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Public-Private Partnerships in Colombian Education: The Equity and Quality Implications of “Colegios en concesión”

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2015 No. 66



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Abstract

Charter schools are one of the most iconic public-private partnership (PPP) formulas in education. Nonetheless, despite charter school programs having been implemented in some countries for decades and their global diffusion, evidence on their impact in education systems is far from conclusive.

This report analyzes the case of the *Colegios en Concesión (CEC)*, a paradigmatic charter school program implemented in Bogotá since 1999 to benefit students from poor areas of the city. By adopting a realist evaluation approach, our research discusses to what extent the assumptions behind the promotion of the CEC program in Colombia are met in real situations, and challenges some of the main conclusions that existing evaluations of this program have reached so far.

This study shows that the CEC program has not achieved the expected results: these schools enjoy only of moderate levels of school autonomy; their economic efficiency largely relies on a drastic worsening of teachers' employment conditions; many CEC schools have strategically selected their students during enrollment processes, though this practice is not allowed by the Education Department; and the pedagogical differentiation that these schools have promoted within the education system has not necessarily translated into substantive academic improvement. In fact, in relation to the latter, we have observed that in terms of learning outcomes, there are not statistically significant differences between CEC and public schools after controlling for school day and the economic status of students. However, we have also seen how CEC schools have had the capacity to generate high levels of loyalty among their more direct users, and both parents and students are deeply engaged and satisfied with these schools. Overall, our results raise some challenging questions about the effects, in terms of equity, quality and segregation, of the CEC program in the Colombian education system.

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Table of Contents

Acronyms	7
1. Introduction.....	8
1.1 About this Report	8
1.2 About the Colombian Education System	9
1.3 PPPs in Colombian Education: Colegios en Convenio, PACES and CEC.....	11
1.4 State of the Art of the CEC’s Previous Evaluations.....	13
2. Methodology and the CEC Theory of Change	17
2.1 The Realist Evaluation Approach.....	17
2.2 The CEC’s Theory of Change	17
2.3 Methods and Sample.....	20
3. Main Results.....	22
3.1 CEC’s Organizational Characteristics	22
Enrollment Processes	22
School Autonomy and Human Resources Management.....	25
Leadership Styles	27
Material Resources and Services.....	29
Funding	31
School-Family and Community Relationship.....	33
3.2 CEC’s Educational Styles	34
Pedagogical Autonomy	34
Educational Approach: Ethos and Values	35
Teaching Practices	36
The Impact of the Context on Teaching Practices	37
3.3 Academic Differences between CEC and Public Schools	39
ICFES Results	39
Approval, Repetition and Dropout Rates	43
4. Conclusions	45
4.1 CEC’s Organizational Characteristics	45
4.2 CEC’s Pedagogical Approaches	47
4.3 CEC’s Academic Performance	48
4.4 Discussion.....	49
5. Bibliography.....	51
Appendix 1: Additional Interview Quotes	60
Appendix 2: Additional Tables and Figures.....	69

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Figure 1.	CEC's theory of change.....	20
Figure 2.	Actors responsible for several management tasks in CEC and public schools	75
Figure 3.	Teachers' salaries distribution among EMOs	76
Figure 4.	Actor with an important incidence, in pedagogical tasks, in CEC and in public schools.....	76
Figure 5.	ICFES results by school, Bogotá 2011	77

Tables

Table 1.	Percentage of private sector by education level; Colombia and Boyacá 2012.....	10
Table 2.	Academic assessments of the CEC program.....	14
Table 3.	Techniques and fieldwork of the research project	21
Table 4.	Summary of teachers' employment conditions in CEC and public schools	25
Table 5.	Per capita amount at the beginning and at the end of the contract	31
Table 6.	Budget differences between public schools and CEC.....	32
Table 7.	Characteristics of the sample: type of school, school day and schools by SES	40
Table 8.	ICFES results in all subjects by type of school, school day and SES.....	40
Table 9.	F-Test one way variance (F values and signifi cation)	41
Table 10.	Multiple linear regression analysis of ICFES results	42
Table 11.	Contracts of the schools of the CEC program	69
Table 12.	Percentage of pedagogical activities performed monthly in CEC and public schools	70
Table 13.	Percentage of principal's activities performed "very often," in CEC and public schools.....	70
Table 14.	Evolution of teachers' salaries of Teachers Statute Act 2277 of 1979	71
Table 15.	Evolution of teachers' salaries of Teacher Status Act 2001, 2004–2014 ...	71
Table 16.	Agreement with statements about families' participation, in CEC and public schools	72
Table 17.	Ratio student/teacher by localities, Bogotá 2011.....	72
Table 18.	Approval rate, repetition rate and dropout rate for Bogotá official sector by type of school	73
Table 19.	Academic continuity and labor insertion of AAE (2009–2013) and Colsubsidio San Vicente (2001–2013)	73
Table 20.	SED (2014) evaluation results	74

Acronyms

ADE	Asociación Distrital de Educadores; teachers' union of Bogotá
CEC	<i>Colegios en concesión</i> (concession school)
EMO	Educational management organization
FECODE	Colombian Federation of Teachers; teachers' union of Colombia
ICFES	Colombian Institute for the Evaluation of Education
MW	Minimum wage
PACES	<i>Programa de Ampliación de Cobertura de la Educación Secundaria</i> (Plan of Expansion of Secondary Education Coverage)
PEI	Institutional Educational Project
SED	Department of Education of Bogotá
SENA	National Apprenticeship Service–VET courses.
SES	Socioeconomic status
SISBEN	<i>Sistema de Identificación de Potenciales Beneficiarios de Programas</i> (National Information System on Social Program Beneficiaries)

1. Introduction

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) in education are increasingly conceived as an optimal policy solution to advance toward the *Education for All* goals (Patrinos et al. 2009). PPPs are defined as contracts “of some sort of durability between public and private actors, in which they jointly develop products and services and share risks, costs and resources that are connected with these products” (Hodge et al. 2010: 4). In education, the adoption of PPPs means the promotion and introduction of values and mechanisms coming from the private sector into public education, such as competition, choice, results-based incentives, and market like mechanisms (LeGrand 1996).¹ Among the most emblematic PPPs in education policies we find voucher schemes, the removal of school zones to enable parental choice, or the creation of publicly financed and privately operated “charter schools” (Lubienski 2009).

Charter schools have become an international model of schooling that is being increasingly adopted in both developed and developing countries. Although the specific characteristics of each charter school program can vary according to its context, charter schools are commonly defined as hybrids of public and private institutions. They are schools funded and owned by the public sector, managed by the private sector, and exempted from many state and local regulations (Hanushek et al. 2007, Nathan 1996). According to Lubienski (2003a, 2003b, 2005 and 2006) and Lubienski and Lubienski (2006), charter school advocates assume that these programs enjoy the superiority of private-style organizational models and promote school autonomy, parental choice and competition between public and private schools. The combination of these elements is expected to foster educational innovation at both the pedagogical and the organizational levels and, ultimately, improve academic results (see Friedman 1955, Hassel 1999). Charter schools are also expected to provide vulnerable students with the opportunity to access good quality education, which is *why* they receive public funding. Finally, another advantage of charter schools, according to privatization advocates, is that these schools promote the diversification of those educational systems in which the public sector is excessively constrained by bureaucratic regulations that make pedagogical innovation difficult (generating a homogeneous “one-size-fits-all” school system) (Chubb & Moe 1990, Tooley 1999).

1.1 About this Report

The research we present in this report tests these assumptions about the superiority of the charter school model by analyzing in-depth the emblematic *Colegios en Concesión* (CEC) charter program, which was adopted in Bogotá and quickly disseminated to other parts of Colombia and even to the global South, thanks to its sponsorship by international organizations such as the World Bank (Edwards 2014). The importance of

1. In general, the growing expansion of PPPs in developing countries has been favored by two main factors. First, in most developing countries governments are looking for new formulas of education delivery that improve educational outputs in a more cost-effective way, including partnering with the private sector. Second, PPPs are being strongly advocated by many influential international organizations, including—among others—the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Investment Bank, the International Finance Corporation, the World Economic Forum, UNESCO and UNICEF (Verger 2012).

the Bogotá model of charter schools gives special relevance to the question of whether the expected effects of CEC on efficiency or equity do really take place, and especially under which conditions are they implemented. In particular, in this report we aim to answer the following questions: How different is the organizational and pedagogical approach of CEC in relation to regular public schools? Are the academic results of the CEC significantly different from the results of public schools operating under similar conditions? If so, why? Does the introduction of CEC increase the equality of educational opportunities for poor Colombian students? Are CEC schools an effective and viable potential alternative to the public school system?

The answer to these main questions (and other sub-questions that will appear in the report) requires a holistic approach to the topic that combines qualitative and quantitative strategies. Our research project explored Colombian education databases, reviewed existing evaluations of the model, compared academic results of CEC and public schools in the national standardized tests, and carried out in-depth qualitative fieldwork in the city of Bogotá and in several CEC, particularly through interviews with stakeholders, focus groups and school observations.

The report is structured in four main parts. First, we present the main features of the CEC program and a brief history on how this program has been embedded in the Colombian education system. Second, we briefly explain the **methodology** of the research project, including the realist evaluation approach we have adopted, our sample and data collection strategy. Third, we present the main **results** of the research project according to three different analytical dimensions: (1) *organizational* change at the school level, in terms of enrollment processes, level of school autonomy, leadership styles and planning, pedagogical activities, material resources and services, funding and school-family relationships; (2) *pedagogical* and educational approach, including teaching practices such as the teaching to the test, values education and the effects of the socioeconomic context on pedagogical practices; and (3) CEC's *academic results*. In the fourth and final section we summarize the main results and present our main conclusions.

1.2 About the Colombian Education System

Within the Latin American context, Colombia is one of the countries that has embraced more enthusiastically the charter schools idea (Barrera et al. 2012), particularly through the program of *Colegios en Concesión* (CEC, or Concession Schools). The emergence of the CEC in Colombia needs to be contextualized in relation to the specific characteristics and needs of this educational system, namely its enrollment rate, a chronic lack of school places and continuous privatization trends. The Colombian educational system is characterized by relatively high rates of enrollment in primary education, but relatively low rates for secondary education. In the last decade, there have been significant advances in access to both education levels, although with important differences between them. Between 2002 and 2012 the net enrollment rate increased moderately: in pre-primary to 63.4 percent (+5.1 percent), in primary to 87.1 percent (+2.8 percent), in lower secondary to 71.5 percent (+14.4 percent) and in upper secondary to 41 percent (+11.5 percent), according to data from the Ministry of Education's Integrated Enrollment System (SIMAT). However, enrollment in urban areas is much higher than in rural areas, and these regional differences are intimately correlated with ethnic distribution (Barrera et al. 2012). Also, large numbers of students drop out at the end of lower secondary

education, during the transition from grade 6 to grade 7, and this pattern is perceived to be more pronounced in public schools than in private schools (Barrera 2006).

The relatively low net enrollment rates of the Colombian education system are linked to the deficit of school places. As today, the shortfall in school places remains important in Bogotá. In 2012 it was estimated that there was a shortfall of 31,481 school places: 11,821 places in preschool, 7,387 seats in lower secondary and 8,640 seats in upper secondary (SED 2013b). The deficit of school places is more important in low socioeconomic status (SES) stratum areas. In addition, this gap between supply and demand is especially relevant in the case of CEC, since the demand for these schools far exceeds the places they can offer.

The lack of school places in Colombia is to some extent explained by the insufficient public funding allocated to education. The average of total public expenditure on education as percentage of Gross Domestic Product in Latin America and the Caribbean was 4.5 percent in 2000 and 5.2 percent in 2010 (Bellei 2013). Colombia was below the regional average in both periods: 3.5 percent in 2000 and 4.8 percent in 2010. Miñana (2010b) stresses that, in the last decades, the Colombian government has increased educational coverage, but not necessarily the public expenditure on education. This has been possible by a substantive increase of the student/teacher ratio at all educational levels (Miñana 2010b).

In addition, the private sector has played a key role in the Colombian education sector (Miñana 2010a: 156). In rural areas, in particular, the Catholic Church brought education to communities that were not being properly served by the state (Quiceno 1988, Helg 1988). As seen in Table 1, the presence of the private sector in education is important in Colombia, the department of Boyacá, and especially the city of Bogotá. In Bogotá, the importance of the private sector varies both by location and by education level.² Overall, there has been a process of recovery of public school enrollment in recent years. This is partially explained because the Secretary of Education of Bogotá (SED) has actively promoted student enrollment in public schools. As a result, public school places increased from 902,513 in 2004 to 935,957 in 2012 (+33,444, representing 57.5 percent and 62.2 percent of the total student population, respectively). In contrast, the private sector declined from 665,866 in 2004 to 568,741 in 2012 (-97,125).

Table 1—Percentage of private sector by education level; Colombia and Boyacá 2012

	Kindergarten	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary*
Colombia	93.6	17.8	14	14	17.7
Boyacá	98.8	17.4	12.5	8.3	10
Bogotá	—	61.8	34.9	33.6	38.2

Sources: Ministry of Education's Integrated Enrollment System (SIMAT) and SED (2013).

Note: * Jardín, Transición, Primaria, Secundaria and Media.

2. In some of Bogotá's localities, the private sector represents almost two-thirds of the total enrollment (64 percent in La Candelaria, 65 percent in Suba and 69 percent in Usaquén) and in other locations even more: 77 percent in Chapinero and 83 percent in Teusaquillo.

Not surprisingly, the students' distribution between public and private schools is highly based on their SES. According to García Villegas et al. (2013), 93 percent of students with lower SES (in Colombia, SISBEN stratum 1) attend public schools, while the 98 percent of students with the highest SES (SISBEN stratum 6) attend private schools.³

1.3 PPPs in Colombian Education: Colegios en Convenio, PACES and CEC

In addition to the presence of totally private institutions, the Colombian education system has a long tradition of public-private partnerships. The first PPP modality are the so-called *Colegios en Convenio* (Subsidized Private Schools), which emerged in Colombia during the eighties. They are private schools that receive a publicly funded voucher (Miñana 2010b, Villegas & López 2011, Helg 1988) on one-year renewable contracts in locations where there is an insufficient public education offer. In general, these Subsidized Private Schools serve low SES populations, have precarious and inadequate installations (no sports facilities, libraries, etc.) and under-qualified teachers, and sometimes are even located in private houses. Because of this, they are commonly known as *colegios de garaje* (garage schools) (Miñana 2010a: 40). Of the total students in the public schools of Bogotá, 9.4 percent were enrolled in Subsidized Private Schools in the year 2013 (SED 2014).

