

## **Part V: Conclusions**

### **Chapter 17:**

#### **Lessons for Conceptual Understanding**

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The introduction and first chapter of this book presented a conceptual framework for the topics addressed. This chapter builds on those remarks, and identifies some of the conceptual implications of patterns described. Focusing on examination systems in small states, this book contributes on the one hand to the broader literature on examinations and on the other hand to the broader literature on small states. Each of these is dealt with here, but is situated within the context of a broader multidisciplinary framework.

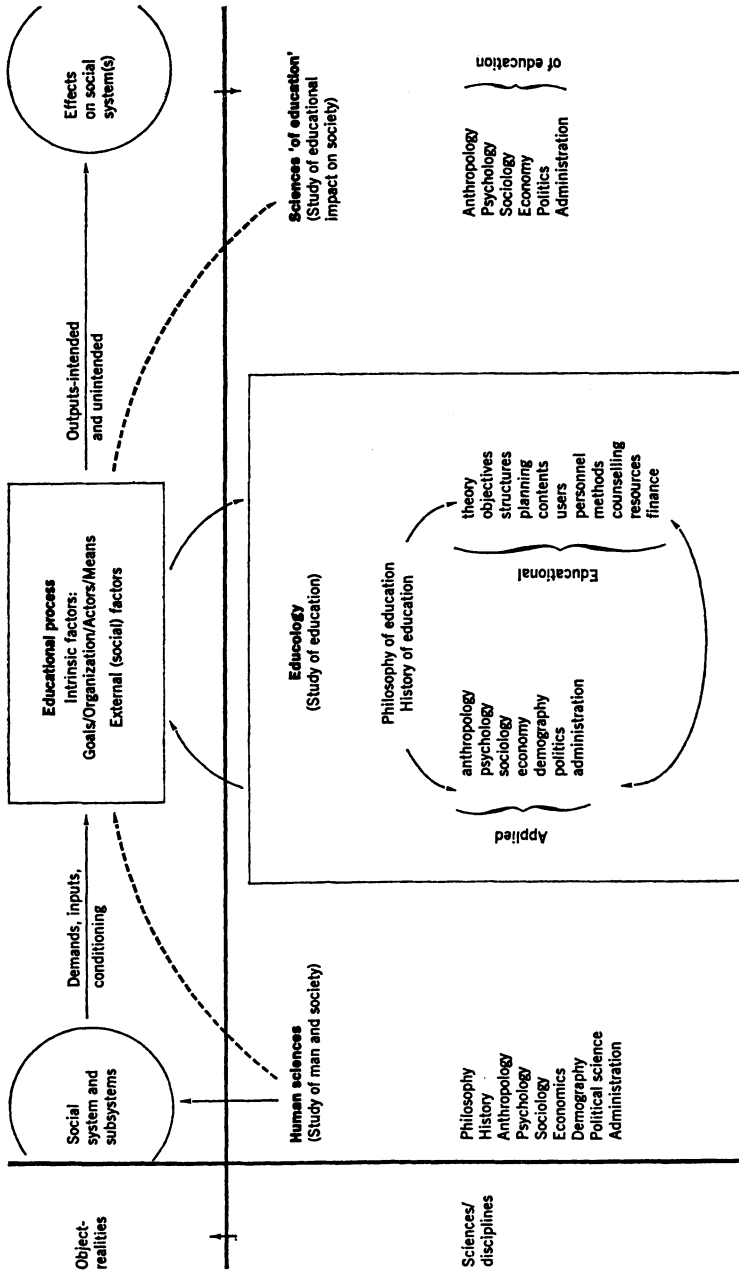
#### **Models for Analysis**

Like many comparative studies of its kind, this book may be located within the branch of studies which places education systems at the centre of analysis but which draws on the contributions of other domains of scholarship. Olivera (1988) used the term 'educology', and presented the diagram reproduced as Figure 17.1 to show relationships between the field of education and other disciplines of enquiry.

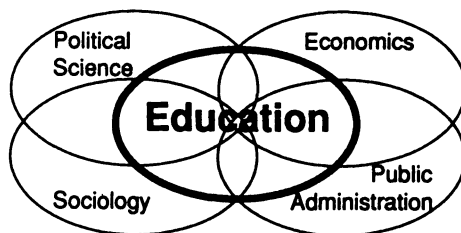
The sub-field of study of education in small states also draws on many other domains of enquiry. Bray & Packer (1993, pp.232-7) highlighted the contributions of political science, economics, sociology and public administration, using the diagram reproduced as Figure 17.2 to illustrate this.

