

Rethinking “Partnership”: Rhetoric versus Reality in International Educational Aid

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I. Introduction

International Educational Aid (IEA) faces the new paradigm of ‘partnership.’ Together with shared understanding that aid agencies would need to respect equal partnership with recipient governments and coordination among aid agencies to avoid duplication and inefficiency, partnership among stakeholders, including donor agencies, governments, private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and civil society, became a norm that each donor agency needs to pursue as stated in various policy documents especially since the 1990s (e.g. WCEFA Secretariat, 1990; DAC/OECD, 1996; World Bank, 2000; DFID, 2003; USAID, 2003).

However, the actual implementation of partnership has not been carefully examined in terms of its effectiveness and implications for the overall policy and practice of IEA. Is equal partnership possible when partners are unequal in the socio-economic and political status in the context of IEA? While there are numerous literatures on NGO sector involvement in international aid, a few literatures focus on comprehensive partnership dynamics among donor agencies, the state, and civil society in the educational reform process (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999; Moulton and Mundy, 2002). Even with reference to government-NGO relations, research that takes into account different interactions between international donor and technical assistance agencies, the state, and local actors are urged to contribute to improved education finance policy and practice (Arnove with Christina, 1998).

Against this background, this article attempts to analyze the issues that arise from actual implementation of partnership in IEA. The core research question, therefore, is: what does partnership mean to different stakeholders in IEA? In order to have a theoretical and empirical grounding to the research question, this paper aims at re-

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viewing literature on definition and historical background of partnership in IEA and critically analyzing existing perspectives on partnership.

II. Definition of Partnership

As Mullinix (2001) indicates, partnership has a substantial cross-disciplinary history and represents a significant step beyond cooperation and collaboration. The transdisciplinary concept of partnership stems from ‘social partnership’ of organizational theories that is defined as a form of collaborative action in which organizations from multiple sectors interact to achieve common goals (Waddock, 1991). It further evolved as a concept common to many disciplines such as education, social services, medicine, and business, to recognize the importance of partnership for achieving goals and expanding impact as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Definitions of Partnership

Area	Definition	Characteristics	Source
Education	Relationship that holds six elements, namely, mutual trust, honest communication, common goals, flexible governance, positive tensions and a culture of inquiry.	Focusing more on elements required for effective partnership rather than strict definition itself.	Patterson, Machelli, and Pacheco (1999)
Health and social services	An association of two or more persons, groups, or organizations who join together to achieve a common goal that neither one alone can accomplish which is characterized by joint membership rights, democratic participation, and shared responsibility.	Highlighting distinction from cooptation, cooperation and coordination in that partnership demands all actors to be owners of the effort, to commit to undertaking a real investment of money, labor, skill or other resources and to face conflict, disagreement, and change to strengthen the alliance.	Poole (1995)
Business	An association of individuals who agree to carry on as co-owners of a business for profit. Public-private partnerships mean "more than superficial cordiality" and require cooperative efforts based on "mutual respect" which does not occur automatically.	Usually shown as a written agreement between the partners. Private-public partnership has varieties in terms of who takes a leading role.	Winicur (1993) and Larkin (1994)
Others	Relationship that involves both pain and gain, for which commitment and investment are required, having the potential to make the delivery of services more coherent and hence more effective by pooling ideas, knowledge and financial resources.	Paying special attention to the balance; between flexibility that partnerships require if they are to break new ground and public accountability for public expenditure; between leadership, expertise and participation; between consensus and diversity.	Balloch and Taylor (2001)

Source: Author (The sources of information are identified in the third column).

While there are few academic literatures on definition of partnership in the field of international development, a couple of scholars present useful analyses to acknowledge difficulty in applying the above mentioned ‘ideal’ types of partnership in IEA. Bray (1999) defines partnership as “a person who shares (in the same activity),” which can also be applied to organizations. Noting the fact that the word partnership implies more or less equal sharing, Bray (1999) notes partnership in reality is practiced with the dominant partners and subordinate partners rather than partners with equal power distribution, accepting that the nature of partnership to vary widely in different settings and at different points in time.

Brinkerhoff (2002) similarly notes obvious impracticality of this ideal type of partnership due to organizational or political constraints. While she defines ‘ideal’ type of partnership as “a dynamic relationship among diverse actors, based on mutually agreed objectives, pursued through a shared understanding of the most rational division of labor based on the respective comparative advantages of each partner,” she warns that one should describe partnership practice on a relative scale, referring to “the extent to which an interorganizational relationship is operating like a partnership”: thus, partnership refers to “relative practice” (Brinkerhoff, 2002: 14).

It should be mentioned that the existing definition of partnership has a serious defect when considering the context of IEA. As Bray (1999) and Brinkerhoff (2002) rightly point out, the premise of equal relationship identified by definitions of partnership does not offer a viable analytical lens for a context in which unequal power already preconditions the nature and forms of partnership upon organizational or political constraints. The positive connotation of partnership as a strong form of participation of actors with relatively equal power to jointly achieve a certain goal fails to see political interests of the donor-recipient relationship as well as different stakeholders within recipient countries and donors. Thus, placing equality as the premise of partnership, the existing definition of partnership is not entirely applicable to examine partnership policy in IEA. Bearing this problem in mind, the next section reviews policy literatures of IEA and indicate its ambiguity as well as rationales behind the policy of partnership.

