



## Parental involvement in schools. A study of resources, mobilization, and inherent inequality

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### Abstract

*In this article I explore issues of parental involvement in school activities in former communist countries of South Eastern Europe. Although parents with higher socio-economic status feel more efficacious and thus get involved more, I argue that successful mobilization by schools may result in more representative parental involvement, extending beyond mere socio-economic inequalities. In my analysis I employ multi-national survey data collected through a project entitled Advancing Educational Inclusion and Quality in South East Europe.*

### Keywords

*Socialization, parental involvement, socio-economic inequality, mobilization*

This research addresses the determinants of parental involvement in school-related activities in ten former communist countries of South Eastern Europe: Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia. More specifically, the subject revolves around perceptions and attitudes parents have over such involvement, mainly focusing on individual (socioeconomic status) features that encourage or deter meaningful involvement. Both resources and mobilization by schools can render parents more efficacious. It is therefore critically important to find out how parents feel about school involvement and how they perceive their roles in such interaction<sup>2</sup>.

The assumption of this research is that parental involvement in school activities, which encompasses multiple lines of communication between parents and schools and a partnership in decision making, are beneficial for the educational and overall development of students. Parental involvement in schools- including different types of engagement and various degrees of involvement – is indeed not only beneficial for the academic performance of the children, but also for the overall harmonious development

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of interactions between parents, students and teachers, between school and family as the two most important arenas for socialization. Nevertheless, in the countries under study there are significant challenges in promoting such involvement, from cultures of traditional child rearing and schooling, to educational legislation, and cumbersome reform in education. From a traditional point of view, education is perceived by parents as the sole responsibility of the school system. Indeed, the communist style of public education reflected this view by rarely inviting parents to participate on school boards or in school governance matters. In fact, school administrators and teachers were given very little autonomy in organizing curricular and extracurricular projects. Since school administrators lacked autonomy, it comes as no surprise that parental involvement did not have a particular niche where it could materialize. It is important to note that the parent survey overwhelmingly illustrates that many parents feel capable and willing to become involved in school activities. For instance, various authors in the political science literature explain how different resources enable specific categories of citizens to participate in governance matters. Furthermore, most of the time resources were measured along the lines of socioeconomic status and education. It is easy to believe that the same logic and mechanisms apply to parental involvement in school. Therefore, it is the main goal of this research to find out the main facilitators and inhibitors of greater parental involvement, by considering both parents' resources and the school's mechanisms of mobilization.

The unprecedented comparative data on parental involvement was collected through the efforts of the Open Society Foundation, whose team worked closely with specialists in the 10 countries involved. The data consists of national representative surveys of parents in all 10 countries, and it includes a subsample of parents' school representatives. This comparative dataset is part of a broader project that includes views of schools' principals in the 10 countries, and aims to understand how reform in education takes place. The main goal is to create educational systems that are based on democratic participatory values, and also systems rooted in ideas of partnerships between school, family and other public institutions<sup>3</sup>.

The relevance of this research for me stems from my previous experience with education data. For example, the Center for the Study of Democracy at Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj<sup>4</sup>, Romania conducted a panel study on high school children regarding their views and attitudes towards an array of topics from activities supporting democracy to leisure time preferences. In analyzing the data, I discovered that students who attend schools with a more democratic style of teaching (i.e. asking the students their opinions of how classes should be run, and sharing information regarding school governance and policy matters) become more participatory and feel more engaged as citizens in a democracy. Moreover, the same analysis revealed that schools in which students were treated in a more democratic manner could decrease inherent socioeconomic inequalities between them. Therefore, the school became an arena in which empowerment took place, and socioeconomic disparities were reduced. Consequently, the main goal of this research is to find out whether, within the context of school involvement, socioeconomic

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<sup>3</sup> More information about the project can be found at <http://www.see-educoop.net/aeiq/>.

<sup>4</sup> [www.democracycenter.ro](http://www.democracycenter.ro)

disparities between parents can be overcome by increasing the mobilization and recruitment of parents.

In this context, the main research questions of the paper are the following:

- First, how does the socioeconomic status of the family (education, financial affluence) influence overall attitudes to get involved more in school-related decisions? Furthermore, how does the answer to this question differ according to the various types of involvement?
- Second, how do school recruitment and mobilization efforts affect attitudes towards parental participation in school issues?