The present book also makes reference to political systems, economic forces, sociological features and aspects of public administration, and thus fits within the same framework. In the realm of politics, for example, among themes highlighted both by Chapter 1 and by some subsequent chapters have been tensions between national self-determination and international forces. In the domain of economics, themes have included the relative costs of national, regional and metropolitan examinations; sociological perspectives have included the ways that examinations officers preserve their neutrality in small-state societies; and in the field of public

Figure 17.1: A Systems-Based Classification of Education-Related Disciplines



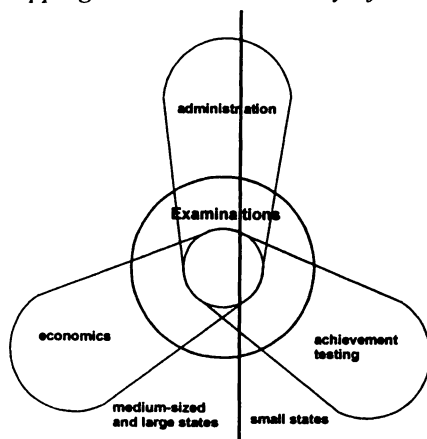
Source: Olivera (1988), p.178.

*Figure 17.2: Overlapping Fields in the Study of Education in Small States*

Source: Bray & Packer (1993), p.237.

administration, discussion has included focus on ways to organise examination units and secure qualified personnel.

In so far as this discussion focuses specifically on examinations, the diagram in Figure 17.2, which concerns education as a whole, can be made more specific by making examinations the central focus. This is done in Figure 17.3 which, along the same lines as Figure 17.2, shows some overlapping domains of study. The three domains portrayed are economics, administration, and achievement testing. Other dimensions could have been shown, but these three suffice to make the point while retaining simplicity. The diagram is divided vertically to show the way that examinations can be viewed according to the size of the state. Recognising that the volume of studies of examinations in small states is more restricted than that of examinations in larger states, the vertical line is towards the right hand side rather than in the centre of the diagram.

*Figure 17.3: Overlapping Domains in the Study of Examinations*

**Questions that these Models can Help Answer**

It is not by chance that the two chapters in this last part of the book are sequenced with conceptual understanding first, and policy and practice second. The sequencing reflects a view that action will only have a strong possibility of meeting its objectives if it is based on clear understanding of the forces at work. This is where the models are useful. They do not aim at practicalities so much as enhanced understanding, which can then be followed by appropriate action.

Within this conceptual domain, the sorts of questions that the models can help answer are:

- Why have small states in general been the last group to embark on localisation of metropolitan examinations?
- Why do some small states still adhere to metropolitan examinations rather than operating their own national examinations?
- Why are regional examinations councils more likely to be created to serve smaller states than larger ones?
- Why might administrators in small states feel even more vulnerable to security lapses than administrators in larger states?
- Why would one expect unit costs of operating national examinations to be higher in small states than in larger ones?

All these questions begin with 'why'. Some could perhaps have been rephrased to begin with 'what' or some other word; but fundamentally the questions, and the answers that flow from them, are about relationships between factors. Once again, this is a matter of conceptual understanding which should precede the 'how' questions, i.e. those concerning policies and strategies for implementation.

**Some Answers to the Questions**

Rather than answering in sequence the questions posed above, responses will be clustered under a number of headings. This avoids some duplication, and permits greater coherence in analysis. Commencing with the political domain, discussion focuses first on localisation, self-determination and international links. It then turns to lessons from experiences with the operation of regional examinations councils. These remarks are followed by commentary on sociological and economic factors.

*Localisation, Self-Determination and International Links*

In countries of all sizes, policy-makers are constantly pressed to ensure that education systems, of which examinations are a part, are relevant to the

societies that they serve. Such pressures have brought periodic waves of reform in almost all countries of the world. This has been particularly evident during periods of political transition during which colonies have moved to sovereign independence. Small colonies in general achieved sovereignty later than larger ones (Derbyshire & Derbyshire 1989), with the result that pressures to make education systems more relevant to national needs in general arrived later in small states than in larger ones.

