definition.

Hierarchical systems with their high level of standardization along vertical lines of coordination and accountability thus seem mostly relevant for simple

bureaucratic tasks, but fail to deliver more heterogeneous outputs that require a high degree of professionalism. We briefly touched on how trust in government would support compliance to centralized regulation, but how a high level of standardization potentially reduces interpersonal trust, such as between students and teachers. Our earlier reference to alignment however provides a counterargument which we develop next. We'll first explain what we mean by alignment in hierarchies and how it affects capacity-building and trust in the system. As we'll see in our next discussion, the argument is not straightforward as strong alignment can both build and reduce capacity and trust. We expect the accountability context, initial levels of teacher professionalism and perceived fairness of standards to inform the direction of the effect and the specific patterns of causality.

A further note on alignment

Alignment or 'coherence' is what makes a hierarchy functioning, according to Pritchett (2015). In such systems, delegation, finance, information and motivation are coherent within and across the various accountability relations. All the actors have similar information to act on, a similar set of standards to work towards and are rewarded for activities that would raise student learning. Technical alignment or coherence ensures that the measurement of behaviour and performance of students and educators alike is consistent across levels and over time while the incentives to improve performance motivate people to learn and develop towards a common point of reference. Technical alignment between performance standards, curriculum, assessment and evaluation allows policy-makers and practitioners to have appropriate data in the right time frame to meet their decision-making needs, according to Looney (2011). Standards allow accountability and feedback systems to provide consistent information across the system to support learning and adaptation, particularly where those standards incentivize actors the system to improve outcomes.

In a well-aligned or cohesive system, the exo and macro-level are organized around a common set of standards and indicators so that various elements and actors all work towards the same goals of high learning outcomes and organize the educational processes towards those outcomes. In such systems, learning is articulated as an objective in the relation from the state to organizational providers of schooling (e.g. schools or other service providers) and to teachers, where information is gathered about learning and the relationships are managed on the basis of this information.

Typical examples of limited alignment are provided by Pritchett (2015) who talks about delegation being too overambitious relative to the amount or structure of how schools are financed, or too vague for regular reliable and relevant information on performance to be created. In incoherent systems, principals may have objectives that are completely different to goals of the Ministry of Education and how they manage teachers, or there may be policies and goals to improve

student outcomes but teachers are promoted on the basis of seniority, or when the magnitude of finance made available (both in terms of wages and resources for inputs) is incompatible with what teachers are being asked to accomplish and are held accountable for. As we explained before, these inconsistencies will reduce capacity when actors have to negotiate conflicting demands and are managed ineffectively with contradictory standards and lines of accountability.

Holding teachers accountable for standards without providing them with resources to implement these standards is also a guarantee for trust–relations to break down. When people and organizations are held accountable on standards and targets for which their counterpart needs, but fails to deliver resources, this creates a sense of unfairness and potential opposition to change.

Strong alignment of standards across the system thus has the potential to improve trust. We refer to Ehren (2016) who talks about a mechanism of ‘setting expectations’. Strong alignment, when creating a common and shared understanding of values and quality, would allow educators to develop high-trust relations as there is less need to reconcile potential opposing views and parents and students would also know what to expect. The argument is grounded in discussions about antecedents of trust and how people come to trust each other. Morrone et al. (2009) and Uslaner (2008) for example identify expectations and the belief that most people share your moral values as central to most definitions of trust, where Hardin (2004; in OECD, 2017) argues that trust is conditional on a set of beliefs about the person being trusted and on their likely behaviour with respect to a given activity. A clear and well-aligned set of roles, responsibilities and accountability standards will create a solid and shared expectation of what good behaviour looks like, and will allow teachers, head teachers, parents and students to refer to these shared standards when evaluating and addressing their counterpart’s behaviour. Such shared standards may even mitigate the breakdown of trust between students and teachers we described earlier, particularly when students (and their parents) are no longer expect to be taught individually.

Whether this is in their best interest is another matter and reflects a similar point made by Levy (2018). He talks about hierarchical systems getting stuck in a low-level equilibrium when organized around schooling and process compliance and not around learning outcomes (see Pritchett, 2015). Levy (2018) and Pritchett (2015) assert that many hierarchical systems, particularly in developing countries, have policies that favour form over function and have emphasized the expansion of schooling, rather than actual learning. Examples are of governments who have procedures for hiring teachers on the basis of their qualifications, or tracking enrolment over time, across space, and by grade without linking those processes to student outcomes. These systems have been successful expanding both the fraction of all children exposed to schooling as well increasing the duration of exposure per child, but have failed to actually improve learning. The lack of performance information locks the system in an equilibrium and creates what Robert Michels described as goal displacement; a shift from ends, or ultimate goals, to means, or instrumental goals. It is these inefficiencies that have caused

various governments to introduce market mechanisms into education, as we'll explain in the next section.

