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8 World Bank Discourse and Policy on Education and Cultural Diversity for Latin America[1]

Eduardo Domenech and Carlos Mora-Ninci

INTRODUCTION

After several decades of implementing neoliberal policies in Latin America, neoliberalism shows clear signs of decay, mainly on cultural, political and ideological grounds (Boron, 2003). There is increasing evidence of the failures of neoliberal policies and analysis carried out by mainstream international agencies. However, institutions that respond to the neoliberal orthodoxy are far from retreating.[2] In the field of education, specifically, the World Bank (WB) shows a renewed willingness to continue with those reforms initiated during the 1990s, forcing the implementation of a new political agenda in the current decade. This fact merits an analysis of the role that this international credit organization plays in the building of global neoliberal policies and discourse.

These organizations argue that problems of education are mainly due to poor management, dilapidation of resources, lack of freedom of choice, outdated curricula, and ill-prepared teachers. These themes have often been highlighted by the WB[3] as central issues. Consequently, they blatantly prescribe the need to adopt rigorous structural adjustment policies and the opening of markets of peripheral nations. In particular, the education sector has been the target of privatization schemes, massive dismissals of teachers, lowering of real incomes, decentralizing of services, changes in the curriculum towards more accountability, and higher standards in the direction of unreachable student achievements, accompanied by the sordid involvement of banks and private enterprises in the public affairs of education, all with the exclusive purpose of optimizing profits. Throughout recent decades, the consequences of implementing such policies have produced a general widening gap between, on the one hand, an education system for the private schools and elite universities of the very rich; and on the other, the growth of a ripped-off public school system for the poor, working, and middle classes.

Even though there is a large number of current academic articles which analyze the educational policies of the WB, it is not as frequent that they

specifically address the issue of cultural diversity in examining the topics, priorities, and recommendations of the Bank. Our analysis suggests that the WB discourse and policy with regard to diversity and inequality are supported by a technocratic and pragmatic logic founded on a conservative vision of society; at the same time they adhere to (neo)liberal postulates in a combination that has been called *conservative modernization.* It also shows that in the educational sector, the basic principles and strategies of the neoliberal program, as articulated by the WB, have not been yet displaced in spite of the Bank's new post–Washington Consensus rhetoric.[4] For that purpose, we examine several WB documents on education, in particular *Educational Change in Latin America and the Caribbean* (World Bank, 1999a) due to its impact on the current decade of the 2000s (its first publication was in 1999 and a Spanish version appeared as late as 2004). In addition, we also examine the first WB documents with a worldwide scope on education such as *Prioridades y estrategias para la educación (Priorities and Strategies for Education;* World Bank, 1996); *Education Sector Strategy* (World Bank, 1999b); and others on topics of ethnicity, indigenous communities, and migration.[5]

The WB is of particular importance because, among other things, it is one of the principal promoters of the *exclusive thought,* a main actor in the implementation of neoliberal ideologies, as well as in the construction of its political agenda.[6] As such, it tries to construct a rigid political ideology, "an ideology which does not refer exclusively to the economy but to the global representation of a reality that asserts, in essence, *that the market is what governs and the Government who administers what is dictated by the market*" (Estefanía, 1998, p. 26; italics in the original). On the other hand, the WB is one of the neoliberal institutions with vast powers for influencing public policy and education, powers that were previously reserved to national governments. As Bonal (2002, p. 4) stated, the use of conditioned loans as mechanisms for financing education presupposes a form of governing that goes beyond the space of the nation-state, and gives a supranational institution the ability to rule without a government. On those grounds, the focus of this study is to analyze the WB political discourse on educational policy as a major player within the global neoliberal project. Thus, this chapter examines the discourse and policy of the WB in the field of education regarding cultural diversity, and its relationship with social inequality since the late 1990s, that is, during the time when a discourse was produced that contributed to shape the policies for the current decade.

THE NEOLIBERAL ADVANCE: THE WASHINGTON CONSENSUS AND BEYOND

As a response to the Latin American crisis of the mid-1970s, international lending agencies prepared a set of measures based on demand-side economics

that would be broadly known in the early 1990s as the Washington Consensus. This set of proposals was implicitly adopted by such institutions as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the WB, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the U. S. Department of the Treasury. This neoliberal recipe book consisted of guidelines for the adjustment and stabilization of programs as the only solution for tackling the economic problems of the region, noting that its points of view should not be questioned because they were regarded as optimal. The guidelines were expected to be consistently adopted by the national governments of most Latin American countries. The mode and pace of its implementation varied from country to country according to the particular forms taken by the local dominant sectors, as well as by their relationship with the State apparatus and its subordinate social strata (Castellani, 2002, p. 91).