III. Historical Background of Partnership

III.1. Overview of Policy Change

In the general terms, partnership in international aid has been present for more than 30 years (DFID, 2003). However, special attention would be required to the historical background to pose a question: why has partnership been overwhelmingly advocated by international community since the 1990s?

After the oil shocks in the 1970s, followed by the lost decade of development in the 1980s, when developing countries faced severe economic stagnation and declined primary enrollment rates and school systems fell into disarray, international aid agencies suffered from aid fatigue by which they felt there were no sufficient outcomes from the past experience of assistance (Clark, 1990; Salamon, 1994; Buchert, 2002). Also in the North questions about the ongoing capacity of governments to continue to expand domestic social services were asked (Mundy and Murphy, 2001). These discouraging realities further stimulated rethinking about a better alternative for economic progress of developing countries and aid effectiveness.

One result has been ‘assisted self-reliance’ or ‘participatory development’ which has been focused since the late 1980s (Salamon, 1994). The role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) drew particular attention under the recognition of their advantages such as global networks, field experience, flexibility, access to media, and the non-profit nature (Clark, 1990). Another result is the idea of ownership and partnership between donors and recipient governments and coordination among different donors. The aim is to share common goals and transcend traditional donor/beneficiary and client/customer relationships (DFID, 2003). The World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 is a milestone of international partnership initiative that involved governments, aid agencies, and NGOs to share commitment to a common goal of providing all children with access to quality basic education (WCEFA Secretariat, 1990). Thus, the motives of international community to seek for alternative development approach initially led to the idea of multi-facet partnerships including donors, recipient governments, and civil society (in both developed and developing countries) since the 1990s.

However, aid fatigue and serious doubt about the ability of government do not

seem to have led to the determined partnership in IEA. Reviewing the official documents, partnership policy stays fairly vague in terms of the degree of participation, devolved authority and mandate (UNESCO, 2000; DAC/OECD, 1996; Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999; World Bank, 2000; CDF Secretariat, World Bank, 2001; DFID, 2003; USAID, 2003). Assistance to private/non-government sector as well as ownership of recipient country is described more as the ‘good’ intention than as the substantial structural change of aid. There is no implication for the exchange relation or suggestion as to who should lose or gain authority in relation to an increase of involvement of the private/non-governmental sector.

For example, whereas the Dakar Framework for Action emphasizes the need for participatory mechanisms for advocacy, monitoring, and knowledge generation and sharing, there is no mentioning as to why and how (UNESCO, 2000). Also, the well-known “Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation” published by Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of OECD in May 1996, repeatedly states the importance of partnership by using different terminology such as “local ownership and participation by civil society,” “importance of a dynamic private sector,” and “a more people-centered, participatory and sustainable development process,” what all these mean in the actual implementation of international aid is not clear (DAC/OECD, 1996).

Similarly the international donors such as the World Bank expressed the need for partnership in the late 1990s. In 1999 the World Bank presented the idea of Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) that is a system in which countries design their own holistic development plans and are accountable for their achievements with country ownership and partnership among stakeholders (CDF Secretariat, World Bank, 2001). Rather than a system with built-in asymmetries between ‘donors’ and ‘recipients’ bounded by “layer of conditions and constraints, bucketfuls of outside interference, and continuous changes of dogma and fashion,” CDF suggests that “exchange between equals is the raw material of trust, trust is the foundation of co-operation, and co-operation is the only hope we have of confronting the collective challenges that face us in the 21st century” (Edwards, 2000).

The more recent Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) to educational reform in developing countries is even more vocal about past failure of IEA and a need for effective partnership (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999; Mundy, 2002). Based on the dissatisfaction with the impact of education sector outcomes on poverty reduction, education SWAPs aim at making education aid more effective through formulating a long-term educational reform plan with a subsequent framework for co-operation among governments, donors, and civil society and a fairly tight operational program (Ratcliffe and Macrae, 1999). Other policy documents stress political dimension of education finance to support complementary relationship as the essence of partnership (Karmokolias and Maas, 1999; Windham, 1994; UNESCO, 2000; Ritzen, 2003). The idea of partnership was brought in the international educational finance not only to fill the financial gap but also to establish the policy environment that makes IEA more effective. Meeting the increased financial requirements for international educational assistance and dealing with critical concerns of debt burdens, fungibility of aid, conditionality, and changes in the world political environment after Cold War, Windham (1994) suggested new structures and means for international educational finance as effective partnerships at the international, regional, and national level with the important role of NGOs, equal relationship between financing organizations and recipient countries, and cooperation of regional educational structures. Ritzen (2003) further introduces the concept of “policy gaps” to emphasize a need for a firm commitment and ownership at the country level. However, these discussions still remain at the advocacy level without empirical evidence as to how the concept of partnership indeed affects each partner and policy and practice of IEA.

In sum, although these policy documents suggest that the IEA has shifted to the new paradigm of partnership due to past failure of aid, it is important to note that the policy discussion on partnership in the context of IEA are hardly based on the empirical evidence or firm theoretical background. Thus, they do not show what partnership means in terms of its process in actual implementation of educational projects/programs/reform on the ground. Moreover, it is not clear how each partner perceives partnership while policy documents normally represent donors' intention more than others. Thus, it is imperative to

investigate in what ways partnership is perceived by each stakeholder with different interests: why partnership? The next sub-section attempts to respond to the question to analyze rationales for partnership and come up with a more viable definition of partnership that can provide analytical lens.