The second PPP modality we find in Colombia is the *Programa de Ampliación de Cobertura de la Educación Secundaria* (PACES, or Plan of Expansion of Secondary Education Coverage). The PACES was a voucher system that benefited 125,000 students in the country's biggest cities between 1991 and 1997 (King et al. 1997, Sarmiento 2000, Arenas 2004). The vouchers were awarded by a lottery, covered half of the cost of attending a private school, and were renewable as long as students maintained satisfactory academic performance. The evaluation of PACES has been highly controversial. According to some authors, it had a positive impact on students, in terms of years of education, approval rate and probability of graduation from secondary education (Angrist et al. 2002 and 2006). Furthermore, PACES students had higher chances to access higher education (Saavedra et al. 2012, Barrera et al. 2012). However, according to other authors there were not significant differences in mathematics and language performance among PACES students and public school students (King et al. 1997). Furthermore, in cases where differences were identified, most could be explained by the socioeconomic origin of the students (Sarmiento 2000).

The third PPP modality we find in Colombia is the *Colegios en Concesión* (CEC, or Concession Schools) of Bogotá, a group of 25 charter schools newly constructed by the SED. These schools became the objects of a bidding process among private operators between 1999 and 2003. In order to be able to place a bid, Education Management Organizations (EMOs) had to be private non-profit organizations and demonstrate their "academic excellence." The contract included a series of obligations such as: the CEC

3. The National Information System on Social Programmes Beneficiaries (SISBEN) is an information system designed by the Colombian government to identify potential individual beneficiaries of social programs; the minimum SISBEN stratum is 0 and the maximum is 6.

should ensure certain standards regarding materials (physical infrastructure, equipment, teaching materials, etc.) and services (full school day, quality of food, etc.); the CEC's ICFES results should be superior to those of nearby public schools;⁴ student enrollment processes should agree with the SED's criteria related to geographical proximity, SISBEN stratum, vulnerable population and family unification; and profit is not allowed.

The SED is responsible for ensuring that these obligations are actually met. To this purpose, the SED regularly evaluates the schools through different strategies. In some cases, it does so simply through administrative evaluations carried out by the SED's inspectors (e.g., to assess the state of the physical infrastructure or students' attendance). In other cases, the SED conducts more in-depth evaluations of the CEC program that focus on the academic performance and pedagogical strategies of the schools, among other variables. These evaluations are periodically carried out by an independent entity and they are high stakes: the contract contemplates the expulsion of the worst rated schools from the CEC program.

Since its inception, the tender faced some difficulties. The requirements of the tender were high but the potential economic profits were null; due to this, the EMOs' motivation was based on social vocation, religious proselytizing, and image and prestige (Pérez & Rivera 2010). Also, the academic requirement of high ICFES results for the providers was a source of tension in contexts of low SES. For instance, some EMOs, despite having extensive experience in education in low SES contexts showed little ICFES results success. For this reason, in order to accomplish the tendering obligations, Fe y Alegría was forced to perform a Temporary Consortium with a more elitist Jesuit school. On the other hand, EMOs with excellent ICFES results, such as Gimnasio Moderno and the entities that constituted Alianza Educativa, had little experience in low SES contexts. Because of these reasons, the bids were not very competitive; in fact, there were few EMOs willing to tender.

As a result of the bidding processes, nine EMOs won those tenders: three private providers with more elitist backgrounds (Alianza Educativa [AAE], which managed five charter schools and Fenur and Gimnasio Moderno, which each managed one school; two compensation funds (Cafam, which managed four, and Colsubsidio, which managed five); and four religious EMOs (Calasanz and La Salle, which each managed one, Don Bosco, which managed five, and Fe y Alegría, which managed two) (for more detail, see Table 11 in Appendix 2). The EMOs were responsible for managing the CEC until 2014; depending on the bidding call, subsequent contracts lasted between 11 and 15 years. In all cases, and despite the existence of important contextual differences, the CEC were

4. The ICFES test (or the Saber test) is a standardized test administered to students of grades 3, 5, 9 and 11 by the *Instituto Colombiano para el Fomento de la Educación Superior* (ICFES 2010b). ICFES in 11th grade is compulsory in order to access tertiary education. However, universities are autonomous when it comes to weighing ICFES as an enrolment criterion: some universities use ICFES test results as the sole criterion for student admission; other universities combine it with interviews and tests; and other universities develop their own selection processes. For instance, according to Sánchez et al. (2002), the ICFES is used as the only tool for 83 percent of the public universities of Colombia; exams or interviews are also widely used. Besides being essential for university access, ICFES is also conceptualized as an accountability tool that might serve as the "main instrument" to improve the quality of education; in particular, the SED understood that the ICFES test should establish the situation of students in different grades and, in so doing, point to appropriate strategies and improvement plans for schools (Peña 2005b: 29). In addition, due to the fact that CEC ICFES results are evaluated by the SED, these schools have strong incentives to strategically adapt their practices to the ICFES.

built in vulnerable areas with low SES stratum (measured through the SISBEN system), since this program openly aimed to benefit poor students.⁵ The methodology section includes a broader explanation.

1.4 State of the Art of the CEC's Previous Evaluations

In this section we review the evaluations of the CEC program made by the SED, international organizations and independent scholars. These evaluations have reached similar conclusions in relation to some aspects of the program such as the academic results of the CEC, the role of the CEC principal, teachers' employment conditions, the infrastructures and services of the schools and the level of families' attachment to the schools. In relation to others aspects, however, there is more controversy. We refer here to the analysis of pedagogical practices of the CEC, their student/teacher ratio, the funding and per capita cost of the CEC, and enrollment processes. Interestingly, existing assessments pay little attention to this last point, which is key to understanding whether the program achieves the objectives of positive action and non-discrimination. Table 2 presents and summarizes the main results of most of the academic assessments of the CEC program.

Despite the multiple aspects in common with previous evaluations, our own research contradicts established assumptions on the superiority of learning achievement and school autonomy dynamics in *Colegios en Concesión*, as well as assumptions concerning the absence of screening practices within the CEC sector.

5. Today, the 25 CEC in Bogotá enroll 39,947 students (2.7 percent of the total number of students in Bogotá). In some localities, the relative importance of CEC is greater: Usme (9 percent of total students and 11 percent of public students), Santá Fé (7.4 percent and 13.1 percent), Bosa (5.6 percent and 8.7 percent) and San Cristóbal (5.1 percent and 7.5 percent). After its initial implementation in Bogotá, the CEC program was later expanded throughout Colombia (47 CEC in the rest of the country); the total CEC student population is calculated to be 67,680 (MEN 2010: 102).

Table 2—Academic assessments of the CEC program

Study, affiliation and/or funding	Objectives	Results
Duarte & Villa (2002a, 2002b, 2002c and 2004) —Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)	Analyze the emergence, implementation and results of the CEC program in Bogotá	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC are more accountable than public schools. • There is a perception of limited autonomy on the part of the principals (due to the EMO's centralism). • The parents' participation is limited (although institutionally encouraged). • Teachers are recruited flexibly. • It is considered that per capita costs of CEC are US\$ 475 and public schools are US\$ 595.
Zuluaga & Bonilla (2006) —Icesi University (Cali, Colombia)	Present a set of proposals to strengthen the role of schools in the elimination of poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEC program increase coverage efficiently and, altogether, increase the quality of education. • The private sector must play a more participatory role in the education system and, in particular, the CEC program should be extended throughout Colombia.
Peña (2005a and 2005b) —former SED secretary. Fundación Empresarios por la Educación	Analyze the emergence, implementation and results of the CEC program in Bogotá	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEC program is defined as a measure of positive discrimination, which planning included the accountability and the avoiding of the adverse selection of students. • The CEC results are: better results in primary but not in secondary; the high parents' attachment; the generation of collective identity; better food than public schools; and the use of CEC's own distinctive pedagogical models. But, although the educational transference was intended, it has been necessary the recontextualization of the pedagogical projects. • It is considered that per capita costs of both CS and public schools is US\$ 473.
Barrera (2006 and 2009) —World Bank and Harvard Graduate School of Education (Cambridge)	Analyze the CEC's dropout rates; the impact of CEC on public schools near the concession; and the comparison between ICFES test scores among CEC and public schools (in Bogotá)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEC have reduced students' dropout rates; and, also, there is “Some evidence of an indirect impact of the concession schools on the dropout rates in nearby regular public schools.” But only at 90% of statistical significance. • The CEC have a positive impact on test scores when compared with students in other public schools (in mathematics and biology, but not in reading or physics). • The role of principal is more autonomous in CEC than in PS (i.e., in hiring and firing teachers). • The CEC have better infrastructure (physical plant, equipment) and services (i.e., food) than public schools.
Sarmiento & PNDH (2007) —SED and Colombian Planning Department (DNP)	Evaluation of the educational public policies in Bogotá (2004–2006), including CEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the costs and efficiency of CEC and public schools. The CEC average was US\$ 418 in 2003 and 599 in 2006; while public schools average was 404 (2003) and 670 (2006).

WORKING PAPER

Study, affiliation and/or funding	Objectives	Results
Sarmiento (et al. 2005, 2008)—Colombian Planning Department (DNP)	Evaluate and analyze the CEC program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC enhance innovative and coherent pedagogy, while public schools a more traditional approach. • CEC principals perceive limited management autonomy (there is similar dependency than public schools). • The methods of selection of students are “similar” (but not identical): evidences of students' selection in CEC. • CEC have more activities to influence the community and parents. Parents participate moderately in CEC (but parents' participation in public schools is zero). • CEC have improved in repetition, dropout and approval ratios (better than public schools). • The principal has a more academic leadership in CEC, while having a more administrative role in public schools. • CEC teachers have lower academic qualifications than public schools teachers (and also worse employment conditions). And the CEC used the non-renewal of contract as a means of increasing the productivity of teachers. • Public schools are more economically efficient than CEC. • CEC increase parents' academic expectations. • The ratio student-teacher average of CEC is considered to be 27,8. • The per capita costs of CEC are US\$ 512 (average 2002) and 424 (2003), while public schools are of 364 (2002) and 311 (2003) -whit important differences among PS reported: from 211 to 369.
Patrinos, H. et al. (2009) —World Bank	Literature review regarding the secondary education in PPPs in education, including CEC in Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEC program had lead to a diversification of the supply of education. • The CEC program had attracted high-performing and specialized educational organizations which drive up the overall quality of the education provided. • The CEC program enhances school management autonomy (being more accountable to the users, and increases the efficiency) and, also, pedagogical autonomy.
Pérez & Rivera (2010) —Rosario University (Bogotá)	Case study of CEC Sabio Caldas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The motivation of the EMO for participating to the CEC program was based on social vocation, religious image and prestige. • The EMO was opposed to the imposition of the double full day. • The students find several difficulties (both economical and academatical) when facing the access to university.

WORKING PAPER

Study, affiliation and/or funding	Objectives	Results
Bonilla (2010a and 2011) —University of Maryland, and ICFES institute	Analyze the CEC's impact on ICFES results (maths and verbal test scores)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no significant differences among CEC and public schools ICFES test scores. • The employment policies of CEC increase teachers' productivity. • CEC don't use the teaching to the test.
Gómez et al. (2011) —Catholic University of Colombia (Bogotá)	Case study of CEC Calasanz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the CEC Calasanz's internal financial documents.
Bonilla Leonardo (2011) —Bank of the Republic of Colombia	Evaluate if double school day effect on the quality of education in Colombia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full school day has been statistically significantly associated with ICFES results. Therefore, double school day creates inequality among students in a full school day (e.g., CEC students).
Barrera et al. (2012a) —Barrera's affiliation is the WB, but the publication is affiliated to University of los Andes (part of AAE)	Literature review regarding the secondary education in Colombia, including the CEC program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEC have more organizational autonomy than public schools (including the management of human resources); therefore CEC are more flexible than public schools. • There are modest improvements in academic performance and in dropout ratios (although these effects are heterogeneous among EMOs).
Valencia & Carrizosa (2013) —UNESCO	Analyze education on conflict resolution in AAE, Colsubsidio and Fenur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEC emphasize discipline and control, but not living together. • CEC promote participation, but the limits of institutional participation are undefined. In practice, participation in CEC more nominal than substantive.
Vélez (2013) —former SED secretary, on a conference organized by the American Development Bank (BID)	Analyze the planning, implementation and impact in Colombia of the CEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aims of the project were: increasing the education supply and improve schools' quality, both in marginal areas with vulnerable population. And the program mechanisms were: the educational transference (from institutions of proven excellence); schools' autonomy; and accountability. • The results of the CEC program had been the improvements in ICFES test and improvements in retention ratios.

2. Methodology and the CEC Theory of Change

In this section we describe the methodology (including the questions that had driven the research, the theoretical-methodological framework, and sample).

2.1 The Realist Evaluation Approach

The **questions** that have guided this research project are: How different is the organizational and pedagogical approach of CEC in relation to regular public schools? Are the academic results of the CEC significantly different from the results of public schools operating under similar conditions? If so, why?

In order to answer these questions, we rely on the **realist evaluation** approach (Pawson 2006, Pawson & Tilley 1997), which considers public policies as hypotheses about social improvement, whose underlying assumptions need to be tested and unpacked. Accordingly, one first step in this methodology consists on constructing the “theory of change” (or program ontology) of the policy in question, as a way to treat such a theory as a set of policies that need to be tested in the field. In fact, this is what we do in the next section, where we (re)construct the CEC theory of change on the basis of secondary data and interviews with key informants.

The realist evaluation approach understands public policies as part of social systems that, as such, may work in a selective way. In other words, public policies will have effects only if agents (both people and institutions) decide to make them work properly and, also, if they use the resources that they possess in the way that policy-makers and planners intended when they designed the policy program under evaluation.

As a consequence, public policy analysis needs to capture the agents’ reflexivity (their reasons, interpretations, strategies and elections), as well as the social values and interpretative frameworks of the actors in question. Then, our research is intended to focus on the preferences, interpretations and responses of different agents (such as local policy-makers, principals, teachers, parents and students) and on the contextual factors (such as the institutional and regulation context) or the socioeconomic space(s) within which the CEC are placed. We aim to understand “what works for whom in what circumstances and in what respects, and how” (Pawson & Tilley 2004: 2), and not only to understand whether “charter schools work (or not)” in an abstract way.

2.2 The CEC’s Theory of Change

As a result of the analysis of interviews with key informants, it is possible to deduce that the CEC program was a “second best” policy option. Initially, the SED sought to create a more market-oriented model with more parental school choice capacity, greater competition between schools and operation by for-profit EMOs. In fact, the promoters

of the CEC program in the end of the nineties openly admitted that their initial intention was to emulate a “Chilean-like model” (Edwards 2014).