Markets

Market governance is the opposite of hierarchy in that it constitutes a set of independent relations between 'buyer' and 'seller' and other societal actors involved in education, rather than the dependent relations that underpin hierarchical systems. Market governance in education is a response to the stalled economic growth in the 1960s and 1970s, according to Robertson (2012), which led to the emergence of new policies promoting deregulation, competitiveness and privatization of schooling. At the time, price and competition were thought to be more effective ways to coordinate the delivery of public services in general, compared with central regulation and control.

Many governments have introduced market mechanisms in education in the last three decennia, according to Waslander et al. (2010). They have done so by enhancing parental choice and encouraging school competition, through policies like abolishing catchment areas, creating voucher programmes and setting up charter schools. Greany and Earley (2017) present the example of England in the 1980s and 1990s as a typical example of a (quasi)market-based system where parental school choice, privatization and market rhetoric dominated the system, and schools can buy improvement services on an open and transparent market place. How are we to understand a focus on competition and choice, and what are the implications for teachers and students who are located in national settings but where power is now concentrated in spaces not open to political contestation?

Greany and Earley (2017) argue that the rationale for quasi-market systems reflect a neoliberal consensus of education as investing in human capital and the improvement of one's personal and national competitiveness in a global economy. Teachers' pedagogic practices are presumed to materialize the competent learner for a knowledge-based economy, instead of ensuring the acquisition of those knowledges that may not be directly useful for the economy or offering a chance of personal fulfilment. Where hierarchical systems value education for its value for contributing to a robust democracy by transmitting values, beliefs and skills that support and maintain a society or culture or common sense of a 'public' (see Robertson, 2012; Pritchett, 2015), markets treat education as a commodity that can be bought and sold. Rather than valuing education as a citizen right, it is now defined as a private good where quality is coordinated through price, supply and demand.

De Grauwe (2007) and Whitty et al. (1998) explain that advocates of quasi-markets argue that competition and choice will lead to increased diversity of provision, better and more efficient management of schools and enhanced professionalism and school effectiveness. Marketization is expected to bring particular benefits for families from disadvantaged communities, who have been ill-served

by more conventional arrangements. The justifying belief is one of superiority of the private sector in driving up standards, compared with public institutions.

The accountability in market-based systems is typically designed to support decision-making of ‘customers’, competition and choice processes in what De Grauwe (2007) calls ‘consumerist’ or ‘free market’ models of accountability. In the consumerist model, the main actors in charge of monitoring are supposed to be the consumers or beneficiaries of the education system, i.e. the students, the parents and the wider community. The free market model of accountability intends to break away from public control and to replace it with the control of the individual consumer. The ultimate way of moving from public control to market control is to provide parents with vouchers, allowing them to buy the education they want for their children and put schools in a competitive position. In that case, individual family demand would become the regulating principle for education development in replacement of public control. Market-based systems typically also have some state-level accountability of performance indicators and rankings to inform school choice, driving up student performance and ensuring that teachers work more efficiently, according to Waslander et al. (2010) and Robertson (2012); high stakes testing would allow governments to publish league tables of schools’ performance where parents are expected to send their child to the schools with the highest scores, motivating those schools with lower performance to either improve their scores or close when student numbers go down.

Markets reposition students and their parents as informed and rational consumers of private goods, where teachers deliver services in response to their demands. Such hard-edged economic emphasis on individuals, flexibility, competition and incentives is likely to undermine the basis of learning, according to Robertson (2012). She argues that the social encounter between teacher and student dramatically changes when the first is now positioned as simply there to improve student performance as efficiently as possible, instead of as individuals with desires and passions to make a difference in the lives of students.

In an ideal market, students (or their parents acting on their behalf) are well-informed consumers or ‘buyers’ and teachers the ‘sellers’ of knowledge and instruction. The assumption is that students can exit the relationship with their teacher and school when the expected service level is not delivered and that they are capable of evaluating the quality of education, using available external accountability information to inform their decision.