III.2. Rationale for Partnership

In working with partnership, the various stakeholders may have different reasons for their commitment to sharing the work. The most powerful motive for the partnership may be self-interest whereby people enter partnerships because there is something to be gained from it (Sacks, 1999 quoted in Bray, 1999), while the most obvious motivation for establishing a partnership as a collective action is the desire to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of development efforts (Brinkerhoff, 2002). In the policy sphere, partnership is said to be used strategically to open decision-making processes (Stoker, 1997 quoted in Brinkerhoff, 2002). This strategy can represent a moral dimension, where the intent is to further public interests rather than private one, or it can be viewed pragmatically as the only means to ensure sustainability (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

To investigate further self-interests of each actor for partnership in this context, Brinkerhoff (2002) analyzes benefits and risks of organizations involved in partnership. According to her analyses, as shown in Table 2, each actor has different expectations that are potentially complementary but can be conflicting. Donors have intentions to improve their aid-effectiveness through partnership by increasing local adaptability, social capital, and expertise and to create good will in their political environment while they also face risks of not obtaining satisfactory outcome in spite of investments in capacity building for organization and negotiations required for partnership. Governments of recipient countries expect partnership to contribute to their overall development objective through information and technological advantages and cost savings, which further enhance government legitimacy and political gains: on the other hand, they are exposed to conflicts and pressures with enemies and external donors as well as increasing demands due to more open and democratic forms of public service operation.

Table 2. Benefits and Risks of Partnership

Area	Benefits	Risks
Donor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt programs to local conditions, leverage resources, and attain more significant impact • Create social capital • Reach communities and address issues that would otherwise be impossible or problematic • Contribute to donor's technical expertise and understanding • Create good will within the politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant investments in capacity building for organization • Require lengthy negotiations • May not always come to fruition and vulnerable to stakeholders criticisms
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to contribute meaningfully to development objective, improving the lives of citizens, and engendering stability and potential government legitimacy • Enhanced effectiveness and efficiency owing to information and technological advantages and cost savings • "Sell itself" in terms of elections and maximizing tax receipts • Institutional capacity to fulfill its mission and in credibility as an honest broker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with enemies who pose political threats to their legitimacy • May not have capacity to respond to the extend and diversity of demand • Diverting resources from it to NGOs • Having to respond to pressure exerted from donors via NGOs • Inertia of participation in decision making
Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced effectiveness, influence and capacity • Scale up their own work and scope • Increase ability to cultivate close personal contacts with the powers-that-be • Broaden access to financial and informational resources • Capacity benefits (e.g. experience and skills in working in contractual or other administrative arrangements, enhance understanding of how other sectors operate, useful and practical knowledge from training and skill transfer and additional material support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucratization • Become risk averse or reluctant to bear the costs of listening to their constituencies • New technologies and management practices alter NGO's ability to tap "the altruism and energy" of those committed to the NGO's mission • Financial dependence and its outcomes may weaker NGO's constituency relations and legitimacy • Conflict between short-term planning and efforts and NGOs long-term commitments to their constituency • Over-funding may induce corruption, waste, diversion of human capacity in time and effort from other organizational priorities • Funding and implementation delays rotted in partners' organizational constraints and priorities
Community Based Organization (CBO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements in the quality of life of the individuals, families, and groups that both comprise CBOs and are represented by them • Manpower, technology and institutional relationship • Identifying and cultivating leaders, providing technical assistance and managerial support and linking CBOs to other actors and sectors for CBOs and their objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffer distancing from constituencies • Social and political oppression when CBO's contextual constraints are not understood
Private Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to key and players in government and among financing institutions and enhance negotiating power and goodwill • Foster more communication, improved relations, sometimes conflict resolution with company's critics • Entering into emerging markets, reduce input, transaction costs, increase process efficiency • Improved quality of products and services • Access to high-quality resources • Organizational learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criticism that businesses profiting from philanthropic work • Partners may speak out and act in ways that can be detrimental to a corporation's reputation • Requiring long-term investments • Delays of implementation

Source: Brinkerhoff (2002), pp. 47-71.

As for the benefits and risks of the side of civil society, NGOs have benefits in expanding their capacity and resources while taking a risk of distancing themselves from the constituencies, losing their original mission and flexibility, and being exposed to unpleasant organizational attributes such as bureaucratization and corruption. Community-based Organizations (CBOs) may be able to achieve their goals and improve the standard of living of people concerned through development of manpower, technology and institutional relationship brought by partnership, while partnership may take them away from constituents and make them more susceptible to the partner's will that may or may not accompany a degree of oppression. The private sector has benefits from cultivating new business fields, obtaining new networks and ways of improving their service and reputation, but it faces the risk of long-term investments and partner's inefficiency or incapacity which negatively influences its reputation in the market.

Although these actor-based analyses are useful in explaining the rationale for partnership at the initial stage, these types of analytic categories overlook interactive nature of partnership that involves political dimension in the context of donor-recipient relationship, within recipient country and within donors. Bray (1999) pays scant attention to political dimension of partnership within the country whereby one partner gains something at the expense of others. While Brinkerhoff's analysis contributes to illustrate the potential controversial issues of partnership from the different organizational point of view, it fails to identify the stakeholders in the donor-recipient context.