This research paper investigates the facilitators of parental involvement in school. I will explore three related influences of involvement and test whether parents participate more if they feel capable; if they consider it necessary and desirable; and/or if they are recruited or mobilized to do so. I use data reduction methods to construct factors grouping together attitudes towards parental involvement in school issues. I then use multivariate regression to create models explaining positive outlooks towards greater parental involvement.

### **Literature review – resources, mobilization and involvement**

Primarily, this paper explores the factors triggering parental involvement in school issues and their attitudes towards such endeavors. A parallel is drawn between parental involvement in school issues and citizens' involvement in politics/civic engagement - based on resources, engagement, recruitment and mobilization as developed by Verba, Scholzman and Brady in their *Voice and Equality: Civic Volunteerism in American Politics* (1995). The overall model is taken from political science where we aim to identify the resources and their related activation mechanisms considered necessary for one's political participation. Succinctly put, people may participate because they can (resources), because they want to (engagement), and because they were asked to (mobilization). In this study, I explore parental involvement through the following three perspectives: education, political science, and democratic theory. I am not that much interested in the institutionalization of education reforms across Central and Eastern Europe, as much as I am interested in the ways in which parents respond to these reforms by exploring various avenues to become more engaged in their child's education and school life. Thus, I employ a model of citizen involvement in politics and adapt it to verify its explanatory power in the realm of education.

The availability of resources clearly influences parental involvement in schools. Having the time to participate is essential, and studies on the US (Diamond and Gomez, 2004) have shown that parental involvement is indeed a function of their time, which, in turn, is a function of broader socioeconomic preconditions. For instance, low income families are forced into longer hours of employment in order to make ends meet, while overlooking some of the less pressing issues in their lives including parental involvement in school. Alternatively, education is arguably a precondition for a parent to be interested in becoming more engaged in his child's education. Anecdotally, school principals have told me that most parents who get involved in school matters are parents with average or above average levels of education. Nevertheless, they also said that parents with low

levels of education display significant willingness to get involved in school matters, but most of the time they feel inferior to the teacher, and thus intimidated. While it is true that people from more remote rural areas and overall people with lower degrees of education will look upon the educational system favorably, it is also true that recruitment efforts are most important in these parents, who live in isolated areas, to become involved in their children's school. Assuming these parents do find the time to get involved, what are the odds that a parent with a low level of education will contribute to discussions and debates when compared to a parent with higher education? Furthermore, education is also highly correlated to knowledge. For instance, those who have higher levels of education may also be more knowledgeable of solving problems that schools encounter, and consequently, their input will be more appreciated. The financial attributes that usually accompany education and an overall higher socioeconomic status also influence parental involvement and enable these parents to assist schools in all activities. Informal interviews with teachers in Cluj, Romania revealed that public schools are still funded by the government (with a change in strategy towards decentralization and per capita funding which will be detailed below); however, they still practice their own fundraising. Moreover, this fundraising is based on collecting the "class fund" in which each student is required to pay a fee that the school uses according to their needs. In addition to this class fund, other types of fundraising also take place, including requests for sponsorships from corporate employers of its parents. Education, time, and money can condition parental involvement in at least two ways. On the one hand, having less resources may be conducive to lower levels of involvement - due to the lack of time, money, or the know-how. On the other hand, less education, and overall lower status may lead to diminished levels of efficacy.

A second part of the Civic Volunteerism Model, developed by Verba, Schlozman and Brady, points to engagement as one way to compensate for resource inequality. Thus, engagement refers to heightened interest and desire to acquire more knowledge about the subject matter and, in time, higher participation. Interest leads to information which, in turn, leads to knowledge and the ability to get involved. Although engagement is fairly important in political participation, it is still somewhat conditioned by the availability of resources.

The third and last component of the Civic Volunteerism Model is recruitment or mobilization. Rosenstone and Hansen are two authors who wrote extensively on the importance of citizens' mobilization from the perspective of their political participation acts. According to them, there are different types of recruitment and mobilization. Recruitment refers to processes through which individuals are attracted to participatory acts, but only at a superficial level, without properly getting involved substantively. On the other hand, mobilization refers to processes through which individuals become attracted to participation by constructing the necessary skills for such involvement and building up competences. Obviously, mobilization is the one process that leads to increased and substantial involvement through the creation of civic skills and abilities, while recruitment is a much more superficial process. Through the lenses of parental involvement, mobilization and recruitment are not interpreted as critically different, especially since the data does not allow significant differentiations between the two.

