

DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Ahmed Draia



Faculty of Arts and Languages
Department of arts and English

A Dissertation in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a
Master's Degree in
Literature and Civilization

**Margaret Thatcher's Ideology of the
New Right and its Impact on the British
Welfare State Education (1979-1990)**

Presented by

FATIMA BAALLA

Members of the Jury

President: Pr. Aziz Mostefaoui

Supervisor: Miss Nadia Mansouri

Examiner: Dr. Fouad Mami

Academic Year 2018-2019

Dedication

I dedicate this work to:
My dear and wonderful parents,
My sisters and my brothers,
My friends.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratefulness to my teacher and supervisor Miss Nadia Mansouri whom I would like to thank for her support, pieces of advice and most of all for her patience for the whole period of the work.

My thanks extend also to my other university teachers for their efforts and for their instructions.

My thanks go also to my classmates.

Abstract

The end of the 1970s indicated a significant period in British politics with the Conservative Party's return to power. This change came as a starting point that paved the way for the establishment of a new range of policies. The party's leader Margaret Thatcher sought to introduce a set of reforms and regulations, which were partly influenced by the New Right ideology, into public sectors among which was education.

This dissertation aims at examining the impacts of Thatcher's educational reforms on the educational system that was established under the Welfare State Program. This research, accordingly, investigates whether the Post-World War II educational system underwent change under Thatcher's ideology of the New Right or it remained the same, and whether these reforms enhanced the quality of education in state schools. At the end of the 1980s, the Thatcher Government decided to raise education standards in state schools through introducing competition and market mechanisms into these institutions. Accordingly, under the 1988 Reform Act, a set of reforms including parental choice, grant maintained schools and a national curriculum were introduced. These reforms resulted in a change in the post-war II educational system as well as in pupils' attainments.

Keywords: Margaret Thatcher, the New Right, the 1988 Education Reform Act, grant maintained schools, parental choice.

Résumé

La fin des années 1970 marque une période importante dans la politique britannique avec le retour au pouvoir du parti conservateur. Ce changement a été un point de départ qui a ouvert la voie à la mise en place d'une nouvelle série de politiques. La Chef de parti, Margaret Thatcher, introduit un ensemble de réformes et de réglementations, partiellement influencées par l'idéologie de la nouvelle droite dans les secteurs publics, notamment l'éducation.

Cette thèse vise à examiner les impacts des réformes éducatives de Thatcher sur le système éducatif mis en place dans le cadre du programme d'Etat-providence. En conséquence, cette recherche cherche à savoir si le système éducatif de l'après-guerre était en train de changer sous l'idéologie de Thatcher de la nouvelle droite ou s'il restait le même. Si ces réformes ont amélioré la qualité de l'éducation dans les écoles publiques. À la fin des années 1980, le gouvernement Thatcher a décidé de relever les normes en matière d'éducation dans les écoles publiques en introduisant des mécanismes de concurrence et de marché dans ces établissements. En conséquence, en vertu de la loi de réforme de 1988, un ensemble de réformes, comprenant le choix des parents, des écoles subventionnées et un programme national ont été introduites. Ces réformes se traduisent par un changement dans le système éducatif de l'après-guerre ainsi que dans les achèvements.

Mots-clés: Margaret Thatcher, la nouvelle droite, la loi de 1988 sur la réforme de l'éducation, octroie une subvention aux écoles maintenues, choix des parents.

ملخص

شكلت نهاية السبعينيات من القرن العشرين فترة مهمة في تاريخ السياسة البريطانية مع عودة حزب المحافظين إلى السلطة و جاء هذا التغيير كتمهيد لمجموعة من السياسات الجديدة حيث سعت مارغريت تاتشر ، رئيسة الحزب ، إلى إدخال مجموعة من الإصلاحات التي تأثرت بإيديولوجية اليمين الجديد في القطاعات العامة بما فيها قطاع التعليم. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة ما إذا كان النظام التعليمي البريطاني الذي أنشئ عقب الحرب العالمية الثانية قد تغير اثر تبني تاتشر أيديولوجية "اليمين الجديد" أم أنه ظل كما هو؟ حيث تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة آثار إصلاحات تاتشر التعليمية على النظام التعليمي الذي أنشئ بموجب برنامج "دولة الرفاهة" كما تسعى أيضا إلى معرفة إن كانت هذه الإصلاحات قد عززت جودة التعليم في المدارس الحكومية؟ مع نهاية الثمانينات ، قررت حكومة تاتشر رفع معايير التعليم في المدارس الحكومية من خلال إدخال المنافسة و آليات السوق في المؤسسات التعليمية. وعلى هذا الأساس أصدرت الحكومة قانون إصلاح التعليم لعام 1988 الذي تضمن مجموعة من الإصلاحات منها: منح الحق للإباء لاختيار مدارس أبنائهم ، إنشاء مدارس مستقلة و تأسيس منهاج دراسي وطني. أدت هذه الإصلاحات إلى تغيير النظام التعليمي السابق و إلى تغيير النتائج الدراسية.

الكلمات الأساسية: مارغريت تاتشر ، اليمين الجديد ، قانون إصلاح التعليم لعام 1988 ، مدارس مستقلة ، اختيار الوالدين للمدارس.

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| Dedication..... | ii |
| Acknowledgments..... | iii |
| Abstract: | |
| In English | iv |
| In French | v |
| In Arabic | vi |
| Table of Contents..... | vii |
| List of Acronyms | x |
| General Introduction..... | 01 |
| Chapter One: The Beginning of Margaret Thatcher’s Era | |
| Introduction | 04 |
| 1. Background to Margaret Thatcher’s New Right..... | 04 |
| 1.1. The One Nation Conservatives..... | 04 |
| 1.2. The Post-War Consensus | 06 |
| 1.3. The Winter of Discontent 1978-79 | 08 |
| 1.4. The UK General Election of 1979 | 11 |
| 2. Thatcher’s Ideology of the New Right | 14 |
| 2.1. The Origins of the New Right | 14 |
| 2.1.1. Neo-Liberal Strands within the New Right | 15 |
| 2.1.2. Neo-Conservative Strands within the New Right | 17 |
| 2.2. Thatcher and the New Right in the UK Government | 20 |
| Conclusion | 23 |

Chapter Two: Introducing Thatcher's New Right Ideology to the Welfare State Education

| | |
|---|----|
| Introduction | 24 |
| 1. The Post-War Educational Policy (1944-1979) | 24 |
| 1.1. The 1944 Education Act | 25 |
| 1.1.1. Provision | 25 |
| 1.1.2. Organization | 26 |
| 1.1.3. Local Educational Authorities | 28 |
| 1.2. The Comprehensive System | 29 |
| 2. The Crisis of the Education Policy of the Postwar Period | 30 |
| 3. Margaret Thatcher's Educational reforms | 31 |
| 3.1. The Assisted Places Scheme | 32 |
| 3.2. Introducing Market Mechanisms to Education | 34 |
| 3.2.1. Creating Grant-maintained Schools | 34 |
| 3.2.2. Parental Choice | 36 |
| 3.3. Introducing the National Curriculum | 38 |
| Conclusion | 41 |

Chapter three: Assessing Margaret Thatcher's Educational Policies

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 42 |
| 1. The Process of Implementation | 42 |
| 1.1. The National Curriculum | 42 |
| 1.2. The Grant Maintained Schools | 44 |
| 2. Reactions to the 1980s Educational Policies | 46 |
| 2.1. Politicians' Reaction..... | 47 |
| 2.2. Teachers' Reaction | 48 |
| 2.3. Parents' Reaction | 49 |
| 3. The Influence of Thatcher's Educational Policies on State Schools | 50 |
| 3.1. Social Segregation in Schools | 50 |
| 3.2. State Schools' Attainment and Performance | 53 |
| Conclusion | 56 |

General Conclusion57

Works Cited60

List of Acronyms

| | |
|------|--|
| APS | Assisted Places Scheme |
| BP | British Petroleum Company |
| CPS | Centre for Policy Studies |
| ESSO | Eastern States Standard Oil |
| ILEA | Inner London Education Authority |
| LEAs | Local Educational Authorities |
| NCC | National Curriculum Council |
| NHS | National Health Service |
| RE | Religious Education |
| SCAA | School Curriculum and Assessment Authority |
| SEAC | School Examinations and Assessment Council |
| STS | Secondary Technical School |
| TGWU | Transport and General Workers' Union |
| TUC | Trades Union Congress |
| URTU | United Road Transport Union |

General Introduction

Throughout history, politicians have been recognized as the chief designers of nations' history. It is due to their policies and the ideologies they adopt that many events and programs in these politicians' countries tend to change. In Britain, there have been a number of politicians among whom was Margaret Thatcher whose ideology led to change the course of events in Britain. Thatcher served as the Conservative Party leader from 1975 till 1990. Following the Tories' victory in 1979, she became Britain's first female Prime Minister and she remained in that position until 1990. Her years as a Prime Minister came in as a period of change for much of what had been before her arrival. Under her ideology of the New Right, many economic and social programs were to be reorganized in a new mindset. The welfare state was among the main programs that underwent change.

By the mid 1940s, the welfare state was established as an initiative to reconstruct the country's economic and social matters. Ignorance was among the main issues that were resolved by this program through introducing the 1944 Education Act. Throughout the post-war period, British education was conducted and performed within a framework that was established under this Act. Nevertheless, with the ascendancy of Thatcher, this educational situation was to face a change.

This research is an attempt to find out to what extent education within the welfare state changed under Margaret Thatcher's ideology of the New Right. In order to investigate this, two main questions were put forward. The first question was how did Margaret Thatcher change the educational system, precisely, what were the educational policies and reforms that were introduced under her administration? The second question was, to what extent were these reforms effective in improving the British educational system?

Margaret Thatcher was defined as an outstanding political leader whose political and economic legacy brought her among the most influential politicians in the world. Thereby, studying about Margaret Thatcher and her political ideology would be an important and interesting topic to deal with so that to know about her story in history and to discover her record in British education. Another important factor for choosing such a topic was to discover how this political icon was different from other British politicians and in particular from her Conservatives' predecessors in managing educational matters.

The study will focus on the period from 1979 to 1990 which represents Thatcher's era as the Prime Minister. During this period, Thatcher introduced a lot of changes in different sectors, such as industry, health, transportation. However, this paper will be limited only to study the changes that took place in British state education. The latter is recognized as an important sector that determines other sectors' progress. It is through education that industries and markets get their workforce. Even more, it is due to promoting a qualified and efficient education that most economic and social issues are solved.

In order to conduct this research, two types of research are adopted. The descriptive research will be applied to describe the educational situation that characterized the post-war time and the one that was created after introducing Thatcher's reforms. The analytical research will be adopted to analyze and evaluate the impacts of Thatcher's educational reforms and policies.

This dissertation is divided to three chapters. The first chapter discusses the conditions that preceded Margaret Thatcher's arrival to 10 Downing Street by giving an overview of the political ideologies that dominated her party and the UK government. It also tackles the origins and the development of Thatcher's ideology of the New Right.

The second chapter starts by discussing the emergence of education within the welfare state with the establishment of the 1944 Education Act. The chapter then tackles the reasons that paved the way for the emergence of Thatcher's educational reforms. The final element in chapter two presents the changes or the reforms that were introduced to the educational system by the Thatcher government.

The third chapter deals with the impacts that came as a result of applying the educational policies and reforms that were launched by the Thatcher government. It first presents the different reactions towards the reforms. Then, it gives a brief illustration for the process of carrying out the reforms. The third chapter concludes with explaining a set of impacts that came after applying these reforms.

Chapter One:

The Beginning of Margaret Thatcher's Era

Introduction

Britain's political history has witnessed several changes which came partly as a result of the political ideologies adopted by the country's political leaders. Following the post-war time onward, the UK government had been governed by several political ideologies whose foundations reshaped attitudes towards decision making and thus leading to change the course of events on the political scene. This chapter provides an overview of two major political ideologies, The One Nation Conservatives and The Post-War Consensus which dominated British politics from mid 1940s till the end of 1970s. It also highlights the UK general election of 1979 which led to the advancement of Margaret Thatcher and her ideology of the New Right.

3. Background to Margaret Thatcher's New Right

By the end of World War II, Britain faced a number of social and economic problems. In order to find a solution to those issues and reconstruct the country's economy, the UK government introduced a set of reforms that were mainly inspired by the thoughts of the British Liberal economist William Beveridge and the British economist *John Maynard Keynes*. The latter's thoughts influenced two ideologies namely the One Nation Conservatives and the Post-War Consensus which dominated the British politics from mid 1940s till the early 1980s.