Such ‘buyer–seller’ relations and the role of trust in enabling effective transactions are frequently discussed in management literature, such as by Dyer and Chu (2003), Gundlach and Cannon (2010) or Vanneste and Frank (2013). These authors talk about economic efficiency of high-trust interfirm transactions between buyers and suppliers, positioning either buyer or supplier as the trustor or referent of trust, depending on who is most vulnerable in the exchange relationship. Vulnerability would be associated with potential opportunistic behaviour of the counterpart in the relation (e.g. when stealing ideas

or misusing confidential information to one's own competitive advantage), or with a suboptimal delivery of products or services. Trust between buyer and supplier, according to these authors, is expected to reduce transaction costs and eliminate the need for formal contracts, which are costly to write, monitor and enforce. A buyer's trust that a supplier will perform would yield economic efficiencies through mitigating transaction costs that would otherwise occur in the absence of trust, such as when a buyer has to make detailed specifications on the type of product the supplier delivers and has to frequently monitor the terms of the agreement.

When we apply these understandings to an education context, we would expect that high trust between students and parents on the one hand (as buyers) and teachers and the principal on the other (as suppliers) would reduce the need for detailed agreements which for example outline the home-school partnership, or set out parental and school responsibilities in educating children. When there is no need for such contracts, students and their parents work in partnership with the teacher and school to ensure a good-quality education.

The management literature also positions the economic advantage of trust in terms of sharing of information. In a high-trust exchange relationship, where the supplier can trust the buyer not to behave opportunistically, the supplier will be more willing to share confidential information. Sharing of information on costs or new ideas and technologies allows both partners to reduce production costs and improve product design and process innovations. A lack of trust, such as when the supplier expects the buyer to steal its ideas or share them with competitors, may cause suppliers to suppress potentially relevant information that would be useful for problem solving.

This chapter however seems less applicable for education where the intangibility of teaching and the lack of a pure market place would present little, or perhaps other risks for sharing of information between students and teachers to improve learning outcomes. Teachers are generally well protected by labour laws which would reduce their anxiety over sharing some of their best practices. Even more important, the relation between students and teachers is essentially one of co-production where students need to be actively engaged in the delivery of the service (the teaching) to ensure the economic advantage of the exchange. Information sharing is inherent to the transaction, and without it, there will not be a transaction at all.

Vanneste and Frank's (2013) reference to relational contracts, compared with formal contracts for the delivery of physical goods, is more relevant here. Relational contracts refer to a service or other intangible outcomes of a relationship which cannot be enforced by outsiders. Considering the relation between a teacher and his/her student, we can immediately see how an outsider (such as the principal or external inspector) would struggle to control every element of their interaction. Not only would such pervasive external control change the very nature of the relationship to the type of narrow standardized responses discussed in the previous section, the heterogeneous nature of education, where teachers

need a degree of professional discretion to meet individual learning needs, also makes such monitoring highly contentious.

Positioning the exchange between student/parent and teacher/principal as a relational contract suggests that particularly a shared history, expected future interactions and potential alternatives and 'outside options' would inform the effectiveness of the relationship and whether parents/students would terminate the relationship. Vanneste and Frank (2013) argue that a shared history facilitates social interactions, which in turn can lead to the establishment of cooperative norms such as trust; the development of such norms is more likely with the view of a continuation of the relationship where high trust facilitates mechanisms associated with 'voice' (i.e. joint problem solving) rather than exit (termination of the relationship). In an educational context, we would thus expect that students/parents, and teachers/principals develop a shared understanding of the value of education and specific goals of teaching over time, where high trust allows them to successfully negotiate opposing views and where sensitive information is shared to ensure high learning outcomes. The evidence of collective trust in schools, presented in [Chapter 1](#), would support this argument.

Various scholars however argue that market mechanisms are more likely to break trust, particularly of disadvantaged students and parents. Marketized systems, by their nature, incentivize schools to respond to customer demand and compete with other schools for the most desirable 'clientele'. The least desirable students are, according to Whitty et al. (1998), those who are 'less able', have special educational needs, especially emotional and behavioural difficulties, as well as children from working class backgrounds and boys, unless they also have some of the more desirable attributes. The more able students stay in the system longer and thus bring in more money, as well as making the school appear successful in terms of its test scores and hence attractive to other desirable clients. Whitty et al. (1998) argue that, given the opportunity, most schools will want to become more selective because taking children who will bring scores down will affect their overall market position. The rationality of choice and competition thus typically only works for students from advantaged background who (or whose parents) are able to navigate the system to their advantage. Learners who require 'more work' will likely feel disrespected by the system and lack trust in teachers and schools who either don't provide them with opportunities to progress or subject them to a high-stress teaching and learning environment.