Thus, in the data analysis part of the paper, I aim to explore in what ways recruitment efforts by the school can compensate or diminish extant resource inequalities among parents.

### ***School, family, and socialization***

Niemi and Sobieszek argued in 1977 that the family and the school are the most important socialization arenas – and, hence, it is only natural to inquire into the ways in which they can interact and what the effects are on the children/students. While the family is the primary milieu in which children acquire their values and attitudes towards the world, the school is also one of the most important contexts of socialization. Moreover, during the school years, school is a medium of socialization that moderates experiences in family and peer groups.

Coleman in 1966 and Apple in 1990 showed that inequality can influence school performance and societal integration. More specifically, the authors discussed at length about features of socio-economic inequality extant between families and analyzed their effect on the children's development, both scholarly and overall social. Correlatively, very small such effects of school have been documented. The relationship between school and social inequality is analyzed through the prism of two major schools of thought: *structural functionalism* and the *conflict theories of educational inequality*. In 1981 Jacob explained how structural functionalism emphasized a fixed opportunity structure populated by students with different qualities and potential. Failures are thus explained by individual responsibility, lack of talent, or insufficient socialization. In contrast, the conflict theories relate unequal opportunities to broader societal inequalities and the manipulative effects of political elites. Accordingly, the school promotes the myth of equality while categorizing students through subordination and fragmentation. The socioeconomic status of the family is thus critical in preparing the child for the school arena. Smith et al. (1997) showed that the relationships between socioeconomic inequalities and school performance become evident in the differences in “home learning environments”.

In this context, parental resources are critical in influencing the academic performance of children, while the interaction the children have with their schools also plays an important role. The relationship between parental resources and the well-being of children extends beyond mere material resources and includes the parents' social capital and social investments in the community (Bank and Slavings, 1990, Bryk and Schneider, 2002, Steinberg, 1996, Furstenberg and Hughes, 1995).

In addition, the post-communist contextualization is necessary when discussing the issue of parental involvement in school, especially through the lens of communist and post-communist legacies. Mass education – widespread access to education for most people - during communism and its lasting legacy may have reduced the effect of inherent socioeconomic inequalities, only to be re-created after 1989 in different ways: the creation of elite and private schools, the difference in the quality of education from urban to rural, and the difference of schools from the city center to the periphery in larger cities. It is one of the more ambitious goals of this research to show how these inequalities influence parental involvement in the countries under analysis.

## Data analysis

The main goal of this research is to explore the tripartite relationship between socioeconomic inequalities, school mobilization, and parental involvement. The dataset collected by the Open Society Institute's 10-country survey of parents allows for this exploration through its multinational coverage and diversity of items measuring parental involvement. I will describe the different operationalizations which are essential to parental involvement in schools and introduce and discuss my statistical models. In constructing these composite indexes, I employed data reduction techniques, such as factor analysis, in order to group together variables that measure different aspects of the same phenomenon.

### *Operationalizing involvement and its determinants*

The first composite index is *school recruitment*, which groups together variables asking parents how often the school invited parents to group meetings, individual meetings, send written information about a variety of topics, and whether one thinks the school should do so<sup>5</sup>. This index is a measurement of school recruitment and mobilization efforts, and it includes both factual and opinion components. At the factual level, parents are asked to mention whether the school indeed acted as a mobilizer, while, at the opinion level, the parents were asked to express their opinions towards the usefulness and efficacy of such recruitment processes. Both factual and opinion variables were highly correlated, and so were used for the construction of the index, through summing up with equal weights.

The second composite index reflects actual parental participation as a result of school mobilization efforts. Thus, *participation* groups together variables asking parents whether they participated at the aforementioned meetings, or responded to the informational literature from school.

The third such indicator is called *economic status* and groups together the variables measuring economic/household comfort – thus reflecting the economic well-being of the parents. This variable is the closest that I could possibly construct to the one measuring availability of and access to financial resources. Although, clearly, there is variability between levels of economic status in the countries under analysis, they are still somewhat similar in their development and in their embracing of materialist values to consider their levels of household comfort comparable.