1.1. The One Nation Conservatives

Since its foundation in the 17th century, the Conservative Party had recognized a set of beliefs as fundamental principles that shaped the Party's ideology. Pragmatism indicated that the Party's attitude could change to adapt to different circumstances. Based on this belief, Conservatism had gone through several changes throughout its history. During the 19th century, the One Nation Conservatism emerged to refer to a branch of Conservatism that was

constructed on the belief of having an organic nation created by the support of the state through reducing the huge social gap between the rich and the poor (Hayton 1).

The birth of the One Nation Conservatives or the Right Progressives ideology goes back to the 19th century and in particular to Benjamin Disraeli and the publication of his *Sybil* (meaning two nations). Through this novel, he provided a picture of two divided nations, the poor class and the rich class, living within the same country during the industrial phase (O.B.E, Cooke 13). Eventually, his main concern was to defend the working class and erase social division by trying “to elevate the conditions of the people” and thus reduce the gap that existed between the poor and the rich people (O.B.E, Cooke 13). Accordingly, during his second presidential term as a Conservative Prime Minister (1874-80), a number of reforms among which was the 1875 Artisans Dwellings Act were introduced. As the latter was passed, a number of slums were removed and later on new houses were built by Local Councils as an initiative to improve the living standards of the poor people.

Although the “One Nation” ideology has always been associated with Benjamin Disraeli, this term was never used by him. However, the fact that his *Sybil* called for a united nation wherein the rich took care of the poor led historians to regard Disraeli as the founder of this ideology. Furthermore, his support for a one nation was common in his speeches that advocated a party that cared for the community’s needs and represented their interests. A clear illustration of this was his speech at Crystal Palace on 24 June 1872 in which he said: “The Tory Party, unless it is a national party, is nothing” (qtd. in Tyrrie 1). This expression suggests that according to Disraeli, the only purpose or reason for a party to exist, in particular Disraeli’s own party, was to serve the nation.

Disraeli’s initiative inspired other Conservative leaders to endorse the One Nation thinking and carry on with this tradition. During the 1920s, the British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin sought to revive Disraeli’s ideas and apply them in his government. On 4 December

1924, he delivered a speech in which he showed his wish to revive the One Nation ideology.

The Prime Minister declared that:

I want to see the spirit of service to the whole nation the birth right of every member of the Unionist Party – Unionist in the sense that we stand for the union of those two nations of which Disraeli spoke two generations ago: union among our own people to make one nation of our own people at home which, if secured, nothing else matters in the world. (O.B.E, Cooke 18)

During his years in office, Baldwin's vision was put into practice. His government initiated a set of reforms such as The Widows, Orphans and Old Age Pensions Act of 1925, Unemployment benefit in 1927 in an attempt to serve his society and thus creating a balanced society.

The mid 1940s formed another defining moment in the history of the One Nation Conservatism ideology. The ideology's beliefs were rejuvenated once again as the Conservative Party formed an alliance with the Labor Party to create the so called the post-war consensus. The latter allowed the Conservatives to carry out their tradition via supporting the welfare state program. Following this period, this philosophy became the guiding ideology of the Conservative party.

1.2. The Post-War Consensus

The post-war period came to represent a significant point in the British political history due to the changes that took place on the political scene. Starting from the mid 20th century, the British government was mainly governed by a political ideology labeled the Post-war Consensus. This concept was used to refer to a political agreement between two major dominant parties, namely the Labor and Conservative, during the post-war time and continued

up to the late 1970s over some major political matters. However, this does not indicate that there was no divergence of opinion between the two parties (Savage and Robins 2).

The post-war political consensus was related to a number of policies which both Labor and Conservatives implemented and sustained once in office. Nonetheless, among all those policies, the welfare state and Keynesian economic management were recognized as the main principles or more precisely as the core of the post-war consensus (Gough 10). Additionally, these two principles were interlinked as the former was dependent on the latter.

To begin with, both Labor and Conservatives supported the Beveridge settlement or the so-called the Welfare State. Starting from the post-war time onwards, politicians have held a common belief that it was the government's responsibility to take people out of their miserable circumstances and improve their living standards. Eventually, they all sought to provide universal and free services such as education, health for people in need. Even more, in order to extend these services, all the successive governments of the post-war period either initiated new reforms that supported the Welfare State or kept the existing ones intact.

In order to provide free social services, the Conservative and the Labor governments adopted Keynesian thoughts¹ in managing the nation's economy. Using this policy, the government was allowed to interfere in the economy and centralize economic planning. This privilege allowed the government to implement several economic policies, such as introducing taxes and controlling wages. The outcome of these policies, that is to say, the revenues, was later used to cover public expenditure.

Although both the Labor Party and the Conservative Party agreed on recognizing Beveridge and Keynes's ideas as the pillar of the post-war settlement, each party applied these policies in different ways and according to its own belief (Savage and Robins 2). This

¹ It advocated government intervention in the economy and increased government spending.

divergence of opinions was obvious in applying Keynesian economic management where the Labor Party went further and sought to redistribute the state assets through nationalizing a number of industries to bring economic equality. However, such policies were not accepted by the Conservative politicians and this, eventually, created tension in the post-war settlement (Savage and Robins 2-3).

Another issue that provoked tension between the two parties was the provision of welfare services. Unlike the Labor Party, the Conservative Party, besides state provision, also supported voluntary and private institutions which wanted to offer their services, mainly education and health, to members of society. This point of voluntary provision was later widely promoted by Mrs. Thatcher when she became the Conservative Prime Minister. However, this was not the case with the Labor Party which was mostly in favor of state provision (Savage and Robins 3). This divergence caused tension within the consensus but did not bring it to an end.

After this discussion, it might be thought of the Conservative Party as a socialist party, but, this was not the case. Alongside supporting the One Nation principle of benefiting the poor, the Conservatives also advocated their principle of private ownership. Unlike the Labor Party who was interested in the redistribution of state assets, the Conservative Party was more interested in the redistribution of wealth to reduce the social gap between the “two nations”.

Despite the fact that the post-war consensus had been a dominant ideology for a long period, by the end of the 1970s, the foundation of this philosophy, that is, Beveridge and Keynes’s thoughts were heading toward decline as the economic crisis took place. This crisis eventually led to an industrial unrest in the country.

1.3. The Winter of Discontent 1978-79

The decade of the 1970s was a period of economic decline in the United Kingdom. British economy witnessed a phase of troubles and instability due to industrial unrest and high

unemployment and inflation rates that increased to 36.3% in 1975(Seldon and Hickson XIII). Accordingly, the United Kingdom was referred to, in that period, as the “sick man of Europe”. As an attempt to curb inflation, the Labor Party Administration (1976-1979) led by Prime Minister James Callaghan adopted the income policy which allowed the government to restrain wages in order to reduce inflation.

Starting from 1975, the Labor government issued several limits on pay rise among which was the 5 % limit. On 21 July 1978, the Chancellor of the Exchequer Denis Healey introduced a government White Paper that restrained pay increase at 5 % (Marwick 271). In order to implement this policy, the government sought to impose a set of penalties on any private or public government contractors who violated the limit. However, this was rejected by the General Council of Trades Union Congress (TUC) which wanted a return to collective bargaining. Eventually, the 5% limit came to be a contributing factor to the emergence of the Winter of Discontent 1978-79 that was considered as a watershed in the history of Britain.

During the winter of 1978-79, many public workers went out in walkouts protesting against the 5 % settlement and asking for large wages hikes. The initial rejection for the pay restraint occurred within the Ford Company (Ford of Britain). In 1978, the company received a good income which allowed it to give its workers high wages. However, since Ford was a government contractor its managers decided to set workers’ wages at 5 % rise in order to avoid government penalties. Eventually, in September, Ford employees started an unofficial strike asking for a 25% pay increase. Later on, on 5 October, the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU) made the strike official. After nine weeks of strike, Ford Company, decided to breach the government pay policy and sit for negotiating with the unions. On 24 November, the strike came to an end and Ford workers went back to work with a pay rise of 17 % (Marwick 271).

When the government failed to impose its sanctions on Ford Company, workers of public sectors were provoked by this. They started a wave of industrial unrest asking for large pay increase and the first to start were the lorry drivers. In December 1978, oil tankers' drivers, the British Petroleum Company (BP) and Eastern States Standard Oil (ESSO) drivers banned overtime working and they raised their demand of 25 % pay increase (Kirkland 67). This stoppage represented a real threat to the industry because oil supplies were very essential to run manufacturing. In order to control this crisis, the government started negotiations with Moss Evans, the general secretary of the TGWU and warned to apply 'Operation Drumstick' whereby troops would work instead of the oil tanker drivers in case the strike continued. Yet, applying such plans required declaring a State of Emergency. Finally, oil companies' managers offered a 15 % rise and the oil tanker drivers accepted this settlement (Marsh 60).

At the outset of January 1979, lorry drivers, members of TGWU, started unofficial industrial actions in Scotland and North of England successively in support of wage increase. Later, in the same month, the TGWU and the United Road Transport Union (URTU) made the strikes official. Since the country relied mainly on road to transport its goods, the road haulage drivers' stoppage meant a shortage of food supplies. As strikes continued, real problems started to emerge; animals' food was running out and shops became almost empty and this led some employers to lay a number of their employees off. Consequently, the government, once again, sought to call troops in order to bring fundamental commodities. Despite of the government's warning to use troops, the lorry drivers continued their stoppage which would mark the beginning of the Winter of Discontent.

The day of 22 January 1979 was regarded as a "day of action". 1,500,000 million workers of public sectors went on strike in different parts of the UK, such as London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast in support of a £60.00 for each week minimum pay (Kirkland 67). The walkouts included mainly National Health Service (NHS) staff, school workers (who

struck only for one day), refuse collectors and gravediggers and each one of these lasted for a period of time. To begin with, on the “day of action”, NHS staff strike began as an unofficial strike where ambulance men and ancillary staff in some areas stopped their services thereby leading hospitals to receive emergencies only. Another strike that started at the same time was the refuse collectors’ stoppage. As this strike continued, the country’s image was getting darker due to the huge piles of rubbish scattered almost everywhere. Gravediggers' strike was another remarkable stoppage. In Liverpool, the City Council was obliged to store the dead bodies in a factory until they could be burned, and in other areas, the corpses were kept in hospitals.

The Winter of Discontent 1978-79 was a crucial event in James Callaghan’s premiership in particular and in the UK’s history in general. Despite of having started for the same reason (wage restraint), each one of the strikes that took place throughout this period had contributed in a way or another to the ongoing of the events. A clear aftermath was bringing the Labor Party administration to an end and thus calling for a general election. A few days before Margaret Thatcher’s arrival to Downing Street, most of these strikes had faded.

1.4 . The UK General Election of 1979

The series of industrial actions which took place during the late 1970s played a significant role in determining the fate of the Labor Party. Following these events, Labor’s popularity declined and their political position was threatened. As argued by Stephen and Blake, “there is little doubt that this winter [of 1979-78] was decisive in firmly ushering Labor out of power and making the advent of Thatcher government an inevitability. There would be no sun to make a glorious summer for Labor in 1979” (37).

The Winter of Discontent came as a decisive argument that proved the failure of Keynesian economic management and government's inability to deal with economic matters.

As Mrs. Thatcher claimed:

All too often the state is tempted into activities to which it is either ill-suited or which are beyond its capabilities. Perhaps the greatest of these temptations is government's desire to concentrate economic power in its own hands. It begins to believe that it knows how to manage business. But let me tell you, it doesn't—it doesn't—as we discovered in Britain in the 1970s. (Thatcher et al. 7)

After the Labor government's failure to handle this crisis, Margaret Thatcher as a leader of the opposition arranged for vote of no confidence on 28 March 1979 which the Labor Party lost. Based on these results, the Prime Minister James Callaghan was forced to call for a general election.

On 3 May of 1979, a general election was held in the UK in order to elect 635 members to the House of Commons. On 4 May, the Conservative Party under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher was declared as a winning party with a majority of 43.9 % of the popular votes and the Labor Party came in the second position with 36.9 % (Gamble 105). The Tories' triumph marked a watershed in the course of the UK politics as the government, for the first time in Britain's history, came to be led by a female prime minister for the following years. Thatcher's electoral victory paved the way for the emergence of a new political ideology labeled the New Right.