The neoliberal program is strongly critical of the welfare state, which is blamed for having a high degree of inefficiency, bureaucratization, and centralism, alongside promoting an unfair system. Therefore, the WB has taken a strong position arguing for the reduction of the state and for the strengthening of the markets. From this perspective, the educational systems of Latin America are perceived as experiencing a crisis of efficacy, efficiency, and productivity (Gentili, 1998a). Likewise, the Washington Consensus with respect to the field of education assumes the principle that in order to overcome the current educational crisis the markets must be strong while the state sector should weaken. Therefore, decentralization and privatization of services are promoted as fundamental policy measures for the education sector. According to this view, the problems of education would be solved by tackling the inefficiencies of the sector, such as implementing budgetary constraints and limiting the role of the state; in a similar vein, the field of education should be let loose in the wilderness of free enterprise of private businesses. In this regard, the WB closely follows the recommendations of neoliberal ideologue Milton Friedman, who advocated the elimination of federal- and state-supported higher education programs and the privatization of schools, on the principle that educational finance must focus on the individual and not on the system in order to best respond to the needs of parents and the family.

By the end of the 1990s, some significant changes had been made to the early versions of the Washington Consensus, mainly relating to the role and organization of the state.[7] In this regard, Stiglitz claimed that "the government should be complementary to the market, taking actions to make its functioning better and correcting its flaws" (Stiglitz, 1998, p. 713). The role of the state is still circumscribed within specific modes and social sectors, while the private and nongovernmental organizations have a strategic place in its decision-making processes. That is why Stiglitz suggested placing the discussion on the role played by the State, its activities and methods, instead of focusing on the reduction of the size of the state

or on whether the government should be involved in these processes (Stiglitz, 1998, p. 712). Castellani affirms that according to the central recommendations of the post–Washington Consensus period, the state should a) respect, foment, and accept private initiative and the formation of competitive markets; b) in the abence of a high level of institutional capacity, try to provide the goods and public services that cannot be satisfactorily obtained through the market or the voluntary civil society; c) guarantee that its institutions will not act in an arbitrary manner; d) only take on more complex intervention programs when the institutional capacity is highly competitive; e) reinforce its own capacity. States need norms and limitations in society and within their own state apparatuses; they need to promote greater efficiency in the public and private spheres, to facilitate the free exchange of opinions and associations within and beyond their borders, to mainain an independent judiciary system, to promote free association with external agents such as the business and civil society sectors, and to promote internal associations (Castellani, 2002).[8]

According to WB's policies for the first decade of the millennium, the state should increase

> "the efficiency of public finances and the essential services provided by the government, limiting the involvement of governments in those activities that cannot be effectively performed by the private sector, making service providers be more responsive to their clients, and promoting equity and participation of stakeholders in all aspects of the management of social services" (World Bank, 1999a, p. 18).

Thus, the state should support those processes towards decentralization of the economy and the administration, promote the growth of the private sector in financing and implementing educational services, and assure the betterment of quality and efficiency in education and the management of evaluation in education. The WB expects that states would not be the sole agents to deliver educational services. According to this view educational services should be in the hands of local governments, communities, families, individuals, and the private sector. The state should mainly procure educational services to those social sectors that cannot acquire it in the educational market. Following this principle, the WB proposes to raise the pedagogical quality and strengthen public schools for those poor students (World Bank, 1999a). In this sense, the role of the state should be to correct the *imperfections* of the market.

In spite of the rejection of state intervention on the side of the neoliberal current, the truth of the matter is that to be able to provide a continuity of policies and programs, the WB needs official organizations as leading actors. In fact, the WB recommends strengthening the functions of the state with a sturdy but flexible leadership that can provide a continuity within Ministries of Education at the same time that it limits and redefines its

tasks at the national level, always targeting what can be best accomplished with loans from international financial agencies.

> Education ministries must have the capacity to formulate, communicate, and implement policy; evaluate schools and programs; and provide technical assistance to local governments, schools and teachers . . . This implies the need for the education ministry to be a learning organization that continually identifies problems, formulates solutions and evaluates results. (World Bank, 1999a, pp. 59–60)

THE WORLD BANK BEHIND THE SCENES

In the WB documents one can observe its hegemonic vocation and strategic interest in carrying out a political project through the dexterous use of the power it enjoys as provider of credit, through the production and systematization of knowledge and experience on a global scale, as well as its use of an extensive network of academic institutions and research centers, civil society and private sector organizations, and the mass media. The WB documents show this strategic interest in order to carry out a political project that uses all the power arising from its participation in transnational relations and networks.[9] For that, the Bank proposals and recommendations are not reduced to, nor should be seen as, mere economic recipes.

> This skill mix, diverse knowledge base, and a broad geographic experience contribute to the analytic rigor of Bank research, project design, and policy advice. These attributes will help the Bank bring neutrality and objectivity to studies, policy advice, and monitoring and evaluation of work in development of the education sector in LAC. The World Bank supports the critical role of monitoring and evaluation in lending operations which contributes to the development of accountability and transparency in the management of the education sector." (World Bank, 1999a, p.70)

In order to legitimize its role as a global leader, one of the central tasks of the WB in educational policies is to organize, select, and prepare knowledge and experience at the worldwide level, especially towards the affairs of developing nations. One way of carrying this out is by studying "good practices" of development in specific case studies that can show its clients how efficiently public policy can be implemented in a sustainable manner. Educational researchers and policy analysts are crucial at this stage as providers of guidelines and examples about how to proceed.