Looking at donor-recipient and within donor partnership more closely, political motives need special attention. Donors do not provide funds and expertise only with altruistic intentions, but tend to attempt to transfer their ideology and strengthen military alliance as well as power and status of certain political actors. On the recipient side, whereas motives can be revealed collectively as obtaining access to markets or resources and political stability, individual interests of political actors play a role of perpetuating their power and status over others. The issue of corruption, often encountered in the process of purchasing textbooks and delivering teacher's salaries, is particularly evident in IEA and suggests that interests in partnership be analyzed both at the organizational and individual

levels within and across donor/recipient countries.

Having examined historical background and rationales of partnership, it can be said that although partnership is officially meant to obtain more efficiency and effectiveness in IEA, it would be more meaningful to understand various gains and losses for each partner at individual and organizational levels in both donor-recipient and within donor/recipient contexts. With this kind of interaction of complex intentions and expectations of partners, actual implementation of partnership can be defined as ‘exchange relationship.’ As exchange theory notes, exchange is not a matter of maximizing or optimizing individual gains but of understanding the meaning of such ‘gains’ relative to the relationship with other people, or the realization of joint gains or gains at the expense of others (Chadwick-Jones, 1976). In line with this argument, the next section outlines the conceptual framework adopted for the analysis on partnership in IEA in this paper.

IV. Conceptual Framework

Following the previous indication that the existing general and policy literature on partnership do not provide a viable definition or lens to analyze the phenomenon of partnership in IEA, exchange theory and organization theory are found to be useful to articulate the power dynamics that leads to partnership and develops its notion. This section reviews these two theories and come up with a possible conceptual framework to further understanding the meaning of partnership in the context of IEA.

Exchange Theory. Historically, exchange theory was developed by political economists whose primary focus was on exchange behavior in monetized market, then later applied to social and political aspects of exchange in various settings (Baldwin, 1990). A basic assumption of exchange is the reciprocal relationship whereby people join together only insofar as they believe and subsequently find it in their mutual interest to do so (Chadwick-Jones, 1976; Huston and Burgess, 1979). In this sense the relation is a joint product of their interdependent actors and thus an individual's action must be studied simultaneously with the actions of others.

Social exchange theory concerns the nature of exchange at three different

levels, namely, factual interdependencies, normative interdependencies, and structural interdependencies (Ceri, 1990). At the factual level, the exchange is considered with respect to the dynamics of the interaction, rebuilt in the light of its results, in which notions such as equal and unequal exchange are placed. At the level of normative interdependencies the exchange is examined with respect to the social norms that institute and regulate it and which express its cultural nature. At the structural level, exchange is investigated with reference to the social relations that support it. Blau (1964) notes that establishing bonds of friendship and establishing superordination over others are two functions of social exchange, contradicting as these two consequences seem. He further explains that social exchange does not start with the norm of reciprocity but with the *existential conditions* of exchange, out of which the norm tends to develop.

Political exchange requires the negotiator to be a political actor in the institutional sense. Politics is depicted in terms of reciprocal interaction rather than as unilateral action by a power wielder vis-à-vis a passive object. In this case, each party does not necessarily have equal influence. Thus, to understand political exchange, one has to analyze from the viewpoints of various individuals involved in exchange: 1) how much of a policy or reward available at a given cost does one want?; and 2) how much is one willing to give up in order to get it? (Curry and Wade, 1968). Homans (1961) and Blau (1964) see the origin of power structures as a product of unequal exchange relations that occur when some individuals become increasingly dependent on others for services required in reaching their objectives.

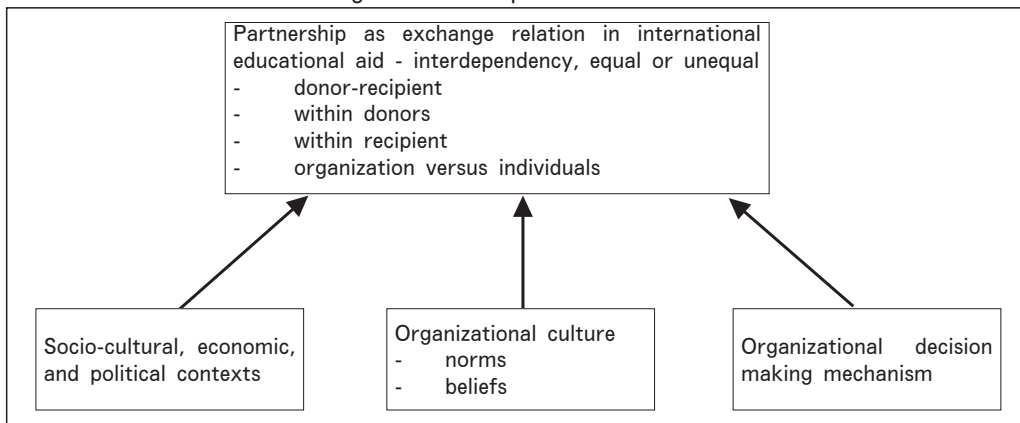
With an exclusive focus on the factual level, contemporary theories on social exchange and political exchange set the main focus of inquiry as to why the exchange was concluded in that particular way. Since the level of reciprocity varies depending on the characteristics of the persons involved and their role and status in a given social and political contexts, conditions must be studied in which reciprocity may be equal and where it may be unequal.

Organization Theory. Organization theory distinguishes individual motives from organizational goals as well as attempts to analyze the function of different organizations. It is acknowledged that only a limited set of organizations do

individual motives and organizational goals coincide (Scott, 1987). Thus, one needs precaution that it is not appropriate to survey individual participants and then aggregate their individual objectives to arrive at a description of the organization's goals or to posit the existence of some type of metaphysical corporate mind in which collective goals are formulated. In order to avoid both reductionism and reification, one has to analyze who sets organizational goals and how organizational goals are set (Scott, 1987).