Margaret Thatcher (a British Prime Minister 1979-90)

2. Thatcher's Ideology of the New Right

Throughout the mid 1970s and early 1980s a number of politicians such as the USA President Ronald Reagan (1981-89) and the UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979-90) who belonged to the right faction sought to introduce radical changes by ending the long dominance of Keynesian economic management and welfare state programs. These politicians were great supporters of the market's freedom and they refused any forms of state interference within economy, such as taxes and expenditure on public services. Thereby, they disagreed with any program that implied government intervention such as the Welfare State in the UK and the New Deal² in the USA. The new ideas and the political beliefs developed at that period were later labeled New Right.

2.1. The Origins of the New Right Ideology

Before dealing with the New Right, it is important to understand what this concept implies. It was first used in the USA during the 1950s and later in the early 1980s to refer to the ideas brought by the American right-wing politicians. Those ideas like anti-socialism and free markets existed before but they were "New" because they came in opposition to the ideas of the "Old" right politicians who supported the post-war consensus.

The New Right ideas were partly inspired by the ideas initiated by the Anglo-Austrian economist and philosopher Friedrich August von Hayek. The latter was recognized as a famous supporter of Classical Liberalism and anti- Keynesianism. In *The Road to Serfdom*, Hayek argued that freedom and democracy came only with free markets (Birch and Mykhnenko 3). In other words, freedom and equality would take place only when all individuals of society, rather than the government, took part in deciding over economic matters.

² A series of programs best known as the "3R" Relief, Recovery and Reform initiated by the President Franklin Delano Roosevelt during 1933-34 to reconstruct the economy after the Great Depression of 1929.

Hayek eventually suggested that in order to achieve individuals' freedom, there must be first an economic freedom (Birch and Mykhnenko 3). Therefore, the state should retreat from interfering in the economy and opt for free markets which would allow each individual to choose and compete for what would bring the best for his interest and this, according to him, would lead to economic prosperity. Moreover, problems related to economic calculation would be solved automatically via the "spontaneous order" that shapes the free market (Birch and Mykhnenko 3).

The term New Right is interpreted in different ways as it was used by both social and political groups. As a political ideology, Kaye defines this concept as follows:

The term 'New Right', referring to the intellectual developments of the 1970s in Britain, actually comprehends two quite distinct politico-ideological currents which were, nevertheless, united in Thatcherism. These two are 'neo-liberalism' and 'neo-conservatism', the former more prominent in politico-economic terms and the latter in social policy formation. (337)

This definition suggests that this political belief is shaped or composed of two contradicting ideologies, Neo-liberalism and Neo-conservatism, and this composition is what creates tension within the New Right. Moreover, these two do not appear equal because, at most times, neo-liberalism tends to override as the neo-liberal policies implemented by the New Right politicians surpassed the neo-conservative ones (King 793-94).

2.1.1. Neo-liberal Strands within the New Right

Neo-liberalism, in many people's view, is sometimes thought of as a rejuvenation of liberalism. This expression suggests therefore that neo-liberalism emerged to revitalize the forgotten ideas and principles that, at a particular period of time, shaped the ideology of liberalism. These two terms, nonetheless, diverge from each other.

Liberalism is a political philosophy initiated by the English philosopher and political theorist John Locke during the 17th century and reached its zenith during the 19th century. This ideology emerged as a reaction against the absolute dominance of the monarch, and it supported individuals' freedom and democratic system of governing where each single member in society can choose their governor (Hay 106).

While Liberalism is a political ideology, Neo-liberalism is an economic ideology that emerged during the 20th century in order to revitalize the old classical liberal ideas of the 19th century (Robison 33). Ideas such as laissez-faire economics, free market capitalism and economic liberalism came as crucial themes for scholars and economists' discussion. During 1938, a meeting was arranged by the French philosopher Louis Rougier in Paris to discuss economic matters particularly the government's role in economy. The outcome of the meeting was the creation of the term "neoliberalism" which indicated that the state should act only "as the guardian of 'free markets' by securing the rule of law" (qtd. in Birch and Mykhnenko 3). Nevertheless, neo-liberalism was not approved until the 1970s and early 1980s when it became so dominant as it was endorsed by a number of politicians. The latter introduced several reforms, such as reduction of social benefits and privatization of public institution to sustain this ideology.

As it has been already mentioned, the New Right ideology includes a set of neo-liberal strands which may occur in different classifications from one source to another. Hoover recognizes three neo-liberalism strands or beliefs that paved the way for the foundation of the New Right ideology (King 794).

To begin with, neo-liberals within the New Right believed in the supremacy of the free market because they considered it as a central and crucial factor for bringing political freedom and economic growth. In order to achieve this, they supported two main principles, minimal state and competitive individualism. Neo-liberals who tended to be skeptical about the state's

ability to handle economic matters supported a kind of government that played a minimal role in the economy. Accordingly, advocates of this ideology such as F. A. Hayek, launched criticism on central planning of economy. Moreover, Neo-liberals also believed that once the government's active role within economy ended and the market became under the dominance of individuals, the latter's competition, then, would accordingly lead to the prosperity of the nation's economy.

Public choice analysis is another neo-liberal principle that influenced New Right politicians. According to neo-liberals, the government extended its dominance over its citizens for a quite long period and this process was due to the lack of market mechanism (choosing what best fits the individual) within public sectors, and this led to the provision of inefficient public services. Eventually, public choice analysts suggested that market system ought to be inserted in public sectors by turning them into private ones in order to make these institutions more profitable and highly qualified.

In addition to the free market preference and public choice analysis, neo-liberals also supported the ideas brought by Libertarianism. This philosophy endorses extreme forms of economic and political liberty. In achieving this liberty, Libertarians promoted private ownership and small state intervention in the economy, and this indicated that the state could act only as a guardian for the free market.

2.1. 2. Neo-conservative Strands within the New Right

The concept of Neo-conservatives was first used on the American political scene to refer to a "new" group that joined the Conservative faction by the early 1970s. This group was originally composed of the New York intellectuals who worked within the left think tank during the 1930s and 1940s. However, later on, they shifted towards the right way as they disagreed with the left policies of the 1960s associated mainly with liberal welfare state policies (Kaye 340). Throughout the 1970s onwards, the Neo-conservative intellectuals, such

as Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell had developed and shaped their fundamental ideas of anti-collectivism that came as a criticism to the liberal social policies related basically to the Great Society³ program. Eventually, the neo-conservatives' ideas became very influential in the US and Britain political scene in the early 1980s.

Neo-conservatism is a political ideology that emerged during the 1970s as a reaction against the post-war welfare state policies that were advocated in both the USA and the UK (King 795). The promoters of this ideology were mainly interested in reshaping social policies to change the long dominance of the welfare program or what they recognized as the collective evil.

Throughout its history, the British welfare state had been recognized as a useful program through which the government could provide deprived people with a number of free services which those people could not afford by themselves. Nevertheless, with the coming of neo-conservatism, the notion of welfare state was interpreted differently. The Neoconservatives were very skeptical about the welfare state, and they claimed that the reforms initiated through this program brought much harm rather than benefit.

The British welfare state policies, according to the Neo-conservatives, had originated in both economic and moral drawbacks. To begin with, the sustained provision of the welfare state services became an economic burden (Kaye 795). In order to finance and increase spending on public institutions and thus extend its services, the government tended to introduce higher taxes. However, this process could sometimes go beyond the economy's ability and this eventually represented an obstacle that hampered economic growth. In other words, once the state imposed higher taxes, then the capital that could be used to develop and improve individuals' industries would be simply used to pay taxes (Kaye 338).

³A series of social reforms initiated by the USA President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964-65 to eradicate poverty and social injustice.

The neo-conservatives claimed that the welfare state originated in undesirable outcomes on individuals' morals. As claimed by the advocates of neo-conservatism, the welfare policies and reforms created an underclass society that was dependent on its benefits. In other words, instead of relying on their own efforts to provide their, and their families' needs, the recipient of social benefits preferred to rely on the government's handouts. Additionally, Hoover pointed out that during difficult economic situations, the worker was guaranteed with an income. Eventually, instead of making an initiative and searching for attractive jobs, the worker remained satisfied with his ordinary or what might be called as a "safe" work (King 795).

Alongside with neo-liberal strands, the New Right included also a set, though limited, of neo-conservative strands. As noted by Hoover, the neo-conservatives within the New Right insisted on the need to restore the authority of the state and create a strong state. This belief brought neo-conservatism closer to traditional Conservatism because like neo-conservatives, traditional Conservatives also favored a strong state. According to neo-conservatives, the state authority was recognized as a crucial means to eliminate the long term of egalitarian benefits brought by the post welfare state and maintain order within society (King 796). By doing so, the state would eradicate the culture of dependency and instead instill other values such as individualism and self-reliance.

Despite of being two different ideologies, as neo-liberalism valued the supremacy of market freedom and individualism while neo-conservatism valued state preeminence, they both formed a kind of unity within the New Right. Both neo-liberals and neo-conservatives rejected the existence of social policies such as the welfare state (King 797). Additionally, it could be argued that neo-conservatives sustained neo-liberalism. That is to say, once a strong state removed the welfare benefits, then higher taxes would be removed too and this would motivate individuals' economic initiative.

During the early 1980s, the New Right reached its zenith and became a dominant political ideology. The ideology's principles and thoughts became influential in shaping political agendas as many political leaders among whom was Mrs. Thatcher sought to endorse this philosophy and use it to guide policy making.

2.2. Thatcher and the New Right in the UK Government

The following years after Thatcher's electoral triumph in the general election of 1979 carried remarkable changes to British politics. Her disapproval of the old political ideologies like the Post-War Consensus and the One Nation Conservatives that were basically based on Keynesian ideology and Beveridge settlement led her to think of an alternative and espouse a different ideology to deal with policy making. Accordingly, a new way of thinking or ideology came to dominate the UK political scene for the following eleven years.

Before tackling Thatcher's political ideology, it is important to note that the foundation of Thatcher's political views did not begin with her ascendancy. Her thoughts were acquired through a long process. Thatcher's political views were shaped and constructed through her interaction with a number of influential personalities and with different events.

As a starting point, Thatcher's upbringing, more precisely her father's beliefs and career, was a crucial stage that helped in drawing some of her political beliefs. Her father, Alfred Roberts, was a Methodist who believed in individual's responsibility to found himself and his family and private charities provision rather than state provision. All of these principles became main standards in Thatcher's political philosophies (Blake and Andrew 13). Additionally, Roberts' support for the Conservative Party was shared by his whole family, and this was expressed clearly in Thatcher's expressive statement "our family was true-blue Tory" (qtd. in Blake and Andrew 12). This eventually justified her tendency towards the Conservative faction. Adding to the moral values that she gained from her father, Thatcher

also acquired an economic knowledge while working with her father in their shop in Grantham. As she claimed, it was through this store that she learned the importance of investment, private enterprise and choice in increasing ones' capital (Evans 607). These practices inspired her later to allow individuals' initiatives in economy.

Another influential personality that inspired Thatcher and shaped most of her economic legacy was the English Philosopher F. A. Hayek. The latter's writings mainly *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) and *The Constitution of Liberty* provided Thatcher with guidelines to deal with economic matters (Evans 606). Thatcher approved of his thoughts and adopted a neo-liberal mindset. Based on this, she introduced privatization as a main doctrine in her administration. Moreover, Hayek's attitude towards the welfare provision was also implemented by Thatcher. According to him, social issues and welfare provision ought to be left to the members of society. Thatcher also believed that social issues are the responsibility of individuals and not the state (Evans 606).

Despite the fact that Thatcher did not live during the Victorian era, the conditions and the way of living that characterized that era presented a significant point that influenced her thinking (Evans 606). According to Thatcher, Britain went through a highly developed economic and social level during the phase between 1837-1901 and this was due to values that were implemented within society. She, thereby, urged the need to restore those principles of self-support, individualism, voluntary associations to assist elder and disabled people and enterprise in order to make Britain once again a great country (Evans 608). Her Victorian enthusiasm led the writer Simon Jenkins to describe her as an old-fashioned in outlook (Evans 606).

Thatcher's political beliefs were put into practice as she held the position of Secretary of State for Education and Science in 1970. Thatcher started an initiative to reformulate the post-war educational system as she rejected to advocate the traditional comprehensive

schools. Later on, in an attempt to reformulate the welfare state provision, Thatcher removed free milk from children whose age was between seven and eleven years (Hadley 4).