The CEC theory of change would have looked very different if it meant the adoption of more drastic market rules. However, several constraints prevented this from happening, including the fierce opposition of teachers’ unions (Miñana 2010b, Peña 2005b, Villa & Duarte 2002b, Pardo Romero 2014)⁶ worried that the privatization of education would worsen teachers’ employment conditions. The worsening of teachers’ employment conditions could be the result of a fraudulent contracting scheme, failing to fulfill the Teachers Acts requirements.⁷

From the analysis of legal documents related to program planning, as well as analysis of interviews with key informants, it is possible to identify the main elements of the CEC’s theory of change: its core objectives, underlying mechanisms and legitimating principles.

The expected objectives of the program are to increase the academic performance of poor students, to diversify the pedagogical models of schools, and to increase the public school places in contexts with shortage of public places (Vélez 2013, Peña 2005a and 2005b, Villa & Duarte 2002b):

- First, **increasing the academic performance of poor students**. This was supposed to be the result of the interaction between different factors: the proven academic success of the EMO; the high quality of the pedagogical approach (both elements evaluated during the tender process); and periodical SED evaluations, which controlled the extent to which CEC’s results were better than those of the nearby public schools (Barrera 2006 and 2009, Patrinos et al. 2009).
- Second, **increasing the pedagogical diversity of the local education system**. This should be the result of the introduction of different education providers (with their different pedagogical approaches and traditions), which differ from the perceived homogeneous pedagogical models of public schools.
- And, thirdly, the CEC should **increase the educational coverage** in contexts with a deficit of school places. And, also, do it quickly and cost-efficiently (Castro et al. 2012, Peña 2005a and 2005b).

6. The CEC program was made possible thanks to the personal involvement of mayors Mockus and Peñalosa, as well as the decisive intervention of Cecilia Vélez (who was Bogotá’s education secretary and later became minister of education of Colombia). Interviewed by B. Edwards (2014) Vélez stated that “Well obviously I had studied all cases: from Finland—which was public—to the Charters in the United States, and I had also studied much about the Chilean model. But we thought that the Chilean was not a generalizable scheme We were not able to make such a risky thing as Chile Despite we are moving closer toward a more market scheme, we still have many restrictions. Chile could do it because they had a dictatorship; in a democracy you cannot implement a scheme like Chile.”

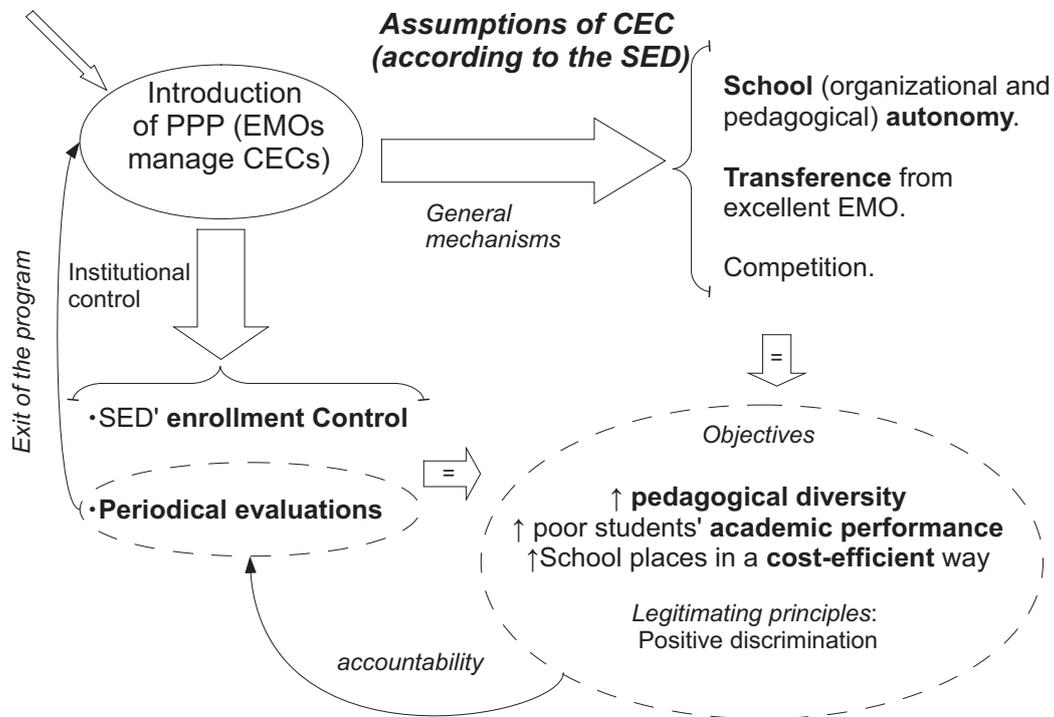
7. Both public schools and CEC are governed by two Teachers Acts (the old 2277 act of 1979, and the new 1279 act of 2002) that establish a correspondence between teacher rank and salary. The two Teachers Acts have important differences in terms of access to the teaching profession as well as teachers’ evaluations and accountability. In the decree of 1979 only those who had a teaching degree could exercise the profession, whereas the new decree of 2002 expanded the definition of teachers. While this could have led to a change of the *ethos* of the profession (Miñana 2010a), only 21 percent of the new teachers had not earned a teaching degree (Barrera et al. 2012: 14). Regarding evaluations and accountability, the new Act (2002) is supposedly more rigorous and performance-oriented (with performance evaluations and a standard test) compared to the 1979 Act (based on training and years of experience); in practice, however, this has not happened because evaluations have been performed less frequently than expected (only in 2010; Barrera et al. 2012: 13–14).

To overcome these objectives the program assumed that three main “mechanisms” would be activated: autonomy, transference and institutional control (Vélez 2013, Villa & Duarte 2002a and 2002b):

- First, the program **enhances schools’ autonomy** (both pedagogical and managerial autonomy), which is one of the “flagships in the New Public Management educational toolkit” (Verger & Curran 2012: 4). On the one hand, as mentioned above, it is assumed that public schools offer a one-size-fits-all homogeneous and monolithic pedagogical model. In comparison, the pedagogical autonomy given to CEC is expected to allow these schools to develop different, particular, and specific educational projects (including various educational or religious approaches) more accountable to parents’ needs. The main outcome of the school autonomy dynamics is an expected increase in the diversity of the education providers. On the other hand, it is assumed that most public education system problems are of an administrative nature (i.e., SED’s inefficient bureaucracy, principals with neither sufficient powers nor managerial vision, or the excessive influence of teachers’ labor unions). Managerial autonomy should allow CEC to be more efficient in resources management, particularly human resources management (Bonilla 2011, Villa & Duarte 2005, Patrinos et al. 2009), and promote the figure of a more autonomous and managerial-oriented principal (Barrera 2006 and 2009, Barrera et al. 2012). For example, the autonomy to hire and fire teachers should allow for the creation of cohesive teacher teams and increased teacher productivity, due to the fact that their employment is linked to their results (Sarmiento 2008).
- Second, the program is based on the mechanism of **knowledge transference**, in which the EMOs are expected to transfer their pedagogical and management know-how of proven success in different realities to the CEC and, accordingly, to the public sector (Castro et al. 2012, Peña 2005). As a corollary, the transference of models is based on the assumption that it is possible to apply a range of management and teaching systems in very different contexts, but with the same level of success (since some EMOs had experience only or primarily in high class and even elitist contexts) (Villa & Duarte 2002b).
- Third, the program relies on the mechanism of **institutional control** of the SED in terms of regulation, evaluation and accountability. This included the SED’s control of student enrollment (assuring that CEC would address the most vulnerable children; see Peña 2005b) and the SED’s periodical independent evaluations (controlling CEC material and academic standards, and expelling poor-performing EMOs of the program) (Villa & Duarte 2002b).
- Finally, **competition** was considered, at least for some charter school advocates, as a mechanism derived from the implementation of the CEC. That is, the implementation of CEC should enhance the competition between providers within the “local education market.” The CEC program involves an ex ante competition among providers during the tendering process (Villa & Duarte 2002a, 2002b and 2005, Patrinos et al. 2009). At the same time, the CEC increases the level of diversity within the local supply system and expands parental school choice options, which is something that “creates a potential competition effect that softens quality-reducing decisions” (Bonilla 2011: 36) and can contribute to improvements in nearby public schools (Barrera 2006: 4).

The most important legitimating principle of the CEC program is the right of poor children to quality education, a positive action principle (Peña 2005b). In other words, the CEC should offer an excellent (private) education to the most marginalized (see Sarmiento 2005 and 2008). The SED’s monitoring of enrollment should ensure that this positive discrimination principle is met. Other legitimating principles were the parents’ right to choose among different types of schools, in pedagogical and religious terms (Jolly 2009). For example, the SED-CEC contract states that one of the aims of the contracts is “to contribute to the fulfillment of the Article 68 of the Constitution that gives to the parents the right to educate their children.” Finally, the exclusion of for-profit operators also contributes to the program’s legitimation. Figure 1 illustrates the CEC’s theory of change.

Figure 1—CEC’s theory of change



2.3 Methods and Sample

The realist evaluation is a reflexive, comprehensive and non-positivist methodological approach that privileges a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. In particular, the **methods** used in this research are both qualitative and quantitative, including techniques such as semi-structured interviews, focal groups, questionnaires and analysis of secondary sources (as shown in Table 3). The construction of the research sample has focused on Bogotá’s CEC program (excluding the rest of Colombia’s CEC); this was due to the fact that Bogotá’s CEC were the first ones constructed in the country and, accordingly, have a longer trajectory. In addition, the Bogotá school system has some particular features such as a higher presence of private educational providers and a deficit of school places that make this city particularly relevant.

The sample's construction includes both public and CEC schools from the same neighborhood in order to analyze their interaction within the local education system. In each school, we interviewed different stakeholders (owners, principals, teachers and parents) and conducted focus groups with students. We also administered a questionnaire to principals and teachers, and interviewed key informants at the policy level. As a result, the **sample** included both CEC and public schools from different Bogotá localities (specifically Usaquen, Santa Fé, San Cristóbal, Usme, Bosa, Kennedy, Rafael Uribe, Engativá, Suba and Ciudad Bolívar).

Table 3—*Techniques and fieldwork of the research project*

Techniques	Fieldwork
Literature review	SED's evaluations of CEC and academic literature on CEC and charter schools
Document analysis of legal contracts and bidding processes	Documents from four SED bidding processes (1999–2003); and the 25 contracts between the SED and each CEC
Interviews with key informants	Interviews with six key informants: ex-secretary of the SED, ex-secretary of teachers' labor union, current SED planning director, current SED education quality evaluator, and SED responsible for the initial implementation of CEC
Semi-structured interviews (in CEC and public schools)	83 semi-structured interviews: 13 school principals, 36 teachers and 31 parents
Focus groups for students (in CEC and public schools)	11 student focus groups
Questionnaires to school principals and teachers (in CEC and public schools)	1,086 questionnaires to school principals and teachers in CEC and public schools
Statistical analysis of ICFES test results of CEC and public schools	ICFES test results of 145 schools, both CEC and public. The sample ⁸ was constructed including CEC schools and public schools located in the same geographical area. The final database includes the following information for each school: school type, ICFES 2013 results in different subjects, school day and socioeconomic category

8. The sample is constructed from the following sources: (a) The ICFES 2013 results and school day schedules from the website of the Institute ICFES-Saber; (b) Type of college from the website of the Institute ICFES-Saber and the application "Looking for school" from the MEN website; (c) Location (in localities and UPZ) is assigned using the SED's school maps; and (d) Socio-economic classification of schools has been obtained through the Institute ICFES-Saber database. The Institute assigns a SES to each school through the Socio-Economic Index Level Student (INSEY), which takes into account the area of residence, housing characteristics, family educational level, occupation of father and mother, number of siblings, etc. The various features of the school's students are grouped by a variant of the method of Principal Component Analysis. From this clustering, schools are assigned a category ranging from 1 to 4 (ICFES 2010a: 12).

3. Main Results

We present in this section the main results of our research, which we structure in three main dimensions: organizational characteristics, pedagogical styles and academic results.⁹

3.1 CEC's Organizational Characteristics

Here, we analyze the organizational characteristics of CEC, in terms of enrollment processes, autonomy, management of human resources (leadership styles, employment conditions, etc.), material resources (including food and/or full school day) and school-community relationships.

Enrollment Processes

In Bogotá school choice is restricted by a zone system and the CEC enrollment process appears similar to that of other public schools.¹⁰ In fact, in many cases, parents recur to the formal procedures to access CEC.¹¹ However, as stated previously, demand for the CEC greatly exceed the places they can offer, which contributes to many CEC and families resorting to informal mechanisms in the process of enrollment.

Parents habitually resort to informal communication with and pressures on school staff. More exceptionally, a few interviewees reported that parents go as far as purchasing places for their children. The

CEC also resort to informal channels in the enrollment process. Since screening students is apparently not allowed, most CEC principals we interviewed emphasized that the selection process in their school is ruled solely by the priorities of the SED, plus the order of arrival. When asked directly, they denied the existence of any cream skimming or illegal selection practice. Nevertheless, according to our data, the **presence of irregularities in the selection of students** is quite common. In particular, our questionnaires show that 68.1 percent of the CEC's staff (principals, coordinators and teachers) consider the CEC principal to be a direct participant in student enrollment processes, whereas only 44.7 percent consider the SED a direct participant in that process. In contrast, public school

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9. The differentiation among organizational and pedagogical levels are based on Lubienski (2001, 2009 and 2014) and OECD (2005 and 2014). Organizational-administrative changes could refer to marketing, enrollment processes, governance, authority of the principal, labor relations aspects (Lubienski 2009) or teacher collaboration, feedback mechanisms, evaluation and hiring, and external relations (OECD 2014). Pedagogical changes refer to pedagogical aspects, curriculum or ICT use (Lubienski 2009, based on OECD 2005) and also to teaching style, instructional practices, class organization, textbooks in classrooms, methods of assessment used in classrooms, availability and use of ICT, and provision of special education (OECD 2014).
10. Parents send a form with their school preferences to the SED, and the SED distributes students through the schools of the zone according to students' individual characteristics (socio-economic stratum according to SISBEN, geographical area, vulnerability and familiar unification) and the availability of places in the schools of the zone in question.
11. There are two specific situations where enrollment to CEC through official procedures predominates. First, in cases of insufficient demand (which was usually the case in the beginning of the CEC program). And, second, when parents can enroll their children to a pre-school institution linked to the CEC.

staff stated that the SED is involved in 81.3 percent of enrollments and public school principals only 37.5 percent. These results could be due to teachers misunderstanding the selection rules. However, our qualitative fieldwork also shows that the CEC frequently select pupils who, in addition to meeting the requirements established by the SED, meet several of the following characteristics: member of a “structured” family, high learning motivation, good academic record in previous schools, and high scores in ability tests supplied *ad hoc* by the CEC to the candidates.

The most common mechanisms through which **CEC selection** occurs are interviews with parents and students, visits by the school social worker to the potential student’s house, and consultation of academic records (including ability tests). These irregular practices were mentioned in interviews with families and students quite often:

“By the time I came to enroll my son, they interviewed me. They asked me ‘What do you think about this school?’ And the social worker and the secretary made me other questions.”