It is also important to note that organizational cultures, that is, shared, internalized beliefs and norms, hold control and provide meaning and guidance to individual members engaged in collective action (Scott, 1987). Furthermore, these organizations are influenced by wider social and cultural environment as the ground in which organizations are rooted (Meyer and Scott, 1992; Scott and Christensen, 1995). Thus, organization theory suggests that in order to analyze an exchange relation, one needs to look at decision making mechanism of the involved organizations, organizational culture and wider socio-cultural environment.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Source: Author.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework as the synthesis of the above theoretical bases. By conceptualizing partnership as exchange relation, the levels of exchange relation are distinguished to identify the different nature of relationship at each level, namely, donor-recipient, within donors, within recipient country, and organization versus individuals. The kinds of exchange relationship at each level are influenced by socio-cultural, economic and political context,

organizational culture and organizational decision making mechanism. Using this conceptual framework, the next section attempts to examine what is known about such exchange relations in IEA by reviewing both theoretical and empirical literatures.

V. Perspectives of Partnership as Exchange Relations

In this section, I attempt to analyze potential and empirical exchange relations from the existing literature in IEA from the perspectives of 1) donor-recipient relation; 2) within donor relation; 3) within recipient relation; and 4) individual versus organizational levels.

V.1. Donor-Recipient Relation

Not surprisingly, a number of literature illustrate that donor-recipient exchange relation is characterized by its inequality with more power attached to donors. Some criticisms demonstrate that partnership remains mostly as ‘rhetoric’ without substantial change from the past cooperation and remain unequal exchange relations due to the structural political context of international aid (Samoff, 1999; McGinn, 2000; Klees, 2001).

For instance, McGinn (2000) notes that while the past IEA enforced standardization in education, which is directly linked with colonialism and recent emergence of supranational organizations, new modalities also have nothing new in concepts and ‘partnership’ is simply reused with particular intention in the current history for two major reasons; 1) rising demands by a new generation of leaders and policy-makers determined to engage with the world on ‘equal’ terms and 2) intention of bilateral and multilateral aid agencies to share leadership with recipient countries, buffeted by criticisms of structural adjustment. Similarly, by critically examining partnerships and their embodiment in the rhetoric surrounding the Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs) and the World Bank's extension of SWAPs, Klees (2001) concludes that recent partnerships are not more than unexamined and idealized “let's all do this together” idea with “a blame-the-victim outlook” that misses the dissent, struggle, and collective action that are necessary to transform fundamentally unequal, unfair, and oppressive

relations into “partnerships of mutuality” (Klees, 2001: 7). These views suggest that donor's gain from the exchange relation with the recipient country is glossing over the criticisms on past aid ineffectiveness, while recipient has less stake other than slightly increasing their voice in the relationship while their voice is still largely confined to its financial dependency on donors.

Samoff (1999) finds that numerous African education sector studies undertaken by various donor agencies during the early 1990s are strikingly similar and concludes that the reasons for such uniformity are donor-driven agendas and procedures, with constrained national participation, control, and ownership. Samoff (1999) asserts that education sector analysis is not accompanied with a sense of “divergent interest” and “mutual benefit” of all participants' interests but solely reflect on ideology of donors and limited elites of the recipient country (Samoff, 1999: 265). This research indicates that donors and limited elites of recipient countries maintain political status quo under the name of partnership at the expense of the mass population in recipient countries who receives little attention.

The empirical case studies that deal with twenty-two education sector programs implemented under partnership policy in developing countries in the 1990s confirm that partnership has been one-sided with recipient governments unable to extend any leverage on the donors (Foster, 2000; Brown, et. al, 2001). For this reason, some governments with fairly strong ownership such as Ethiopia declined to negotiate an aide memoire setting out rules of conduct for the Sector Wide Approaches (SWAPs). The general observation is that where government and donors agree or where donors are willing to be lead by recipient government priorities, co-ordination can be a co-operative process in which partners work together: when partners do not agree, the donor co-ordination agenda is more likely to be dominated by efforts by donors to influence governments to modify views on policy and priorities, and merges into discussion of the issue of conditionality (Foster, 2000). In this sense, the distinction between old style ‘conditionality’ and new style ‘ownership’ and ‘partnership’ is a subtle one, a shift of focus from “buying promises, towards assessing commitment and track record” (Foster, 2000: 7).

However, organizational decision making mechanism and individual personal skills and willingness are also at play in determining the form of partnership. Foster

(2000) reports from twenty-two country cases that underwent education SWAPs that exchange relations are often based as much on personal skills and willingness to get involved as on institutional relationships. When the organizational decision making is centralized, some ambiguity develops in relationships, with local donor field officers sometimes seen as representing the government case to an inflexible or skeptical head office.

The donor's interest in exchange relation with NGOs and private sector in recipient country has more theoretical explanation. Such interest was mainly influenced by neo-liberal economic theory and liberal democratic theory which were jointly called "New Policy Agenda" in the early 1990s (Robinson, 1994; Moore, 1993). According to the neo-liberal theory, markets and private initiative are seen as the most efficient mechanisms for achieving economic growth and providing most services to people (Colclough and Manor, 1991). Liberal democratic theory also regards NGOs and Grassroots Organizations (GROs) as useful for democratization and essential components of a thriving civil society, which in turn are seen as essential to the success of the agenda's economic dimension (Edwards and Hulme, 1996). In theory, donors gain from this expanded relations in avoiding inefficient, difficult and corrupt governments to transfer donors' agenda and ideology more smoothly to the recipient country through alternative channels.