However, pressures to ensure national relevance have not affected all parts of school curricula to the same extent. Pressures have commonly been stronger at lower levels than at higher ones, beginning with primary schools and only later followed by junior and then senior secondary schools. Universities, almost by definition, commonly see themselves as international institutions in which concerns about national relevance are mixed with concerns for international recognition.

Moreover, even though examinations are among the most important determinants of classroom realities, policy-makers anxious to promote localisation of curricula have often been reluctant to push with equal vigour for localisation of examinations. Sultana's chapter in this book points out that although Malta achieved independence from the United Kingdom in 1964, following which major changes were brought to the orientation of the school system, British examinations remained dominant for the next 25 years, and the Matriculation & Secondary Education Certificate examination board was only established in 1989. A comparable time-lag was evident in Botswana, which achieved independence from the United Kingdom in 1966. A decade after independence, a Commission appointed to review the education system stressed the desirability of localising examinations as well as curricula. The report (Husén 1977) pointed out that the Junior Certificate was controlled by a regional body, the University of Botswana, Lesotho & Swaziland Schools Examinations Council, and that the Senior Certificate was controlled by a metropolitan body, the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). In addition, the two examinations were not coordinated. The report suggested (pp.114-5) that:

The curricular objectives ... can only be achieved if examinations and assessments are the servants of the curriculum, and this is difficult to achieve if a country does not control the assessment of its own educational system. What may then happen is that an examination system run by an external agency may not assess performance in terms of curricular objectives set by an internal body. When secondary examinations are set by two different agencies, as is the case in Botswana, true control of the curriculum is indeed difficult.

The Botswana government did take over control of the Junior Certificate examination during the next few years. However, it was another two decades before the government felt able to localise the UCLES examination.

Further parallels may be found elsewhere in Africa, in the Caribbean, and in the South Pacific. Zimbabwe gained sovereignty in 1980, but was tied to UCLES examinations until 1994; and Lesotho and Swaziland achieved sovereignty in 1966 and 1968 respectively, but only localised the UCLES examinations in 1997. Likewise the Bahamas gained sovereignty in 1973, but retained the linkage with UCLES; and when the government eventually launched its Bahamas General Certificate in Secondary Education in 1993, it was a joint venture with UCLES. Similarly, as noted in Chapter 13 of this book, although the majority of states in the South Pacific gained sovereignty in the 1970s, in most cases their examinations were only localised during the 1980s.

Moreover, some states have neither localised UCLES examinations nor shown any signs of doing so. Singapore for example achieved self-government in 1959, decolonisation as part of Malaysia in 1963, and sovereignty as an independent state in 1965, but still retains its link with UCLES. Other countries which remain tied to UCLES include Mauritius, which gained independence in 1968, and Brunei Darussalam which gained independence in 1984. The University of London Examinations & Assessment Council (ULEAC) has also continued to play a major role in some post-colonial states. In this book, the ULEAC role has particularly been highlighted in Mauritius and the Maldives.

Among questions then arising are why many states were slow to localise their examinations, and why some have maintained their links with metropolitan bodies. Part of the answer to the first question concerns technical expertise. Newly-independent states, and small ones in particular, were generally short of qualified personnel and would have encountered difficulties had they rushed to localisation. Another part of the answer lies in the perceived respectability and international portability of metropolitan credentials. International recognition was particularly important to small states because many had high emigration rates. Especially in the initial post-colonial period, few small states had universities of their own, and even the ones which did have local universities had only small institutions which could not provide the full range of specialisms needed. Recognised credentials were therefore needed in order to secure admission to universities abroad. Such matters made the education authorities reluctant to tamper with arrangements for examinations, despite the pressure to localise school curricula.

The Singaporean case sheds further important light on this topic because

by the 1980s and 1990s the country certainly had enough domestic expertise to operate a national examination system had the government wanted to. Singapore also had two universities plus an impressive system of polytechnic education. The Singaporean authorities therefore adhered to UCLES examinations because they felt it desirable to do so, rather than because they had no choice. They felt that UCLES examinations offered respectability and neutrality which might not be so easy to achieve had the examination been operated locally; and they were satisfied that UCLES tailored the examination sufficiently to local needs for the purposes of local relevance and national development.