Furthermore, although the partnership of the WB with international agencies like the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization and the U.S. Department of the Treasure is well known, its strategic alliances with other organizations of the United Nations, such as UNESCO

and UNICEF, as well as with others at the regional level like the Inter-American Development Bank, is vital to understanding its advance in the field of education and culture.

Without ignoring the important differences amongst these organizations, because in the UN organizations it is common to attribute to the state an active role with its own goals and with a determinate idea of citizenship (Rivero, 1999), the critics seem to be agreed in that the former organizations accept as inevitable the new neoliberal order without questioning, while only procuring a more humane face to the model. At the national level, the WB considers the national ministers of education, as well as other local government agents, private businesses, or nongovernmental associations, to be their natural partners and allies in the implementation of its policy recommendations. It is eloquent that the WB considers the functionaries of the ministries of education "the Bank's education partner" and ministries of finance "the Bank's chief interlocutor" (World Bank, 1999a, p. 70).

The WB, together with international agencies and national governments, seeks to gather together public officials, academics, designers and beneficiaries of nongovernmental programs, with the aim of revising its strategies and policies in search of new agreements and political support for its economic and social reforms.[10] In this process, the WB procures the involvement of all public, private and nongovernmental agencies that are seen as complementary to the optimization of the programs to reduce government expenditures. It is also important to note that the relationship between the WB and these international, governmental and nongovernmental organizations is not linear or unilateral., Also undeniable is the powerful position of the United States over the WB as well as the influence of other such powerful nations in the redesigning of the thought and practice of the Bank, such as in the culture sector where the Bank has had less experience.

The WB was compelled to modify its discourse during the 1990s due to heavy criticism and opposition from various social and political entities, especially the so-called new social movements. As a by-product of those criticisms the WB sought more credibility and legitimacy by associating its policies with successful cases of "good practice" that resulted in sophisticated research and statistical analyses, as well as empirical and theoretical arguments. In addition to the traditional target audience of technicians and specialists, the WB's new audience includes all individuals occupied in social affairs.

The Bank's discourse has become an odd mixture of decontextualization, generalization, distortion, and omission. For instance, it has concealed the real effects of the stabilization policies and economic liberalization implemented in Latin America and made local governments completely responsible for the consequences of these policies—in spite of the fact that the WB is itself a *regulatory* and *proactive* loan agency (Torres, 2002) that fosters the reforms and establishes the conditions for granting credit—thus denying its own role and blaming economic globalization, the invisible hand of our times, as if the WB itself were not one of the key international actors that has engineered the so-called new international order.

WORLD BANK EDUCATION: CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN LATIN AMERICA

The WB has increased its intervention in the field of education to the point of now being the main source of external financing of education in many dependent economies, reaching the level of about one-fourth of all external funds. Since 1980, the total volume of loans for education has tripled, and the proportion of its loans has doubled (World Bank, 1996, p. 162). Its activities are not limited to those of a mere financial agency. After over forty years of action it has become one of the main sources of advice in education, and an important agency that promotes educational research (especially after 1980 when the WB published its first educational policy document) in a field that traditionally belonged to UNESCO.

The WB policy analysts have argued that education is crucial to create economic growth and reduce poverty levels because it enhances the development of human capital through quality investments and specific outreach to the most needy sectors of society, which should in turn help to achieve sustainable benefits for its investments (World Bank, 1999a). Some of the excluded sectors in need of urgent attention are certain ethnic minorities who should be the immediate target of investment according to the Bank's vision of education for human capital (World Bank, 1999a). The Bank's guiding principle is that the betterment of educational achievement of the poor, women, and indigenous populations would increase the chances of economic wealth and reduction of poverty levels.

According to the theory of human capital, education is seen as an investment to improve the individual's personal productivity, and consequently lift their occupational status and income. This approach relies on an individualist perspective that promotes personal challenge through acquiring higher levels of education over structural social conditions of inequality, making each individual person solely responsible for his or her own successes and failures. According to Verena Stolcke this is a liberal illusion that assumes that through mere will, and with a lot of efforts and time, most social obstacles can be overcome, but that in fact this is an ideology that hides the underlying causes of inequality in a system of exploitation of the majority by a small powerful minority (Stolcke, 1998, p. 321).

Likewise, the principles and strategic goals of the WB do not change in the context of the post–Washington Consensus period. Its policy recommendations continue to be based on cost-benefit models of education that seek high returns on educational investments and are linked to the principles that constitute the hard core of neoliberal thought: equity, efficiency, efficacy, and

quality. The WB's goals still include the achievement of equity by improving efficiency, efficacy, and quality through compensatory, focused, and decentralized policies (World Bank 1999a, 1999b).