—Parent 2 CEC 5, Bogotá, February 12, 2014

In particular, most parents and students we interviewed referred to processes of determining academic potential (via tests and consultation of previous academic records) as an intrinsic element of the enrollment process:

“They asked me to show them the previous school’s report card.”

—Parent 1 CEC 24, Bogotá, March 26, 2014

“We did a test. They asked us about the core subjects, such as mathematics, Spanish, English, physics, those subjects.”

—Focal group CEC 20, Bogotá, February 28, 2014

On the contrary, public schools are characterized as not selecting students. In fact, these schools have no choice but to accept and enroll students who have been rejected and expelled from CEC.

The selection of CEC students has been possible due to two major problems during the implementation of the program: a certain **contractual ambiguity** and **lack of strict control from the SED**.

In relation to contractual ambiguity, the 27th clause of the SED–CEC contracts (which specifies the process of student enrollment) can be interpreted in a flexible manner to allow the selection of students. In fact, there has been progressively more room for student selection in each tender; the last contracts are even more ambiguous than the first contracts. This manifested uncertainty has been criticized both by the current director of planning of the SED as well as the former SED coordinator of the CEC program:

“If you read the bidding documents, the selection of students is an issue that is not sufficiently specified. In fact, there are three versions of bidding documents. In the first version, it seems that the Ministry of Education assigned quota students. The second version is ambiguous. And in the third version it is clear that schools can choose the students.”

—Key informant, SED planning responsible, Bogotá, February 18, 2014

“In the contracts, the student selection is not anticipated. I do not know at what point they began to select pupils, but that was not written in the contracts.”

—Key informant, former responsible of CEC implementation, Bogotá, March 31, 2014

As some key informants revealed, the CEC’s selection practices are well-known among the planning office of the SED.

The selection of students by the CEC has implications of a different nature. One of the most obvious (and concerning) relates to the alteration of the learning process and its outcomes, since the selection of brighter and more motivated students is expected to have positive academic consequences at the classroom level through the so-called “peer effect.” This is ironic, in the sense that the CEC program is based on the assumption that the school effect is more relevant than the context and social composition effect. However, it is clear that for many CEC managers, intervening proactively in the composition of their schools is perceived as a strategic asset to deliver good results.

“So there is an effect such as [cream] skimming. Suddenly the CEC selected the poor but motivated students. CEC students are poor but motivated, unlike the [not motivated] poor students of nearby public schools.”

—Key informant, SED planning responsible, Bogotá, February 18, 2014

“The CEC may present factors of choice and self-selection. These factors may be important. For example, the families of the CEC are generally more motivated than families who are in state education.”

—Key informant, SED evaluation responsible, Bogotá, March 4, 2014

Overall, cream skimming, despite does not necessarily mean a breach of the contract, is a violation of the spirit and the principles of the CEC original policy idea.

“In case there is selection of students, then it is necessary to investigate that. In other words, the selection of students is wrong. There may have been certain SED lassitude for allowing the CEC to choose their students.”

—Key informant, SED planning responsible, Bogotá, February 18, 2014

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School Autonomy and Human Resources Management

Both our qualitative and quantitative data indicate that CEC principals are quite autonomous in certain management aspects (such as hiring and firing teachers). However, at the same time, the CEC are **subordinated to the EMO** in many other aspects, such as salary and budgetary issues. In comparison, public schools are characterized by a high dependence on the MEN/SED, and by a narrow margin of action of principals in most managerial aspects. Figure 4 in Appendix 2 details which actors in CEC and

public schools are responsible for management tasks such as hiring and firing teachers, teacher salaries and budget assignation.

The CEC are autonomous when it comes to hiring and firing teachers, but they are not supposed to be able to define teachers' employment conditions because, like public schools, they are governed by the Teacher Acts of 1979 and 2002. Despite this, in practice, **working conditions for CEC teachers are much worse** than for teachers in public schools. Our teacher survey pointed to a range of questions related to labor conditions; responses are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4—*Summary of teachers' employment conditions in CEC and public schools*

	Public school	CEC
Age, experience as a teacher, and years at the school	Age: 44.4 Exp.: 19.3 Years: 8.3	Age: 35.2 Exp.: 11.4 Years: 4
Rank	Specialization: 48.7% Master 15.2%	Professional: 69% No correspondence rank-salary
Teacher Act	1979: 51% 2002: 28.7%	1979: 36.9% 2002: 63.1%
Workday (hours/week) at school and at a class	School: 30.3 Class: 23.8	School: 42.9 Class: 31.2
Mode and time of recruitment	Indefinite: 95%	Temporary: 98.9% (of which 99% were less than a year)
Salary (in Minimum Wages [MW])	Between 2 and 6 MW: 83.2%	2 or less MW: 66.5% Important differences among EMOs No correspondence rank-salary
Unions	Yes: 77.1% No: 22.9%	Yes: 0.7% No: 99.3%

Source: Own elaboration based on our survey.

In the context of CEC, the 2002 Teacher Act is predominant (63.1 percent), while the 1979 Teacher Act predominates in public schools (it applies to 51 percent of the teachers, while the 2002 Teacher Act applies to 28.7 percent of them). Thus, labor conditions are clearly worse in CEC, which tend to reflect lower ranks and salaries and potentially include professionals with no teaching degree.

CEC teachers have a much longer workday than public school teachers: the former spend 42.9 hours per week in school (31.2 of those hours in the classroom), whereas public school teachers are in school only 30 hours per week (23.8 of those hours in the classroom). In addition, 87.3 percent of the public school teachers agreed with the statement "I have time to prepare my classes," while only 68.4 percent of the CEC teachers agreed with it.

CEC teachers' contracts were temporal in almost all cases (98.9 percent). These contracts ranged in duration between 12 months (13.8 percent) and 11 months or less (85.6 percent), which means that few CEC teachers have paid summer holidays. In comparison, public school teachers had been hired indefinitely in 95 percent of the cases and had paid holidays.

CEC teachers also reported lower salaries, although salaries vary substantially according to the EMO in charge: the EMOs with the lowest salaries are Fe y Alegría (90.5 percent of teachers between 1 and 2 minimum wages (MW), Cafam (85.5 percent), Fenur-Durán Dussán (80.7 percent), Alianza Educativa (79.5 percent), and Calasanz (78 percent). The EMOs with the highest salaries are Don Bosco (68.5 percent of teachers between 2 and 4 MW), Colsubsidio (68.5 percent) and Gimnasio Moderno (41 percent) (for more detail about teachers' salaries distributions among EMOs, see Figure 3 in Appendix 2). But, even in the three EMOs with the highest salaries, the salary is substantially lower than in public schools, where 23 percent of teachers are paid between 5 and 6 MW (this percentage is less than 2 percent in any EMO).

Overall, CEC teachers have lower degree qualifications than teachers in public schools; the latter are staffed predominately by Professionals with Specialization and Master, whereas most CEC teachers are only Professional without specialization. This is partly due to the fact that CEC teachers overall are younger than public school teachers, but it has also to do with the fact that most of the CEC either do not recognize teachers' ranks or limit them to a maximum.

“Teachers in public schools are paid according to their teaching ranks. However, the CEC are not forced to pay in accordance with the Teachers Act. What did the CEC do? All CEC hired teachers in the 7th category [the lowest one]. That is, there is a cost economy at the expense of labor and professional rights of teachers. CEC teachers' rights (labor right, economic and wage conditions) are not recognized.”

—Key informant, former SED secretary and FECODE leader, Bogotá, 11 March, 2014

“Does the school recognize your rank? Yes, but only up to grade 10, but not more.”

—Teacher 2 CEC 13, Bogotá, March 5, 2014

Finally, while most teaching staff is unionized in public schools (77.1 percent), labor unions are almost nonexistent in CEC (only 0.7 percent of CEC teachers are unionized).¹² Our qualitative data show that the exclusion of unions are a conscious EMO strategy to “flexibilize” teacher employment conditions in the CEC:

“When the CEC were implemented, that was another factor that was claimed: that public schools' teachers obeyed more the guidance from the union than the guidelines of the Ministry of Education or of the schools' principals. Therefore, it was considered that there was an excessive ... ‘Fecodization.’”

—Key informant, former SED responsible and FECODE leader, Bogotá, March 11, 2014

“No, here are no trade unions, Colsubsidio is an enemy of the trade unions.”

—Principal CEC 12, Bogotá, February 4, 2014

Given their poorer working conditions, many CEC teachers would prefer to work in a public school: in our questionnaire, 42.2 percent of the CEC teachers reported having

12. Animadversions between CEC and teachers' unions are reciprocal. CEC are widely criticized by unions (ADE in Bogotá, FECODE in Colombia) for both political (CEC as an education privatization tool) and labor related reasons (worsening of the working conditions for CEC teachers).

sought work in another school (whereas only 24.3 percent of public school teachers reported that they would prefer to work in a different school). Teachers from Fenur, Fe y Alegría and Don Bosco EMOs had searched for other teaching jobs most frequently (more than 50 percent of those teachers made this intention explicit). Colubsidio EMO had the lowest percentage (29.2 percent) of teachers looking for work in another school.

Unsurprisingly, the CEC have a high level of staff turnover; among our respondents, years of experience averaged eight at the public schools and only four at the CEC. High turnover makes it difficult to consolidate cohesive teams and poses problems for relationships with students. Nonetheless, our qualitative fieldwork also highlights an ambivalent opinion about working in a CEC among teachers. The strong and majoritarian negative opinion on the bad employment conditions is combined with a certain positive valuation of the CEC in aspects such as pedagogical planning and training opportunities. In many cases, especially in religious schools, teachers described themselves as being profoundly attached to the ethos of the CEC.

Leadership Styles

Our data suggest that the CEC carry out more **pedagogical and planning activities** and enhance teacher-principal collaboration more than regular schools. In particular, the survey shows a statistically significant difference between public schools and CEC in terms of planning pedagogical activities (+18.5 percent of average difference, and generally low Cramer's V Coefficient) such as: meetings on school vision and mission, definition of the curriculum, class material, evaluation standards, collaboration with other colleagues and participation in in-service training. There are also significant differences in principal activities (+24.1 percent of average difference, and generally moderate and even strong Cramer's V Coefficient) such as observation of teachers' practices (and improvement suggestions) and collaboration with teachers (discussing goals, reinforcing their initiatives, solving problems together, etc.). For more detail, see Tables 12 and 13 in Appendix 2.

The high frequency (of both planning pedagogical activities and principal pedagogical activities in CEC) was emphasized in our interviews by both teachers and principals.

"In public schools, teachers do not plan. Then you go to school and do what you can in your area. No one checks your classes, you do not plan at all."

—Principal CEC 22, Bogotá, February 25, 2014

"I had colleagues in state schools and they were teachers, coordinators and principals. They do not plan."

—Teacher 3 CEC 22, Bogotá, February 27, 2014

The high presence of pedagogical activities in CEC can be explained by various reasons. First, by differences in **labor conditions** and hours per week: CEC teachers' workdays are much longer. CEC teachers work 12.9 hours more *per week* (7.4 of those hours are spent in the classroom) than regular teachers in public schools, which increases their chances to spend more time on planning and teaching coordination.

Second, by differences in **incentives schemes** and training opportunities: CEC teachers are in a very weak employment position. According to our survey, while public school teachers have mostly indefinite contracts, almost 99 percent of the CEC teachers have a contract length of one year or less. Moreover, the relationship between teachers and principals in the public schools is mediated through the labor unions while, in contrast, unions are absent from the CEC sector. This weak employment position makes CEC teachers continuously threatened by the possibility of dismissal or non-renewal. This labor insecurity works as a great incentive for CEC teachers to adjust their productivity to the high CEC standards in terms of planning meetings and pedagogical sessions.

“Teachers in public schools are characterized by tranquility, relaxation, wellness. They think ‘I already got here, here they no longer exploit me.’ And they provide an unethical answer: ‘I become the person who is late, dodging the day.’”

—Principal public school 3, Bogotá, July 11, 2014

“I was in both sides [public schools and CEC]. The quality is different in each side. There are bad teachers on all sides; but in the private school, if you’re bad, you get fired. Here [in the public sector], you mischief all you want and the only thing that they do is move you to another place [a different public school]. In the private sector, if you’re late, they’ll say ‘get active!’ In the state sector they do not tell you anything.”

—Teacher 2 public school 2, Bogotá, July 12, 2014

The continuity or non-renewal of CEC teachers, then, depends on the internal evaluation system of the CEC. Evaluation systems are also present in public schools, but they differ substantially from those in CEC. First, although public schools and CEC teachers are supposedly evaluated by the same system contemplated in the Teachers Act, the EMOs have generated their own and parallel mechanisms of teacher evaluation. Teachers with a negative evaluation according to the EMO system have many chances to not have their contract renewed. Another reason why evaluation in CEC and public schools is different is due to differences in the Teachers Acts that regulate their labor. As mentioned above, public school teachers are mostly hired through the old 1979 Act. In contrast, the CEC teachers are hired predominantly by the new 2002 Act (63.1 percent). The old 1979 Teachers Act evaluation system is based, mainly, on in-service training and years of experience, while in the new evaluation system of the 2002 Act performance evaluations and standardized tests (which, supposedly, the principal applies on yearly basis) are also contemplated.

Other less important differences in incentive schemes exist. Our survey shows that 73.3 percent of the CEC teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “the school offers me the chance to advance in my teaching career”; more than seven points above the public school teachers (66 percent). Also, CEC seem to offer more opportunities for continuous in-service training for their teachers. CEC teachers agreed more with the statement “at school there are opportunities to increase my training” (76.6 percent, compared to 69.4 percent of public school teachers) and “training opportunities are adequate” (80.2 percent in CEC, 67.6 percent in public schools). Nevertheless, though these elements could be considered positive incentives for teaching in the CEC system, both reflected a low statistical association (0.11 and 0.15 respectively).

Finally, a powerful narrative emerged during the fieldwork in which most CEC professionals (principals and directors) harshly criticized public school teachers. According to the

former, public school teachers just comply with the minimum requirements of their work schedule and are not as involved in students' learning processes. They also affirm that public school teachers who work hard are negatively perceived by their peers, and that teacher absenteeism in public schools is a big issue (partly due to the supposedly great number of labor strikes). In fact, despite being quantitatively insignificant, teacher strikes have acquired great political significance and are considered a key reason to favor the CEC model, especially by CEC students, families and staff. Ironically, despite the negative narrative about public school teachers, many CEC teachers want to work in a public school.