The issue of local tailoring deserves elaboration because it helps to show that metropolitan examinations are not necessarily less relevant than locally-designed ones. When governments of small states insist on establishing local examination units, they encounter dangers from placing the process in the hands of a small group of people who are recruited from a limited pool and who do not necessarily have as much expertise as would be needed. Metropolitan agencies can draw from larger pools of expertise, and in recent years have shown much greater willingness to become client-centred than used to be the case. The chapter on Namibia in this book provides a noteworthy example. Namibia was never a UK colony, and the UCLES link is thus not a simple colonial legacy. In any case, UCLES was contracted to operate its examinations in the post-colonial era rather than before independence, partly because UCLES demonstrated strong willingness to meet Namibian requirements as expressed by the authorities in that country. One indication is that the Higher International General Certificate of Secondary Education (HIGCSE) was created solely to serve Namibian needs; and a second indication is that the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examination includes papers in no less than seven local languages (Oshikwanyama, Oshindonga, Otjiherero, Rukwangali, Setswana, Silozi and Afrikaans).

An additional point, made clearly by the chapter on Mauritius, is that small states which enter contracts with metropolitan examinations may gain access to a much wider selection of subjects than could be the case had those states endeavoured to operate their own examinations. School Certificate subjects which are offered in Mauritius but usually have low entries in that country include Arabic, electronics, German, law, Marathi, Chinese, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu. The range of languages is particularly impressive, and helps support the cultural pluralism of this particular country. The metropolitan agency is able to offer the examinations with low numbers of Mauritian candidates because it gains economies of scale by offering the subjects in other countries too. At the

same time, UCLES has been willing to undertake some tailoring for Mauritian needs. Finding that the French papers for UK and most international students were too easy for the Mauritian context, UCLES has devised special syllabuses to fit Mauritian needs. It has also arranged for special papers in history and geography, to suit the Mauritian society.

These points add up to a complex picture in the realm of localisation, self-determination and international links. Because small states commonly have open economies, and because they typically continue to rely on external training for many specialisms at the tertiary level, the demand for international linkages is generally stronger in small states than in larger ones. In this context, the governments of small states may decide that examinations set by metropolitan agencies have a market value which meets national needs more appropriately than would examinations set by national bodies. However, not all governments hold this view. By the late 1990s, a substantial number of states which had gained sovereignty in the 1960s and 1970s had moved to operation of their own national examinations.

### *The Roles and Functioning of Regional Examinations Councils*

The previous discussion mainly contrasted national examinations with metropolitan ones. It is now necessary to consider the intermediate layer of regional examination councils. Do they provide the best of both worlds? Or are they complex, costly and cumbersome creations which in fact provide the worst of both worlds?

Among the three regional bodies considered in Part III of this book, the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) is the oldest, having been established in 1952. It was followed by the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) which was created in 1972, and by the South Pacific Board for Educational Assessment which was created in 1980. These three bodies may usefully be considered alongside two other regional bodies which have ceased to exist. The East African Examinations Council (EAEC) was established in 1967 but collapsed in 1979; and the University of Botswana, Lesotho & Swaziland Schools Examinations Council (UBLS/SEC) was established in 1963 but collapsed in 1979 (Bray 1997).

Each of these bodies has had a different history and structure, but they have also shared common features. Four of the five had small-state members, but one of these also had (and still has) large-state members. The body without small-state members was the East African Examinations Council, the members of which were Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. All these countries had populations above nine million, even at the time that the council was formed. The other body with large-state members is the West African Examinations Council. On the one hand this body includes The

Gambia, with a population of one million; but on the other hand it includes Nigeria, which has a population exceeding 105 million.

The formation of the regional bodies may best be understood within the context of forces of decolonisation and geopolitical change. The roots of all five councils lay in the colonial era, but the bodies were formed in order to permit localisation from metropolitan bodies. For WAEC, the CXC and the EAEC, this chiefly meant reduction of dependence on UK examining boards. For the SPBEA this meant reduction of dependence on New Zealand agencies; and for the UBLS/SEC it meant reduction of dependence on South Africa. Regional bodies were considered desirable because they offered benefits of scale in both an economic and a professional sense. This was especially attractive to the smallest states which otherwise would have been unable either to afford such an enterprise or to provide the personnel.

However, the attractions of regional cooperation must be set alongside tensions and practical difficulties. Some of these are highlighted in the three chapters of Part III. Each of these chapters focuses on an organisation which has so far survived the tensions and difficulties; but the fact that two other bodies have not survived is of considerable significance.