Compensatory and focused policies substitute the idea of equality for that of equity.[11] The supporters of equity elaborate this concept on both the unfinished project of modernity and its ideals, and have altered the meaning of equality on the wrong supposition that equality is the same as homogeneity; in fact, equality means universality, while equity is concerned with particularity. The notion of equality is grounded on the universal request that can start from the singular in what can be called (González Casanova, 1994) a *particularistic universalism;* on the other hand, equity can be projected from its *universalistic particularism.* That is to say, equality implies the notion of common welfare or general interest, while equity implies paying attention to particular interest, which is rooted in individualism. Even though neoliberalism shares with classical liberalism its adherence to individualism,[11] in the neoliberal version it loses the social component that is present in the liberal tradition. Individualism, according to Gentili (1998b), supports itself in an ethics of gain which rejects any relationship between common good and equality. In this sense, neoliberalism is founded on a "thesis of incompatibility" between individual and social interests, where the search for the well-being of society contradicts the individual search of maximization of profits in the market.

Friedrich von Hayek, one of the founding fathers of the neoliberal doctrine, maintained that the only way to put people in an equal position was to treat them as different, thus opposing egalitarianism as a threat to individual liberties (DiPol, 1987, p. 44). Thus, following this view in the field of education, educational supply should be diversified and rely on the notion of equity. However, what actually occurs is that diversity in the educational supply-side model ends up reinforcing and legitimizing the unequal distribution of knowledge and produces educational circuits that are differential in terms of the social and cultural backgrounds of the actors. This gives grounds to what Díaz and Alonso (2004) have called a *pedagogy for the poor* or a *pedagogy for the excluded.*

Compensatory policies help consolidate the segmentation and fragmentation of educational circuits. The WB does not only seek to facilitate access and provide education for these social sectors and cultural groups, but also to satisfy their basic needs, such as nutrition, health, and so forth. It is common that these subaltern sectors receive a public-service type of education. As it has been broadly accepted, the problem is that within contexts of poverty, assistentialism is the substitute rather than the complement to the pedagogical function, a process that Achilli (1996) calls *neutralization of the educational function.* It evokes the deterioration of the pedagogical practice at the level of elaboration of pertinent strategies, as well as at the level of representations and expectations that allows generating actual learning in children. That is, within this context, the school only plays an assistentialist

function that displaces other pedagogical responsibilities. It is to note that from the WB perspective, the detection and satisfaction of basic needs are not based upon arguments linked to liberal principles, such as human rights, but based on criteria of efficiency, efficacy, and profitability.

> There is by now substantial evidence that poor health and an inadequate early learning environment lead to handicaps that are difficult to reverse later in life, beginning with difficulties in school that result in the high probability of school repetition and early drop out . . . Thus, these handicaps lower the return to both private and public investment in education. Early childhood programs may both increase the efficiency of investments in schooling and promote equity in the population they serve. (World Bank, 1999a, p. 53)

The idea of focused policies is derived from, and complementary to, the concept of equity. For the WB the "disadvantaged groups" that are the target of focused and compensatory programs should be clearly identified, and its policies concentrated on those representing higher risks. In this way, indigenous communities and ethnic and linguistic minorities are reduced to the category of *disadvantaged* groups,[13] and therefore are the object of analysis and intervention of the WB's focused and compensatory programs. The interest of the WB in these communities is framed within the relationship between poverty, culture, and development, and as a framework of analysis and action, they are subject to restrictions under the principles of economic pragmatism. The WB is interested in studying and monitoring these ethnic and cultural minorities with the purpose that they might be of help to economic development.[14] This focus on indigenous communities should be understood as a way to deal with issues of development with the purpose of furthering capital expansion and opportunities. These communities have traditionally been outside the outskirts of the market and its emphasis is precisely to bring them inside the realm of capital. Furthermore, the focus on these communities is also due to their anticapitalist nature as they provide further motives for attention.[15]

The WB recommends the implementation of special measures on the financial front directed towards the "disadvantaged groups," with the goal of raising enrollment and retention levels in schooling.[16] These measures are to provide bilingual education in those countries with multiple linguistic communities (World Bank, 1999a). Bilingual education is understood as an instrument to reach equity levels in terms of efficiency and efficacy. Good practices in this area are those schools where there is a high degree of linguistic flexibility in instruction, parental support, and no prescriptive application in the curriculum. The recent WB policy recommendations do not emphasize the provision of bilingual education at the elementary level and it is justified only as belonging to basic education. It seems that beyond certain basic years of schooling, bilingual education ceases to be

profitable.[17] As stated by Kincheloe and Steinberg (1999) in relation to what Peter McLaren (1995) calls *conservative multiculturalism,* the educational, social, and political precepts formulated by the New Right seek to protect the market economy, which is allowed to damage the people in the name of a more efficient economy. The WB policy recommendations in regard to bilingual education are not based on liberal ideals, as might be those of collective rights or the peoples' rights, or cultural recognition, but on technocratic concepts of quality of education defined in neoliberal terms as more efficient educational services where the training for the labor market is the top priority.

