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Abstract

A common policy theme across education jurisdictions is the need to improve student achievement and outcomes to bring greater equality, despite evidence showing the opposite to be true (OECD 2012). The quest to bring about systemic improvement to both raise achievement and increase equality has led to a significant tension in many education systems.



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Systems of Education Governance and Cultures of Justice in Ireland, Scotland and Pakistan

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Introduction: Education Governance and Cultures of Justice

A common policy theme across education jurisdictions is the need to improve student achievement and outcomes to bring greater equality, despite evidence showing the opposite to be true (OECD 2012). The quest to bring about systemic improvement to both raise achievement and increase equality has led to a significant tension in many education systems. According to Hudson (2007, p. 269):

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15 the state is faced with a conundrum; it needs to control education, but
16 its means of regulation must not constrain the potential for finding new
17 ways of meeting or adapting to increasingly diverse and changeable socie-
18 ties and problems.

19 In these efforts to realise policy ambitions to improve learner outcomes,
20 increasing attention is being paid to systems of education governance.
21 Governance refers to the ways in which an education system is regu-
22 lated: the processes and structures which set direction through policy
23 and hold to account those charged with enacting policy (Bache 2003).
24 The state oversees the provision of education through a range of net-
25 works and providers including local government, commercial or char-
26 itable bodies, monitoring performance through data (Grek 2008).
27 Governance moves through the different levels of a system—the macro
28 (central government), meso (local councils, agencies, trusts, boards
29 of management) and micro (school and school leaders). In contexts
30 where education policy is dynamic and at times even volatile there is
31 an ever-evolving set of relationships between these various levels, what
32 Bache (2003) terms multilevel governance. The recent OECD's (2015a,
33 p. 16) study of governance in complex systems notes that 'ministries of
34 education remain responsible for ensuring high-quality, efficient, equi-
35 table and innovative education'. This raises the question about how
36 ideas of social justice and equality inform the systems of governance
37 within education in different nations. The increased attention placed
38 on governance might suggest that governments are relinquishing con-
39 trol of education: particularly where the corporate sector has an expand-
40 ing role, or where there is growing devolved local decision-making.
41 However, Hudson (2007) disputes that this trend represents a retreat on
42 the part of the nation-state from its role in education but rather that
43 governance represents new forms of state regulation. Ball (2008) writing
44 specifically about English education argues similarly that governance is
45 not a reduction of the role of the state since the complex networks of
46 policy actors it consists of, exert centralised influence. This move to gov-
47 ernance is marked by 'soft governance' (Hudson 2007), a focus on out-
48 puts and the processes of self-monitoring against external criteria, with
49 benchmarks measuring performance at every level of decision-making.



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50 International benchmarks, monitoring and comparing national perfor-
51 mance, are a major tool of governance systems.

52 International benchmarks, ‘knowledge-based regulation tools’ (Rinne
53 and Ozga 2013), are increasingly used by governments to judge sys-
54 tems-level performance. The *Programme for International Student*
55 *Assessment* (PISA) (OECD 2015b) is a key policy tool for member states
56 including Scotland and Ireland. However, other supranational organisa-
57 tions such as UNESCO gather and publish information about national
58 systems, including statistics on enrolment, completion of education and
59 literacy rates—significant issues in many developing education systems
60 (UNESCO 2015). At one level, such tools potentially bring to the fore
61 issues of social justice and (in)equality. For example, patterns in non-en-
62 rolment, levels of literacy or attainment, can distinguish significant
63 inequities. Pupil performance on standardised tests can reveal inequities
64 between the achievement of different groups of learners. Conversely, in
65 the drive to identify ‘successful’ systems and ‘improving’ systems, the
66 focus on comparative statistical data can lead to a narrowing of education
67 policy and its regulation. Instead of attention being paid to the conditions
68 of learning and the barriers to learning experienced by diverse groups of
69 learners, policy strategies are shaped to meet less complex measures of sys-
70 tem improvement. How such tensions are reconciled in contrasting inter-
71 national contexts provides thought-provoking insights.

72 The Case Studies

73 This chapter compares the cultures of justice in education governance
74 within three systems: Ireland, Scotland and Pakistan. These systems pro-
75 vide interesting points of similarity and contrast. Though Ireland and
76 Scotland are developed economies, the economic downturn of 2008
77 has led to financial constraints, while Pakistan is viewed as an emerg-
78 ing economy. Both Ireland and Pakistan have developed from the colo-
79 nial occupation in the twentieth century to being independent states.
80 Scotland has an element of devolved government with the establish-
81 ment of the Scottish Parliament. There is a significant contrast between
82 Pakistan as a large country with a population of approximately 200



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83 million, while both Scotland and Ireland are small states with pop-
84 ulations of approximately 5.5 million and 4.5 million respectively.
85 Nevertheless, education is central to economic policy in each state.
86 Side by side with the imperative for economic growth, exists the place
87 of education socially and culturally. In Ireland historically, Roman
88 Catholicism has been the dominant religion, in Scotland historically
89 Protestantism occupied this position and in Pakistan, Islam is the dom-
90 inant religion. Consequently, there are some interesting parallels about
91 the relationship between religion, culture and education particularly
92 addressing increasing pupil diversity.