One of the difficulties lies in the types of products that regional bodies can deliver. Taufe'ulungaki (1993, p.133), writing generally about regional cooperation for education in the South Pacific, observed that:

There are eleven countries in the region, each one unique and distinct from the other. Not one represents a 'regional' country, and the projects, in endeavouring to cater to the needs of a mythical and abstract entity, ended up with educational programmes that did not match the concrete requirements of any member country.

Allied to this, and perhaps even more important, have been tensions between the forces of regionalism and the forces of nationalism. The EAEC fell apart chiefly because the governments of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda evolved different political ideologies and required the examination and education systems to support those ideologies. The UBLS/SEC also foundered over disputes about control and ownership. The other three regional bodies have only survived by making various compromises. The history of the CXC includes the resignation (though also the subsequent rejoining) of Cayman Islands; and the history of the SPBEA includes the resignation of Cook Islands, albeit with an otherwise expanding membership which in the 1990s included Vanuatu, Nauru and Marshall Islands. The Indian Ocean Commission did one propose a regional examination board for Mauritius, Seychelles, Comoros and possibly Maldives. However, that idea

never got off the ground because policy-makers in the individual countries were aware of the political and practical difficulties they would face in working together.

Some political difficulties are allied to economic forces. Regional bodies require careful attention to geographic representation in core committees, and require extensive travel for coordination and consultation. They also encounter difficulties from fluctuations in the exchange rates of members' currencies, some of which may not be freely convertible. WAEC, the CXC and the SPBEA have also been plagued by problems of member governments failing to pay their dues according to agreed schedules.

On a more practical level, tension arises from the different academic standards required by different countries. This was among factors which contributed to the demise of the EAEC, the officers of which found particular difficulty in determining grade boundaries and pass rates (Somerset 1997). Boundaries which would have been considered appropriate in Ugandan society would have flooded the Kenyan labour market with too many EAEC passes; and conversely, boundaries which would have been appropriate for Kenya would have led to politically-unacceptable failure rates in Uganda. Differences also arise in the Caribbean. Table 17.1 shows the proportions of candidates gaining Grades I and II in CXC General Proficiency examinations in different countries in 1989. The statistics are the totals for all subjects, and show a range from 55 per cent in St. Kitts & Nevis to just 18 per cent in Guyana. In some individual subjects, the range was even greater. Such factors require the administrators to have considerable negotiating and diplomatic skills as well as professional ability to operate examinations.

Given that these tensions exist, it is also of little surprise that none of the still-surviving regional bodies confines itself to operation of regional examinations. The SPBEA was in fact set up to assist national governments with national examinations, and only launched a regional examination nine years later. WAEC commenced with a regional examination as its principal agenda, but gradually increased its proportion of national examinations to the point at which in 1992/93 91.2 per cent of all WAEC candidates were taking national examinations. The CXC has not had so prominent a role in operation of national examinations, but it does operate the primary school-leaving examinations for St. Lucia and Trinidad & Tobago. Also notable about the Caribbean is that in some countries, and particularly Jamaica, metropolitan, regional and national examinations all operate alongside each other. In other words, the regional body is certainly not given the exclusive right or mandate to control all the examinations in that country.

*Table 17.1: Percentage of Entrants Achieving Grades I and II in the CXC General Proficiency Examination, 1989*

| Country           | Per cent |
|-------------------|----------|
| Antigua & Barbuda | 37       |
| Barbados          | 52       |
| Belize            | 48       |
| Dominica          | 46       |
| Grenada           | 35       |
| Guyana            | 18       |
| Jamaica           | 36       |
| St. Kitts & Nevis | 55       |
| St. Lucia         | 53       |
| St. Vincent       | 49       |
| Trinidad & Tobago | 43       |

Source: World Bank (1993c, p.90).

Moreover, some Caribbean countries have never joined the CXC. St. Maarten and Saba have become External Territories, but the other parts of the Netherlands Antilles (i.e. Aruba, Curaçao, Bonaire and St. Eustatius) have not followed. Likewise the Bahamas always stayed out of the CXC, retaining links with UCLES and eventually working in partnership with UCLES to operate its own school certificate examination. Suriname also kept out of the CXC, chiefly because the CXC examinations are not perceived to have wide currency in Europe where most Surinamese students who wish to study abroad prefer to go (Chapman & Levens 1996, p.19).