In practice, however, on the recipient government side, even if their roles are restricted to setting rules and regulations for the extent of market activity, the government officials still find the way to "gain" by attempting corruption. For example, the Public Expenditure-Tracking Surveys in Tanzania and Ghana indicate that there is an extensive leakage of public funds on primary education. In Tanzania, the leakage was estimated at 57 percent in 1999, while in Ghana only 50 percent of non-wage education expenditure reached the frontline facilities and the leakage in salaries was around 20 percent in 2000 (Reinikka and Svensson, 2002).

The above discussion implies that the donor-recipient exchange relation is characterized by donors' political and ideological interests and political and economic gain of elites in recipient countries, while recipient countries in general lose its voice particularly when confronting disagreement among partners. Existing structural political and financial context of international aid does not seem to have changed the

nature of exchange relation in this sense. Nevertheless, individual personal skills and willingness may play a role in developing exchange relations.

V.2. Within Donor Relation

With its political and subtle nature of relationship among donors, there are few literatures that report on exchange relation of donors. Foster (2000) notes that under partnership policy, donor coordination now operates at every level from global to project level, which made the exchange relation more explicit in that donors give up a role in running projects on the ground in return for a voice in the overall direction of sector policy. On the other hand, Klees (2001) indicates that forcing consensus on a sector program under the name of partnership made donor power stronger and more monolithic and that the donor community also suffers from coordination that often becomes unequal power distribution within itself.

In fact, some recent case studies on SWAPs reveal concerns of ineffective partnership in reality. An empirical comparative case study of SWAPs from Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Mozambique highlights the difficulties in overcoming structural obstacles conditioned by donors who are tied to different sets of interests and ideologies which set boundaries to any common efforts (Buchert, 2002). The dominant donors who lead partnership, often large European bilateral donors such as the United Kingdom and multilateral donor such as the World Bank, express their goals and intensions more vocally to override other donor's organizational identity and priority and create peer pressure. Although such peer pressure on donors is beginning to influence donor behavior, donors have yet to live up to the expectations which have been created for the SWAPs (Foster, 2000). Thus, it can be said that partnership policy among donors has created unequal exchange relation in terms of the presence and influence in the partnership policy direction among themselves, for which some minor donors face organizational and political struggles.

V.3. Within Recipient Country

In terms of exchange relation within recipient country, existing literature

suggests that while there are certain conditions that enable collective interests to be achieved through such an exchange, there expected to be more loss and less gain for civil society than for the government under the name of partnership.

Perspectives of Collective Interests. The arguments that advocate for an equally complimentary relationship between the state and private/non-profit stakeholders claim that the weakness of both parties necessitate each side to pursue their own interests through exchange relation (Salamon, 1995; Arnove with Christina, 1998; Brinkerhoff, 1999). Many argue that while the state needs both the willingness and the capacity to respond to input from civil society, private actors also require effective public partners: in reality, non-profit sector plays the 'supplementary,' 'complementary' and 'adversarial' roles to the state, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive (Young, 1999 in Boris and Steuerle, Eds.: Brinkerhoff, 1999).

This perspective is supported by voluntary failure theory and the excess demand and differentiated demand model in education finance. First, voluntary failure theory indicates the importance to acknowledge the possibility of "voluntary failure" stemming from inherent limitations of the voluntary sector (Salamon, 1995). In this voluntary failure theory, nonprofit sector cannot be thought of substitute for market failure and government failure. Rather, the alternative set of theoretical lens, that is, combined perspective of market failure, government failure, and voluntary failure enables the widespread partnership between government and the nonprofit sector to come into focus as a reasonable adaptation to the respective strengths and weaknesses of the voluntary sector and the state. This angle posits that the exchange relation between the state and nonprofit organizations is in fact not one of superior and dependent, but one of interdependence. Such an interdependent relation, however, can be established under the condition of equally distributed risks among governments, private sector, and voluntary sector.

Second, James (1987) presents two models of public-private partnership of financing education, namely, the excess demand model and the differentiated demand model. The excess demand model explains the role of private sector to fill the gap between small capacity of the public sector, relative to the size of the age

cohort and excessive demands for education. Excess-demand-driven private schools are seen in developing countries such as Kenya and Indonesia and often face low quality of education. It is partly because of insufficiency of public schools but is also caused by substantial private cost of public education even under “free” primary education policy (Tsang and Kidchanapanish, 1992; Tsang, 1994; Tsang, 2002). Thus, excess-demand-driven low quality private schools will still be utilized by students who cannot enter the public schools. The government gains to save the cost for education service delivery to the needy population when facing the budgetary constraints while the private sector expands its business; and beneficiaries obtain educational opportunity that may not have otherwise been obtained.

Finally, the differentiated demand model, on the other hand, views private schooling as a response to differentiated tastes about the kind of education to be consumed. This model hypothesizes that important taste differences about education stem from religious and linguistic differences as well as academic quality. In this line of thought, the discussion of educational voucher and school choice suggests the possible complementary role of private sector to expand school choices of students and parents through competition among both public and private schools for students. However, different arrangements can influence the balance between efficiency and equity as well as one between freedom of choice and social cohesion (Levin, 1991; Levin, 2000). Thus, it is implied that depending on the rules and regulations, disadvantaged population in rural and poor areas where access to information and transportation is hard to obtain may lose more than others from the exchange relation between public and private sectors.