93 Given the increasing focus on governance to set direction and moni-
94 tor performance, this comparative study is based on three case studies of
95 key policy texts related to regulation and accountability. A diverse range
96 of documents was used, selected on the basis of their current signifi-
97 cance within the particular system:

- 98 • For Ireland, the main policy documents were the Action Plans for
99 Education 2017 and 2018 (DES 2017, 2018) which emanated from
100 *Education Action Plan* 2016–2019 (DES 2016a).
- 101 • For Scotland, it was policy documents for reforms to education gov-
102 ernance and improvement (SG 2016a, b, 2017a, b, c).
- 103 • For Pakistan, the government owned policy documents such as
104 the *National Education Policy* (GoP 2009, 2010, 2016, 2017), the
105 Constitution of Pakistan, and the National Education Management
106 Information Service-Academy of Education Planning and Management
107 (NEMIS-AEPAM) 2017 report, were used as sources. In addition, some
108 research papers, two UN reports: the UN Development Programmes
109 (UN 2016) and the UN Women Annual Report (Zaidi et al. 2016)
110 were used to substantiate the analysis.

111 A set of research questions was developed at the outset:

- 112 • What are the main wider societal issues around equality and social justice?
- 113 • How, if at all, are the concepts of ‘equality’ and ‘social justice’ con-
114 structed in policies?
- 115 • How are decisions made for education—the structures of governance?



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- 116 • Within the systems of governance, for what are school leaders held
117 accountable and how do these relate to issues of equality and social
118 justice?
- 119 • How are these accountabilities articulated and to whom do school
120 leaders need to account?

121 The set of documents for each system was analysed identifying key
122 themes (Miles and Huberman 1994). From this examination the data
123 was reduced through the generation of short summaries presented
124 below. A further stage of analysis was undertaken where the summa-
125 raries from each case study were reviewed to identify some overarching
126 themes.

127 Issues of Equality and Social Justice

128 The increasing significance of knowledge-based regulation tools
129 (Rinne and Ozga 2013) reflects the globalisation of education policies
130 and reform strategies. However, the issues to be addressed in terms of
131 equality and social justice within an education system are deeply con-
132 textualised. To consider the relationship between systems of education
133 governance and cultures of justice, we need to consider the socio-politi-
134 cal backdrop.

135 Ireland

136 Ireland has experienced significant immigration in recent years, espe-
137 cially from the UK, Brazil and Poland (CSO 2016). Fears around
138 increasing immigration continue in light of the ongoing uncertainty
139 about Brexit with many individuals and companies relocating to
140 Dublin, thus adding to the existing crisis around housing and home-
141 lessness. This increased diversity has resulted in the Department of
142 Education and Skills (DES) looking at the issue of meeting 'parental
143 demand for patronage diversity' (DES 2017, p. 46) in a system where
144 over 96% of primary schools are under Catholic patronage. However,



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145 despite evidence of parental desire for choice from the school patronage
146 survey in 2012 and 2013 and parents' constitutional rights for choice
147 (Article 42.3), little progress has been made (O'Leary 2018). Minister
148 Brunton recently stated that the government was not in a financial
149 position to build additional schools. However, *Action Plan 2018* (DES
150 2018) aims to 'agree detailed arrangements for the transfer of patronage
151 of schools, following consultation' (DES 2018, p. 52). O'Leary (2018)
152 has suggested that given the issues related to historic abuse, on moral
153 grounds the Roman Catholic Church should hand over vacant school
154 buildings to non-denominational/multi-denominational schools.

155 *Action Plan 2017's* goal is 'to improve the educational outcomes
156 of learners at risk of educational disadvantage or learners with special
157 educational needs' (DES 2017, p. 29). It introduced a new Special
158 Education Needs allocation model, and a new Inclusion Support
159 Service for schools that will be reviewed in 2018. *Action Plan 2018*
160 acknowledges increased school retention and attendance figures, 'a nar-
161 rowing of the gap between DEIS [Delivering Equality of Opportunity
162 in Schools] and non-DEIS schools in areas including standards of lit-
163 eracy', along with some evincing improvement in the progression to
164 higher education of students who come to education at a disadvantage
165 and/or have special education needs. *Action Plan 2018*, reflecting the
166 Programme for Government, argues that 'education is the key to giv-
167 ing each child an equal opportunity in life' (DES 2018, p. 8) and looks
168 to 'tackling disadvantages and strengthening inclusion'. However, it still
169 falls short in recognising an intersectionality perspective (Lumby and
170 Coleman 2016) which would consider issues of poverty and homeless-
171 ness and their impact on outcomes for learners at risk of educational
172 disadvantage or learners with special educational needs.