Competition also seems to strain trust relations between principals and teachers in schools. MacBeath (2012) talks about a damaging effect of neoliberal policies on teachers' collaborative work as there are little incentives for more socially organized encounters. Weenink (2009) argues that marketization creates different value systems between teachers and principals that are often at conflict with one another. His study in the Netherlands shows how a school management's response of attracting able students and their willingness to raise fees was at odds with teachers' commitment to social justice. Particularly principals who face high competition from other schools tend to invest school resources into promotion

and marketing or introduce practices and programmes that are likely to attract high-ability students, such as strict selection policies to attract high-ability students, or introduce costly school uniforms (Teelken et al., 2005; Lubienski, 2009), rather than promoting the learning and development of a wider student population. This ideological gap potentially breaks trust between teachers and principals but may equally break trust between teachers and students when the latter questions the benevolence and integrity of the school and teachers.

The risk of such tensions depends on the position of schools in the local community according to Waslander et al. (2010) and Greany and Higham (2018). These authors talk about local (informal) rankings of schools where schools at the top will feel less need to engage in the market and respond strategically and will have fewer disputes over a market mode or professional model of conduct. These rankings are, according to Greany and Higham (2018), informed by schools' status and popularity with parents, where the school's status is a reflection of its history, student intake, aggressive marketing campaign and inspection grade. Interviewees in their study talk about a context of 'winners and losers', where higher status schools benefit in terms of new opportunities and resources as a result of policy reform, but where lower status schools faced a concentration of challenges often including undersubscription, higher mobility and disproportionate numbers of disadvantaged, migrant and hard to place children. Some schools, particularly in highly competitive areas, turned to 'cream skimming' to recruit a particular type of students to improve the school's popularity in the neighbourhood, while also increasing the chances of doing well in standardized tests, performance league tables and Ofsted inspections. The inspection grade was an important piece of information for parental school choice and structured the competition amongst schools.

Whether market mechanisms can improve education has been the topic of fierce debates. Proponents claim higher quality, efficiency and demand sensitivity where others, such as Darling-Hammond (2004) and Ladd (2007), however also show how marketization leads to higher inequality, segregation and increasingly unequal access to schools. The evidence so far suggests that choice and competition will lead to better quality schooling for some children, particularly the most able and advantaged, but will also increase inequality between schools and lead to, what Whitty et al. (1998) refer to as, working class children and particularly children with special educational needs being 'ghetto-ized' in poorly resourced schools. How choice and competition affect school quality and improvement will vary across level of urbanization and socio-demographic features of the market place. But even in urban areas with many options, parents often don't prefer schools on the basis of their academic outcomes but decide on the basis of other indicators such as proximity to their home (particularly for primary schools). Demographic and socio-economic background factors, level of education and income all play an important role in parental choice processes, where parents tend to prefer schools with a certain composition of the student and teacher population, climate and safety, curriculum or pedagogical orientation (Bell, 2005).

A general pattern underlying school choice seems to be that parents who are well educated, well-off and involved in their children's education are overrepresented in the group of active choosers (Waslander et al., 2010) where white parents more often try to avoid schools with high proportions of minority and low-income students, while minority and religious groups may opt for schools with high representation of their groups as well. If the local school can provide high (perceived) quality, a sense of communication and collaboration with parents and overall satisfaction, then the likelihood that parents choose another school diminishes.

Market mechanisms operate in various ways with diverging consequences, depending on specific push-and-pull factors of the local context and actual competition and school choice. High trust, particularly between schools and educators in a local community, may mitigate some of the unintended consequences of market-based mechanisms, but the organizing principle of choice and competition would rule out the role of trust as a lever for learning and improvement. Our final archetype of network governance however is based on trust and provides a counter narrative.

Networks

Network governance emerged in the 1990s as a new type of coordination, based on interdependency, trust and empathy (Meuleman, 2011). It was a response to both the dramatic intensification of social complexity and a recognition of the failure of both hierarchy and marketization, according to Grimaldi (2011). Network-like organizational forms are thought to be more effective tools of governance in enacting processes of innovation, improvement and self-organization. In education, network governance has been promoted by various international agencies (particularly the OECD), according to Grimaldi (2011), as an effective scenario for tackling major educational issues, such as persistent academic underperformance, students' transition from school to work or childhood obesity. Creating an interconnected approach to, and comprehensive offer of, social, educational and health services through community-based partnerships is expected to more effectively address complex educational challenges in child development (Díaz-Gibson et al., 2014).