Thatcher's political views started to be well-defined during her years as a Conservative MP where she met her mentor Keith Joseph. The latter was recognized as a major critic to the policies initiated by Edward Heath government, such as state interference in the economy. For that reason, Joseph along with Thatcher established the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) in 1974 to renovate the Conservative thinking. Moreover, the CPS played an important role in developing what would be later known as the New Right (Gamble 90).

Later when Thatcher became the leader of the opposition in 1975, she took advantage of the events of "the Winter of Discontent" that were undermining Labor's authority. She, eventually, developed her new policies which were in contrast with the tradition of the One Nation Conservatives and the Post-war Consensus. Even more, these policies contributed to form a radical change within her party and later on within the whole government. Accordingly, Thatcher's initiative

...encouraged the marshalling of powerful popular and intellectual forces in support of a radical programme [Which] became the rallying point for all those groups who wished to overturn the old politics and destroy the old consensus. A thousand flowers began to bloom on the New Right. Enormous hopes and expectations began to be invested in this new leader. (Gamble 95)

Although the New Right thoughts started during the 1970s, it was until Thatcher's arrival to power that this ideology came as a dominant political theory in the British government.

Conclusion

Prior to early 1980s, decision making in the British government was guided by the One Nation Conservatism and the Post-War Consensus ideologies which believed in government's ability to run the country's economic matters. Yet, the two ideologies' belief was unstable and weak and this was sustained by the Winter of Discontent which proved that government cannot hold and manage economic matters. This event was used as an argument by the Thatcher government who sought to introduce a new alternative that would help in managing the nation's economy. This was to be achieved by endorsing the New Right ideology which liberated public sectors from government's monopoly and control. Under this ideology, several fields among which was education were to be approached in a different mindset.

Chapter Two:

Introducing Thatcher's
New Right Ideology to the
Welfare State Education

Introduction

The year of 1870 indicated a significant point in the history of British education as it represented the first state intervention in education with introducing the Elementary Education Act. Following this Act, several reforms were introduced by the government in order to enhance education and provide better educational services. This chapter is devoted to illustrate the main educational reforms introduced during the post-war period and the main concerns that led to the downfall of these reforms. The chapter then tackles the major educational policies that were launched by the Thatcher government during the 1980s.

1. The Post-War Educational Policy (1944-1979)

The period of the Second World War (1939-1945) represented a turning point in human history for the changes, or more precisely, for the massive destruction it brought. Like many other countries during this period, Britain, faced a number of serious issues that occurred within different social and economic fields among which was education. Many children were obliged to interrupt their education either because their schools were destructed or because they were evacuated. Following these changes, around half a million British children received no education in January 1940 (Lerner 12-13). Eventually, the British government started planning for the post-war educational reconstruction.

The process of educational reconstruction started with the publication of the Beveridge Report in December 1942. Despite the fact that this Report did not receive a great response right after its publication, it was later recognized as the foundation of the British welfare state program (Middleton 189). The Report pointed out five major issues or Five Giants as its author, the Liberal Economist William Beveridge, named it. Ignorance was among these issues, and it was regarded as a main threat to the children's future and to the society as a

whole. The report later presented education as a solution for ignorance, and this set the ground for introducing the 1944 education Act (Hirakata 1).

1.3. The 1944 Education Act

The Beveridge Report inspired Richard Austen Butler the then President of the Board of Education to prepare for a new educational system that would help in restructuring the war time education. Although Butler's initiative was not welcomed by his own Conservative Party whose main concern was planning for World War II, he was able to proceed with his plans as he gained the Labor Party's support that was part of the war coalition government. In July 1943, the Board of Education headed by Butler passed a White Paper titled *Educational Reconstruction* which included some basic aspects to shape the post-war education. The Bill was later discussed by Parliament and the Bill including the agreed points was passed on 17 December 1943 (Middleton 187). Later, as the Conservative Prime Minister Winston Churchill joined Butler and supported his reform, the Education Act was finally introduced on 3 August 1944 (Middleton 90).

The 1944 Education Act or the Butler Act was an important piece of legislation that characterized the British education system during the 1940s, and it was regarded as the beginning of the history of education within the welfare state. The Act presented a number of changes related to provision and organization of schools in Britain, mainly, England and Wales.

1.1.1. Provision

The Butler Act outlined a set of services which all pupils within a limited age should be entitled to receive. To begin with, in order to improve pupils' physical ability, the 1944 Education Act indicated that the Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) of each region ought

to cater all children with meals and free milk (Chan and East 8). In addition to meals and milk, children were also provided with regular medical inspections (Chan and East 8).

Prior to the 1944 Education Act, children's education was linked to their social class. While children of poor families attended elementary schools from the age of 5 to 14, children belonging to the rich families went to independent schools (Smith 115). This implies that there were two categories of pupils or "two nations". Accordingly, Butler sought to remove this inequality and bring equal educational opportunities, and this was depicted in his 1944 Education Act. The latter stated that all children should receive free secondary education and it raised the school leaving age to 16 (Smith 116). However, it was until 1972 that raising the school leaving age became a law (Barber 118).

1.1.2. Organization

The Butler Act did not bring changes related only to service provision. The Act introduced a number of changes that helped in organizing the process of education. The traditional elementary system was abolished and instead of it a new system consisting of three phases was implemented. All pupils had to go through three successive stages; primary education which started from the age of 5 till 11; secondary education from 11 to 15; and further education.

The system of three stages came along with another procedure called the eleven-plus examination which helped in classifying children into different schools. This idea of assessment was based on the findings of the English educational psychologist Cyril Burt. The latter argues that children's mental ability could be evaluated by the age of 12 in order to categorize their intelligence. Accordingly, the Education Act stated that at the age of 11, all children of primary school should pass an examination in English and arithmetic and this

would later determine to which type of secondary schools these children would go (Chan and East 8).

The tripartite system was a new concept that emerged within the educational structure as a result of introducing the Butler Act. This term was used to refer to a new organization of secondary schools that was inspired from the Norwood Report of 1943. The latter argued that children could be sorted into three groups according to their intelligence (Chan and East 8). Based on this report, after having the eleven-plus examination, pupils were classified into three types of secondary schools; grammar, technical and secondary modern schools.

The grammar schools were at the top of the classification, and they were prestigious schools that used to be restricted only to middle class children whose parents could afford to pay their high fees. Yet, with the introduction of the 1944 Act, the fees were removed and children belonging to poor families, who enjoyed a high educational level, became able to enroll in these schools (Chan and East 8). The grammar schools provided an academic curriculum including academic subjects such as literature and mathematics (Khalki 154).

Secondary technical schools (STS) came in the second place after the grammar schools. These schools provided their pupils with a technical and scientific knowledge which would help them in running the nation's industries. In order to get an "A" level, students of the STS had to be tested in subjects like science and engineering (Khalki 155).

The third type of secondary schools was the secondary modern schools. The latter were left for those pupils who came in the last position in the eleven-plus examination. Children of these schools received a kind of training that helped them deal with home management and other less skilled jobs. The secondary modern schools delivered classes in different subjects, such as history, English, mathematics and geography (Khalki 154).

1.1.3. Local Educational Authorities

Under the Education Act of 1944, the Ministry of Education was established as a new institution to guide the process of educational reconstruction and plan for matters related to education. This administrative body came as a successor to the Board of Education, and Butler was appointed as a minister. The 1944 Act granted the Ministry of Education a very dominant position that enabled it to carry out educational matters through the Local Educational Authorities (LEAs).

The process of educational organization was left to the Local Educational Authorities whose role and position became influential throughout the post-war period. The LEAs' influential role came as a result of the duties introduced by the Butler Act. To start with, the Act stated that each LEA should work and prepare a development plan about secondary education and submit it to the Minister of Education. Once these plans were approved by the minister, the LEAs applied them (Taysum 58).

The three successive stages system was a new structure for the educational organization introduced with the 1944 Education Act. In order to apply such a process and make it effective, the Act indicated that through the three stages, each LEA should provide all the appropriate conditions to facilitate the learning process (Taysum 58).

Following the introduction of the Butler Act, all state schools were to be under the LEAs' control and all matters related to the organization and management of these schools were left to these authorities. Nevertheless, since the 1944 Act did not stipulate a specific curriculum to guide the learning process in state schools, teachers and headmasters were required to prepare the curriculum (Hirakata 7).

1.2. The Comprehensive System of Education

The Butler Act of 1944 was a significant transformation that changed much of the British educational landscape. As the Act was introduced, a new structure came about to guide the process of organization for education. Nevertheless, while a set of the 1944 Act's reforms were appreciated, others among which were the eleven-plus and the tripartite system were discarded and thus came as points of discussion that led to the creation of a new alternative. It was against this background that the comprehensive system of education emerged.

Inequality was among the main concerns that provoked the educational reconstruction of the 1940s. Eventually, after introducing free education for all children, it was expected that the existing inequality in educational opportunities would come to an end. However, even after the 1944 Act's emergence, the situation remained the same. Accordingly, instead of ending inequality, the 1944 Act did maintain it through introducing the idea of selection and via establishing three different unequal types of schools (tripartite system). This urged the need to remove the regulations that caused inequality and adopt an educational system that would bring equality.

Following its electoral victory in 1964, the Labor government under the leadership of the Prime Minister Harold Wilson sought to eliminate the idea of selection and bring social justice. Therefore, in January 1965, a proposal was initiated by the House of Commons to withdraw the eleven-plus examination. However, it was only after introducing the 1976 Education Act that selection was banned (Chan and East 10).

The tripartite system also came under attack during the 1960s as the gradual transformation of schools towards the comprehensive system was taking place. This process was partly carried out by the then Secretary of State for Education Anthony Crosland whose

main concern was to end social division in education (Kogan 76). During Crosland's leadership, the Department of Education and science enacted the Circular 10/65, known also as the Crosland Circular on 12 July 1965. The Circular indicated that all LEAs in England and Wales were required to transfer the secondary schools in their areas into the Comprehensive system (Khalki 166). After introducing the comprehensive system, the British secondary educational system changed from a multi-stream system to a single-line system (Hirakata 7).

2. The Crisis of the Education Policy of the Post-War Period

Following the dramatic events of World War II that undermined the British educational system, the Education Act of 1944 was introduced as an initiative to reconstruct and create a better education for children. The Act extended education to all children and brought a new framework in which education was to be organized and provided by the state and LEAs. Over the following years, this system expanded and developed, thus resulting in the emergence of the comprehensive system of education during the 1960s. However, during the 1970s, the continued progress of the post-war education system came under attack.

During the 1970s, the British economy was believed to be in a weak and declining situation in comparison with other countries. It was argued that the bad economic situation resulted from the poor educational system that did not succeed in meeting markets' demands. In other words, the postwar educational system did not provide future workers with pre-vocational teachings that would enable them to deal with economic matters (Verger et al. 46; McLean and Voskresenskaya 72-73; Brown 71).

Throughout the post-war period, British education was provided and organized within a framework set by LEAs. However, this process brought education under public authorities' monopoly which formed a barrier that hampered the development of education. Eventually,

this led state schools to provide inefficient services and this brought educational standards down (Verger et al. 47).

The comprehensive system of education was also criticized for reducing the quality of education, more precisely, dismantling the grammar schools' standards (Hirakata 8). Since the grammar schools were regarded as highly prestigious schools that produced most influential British leaders, it was important to maintain such schools. However, after introducing the comprehensive system and eliminating the idea of selection, a huge number of grammar schools disappeared.

The factors mentioned above urged the need to bring new reforms that would help in improving and raising education standards. Eventually, during the 1980s, these issues paved the way for introducing radical reforms or new approaches to improve the quality of education.

3. Margaret Thatcher's Educational Reforms

The years following Margaret Thatcher's electoral victory represented a period of change in many of British social and economic aspects. Under her leadership, the New Right ideology was introduced to guide policy making and manage the country's institutions and services. Education, as an example, underwent several changes which resulted in bringing most aspects of the traditional post-war educational system to an end. Accordingly, during the 1980s, the newly elected Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher with her New Right ideology brought a new era of education.

Before dealing with Thatcher's changes in education as Prime Minister, it is first important to mention her previous experience with education. During Edward Heath's premiership, Thatcher was appointed as Secretary of State for Education from 1970 till 1974. While being in this position, she removed one of the key points brought by the 1944

Education Act. In 1971, all children over the age of seven were prevented from receiving free milk (Hadley and Ho 4).