173 Scotland

174 There are several issues in relation to social justice and equality in
175 Scotland. Like many developed economies, Scotland has experienced
176 multiple waves of immigration; since the early 1960s from areas of
177 the Commonwealth, more recently from Eastern Europe and the



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178 Middle East. The historical sectarianism between immigrant Catholic
179 communities and the Protestant Scottish communities remains a sig-
180 nificant socio-political concern, side by side with the integration of
181 diverse newly arrived communities. However, the focus of the current
182 Scottish Government (SG) policy is on poverty: ‘Our vision for edu-
183 cation is to close the unacceptable gap in attainment between our least
184 and most disadvantaged children and to raise attainment for all’ (SG
185 2017a). UK wide legislation (PofUK 2010) identifies protected char-
186 acteristics including gender, ethnicity, faith, disability and sexuality.
187 However, the intersection of such factors with poverty is not included.
188 Advantage and disadvantage is situated largely in economic and mater-
189 ial terms and so complex issues raised by the increasing diversity
190 of pupil populations can be overlooked in target setting to reduce a
191 ‘poverty-related attainment gap’ (SG 2017a, p. 9). Moreover, there is
192 limited discussion around the lived experiences of minority and mar-
193 ginalised communities, including barriers to effective learning and
194 achievement.

195 Pakistan

196 The issues of social justice and equality in Pakistan are linked with a
197 widespread incidence of poverty, insufficient basic infrastructure and
198 inadequate access to social services for the low-income groups more
199 generally, and people living in remote geographic locations particu-
200 larly. Where access to quality social services is determined by position-
201 ing in socio-economic strata and urban–rural divide, the dynamics of
202 gender-based inequity add another lens to framing social justice in the
203 country. Pakistan ranks at 147 on the Human Development Index
204 and 130 on the gender inequality index (UNDP 2016). Women partic-
205 ipation in the labour force is just 26% (Zaidi et al. 2016), which
206 puts them at the lowest rungs of both human development and pov-
207 erty indicators. Among all denominators of poverty, gender disparity
208 in education is most pervasive. This is reflected in the mean years of
209 schooling for women, 3.7 years in comparison with 6.5 years for men
210 alongside only 26.5% of women accessing some secondary education



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211 in comparison with 46.1% of men in this category (UNDP 2016).
212 Geographic disparity on a multidimensional poverty index ranges from
213 between 86.6% for rural Baluchistan to 6.3% in Urban Punjab, which
214 has serious implications for social justice issues in the country. Access to
215 and the quality of social services, especially education, is linked to these
216 rural-urban differentials (GoP 2016; ASER 2015).

217 Policy Constructions of Equality and Social 218 Justice

219 Within the wider socio-political context of each education system, the
220 interplay of history, cultures and communities gives rise to particular
221 issues of equality and social justice. Therefore, we need to consider how
222 the concepts of equality and social justice are contextualised within the
223 education policy.

224 Ireland

225 In Irish society in recent years there has been a growing emphasis on
226 social justice in terms of equality, anti-discrimination, poverty and
227 homelessness. Within education the words 'social justice' fail to appear
228 in many policies including the *Action Plan 2018* (DES 2018). In spirit
229 it is evidenced in *Towards 2016: Ten-Year Framework Social Partnership
230 Agreement 2006–2015*, in terms of an investment in 'human capital'
231 with a focus on higher retention rates and enhanced academic outcomes
232 for learners from socio-economic disadvantaged areas (Department of
233 the Taoiseach 2006, p. 23). *Action Plan 2018* proposes the introduc-
234 tion of specific literacy and numeracy targets for disadvantaged schools.
235 At a surface level, individual academic mobilisation within schools and
236 social mobility may be seen as markers for social inclusion but are argu-
237 ably merely reflective of neoliberalism and perpetuating existing power
238 structures (Berkovich 2013). This is once again evident in *Action Plan
239 2018* (DES 2018, p. 28): 'education and training are the key to breaking
240 the cycle of disadvantage'. Social justice issues need to be considered as



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241 socio-ecological issues (Berkovich 2013) with an emphasis on listening
242 to the voices of those being marginalised (Skrtic 2012). Commendably
243 the *Action Plan 2018* aims to increase diversity of learning opportuni-
244 ties, diversity of school types, have more collaboration with parents,
245 communities and other government departments and talks about har-
246 nassing ‘education and training to break down barriers for groups at risk
247 of exclusion and set the benchmark for social inclusion’ (p. 8). It also
248 focuses on initiatives in DEIS schools to promote student well-being and
249 resilience. However, it arguably still falls short in terms of understanding
250 how social justice, in the context of a broader definition of disadvantage
251 and social inclusion, is understood within an educational context and
252 how this understanding informs policy development at the macro level
253 and in turn policy enactment at the meso and micro levels.