The fourth composite index, *competent* groups together variables that ask parents whether they feel competent to attend parent teacher meetings, to respond to written correspondence from school, help with homework, to volunteer in school related activities, anything having to do with decision making within the school, and to assume any role in relationship to school. This index reflects respondents' subjective feelings of ability to participate. It is that part of socioeconomic status that usually accompanies financial well-being and higher education. Nevertheless, the effects of this efficacy

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<sup>5</sup> Detailed information on survey items and their measurements are available at <http://www.see-educoop.net/aeiq/outputs.htm>

measure are not necessarily the same with mere financial affluence, and it is also part of this study to explore how material resources and efficacy interact to influence parents' decisions to get involved.

In addition to these 4 main composite indexes, I also constructed additional indicators that capture different aspects of the relationship between school and parents, focusing mostly on the communication between the two: one as an institution, and the other as a group of people, coalesced together for a common purpose. Thus, a battery of 4 indicators – *opinionsasked*, *opinionsgiven*, *opinionstakenintoaccount*, *opinionsnormative* – groups together parents' answers about how/whether schools should consult them on a range of issues, from management to extracurricular activities. The normative character of these four questions taps into the parents' values as to what lengths should the school really go when trying to involve parents. Also, *teacher communication* and *parents communication* are indexes that include assertions expressing attitudes towards teachers' and parents' abilities to communication with each other (small values equal positive evaluations of these abilities). Finally, *perceived effectiveness*, applies to parents' representatives and their perception of roles played by other parents (they believe I cannot do much, only to show off, only for the sake of my child, only when it is about their children) and by the school (they are not interested in my contribution, only want me to support their ideas, they try to listen to my opinion but do not take it into account later) (small values=higher effectiveness).

### Exploring parental involvement – statistical models

Exploratory analysis shows that the composite indexes take very similar values, as shown by Table 1. Overall, in each of the countries under study, there are similar values especially on the school recruitment, competent and participation indexes. There are some notable differences in terms of economic status, especially in Moldova, which ranks significantly lower than any other country in the data set.

**Table 1. Means and standard deviations for composite indices**

COUNTRY	Participation Mean	Std. Deviation	Recruitment Mean	Std. Deviation	Economic status Mean	Std. Deviation	Competent Mean	Std. Deviation
Serbia	No data	No data	33.00	4.20	13.70	1.87	20.05	3.02
Montenegro	30.87	4.75	35.48	4.77	14.22	2.22	19.57	2.76
Bosnia & Herzegovina	28.91	4.67	32.94	3.94	13.60	2.11	19.54	3.42
Croatia	27.00	6.00	34.52	4.60	14.08	2.03	20.70	2.61
Romania	35.71	.611	32.93	5.52	11.07	3.13	21.09	3.11
Bulgaria	26.73	7.20	32.63	5.76	12.79	2.71	19.90	3.73
Moldova	32.96	3.45	35.91	5.07	9.59	2.94	20.37	3.12
Macedonia	21.42	8.7	34.01	4.40	13.80	1.97	19.64	3.10
Kosovo	30.68	4.64	34.97	4.58	13.49	1.84	20.32	2.45
Albania	28.23	4.38	37.43	5.15	12.40	2.26	19.39	2.83
Total	29.11	5.57	34.37	5.00	12.84	2.76	20.06	3.06

Table 2 shows correlation coefficients for the indexes that I constructed. While there are significant correlations between all indexes, some of them are more substantively significant for this study. For example, the subjective perception of one's own competence and ability to get involved is highly and positively correlated with participation in school issues and willingness to express opinions about the school. This finding is critically important because it underscores the relationship between socioeconomic status and involvement in school matters. At first glance, it seems that it is the subjective appreciation of one's competence to get involved that makes the decision and not one's mere resources. Nevertheless, economic status and competence are significantly and positively correlated, lending support to the thesis, which states that people who have more access to financial and overall economic resources are also more confident about their involvement. Additionally, the fact that all the composite indexes are significantly correlated with each other is also important for purposes of reliability and validity of the data. Overall, the models indicate that parental involvement in school matters is a result of competence and efforts to recruit and mobilize parents. In other words, subjective perceptions of one's ability and competence to participate in school matters, combined with the school's own mobilization strategies account for most of the variability of the variable measuring involvement in school matters through the specific model.