The 1960s comprehensive system of education also received its share of criticism from Thatcher. As an advocate of the grammar schools, she rejected this system and refused to apply it. Eventually, as a Minister of Education, Thatcher ordered LEAs to stop applying the comprehensive system in the secondary schools (Hirakata 8).

Despite the fact that the changes made by Thatcher as a Secretary of State for Education were few, this experience helped her to construct a vision that would lead her later to plan and introduce a new organization for the 1980s education.

3.1. The Assisted Places Scheme

Throughout the post-war period, education provision came as a main task that occupied many of the political agendas in Britain. Accordingly, a number of politicians and Ministers of Education initiated a number of educational reforms that enabled children from different social backgrounds to receive education within state schools. Some of these reforms enabled children of poor families to get access to highly expensive schools like grammar school after abolishing the schools' fees. Margaret Thatcher also supported the process of providing education; however, she advocated a different approach. Instead of supporting public schools, she was in favor of private institutions.

Neo-liberals within the New Right ideology believed that public schools that were under state management and control provided inefficient services and so did Thatcher. Despite the fact that these institutions received a regular budget that enabled them to improve and provide better services, they still lacked efficiency. This point was better illustrated by Michael W. Apple in his article "Between Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism: Education and Conservatism in a Global Context". In this article, Apple compared public institutions to

a “black hole” that absorbed money and then produced undesirable outcomes (59). Thereby, neo-liberals among whom was Thatcher promoted private institutions whose services, tended to be more effective according to them.

Thatcher’s disapproval of public schools’ poor performance led her to introduce a number of educational reforms to reduce the role of state education and support private education. During her first term, the Thatcher government passed the 1980 Education Act in which the Assisted Places Scheme (APS) was introduced. Through this Scheme, the government granted financial assistance to pupils belonging to poor families with highly academic performance to proceed their education in private schools.

The process of the Scheme was to be conducted within a framework set by the government. After having an entrance examination, children who were classified first were sent to highly prestigious private secondary schools that were chosen by the government. Each pupil received a budget that would help to cover the school fees (Khalki 182). Over the following years, this initiative extended as the number of its recipients increased to reach 27,000 pupils in 1987-88 (Whitty and Menter 45-46).

The Assisted Places Scheme was launched by the government in order to support and extend the role of private institutions in education provision through public money. This initiative constituted an attempt to instill the culture of private enterprise within the British society. In addition, Thatcher’s principle of hard work was also advocated through this Scheme. In other words, the fact that the APS was granted only to eligible poor children, this eventually would motivate the other non-excellent poor pupils to work hard and get access to independent schools.

The APS was a major educational reform that was launched by the government to enhance the educational standards. However, since the Scheme was restricted only to a small

category of children, many children were still subject to poor state education. This eventually urged the need to introduce new reforms in order to improve the state schools.

3.2. Introducing Market Mechanisms to Education

Raising the educational standards and bringing efficiency to state schools came as major concerns to the Thatcher government. Therefore, in order to encourage public schools to provide efficient services, the government sought to introduce competition into these schools so that to make them vie with each other in order to improve education standards. Nonetheless, since competition could not be applied in public schools, it was necessary to turn these institutions into private ones.

Privatization is sometimes recognized as the process of transferring the control over a particular service or an industry from public to private sectors. However, during Thatcher's administration, the privatization of public education appeared in a different form. The process of privatization was applied through introducing a number of techniques and practices that were used in private institutions into public schools to make these institutions behave like private ones (Ball and Youdell 13). Accordingly, the 1980s marked a new approach to educational organization that was different from the one that characterized the post-war period. The government introduced a number of policies designed to liberate schools and enable them to compete like markets.

3.2.1. Creating Grant-Maintained Schools

Before introducing market mechanisms into public education, it was first important to set the appropriate environment for such a process. This suggested the creation of independent schools that had control over their own responsibilities.

The 1944 Education Act granted the LEAs control over managing educational matters and this role continued over the following years. However, this role came to an end with the

Thatcher government whose first aim was to reduce the influence of these agencies over education in order to bring market principles (choice and competition) into schools.

In the early 1980s, there was an attempt to restrain the power of the LEAs and reduce their role in planning for education, but, this did not succeed in bringing them down. Nevertheless, the great initiative to diminish the dominance of the LEAs came with the 1988 Education Reform Act. The latter was introduced by the Thatcher government and carried out by the Secretary of State for Education Kenneth Baker. The Act indicated that all the schools that were under the control of LEAs could opt out of the LEAs' control and have their own autonomy.

The new schools that emerged from the 1988 Education Reform Act were called grant-maintained schools. The latter were independent schools that received their budget directly from the central government. Schools received their budget according to the number of their pupils; each pupil was followed by his funding from the central government (Verger et al 48; Bolick 543). The grant-maintained schools also had the right to decide and manage issues related to admissions, and this was through giving the schools the right to enroll as many pupils as possible according to the schools' capacity (Bolick 543).

The emergence of grant-maintained schools came as another change made by Margaret Thatcher against the Butler Act which placed all schools under the LEAs' control. Following the 1988 Act, many schools decided to opt out of the LEAs' control and take the responsibility to manage their own affairs. This eventually weakened the power of the LEAs and led to abolish a number of LEAs among which was the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) (Aldrich 1-2). These changes enabled the schools to compete over parents' choice.

3.2.2. Parental Choice

Throughout the post-war period, much of the decisions related to education were made by different institutions among which were the Ministry of Education and LEAs but no mention was made of parents. The latter, nevertheless, obtained much privilege and power to decide and select their children's school during the Thatcher's years.

Parental choice was one of the main market mechanisms introduced to education during the 1980s. The idea of giving parents the right to choose their child's school was introduced earlier in the 1980 Education Act which attempted to reduce the right of LEAs in determining pupils' school. However, this Act was unsuccessful in curbing the power of LEAs whose influence in planning for schools' admission was still strong (Whitty and Menter 46). Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, parents were once again granted the right to decide and choose their children's schools. Unlike the previous Act of 1980, the 1988 Reform Act proved its efficiency and strengthened the position of parental choice.

Introducing the league-tables was an effective measure that was applied to enhance parental choice through providing parents with the necessary information about the efficiency of different schools. Soon after the exams, the schools' attainments were broadcasted by the media through the league-tables to show the location of each school among the other schools (Hadley 11). After having a clear idea about each school's result, parents tended to register their children at the schools that came at the top of the classification.

As an advocate of the New Right ideology, Margaret Thatcher believed in individualism and markets. She believed that the best way to generate wealth and make economy flourish was to withdraw the control from the government and give it to members of society. The latter's competition over the best position in the market would lead them to raise the efficiency of their product and thus leading to economic prosperity (Maisuria 287).

The same idea was to be applied in education. Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, the grant-maintained schools emerged as independent schools that enjoyed self autonomy. This position enabled schools to compete with each other over the best positions that would attract as many pupils as possible. With this increased competition, each school would present its best efforts to offer the best education services. This would eventually, lead to raise the standards of education at an extended level.

Competition among Schools over parental choice was an effective measure to improve the quality of education. In other words, enrolment within good schools which had high educational performance would increase and it would decrease at schools with poor educational qualities. Thus, at the end, those poor schools had either to improve their services to obtain more students and increase their budget or just got closed.

The idea of schools' competition bears an influence of the Victorian era. Back then, it was deeply believed that all social issues were best carried out by individuals' hard work. As an advocate of this era, Thatcher granted schools their self-autonomy in order to allow individuals to compete and give their best so that to elevate the schools standards.

The Thatcher government launched the aforementioned reforms in order to enhance the quality of education that had been at a weak situation due to the state's dominance over during the post-war period. Accordingly, during the 1980s, state schools were granted autonomy and this enabled them to compete with each other to attract as many pupils as possible. These changes made them behave like private institutions. However, unlike private schools, state schools remained subject to the central government's control as they had to follow the national curriculum.

3.3. Introducing the National Curriculum

The 1988 Education Reform Act came as an important legislation that redefined the structure of much of British education organization. With the introduction of this Act, a number of schools that used to be under the LEAs' control were liberated and got their self-autonomy. Individuals (parents) rather than the LEAs gained an influential role in determining the schools' fate. The Act also introduced a new approach to guide the content of the learning process through introducing the national curriculum.

The establishment of the national curriculum was a major educational change that was carried out by the Thatcher government through the 1988 Education Reform Act. Under this Act, the Secretary of State for Education was granted the power to formulate a national curriculum (Colwill 57). This point came along with the establishment of the National Curriculum Council (NCC). The council's members were appointed by the Secretary of State to help him/her carry out matters related to the curriculum (Khalki 193).

The national curriculum was introduced to guide the learning process for all pupils starting from the age of 5 till 16 years for both primary and secondary schools (Colwill 57). The curriculum embodied 10 subjects 3 of which (English, science and mathematics) were recognized as core subjects, and 6 subjects (history, geography, art, technology, music, and physical education) were recognized as foundation ones. The tenth subject would be modern foreign language which students were expected to study starting from the age of 11 till 16 years (Lofty 243).

After introducing the national curriculum, all state-funded schools were obliged to apply its directions and this was to be applied also on grant- maintained schools (Khalki 207). The latter, though independent, were obliged to follow the curriculum for they were financed by the central government. Private schools and independent ones were, however, not required

to apply such curriculum on their students and this also included the private schools that were part of the APS because the state financed the students and not the schools (Aldrich 4).

The fact that the 1980s educational reforms were advocated and presented within a New Right framework created a kind of divergence over some educational matters, the first of which was the curriculum. While Neo-liberals of the New Right advocated a curriculum that emphasized a culture of enterprise and free markets, Neo-conservatives of the New Right were in favor of a curriculum that emphasized traditional culture and traditional learning approaches. However, this ideological divergence came to an end with selecting Neo-conservatives approach (Crawford 438).

The Neo-conservatives within the New Right supported the existence of a strong state and the traditional methods of learning. These two beliefs were advocated in education through the curriculum. The authority of the state was illustrated through imposing a prescribed national curriculum that would strengthen the state control over its schools (Khalki 182). The curriculum was traditional in the sense that its content (subjects) was similar to the one that characterized the grammar schools' curriculum in the early 1900s (Aldrich 14). The Thatcher government endorsed this subject-based curriculum, as it was referred to, as an alternative to the 1960s child-centred⁴ curriculum which was condemned for its inefficiency. The subject-based curriculum was recognized as a useful means through which the government could protect the nation's culture and restore traditional approaches to knowledge (Crawford 438; Aldrich 13).

The Thatcher government introduced the 1988 Education reform Act in order to liberate schools from state intervention and this was achieved after the emergence of the grant-maintained schools. Yet, the fact that these schools were submissive to the state national

⁴ Its main concern was to meet the child's interests rather than anything else.

curriculum indicated that they were still under the state's dominance. This point accordingly created a kind of contradiction within the Act.

The national assessment was another educational reform that came along with the national curriculum. The 1988 Education Reform Act empowered the Secretary of State for Education to schedule for national tests with the help of the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC) whose members were appointed by the Secretary of State (Black 194; Khalki 193). All students were assessed at the age of 7, 11⁵, 14 and 16 years (Black 194).

The national curriculum and the national assessment were important measures conducted by Thatcher's government to facilitate the process of schools' selection for parents (Black 194). In other words, since all schools were subject to the same curriculum and the same assessment, this would provide parents with a consistent standard through which they could evaluate the schools and choose the most appropriate ones.

Despite the fact that the two contradicting ideologies, neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism, within the New Right created some tension over some educational issues, the two ideologies achieved a kind of agreement and unity. The strong state of the neo-conservatives set the ground for the neo-liberal free markets. In other words, the strong position that was adopted by the state enabled it to reduce the LEAs dominance and introduce a national curriculum and national assessment. These neo-conservatives policies paved the way for the emergence and the expansion of neo-liberal reforms that were presented in liberating schools and competition over parents' choice.

Religious education (RE) was another important aspect that was carried out by the 1988 Reform Act along with the national curriculum (Khalki 191). Despite the fact that it was already fostered in the previous educational reforms, RE or more precisely Christianity was given much emphasis from Thatcher. She considered Christianity a crucial engine to bring

⁵After it was abolished by the comprehensive system, assessment at the age of 11 was reintroduced with the 1979 Education Act that gave LEAs the right to select pupils at the age of 11 (Khalki 182).

moral values and reverse “the permissive society” of the 1960s and 1970s. This accordingly led Thatcher to agree on the amendments that secured Christianity as part of the 1988 Reform Act (Jackson and Saunders 89-90).