> Learning is more efficient and it can save time if in the first grades instruction is given in the children's native language . . . Once a solid knowledge has been acquired in the native language, the national, regional or metropolitan language can be learnt in the upper grades of primary school as a preparation for High School. *However, the production of textbooks in the native language can increase the costs of education.* (World Bank, 1996, pp. 86–87, emphasis added)

> The fact of not knowing the dominant language can limit the opportunities of learning and employment mobility and thus reduce people's income and opportunities to escape poverty. Therefore, there is an incentive based on the labor market for learning the dominant language. (World Bank, 1996, pp. 87–88)

Within the "disadvantaged groups" the WB also includes the subcategories of nomads, as well as those who live in isolated regions, street children, and refugees. For each group a different strategy should be applied, for example for the "disadvantaged" nonformal methods are more appropriate than formal schooling. The policy of the WB is not to include these sectors in the formal school system, which in general is the only system financed and controlled by the state. Thus, the Bank does not actually intend to include all the excluded people but only those whose inclusion is profitable, or whose exclusion would be a threat to social order. In fact, for the WB strategists, the idea of socioeconomic inclusion is not one of full or equal citizenship rights. The poverty of these sectors is treated as an anomaly of the free will of the markets, not assuming at any level a redistribution of socioeconomic resources and income[18] (Bonal, 2002, p. 26).

It is also interesting to observe in WB documents the description of how indigenous peoples have been subject to domination and exploitation during the colonial period and the role attributed to the nation-state in the process of cultural homogenization, in opposition to its open posture on cultural diversity and participative strategies. It seems that oppression, inequality, and assimilation solely function within the milieu of personal circumstances (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1999, p. 38). Likewise, the WB describes the

material and symbolic circumstances under which ethnic minorities participate in the educational system, where unequal conditions are believed to be due to the cultural conflict between school and community. Thus, the Bank overlooks the complex mechanisms and social actors behind the construction of inequality related to socioeconomic order. In the same way, it limits its recommendations to the understanding and acknowledgement of ethnic differences, aligning with a tendency that is also promoted by other agents of capital which minimize or deny the classist character of social inequality. As evidence, the Bank attributes the low levels of school achievement and high dropout rates to differences of culture and language and of cultural and family environment. This naturalization and concealing of unequal social conditions through cultural or ethnic differences can also be found in other WB documents: "Indigenous peoples are *different* as a group because they *share* a history of colonial repression and are viewed as *different* by external power structures" (Roper, Frechione and DeWalt, 1996, p. 3, emphasis added).

This is precisely what has been denounced as *conservative multiculturalism,* which regards "diversity" as uncovering the ideology of assimilation (McLaren, 1995). Once cultural diversity is understood merely as a harmonic and horizontal coexistence of different cultures (that is, as a nonconflictual or unhierarchical relationship between cultural groups), then the actual structures of power and domination that are the cause of social and ethnic violence are reinforced by the defense of difference (Grüner, 2002). In the terrain of education, the perspective of diversity is doubly problematic when it is limited to a proclamation of diversity without a pedagogy centered on the political critique of identity and difference (Silva, 2000, p. 73).

Neoliberalism's interpretation and appropriation of cultural diversity can by generalized under the liberal rubric of the necessary, the possible and the indicated: to increase respect and tolerance (Díaz and Alonso, 1997). In this sense, the new processes of social and cultural integration molded as *essentialist multiculturalism* (Bauman, 2001), and based on a liberal discourse of respect and tolerance to diversity and difference, would not be encouraging emancipatory practices or assuming a model or proposal for change or an alternative to the classic assimilationist integration. On the contrary, this practice can serve to cover up mechanisms and processes of devaluation, segregation, discrimination, and inequality in the struggle of ethnic minorities for public space.

Related to policies of decentralization is the issue of *partnership.* The negotiations that the WB has established with indigenous organizations show this approach. Far from any idea of communitarianism, this strategy is promoted by the WB as a criterion of efficacy and efficiency, as well as to seek a consensus that would assure legitimacy and reduce the tone of its critics (Bonal, 2002, p. 27). One of the main problems with programs promoting decentralization and participation in "developing" nations, and

the reason why most such programs do not work in the long term, is that they represent societies as being for the most part homogeneous, without considering their great social variety, such as class differences within local communities.[19]