For a time, network governance was considered to be a hybrid form of hierarchy and market, according to Meuleman (2008), but it is now seen as a separate third style. Collaboration between interdependent actors is the main principle of coordination where actors are involved in decision-making and jointly coordinate policy implementation. It is considered most effective when provision cannot be standardized and local actors need a degree of autonomy and flexibility to coordinate their work. The outcomes of such collaboration can be multifarious but will, by the nature of network governance, transcend each individual member organization. Provan and Kenis (2008, p. 230) talk about 'network level outcomes' that could not normally be achieved by individual

organizational participants acting independently'. Such outcomes are categorized by Gray et al. (2003) with specific examples for educational networks by Ehren and Perryman (2018):

1. Creating synergy: adding value by combining mutually reinforcing interests. Synergy is created when the partnership adds value by combining mutually reinforcing interests, such as when students benefit from a broader curriculum range, have access to more facilities or when schools share professional development.
2. Leading to transformation: transform different views into an ideological consensus, such as when all schools in a region sign up to the same model of teaching and behavioural policy and high expectations of student outcomes.
3. Enhancing financial efficiency: maximizing the use of resources across the partners in the network; e.g. when schools share IT or HR services, or use school and classroom infrastructure across a number of schools.

Network governance is premised on local outcomes and capacity-building where outcomes will likely vary across regions, districts, municipalities and provinces, depending on the nature of the issues each network aims to address and the extent to which the network has the autonomy to set its own goals and structures of collaboration. In some countries, networks have been part of government-initiated reforms where national policies and regulations have either incentivized or mandated specific types of collaboration and outcomes.

In West Belfast, we find an example of the first where area-based learning communities of primary and post-primary schools collaborate to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and to deliver on the requirements of the 'Entitlement Framework'. The Entitlement Framework requires schools to provide pupils with access to a minimum number of courses at Key Stage 4 (24 courses) and a minimum number of courses at post-16 (27 courses). To reach these targets, Article 21 of the Education Order 2006 enables schools to secure course provision for students at other institutions within the area learning community. Thus, a key purpose of these networks is to allow the level of flexibility required to enable students to take courses at more than one institution (see Brown et al., 2020).

The Netherlands offers an example of mandated networks for inclusive education. Here, national government introduced new legislation in 2014 which required mainstream schools and special schools to work in partnerships under a new authority to provide inclusive education for all children (including children with disabilities) in a region. These networks were centrally formed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science according to the geographical location of schools, number of pupils, existing informal cooperation between schools and after consultation with the school boards. Each network of mainstream and special needs schools is governed by new education authorities who are responsible for ensuring close collaboration between these schools in the provision of care and high-quality education to each pupil. They have a legal 'duty to care'

which means that they are formally responsible for finding an adequate school place for each pupil in their area where children with special needs are supported in mainstream education as much as possible. The collaboration of mainstream and special schools is thought to enhance the learning and overall well-being of children, particularly those with disabilities. A network approach would allow these schools to be more responsive to their needs.

Other examples of voluntary networks, such as peer review partnerships in England (e.g. Challenge Partners), have a much more fluid structure. Here, members organize themselves according to common interests where the network dissolves when there is no longer a need to collaborate or schools join other more opportune partnerships.

Mandated versus voluntary networks are each premised on a different idea about how best to innovate schools and educational systems and how to build capacity for improvement, according to Grimaldi (2011). Mandated networks or those incentivized by national government particularly represent a rationale of management and control, allowing the transfer and spreading of standardized knowledges and practices. Voluntary networks on the other hand can be understood as an organizational configuration emerging from the bottom, being it planned or spontaneous, that develops through authentic peer-to-peer and self-organizing logics. Grimaldi (2011, p. 145) argues that in the first case, networks follow a technical rationality, based on the idea that general solutions to situated and practical problems can be developed outside the contexts of those practices. Such a network model is often associated with the logic of best practices transfer within failing and disadvantaged contexts. This model of 'rescue intervention' underpins some of the Multi-Academy Trusts in England, particularly those that have been asked by representatives of the Department for Education (Regional Schools Commissioners) to take on failing schools. These schools, which have failed their Ofsted inspection, can be mandated to convert from being governed by their local authority to academy-status, where they are placed under the governance of a high-performing trust. The 'rebrokering' is expected to drive up standards in the failing school when the trust board implements its tested and successful strategies in the school. Grimaldi (2011) argues that such models, contrary to more decentralized and voluntary types of networks, do not generate or build trust given that the process of labelling and assigning negative identities to schools and school staff that 'need to be rescued' produces a coercive transfer of practices, languages, definitions, concepts and solutions from one context to another and establishes a hierarchical order between the 'rescuer' and 'rescued'. Greany and Higham (2018) therefore position this model as 'merger and acquisition' with features of a hierarchy, instead of pure networks.