Nevertheless, according to our questionnaire, there are not such vocational and motivational differences between public school and CEC teachers. In our survey, agreement with the statements "I enjoy being a teacher" and "I am happy working in this school" was 98.9 percent in public schools and 94.8 percent in CEC schools. Something similar happened with the assertion "If I could choose again, I would choose the teaching profession," to which 94.7 percent of teachers in public schools and 88.7 percent of teachers in CEC responded positively.

Material Resources and Services

CEC are well known for enjoying high quality **facilities** and **material** resources. CEC infrastructure, physical plant, and specialized equipment is modern and functional. Many CEC have audiovisual materials (TV, audio recorders), artistic resources (paint, clay, painting, decorative elements in the classroom), computers, Internet access, specialized rooms (library, games room, computer room, rooms for music events), etc., which in some cases are provided by the EMO itself. CEC infrastructure is usually much better than that of nearby public schools. To a great extent, infrastructure and equipment resources have played an important role in the prestige acquired by the CEC. In this sense, the CEC parents express great satisfaction with the infrastructure of the CEC that their kids attend. Their demands in this matter are few and restricted to more security (surveillance cameras, road safety in the vicinity of schools, etc.) or more green areas.

Differences in the quality of the infrastructure between CEC and public schools are perceived by some as unfair:

"How is it possible that the first time that the State builds a new school, well gifted, with good infrastructure ... they give it to private providers? Why does the State not give to them the old schools, the ancient ones, those without infrastructure?"

—Key informant, former SED responsible and FECODE leader, Bogotá, March 11, 2014

Meanwhile, the CEC community, including parents, students and principals, believe that they take more care of the equipment and infrastructure than public school communities. According to the former stakeholders, this happens because CEC are stricter with their students (e.g., the CEC force students to pay for materials they break); because students and parents have a greater attachment to the CEC; and/or because CEC, on occasion, require students to collaborate in the maintenance of school facilities. Despite this narrative being very present in the interviews, it has not been possible to triangulate with other data sources.

Regarding **food and diet**, CEC offer quality food and balanced diet to all students. Food is also considered to be better in CEC than in public schools.¹³ In fact, only 68.2 percent of students in public schools receive food (SED 2012). Food is an element that is especially appreciated by the CEC parents. This is not surprising because CEC are located in contexts with high levels of chronic malnutrition (Acosta 2012).

Regarding the **school day**, all CEC offer a full school day. In contrast, in 2013, only 0.8 percent of public school students enjoyed a full school day; 51.3 percent attended only in the morning, 44.8 percent in the afternoon, 2.8 percent in the evening, and 0.3 percent on the weekend (SED 2014: 58). CEC families consider the full-day schedules profoundly positive, since long work days make it difficult for parents to monitor their children after school and the neighborhood is considered unsafe and violent. Nevertheless, this difference in the school day between public schools and CEC is considered discriminatory. According to Abel Rodríguez, leader of FECODE and former SED director:

“In the Council of Bogotá, I described this situation as discriminatory. Why are some kids going to full school day schools while others [the poor children] are going to a non-full school day? This is discriminatory.”

—Key informant, former SED responsible and FECODE leader, Bogotá, March 11, 2014

Abel Rodríguez, when in charge of the SED, aimed to offer more children the opportunity to have access to a full school day. With this purpose in mind, he allowed CEC to introduce a “double full school day.” This measure, apart from increasing the number of children enjoying a full school day, increased the supply of school places in locations with an important deficit of school places.

Most CEC joined this initiative and doubled their teaching schedule: a “morning full day” in combination with an “afternoon full day.” To allow this to happen, many had to incorporate the weekend to the school schedule and start classes as soon as 6:30 in the morning on weekdays.

The introduction of this double full school day generated both adherence and resistance among the CEC. It generated adherence because the measure allowed the schools to increase income substantially, since it virtually allowed them to double the number of students. But it generated resistance because of the logistical difficulties involved and because it potentially reduced the full school day length for the students, whereby the initial spirit of the program could be partially lost.

However, to better understand this last point it is important to have a more clear comprehension of how the school funding system works in Bogotá.

13. The quality of food is a contractual requirement of the tender, and it is highly regulated. The “Annex V.—Food supply” of the 3rd tender (2002), for example, specifies the caloric intake of each element of the menu. However, according to SED (2013a) calculations, the public schools spend US\$ 424.40 (20.3 percent of their budget) on food while CEC spend US\$ 291.40 (27.2 percent). So, it is difficult to explain these differences in cost and quality terms; are differences due to economies of scale, economic efficiency, third party help, etc.?

Funding

All public and CEC schools are funded according to the 2001 Act, which implements a per capita system of school funding. However, there are large fluctuations in the amount per student that each CEC receives from the SED. The SED-CEC contracts show that the EMO average was US\$ 545 in the first bidding (1999–2003), with certain differences among EMOs (for instance, La Salle receives, per capita, only 75 percent of the average). These differences are related to the initial economic proposal submitted by the EMO to the bid (which counts for 10 percent of the total score of the proposal). Some EMO reduced the students' per capita funding in the bidding proposal in order to become more competitive in the tendering process.

The contracts also specify how the per capita amount should evolve: “[the remuneration for pupil] will be set at the beginning of each year ... according to the inflation target has been officially adopted for the coming year the Board of the Bank of the Republic” (clause 31 of the CS–SED contracts).¹⁴ As Table 5 shows, the per capita amount received by CEC has evolved, accurately, according to the level of inflation in the country.

Table 5—Per capita amount at the beginning and at the end of the contract (in US\$)

EMO	Beginning of the contract		2014	
	1999	2003	2003	2014
Cafam	608.1	100.3	982.7	104.0
Fenur Duran D.	605.7	99.9	978.8	103.6
Don Bosco	602.0	99.3	972.8	102.9
Colsubsidio	608.1	100.3	982.7	104.0
Gimnasio Moderno	608.1	100.3	982.7	104.0
Calasanz*	545.0	101.1	984.0	104.2
Alianza Educativa*	550.5	101.2	994.0	105.2
La Salle**	371.0	74.9	711.2	75.3
Fé y Alegría***	405.9	96.7	913.6	96.7
Average	544.9	100.0	944.7	100.0

Source: CEC–SED contracts. The beginning of the contract is 1999, except * = 2000, ** = 2002, *** = 2003.

Nevertheless, in financial terms, the most important problem for CEC is related to the **evolution of teachers' salaries**, since salaries have risen more than the cumulative inflation over the period 1999 to 2014. Specifically, teachers' salaries have risen between +12.1 percent (rank 14) and +26.4 percent (rank 6) in the Teachers Statute of 1979, and between +5 percent (Normalist) and +124 percent (Licensed or professional with a Master or PhD) in the Teachers Statute of 2001 (for more detail, see Tables 14 and 15 of Appendix 2).

14. According to the Banco de la República de Colombia, inflation per year since 1999 has been: 9.2 percent (1999), 8.8 percent (2000), 7.7 percent (2001), 7 percent (2002), 6.5 percent (2003), 5.5 percent (2004), 4.9 percent (2005), 4.5 percent (2006), 5.7 percent (2007), 7.7 percent (2008), 2 percent (2009), 3.2 percent (2010), 3.7 percent (2011), 2.4 percent (2012) and 1.9 percent (2013). These rates have been applied to the CEC funding system since the beginning of the contract with the SED.

Methodologically speaking, it is difficult to compare the economic efficiency of the CEC and of the public schools. The first difficulty is related to the SED not being able to reliably estimate the cost per student in all public schools yet; there is only one calculation attempt concerning the so-called 40*40 system: 40 hours a week and a teacher-student ratio of 40 (which in fact only affects 13 percent of the students in the public system). Table 6 presents the differences in costs among CEC and public schools 40*40. The per capita funding of the public schools 40*40 is US\$ 2.091; in contrast, the per capita funding in CEC is only US\$ 1.072 (almost 50 percent less than in public schools).

Table 6—Budget differences between public schools and CEC (in US\$)

	Public 40*40 (a)		CEC (b)		Difference (c) [c=a-b]	
	Value	%	Value	%	Value	%
Human resources	1.146.5	54.80%	586.2	54.70%	560.3	54.97%
Physical plant, maintenance	140.6	6.70%	118.3	11.00%	22.2	2.18%
Material for students	272.0	13.00%	53.5	5.00%	218.5	21.43%
Administration	28.8	1.40%	22.0	2.10%	6.8	0.66%
Transport	78.6	3.80%	0.0	0.00%	78.6	7.71%
Food, nutritional support	424.4	20.30%	291.4	27.20%	133.0	13.05%
Total per capita	2.090.8	100.00%	1.071.5	100.00%	1.019.3	100.00%

Source: Own elaboration based on SED (2013a).

These important differences in budgeting are usually attributed to the inherently superior efficiency of the private sector in management of resources (Bonilla 2011, Villa & Duarte 2005). However, when having a more careful look at the numbers, we realize that the budgetary differences are due to:

- a) Differences in **internal expenses and budget priorities**. As seen above, CEC pay substantially less in teacher salaries; in fact, this explains 55 percent of the budgeting differences of public schools and CEC. In this sense, wage policies (and the exclusion of unions) play a key role in the economic efficiency of the CEC. Furthermore, public schools give more budgetary priority to non-core education services (such as transportation, school supplies and food) than CEC. These services to students account for another 42 percent of the difference.
- b) Differences in **funding sources**. Most CEC benefit from additional external funding mechanisms (which are supplied by the EMO or by third institutions) such as scholarships, grants, technical or pedagogical counseling, support of external professionals, teacher-training courses, etc. The expenses related to these items are not necessarily contemplated in the yearly expenses of the school.
- c) Differences in **educational process costs**. Last, but not least, as we have seen above, some CEC partially select the most motivated and academically bright students, who, to some extent, are “easier” and “cheaper to educate.”

School-Family and Community Relationship

Our data suggest that **families participate frequently** in the dynamic of the CEC and feel very involved with the school. In particular, our survey shows that teachers based in CEC

consider that families participate more in the school, and that families' suggestions are taken into account more frequently than teachers from public schools (with a Cramer's V Coefficient moderate in both cases) (see Table 16 in Appendix 2).

Our data suggests that parents' participation has been encouraged by the CEC through parallel strategies, such as festivals and leisure activities (open days, parents' days, bingo, etc.) and workshops and courses on different themes in the school. These courses are based on the idea that each CEC should impact its direct context; therefore CEC should be committed to educate both the students and the parents.

Nevertheless, parents' institutional participation in CEC has been confined to **minor issues**: collaborating in the maintenance of the school (e.g., planting trees) and fundraising for equipment and systems for the school (such as a sound system, a photocopier, etc.) through bingos, bazaars, markets, etc. In addition, institutional participation of families in CEC also has a predominantly informative character. Accordingly, it could be argued that this level of participation does not interpellate to the core of the decision-making processes concerning school organization, budget, educational process, etc.

The greater attachment of CEC families to the school could be partially explained because many of these families have gone through a selection process. The fact that families feel privileged and selected raises their level of motivation and appreciation regarding the school.

Finally, our data also reveals that many CEC have had the capacity to generate a strong **collective identity**, which contributes to strengthening the attachment of parents and students to the school. The mechanisms favoring the creation of collective identity are:

- a) Organization of numerous extra-curricular activities, especially recreational and team building activities such as music bands, sports teams, etc.
- b) Consolidation of a CEC "brand" with its own aesthetics and symbolism, with uniforms playing a fundamental role.
- c) Intensification of the relations and exchange between students of different CEC who belong to the same EMO (or even with students of private schools managed by the EMO).
- d) The intensification of rituals, especially religious rituals. Furthermore, the nature of the CEC collective identity is constructed around the values of discipline, religion and so on, in contrast to the type of identity (or, better said, labeling, of public school students); while public school students are identified as louts or marginals (*ñeras*), CEC students are identified as quasi-posh (*gomelos*).

Finally, it is important to remark that, to some extent, the construction of such a collective identity is facilitated by the processes of student selection and exclusion. As we have seen, CEC select the more "able" students (academically bright, motivated, etc.) among the poor, and those with better family backgrounds. These same schools also tend to expel students who do not "fit" the school for academic or disciplinary reasons.

3.2 CEC's Educational Styles

This part of the report focuses on the pedagogic characteristics of CEC and whether these schools experience intensive processes of educational innovation and pedagogic autonomy as compared to public schools.¹⁵

Pedagogical Autonomy

Quantitative and qualitative data show that the CEC have some autonomy from SED/MEN, although school autonomy is also present to some degree in public schools. There is also a prominent role of the EMO as a central institution that defines the pedagogic orientation of schools. The EMO has the power to define the pedagogic project and even specific tasks such as the curriculum or the evaluation system of students. Figure 4 in Appendix 2 shows which actors are important in pedagogical tasks, according to our questionnaire. It can be seen that CEC principals have a prominent role in student discipline and evaluation, while the EMO has a key role in subject content definition and, especially, in pedagogical project elaboration. In comparison, in public schools the principal's role is less important; the teachers are more important in student discipline, evaluation and subject content definition. In addition, pedagogical project definition in the public schools is the result of a collective and choral collaboration with the involvement of teachers, parents, principal and SED/MEN.

EMOs' pedagogical central role is based on three main activities: (1) centralized elaboration of the pedagogical project of all affiliated schools, (2) coordination of areas of knowledge, in-service training and successful projects, and (3) external assistance from partner foundations. Therefore, the EMO is actually the main actor defining the pedagogic style of CEC schools.

- 1) Regarding the centralized **elaboration of the pedagogical project**, most EMOs were especially active in the definition of the pedagogical project or even the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) itself.¹⁶ This is the case of Colsubsidio, Don Bosco, AAE and Fe y Alegría, among others.

"I was the assistant manager of Education in Comfenalco and I had the opportunity to develop the bidding proposal for the SED of these three schools [CEC: Nueva Roma, S. Vicente y S. Cayetano]."

—Principal CEC 12, Bogotá, February 4, 2014

"[All CEC Don Bosco] took the same approach, the same guidelines ... the same text, the same line."

—Teacher 2 CEC 7, Bogotá, February 10, 2014

- 2) With regard to the **coordination** of planning and in-service training activities, the EMO normally enhances the coordination processes among areas of knowledge or course levels, with regular meetings for planning. Moreover, the EMO coordinates

15. In any case, later we will discuss how the EMOs' pedagogical models *affect* educational quality and/or academic results.

16. The central role of the EMO in the elaboration of the PEI entails a contradiction with Colombian legislation, as the PEI is considered strictly a school project: "every educational institution should develop and implement, with the participation of the educational community, an education project that expresses the way in which the school has decided to achieve the purposes of education as defined by law, taking into account its social, economic and cultural environment" (Decree No. 1860, August 3, 1994, Art. 14).

the in-service training by providing the same training courses to all teachers in the EMO's schools (including training for ICFES tests preparation, ICT training, etc.). The EMO is also responsible for facilitating the exchange of successful projects and experiences among the CEC.