A clear demonstration is the approach toward indigenous communities in Latin America with the purpose of promoting self-development and ethnodevelopment. In the above-mentioned report by Roper, Frechione and DeWalt (1996), even though the WB takes account of indigenous involvement throughout the different stages of development with the purpose of ensuring local priorities, what commands most attention is the internalization of the projects on the part of its participants.[20] That is, the presence or the formation of indigenous organizations is encouraged and supported only when they serve the organs of representation (vis-à-vis the Bank) in the processes of development and when they carry out local initiatives. Likewise, as already discussed on the issue of bilingual education, the use or construction of indigenous knowledge is only justified in order to guarantee the success of the project. On the other hand, even though the authors highlight the importance of a legal framework that accounts for indigenous rights, the WB documents suggest that land and other natural resources can be considered a prerequisite or a condition for the success of development, but it cannot assure its accomplishment. Following traditional neoliberal doctrine, this position suggests that the WB is more ready to accept legal egalitarianism before social and economic egalitarianism, given that the latter puts economic freedom under risk of socioeconomic turmoil. These thoughts and liberal practices seek to reconcile their proclamation of formal equality before the law, together with the support of ideas of inequality facing the material conditions of life.

In another document of the WB (Partridge and Uquillas, 1996, p. 31) dedicated to ethnodevelopment and which seeks to plan future strategies, neoliberalism again postulates the need for approaches based on decentralized processes of development that would also include (in addition to indigenous peoples) representatives from governments and nongovernmental organizations in recognition of social and cultural diversity. These changes are due to proven impacts of bleak strategies that have been implemented before. They conclude that the only manner of assuring an efficient focused policy and distributing development projects is to assign them directly to the indigenous governments and leaders. In the projects financed by the Bank, it covers up the real effects of participation of indigenous organizations with a discourse on *partnership*. In fact, the WB disguises through a discourse on partnership the actual effects of the participation of indigenous organizations in the financed projects. It forces the indigenous organizations to lose autonomy through their involvement in monitoring, evaluating, and claims for accountability, at the same time that these communities internalize the criteria of the Bank.

The fact that the Bank seeks to assist "the great masses of indigenous population" to overcome their poverty by strengthening their participation in the development process, makes one think that the Bank's interest is to include these groups from the market economy as a way to achieve its purposes of liberalization, deregulation, and privatization, as well as to control those who might challenge its objectives.

Last but not the least is the WB interest in what is known as *education in values*. Among the responsibilities that the Bank renders to the State and which justifies its investments, the issues of social cohesion and democracy are emphasized, which should both be promoted through education (to be precise, another issue implicit in most of the documents is the identification of democracy with the market, in spite of the connotations of tension and contradiction in this relation; through simple logic, the WB states that democracy equals freedom, freedom equals the market; therefore democracy is equivalent to the market). This role of education complements the social conflicts and violent confrontations that paradoxically have taken place in the Latin American region precisely due to the brutal implementation of neoliberal reforms.

> Three interrelated social goals drive government investment in education in LAC countries: providing a skilled and flexible workforce in the interest of economic growth, fostering social cohesion and promoting democracy, and reducing social inequalities and poverty. (World Bank, 1999a, p. 9)

> Policies of inclusion are essential to fostering social cohesion and decreasing the incidence of violence and social unrest. (World Bank, 1999a, p. 51)

> Social cohesion and democratic participation cannot be achieved unless all citizens are educated and taught "a spirit of cooperation and integrity" (Summit of the Americas II, 1998, cited in World Bank, 1999a, p. 20)

The WB discourse denotes a degree of disciplining under the democratic regimes even though it adheres to the liberal idea of developing "educational strategies for both inside and outside the classroom that foster democratic principles, human rights, gender equity, peace, tolerance, and respect for the environment and natural resources" (World Bank, 1999a, p. 75). Indeed, its call for social cohesion and democracy might indicate a call for discipline since neoliberal thought "tries to enunciate a practical 'utility' of the democratic system as a form of government that assures and protects . . . economic freedom, the right to choose; in short: the implementation and expansion of property rights" (Gentili, 1998b, p. 59).

THE WORLD EDUCATION FORUM OF PORTO ALEGRE: A RESPONSE TO NEOLIBERAL AND NEOCONSERVATIVE POLICIES

As we have seen in this chapter, the WB promotes educational strategies and policies based on (neo)liberal principles which adhere to a pragmatic, technocratic, and conservative vision of society. That is the reason why many progressive social movements linked to the World Education Forum (started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001) are an alternative and a legitimate response to neoliberal and neoconservative policies in the fields of education and culture opposed to other organizations, that intend to provide these policies a human face. The creation of the World Education Forum is seen as a new space to fight neoliberal hegemony with a proposal directed towards the search for universality in public, secular, free, quality education that is socially distinct.

