Contestion, Coalitions, and Consultation in the Politics of Education Reform

Ben Ross Schneider
Department of Political Science
MIT

With Alejandra Mizala on Chile, and
Barbara Bruns and Pablo Cevallo Estarellas on Ecuador
Quality education reform should be easy I: Escaping the Middle income trap

• Education drives development
  • Hanuscheck and Woessman
  • Silver bullet

• Human capital is essential to increase productivity and escape the middle income trap

• So, business and economic policy makers should have strong interest in improving education quality
  • World Bank, Interamerican Development Bank, and other multilaterals are all pushing education quality

![Total Factor Productivity Graph]

- 1961-2008
- 2001-08

- Brazil
- Latin America (7 largest countries)
- East Asia
Education reform should be easy II: Not a problem of income/resources
Educational progress and income in Brazilian States
Education reform should be easy III: High returns to schooling

- Parents should demand more and better education
- Overall, development planning, business, and bottom-up pressure should propel education reform
Education reform should be easy IV: Solutions are not lacking

• Teachers
  • More selective hiring
  • Better training and mentoring

• Better infrastructure

• More time in school and more of that time spent learning

• Dozens of countries have successfully reformed education
  • Does not require massive spending (Vietnam, states in Brazil)
  • Though, successful reform in Asia often in authoritarian regimes (Korea, China, Taiwan)

• Puzzles
  • Why isn’t reform more common?
  • Who or what is stopping reform?
Overall argument: weak support, strong opposition

• In normal politics, pro-reform coalitions are weak in Latin America
  • Development planners lack patience to engage in education reforms that take decades
  • Business does not push for education reform
    • Do not need more skilled workers, or they train their own
    • Parents are dispersed, and middle class exited public system

• Reform opponents *consequently* stronger
  • Clientelist politicians
  • Teacher unions

• Most successful reforms in Latin America – Ecuador and Chile – followed shock and electoral mobilization (not normal politics)
Politics in Normal times: Quality reform and reversal in the state of Rio Janeiro

• Wilson Risolia spent full four years as secretary (2010-14)
  - Previously, 20 secretaries in 24 years, 1986-2010

• Depoliticized education administration
  - Fired clientelist appointees
  - Neutralized radical teacher union

• Wide range of reforms to improve education quality
  - Hired professional school directors; Teacher training and mentoring

• Rio moves from 26th to 4th place among 27 states in IDEB rankings

• BUT, by 2015 reforms undone
  - Clientelist politicians and unions restored power and influence
  - No lasting pro-reform coalition

• Common pattern in LA of reform champions enacting great but unsustainable reforms
Why do we know so little about the politics of education reform?

• Very few political scientists work on education
  • Grindle’s *Despite the Odds* is still core reference
    • But published in 2004

• Schools of education are not interested in politics

• Why?
  • Political data are costly
    • Compared to tons of social and economic data
  • Reform outcomes are complex and difficult to measure
    • Political process is long and often opaque
  • And lonely pursuit?
Still, a few theories on education politics exist

- **Class-based approach** (Power Resource Theory (PRT), Ansell 2010)
  - In LA, would expect strong support from poor for quality reforms

- **Veto-points approach** (Moe & Wiborg 2017)
  - Teacher unions are all alike – vested interests (Moe 2011)
  - What varies is whether political systems offer veto points that unions can use

- **Trade-related models** (Ansell 2010)
  - High international trade leads business and workers to seek more skills

- **Business-driven models** (Kosack 2009)
  - Depends on business need for skills

- **Reform experiences in Latin America** provide some, weak support
  - But, none of these approaches is much use on its own
Chile: Reform to teacher careers, 2016-

• Shock: Student demonstrations through 2011 and often after
• Bachelet campaign in 2013
  • 3 fundamental reforms: taxes, education, and constitution
• Strong electoral mandate
  • Nueva Mayoria won presidency by big margin and both houses of congress
• Reform process
  • 2014 raised taxes by 3% of GDP
  • Law of Teacher Career 2016
    • Higher standards, tests, promotions, salaries
Who participated?
Measuring stakeholder engagement

• Mostly qualitative
  • Ask reformers and stakeholders
  • Alejandra Mizala was one of main ministry advisors

• Word count software Nvivo
  • Daily press briefing prepared by Ministry of Education (2014-16)
  • Covered all major media outlets
    • so less biased than many single source analyses

• Compare National Teacher Policy (PND) to Inclusion Law
  • Inclusion Law (2015) for private voucher schools
    • No profits
    • No student selection
    • No parental copay
Percentage of press appearances by civil society organizations

- Large, well organized, diverse civil society
- Church and parents not interested in teaching
- And, where is business?