#### *Sociological Dimensions in the Operation of Examination Systems*

Farrugia & Attard (1991, p.237) have pointed out that officials in small states may "envy the impersonality and formality that exist in larger systems where it is easier for officialdom to be faceless". During the 1996 Barbados workshop which was part of the project leading to the present book, Sangay Dorjee, who is among the staff responsible for examinations in Bhutan, commented that the peak seasons in the examination cycle seriously affect his social life. Since he knows that during those seasons he is likely to be accosted for inside information wherever he goes, he often finds it better to stay at home. Chapter 1 of this book referred to Lowenthal's (1987) term, 'managed intimacy'. This seems to be an example of the way in which at least one individual finds a mode of operation.

Extending this commentary, the close-knit interpersonal relationships of small states can have different effects on the administration of examinations, depending on the ways that dynamics operate in particular settings. Theoretical considerations (e.g. Benedict 1967; Lowenthal 1987) would lead to predictions that transparency would lead either to widespread abuse or to very 'clean' systems in which transgressions rarely occur because the perpetrators could so easily be recognised and subjected to social and other sanctions. Several chapters in this book give examples of the former. Mauritius, for example, has been plagued by leakages which have led the authorities to revert to external printing and to ties with metropolitan examination boards. Leakage of examination questions is of course not only a small-country phenomenon, and can also be found in large countries (Greaney & Kellaghan 1996); but it seems that in Mauritius, and also in some other small states, interpersonal relationships are a factor in leakage to an extent which would be much less pronounced in larger states. In contrast, St. Kitts & Nevis has been said to exemplify the other end of the spectrum, in which transparency helps to keep the system free from abuse because all participants are aware of the social implications of transgressions (Manners 1996). Similarly in Malta, according to Sultana, "teachers who accept to set and write papers in contravention of rules — specifying that they must not be related to candidates, and must not have had them as students in the subject over the 12 months preceding the examination — are very quickly caught".

Rodhouse (1991) has contributed further insights into the ways that the small size of societies may affect administrative operations, drawing on his experiences in Jersey. On the positive side, he observes (p.222):

Intimacy can contribute to excellent teamwork in which the strengths and weaknesses of individuals are well known, and in which 'playing to strengths' produces good results. Close relationships may also speed decision-making, and can generate trust and confidence.

However, this environment may also be problematic (p.223):

First, innovation can be more difficult if it is 'known' that a particular person will be opposed to new ideas. Second, differences of personality may produce conflicts which are not easy to resolve in a small organisation. Conflicts can consume energy and time which would otherwise be directed at the Department's objectives, and the loss is proportionately greater in a small Department.

Presumably these factors apply to examinations units as much as to other parts of administrative machineries.

Just as variations may be found in the ways that these factors play out in practice, variations may also be found in the tolerance of irrelevance, or in demands for relevance, in examination systems. In some small states, societies tolerate metropolitan examinations which seem to have syllabuses that are barely linked to daily life in the client countries. Johnstone (1987, p.97) presented what was perhaps an extreme example of a type which is now much less likely to be found but which nevertheless makes the point well:

The Tongan science curriculum contains a practical exercise involving the dissection of a frog, when there are no frogs in Tonga. Many inappropriate examples are used in English language development curricula, such as the following one from Kiribati: 'In my garden I have many petunias, antirrhinums, sweetpeas and roses.' In social science, a number of topics have limited relevance to basic education, such as those concerning England, France, kiwis, glaciers, mountains, kangaroos, Kalahari bushmen and Eskimos. ... In home economics, topics on the growing of wool and cotton have been included, often with no support material.

The question then is why such syllabuses would have been tolerated. The answer to some extent lies in the forces of tradition in a quasi-colonial education system. It also lies in the domain of economics, in so far as Tonga, at the time that Johnstone was writing, had not felt able to embark on localisation of examinations given the manpower constraints and high costs of doing so; and a third factor was the fact that Tonga had high emigration rates, which meant that the public demanded an education system linked to that of destination societies as well as their own.

A further factor which may explain tolerance of metropolitan examinations even when they seem of limited relevance is the fact that such examinations may seem to be more reliable and trustworthy. In many cases this is a myth rather than reality; but myths can be powerful. With reference to Malta, Sultana's chapter in this book points out that:

the setting and marking of papers in distant England gave GCE [General Certificate of Education] examinations a legitimacy which local examinations could not have. This was partly because of a prevalent colonial mentality, but also because distance assuaged fears regarding the leakage of papers prior to examination sessions, and preferential marking in a

context where everybody seemed to know everybody else.