- 3) Finally, the EMO is responsible for providing external assistance from its **allied foundations**, which is particularly prominent in the case of Alianza Educativa. In particular, the private University of Los Andes and the private schools Nueva Granada, San Carlos and Los Nogales are clear references for providing support and technical assistance to the CEC. Alianza Educativa also centralizes the funding coming from external donors.

Educational Approach: Ethos and Values

Specific values and ethos are a central characteristic of all the CEC. Despite notable heterogeneity among EMOs' values, three key values appear to be central: religiosity, labor orientation and discipline.

Firstly, **religiosity** as a key value is not surprising since four of the nine EMOs are religious organizations (Don Bosco, Calasanz, Fe y Alegría and La Salle). This religious emphasis is expressed through several means, such as Catholic symbols decorating the schools, morning prayers, the act of blessing at breakfast and lunch, the presence of Mass and Eucharist, and even spiritual retreats. It is argued that these practices have a pastoral character (centered on values such as tolerance, solidarity and charity) rather than a theological character exclusively focused on the biblical message. For that reason, it is considered that this approach is appropriate for all students, including those who are non-religious. This is, of course, an important difference between CEC and public schools. Generally speaking, families value positively the religiosity of the CEC.

Secondly, **labor orientation and entrepreneurship** (such as compensation funds) have emerged as central values for some EMOs. In most cases, CEC are characterized by tasks of labor orientation. For instance, although both public schools and CEC have a relationship with the SENA vocational training service in the upper grades (9 to 11), the relationship is particularly intense in the case of CEC. In addition, some EMOs prepare students for employment, as in the case of Colsubsidio, through programs such as "Life Project," "Community-company Project" and "Research Project." Though conceived as holistic educational programs with emphasis on self-esteem, self-projection or conflict resolution, these projects focus on labor insertion and entrepreneurship. All of them are cross-curriculum projects and they cover almost all grades (in some CEC, from grades 0 to 11). Students present their entrepreneurial projects in the "Business Expo" that takes place when they are in grade 11. Exceptionally, some projects have been effectively implemented in the local economy. The goal is to facilitate the autonomous work of students, an idea that is embraced by both teachers and parents.

"The idea is that students do not leave school to be employed, but have their own business."

—Teacher 3 CEC 13, Bogotá, March 5, 2014

"Students have to turn in people able to go out tomorrow from here and form his own company."

—Parent 3 CEC 12, Bogotá, February 26, 2014

Actually, Colsubsidio's institutional framework states that the objective of the EMO is to "offer quality education for a holistic training of people with intellectual, social and *productive* competencies" and to ensure that graduates are "people with a solid training in the ethical, scientific, technological and cultural domains" (Colsubsidio 2012: 5; emphasis added). There is no aggregate data on the labor insertion of Colsubsidio graduates. However, data from San Vicente School indicates that students who have become salaried employee (91 percent) are much higher than those that have become autonomous entrepreneurs (9 percent).

Finally, a third pedagogical characteristic of CEC is **discipline**, a polysemic concept including various meanings. Discipline means, first, "urbanity" and respect for authority (teachers, parents and police). Discipline is also used as a synonym of security (less violence, fewer burglaries or thefts, etc.). And, thirdly, discipline means also a strict way to wear the uniform, a rule that also contrasts with public schools. In these three realms of discipline¹⁷ it is broadly assumed that CEC students are more disciplined than public school students. It is noteworthy that CEC parents show great commitment to these values.¹⁸

Teaching Practices

Teachers, principals and students stated that teaching practices of CEC are characterized by active teaching and applied knowledge. Moreover, in CEC, the student has an active role; students are protagonists of the learning process: teaching activities start from students' own knowledge, using dialogic techniques (recursive style, Maieutics, questioning strategies, etc.). Thus, the focus of the learning process is the child, so CEC teachers have more the role of counselor or guide and their practice is less traditional and less based on memorization. CEC teachers also stated that they develop a practice that is applied and context-based, and not merely theoretical or abstract. For instance, they do experiments in science subjects or they seek immediate memory and experience in teaching history.

Also, CEC teachers argue that they promote cooperative work rather than individual work. They also assert the use of a transversal and cross-curriculum approach, overcoming discipline-based teaching. This transversal approach is particularly evident in some career guidance programs (academic orientation, labor orientation and even personal

17. This conception of discipline as authority could be part of a process of internalization of subjectivities ("normalization") within an environment of disciplined institutional punishment (following the Foucaultian framework, as in Ball 2012b and 2013). Moreover, according to Olmedo (2014) and also using these Foucaultian analytical tools, neoliberal logic has enhanced the role of the market as a central mechanism of social regulation. Under this neoliberal "governmentality" (Foucault 1991), the market has subsequently become a disciplinary institution aimed to rule and guide—in a subtle and indirect way—more than dominate. Using this framework, it is possible to assume that the CEC are an environment of institutionalized discipline, aiming to guide and rule (more than dominate) through the construction of new subjectivities.

18. However, it is also true that, according to some authors, these practices might actually challenge some aspects of the public character of CEC. It can be questioned whether the emphasis on the pastoral approach of many schools challenges the secular character of the public education system (as stated by FECODE; see CEID 2014)—or it is simply an effective response to the religious diversity of pupils (Bidegain 2005). Also, strict discipline and models of authority cast doubt on whether this approach reinforces a good school climate, self-respect and disciplinary values (Valencia & Carrizosa 2013) or perhaps challenges the more rights-based system of public schools. In any case, there is no doubt that CEC religiosity has been considered a positive aspect by most CEC parents; Colombia has an important presence of Catholicism, Protestantism—Evangelism and Pentecostalism (Bidegain 2005, Rondón 2007).

orientation). At the same time, CEC teachers also recognize difficulties for implementing these practices, such as the fact that cooperative work makes students easily distracted and can generate some problems related to controlling students. Teachers also accept that cross-curriculum approaches are easier to implement in some areas of knowledge, but more difficult in others.¹⁹

It is assumed that **student/teacher ratio** determines the possibility of applying individualized pedagogical techniques. Therefore, the CEC's high student/teacher ratio is negatively perceived. Although there is a lack of accurate data, it is clear that the CEC have a high student/teacher ratio, and higher than public schools. Public schools have, on average, a student/teacher ratio of 27 in preschool, between 32 and 35 in primary education, and 31 in secondary and medium education (Veedia Distrial 2011, SED 2012); the total average is 31. In contrast, our data indicate that the student/teacher ratio in the CEC is estimated at more than 45 students per classroom in grades 1 to 11, and around 35 in preschool (see Table 17 in Appendix 2 for more detail).

The active and innovative teaching practice described in the CEC contrasts with intensive **teaching to the test** (also called "simulations," "student ICFES training," "clubs ICFES," "pre-ICFES," etc.). Pre-ICFES begins in early grades and becomes more intensive between grades 9 and 11 (ICFES tests are performed in grades 5, 7 and 9). This training can be done by CEC teachers themselves (teaching to the test is part of in-service teacher training) or by external agents (e.g., private firms or other EMOs, such as Colsusbdio). The latter might imply some costs for the family.

The emphasis on ICFES testing stems from two main reasons: 1) ICFES results are a key element in the CEC evaluations carried out by the SED, and 2) students' ICFES results condition their academic continuity in post-compulsory education. This emphasis is not exclusive to the CEC; in fact, public schools also use teaching to the test, sometimes as a result of pressures from the SED. In both CEC and public schools there is an internal debate about the appropriateness of teaching to the test. Questions such as what is really being measured through a standardized test, how the practice of ICFES tests impedes other educational practices (i.e., values education), and how fair it is to use the same test for children with very different social and family backgrounds are central aspects of this debate.

The Impact of the Context on Teaching Practices

The design of the Colombian CEC program assumes that the know-how, management and pedagogical expertise of contrasted and high-quality educational providers, usually developed in wealthier contexts, can be transferred to the worst off. This assumption is strongly questioned by reality. Different social contexts do clearly shape the everyday practice of schools, and the CEC are not an exception.

It is noteworthy that the social contexts in which CEC are located are highly diverse. Despite the fact that all of these schools are situated in contexts with generally poorer

19. The absence of ethnography prevents delving into these issues (therefore these claims should be taken with caution). However, it is also true that these claims regarding active teaching and applied knowledge could be related to the high incidence of pedagogical activities in CECs.

SES than the Bogotá average,²⁰ each context has its own dynamics in terms of economic deprivation and exclusion, frequency of drug trafficking and drug use, existence of violent youth gangs (*pandillismo* and *barras bravas*), presence of “dysfunctional” families (single parent families, young motherhood, domestic violence, absent parents, etc.), impact of political conflict (occasional presence of guerrillas and/or people displaced by violence), etc. So, despite the apparent homogeneity of the social strata, CEC are inserted into very different environments. Our data show that these differences are clearly perceived by CEC principals and teachers, who point out how the social realities of their particular school environment influence their teaching practices.

Awareness of contextual differences is especially acute among different CEC of the same EMO:

“The school [AAE] Atalayas had created an academic environment, discipline, coexistence, since its inception. In that school it is easy to do academia because everything else was already underway. The school [AAE] Jaime Garzón has many university parents; therefore, the academic level is high. In this school, [AAE] La Giralda, the context is typically composed by single mothers living washing clothes, recyclers some little delinquents. The school environment is more complicated. To build academics you have to prior fight it—and it is strong.”

—Principal CEC 20, Bogotá, February 25, 2014

“The contexts of Colsubsidio schools are very different. The CEC San Cayetano is more vulnerable, has more poverty, more dropouts. It is more dysfunctional than the localities of Victoria or Nueva Roma. These localities are more central, here we are in a more rural context. Here, the students have a strong problem of vandalism.”

—Teacher 3 CEC 13, Bogotá, March 5, 2014

Both CEC teachers and principals believe that **socioeconomic background has an effect on learning processes**, especially in terms of convivial and violence issues or parental relationships with the school (parents’ expectations on academic continuity, collaboration and attachment to the school values, time availability, etc.). These differences compel teachers to review their teaching practice. Aspects such as career guidance programs or convivial strategies (conflict resolution courses, discipline and respect to authority rules) receive special attention in the most unstructured contexts. According to our key informants, such pedagogical readjustment was not initially considered in the design of the CEC program:

“The original [CEC] idea was that a pedagogical model that had worked well for the intelligentsia class could be developed in popular sectors. For us it was not a traumatic landing, because we [Fe y Alegría] have been working in the popular sectors all our life. [However] the comments we hear [from other EMOs] was that it was very difficult to translate a model to another context with totally different conditions.”

—Key informant, EMO Fe y Alegría director, Bogotá, February 4, 2014

20. According to SED (2013), while the Bogotá average of SISBEN stratum 0, 1 and 2 covers 46.3 percent of the total population, most of the CEC are located in localities with a higher percentage of these poorer stratum (i.e., Usme, San Cristóbal, Bosa, Ciudad Bolívar and Sumapaz—more than 80 percent; Santa Fé, Tunjuelito, Kennedy, La Candelaria and Rafael Uribe—more than 50 percent). However, it is also true that within localities there is significant internal economic diversity, so the data SISBEN aggregate has only an approximate value.

“To AAE work in groups of 10 to 12 students, who were already literate, was very different to face courses of 35 to 40 students. Someone from the University of the Andes once told me ... ‘You know what? Understand the baccalaureate, understand all these problems has led to us to change our curricula here ... Education is not only a school, or the teachers, but is also associated factors such as the socioeconomic conditions. That is: you cannot transfer the Los Nogales school model, which is one of the most expensive schools in Colombia, to Ciudad Bolívar.”

—Key informant, initial responsible of CEC implementation, Bogotá, March 31, 2014

Obviously, the social context impacts educational results, so most actors recognize that you cannot expect the same results for all students.

“[AAE] Miravalle have very high [ICFES] tests results. My daughter is studying there and she tells me ... ‘we have very high [ICFES] test results’, and I say ‘but the context is different.’”

—Teacher 2 CEC 20, February 28, 2014

3.3 Academic Differences between CEC and Public Schools

This section of the report explores the differences among CEC and public schools in terms of academic outcomes, including ICFES test results, internal efficiency (such as approval, repetition and dropout rates), and academic continuity.

ICFES Results

ICFES results are the single source to evaluate the impact of CEC schools on academic performance compared to public schools. The ICFES results of 2011 show the academic results advantage of private and subsidized private schools, but the interest for this research is the comparison between public and CEC schools. ICFES results show that more CEC schools are located at a “superior” level of performance (28 percent) than public schools (11 percent). At the same time, only 3 percent of CEC schools have low levels of performance in comparison with 8 percent of public schools (for more detail related to ICFES results by school, see Figure 5 in Appendix 2). However, this direct comparison is not very informative because there is a methodological problem of endogeneity; key independent variables such as students’ socioeconomic background and school day length are correlated with school type.²¹

To overcome these limitations, a statistical analysis of the ICFES results of 145 public and CEC schools (see the details on the sample construction in the methodology section) was carried out. The sample includes the 25 CEC of Bogotá (17.2 percent of the sample) and 120 public schools (82.8 percent). Table 7 shows that 37 schools (25.5 percent) of the sample teach the full school day, while 49 schools (33.8 percent) teach only in the

21. This endogeneity is recognized by the person responsible for the SED evaluation, who recognized the challenges of proper comparison: “ahí tampoco la relación es justa, porque si comparamos los resultados de 25 colegios [CEC], contra los resultados de 359 colegios [distritales], la proporción y las poblaciones no son las mismas; una lógica más equitativa sería equiparar los resultados de esos 25 [CEC] con colegios [distritales] que tiene por ejemplo el mismo tipo de jornada que los de concesión, y ahí la lógica no funciona igual porque demostramos que en esos colegios que tienen la jornada única el resultado en las pruebas ICFES es mayor que en los colegios en concesión” (Key informant SED evaluation responsible, Bogotá, March 4, 2014).

morning, 53 (36.6 percent) in the afternoon, and 6 (4.1 percent) in the evening. All CEC teach the full school day. The SES of the sample is 1 in 20 cases (13.8 percent), 2 in 102 cases (70.3 percent), and 3 in 8 cases (5.5 percent). The CEC are more concentrated in the SES 2, while the public schools of the sample reflect the three SES categories.

Table 7—*Characteristics of the sample: type of school, school day and schools by SES*

	School day			SES			
	Incomplete	Complete	Total	1	2	3	Total
Public schools	108 (90%)	12 (10%)	120 (100%)	19 (18.1%)	78 (74.3%)	8 (7.6%)	105 (100%)
CEC	0 (0%)	25 (100%)	25 (100%)	1 (4%)	24 (96%)	0 (0%)	25 (100%)
Total	108 (74.5%)	37 (25.5%)	145 (100%)	20 (15.4%)	102 (78.5%)	8 (6.2%)	130 (100%)

Source: Own elaboration based on ICFES.