Thatcher’s 1988 Education Reform Act introduced several changes to the previous educational framework. While the 1944 Education Act brought all state schools under the control of LEAs and left the curriculum free, the 1988 Reform Act liberated the State schools from LEAs’ dominance and brought the curriculum under the state’s control. However, other aspects such as the leaving age, the three successive stages and the eleven-plus examination were left intact and continued to exist in Thatcher’s educational reforms.

Conclusion

During the post-war period, the British government introduced two main educational reforms in an attempt to provide equal educational opportunities for all children. Indeed, these reforms granted a kind of comprehensive education, yet, they were unsuccessful in providing an efficient education. This eventually provided the Thatcher government with an argument to introduce a whole range of reforms that were influenced by the New Right ideology in an attempt to enhance the quality of education.

Chapter Three:

Assessing Margaret Thatcher's Educational Policies

Introduction

Following the 1970s debate over the deteriorating situation of British education, the Conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher introduced a set of educational reform to ameliorate the English education. This chapter represents the process of implementing the reforms, the different reactions that were expressed by different personalities regarding Thatcher's educational reforms, and examines how effective these reforms were in improving the performance of students in state schools.

2. The Process of Implementation

Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, a number of educational policies were designed to reorganize and govern the process of education in both primary and secondary state schools. As the Act was established as a legislation, the process of implementation followed to carry out its content and directions in schools.

2.1. The Curriculum

Following the introduction of the 1988 Education Reform Act, a number of changes among which was the national curriculum emerged within state schools. The establishment of the curriculum came in as an attempt by the central government to impose or provide a national unified form of knowledge, and this change, in turn, was considered as an unprecedented attempt in British education. The curriculum eventually presented a basic framework in order to guide the learning process throughout all state funded schools.

The national curriculum presented ten subjects that embodied and specified the content of study. The process of carrying out and introducing these subjects did not take place all at once. The process was rather performed and applied gradually and throughout several years. While a number of subjects were introduced right after the establishment of the Act in 1988 others remained until the year of 1993 when they were first put into practice.

The process of introducing the ten subjects took place gradually and lasted for almost six years. The first two subjects to be introduced were science and mathematics in 1988. English was introduced in the following year and was followed by technology which was added during 1990. In 1991, history and geography became part of the timetable. The subject of modern foreign languages was added in 1992. The three remaining subjects, music, art and physical education were introduced in 1993(Colwill 57).

In 1993, during the administration of the Conservative Prime Minister John Major (1990-1997), there were growing concerns related to the length of the curriculum. These concerns emerged partly among teachers who considered the curriculum to be overloaded. During the same year, there was discontent among teachers about the process of assessment and this led to a boycott of tests (Pierson 136). Eventually, the then Secretary of State for Education John Patten sought to review the national curriculum in order to find out resolutions that would help in solving the existing situation (Colwill 57-58).

The task of reviewing the curriculum was handed to Ron Dearing who was appointed as the Chairman of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA). Dearing presented two reports in which he proposed 'slimming down the curriculum'. He also recommended reducing assessment by limiting national assessment to three subjects, namely English, science and mathematics (Colwill 58). The government agreed on Dearing's suggestions and thus initiated a review of the curriculum by the SCAA in 1984.

Following a long process of meetings and consultations that included several educational institutions, the SCAA presented the proposal that embodied the revised order of the curriculum to the Secretary of State who approved it in November 1994. The revisited order was similar to the original one though with some reduction in the content of some foundation subjects. In 1995, schools started to implement the revised curriculum which was

directed to pupils whose age was between 5 and 14 years. The new curriculum that would be taught for student between 14 and 16 years was introduced later in 1996 (Colwill 59; Aldrich 17).

The national assessment also underwent different changes. Based on the revised order, pupils were expected to have tests at the age of 7, 11 and 14 in English and mathematics. Additionally, students aged 11 and 14 were to be assessed also in the subject of science (Colwill 60). In addition to this, pupils were to be tested also by their teachers to evaluate their progress against the national standards. They were to be assessed at the age of 7, 11 and 14 years in English, science and mathematics (Colwill 60).

2.2. The Grant-Maintained Schools

Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, many of Margaret Thatcher's values and principles were brought and introduced into the British educational system. Her support for free markets and competition became apparent and prevalent within education after the establishment of the grant-maintained schools which were created following the Reform Act. These schools were independent schools that opted out of LEAs' dominance and gained control over its financial and admission matters.

The process of achieving the grant-maintained status was to be initiated mainly by parents. Parents who were members in the same schools would make a secret ballot in order to decide whether to take their school out of or leave it under the LEA's control. Following this process, if the majority of votes were in favor of the decision to opt out, then, the parents' application would be presented to the Department for Education (DFE) where the Secretary of State would decide whether the school could opt out or not (Campbell 247). Additionally, sometimes, the proposal to opt out might get rejected because the LEA had already marked the school for either reorganization or closure (Clark 749).

The grant-maintained status was expected to be an attractive policy that many schools would seek to adopt as earlier as possible. This expectation was held by many advocates of the policy among whom was Margaret Thatcher (Judge 816). This argument was sustained by Campbell et al who argued that during the first six months of the Reform Act, there were over 50 ballot declarations to opt out (248). This suggested that the policy gained parents' interest right after its introduction. The grant-maintained policy gained an increasing interest during the years 1991 and 1992 due to the policy's success in primary grant-maintained schools (Campbell et al. 248; Pierson 137). Nevertheless, during the following two years, the popularity of the policy decreased as the ballots decreased. The first term of the 1994-95 school year marked the policy's worst periods as the percentage of votes against the policy reached 50% (Campbell et al 248).

There were many reasons that provoked schools' governors to opt for the grant-maintained status. A number of schools decided to opt out due to their unsatisfactory relation with their LEA and also to avoid plans of reorganization or closure. Other schools sought to adopt the grant-maintained status because of their desire to gain self-governing and manage their educational issues without any interference from the LEA (Halpin et al. 411).

The grant-maintained policy was recognized by former LEAs schools as a resolution to avoid reorganization or closure, yet, the grant-maintained status was not also a contented or safe status. The open enrollment policy that allowed schools to recruit as many students as possible and in accordance to the school capacity originated in a number of issues. The small budget delivered to "Under-subscribed" or less popular schools hampered these schools from bringing sufficient and accurate equipment that could enable these schools to improve the schools' conditions. The "oversubscribed" or the most popular schools were also to suffer from this policy. As the number of students being enrolled within these schools increased,

over-crowding became a main concern that these schools had to face (Ruotanen 42). These issues might be considered as reasons for parents' disapproval of this kind of schools.

Despite of all the changes in attitudes and the different concerns related to the grant-maintained policy, the latter proved its value as it was adopted by a number of schools. In England, there were a number of 644 grant-maintained secondary schools which represented 16% of secondary schools and 454 grant-maintained primary schools which represented 2% operating in England by 1996 (Campbell et al. 248).

The grant-maintained status can be recognized as a unique policy that made Thatcher's educational reforms differ from other educational reforms. Previous educational policies, such as the tripartite system and the comprehensive system, were imposed on schools as LEAs were compelled to convert schools towards these systems. Nevertheless, the grant-maintained status was different from those systems. Its voluntary nature indicated that schools could adopt this policy freely. Eventually, the fact that schools shifted towards this status without being compelled to do so made the policy successful.

2. Reactions to the 1980s Educational Policies

Following the process of implementing the educational policies introduced under the 1988 Education Reform Act, many changes related to organization occurred in state schools. This process was accompanied with different reactions. Politicians, teachers, parents and other members involved in the educational theatre reacted in different ways towards these reforms.

3.1. Politicians' Reaction

The educational reforms that were launched by Thatcher's government were viewed differently by politicians mainly Secretaries of State for Education who expressed either their approval or disapproval of the reforms. One of these reforms was the grant-maintained policy which was conducted as a main measure to improve education in state schools. This belief was held by the advocates of the reforms among whom was the Secretary of State for Education Kenneth Baker. In August 1988 at the North of England Education Conference, Baker supported this policy by saying that: "grant maintained schools will be a threat to the complacent and the second best" (Halpin et al. 416).

Kenneth Baker's argument was fostered and promoted later by John MacGregor. The latter was the Conservative Secretary of State for Education and Science from 1989 to 1990. According to MacGregor, the grant-maintained policy would sustain parents' choice and this in return would enhance education. This eventually led him to recognize the grant-maintained policy as "the Jewel in the Crown of parental power"(Power et al. 210).

The opponent of these reforms expressed a different perspective. Jack Straw who was a Shadow Education Minister during the period of passing the Education Reform Bill argued that the 1988 Education Reform Act was not conducted to provide choice and enhance the quality of education, but rather to partly end the comprehensive system of education by bringing selection. This, according to Straw, would reduce opportunities of equity in education and create hierarchy instead (Power et al. 211).

A similar claim was presented by the Labor politician Hillary Armstrong. During the period of discussing the Education Reform Bill, Armstrong was a member in the committee that examined the Bill. According to her, the Education Reform Act's main focus did not care for the child and it gave up meeting the child's needs. The Act, instead, advocated an elitist

system that was mainly based on selection (Armstrong 572). Moreover, Armstrong expressed another criticism in which she condemned the privilege given to parents under the Act. According to her, after being engaged in the governing body of their children's schools, parents would be much involved in administrative and financial matters rather than following educational matters of their children (Armstrong 575-76).

Based on the politicians' perspectives being discussed above, it might be observed that those who approved the Thatcher's educational policies were only from within her party while those who opposed the reforms were from the opposition party. Nevertheless, critics of Thatcher's educational reforms were not only from outside the party. The Conservative party's politicians among whom was Keith Joseph launched criticism against some of the reforms. Despite the fact that Joseph was Thatcher's great supporter and adviser in her early years, he condemned the policy of the national curriculum. Prior to the curriculum's establishment, Joseph rejected its foundation and as a neo-liberal, he favored a vocational curriculum that would bring a culture of choice and enterprise (Crawford 438). Later in 1988, Joseph criticized the curriculum by saying that it was too prescriptive (Aldrich 16).

1.2. Teachers' Reaction

The teachers' reaction towards the 1980s educational policies was partly related to the national curriculum due to the restrictions it made on the content of the learning process. The passing of this policy was an unprecedented educational measure that altered the post-war tradition or consensus over the curriculum (Ruotanen 14). The previous educational legislations among which was the 1944 Education Act left the curriculum free and this enabled teachers to be the designers of the curriculum which they thought would best fit their pupils. Nevertheless, with the establishment of the national curriculum, this long inherited

privilege that lasted throughout the post-war period came to an end, leading teachers to react against this policy.

The amount of the subjects that were set by the national curriculum was considered as a main issue that many teachers criticized. A number of teachers claimed that the prescribed curriculum which was overloaded hampered their relationship with their students. As argued by the author Pollard, personal connection with children would make children happy and this would help in the learning process (Ruotanen 43). Nevertheless, the fact that teachers had a lot of attainment targets (which were set by the curriculum) to deliver led them to focus more on this task for much of the study day. Consequently this led them to ignore their students' personal issues (Ruotanen 43).

Teachers' criticism extended to include the system of assessment that was introduced under the 1988 Education Reform Act. The teachers along with teacher unions interrupted the process of establishing the assessment system. In 1993, the assessment process came under a critical situation as a boycott for this policy took place. This situation came to an end after the 'slimming down' (reducing the scope) of the assessment process (Pierson 136).

1.3. Parents' Reaction

The educational reforms introduced by the Thatcher government presented parents' role as a significant factor in the learning process. Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, parents were given the authority to take their children's schools from the dominance of the LEAs and make the school a grant-maintained school. This initiative was expected to receive an enormous welcome and be popular among parents. However, Parents' reaction towards this privilege differed.

The grant-maintained status was interpreted and recognized as a useful initiative by parents who advocated this policy. Their approval of the policy was expressed through voting

for its implementation. Reasons behind parents' support for this policy might be numerous and they differed from one parent to another. An example of these reasons would be securing these schools from LEAs's plans of reorganization and closure. Other parents backed the grant-maintained policy because it was a new program which they expected to succeed (Power et al 213). While the grant-maintained status was welcomed and received a kind of appreciation from a number of parents, other parents rejected the decision to opt out. These parents expressed their rejection of the policy via voting against this policy (Pierson 137).