In contrast to these situations in which the public not only tolerate but may actually favour metropolitan examinations are situations in which the public are highly critical. These situations are typically characterised by strong demand for local relevance. As noted in Chapter 1 of this book, the peoples of small states tend to be acutely conscious of national identities, and in some settings demand a much stronger degree of recognition in school curricula than would be demanded by numerically equivalent groups inhabiting provinces of larger countries or suburbs of large industrial cities (Bray 1992, pp.72-80). Once again sociological analysis, which overlaps with the domain of political science, helps to provide the explanation for this.

### *The Costs and Financing of Examinations for Small States*

Several chapters in this book have highlighted the costs of operating examination systems. The basic question derived from the realm of economics is whether examinations systems operated independently by small states have higher unit costs than those operated by regional or metropolitan bodies. At first sight, one might expect the answer to be affirmative because regional and metropolitan bodies can secure economies of scale which small states would be unable to secure when operating independently. However, the actual picture as portrayed by the chapters in this book, is more complex.

Beginning with the demands of national examination units, some of the case study chapters in this book do comment on the high costs of localisation. Sanerivi, for example, remarks that in financial terms the operation of the Samoa School Certificate and the Pacific Senior School Certificate "is unquestionably more costly" than the old system of New Zealand School Certificate and New Zealand University Entrance. Similarly, Dorjee remarks that it is "uncertain that future localisation of examinations [in Bhutan] will be less expensive than the present system", which is a partnership with Indian bodies. However, Erasmus highlights the costs of using UCLES examinations, and remarks that "Namibia pays a financial penalty for not conducting its secondary school examinations entirely on its own". Among the factors are salary scales, which would be lower in Namibia than in the UK, and the costs of transportation of question papers and scripts.

The chapter by Bissoondoyal on Mauritius adds further complexities. In that country the services of UCLES have been retained for most secondary school examinations, but the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate

has been made responsible for the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). Immediately following the establishment of the MES in 1984, this was an entirely local operation. However, in 1993 the authorities decided for security reasons to employ a UK printer. The costs of printing and of air freight raised expenses to three times the level that they would have been if everything had been handled locally. Since 1994, further costs have been incurred for the moderation by the University of London Examinations & Assessment Council. The example indicates that efforts at localisation and cost-saving are not always successful.

The chapters on regional bodies, by contrast, indicate that larger bodies can secure economies of scale but that the bodies encounter additional costs from coordination. Moreover, small-state members must to some extent go along with the decisions of their larger counterparts. In the West African case, although in 1996 The Gambia paid only 2.25 per cent of the budget of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), that figure amounted to 6.5 per cent of The Gambia's 1995/96 total budget for education. It is uncertain that membership of WAEC was cheaper, or represented better value for money, than operation of a national examination system or use of metropolitan bodies would have been.

As for the metropolitan bodies, certainly the scale of the UCLES operation is one factor which permits the organisation to keep its unit costs down. Sadler remarks that the break-even point for an examination (i.e. outgoings minus income) seems to be in the region of 4,000 candidates with five subjects per candidate. It is because of its international operation that UCLES is able to offer examinations which in Mauritius, for example, are taken by fewer than 100 people. However, UCLES' work in Mauritius has also highlighted a potential threat within the system: the 1984 leak of examinations in Mauritius required the cancellation of papers all over the world, and was estimated to have cost UCLES £250,000. The Syndicate now insures against such events; but the administrators are always aware of their vulnerability in such respects.

Discussion of costs should also note that in some countries the difficulty is not only in absolute costs but also in availability of foreign exchange. Several chapters in this book comment on the misgivings of governments which see large outflows of foreign exchange to regional and/or metropolitan examination boards. In several settings, this has been among the major forces for localisation. However, the book has also noted that regional bodies, in particular, sometimes make efforts to accommodate governments in difficulty. For example, when Jamaica and Guyana were in crisis, the Caribbean Examinations Council negotiated arrangements of a type which could probably not have been negotiated with metropolitan bodies. Con-

siderable adjustments are also made within the framework of WAEC.