Perspectives of Unequal Exchange Relation. The perspectives that show that exchange relation between government and private/non-profit sector is structurally unequal or potentially highly political are well represented by contracting theory. Contracting theory warns that government tends to dominate the relationship when contracting is involved. This is because stability of the governments does not depend upon contracts with non-profit organizations in contrast to nonprofits survival that heavily relies on contracts from the public sector. The skeptical view of Smith and Lipsky (1993) further questions the legitimacy of public-private relationship in public services. It is claimed that contracting public

services to private providers gives away responsibility for important authoritative decisions about vulnerable people and brings problems of accountability due to contracting. Thus, nonprofit organizations gain contracts at the cost of autonomy and founding principle. The government, on the other hand, gains by reducing the costs and give public responsibility to the non-profit sector without specifying direct implications of contracting.

Such hindrance of critical cooperation between public and private sector is further explained by Klees (2001) in the international context. He argues that partnerships since the 1990s have been controlled by neo-liberal policies that emphasized a diminished role for the public sector and ultimate political decision that yielded unequal degree of voice. As a result, such partnerships have produced no substantial outcome but softened critical voices of many NGOs and civil society organizations. Thus, it is inferred that partnership in the context of IEA disturbs national function of democracy.

The perspective of 'multiple accountability' faced by contracted civil society agencies and the downward accountability of public-private partnership in particular may add another explanatory factor for contracting theory in the context of international aid (Edwards and Hulme, 1996). 'Multiple-accountability' refers to the phenomenon that the agency under contract with governments/donors increases their accountability to governments/donors in comparison to accountability to the population for whom they serve. Multiple-accountability is likely to be particularly complex in international aid since it involves more than two countries with its power dynamics brought by the relationship between donors and recipients on top of within-country complexities. Furthermore, international assistance makes the power relationship more ambiguous than public services within a country particularly because the relationship between served people and funding agencies is less visible while tax payers and beneficiaries are not necessarily the same. Thus, the importance of the view of served population tends to be overlooked. The multiple accountability perspective adds another cautious angle to examine the downward accountability influenced by public-private partnership particularly in the context of international aid.

Empirical Evidence. The empirical research results show that the consequences

of partnership policy with no fundamental institutional change in IEA are ambiguous implementation and in fact less voice of private/non-governmental sector, contrary to the official policy statements. Most notably, empirical research reveals that the ideology, values and culture at individual, organizational and national level further play an important role in determining such ambiguity.

For instance, empirical studies using qualitative research method in Benin, Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi, and Uganda indicate that educational reform initiatives in the 1990s under the name of partnership between public and private/non-government sector/civil society were highly centralized with “the structural top-down strategy” with strong control of central government and donors (Moulton and Mundy (Eds.), 2002). This was mainly caused by the lack of will and political considerations of the central government officials and donor agencies to devolve their authority in decision making process not only to the local governments but also to a wide range of citizen organizations and private sector. These studies show that partnership policy has not indeed influenced the distribution of authority or behavioral change of stakeholders.

Moulton and Mundy (2002) also rightly point out that the national political culture in sub-Saharan Africa was at play: for, the political parties and interest groups that aggregate public opinion and feed it into the policy formation process in industrialized countries are weaker in these countries. Moreover, political and administrative leaders often see popular participation as illegitimate or inefficient, even though government policies have widespread and profound influence on the economic and social aspects of life. Thus, personal, organizational and national values, culture, and willingness seem to determine partnership policy formation and implementation on the ground.

Some other empirical studies show that conflict of organizational ideologies and interests result in less partnership. For instance, an empirical comparative case study of educational reform in Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Mozambique indicates that with the unbalanced economic and political power of organizations, the ideologies and values of powerful organizations such as larger-scale NGOs, and central government institutions override those of smaller NGOs and other civil society organizations, let alone end-users of the system such as students, parents,

and teachers (Buchert, 2002). The case of Nepal also indicates that exclusionary practices of educational reform can severely curtail and reduce opportunities for knowledgeable, high quality, yet financially smaller organizations to participate in policy design and implementation of educational development, constrained by the assumption that the large government and international agencies are the best providers of such services of consultation and guidance (Maslak, 2001).

On the other hand, having little chance to influence policy formation in sub-Saharan African countries, individual citizens were inclined to focus their energies on influencing policy implementation, which tended to result in the officials' diverting resources away from larger policy goals to meet the demands of their immediate local constitutions or passive neglect of policies and their implementation by local-level actors (Moulton and Mundy, 2002). At the local level, corruption was also attempted among politicians and local government officials. It is implied that exchange relations are indeed often influenced by interests of stakeholders at local level.

These empirical studies have important implications that civil society participation cannot be dealt by a monolithic approach. Within the civil society, there are groups of people who gain or lose out of the exchange relations under partnership policy. Both policy documents and academic literature tend to fail to analyze private/non-governmental sector and civil society of recipient country as diverse entity. The premise that the local participation is democratic and reflects people's needs is a dangerous assumption (McDermott, 1993). On the contrary, it is often true that there is politics at the local level that hinders wide popular participation. Discussion on partnership in IEA overlooks local politics which seems to have caused partial representation of relatively large organizations.