**Table 2. Correlation between composite indexes**

	Opinions asked	Opinions given	Opinions taken into account	Opinions normative	Competent	School recruitment	Participation	Economic status
Opinions asked	1	.522**	.500**	.279**	.157**	.446**	.238**	.040**
Opinions given	-	1	.677**	.515**	.470**	.328**	.770**	.061
Opinions taken into account	-	-	1	.556**	.358**	.359**	.595**	.061
Opinions normative	-	-	-	1	.269**	.278**	.331**	.050**
Competent	-	-	-	-	1	.188**	.441**	.233**
School recruitment	-	-	-	-	-	1	.567**	.058**
Participation	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	.063
Economic status	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1

\*\* Correlation significant at the 0.01 level

These findings are further analyzed through regression modeling, as shown in table 3, in which three different measures of involvement are explored. Economic status itself is not a significant predictor of participation in school – a finding that suggests that through intensive and efficient mobilization, the school may involve many parents of different backgrounds and statuses. Nevertheless, the competence variable is significant, and can be considered an indirect measurement for economic status, albeit not strongly



correlated with it. It seems that subjective feelings of competence can derive from other sources besides economic status per se. The control variables introduced in these models, such as the mother's education or the number of books in the household are not significant, which, together with the lack of significance of the economic status variable, suggest that indeed pure economic or material resources do not influence parents' decision to get involved, either as actual participation or as offering opinions on various matters. The data is fairly clear about the critical importance of both recruitment and competence. The fact that both these variables are significant and have high beta coefficients shows that they are both important predictors of involvement, without one being a substitute for the other. Consequently, if the argument is that competence is a matter of both higher education and probably past experience, then through recruitment, the inherent imbalance brought about by different degrees of competence can be compensated for by increased recruitment efforts.

**Table 3. Regression models explaining involvement (Beta coefficients)**

	Participation (N=302, Rsq.=.387)	Opinions given (N=400, Rsq.=.381)	Opinions normative (N=6221, Rsq.=.142)
Economic status	.010	-.025	.012
School recruitment	.446**	.092*	.157**
Opinions asked	-.047	.329**	.167**
Highest school planned for the child	-.013	-.092*	.008
Competent	.262**	.370**	.214**
Number of books in household	.038	.003	-.002
Mother's education	.006	.015	.009

\*\* Correlation significant at the 0.01 level, \* correlation significant at the .05 level

The questions referring to parents' willingness to offer their opinions about school matters is a more specific measurement of involvement and taps more deeply into the subjective competence indicator. Thus, the decision to express one's opinions about school issues (opinions given) is also explained by competence, school recruitment and, in addition, by school invitations destined specifically to expressing opinions (opinions asked). Apparently, when schools attempt to mobilize parents in their activities, parents feel more empowered. The normative view of whether schools should ask for parents' opinions in various matters is also explained by asking for opinion, competence and recruitment. Surprisingly, it seems that recruitment can overcome inequality, although competence can be considered as a different proxy for a higher socioeconomic status. Therefore, a partial conclusion of this analysis is the fact that school mobilization can lead to increased parental involvement, reaching farther, even to those parents who feel less efficacious when it comes to school matters.

Additionally, parents' and teachers' communication skills and strategies are also important in regards to parental involvement in school activities. For instance, data shows that parents who believe that teachers are efficient and professional in communicating with them also feel that they can get and should become more involved in school matters.

The data analysis so far shows a complex relationship between feelings of competence and socioeconomic status. While financial well being per se, as measured in

this research is not necessarily a determinant of parental involvement, subjective feelings of competence are a predictor for most variables capturing the idea of involvement, its limitations and motivations, openness to discussion with the school leadership, and partnership between school and parents.

When briefly analyzing the subsample of parents' representatives (table 4), embedded in the larger sample of parents, the socioeconomic status seems to occupy a more visible position. In other words, when trying to figure out how effective parents' representatives feel in relationship with school issues, both subjective feelings of competence and socioeconomic status are significant predictors.