3. The Influence of Thatcher's Educational Policies on State Schools

Improving the quality of education and raising the performance of pupils at state schools were among the main concerns that urged the Thatcher government to reform the educational system. Consequently, as these reforms were established and put into practice, many changes occurred at the level of British state education.

3.1.Social Segregation in Schools

The economic and social backgrounds of an individual came as crucial factors that determined and shaped many aspects of the individual's life. This, thereby, suggests that one's position at school or at work was set and defined by his/her social backgrounds. While rich people occupied and dominated the most senior positions in the work, poor people occupied less effective positions.

The same situation was to be applied in education. In many educational systems, there existed highly prestigious schools and others which were recognized to be unqualified or less prestigious. While the former type of schools was restricted only to children belonging to well-off families, the latter type was attended only by children belonging to poor backgrounds.

Socio-economic stratification in education had been a main concern that several educational reforms sought to eliminate via initiating different policies. Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, a number of market policies among which were competition and parental choice were introduced. These policies indicated that parents as well as their children could choose any school they wished to attend. This, accordingly, indicates that children of both poor and rich families could attend courses within the same classroom. Yet, in order to achieve this, all parents regardless of their economic backgrounds should be in practice given the same opportunity to choose their intended school (Gorard and Fitz 369).

Market policies were recognized by a number of researchers as an engine that would create social segregation within schools. Researchers such as F. Echols and P. Woods argued that markets, instead of promoting equity and social cohesion, would rather benefit those who were already in a good social position (Gorard and Fitz 366). As proposed by Gorard and Fitz, this would suggest that following the introduction of the 1988 which embodied various market policies, students in British schools would be classified based on their social class (366).

This argument was further developed and sustained by a research carried out by Gewitz et al in 1994. The latter's study was conducted within a number of schools in London. Eventually, the results of the study indicated that children belonging to the working class families attended low status schools that lacked both resources and staff (Levačić and Woods 210).

The view presented by the opponent of market policies in education was, nevertheless, opposed by other writers and researchers among whom were Gorard and Fitz. The latter conducted a research in a number of English secondary schools. The outcome of the study proved that social segregation went down in the period between 1991 and 1997 (Levačić and Woods 210).

In *Education Policy in the UK*, another evidence indicated that inserting market reforms into the British educational system did not create social segregation within schools. The authors Stephen Machin and Anna Vignoles based their perspective on the table below (5-6).

Staying on Rates by Parental Income Group

| Cohort and Year | Parental Income Group | | | Educational Inequality (Unconditional) | Educational Inequality (Conditional) |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| | Lowest 20 percent | Middle 60 percent | Highest 20 percent | | |
| 1958 cohort (1974) | .21 | .27 | .45 | .24 (.02) | .24 (.02) |
| 1970 cohort (1986) | .32 | .43 | .70 | .38 (.02) | .39 (.02) |
| 1980 cohort (1996) | .61 | .71 | .86 | .25 (.03) | .23 (.03) |
| Change 1974-1986 | .11 | .16 | .25 | .14 (.03) | .15 (.02) |
| Change 1986-1996 | .29 | .28 | .16 | -.13 (.04) | -.16 (.04) |
| Change 1974-1996 | .40 | .44 | .41 | .01 (.04) | -.01 (.04) |

Source: (Machin and Vignoles 5)

The table shows the percentage of students who stayed at school after 16 years (in the UK, this age is recognized as the compulsory school leaving age). The table includes a group of individuals from three different socio-economic backgrounds; lower, middle and high classes. The first year indicates the year of the birth, while the second year which is in brackets represents the year at which those individuals became 16.

The information presented in the table shows that starting from the year of 1974 to 1986, the highest percentage of staying after the age of 16 was taken by children belonging to wealthier families. However, from 1986 to 1996, the percentage of staying at school after the compulsory age increased for children of poor families.

Based on these information, it would be noticed that prior to 1986, the economic backgrounds of children had an influence on their education. Yet, this influence started to fade from 1986 till 1996 and this period coincided with the introduction of market policies.

This, eventually, would lead to the conclusion that market mechanisms erased the social gap rather than created it.

The contradictory findings mentioned above came in to indicate whether the reforms initiated under the 1988 Education Reform Act contributed to social segregations in schools or not. Yet, the fact that schools were competing with each other over the best and the first positions would lead these schools to choose only the best. In other words, since the schools' position depended on their students' performance, this would lead schools to recruit only students with highly academic performance regardless of their social backgrounds.

3.2.The Schools' Attainment and Performance

The poor quality of education and the low standards within British schools were among the main concerns that provoked the Thatcher government to initiate new reforms that would help in achieving high attainment. Eventually, towards the end of the 1980s, the government introduced a range of educational policies that would sustain competition among schools and thus enhance its performance.

Educational systems that lacked the spirit of competition tended to provide poor services that were inefficient and unqualified. Competition was regarded as an important factor that motivated institutions to present their best to maintain their position. Accordingly, the fact that state schools were not involved in a competition that obliged them to improve their services led these institutions to offer less profitable and insufficient services (Hirakata 8). It was against this background that the Thatcher government decided to introduce competition into these schools in order to make them more accountable, and thus compel them to improve their services.

The advocates of Thatcher's educational reform argued that the establishment of the grant-maintained schools, national curriculum, and the league tables along with the other

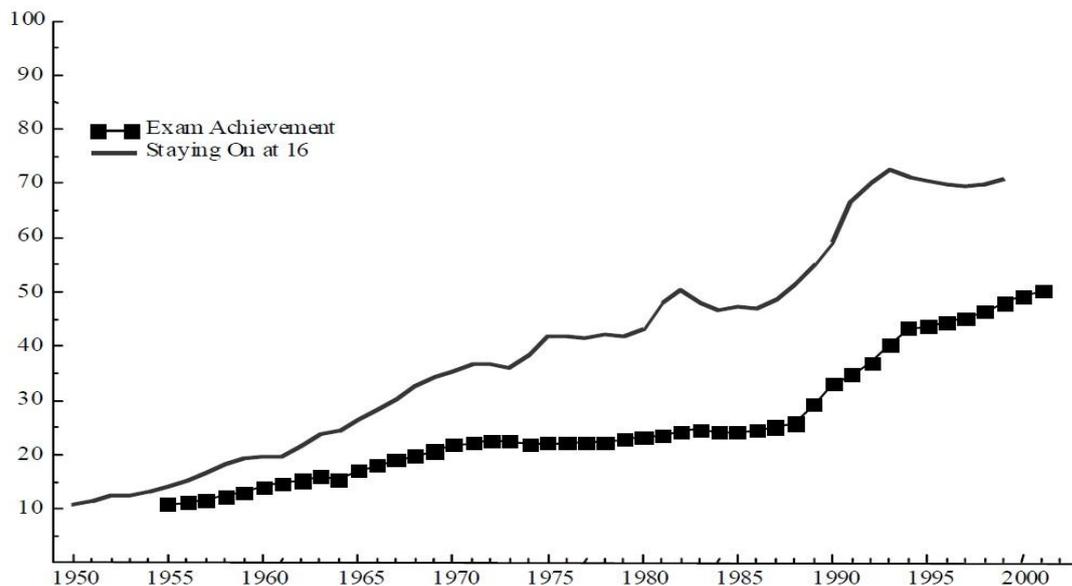
reforms would generate a competition that would improve the performance of these schools. Furthermore, this competition would enhance the performance of both grant-maintained schools and the other state schools (Halpin et al. 416; Clark 746).

Discussion about the impacts of such policies on schools' performance was conducted by several researchers and authors among whom was the Secretary of the Centre for Policy Studies Education Policy Group John Marks. In *The Betrayed Generations, Standards in British Schools 1950-2000*, Marks argued that unlike the previous educational reforms, the Thatcher government's reforms succeeded in creating a kind of accountability in public schools (82).

The role of market policies and competition in enhancing the performance of schools was also sustained by the authors Machin and Vignoles. As argued by the latter, once the schools were put into competition with each other, then, each school would perform and enhance its services to be at the top of the other schools. This excessive competition would contribute to uphold the quality of education in schools and thus help in raising education's standards (Machin and Vignoles 4).

The impact of the Thatcher government market reforms and competition on the performance of schools could be evaluated through examining the performance of British schools after applying these reforms precisely after 1988. The figure below illustrates the attainments of British schools from mid 1950 onwards:

Exam Achievement



Source: (Machin and Vignoles 2)

The figure shows the exam achievements from 1950 onwards. As it is noticed, starting from the 1950s till the end of 1960s there was a steady growth in the attainments. However, from early 1970s till the end of the 1980s, the rate of the exams' results was stable. Yet, starting from 1989, there was a sharp growth in the students' results. This continued until 1994 where the results remained stagnant until 1996 then the rate increased again.

Based on these data, it could be noticed that the level of attainment increased in a remarkable way starting from 1989 and this coincided with the introduction and the implementation of the educational reforms introduced by the Thatcher government. This indicated that these reforms were effective in improving schools performance. Additionally, between 1994 and 1995, the percentage of the exam achievements stagnated and this situation took place during the period of reviewing the national curriculum. This eventually indicated that these policies had an influence on the process of education.

Unquestionably, from the figure above, it would be noticed that there had been a rapid increase in the average of attainments in the year that followed the introduction of the Thatcher government's educational reforms. However, with the lack of any evidence or an official declaration, in this paper, that attributes these results to the Thatcher's reforms, the effectiveness of these reforms remains uncertain.

Conclusion

Education came as an important area of change during the Thatcher years. Along with her government, Thatcher introduced a number of New Right educational policies. Nevertheless, her initiative did not receive a great interest and this was depicted through the negative reactions it received. Even the process of implementation was to be hampered by those people who refused such policies. However, despite of the criticism and the rejection they faced, these reforms were applied at a wide level and in a large number of schools. In addition, following the introduction of these reforms, there was a sharp growth in the level of pupils' attainments.

General Conclusion

Following the British general election on 3 May 1979, the Conservative Party became the leading party and its leader Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister. The following years after Thatcher's electoral victory carried much change to Britain. The newly elected Prime Minister adopted a new ideology labeled the New Right ideology which came in opposition to what was promoted by the previous ideologies, namely the One Nation Conservatism and the Post-War Consensus. Thatcher introduced this ideology to the educational system which led in return to change the post war-education.

Prior to the 1980s, the educational system in Britain was carried out in a framework that was established by the 1944 Education Act. Under this Act, free secondary education was granted for all children and the traditional elementary system was replaced by three successive stages. Additionally, all pupils at the age of 11 were expected to pass the eleven-plus examination which would determine which type of school of the tripartite system they would attend. Another important change was raising the leaving age to 16 years. Moreover, the Butler Act granted the LEAs the authority over state schools, and they became responsible for all matters related to schools provision and organization. Nevertheless, the only thing that was left uncontrolled was the curriculum which was left for teachers.

During the mid 1960s, the comprehensive system of education emerged as an extension or as a result to the 1944 education Act. This system abolished the idea of selection under the 1976 Education Act. Moreover, the tripartite system was replaced by a comprehensive system that did not distinguish between pupils' ability and aptitude.

The post-war educational system came under attack in the 1970s where it was criticized for being inefficient and for bringing schools' standards down. This eventually provided the argument for the Thatcher government to reform the educational system.

At the end of the 1980s, Margaret Thatcher assisted by her government introduced a set of educational reforms that were influenced by neo-liberal and neo-conservative aspects within the New Right. Under the 1988 Education Reform Act, parents were granted the right to choose their children's schools. Schools were allowed to opt out of LEAs' control and became independent. Even more, a prescribed national curriculum of ten subjects was designed for both primary and secondary schools. All of these reforms were launched in order to reduce LEAs' influence over schools and encourage competition in state schools.

The welfare state education that was initiated with the 1944 Education Act underwent several changes due to the reforms that were introduced by the Thatcher government. Under the 1944 Act, all state schools were put under the LEAs' control and left the curriculum free. This however was to change under the 1988 Education Reform Act which allowed schools to leave from the LEAs' control and have their self-governing. The Reform Act also established a national curriculum for all state funded schools. In other words, the 1988 Act controlled what was uncontrolled and released what was controlled.