As it is claimed in its founding declaration, its purpose is to create a collective social movement that will mobilize educators, students, unions, social movements, governments, nongovernmental organizations, universities, and schools, to advance the debate to motivate the citizenry on the difficulties and successes in carrying out an education for freedom, all-inclusive, capable of motivating an active citizenry, inter/multicultural, and planetary.[21]

The consensus among the different social sectors involved in this forum against neoliberalism seems to have been reached through the common commitment to public education as an exclusive social right. The World Education Forum appears at this historical moment not by accident when the agencies of the United Nations and other international organizations such as the WB, the WTO, the IMF, etc., are being heavily questioned and are in need of legitimation. International events such as the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien (Thailand, 1990) and the World Education Forum in Dakar (Senegal, 2000)[22] contributed to the distrust of the likelihood of these mega-events helping the development of policies and strategies directed at overcoming the great issues of inequality within education and access to quality education. The World Education Forum of Porto Alegre asserted the importance of public education in renewing the expectations surrounding emancipatory education, and of suggesting critical alternatives in order to build the idea that *Another World is Possible*—as claimed by the World Education Forum slogan—moving away from the technocratic concepts and proposals that proliferate in other international meetings.

The political goals of the World Education Forum are based on democratic and participatory principles. Its organizational structure seeks to democratize the decision-making process by implementing mechanisms of collective elaboration. This Forum seeks to avoid the establishment of a centralized power structure away from democratic criteria that were

common in the international events of Jomtien and Dakar. It is expected that the World Education Forum will articulate the international and local struggles for public, free, democratic, and quality education as a right for all citizens, as well as a state obligation constructed on behalf of organized society.

Given the wide variety of events called by representatives of national governments, nongovernmental organizations, and international agencies, one feature distinguishes the World Education Forum from the rest: the participation of diverse social sectors, from educators and individual researchers to diverse social actors and unions. It is interesting to note the absence from the World Education Forum of international development organizations, even though their participation in education is growing and ever more frequent. As we have already seen, the WB is amongst the top sponsors of the international meetings of education that took place in Jomtien and Dakar. On the other hand, the World Education Forum of Porto Alegre also fights for the universalization of education and for the reduction of illiteracy, but it explicitly defends the public, secular, and free, emancipatory, and popular nature of education, fully funded by the state, guaranteed at primary and secondary levels, for all social sectors. Instead, the role of education supported by Jomtien, and specially by Dakar, leaves grounds for a technocratic perspective based on some of the neoliberal axioms such as efficiency and focused policies.

In short, the fundamental difference between the Jomtien and Dakar meetings organized by UNESCO (amongst other UN agencies) together with the WB, on the one hand, and on the other the World Educational Forum of Porto Alegre, is the formulation of two opposite projects for world society. The World Education Forum must transcend its own claims in order to develop a space from which to articulate critical and emancipatory proposals and actions for social and educational change, with the purpose to influence in public affairs and to develop its full potential to intervene at the national and international stages.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this chapter was presented in the 2004 meeting of the Working Group on Culture and Power of CLACSO, the Latin American Council for the Social Sciences. We would like to thank Prof. Ignacio Marcial Candioti for his assessment of the translation of the English version of this chapter.
2. See Sader and Gentili (1999) for a discussion on the scope of neoliberalism and its alternatives in the fields of culture, politics, and the economy in Latin America.
3. The World Bank Group is integrated with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA) and three affiliated institutions: the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)

and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). The World Bank started with the Bretton Woods agreements that took place in New Hampshire, United States in 1944 within the framework of the International Monetary and Financial Conference of the United Nations.

4. We regard here the dominant institutional vision of the WB, which does not mean that its discourse and policies might not have fissures and contradictions, or that tensions and conflicts still exist inside this organization as has been shown by official documents of the Bank (Torres, 1997) or by the formation of internal associations with the purpose of promoting and defending the interests of its functionaries, following their own ethnic or national identification (Ribeiro, 2002).
5. See Bates (1999); Clark, Hatton, and Williamson (2004); Collier (1999); Davis (1993); Partridge and Uquillas (1996); Psacharopoulos (1992); Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (1994); Roper, Frechione, and DeWalt (1996); Russell (1995); and Schiff (1996).
6. It should be noted that in this study we deal with an international organization which is clearly identified with neoliberal ideas, but as Daniel Mato has pointed out, it is important to analyze social actors who do not necessarily perceive themselves as neoliberals (social and political leaders, professionals of diverse disciplines and traditions, and opinion builders, among others) as well as those with roots in the commonsense neoliberal types of local functionaries, especially those who participate of decision-making processes facing organizations such as the IMF and the WB which put into question the unilateral idea of this relationship. On the other hand, the importance of certain institutions on the development of professional networks and research centers dedicated to the creation, diffusion, and promotion of neoliberal thought and policies should not be ignored
7. Such change is promoted by intellectuals like Joseph Stiglitz, who was vice president and chief economist of the WB during the last years of the 1990s. In general terms, he advanced a critique of certain technical aspects of the Washington Consensus, which even though it proposes broadening the Consensus's aims and further changing its neoliberal rhetoric, nevertheless does not question the paradigm of development or its objectives. That is, Stiglitz's analysis questions and reviews the Washington Consensus regarding its main outcome, to help markets function better.
8. Whether it was the Keynesian paradigm of the enhanced role of the state or whether it was a phase of the new doctrine on "Another World is Possible," none of these ideas tackle the inherent flaws underlying capitalism itself. Many intellectuals propagate the idea that capitalism can have a more "human face," whereas the ideology about the so-called withdrawal of the state and the current shifts towards commercialization of education might emerge from this odd idea of humanitarian capitalism. We thank Ravi Kumar for this comment.
9. See Mato (2001, 2004) for a discussion about transnational relations and networks in the Latin American context.
10. In effect, the elaboration of the main World Bank document that we discuss here was produced under the auspices of such a conference (2004). For example, James Wolfensohn, the President of the World Bank at the time, called national ministers of education and leaders of the private sector in Latin America and the Caribbean to meet in Washington D.C. in 1998 to reinforce the basic agreements of the Summit of the Americas II that had taken place a few months before in Santiago, Chile. The objective of this meeting was to give policy support for the principles outlined in the Summit of the Americas for 2010: focused policies, evaluation of the quality of education, teachers' professional training, decentralization, and training for the labor market.