Jaime Gajardo, Colegio
Process: Civil Society’s Teacher Plan

• Bachelet government had a mandate, but no specific plan

• Consultative council of 20 organizations
  • Associations, think tanks, foundations, etc.
  • Colegio de Profesores, church, private schools
  • Left wing and right wing associations
  • Met for 4 months in 2014 to discuss reform ideas

• Strong policy network that could bring together opposing stakeholders
  • Rough consensus in civil society paved the way for later government proposal
  • Part of ongoing debate over previous decade
Strike and final negotiations

• Ministry of Education sends bill to congress in April 2015
• Colegio goes on strike in June
• Camila Vallejo (president of education commission in Chamber of Deputies) calls for negotiations with Colegio and Ministry
  • Communist connection
  • Slightly diluted bill negotiated
  • Colegio calls off strike and endorses revised bill
• Congress passes bill almost unanimously in 2016
Reforming teacher careers in Ecuador

- Total reform of teaching career, 2006-2017
  - Greatest gains Unesco tests (Serce-Terce)
  - Chile too
- Shock: Collapse of education in early 2000s
  - Education less than 1% of GDP
  - Second lowest scores in 2006
  - Teachers showing up for 60% of contracted hours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Math SERCE 2006</th>
<th>Math TERCE 2013</th>
<th>Reading SERCE 2006</th>
<th>Reading TERCE 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>566</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraguay</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA average*</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>511</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reform process: consultation, then top down

• Consultation and referendum, 2006-07

• Correa got strong mandate for “education revolution”

  • Entrance by exam, promotion by evaluation
  • Doubled teacher salaries
  • 25% new teachers in first 4 years

• Brief strike in 2009 by UNE
  • End of compulsory dues in 2008 (for all associations)
  • Cancellation of legal registration for UNE in 2016
  • Creation of pro-reform union, Red de Maestros

• Almost no participation by business or rest of civil society
## Transforming teacher careers: Ecuador, Mexico, and Chile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ecuador/Correa</th>
<th>Mexico/Pena Nieto</th>
<th>Chile/Bachelet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reform outcome</td>
<td>Deep, consolidating</td>
<td>Deep, in limbo</td>
<td>Deep, in implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core years</td>
<td>2006-17</td>
<td>2013-18</td>
<td>2014-17 (but also 1996-2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Presidential</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>campaign promise?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opposition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shock</td>
<td>Bottom ranking; collapse of education</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Student demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition by union</td>
<td>Intense, costly</td>
<td>Intense, costly</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from</td>
<td>Almost none</td>
<td>Some (business)</td>
<td>Some (NGOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civil society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from policy</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>network</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity in</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Transforming teacher careers: Main factors in Ecuador

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ecuador/Correa</th>
<th>Mexico/Pena Nieto</th>
<th>Chile/Bachelet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reform outcome</strong></td>
<td>Deep, consolidating</td>
<td>Deep, in limbo</td>
<td>Deep, in implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core years</strong></td>
<td>2006-17</td>
<td>2013-18</td>
<td>2014-17 (but also 1996-2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main Presidential campaign promise?</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support from opposition</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shock</strong></td>
<td>Bottom ranking; collapse of education</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Student demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Opposition by union</strong></td>
<td>Intense, costly</td>
<td>Intense, costly</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support from civil society</strong></td>
<td>Almost none</td>
<td>Some (business)</td>
<td>Some (NGOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support from policy network</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuity in government</strong></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transforming teacher careers: Main factors in Mexico

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ecuador/Correa</th>
<th>Mexico/Pena Nieto</th>
<th>Chile/Bachelet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reform outcome</td>
<td>Deep, consolidating</td>
<td>Deep, in limbo</td>
<td>Deep, in implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core years</td>
<td>2006-17</td>
<td>2013-18</td>
<td>2014-17 (but also 1996-2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Presidential campaign promise?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from opposition</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shock</td>
<td>Bottom ranking; collapse of education</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Student demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition by union</td>
<td>Intense, costly</td>
<td>Intense, costly</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from civil society</td>
<td>Almost none</td>
<td>Some (business)</td>
<td>Some (NGOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from policy network</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>some</td>
<td>A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity in government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ecuador/Correa</td>
<td>Mexico/Pena Nieto</td>
<td>Chile/Bachelet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform outcome</td>
<td>Deep, consolidating</td>
<td>Deep, in limbo</td>
<td>Deep, in implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core years</td>
<td>2006-17</td>
<td>2013-18</td>
<td>2014-17 (but also 1996-2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Presidential campaign promise?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from opposition</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shock</td>
<td>Bottom ranking; collapse of education</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Student demonstrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposition by union</td>
<td>Intense, costly</td>
<td>Intense, costly</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from civil society</td>
<td>Almost none</td>
<td>Some (business)</td>
<td>Some (NGOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from policy network</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>A lot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity in government</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary: Two routes to reforming teacher careers