254 Scotland

255 The concepts of equity and excellence are central to current Scottish
256 educational policy. Arnott and Ozga (2016, p. 253) argue that the
257 Scottish Nationalist Party’s education policy ‘works to mobilise a narra-
258 tive of a “journey to independence” drawing on historically embedded
259 themes and myths about fairness’ particularly the democratic tradi-
260 tions of Scottish education. Torrance and Forde (2017) depict the way
261 in which a discourse related to ‘all learners’ runs through the levels of
262 decision-making, accountability frameworks and policy guidelines. In
263 these documents there is the constant use of positive language with the
264 constructs of discrimination, marginalisation and prejudice not form-
265 ing part of a policy discourse. Successive reports and performance data
266 on attainment instead underline the continued underachievement of
267 pupils from poor and marginalised communities. Notwithstanding a
268 strong policy discourse around ‘excellence’ and ‘equity’, the underpin-
269 ning concepts relate to the need to drive economic development and to
270 address a ‘poverty-related attainment gap’ (SG 2017c, p. 3). The meas-
271 ure used for determining disadvantage is the Scottish Index of Multiple
272 Deprivation (SIMD) where localities are rated (SG 2016b) using indi-
273 cators including parental income, rate and type of employment, pupil



274 performance, availability of services including sports, shops and leisure
275 facilities. Although empowerment is a keynote of the current reforms
276 to support local decisions to meet local circumstances, improvement is
277 judged predominantly on the government-mandated target of closing
278 the attainment gap.

279 Pakistan

280 The national education policy of Pakistan sets out to achieve 20 goals,
281 including universal access to all children in the age range of 5–16 years
282 by 2020, and the ‘provision of standardised facilities and services by
283 removing all kinds of disparities, inequities and imbalances including
284 gender disparities and geographical imbalances’ (GoP 2017, p. 11). This
285 statement affirms the existence of gender and geography related dispar-
286 ities, but falls short of acknowledging huge disparities due to the four-
287 tier parallel education systems: Madrassas (Religious Schools), Private
288 Schools (English and Urdu), Public Schools and Army Public schools
289 (Andrabi et al. 2005; Lall 2009; Rahman 2005). The quality of teach-
290 ing and learning process and its evaluation; qualifications, skills and
291 work conditions of teachers; the curriculum; and concepts of citizen-
292 ship promoted among all learners vary significantly across these four
293 systems. The system has generally failed to unleash the potential of mil-
294 lions of learners where only about 49% of grade 5 students can read a
295 sentence in English; about half of them being able to compute a 2-digit
296 division (ASER Pakistan 2015). Another facet of structural inequity is
297 the language of instruction in different systems and its implications for
298 employment opportunities. English is the standard language of com-
299 munication in a prestigious job market including the civil services of
300 Pakistan, multinational companies, international organisations and the
301 corporate sector of Pakistan. English is not the language of instruction
302 in public system schools, low fee private schools or madrassah, while
303 high-end private schools focus on developing English language skills.
304 This structural issue results in differentials in career aspirations, confi-
305 dence and success in acquiring prestigious jobs among young people
306 coming from these various systems.



307 Structures of Governance and Decision-Making 308 in Education

309 The structures of governance are crucial in shaping decision-making at
310 the different levels of an education system. The International School
311 Leadership Development Network (ISLDN) framework of macro, meso
312 and micro levels is used to identify the decision-making processes and
313 the relationships between the different sites of decision-making in a
314 system.

315 Ireland

316 Ireland continues to emerge from a severe economic crisis which
317 began in 2007, with the knowledge economy promulgated as the pan-
318 acea and so the ‘perfect storm’ (Conway and Murphy 2013) resulted
319 in an education system with ‘new vocabularies of practice’ arguably
320 reflective of neoliberalism (Ball 2016, p. 1050). *Action Plan 2018*
321 includes numerous targets related to performance in PISA. The strive
322 for equity and excellence (Chapman et al. 2011) or ‘a stronger econ-
323 omy and a fairer society’ (DES 2017, p. 6) is a challenge at all levels
324 of the system with a somewhat oversimplified perspective of narrow-
325 ing the attainment gap seen as the way forward (DES 2011). This
326 is further compounded by a complex educational system with cen-
327 tralised policy making by the DES at the macro level and notable
328 decentralisation of provision at the meso level by a number of sup-
329 port agencies, the Teaching Council and Inspectorate who operate in
330 different ways, thus resulting in tensions (Forde et al. 2017). Despite
331 this, at the primary level decision-making is largely the responsibil-
332 ity of individual school Boards of Management (BOMs) or trusts.
333 At the secondary level, there are a number of Educational Training
334 Boards (ETBs) which act as a meso layer for some schools. All pub-
335 lically funded schools annually report achievement scores in literacy
336 and numeracy to the DES who are setting new targets up to 2020 in
337 this area (DES 2017).