Table 8 illustrates ICFES results by school type, school day and socioeconomic category. As can be observed:

- a) CEC have, on average, higher ICFES results than public schools.
- b) Schools teaching the full day have, on average, higher ICFES results than other schools.
- c) SES 3 schools have, on average, higher ICFES results than SES 2 schools (which have, on average, higher results than SES 1 schools).

Table 8—*ICFES results in all subjects by type of school, school day and SES*

		Math.	Chemis.	Physics	Biolog.	Philoso.	Engl.	Span.	S. know.	Average
Type	CEC	46.8	47.6	46.8	46.5	41.7	45.7	49.3	47.1	46.4
	Public s.	45.6	45.6	44.1	45.2	40.9	43.4	46.9	44.7	44.6
School day	Full day	47.2	47.6	46.5	46.7	42.4	46.3	49.5	47.4	46.9
	Morning	46.0	45.8	44.2	45.4	40.8	43.6	47.2	45.0	44.9
	Afternoon	45.1	45.4	44.0	44.9	40.4	42.9	46.4	44.1	44.0
	Evening	42.2	43.0	41.7	43.0	37.8	39.6	44.5	42.5	41.6
SES	1	43.0	43.8	43.1	43.5	38.7	41.5	45.5	43.1	42.8
	2	45.9	46.1	44.6	45.5	41.1	43.9	47.4	45.2	45.0
	3	50.4	50.0	48.6	48.8	44.7	49.4	50.9	49.2	49.0

Source: Own elaboration based on ICFES 2013.

Table 9 presents the results of the ANOVA test, which was carried out to determine whether differences in ICFES results for each independent variable were statistically significant. There are significant differences for all subjects when SES is taken as an independent variable, as well as when school day is taken as an independent variable. However, when “type of school” is the independent variable two subjects show no significant differences (mathematics and philosophy). Finally, the F-test values of school day and SES are always higher than the F-test values of “type of school.”

Table 9—*F-Test one way variance (F values and signification)*

	Math.	Chemis.	Physics	Biology	Philosophy	English	Spanish	Social Kn.
Type	3.26	13.279*	24.199*	6.678*	2.647	10.626*	27.248*	18.569*
Day	24.084*	41.639*	62.183*	28.170*	20.523*	39.089*	66.666*	48.916*
SES	42.936*	39.108*	27.292*	37.759*	48.830*	40.121*	38.535*	36.436*

Note: * Significant with 95% confidence (>0,05).

To assess the importance of the effects of each independent variable on ICFES results, a linear regression analysis was carried out. Two models were developed: model 1 includes one independent variable (type of school), and model 2 includes the three independent variables (type of school, school day and SES). By developing these regressions we can observe whether the effect of “type of school” is still significant after controlling for school day and the socioeconomic background of the students.

As shown in Table 10, in model 1, type of school is statistically significant in seven of eight subjects. Only in the subject of philosophy is the type of school coefficient not significant. However, in model 2, type of school is not significant in seven of eight cases. In fact, it is only significant in mathematics, but not in any of the other subjects assessed. That means that when other independent variables (school day and SES) are introduced into the analysis, the impact of the type of school practically disappears.

As expected, full school day coefficient is always positive. Therefore, it can be concluded that schools with a full school day obtain better ICFES results than schools teaching half school days. As expected, both SES 1 and SES 2 have a negative coefficient, meaning that a school with students from the lowest SES have worse ICFES results than schools comprised of students from SES 2 and SES 3. However, type of school is negatively statistically significant in mathematics, meaning that CEC schooling predicts worse ICFES results in mathematics than public schooling (other independent variables being equal). There are other cases where type of school has a negative value, but they are not statistically significant.

In conclusion, the analysis shows that school day and SES are both more influential on schools’ ICFES results than type of school.

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Table 10—Multiple linear regression analysis of ICFES results (model 1 with one independent variable and model 2 with three independent variables; Coefficient B and standard errors in brackets)

	Mathematics		Chemistry		Physics		Biology		Philosophy		English		Spanish		Social Knowledge	
	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2	M1	M2
Constant	150,63*	47,905* (1,121)	184,28*	48,370* (0,934)	192,25*	47,251* (0,876)	206,78*	47,462* (0,837)	175,83*	43,072* (0,860)	145,229*	47,730* (1,115)	231,07*	49,762* (0,754)	183,78*	47,837* (0,918)
Type of school	1,986*	-2,516* (1,190)	3,592*	-0,407 (0,992)	4,997*	0,753 (0,931)	2,650*	-0,741 (0,889)	1,762	-1,544 (0,913)	3,229*	-0,154 (1,184)	5,312*	0,871 (0,800)	4,393*	0,376 (0,975)
School day	—	3,995* (1,072)	—	2,574* (0,894)	—	2,126* (0,838)	—	2,165* (0,801)	—	2,534* (0,822)	—	2,614* (1,066)	—	1,739* (0,721)	—	2,241* (0,879)
SES 1	—	-5,404* (1,202)	—	-4,925* (1,002)	—	-4,556* (0,940)	—	-4,209* (0,898)	—	-4,669* (0,922)	—	-6,608* (1,196)	—	-4,560* (0,809)	—	-5,093* (0,985)
SES 2	—	-2,447* (1,140)	—	-2,823* (0,951)	—	-3,331* (0,892)	—	-2,363* (0,852)	—	-2,305* (0,875)	—	-4,445* (1,134)	—	-2,979* (0,767)	—	3,254* (0,935)
Adjusted R ²	0,022	0,340	0,084	0,361	0,157	0,399	0,045	0,312	0,016	0,336	0,068	0,366	0,174	0,442	0,124	0,388

Notes: Type of school: public schools = 0; CEC = 1
 School day: no full day = 0; full day = 1
 SES category of reference = SES 3

Approval, Repetition and Dropout Rates

This section examines differences in other educational indicators between CEC and public schools (for more detail, see Tables 18 and 19 in Appendix 2). The most salient indicators reveal that:

- a) CEC have more approvals than public schools (+6.9 percent), due to the higher approval rate in lower and upper secondary (preschool and primary education approval rates are relatively similar).
- b) CEC schools have less repetition (–2.3 percent), due to lower repetition rates in secondary education.
- c) CEC schools show less dropout (–3.7 percent); in this case the differences in preschool and primary education are also important.

Unfortunately, no disaggregated data include socioeconomic conditions or school day. This makes the comparison between CEC and public schools a biased one, and allows only a merely descriptive analysis. In addition, these indicators have to do with the internal systems of evaluation of schools, so they cannot be as objective as the ICFES exam is, for instance.

Academic Continuity

There is no consistent data on academic continuity in the CEC. However, data from two EMOs, Alianza Educativa and CEC Colsubsidio San Vicente, offers some data on students' academic continuity. In these cases, the CEC students present high academic continuity in post-compulsory education (both university and VET): 65 percent for Alianza Educativa graduates and 64.6 percent for Colsubsidio San Vicente graduates. However, the CEC students showed a high preference for VET careers (which includes the “professional technical” and “technologist” specialties); these paths accounted for 54 percent of AAE students who continued studying and 58 percent of Colsubsidio San Vicente students who continued studying. In comparison, access to university is less than half (42 to 45 percent).²² The comparison is obviously biased (because there is no disaggregated data by SES level), but it is interesting to note that CEC students showed more preference for technical careers and less for university than the Colombian average. Our qualitative fieldwork supports the hypotheses that the CEC enhanced articulation with vocational programs and continuity to VET institutions, more than to university, through these mechanisms:

- a) Articulation with vocational programs such as SENA, which presuppose a more direct labor insertion and are less academically oriented and less costly.
- b) Some EMOs provide partial grants for students' VET continuity.
- c) Orientation and counseling activities that increase expectations of academic continuity for both CEC families and CEC students. Principals and teachers highlight the difficulties of this task, due to families' skepticism and low expectations, as well as structural limits: access to university for these students is highly unlikely due to economic barriers and academic difficulties.

22. See Table 19 of Appendix 2.

- d) Labor insertion for Colsubsidio students is a relatively high 29.2 percent. However, and in spite of its rhetoric of entrepreneurship, students from CEC Colsubsidio San Vicente became salaried employees (155 cases, 91 percent) rather than autonomous entrepreneurs (9 percent).

4. Conclusions

This research made use of a realistic evaluation approach to analyze the CEC in Bogotá. Our analysis tested to what extent our observation of the enactment of the program in real situations is consistent with the assumptions of the program theory of change (its objectives, mechanisms and legitimating principles). To achieve this objective, this report has tried to respond to the following questions: How different is the organizational and pedagogical approach of CEC in relation to regular public schools? Are the academic results of the CEC significantly different from the results of public schools operating under similar conditions? If so, why?

Despite our focus on the particular case of the CEC in Bogotá as a paradigmatic model of charter school programming (see, for instance, Villa & Duarte 2002a, 2002b and 2002c, Barrera 2006 and 2009, Barrera et al. 2012, Patrinos et al. 2009), our findings directly interpellate to broader debates regarding the potential and limitations of the charter schools model in ongoing global education reform processes.

4.1 CEC's Organizational Characteristics

Pedagogical and administrative autonomy is conceived as a source of educational effectiveness within the CEC theory of change (Vélez 2013, Bonilla 2011, Villa & Duarte 2005a and 2005b, Barrera 2006 and 2009, Barrera et al. 2012). Our study has showed that, both in pedagogical and organizational aspects, CEC have **more autonomy** from the SED/Ministry of Education than public schools, but they are also **highly dependent on the EMO** in many aspects.

A key actor in pedagogical aspects, the EMO elaborates the pedagogical project of its schools, defines the main values of the educational project, and assumes the coordination between areas of knowledge and all processes of in-service training.²³ This pedagogical autonomy was supposed to be conducive to the development of specific educational projects that would be more accountable to parents' needs and preferences. However, although our data shows that CEC parents participate intensively in the everyday life of the school, their institutional **participation** is limited to minor issues (usually of an informative character), and is rather scarce when it comes to the definition of substantial aspects of the school life—curriculum or school organization. In any case, participation in schools is highly dependent on the social origin of students' families, both in CEC and in public schools.²⁴

The EMOs take decisions on several aspects of CEC organization, some of which should lie on the principals. EMOs decide the elaboration of the initial economic proposal of

23. In this sense, some EMOs are especially salient, such as Fe y Alegría, whose schools feature a pedagogical approach and organizational structure considered valid not only for Colombian education but for the entire South American continent (Parra & Wodon 2011 and 2014, Borjas 2003, Martiniello 2001, Jaimovich 2014). It is also interesting the case of the EMO Calasanz, which created an Institute of Education promoting the coordination of pedagogical issues and in-service training both in Colombia and Ecuador.

24. An emerging finding of our research is the fact that CEC have generated a strong collective identity among parents and students; most of whom showed strong attachment to their school. Moreover, this collective identity is opposed to the public schools' identities. While public school students are identified as "louts" or "marginal" (*ñeros*), CEC students are considered "quasi-posh" (*gomelos*).

the tender (which defined some basic financial parameters), budget allocation (both external and internal) and the management of human resources, including teachers' evaluations and employment conditions. However, CEC principals do have a high level of autonomy in hiring and firing teachers; their autonomy in this aspect is much higher than the autonomy of public school principals.

Autonomy in human resources management is a particularly central aspect of the CEC program ontology. In fact, it is assumed that the management of human resources at the school level should contribute to generating cohesive teachers' teams and strengthening teachers' incentives through more flexible employment conditions and solid teacher evaluations, thereby increasing teachers' productivity (Bonilla 2011, Villa & Duarte 2005, Patrinos et al. 2009, Barrera 2006 and 2009, Sarmiento 2008). However, the CEC's management of human resources has been basically characterized by a drastic **worsening of teachers' employment conditions**, including longer workdays and lower salaries than public school teachers, temporary contracts and non-recognition of years of experience. Although this worsening of employment conditions has been previously highlighted by other evaluations (SED 2004, Villa & Duarte 2005, Sarmiento 2008, Bonilla 2011, Bogotá Comptroller 2011), this is a clear and flagrant breach of the law²⁵ that violates certain basic labor rights, such as the right to unionize and the correspondence between salaries and experience/ranks. Particularly, the exclusion of labor unions seems to be a conscious EMO strategy aiming to "flexibilize" teachers' employment conditions by undermining their collective bargaining ability. These reasons explain the high turnover of CEC teachers and the incentives for CEC teachers to move to public schools as soon as they can.

Paradoxically, bad working conditions are behind two of the most positive outcomes of the CEC program, according to its advocates: intensification of teachers' engagement and efficiency. First, concerning the increase in teachers' activities (as a proxy of productivity), our findings show that **CEC teachers intervene in teaching planning activities and collaborate with the principal in a range of issues more often than public school teachers**. This is the direct result of a strict teacher evaluation system²⁶ that is applied within highly flexible working arrangements. The EMOs do not renew the contracts of teachers who do not adapt to the work pace and/or the extra activities required. Second, it is precisely **the lower salaries paid by CEC that make these schools more economically efficient** than public schools. Namely, more than half of the economic differences between the 40*40 public schools and the CEC are due to disparities in teacher salaries (SED 2013).²⁷

Finally, the SED was expecting to **control the quality of the program** via regulation, evaluation, accountability and the potential exclusion from the program of poor performing CEC (Villa & Duarte 2002b). However, the CEC have been less strictly

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- 25. CEC, as all other publicly funded schools, are governed by the two Teachers' Acts of 1979 and 2002, which clearly defined teachers' employment conditions. CEC are therefore not supposed to be able to establish employment conditions different from those of public schools.
 - 26. EMOs use a double teacher evaluation system: the official or public system (which links ranks and salaries but is not always recognized by the CEC) and a parallel system (based on the EMO's own criteria and key to determining teacher contract renewals). According to its advocates, the EMO's teacher evaluation system is understood as an "accountability model" (Bonilla 2011; Sarmiento 2008).
 - 27. However, the evolution of teachers' salaries linked to the inflation rate has distorted the budget of the CEC and implied the modification of its internal cost structure. This linkage has been harshly criticized by CEC principals and EMO staff.

controlled by the SED than expected according to the initial design. SED evaluations of the CEC faced some practical difficulties: methodological discontinuities among evaluations (with the exception of the evaluations carried out by the IDEP in 2010 and 2011) and the organic link between SED and IDEP, which undermines the credibility of the evaluations and breaks Clause 22 of the contract (stating that evaluations should be carried out by independent institutions or experts). Only the last evaluation carried out by the SED (SED 2014) is actually binding and has had real effects.