### **Forces for Change**

Underlying much of the commentary above is the need for analysis which takes account of dynamic forces rather than just a static picture. This is particularly evident in the political sphere. One major force for creation of all the regional examination boards has been the process of colonial transition. The seeds of WAEC, the CXC, the SPBEA and the UBLS/SEC all lay in the late colonial period, and the bodies were seen as a way to reduce dependence on metropolitan examination boards. In those regions and at that time, the regional initiative was given more weight than national ones, though subsequent development brought stronger national demands, even within the regional framework.

In some cases, however, national governments did not act on their own initiative so much as respond to changes in the metropolitan systems. Sultana makes this observation with reference to Malta, which, until the late 1980s was heavily dependent on examining boards in England & Wales. When the metropolitan examining boards merged the General Certificate of Education (GCE) with the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) to create a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), Malta found itself being offered a product which it did not want. The CSE had been developed in England & Wales to cater for students with low academic ability, but had never been adopted in Malta; and the GCSE was predicated on a set of criteria which did not match Maltese educational policies and practices. Because of these changes in the metropole, Malta found itself forced to overcome its inertia and to develop its own system.

The situation in the South Pacific was a little different but had some parallels. In 1973 the New Zealand government set up special alternative papers in the New Zealand School Certificate (NZSC) examination to serve candidates from the smaller South Pacific countries. Even at that time, however, the New Zealand authorities recognised the dangers of fostering dependency. As noted by Renwick & Evers (1991, pp.9-10):

the New Zealand government was aware that, by making alternative papers available, it was, at least in the short-term, increasing the dependency of Pacific Islands education systems on examinations administered by New Zealand. It therefore emphasised that the alternative papers were to be seen as an interim arrangement. New Zealand would want to cease providing them when the countries of the region, separately or collectively, were in a position to handle their own examinations at fifth and sixth form level.

In 1982, partly because the New Zealand authorities wished to reform their own examination system, they announced that the South Pacific Option papers in the NZSC examination would be withdrawn in 1985. This caused considerable consternation in some parts of the region, and the deadline was subsequently postponed to 1987 and then again to 1988. The New Zealand government did recognise the difficulties that could be caused by the change, and assisted the governments of the smaller states with training and other support. Ultimately the goal of localising the examinations was achieved; but it was more a case of the small-state governments being pushed to operate their own assessments than of the small-state governments themselves demanding autonomy from New Zealand.

Further factors include the major quantitative and qualitative advances that have been evident in most small states (and also many larger ones) at all levels of education. Even relatively poor states now have much higher enrolment rates at primary, secondary and tertiary education than was the case during the 1970s and before. In countries which have reached universal primary education and substantial enrolment at post-primary levels, much of the policy emphasis has moved to qualitative issues. Also, in many parts of the world, populations have grown significantly during the last few decades. Among the implications of these forces for small states are that, at least in terms of population, they are not as small as they used to be; and when population growth is combined with increasing enrolment rates, the growth in absolute size of examination candidates may be substantial. This may give small states economies of scale and other benefits that were previously out of reach.

Moreover, a corollary of expanded and improved-quality education is a strengthening in the base of human capital and therefore the expertise needed to operate organisations of all types including examinations. The improved human capital may in turn be complemented by technological advances in the form of computers, faxes etc. which have radically altered the nature of data processing.

These observations show the ways in which changes in examination systems may have multiple roots. In many cases the chief forces for change are political, but they can also be economic, social, technological and pedagogical. In some instances the changes are driven by factors within the small states themselves, but in other cases they are driven by external factors. Whatever the situation, the fact remains that models for analysis must take account of dynamic as well as static factors.

## **Conclusion**

The commentary in this chapter shows ways in which the analysis of exami-

nation systems in small states may be informed by perspectives from a wide range of fields of enquiry. Particular attention has been given here to insights from the fields of political science, sociology and economics. The analysis helps shape understanding of the forces which shape education and examination systems. In turn, this understanding can and should form the background to formulation of appropriate policies.

Chapter 1 of this book pointed out that in many respects it is more useful to look at a continuum of scale than at rigid categories of small, medium-sized and large. It also highlighted the fact that states which have small populations do not necessarily have small areas or small gross national products; and considerable variation exists in the geographic and cultural features of states which have small populations. All these facts need to be built into analysis, to recognise diversity and avoid over-simplified explanations of patterns and forces behind them. This book has advanced understanding by addressing one particular domain that has previously received very little attention; but considerably more research and analysis remains to be conducted. To be comprehensive, such analysis must also be interdisciplinary.