338 **Scotland**

339 In the political context of a devolved Parliament and a nationalist gov-
340 ernment (Arnott and Ozga 2016) education is used to assert the dis-
341 tinctiveness of Scotland and build an economy for independence: ‘The
342 central purpose of this Government is to create a more successful coun-
343 try with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing
344 sustainable economic growth’ (SG 2016a, p. 3). However, an enduring
345 attainment gap between pupils from advantaged and disadvantaged
346 backgrounds has led to a sharp focus on the systems of education gov-
347 ernance. The regulation of education currently occurs through the set-
348 tled relationships connecting the three levels of macro, meso and micro.
349 Central government initiates national policies and monitors national
350 performance across the system; local authorities (LAs) are responsible
351 for the provision of education within their locality, including school
352 improvement and for ensuring schools address national policy. School
353 leaders work to develop policy and practice to take forward national pol-
354 icy and are then judged on the school’s performance in terms of pupil
355 attainment and achievement, and wider school improvement. However,
356 an OECD (2015c) review of Scottish education questioned the rela-
357 tionships between and across these levels. The stated intention of the
358 Scottish Government was to bring forward legislation in mid-2018 (SG
359 2017b), which would strengthen central government’s direction of col-
360 laboration for improvement and alter relationships between schools and
361 between LAs as well as between a school and their LA. The proposed
362 legislation included the Regional Improvement Collaboratives (RICs)
363 and the Headteacher Charter. However, following ongoing discussions
364 with the LAs, the Minister for Education announced in June 2018 that
365 at that point they would not progress to legislation. He indicated never-
366 theless that the proposals set out in the consultative paper (SG 2017b)
367 must be implemented or legislation would be introduced to address the
368 provisions. The LAs now work in RICs reporting to the newly formed
369 Scottish Education Council on progress made with addressing the pov-
370 erty-related attainment gap. Under the proposals, headteachers will have
371 a duty to collaborate with other schools to foster higher achievement
372 and address the attainment gap.

373 **Pakistan**

374 Since its formation in 1947, Pakistan followed a centralised educa-
375 tion system until April 2010 when the 18th amendment in the con-
376 stitution decentralised the system of education, limited the role of the
377 federal government, and expanded the purview of the provincial gov-
378 ernments in the education sector. This amendment includes Article
379 25A, stating a 'Right to education: The state shall provide free and
380 compulsory education to all children between the age of five to sixteen
381 years in such manner as may be determined by law' (GoP 2010) which
382 obligates provincial governments to ensure universal secondary educa-
383 tion. This two-pronged responsibility for the provision of compulsory
384 education as well as the determining and development of policy, plan-
385 ning, curriculum, standards and services has highlighted gaps in provin-
386 cial capacity (Imran 2016). The sheer size of the educational system
387 (44,435,753 diverse learners, 1,652,141 teachers and 267,955 existing
388 educational institutions) is overwhelming. Though Pakistan's National
389 Education Policy is the reference document, added challenges emana-
390 te from low funding allocations, politically motivated interference to
391 limit socio-economic mobility, a capacity deficit and pervasive corrup-
392 tion in the system (GoP 2009), all make the task more daunting for
393 ill-prepared provincial systems. Over the last seven years, provincial gov-
394 ernments with technical and financial assistance of bilateral (UK, US,
395 European, German, Australian Governments' aid programmes) and
396 multilateral donors (UN, Global Partnership for Education and World
397 Bank) have made progress on the road maps for improved teacher and
398 school management and monitoring structures. The curriculum, text-
399 books and examination systems still need urgent attention at the level
400 of provincial government. This devolution of education function from
401 federal to provincial level is still in the process of settling down and the
402 governance system is now working at both macro and meso levels, with
403 federal government providing broader policy guidelines and provincial
404 governments building governance mechanisms for their education sys-
405 tems respectively. Though part of the vision of provincial governments,
406 the district level governance system and ultimately school-based man-
407 agement system will take some time to evolve. Thus, there is a gradual



408 move from dominance of the macro level to building decision-making
409 and regulation processes at both the meso and micro level.

410 Social Justice and the Accountability 411 of School Leaders

412 Within each system the macro level planning process includes targets
413 used in education regulation related to equality and social justice and
414 these issues are variously constructed: ‘poverty-related attainment gap’,
415 ‘anti-discrimination, diversity, poverty and homelessness’ or ‘inequities
416 and imbalances’. Therefore, we need to consider how such issues are
417 reflected in the structures of governance and expectations placed on
418 school leaders.