Despite the aforementioned changes, the Thatcher government left some aspects of the Butler Act intact. The three successive stages of education and the leaving age were kept the same and public finance for education continued to exist in Thatcher's era though with a different approach, precisely, in grant-maintained schools where the school received its budget based on the number of students. The Thatcher government had even restored some aspects of the 1944 Act when it reintroduced the eleven-plus examination under the 1979 Education Act.

Following the introduction of Thatcher's educational reforms, there was a change at the level of organization of schools due to the emergence of the grant-maintained independent schools. Besides, there was a change at the level of attainments. The period of implementing

these reforms witnessed a sharp growth in the exams achievements and this might be considered as an impact of the reforms.

The educational reforms that were launched by the Thatcher government were to form an important era of education. These reforms represented Thatcher's legacy and contribution to the British educational system. These reforms came as a bridge between her government and John Major's. It was the Thatcher government that initiated these reforms but the reforms were carried out and put into practice by John Major's government. Despite the fact that the latter reviewed some aspects of these reforms, the outcome of this process was similar to the original reforms. This could be recognized as an initiative to maintain Thatcher's educational reforms.

Works Cited

- Aldrich, Richard. "Educational Reform and Curriculum Implementation in England: An Historical Perspective". (1994): 1-19. Print.
- Apple, Michael W. "Between Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism: Education and Conservatism in a Global Context". Print.
- Armstrong, Hillary. "The British Education Act of 1988: A Critique from the Labour Party". *Journal of Education Finance* 15. 4, (1990): 572-576. Print.
- Ball, Stephen J and Deborah Youdell. *Hidden Privatisation in Public Education*. London: Institute of Education, 2007. Print.
- Barber, Michael. *The Making of the 1944 Education Act*. London: Cassell, 1994. Print.
- Birch, Kean and Vlad Mykhnenko, ed. *The Rise and Fall of Neoliberalism: The Collapse of an Economic Order?*. London: Zed Books Ltd, 2010. Print.
- Black, Paul J. "Performance Assessment and Accountability: The Experience in England and Wales". *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 16. 2, (1994):191-203. Print.
- Blake, Stephen and John Andrew. *Iron Lady: the Thatcher Years*. London: Michael O'Mara Books, 2012. Print.
- Bolick, Clint. "Thatcher's Revolution: Deregulation and Political Transformation". *Yale Journal on Regulation* 12.2 , (1995): 528-546. Print.
- Campbell, Jim, David Halpin and Sean Neill. "Primary Schools and Opting out: Some Policy Implications". *British Journal of Educational Studies* 44. 3, (1996): 246-259. Print.
- Chan, Sui-Mee and Pat East. *A Recent History of Primary and Secondary Education in England part 1: 1944 to 1985*. London: ITT MFL, 2008. Print.
- Clark, Damon. "The Performance and Competitive Effects of School Autonomy". *Journal of Political Economy* 117. 4, (2009): 745-783. Print.

Colwill, Ian. "The Revised National Curriculum in England and the European Dimension".

International Schulbuchforschung 18. 1, (1996): 57-64.Print.

Cooke, O.B.E, Alistair. *A Party of Change: A Brief History of the Conservatives*. Print.

Crawford, Keith. "A History of the Right: The Battle for Control of National Curriculum History 1989-1994". *British Journal of Educational Studies* 43. 4, (1995): 433-456.Print.

Evans, Stephen. "Thatcher and the Victorians: A Suitable Case for Comparison? ". *History* 82. 268, (1997): 601-620.Print.

Gamble, Andrew. *The Free Economy and the Strong State: The Politics of Thatcherism*. 2nd ed. New York: Palgrave, 1994. Print.

Gorard, Stephen and John Fitz. "The More Things Change... The Missing Impact of Marketisation?".*British Journal of Sociology of Education* 19. 3, (1998): 365-376. Print.

Gough, Ian. "Thatcherism and the welfare state: Britain is experiencing the most far-reaching experiment in 'new right' politics in the western world": *Marxism Today*. (1980): 7-12.Print.

Hadley, Louisa and Ho, Elizabeth, ed. *Thatcher & After: Margaret Thatcher and Her After life in Contemporary Culture*. England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.

Hadley, Louisa. *Responding to Margaret Thatcher's Death*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Print.

Halpin, David, Sally Power and John Fitz. "Grant-Maintained Schools: Making a Difference without Being Really Different". *British Journal of Educational Studies* 39. 4, (1991): 409-424.Print.

Hay, Rod. ed. *Two Treatises of Government*.London,1823.Print.

- Hayton, Richard. "The demise of the One Nation tradition. *Global Discourse / Global Discourse: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Current Affairs and Applied Contemporary Thought* 5, (2014): 92 - 95. Print.
- Hirakata, Yasuhisa. Education Reform under the Thatcher Government and Hayek's Thought on Welfare State: Market Mechanism and Managed Competition. Thesis. Kyushu Sangyo University, 2016. Kyushu Sangyo. Print.
- Jackson, Ben and Robert Saunders, ed. *Making Thatcher's Britain*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Print.
- Judge, Harry. "Is There a Crisis in British Secondary Schools?". *The Phi Delta Kappan* 70. 10, (1989): 813-816. Print.
- Kaye, Harvey J. "The Use and Abuse of the Past: the New Right and the Crisis of History". *Socialist Register* 1987: 332-364. Print.
- Khalki, Smaine. State Intervention in British Education (1833-1988). Doctorat Thesis. Université d'Oran 2, 2016. Oran. Print.
- King, Desmond S. "New Right Ideology, Welfare State Form, and Citizenship: A Comment on Conservative Capitalism". *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30. 4, (1988): 792-799. Print.
- Kirkland, Christopher, ed. *The Political Economy of Britain in Crisis, Trade Unions and the Banking Sector*. Springer, 2017. Print.
- Kogan, Maurice. "Anthony Crosland: Intellectual and Politician". *Oxford Review of Education* 32, (2006): 71-86. Print.
- Lerner, Rachel Ashley. Butler's Battle: Wartime & the Nature of Compromise: An Analysis of British Educational Reform during World War II. Thesis. University of Michigan History Honors, 2015. Print.

- Levačić, Rosalind and Philip A Woods. "Raising School Performance in the League Tables (Part 1): Disentangling the Effects of Social Disadvantage". *British Educational Research Journal* 28. 2, (2002): 207-226.Print.
- Lofty, John S. "News from England: Coming Home to the National Curriculum". *English Education* 22. 4, (1990): 241-264.Print.
- Maisuria, Alpesh. "The Neo-liberalisation Policy Agenda and Its Consequences for Education in England: a focus on resistance now and possibilities for the future". *Policy Futures in Education* 12. 2, (2014): 286-296. Print.
- Marks, John. *The Betrayed Generations: Standards in British Schools 1950-2000*. London: Centre for Policy Studies, 2000. Print.
- Marsh, David. *The New Politics of British Trade Unionism*. London: the Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992. Print.
- Marwik, Arthur. *British Society since 1945*. Middlesex: Penguin Book, 1996. Print.
- McLean, Martin and Natalia Voskresenskaya. "Educational Revolution from above: Thatcher's Britain and Gorbachev's Soviet Union". *Comparative Education Review* 36. 1, (1992): 71-90.Print.
- Middleton, Nigel. "Lord Butler and the Education Act of 1944".*British Journal of Educational Studies* 20. 2, (1972): 178-191.Print.
- Pierson, Chris. "The New Governance of Education: The Conservatives and Education 1988-1997". *Oxford Review of Education* 24. 1, (1998): 131-142.Print.
- Power, Sally. David Halpin and John Fitz."Parents, Pupils and Grant-Maintained Schools".*British Educational Research Journal* 20. 2, (1994): 209-225.Print.
- Robison, Richard, ed. *The Neo-Liberal Revolution: Forging the Market State*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.Print.

- Ruotanen, TuomoKalevi. . "A Bright Child...He Just Burst Into Tears And Said... I Can't Do It!":The 1988 Education Reform Act and It's Consequences on Child-Centredness in Teaching in English Primary Schools. Master Thesis. University of Joensuu, 2001.Print.
- Savage, Stephen P. and Lynton Robins, ed. *Public Policy under Thatcher*. New York: Macmillan Education, 1990. Print.
- Seldon, Anthony and Kevin Hickson, ed. *New Labour, Old Labour the Blair: Wilson and Callaghan Governments*. London: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- Smith, Anne. "Reflections on secondary education policy in England and Wales since the 1944Act".*Education Research and Perspectives*. 34. 1, (2007):115-135.
- Taysum, Alison. "A Critical Historiographical Analysis of England's Educational Policies from 1944 to 2011". *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education* 1, (2012): 54-87.Print.
- Thatcher, Margaret. Mitch Daniels and Mark Sanford. *Transforming Government Through Privatization*. Reason Foundation, 2006. Print.
- Tyrie, Andrew. *One Nation Again*. One Nation Group, 2006.Print.
- Verger, Antoni, Clara Fontdevila and Adrián Zancajo. *The Privatization of Education: A Political Economy of Global Education Reform*. New York : Teachers College, 2016.Print.
- Vignoles, Anna and Stephen Machin. *Education Policy in the UK*. London: Centre for the Economics of Education, 2005.Print.
- Whitty, Geoff and Ian Menter. "Lessons of Thatcherism: Education Policy in England and Wales 1979-88". *Journal of Law and Society* 16. 1, (1988): 42-64.Print.

Margaret Thatcher's Ideology of the New Right and its Impact on the British Welfare State Education (1979-1990)

أيدولوجية "اليمن الجديد" لمارغريت تاتشر وتأثيرها على التعليم البريطاني في "دولة الرفاهية" (1990-1979)

By: Fatima Baalla

Supervised by: Miss Nadia Mansouri

Abstract

The end of the 1970s indicated a significant period in British politics with the Conservative Party's return to power. This change came as a starting point that paved the way for the establishment of a new range of policies. The party's leader Margaret Thatcher sought to introduce a set of reforms and regulations, which were partly influenced by the New Right ideology, into public sectors among which was education.

This dissertation aims at examining the impacts of Thatcher's educational reforms on the educational system that was established under the Welfare State Program. This research, accordingly, investigates whether the Post-World War II educational system underwent change under Thatcher's ideology of the New Right or it remained the same, and whether these reforms enhanced the quality of education in state schools. At the end of the 1980s, the Thatcher Government decided to raise education standards in state schools through introducing competition and market mechanisms into these institutions. Accordingly, under the 1988 Reform Act, a set of reforms including parental choice, grant maintained schools and a national curriculum were introduced. These reforms resulted in a change in the post-war II educational system as well as in pupils' attainments.

Keywords: Margaret Thatcher, the New Right, the 1988 Education Reform Act, grant maintained schools, parental choice.

ملخص

شكّلت نهاية السبعينيات من القرن العشرين فترة مهمة في تاريخ السياسة البريطانية مع عودة حزب المحافظين إلى السلطة و جاء هذا التغيير كتمهيد لمجموعة من السياسات الجديدة حيث سعت مارغريت تاتشر ، رئيسة الحزب ، إلى إدخال مجموعة من الإصلاحات التي تأثرت بإيدولوجية اليمن الجديد في القطاعات العامة بما فيها قطاع التعليم.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة ما إذا كان النظام التعليمي البريطاني الذي أنشئ عقب الحرب العالمية الثانية قد تغير اثر تبني تاتشر أيدولوجية "اليمن الجديد" أم أنه ظل كما هو؟ حيث تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة آثار إصلاحات تاتشر التعليمية على النظام التعليمي الذي أنشئ بموجب برنامج "دولة الرفاهية" كما تسعى أيضا إلى معرفة إن كانت هذه الإصلاحات قد عززت جودة التعليم في المدارس الحكومية؟ مع نهاية الثمانينات ، قررت حكومة تاتشر رفع معايير التعليم في المدارس الحكومية من خلال إدخال المنافسة و آليات السوق في المؤسسات التعليمية. وعلى هذا الأساس أصدرت الحكومة قانون إصلاح التعليم لعام 1988 الذي تضمن مجموعة من الإصلاحات منها: منح الحق للإباء لاختيار مدارس أبنائهم ، إنشاء مدارس مستقلة و تأسيس منهاج دراسي وطني. أدت هذه الإصلاحات إلى تغيير النظام التعليمي السابق و إلى تغيير النتائج الدراسية.

الكلمات الأساسية: مارغريت تاتشر ، اليمن الجديد ، قانون إصلاح التعليم لعام 1988 ، مدارس مستقلة ، اختيار الوالدين للمدارس.