In the second case of voluntary networks, the inspiring rationality is one of the dialogues, according to Grimaldi (2011), allowing for symmetrical relations within the network which are structured by processes of exchange (comparison, influence, learning and so on), a reciprocal recognition and understanding. Here partners join out of a common interest and develop trust over time when both

spontaneous and formal relations develop, and norms on how to collaborate and which outcomes to work towards are established.

Capacity is an important precursor for effective network governance. Hadfield and Ainscow (2018) explain how a lack of structures and processes for collaborative school improvement was one of the most important reasons why regional consortia in Wales failed. These consortia struggled to build local capacity for improvement, due to an absence of sufficient interlocking networks or subsystems of school leaders and groups of schools to deal with a region's systemic school improvement issues. According to these authors, the capacity to collaborate was evident in some areas but not in others. The gap was too great to allow the collaborative model to translate into a system-wide approach of network governance. According to Hadfield and Ainscow (2018), network governance requires an intermediate organization that can facilitate system-level transition and broker collaboration between local partners, develop capacity for leadership at all levels of the system and create and maintain a strong political mandate for a collaborative local approach, both at the national and local level.

The conditions that assure an effective functioning of networks are complex, and organizational forms are widely varied in participants' number, typology, scale and objective. Grimaldi (2011, p. 147) explains how motivation, commitment and trust among partners cannot be taken for granted, and all of these factors are crucial to the enactment of collaborative practices. The features of a network's design, the modalities through which they are created and the objectives pursued all need to be analysed carefully to understand how network governance can improve education.

Following Kenis and Provan's work on organizational networks in other sectors (e.g. health, youth services), the size of networks, the geographical location of members and trust between partners appear to be relevant conditions for high outcomes. Their work suggests that there is an optimum structure where larger, more dispersed networks need more brokered forms of governance where a separate administrative entity or one member organization governs the network. Large networks, according to these authors, will struggle to have effective forms of bottom-up shared governance as members will either ignore critical network issues or spend significant amounts of time trying to coordinate large numbers of organizations, particularly when participants are geographically dispersed. Larger networks often also face problems with the distribution of trust across the network and with ensuring goal consensus. Examples of such brokered networks are the teaching school alliances in England which function to support professional development, school improvement, leadership development and initial teacher training of their member schools. Each alliance is led by one of their members who meet the government's eligibility criteria (amongst others an outstanding judgement by Ofsted, the Inspectorate of Education) and have been approved as a 'teaching school'. Where networks are small, members are geographically close and trust is pervasive throughout the network, there is less need for a management role, and shared, bottom-up collaboration is most likely to be

equally effective in improving learning and development across the network and student outcomes.

Support for this contingency model for educational networks comes from small case study work by Ehren and Godfrey (2017) who found that large national Multi-Academy Trusts, after an initial start-up phase, often set up regional hubs to coordinate the collaboration between schools more locally as a way to improve their span of control. These hubs have a mix of high and low-performing schools to distribute the improvement capacity across the portfolio. In the Netherlands, the work of Svensson (in Ehren, 2016) furthermore shows how a lack of trust between school boards in networks for inclusive education, caused by a past history of competition and divergent views on education, inhibited their collaboration. School boards decided to develop as little partnership as possible, by distributing resources directly to each school board; they never really integrated their provision.

The examples indicate how network governance can also have unintended consequences which may reduce capacity for improvement. Ehren and Perryman (2018, p. 7/8) build on the work of Mayne et al. (2003) to summarize such potential side effects for educational networks:

