

Editorial

¿Centralized or decentralized education?

Public policies, the theoretic, legal and functional support of the education system of the states, may characterize for their condition of being centralist or decentralized. The first ones assign priority to the Ministries of Education as if they were the essential axle of the system; while the second ones found their structure and development parting from recognizing education institutions of every level of education. As a consequence of such characterization, education quality in a centralized system is aimed at achieving econometric and statistical answers, as a comparative factor among the states, and if they are successful, the most benefited are basically the governments and the individuals representing them.



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Unlikely, decentralization as a different organization, as the classroom, the education institution and the municipality, as the key referents to perform all kinds of analyzes regarding coverage, inclusion, desertion, and logically, quality; their conception is from the context and its characterization, specially in terms of the social condition, which the school sector should answer to meet such needs.

For each case, centralism o decentralization, measurements are necessary to prepare answers; but the difference is how results are used to promote development of citizens. It tries to reflect postures, interests and individual views which ignore the feeling of the Colombian people, regarding the fact that we are a country of regions, in many cases, with marked difference of development and culture, which call for diverse answers regarding their situation in order to narrow the gap which exclude us from opportunities and not to expand any more on it.

Decentralized programs and projects coming from an education system built from the local ambit and the regional scenario bear the virtue of understanding needs, commitments and challenges of the various educative actors, who represent in the practice, the real possibilities to improve life quality and social mobility. These results do not seem compatible with quality standards founded on rigid, homogenizing, decontextualized, and unchangeable figures, proper of centralism.

Centralism ends turned essentially into activism, in the use of media to sell ideas and short term programs, many of them without measuring impact in the time, which leads to evaluate and verify whether they produce any impact in the student life and in the society in general. Decentralization in turn, values the teacher of each zone, and assigns a special place to the rural sector, the remote site, or the marginal context, which from reconquite classroom far away from urbanism privileges, manage to provide peasants' children, and excluded citizens, access to school to grasp skills, which enable them to promote together with their family, (it is worth to mention, for example, the impacts of the New School, among other stakes to include and move disadvantaged regions). Likewise, decentralized policy recognizes that from the municipality it is possible to find alternative strategies for children, young individuals school attendance, and even for adults and old people to be provided with quality education which produces social potential, which programs have been measured in their social and academic impact, such as the project The School Looks for the Child, are undoubtedly a clear example of this type of alternatives which demonstrate that education quality has quite a higher impact than the simple standardized statistic which is systematically proclaimed as if it were the unique factor of quality.

Similar situations occur to Higher Education. In this ambit we see how thought and centralist measurements expand and deepen the gap between universities at large capital cities, regarding those located in regions and localities, through which the same government, as the entity responsible for promotion, ends providing the wrong message, that only the first ones ensure students possibilities of success, and creating a huge uncertainty among those parents lacking enough funds to move their children to the main cities of the country.