419 Ireland

420 Within the *Action Plan 2018* there is little explicit evidence of what
421 school leaders are accountable for. There is an emphasis on strength-
422 ening leadership through access to professional learning opportunities
423 such as coaching as well as a proposal ‘for the better involvement of
424 Principals with inspection teams’ (DES 2017, p. 37). Inspection is cen-
425 tred on ‘identifying and implementing improvements...assuring quality,
426 and providing information for parents’ (p. 44) in line with the stand-
427 ards set out in *Looking At Our Schools* (LAOS) (DES 2016b). In relation
428 to social justice and equality principals are accountable for fostering
429 ‘a commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity and the holistic
430 development of each pupil’ as well as managing ‘challenging and com-
431 plex situations in a manner that demonstrates equality, fairness and jus-
432 tice’ (DES 2016b, p. 12). Noteworthy also is an accountability towards
433 ‘pupil voice, pupil participation, and pupil leadership’ (p. 12) which, if
434 executed in a meaningful way, could provide insights from marginal-
435 ised voices (Skrtic 2012) towards a better and broader understanding
436 of disadvantage, special educational needs and any other marginalising
437 characteristics.



438 Scotland

439 The driving political force is tackling the poverty-related attainment gap
440 which is significantly changing the responsibilities of the headteacher
441 exemplified in a proposed legislated Headteachers' Charter (SG 2017b).
442 While the keynote of this suite of policies is the 'empowerment' of head-
443 teachers, schools and school communities, the extension of headteacher
444 responsibilities bears a strong resemblance to the processes identified by
445 Keddie (2017). A headteacher is given sufficient scope to generate strate-
446 gies and make decisions to address local circumstances and is then held to
447 account for the outcomes achieved. Specifically, in terms of social justice
448 and equality, headteachers are being directed to close the attainment gap
449 between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils without recognising com-
450 plex and interrelating societal factors beyond their control. Further, head-
451 teachers will be held to account for the strategies and the outcomes they
452 deliver in relation to central government's targets for closing the attain-
453 ment gap (SG 2017c). Education and more specifically headteachers are
454 to be held accountable for the entrenched failings of society at large.

455 Pakistan

456 Due to the centralised governance structure of Pakistan's public edu-
457 cation system, initially at national and now at the provincial levels, the
458 professional freedom at the headteacher level is quite limited. With no
459 expectations or space for independent decisions for school-based manage-
460 ment from the headteacher, there is no separate service cadre for this tier
461 in the education system. Teachers achieve promotion to become heads of
462 the institutions based on their length of service. The headteacher has no
463 role in the selection and deployment of teachers, curriculum, textbooks
464 to be used for each subject, school timings, enrolment targets, assessment
465 type and frequency, student uniform and school facilities. Therefore,
466 both in the public perception and across the education system, the head
467 teacher is not held accountable for the quality of the teaching and learn-
468 ing process, or for student learning outcomes. In private schools, the
469 headteacher is primarily accountable for responding to the expectations



470 of parents and school owners. If the clientele of the school comprises
471 educated parents who are aware and interested in the quality of learning,
472 then a headteacher is held to account for ensuring this. However, in the
473 case of low fee private schools the expectations of parents can be limited
474 to the regularity of lessons, the teaching of English language and disci-
475 pline in the school. Here the headteacher is responsible for maintaining
476 these basic standards. There are no state-managed regulations or stand-
477 ards for the private sector schools, hence the accountability of school
478 managers is confined to the parents who pay for the services.

479 **Accountability and the Exercise of Social** 480 **Justice Leadership**

481 The relationship between policy intentions related to equality and social
482 justice and the systems of governance in each nation is crucial: these
483 accountabilities can hinder or facilitate the exercise of headteachers'
484 social justice leadership.

485 **Ireland**

486 In Ireland, educational provision at primary level is largely publicly
487 funded (97%) despite being privately owned by patrons. However, there
488 is greater diversity in funding and governance arrangements at secondary
489 level (King and Travers 2017). Nevertheless, principals are held account-
490 able for the performance and improvement of their school through
491 BOMs, Trusts and/or ETBs, along with the DES, which includes the
492 Inspectorate, and the Teaching Council. School principals are held to
493 account for the performance of their school in the following ways:

- 494 • whole school self-evaluation based on a quality assurance frame-
495 work, *Looking At Our School* (DES 2016b) which includes a standard
496 related to inclusion, equality and social justice;
- 497 • annual short self-evaluation report and school improvement plan
498 to implement national initiatives and address curriculum areas or
499 aspects of teaching and learning (DES 2016c); and



- 500 • annual reporting of pupil performance on standardised school assess-
501 ments for literacy and numeracy for certain class levels to parents,
502 boards of management and the DES (DES 2012).