- Diffusion of roles and responsibilities with limited clarity over where to complain or who to approach when things go wrong. Hutchings et al. (2014) for example explain how parents have little clarity over who is in charge of Multi-Academy Trusts and who to address with concerns.
- Competition between partners in the network over delivery of services when partners are trying to deliver different services to the same clientele and have some home-based loyalties and preferential knowledge in delivering those services. As Gray et al. (2003) explain, stakeholders drawn into collaborative arrangements rarely relinquish their own organizational agendas for the collective good of the network but rather battle to impose their own values on the overall goals of the enterprise. Greany and Ehren (2016) report similar issues for Multi-Academy Trusts in England, where schools who join the Trust are used to 'running their own ship' and oppose working in matrix-like structures where finance, human resources and marketing professionals are employed by the Trust, and where school leaders have to adhere to and work within the framework set by these centralized services. This creates tensions which need to be resolved for the partnership to be effective.
- Issues around service users who do not want to be associated with other users served by the same network organization, such as when pupils going to mainstream schools do not want to be identified with students from a special needs school, or when head teachers of high-performing schools do not want to be associated with a failing school in the network.
- Challenges in having multiple partners in the delivery of services determine success criteria for their services and potential conflicts, coordination

difficulties and costs, management complexities and power issues about deciding on, and reaching, common goals. Greany and Ehren (2016) for example talk about head teachers and teachers feeling disempowered by having to work within centralized structures of scripted curricula and lesson plans, particularly in large Multi-Academy Trusts where the Chief Executive Officer tries to ensure control over schools through hierarchical governance. Hill (Academies Commission, 2013) notes that the imposition of a centrally mandated model on academies in the Trust reduces school and teacher autonomy and constrains head teachers in developing innovative practices. Some head teachers also report that much of the support from centralized staff goes to schools who are failing to meet the targets set in Ofsted's inspection framework (and are designated as 'requiring improvements' or 'in special measures'), where good and outstanding schools are either expected to fend for themselves or see their resources (e.g. teachers and teaching assistants) taken out of their school to support their poorly performing peers.

- Convergence towards groupthink when members of the network isolate themselves from outside influences and suppress conflicting viewpoints when making decisions. Groupthink is a potential risk where schools in a network are for example expected to implement one and the same organizational model, curriculum and assessment practices. Such centralized decision-making and frameworks potentially create a situation in which member schools are not encouraged to think and act independently and develop innovative solutions for local problems.
- Inefficiencies due to participant turnover and communication and meeting costs, such as when schools leave the network when initial attempts to collaborate fail, or cost too much time.

Network governance, by its nature of involving various actors in decision-making and coordinating policy implementation, requires trust between those actors to come to a shared understanding of the problem at hand and a set of relevant activities to address them (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000). Partners who trust each other will be more willing to collaborate without constant monitoring and checking up on agreements. Trust is thus, according to Bachmann (2001), also a governance mechanism in itself when cooperation flows from informal norms and established social relationships, where dense interpersonal networks provide information as well as opportunities to impose sanctions that are important to the establishment of trust. Such collaboration, when reflecting repeated positive experiences over time will build trust between (groups of) people and organizations, allowing public and (semi-) private actors to link mutual expectations and coordinate actions (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000). When there is no initial trust between partners, the network is likely to fail as our previous example from the Netherlands shows. The school boards in one of the networks for inclusive education had a history of competition and

opposing views and values on teaching. Both factors proved unfavourable for constructive collaboration and led to a disintegration of the network into sub-groups organized around existing organizational lines and without new forms of collaboration or integration of services.

The shift towards network governance creates, according to Burns and Koster (2016), a complex education landscape with very real questions about which actors at which levels should be held accountable for which outcomes, and how this can function in a coherent and intelligent manner. The tension between tightly controlled accountability mechanisms which seek to minimize risk and error contradicts the fundamental purpose of network governance to allow stakeholders to flexibly respond to local context and collaborate on the basis of trust. Ehren and Perryman (2018) and Ehren et al. (2017) therefore argue for accountability that acknowledges the position of schools within networks and the collaboration between schools towards a common purpose.

Their suggested bottom-up model of accountability includes a qualitative, interpretative and flexible approach of validating good practices of localized and collaborative provision and improvement of education, such as through the use of 'developmental evaluation' or 'participatory evaluation'. In Ehren et al.'s (2017) model, Inspectorates facilitate evaluations which are goal-free, flexible and specific to context and information needs of (a network of) schools and stakeholders. Network members and their stakeholders are involved in all the phases of the accountability exercise, from developing the standards and methods for evaluation to deciding on how to improve network performance and potential consequences for failure. Such an approach allows Inspectorates of Education to engage network members and their stakeholders in making judgements about what type of behaviour is effective and appropriate in which settings and allows for a deep understanding of how networks operate and are effective in solving local problems. Inspectorates facilitate evaluations and inspect against local targets, instead of making judgements on a centralized framework. A localized approach respects the specific purpose of different networks, while simultaneously bringing order to the diffuse and sometimes ambiguous nature of collaborative arrangements.