**Table 4. Cross-tables of educational attainment and avenues for becoming parent representative (among the sub sample of parent representatives)**

	Elementary or up to elementary school	Secondary vocational	Secondary general (high-school)	University degree	Postgraduate education	Total per lines
Asked by class teacher	11.2% (33)	13.2% (39)	35.9% (106)	24.1% (71)	5.1% (15)	100% (264) (19.2%)
Asked by school principal	8.1% (7)	8.1% (7)	32.6% (28)	34.9% (30)	4.7% (4)	100% (76) (5.5%)
Elected by other parents	9.0% (95)	15.3% (163)	36.5% (388)	28.2% (300)	6.2% (66)	100% (1012) (73.8%)
Other	0	5.3% (1)	5.3% (1)	31.6% (6)	52.6% (10)	100% (18) (1.3%)
Total per columns	9.8% (135)	15.3% (210)	38.1% (523)	29.7% (407)	6.9% (95)	100% (1370)

These findings confirm and validate previous findings and results obtained in other research, according to which parents of particular communication skills and competence and also parents with higher socioeconomic status are more likely to become parent representatives. As a result, this data illustrates that parents with at least high school level of education will be more likely to become parents' representatives rather than parents with a university degree, who, presumably, have very busy lives and for whom being a member of the parents' representatives group would not be a cost effective choice. This finding is important especially from the perspective of who gets involved and why. Assuming that a certain level of education is necessary for a parent to become a representative, the data shows that this assumption refers to levels of education that are not the highest but rather medium (such as high school). Perhaps parents with the highest levels of education do not have enough time to become representatives, or believe that they have "better" things to do with their time, while parents with lower levels of education may feel that this is a higher status position. The data in table 5 is also important for showing that the majority of representatives are elected rather than being nominated.

## Discussion and conclusion

In this paper I explored parental involvement in school matters, focusing on the determinants of such actions. More specifically, I aimed to find out what triggers parental involvement, and whether a certain level of socioeconomic status is a prerequisite of such involvement. In so doing, I used theoretical apparatus originating in political science to explain political and civic involvement. I considered that political participation and parental involvement can have the same mechanisms that explain who gets involved and how. Moreover, the Civic Volunteerism Model which is the core of my literature review is also an appropriate starting point because of its brevity and easiness of interdisciplinary use.

The data from the South East Europe 10-country Parent Survey demonstrates that material resources per se are not associated with parental involvement, which was measured in different ways, from participation and expressing opinions to attitudes towards such involvement in order to capture all the facets of this complex phenomenon. Consistently throughout the research, there are two important factors which clearly influence parental involvement and attitudes: feelings of competence and recruitment efforts made by schools. While feelings of competence are significantly correlated with a certain level of education and overall socioeconomic status, competence itself can also be acquired through other ways, such as experience or availability of time. Additionally, recruitment also seem to be critical in making parents become involved more, and it is also possible to conceive of a model in which sustained mobilization leads to involvement, which, in turn, may lead to increased feelings of competence. This paper can conclude that parental involvement can be increased through recruitment efforts whereby inherent socioeconomic inequalities among parents can be overcome. This finding is corroborated by the fact that most parent representatives are high school graduates without university degrees.

In Central, Eastern, and Southern European context the story is of course further complicated. While it is important to note that school mobilization can lead to increased parental involvement, it is the substance and meaning of parental involvement that can become problematic due to the cumbersome education reforms in the region. In Romania, between 1990 and 2009, there were fifteen Ministers of Education; the first post-communist law on education was passed in 1995, modified in 1999; in fact, from 2000 to December 2008, the law was modified 42 times. These changes affected everything from the management and financing of primary schools, to decentralization of pre-university education (funding no longer came directly from the Ministry of Education directly but instead through local authorities dependent upon the budget allocation decisions of the town hall or local council (Education law 296/2008), which made school principals accountable not only to the county-level education authority but also to local authorities. Recently, (in August 2010) the Romanian minister of education discussed the importance of parental involvement in schools and suggested that school decision-making procedures should be changed to include the input of parent representatives. While these efforts at institutionalizing parental involvement aim to make Romanian education more in line with Western Europe and based on partnership and dynamic interaction among different stakeholders, one should remember that too many

expedient changes can backfire. For instance, when primary, secondary, and high schools were placed under the auspices of the local authority for financial matters, it resulted in the politicization of school principals (i.e. school principals are often designated based on political or party loyalty bases. Furthermore, parental contribution to schools need to also be filtered through collective action and institutional limitation, consensus building, and, above all, a shared understanding that better education is the common goal of all – teachers, parents and students. Indeed, more parental involvement without a clear understanding of what parents can do through their involvement may lead to more frustration and uninformed decisions.

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