503 Scotland

504 Nationally, educational provision is largely located within the public
505 sector (95%) and so headteachers are held accountable for the perfor-
506 mance and improvement of their school through both the local author-
507 ity (the employer) and central government, including national agencies
508 such as Education Scotland (which includes the Inspectorate) and the
509 General Teaching Council for Scotland. Headteachers are currently (as
510 of 2017) accountable for the performance of their school through:

- 511 • annual school improvement plan to address national aims and priori-
512 ties, notably the ‘poverty-related attainment gap’;
- 513 • whole school self-evaluation based on a quality assurance framework,
514 *How Good is Our School* (Education Scotland 2015, p. 16); and
- 515 • pupil performance on school assessments and examination results,
516 where pupil performance is analysed using the SIMD measurement
517 of social and economic advantage and disadvantage (SG 2016b).

518 The proposed Headteachers’ Charter outlined above would bring sig-
519 nificant changes to the accountabilities and the bodies to whom head-
520 teachers will have to account.

521 Pakistan

522 In Pakistan, approximately 43% of all Pakistani students are enrolled in
523 private schools (NEMIS-AEPAM 2017) and attract learners from mid
524 to high-income groups (DeStefano and Moore 2010; Razzaq 2015).
525 There is an increasing trend for private schooling in urban areas with
526 more affluent populations. This trend has implications for social justice
527 and equity as some private institutions charge high fees for their qual-
528 ity services (Andrabi et al. 2005) and the subsidised public system fails



529 to provide similar levels of quality education. With the recent reforms,
530 mainly through donor-funded technical and financial assistance pro-
531 grammes, provincial governments are establishing monitoring sys-
532 tems for public schools and have devised school enrolment targets to
533 meet their mandate in relation to the Right to Education Act. At the
534 initial stages of this accountability mechanism, Punjab (Programme
535 Monitoring and Implementation Unit [PMIU]) and KPK (Independent
536 Monitoring Unit [IMU]) have started collecting data on mainly absen-
537 teeism among teachers. In this system, the headteacher is accountable
538 for ensuring the presence of teachers though the implications of absen-
539 teeism are restricted to teachers only. One aspect for which headteachers
540 are solely accountable is the enrolment into schools and ensuring the
541 maintenance of these numbers, not necessarily through retention. These
542 targets are linked with equity and are mainly focused upon ensuring
543 school-aged children attend school. However, these concerns need to be
544 connected with deeper issues of equity particularly by linking the issues
545 of retention of students with the quality of student learning outcomes.

546 **Discussion: Comparing Systems of Education** 547 **Governance and Cultures of Justice**

548 Across the three education systems there are some important similarities
549 but also significant differences and these help illuminate further issues
550 related to social justice in education and the processes of education gov-
551 ernance. Three key issues are: firstly, the improvement of a state educa-
552 tion system; secondly, decentralisation and centralisation in governance
553 structures and thirdly, the expectations placed on school leaders.

554 **The Improvement of State Education**

555 The improvement of state education is set within a wider socio-polit-
556 ical and economic context. The most marked contrast is the unques-
557 tioned assumption about access to education in Scotland and Ireland,
558 while in Pakistan remote locations, poverty and traditional cultures are



559 among the barriers to access. This comparison highlights disparities in
560 economic disadvantage between developing and developed economies
561 and education remains an important tool to ameliorate such condi-
562 tions. Common across all three systems is a policy concern to address
563 the impact of poverty and social disadvantage on educational partici-
564 pation and achievement. However, while for Scotland and Ireland the
565 issue of poverty predominates, in Pakistan a more nuanced focus helps
566 point out the intersection of poverty with other factors, in this case gen-
567 der and geographical location. This comparison also highlights existing
568 structural inequalities related to the impact of private education on state
569 provision. The impact of private education in Pakistan is noted but this
570 issue does not figure in the policy imagination in Scotland and Ireland.
571 Even in Scotland, with a very high proportion of state provision (over
572 95%), the private sector can have a significant impact on urban localities
573 (Torrance and Forde 2017). The case study of Pakistan illuminates
574 this question of social mobility and the balance of private and public
575 education—a balance becoming increasingly more complex with the
576 growing presence of the corporate sector and philanthropic organisa-
577 tions. These developments will alter the structures of education govern-
578 ance and the role of school leaders.