Ehren et al. (2017) additionally argue that external accountability of networks operating in situations of high uncertainty can only really work if the education system in which they function is characterized by high levels of reciprocal trust. In such a context, accountability becomes a tool for learning and improvement instead of control; dissolving boundaries between schools and other relevant providers in the area, the Inspectorate of Education and policymakers and ensuring the goal of 'good education' is a shared responsibility and endeavour. In such a context, network members can respond quickly to local problems, professionally scrutinize and share local solutions and ensure that school collaboration is not just an 'end in itself' but successfully contributes to improvement of education and student outcomes, even in challenging circumstances.

Conclusion and discussion

This chapter provided theoretical insights into trust, accountability and capacity-building in hierarchical education systems, markets and networks. We discussed how hierarchical systems are typically organized around a set of vertical relations of dependency which particularly work well to coordinate the delivery of bureaucratic tasks that are well defined and easy to monitor. More heterogeneous outcomes, such as typical in education systems where students have various learning needs and interests, are more complex to regulate from the top-down, and we explained how doing so potentially breaks interpersonal trust between students and teachers while reducing professional agency of educators and narrowing the set of outcomes in the system to those to which educators are held accountable. Our discussion of alignment of standards, as one of the principles of well-functioning hierarchies, provided a counter narrative in addressing the potential of coherent standardized systems to build trust by aligning expectations and create a set of shared values; one of the antecedents of high-trust relations. Taken to the extreme, strong alignment is however expected to lead to various unintended consequences, such as narrowing the curriculum and teaching to the test, which would reduce trust in similar ways as when standardizing education. Strong alignment, particularly around procedural indicators, is also thought to reduce a system's capacity to improve outcomes as it tends to lock actors into a low-level equilibrium and lead to what has been described as 'goal displacement'.

Market mechanisms are often introduced to offset the inefficiencies of hierarchical systems. They are expected to improve education through competition and choice. We reflected on evidence which indicates that, by definition, market-based systems tend to favour those students and parents who have the capacity and offer of schools to make an informed and rational decision on school choice and can 'vote with their feet' when schools and teachers fail to deliver an agreeable standard of teaching. Competition, fuelled by a school's position on accountability league tables, is known to disservice students with special needs or students who would otherwise compromise a school's position in the market. They would become the 'lost cases' or 'unfavourable client group' in a system of supply and demand where the repositioning of education from a human right and development of individual personality to a commodity and teaching of economically advantageous skills breaks trust of those who are disenfranchised from the system. Where market mechanisms work to build a high standard of education for some, they also tend to create high inequality by leaving vulnerable groups behind.

Network governance was our last ideal-type of coordination, where our brief introduction highlighted the various types of networks that have emerged over the past two decades. We distinguished government-mandated networks which often mirror relations of accountability and trust found in hierarchies, from decentralized voluntary networks that are discussed most often as typical

examples of network governance. In the latter, trust and a set of interdependent relations are the main tenets of (social) coordination where, as Bachmann (2001) describes, trust can be seen as a coordinating principle in itself. Our examples from Wales and the Netherlands highlighted the role of local capacity and existing levels of trust as conditions for effective networks, such as resources to collaborate and a positive disposition to engage in a partnership with unknown others. Evaluation and accountability can support the development of such partnerships over time, particularly when locking members of the network (e.g. mainstream and special schools and other service providers) into the collaboration and providing them with information to improve their shared work and collective action (e.g. in providing inclusive education in a region). The examples we provided were organized around external inspections, but mature networks also have well-functioning internal mechanisms for information collection and decision-making. These would prevent some of the unintended consequences of networking we discussed, such as high transaction costs, lack of clarity over roles and responsibilities or groupthink.

As systems change their modes of coordination, schools are often faced with a combination of hierarchy, market and network and various, sometimes, contradictory pressures. These combinations can repair some of the flaws inherent in each of the ideal-types, such as a lack of innovation and variety in over-standardized hierarchies, high inequality in (quasi)markets or groupthink, ambiguity and high transaction costs in networks. However, the combination of different modes of governance also provides further sources of failure such as when creating multiple, and potentially conflicting, lines of accountability. Jessop (2002) talks about some of the most prevalent failures of combined models of governance, such as where self-organization needed for network governance rarely materializes when national governments continue to measure and regulate aspects of members' work. How the various systems operate will depend on initial levels of trust, accountability and capacity as we have seen in the examples throughout this chapter. Part 2 of country chapters will present us with more detailed cases, allowing us to understand the specific ways in which the three variables will positively reinforce change or lead to a spiral of decline.

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