Finally, there is considerable empirical evidence that the patterns of implementation of partnership reveal the contradictory tensions between state-private sector/civil society relationship. For instance, to deal with civil society organizations (including NGOs and private sector) as substitute for government exacerbates state-civil society tensions when governments perceive themselves to be in competition with NGOs and private sector for scarce resources. In fact, a major donor research paper indicates that such tension occurs particularly when donors

involve the private sector, NGOs and local communities as the tool to avoid centralization and government administrative structures (Ratcliff and Macrae, 1999). Similarly, the World Bank confesses that it is still in the learning process “to balance the sometimes conflicting demands of governments and civil society” (World Bank, 2000: 29). These tensions often result in a partial voice of stakeholders with dominant power attached to donors and the recipient government and weaker representation of civil society (Ratcliff and Macrae, 1999; Mundy, 2002).

In sum, the lack of clear institutional arrangement of public-private/non-government partnership in IEA resulted in the mere absence of exchange relation in policy implementation. Most educational reforms undergone during the 1990s under the name of partnership seem to have failed to realize active participation of civil society and private/non-government organizations. The most notable reasons behind such failure are lack of institutional arrangement, conflict of ideology, values and culture of stakeholders and local politics that allows dominance of large scale organizations often assisted by donors. The consequences seem to prove that partnership policy stated in many donors' policy documents overlooks these important political aspects of partnership policy implementation.

V.4. Individual versus Organizational Levels

Perhaps this perspective is the hardest to find in the present discussion and literature on partnership as exchange relation. This may be because data is hard to collect and generalize. However, as Moulton and Mundy (2002) and Foster (2000) found, it is often the personal characteristics of those who are involved in exchange relations that determines the quality of relation. Because of this factor, it is hard to keep coherence, smooth operation, and integrated system in exchange relations among organizations in IEA.

Difficulty in keeping coherence within the organization is explained by Mundy (2002) with regard to the World Bank's assistance to education in general and its partnership policy in particular. Mundy (2002) finds that the World Bank's policy in education sector has been fragmented by its internal diversity and external push for poverty and educational focus, failing to explore the appropriate degree

of partnerships and non-governmental participation in Bank lending negotiations and operations. In fact, the World Bank report confesses the gap between individual behavior and organizational culture and organizational aim on partnership issue in its policy paper (CDF Secretariat, World Bank, 2001). It is argued that required supportive behaviors such as explicitly recognizing, respecting and valuing clients' contributions, unleashing local knowledge and capacity, learning from each other and from clients and partners are yet to be obtained in order to change the organizational culture to “one based on trust, openness, accountability, encouragement and innovation” (CDF Secretariat, World Bank, 2001: 28).

In addition, the issue of corruption would need attention at both individual and organizational levels. As shown in the previous sub-sections, corruption could occur in any exchange relation both within recipient country or donor-recipient relation, through personal political connections or organizational arrangements.

VI. Synthesis

Looking at partnership as exchange relation, the existing literature on partnership in IEA reveals various perceptions and factors that determine the nature of partnership as exchange relation at different levels. With regard to the donor-recipient relation, the dominant view suggests that the structural political context of international aid itself perpetuates unequal exchange relation. The empirical evidence supports that such inequality reveals particularly when there is disagreement among partners. In other words, it is implied that there is no much difference in the nature of exchange relation before and after introduction of ‘partnership’ policy. It is also shown that a combination of organizational decision making mechanism and personal characteristics of field officers plays a significant role in developing exchange relations.

As for within donor relation, it is worth noting that in contrast to its official intention, the exchange relation in the era of partnership is becoming more unbalanced in terms of distribution of voice and power among donors. Under the name of partnership, the dominant donor seems to become more influential on not only the recipient country but also on less vocal donors. Such a consequence of the recent partnership policy seems to carry invariant structural and

contextual theme to be further investigated.

The within recipient relation is the most controversial relation influenced by partnership policy as many existing theories support both equal and unequal exchange relations between public and private/non-profit sectors; between government and civil society; and between powerful large scale civil society organizations and relatively small organizations under different social, economic and political contexts. However, the limited empirical evidence shows that local politics and organizational culture seems to play an important role in determining who gains and loses in exchange relation within country organizations and indicating defects of partnership policy to overlook such local politics.

The argument on individual and organizational levels is scarce with the case of the World Bank whose struggle is to make its organizational aim, culture and behavior coherent. In the context of the donor-recipient exchange relation, some empirical study indicates that it is not rare to find the gap between individual officers' view and organizational vision set by the head office in developing exchange relations. Individuals with personal skills and willingness are at play, but detailed cases are not shown. This point would need further analysis based on the empirical research.

The problem of the present literature on partnership is that few analyses touch upon the impacts of 'partnership' on different stakeholders in developing societies in a comprehensive manner. It is easy to group donor agencies and recipient countries, but there has to be comparative aspects as to which stakeholders gain or lose out of 'partnership' even within recipient countries or between donor and recipient countries. This perspective seems particularly important to examine competency of ownership and partnership when ownership is attached to particular group of people in societies or partnership is established between particular groups of people in both donor and recipient countries.

Furthermore, it is not clear how the population interacts with various exchange relations and whether or not the served population brings another dynamics of partnership beyond supply-side factors of contracting and disbursement of aid. In short, comparative perspectives need to explore more dimensions of partnership in IEA and reflect upon the current politics of educational 'lending'

and 'borrowing' (Steiner-Khamsi and Quist, 2000: 276).

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