579 **Centralisation and Decentralisation in Governance**

580 An aspect pertinent to the question of cultures of justice in systems of
581 governance is the degree of centralisation and decentralisation in deci-
582 sion-making and regulation. From the case studies, the impact of the
583 wider socio-political context on education is compounded by the scale
584 of the system. Potentially smaller systems might attain greater coher-
585 ence between policy intentions and the structures of governance, yet,
586 in Pakistani education coherence is more clearly evident in a central-
587 ised system. Scale intersects with the degree of centralisation in deci-
588 sion-making in a system. The meso level in Irish education has no
589 local council intermediation between the national government policy
590 direction and the schools and BOMs and Trusts that provide govern-
591 ance oversight of individual schools. Both Pakistan and Scotland are



592 reforming their systems of governance but whereas Pakistan is look-
593 ing to strengthening local decision-making, the Scottish reforms are
594 increasing central direction. In Pakistan, the move from federal to
595 provincial oversight is underway but requires substantial development
596 across a large system to build a provincial system and then district and
597 school level management. Much smaller in scale but equally complex,
598 are reforms in Scotland. The relationships between the levels of macro
599 (central government), meso (local authorities) and micro (schools) are
600 being reconstructed in the current reform programme. Of particu-
601 lar focus is collaboration between LAs at the meso level and chang-
602 ing the relationship between LAs and schools where schools may have
603 greater autonomy. These developments are principally about gaining
604 greater policy traction in educational provision. Here the case studies
605 highlight that the place and construction of equality and social justice
606 in these systems of governance are important in fostering social justice
607 leadership in schools but there are questions about the scope of local
608 decision-making.

609 Empowerment and Compliance

610 The accountabilities of the school leader reflect systemic issues across
611 the three nations, with increasing use of similar accountability tools.
612 Currently in Pakistani education, the development of the teaching
613 profession is designed to support the drive to increase engagement in
614 education (Razzaq and Forde 2014). While there is a question of the
615 standing of the teaching profession and the scope of their decision-mak-
616 ing in Pakistani education, the issue of professional standing is also a
617 question in Irish and Scottish education. Here increasingly accounta-
618 bility, designed to track performance against central statistical targets,
619 is reducing the ability of headteachers and their staff to make decisions
620 based on local circumstances and the needs of their learners.

621 Though the structures of governance are increasingly focused on
622 performance against targets (which relate to external systems of meas-
623 urement through supranational organisations) a common theme
624 in Scottish and Irish education is the importance of school leaders



625 engaging with pupils, parents and local communities to build inclu-
626 sive practice. However, in both systems there is a tendency to present
627 parents and communities as homogenous constituencies without any
628 consideration of engaging with ‘hard-to-reach’ parents and communi-
629 ties to tackle educational disadvantage. The case study from Pakistan
630 helps to illuminate the tensions where specific parent and community
631 groups can seek to shape practice and policy in schools. Policy can pro-
632 vide a tool to support professional decision-making but one of the crit-
633 ical tasks for school leaders is then balancing the aspirations of different
634 groups with their professional values in seeking to meet the needs of
635 diverse groups of learners.

636 Conclusion

637 One of the questions around structures of governance and cultures
638 of justice is the balance between centralised direction and meaning-
639 ful local autonomy. Contextualised issues of social justice and equality
640 are evident in the education policies of the three case study nations,
641 the role of school leader in enacting policy is the focus for regulation.
642 However, a critical issue is the way in which the professional practice
643 of the school leader to address areas of inequalities and marginalisation
644 is constrained or supported by education governance within a specific
645 education system. The OECD (2015a) study identified several key ele-
646 ments of effective governance including the need to focus on processes
647 and build sufficient flexibility to adapt to change; the use of construc-
648 tive accountability for feedback and opportunities to trial approaches;
649 a whole system approach where aspects align; use of research and evi-
650 dence to inform practice; the need to build capacity and work through
651 stakeholder involvement and open dialogue. This calls for a participa-
652 tive approach with strong connections between the different levels of
653 macro, meso and micro and their different stakeholders, and with some
654 form of local decision-making to address local circumstances. However,
655 the degree to which school leaders can genuinely generate alternative
656 approaches to bring greater equality across diverse groups of learners is
657 curtailed by the drive to improve education against narrow measures.



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658 There is no doubt that issues such as poverty, of minority status, of
659 social turbulence, of non-engagement in school education have a sig-
660 nificant impact on the well-being and life chances of young people.
661 However, holding school leaders accountable to address what are wider
662 societal concerns will not resolve these issues. There is a danger there-
663 fore that systems of governance are not designed to promote the genu-
664 ine participative empowerment required to enable schools and leaders
665 to build quality relationships and work with communities to address
666 local circumstances. Instead, school leaders are held to account in a top-
667 down model of regulation (Shamir 2008) within an increasingly narrow
668 focus on statistical targets including international benchmarking tools,
669 designed to engender greater policy compliance and standardisation
670 of practice on the part of school leaders, who in turn demand this of
671 teachers. This is unlikely to bring about significant and lasting change
672 for the benefit of all pupils, regardless of their background or personal
673 circumstances. For this to become a reality, a radical rethink of cultures
674 of justice within systems of education governance is needed. We need
675 to move beyond policy rhetoric to greater coherence in policy, so that
676 systems of governance are indeed imbued with a culture of social jus-
677 tice, where some of the complex issues are grappled with to bring about
678 genuine improvement in the conditions of learning rather than simply
679 meeting targets whether for attainment or for enrolment.

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