• Top down in Ecuador
  • Strong electoral mandate
    • but then reforms planned and implemented without input from civil society
  • And, over objections of teacher union
  • Requires continuity in government
    • Mexico lacked both time in government and electoral mandate

• Consultative in Chile
  • Strong electoral mandate
  • Consultation with policy networks and negotiation with teacher union

• Is top down only route to overcome opposition where unions are strong and politicized?
  • Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, state of Rio de Janeiro
Teacher unions have disruptive power

Brazil, 2015

Peru, 2012
Strikes and protests by teacher unions in Latin America, 1998-2003

Federal systems
Teacher unions are not all alike

• Professional: Colegio de Profesores in Chile
  • Strikes, but also negotiated reforms to teacher careers including regular evaluations and pay for performance
  • Linked to multiple parties, but no control over teacher careers

• Politically embedded: Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE) in Mexico
  • 1+ million members
  • Influence over teacher careers
  • Appointments to education ministry
  • Own political party (Nueva Alianza (PANAL))
  • Gigantic rent seeking machine

• Need in depth analysis of teacher unions to know how education reform will affect them and whether negotiation is possible
  • Reform much more costly for politically embedded unions
Why are teacher unions so strong organizationally?

• Strong even where few other unions exist
  • United States, Peru, Chile
  • Both professional and politically embedded unions

• Advantages for collective action
  • Homogeneous workforce and salary scale
  • Centralized bargaining
  • History of volatile salaries in Latin America
Why are embedded teacher unions so strong politically?

• **Asymmetry in time horizons**
  • Average tenure for ministers of education in Latin America is 2 years
    • In Ecuador, 9 ministers in decade before 2006
    • In Brazil, 18 ministers 1985-2017
  • Versus 7 years for union leaders

• **Politicians willing to trade long-term benefits to union for short-term support**
  • Pensions, influence in hiring, automatic dues collection, appointments to ministry etc.
    • In exchange in short run for votes, peace, and wage moderation
  • Unions accumulate power over time
Why cont’d: Hiring power shifts power up to union leaders

• Politically embedded unions (Mexico, Ecuador, Peru) had influence over teacher hiring
  • Dependent teachers follow union leaders in electoral mobilization (Finger & Chambers-Ju 2017)
  • Union leaders in turn very strong in national politics
    • Trade electoral support for appointments and other benefits

• So, reforms to teacher careers threaten source of union power
Summary

• Overcoming long-term opposition is hard
  • Teacher unions and clientelist politicians
    • Long-term perspective, can wait out short term reforms
    • Champions cannot succeed alone (contra World Bank, IDB)
  • Reform easier where unions are not politically embedded

• Beneficiaries – business and parents – normally not in core reform coalition

• Shocks can make education quality central to electoral campaigns
The risk of depending on champions

• Washington consensus: reform requires champions
  • Leadership, political will, backbone, etc.
  • Lesson of market oriented reforms of 1990s
    • Trade liberalization and privatization are self-reinforcing
  • But education reform is not

• But, reforms in education are vulnerable when champions leave office
  • State of Rio de Janeiro (2011-15)
  • Mexico (2013-2018)

• Key is continuity across elections
  • Chile (1995-2017)
  • Ecuador (2006-17)?
  • Peru (2008-17)?
  • Ceara and Pernambuco?
To consolidate reforms need lasting pro-reform coalitions – not easy

• Business
  • Biggest businesses (foreign and domestic) and associations mostly absent
    • 9 CNI priorities for 2017 – education last on the list
    • But, small and medium firms rely more on students from public education

• Parents
  • Dispersed and lack information
  • Middle class that has not yet exited public education

• Civil society and education policy networks
  • Think tanks, foundations, international agencies

• Reform-minded insiders
  • Ministry staff
  • School directors
Theoretical reprise

• Some support for bottom up, class-based approach to education quality (PRT, Ansell 2010)
  • But only with extraordinary electoral mobilization
    • As in Bachelet and Correa elections
• Some support for veto points approach (Moe & Wiborg 2017)
  • Very strong mandates and legislative coalitions for Correa and Bachelet
  • But, negotiation is outside their framework
• Teacher unions are not all alike (contra Moe 2011)
• Little support for trade-related models (Ansell 2010)
• More support for business-driven models (Kosack 2009), or absence of business-driven reform
• Room for further theorizing
Clientelism and special vulnerability of education – research in progress

• Teacher versus surgeon
  • Opacity of education system
  • Patronage appointments in education have little short-term impact
  • Especially compared to other specialized public employers like medical staff, transportation operators, inspectors, et al.

• Therefore, public education is ideal target for clientelist politicians
  • Huge budget, bureaucracy, and personnel
  • Few short-term, visible costs
Percentage of total press appearances by party and by law with size of congressional delegation

Ignacio Walker, DC

Camila Vallejo, PC