11. Even though the WB document *Educational Change in Latin America and the Caribbean* (1999) refers to the terms inequality, social inequality, and extreme inequality, setting it apart from previous documents which did not use them, the issue of poverty continues to be understood in terms of equity, which is seen in one of the priority reforms established for the following decade: its attention to equity.
12. Eric Hobsbawm, in a conference delivered at the Institute of Education of London in 1996, recalls the division that exists between the left and the politics of identity. He postulated that while the political project of the left is universalistic, the politics of identity is directed only to members of an specific group. The only form of politics of identity based on a common cause, at least within the limits of the state, would be that of civic nationalism (Hobsbawm, 2000).
13. For the WB, this category mainly includes "indigenous populations, poor children in rural and urban areas, the physically handicapped and, in many instances, girls. Policies of inclusion are essential to fostering social cohesion and decreasing the incidence of violence and civil unrest" (World Bank, 1999a, p. 51). Another denomination used by the neoliberal discourse that refers to the excluded, oppressed, and exploited population is "vulnerable groups" (See Briones et al., 2007).
14. This coincides with the international concern for the Balkan conflicts and its potential extension to other regions of the world. For instance, in the mid-1990s, the International Labor Organization included issues related to indigenous peoples in its negotiations with Argentina because of fears that new foci of conflict might be propagated. On the other hand, the resurgence of a perspective that is founded on the management of cultural and ethnic conflicts should be noted. Actions such as Program MOST of UNESCO, which promotes from its project Multicultural and Multiethnic Societies a harmonic and enriched vision of ethnic and cultural relations, reassured by the respect of individual human rights under the banner of tolerance and liberal democracy, show the degree of involvement with the logic of neoliberalism within diverse international organizations. This logic comes to displace policies of management of multiculturalism, migration, and cultural diversity.
15. We appreciate the comments on this paragraph made by Ravi Kumar.
16. The WB points out that the lowering turnout of ethnic minority students at schools is due to the fact that students are "generally poor and also to the normative on languages" (World Bank, 1996, p. 49).
17. For example, in the year 1990 the WB sponsors together with UNESCO the world conference on Education for All in Jomtien and ten years later participates in the World Educational Forum that took place in Dakar (it should not be confused with the homonymous meeting of Porto Alegre). It is not a minor fact that even though the WB is one of the sponsors, it distances itself from the idea of expanded/extended education that came out of the Jomtien event and sustains its defense for basic education. During the same period, ten years later the WB imposed its perspective in the World Educational Forum in Dakar in 2000. It reduced what in Jomtien was agreed as education for all, there was a focalization on poverty (the poor among the poorest) combined with a focalization on infancy, especially on girls. Furthermore, the notion of basic education was constrained to elementary education (while in Jomtien the possibility of including secondary education was contemplated; Torres, 2000).
18. In this sense, the WB's own slogan, "Our Dream is a World Without Poverty," is misleading, since it claim a reduction of poverty—it never refers to

elimination—without altering the mechanisms of social and cultural reproduction which are intrinsic to a model of capitalist accumulation.

19. We would like to thank Ravi Kumar for his important comment on this issue.
20. See Briones et al. (2007) for an interesting discussion on the role carried out by some indigenous individuals and anthropologist as consultants, experts, and managers in the implementation of plans and programs by national and international organizations.
21. More information about the World Social Forum and the World Education Forum can be found at http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br.
22. In 1990, delegates from 155 countries as well as representatives from some 150 organizations agreed at the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, March 5–9, 1990) to universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy before the end of the decade. The World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000) was the first event in education at the dawn of the new century. By adopting the Dakar Framework for Action, the eleven hundred participants of the Forum reaffirmed their commitment to achieving education for all by the year 2015. More information about these events can be found at http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/ed_for_all/background/world_conference_jomtien.shtml and http://www.unesco.org/education/efa/wef_2000/.

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