Student enrollment has been one of the most challenging issues from the public control perspective. Theoretically, the SED had to assure that the CEC would follow the same admission procedure as public schools (criteria include proximity and socioeconomic condition) in order to give priority to the most vulnerable children (Vélez 2013, Sarmiento 2005 and 2008, Peña 2005b). That would ensure that the CEC would effectively recruit children from the most marginalized sectors. In fact, while most CEC have met the requirements established by the SED on school admission, some have strategically selected students with better academic profiles. It is not possible to quantify the dimension of this practice. Most CEC principals state that their schools strictly follow the selection processes established by the SED. However, our data²⁸ also show the likely existence of **cream skimming** practices, which, among other implications, **could undermine the potential for positive action of the CEC** program and reduce its legitimacy.

Various elements have favored student selection, such as the high demand for CEC, ambiguity in the contract and the lack of strict SED control.²⁹ Despite the former secretary of the SED's assertion that "any process of selection [by the CEC] is not allowed, so adverse selection is avoided" (Peña 2005: 156), our data reveal that the SED is well aware of the prevalence of this situation and has not clearly intervened to correct these practices. This process of student selection can be understood as a "second-order competition" among schools. Since CEC have an excess of demand, schools compete not to attract any kind of student ("first-order competition") but to attract students who are potentially high performers (Gewritz et al. 1995, Van Zanten 2009).

4.2 CEC's Pedagogical Approaches

One of the salient characteristics of the CEC program is the transferability of educational practices. EMOs are expected to transfer their pedagogical and management know-how to the CEC (Castro et al. 2012, Peña 2005b, Villa & Duarte 2002b). However, this type of transference has not always taken place due to the variable social **contexts** in which the EMO's pedagogical models and teaching practices are implemented. Contexts of structural violence require, for instance, school strategies for managing conflict resolution. Likewise, differences in parental socioeconomic status result in differences in school attachment and academic expectations of the families. From the perspective of principals and teachers, the effect of the context on the everyday life of the school is more

28. The questionnaire used in this research shows that CEC principals have controlled 68 percent of student enrollment processes, and the SED only 45 percent. These proportions are inverted in the case of the public schools, where the SED controlled 81 percent of student enrollment processes, and principals only 38 percent. Our interviews also reflect that some CEC principals conduct interviews with parents and students to analyze their academic background (as well as consulting students' previous academic records, tests or examinations) as a form of selection or pre-selection of students.

29. As criticized by the SED itself; see SED (2004) and the internal document *Monitoring CEC contracts*.

evident in those cases in which one EMO manages several schools in different social areas. This is particularly clear for those EMOs with a tradition of school management in high socioeconomic environments (namely, AAE and Gimnasio Moderno). Several studies have previously referred to the “context effect” as one of the clearest difficulties that CEC have faced to achieve their educational goals (IAM 2004, IDEP 2007, Peña 2005b).

One of the main expected objectives of the program was to **increase the pedagogical diversity** of the local education system as a result of the introduction of different education providers. It is certainly the case that CEC have introduced significant changes in pedagogical models and teaching practices. Namely, CEC put strong emphasis on **values education** (associated with religiosity, authority, discipline and entrepreneurship), active teaching, applied knowledge, cooperative work and a transversal approach to the curriculum (IDEP 2007 and Sarmiento 2008). Nonetheless, some of these pedagogical ideas have been difficult to apply due to the high student/teacher ratio that prevails in most CEC. At the same time, and against what Bonilla (2011) says, CEC schools seem to do more **teaching to the test** than public schools. Teaching to the test practices are common for two main reasons: the importance that SED evaluations give to ICFES results, and the importance of ICFES results for academic continuity to post-compulsory education.

The internal diversity of CEC (and EMOs) certainly increases the diversity of providers in the local education markets. This does not mean, however, that all CEC are necessarily **innovative** in their teaching practices. Some schools are actually very traditional in terms of religious values, authority, discipline and/or strict uniform policies. Nonetheless, it is also true that many poor parents value positively an educational model based on authority and discipline.

4.3 CEC’s Academic Performance

The CEC were expected to increase the academic performance of poor students. Therefore, it was assumed that CEC students would perform better than their public school peers (social composition being equal). This improvement was associated to various factors: better infrastructure, full school day and/or more innovative and efficient teaching practices. In this sense, the CEC’s theory of change was therefore consistent with the principles of the broader theory of change behind PPPs in education (see Barrera 2006 and 2009, Patrinos et al. 2009).

Interestingly enough, our analysis based on ICFES results shows **no statistically significant differences between CEC and public schools** after controlling two variables: school day and the socioeconomic status of students. In fact, **both school day and student SES are more influential on ICFES results than type of school (CEC or public school)**, a result that obviously challenges the assumption of the private sector being inherently better than the public sector. Our results clearly open an interesting discussion about the real added value of CEC as the most appropriate schooling modality to provide better opportunities for the poor.³⁰

30. It seems that the addition (or exclusion) of SES, as well as school day, are key factors when asserting the superiority of private providers of education. For instance, previous studies that have compared the performance of CEC and public schools without taking into consideration SES or school day showed a better performance of CEC (IDEP,

Finally, according to our case studies, around two-thirds of **CEC students have access to post-compulsory education**. The VET track represents more than the 54 percent of CEC graduates' post-compulsory continuity; this figure is likely to be the result of CEC articulation with the SENA vocational training service. In comparison, university access represents around 42 percent of CEC graduates' post-compulsory continuity. The **bias in favor of VET** reveals both the academic and economic barriers that poor students face to access the university sector, an aspect that the CEC program can hardly address (cf. García Villegas et al. 2013, Sánchez et al. 2002, Ministry of Education 2008).³¹

4.4 Discussion

This report reveals the existence of significant **tradeoffs** between some of the CEC program's core principles. First, the theory of change of the CEC program assumed two mechanisms that can be partially contradictory: **pedagogical autonomy and educational transference**. Pedagogical autonomy is based on the capacity of the school to adapt to the social environment (and implicitly takes into account the effect of the context). Educational transference, on the contrary, is based on the desirability of importing successful models of schooling from elsewhere to different contexts. The EMO's capacity of deciding on the school's educational project reinforces this contradiction and makes the idea of pedagogical autonomy at the school level more difficult.

Second, the tendering process included a tradeoff between **academic requirements** (e.g., ICFES results) **and the level of experience teaching in low SES contexts**. These two aspects can hardly be found simultaneously. This is why some of the EMOs with recognized experience offering schooling in low SES contexts faced several problems with their bid (e.g., Fe y Alegría), while other EMOs without any experience in popular contexts were successful in the first tender (e.g., AAE and Gimnasio Moderno).

Another element to consider is the **risk sharing** that the program implies: despite risk sharing being one of the core principles behind any PPP program, the CEC have shared only limited risks. The SED made all the initial investment and provided the CEC with a privileged standpoint (e.g., full school day, better infrastructure and equipment). Moreover, the lack of school quotas ensured sufficient demand for CEC. Nevertheless, the program has created some risks for the private partners, especially economic risks. Private providers are obliged to ensure gratuity and to manage the school with the *per capita* amount established in the initial tendering. In addition, teacher salaries are externally determined and might evolve differently from inflation rates (as established

2007, 2010 and 2011). However, other studies that have compared the performance of public and private schools including SES as an independent variable concluded that performance is similar. García Villegas et al. (2013), for example, based on an econometric analysis of 2011 ICFES test results, conclude that the SES effect accounts for 70 percent of the academic results, while the school effect "only" explains 23 percent of the academic results.

Regarding other aspects of performance, CEC have higher levels of students who do not fail (+6.9 percent), less course repetition (-3.1 percent) and less dropout (-3.7 percent) than public schools (for similar results, see IDEP 2011). Nevertheless, these are only very indirect proxies of performance and might be more indicative of school culture and teaching practices than objective signs of the learning process.

31. At this point, it is pertinent to refer to the low levels of access to higher education in Colombia. For instance, García Villegas et al. (2013) have shown that student SES is strongly linked to ICFES results and, therefore, access to tertiary education. Also, Sánchez et al. (2002), using a logistic regression analysis, stated that high student SES (between 3 and 5 MW) increases the probability of access to public universities. A Ministry of Education report (2008) concludes that student SES is statistically significant when analyzing tertiary education dropout rates.

in the contract). Nonetheless, in terms of economic uncertainty the CEC teachers have been more affected than the EMOs.

According to education privatization advocates, the charter school model seems to be territorially de-localized and context-resistant, since charter schools are expected to make education systems perform better almost everywhere. However, our research shows that the particular characteristics of the Bogotá education system strongly shaped the ways in which the CEC entered the system. In particular, although **competition** was considered as a key mechanism of the CEC program (see Villa & Duarte 2002a, 2002b and 2005, Patrinos et al. 2009, Bonilla 2011: 36, Barrera 2006: 4), several structural factors obstructed its real materialization: a structural deficit of school places, the institutional regime of school zones limiting parental school choice capacity, and the fact that the few EMOs available to bid limited the competition of the tendering process. In addition, the importance of the ICFES, particularly in the case of the program evaluations carried out by the SED, had a crucial importance in shaping CEC's pedagogical practices. Teaching to the test practices, widespread among all CEC, thus became a strategic response to the limitations of the contexts within which these institutions operate.

Finally, the implementation of the CEC program has created a differentiated—and unequal—situation between students of the same social background, because students enrolled in CEC might enjoy better material conditions and schooling services (i.e., full school day) than others of a similar SES enrolled in nearby public schools. The SED has found this duality difficult to handle. The end of the program would ostensibly prevent many families from enjoying a service to which they are highly attached. However, the maintenance of this situation implies discrimination for those families who have not had the chance to access better-resourced educational institutions, such as the CEC. In 2014 the CEC contracts finished and had to be reviewed by the SED. After conducting an evaluation of the program (see the main results in Table 20 of Appendix 2), the SED finally decided to renew 17 of the 25 contracts. Eliminating some of the worst performing CEC and converting them into full-day public schools is a step forward, but it does not address at all the problem of the SED not guaranteeing education with the same quality conditions for all children.

5. Bibliography

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Appendix 1: Additional Interview Quotes

Enrollment processes: parents resorting to informal communication with and pressures on CEC staff

“Para el proceso si fue por medio de solicitud, entonces yo llené una carta, incluso la diligencié a mano, [me puso cuidado] y una de las cosas que, yo vine acá un día [que espere] y yo pasé la carta y después un buen día me acerque y le pregunte, y le pedí el favor que me tuviera en cuenta, y ahí ya fue cuando él me dijo que había mucha demanda, claro, entonces uno pasa por grosero.”

—Parent 1 CEC 12, February 26, 2014

“en esa época era muy difícil poder hablar con el rector Le dije al rector ‘estamos nuevos en el sector, queremos un buen colegio, y éste me gusta’ yo creo que de tanto insistir y de ver la cantidad de gente que hacía fila aquí ...mucha gente, hay muchos padres que vienen a preguntar, todo el tiempo, realmente acá es difícil.”

—Parent 2 CEC 22, February 27, 2014

“lo que uno escucha de los papás, ¿sí? o uno sale y los papás que están ahí: ‘mire profe, usted que es profesora de acá, porque no me colabora con un cupo, mire que es que ese colegio.”

—Teacher 1 CEC 7, February 11, 2014

“no fue muy fácil conseguir el cupo para este colegio. ... Me tocó ir a Secretaría varias veces para conseguir el cupo porque no habían cupos. ... Entonces entrar acá no fue fácil porque primero había que venir o un martes o un jueves a las 3 de la tarde, hacer una filita y ahí le programaban a uno la cita con la Rectora y pues yo perdí dos entrevistas porque la rectora como siempre ocupada, entonces bueno pero yo no me desanimé, seguí, seguí hasta que insistí y logré el día en que logré la cita con ella [la Rectora] y pues me anotó en un libro grande que ella tiene, me dijo: no le garantizo nada.”

—Parent 1 CEC 24, February 27, 2014

“en la entrevista con la Rectora se preguntan cuestiones como toca traer recibo de certificado de donde uno vive, que estrato, el recibo de la luz ... Y en qué colegio ha estudiado, o si lo sacó, y si lo sacó porque lo trae acá.”

—Parent 1 CEC 24, February 27, 2014

“A mí me entrevistaron, precisamente me hicieron también las mismas preguntas [que la entrevista de ahora]: ‘¿por qué escogió este establecimiento, este colegio?’ ... En el momento en que yo vine a matricular fue que me dijeron: ‘A usted ¿cómo le parece este colegio?’ ... [La entrevista fue con] la trabajadora social sí y en ese momento pues la secretaria que estaba acá en ese momento.”

—Parent 2 CEC 5, February 12, 2014

“uno coge por cartas y no conoce nadie, no conoce al chino, no conoce al padre ni nada, entonces citamos a una entrevista ... yo les digo: ‘Mire yo no voy a recibir una persona que sea un parásito que no haga nada contra una persona que trate de luchársela todo el tiempo y trate de ser uno de los mejores, o sea que la tenga clara para qué va a venir a estudiar aquí al colegio’. ... Yo le digo ‘¿pero bueno usted si va a poder? con todo esto por ejemplo dos o tres materias perdidas, ¿usted si va a poder? de verdad que usted me los promete porque es muy duro, el acoplamiento de distrital a acá es muy duro, en cambio de un privado acá no es tan duro.’”

—Principal CEC 22, February 25, 2014

Focal groups also reported interviews with students: “yo entré en quinto, mi mamá tuvo que hacer mucha fila, es muy difícil que lo atiendan a uno, para darle una ficha para que lo atiendan, a mí me tocó una entrevista con el director del colegio y fue una temporada que mi mamá duró viviendo mucho, y le decían que no había cupo ... primero le dijeron que mi mamá que tenía que traer a la hija, y el doctor me hizo unas preguntas y me pidió los boletines del otro colegio”

—Focal group CEC 22, February 20, 2014).

Enrollment processes: parents purchasing places for their children

“yo tengo un amigo, y bueno me tocó meterme [ríe] un poco en política, ¿sí?, y entonces él tenía unos cupos y entonces me llamaron. Yo les llamé a ellos y les comenté. ... él trabaja en el Consejo. Entonces le llamé y yo le dije que deseaba que mi hijo estudiara [aquí], pero que era imposible por causas de que había mucha demanda, y mucho inconveniente para entrar. Entonces me dijo ‘déjeme, yo hablo, porque yo tengo unos cupos’. Y creo que hizo una reservación de cupos. Y entonces [él dijo] ‘yo tengo un cupo para que entre su hijo’, ustedes, ellos [AAE La Giralda] me llamaron y dijeron ‘tome el cupo para su hijo.’”

—Parent 1 CEC 20, Bogotá, February 28, 2014

“hace como cinco años cuando recién yo llegué, había gente que vendía los cupos ... y vendían los cupos y decían: ‘yo soy amiguísimo de fulanito y entonces yo le consigo el cupo deme 250.000 pesos’ ... entonces los estafaban, la queja todo el tiempo, a partir de que empecé todo el tiempo a educar a los padres yo les mando en circular: ‘no se dejen llevar de las personas inescrupulosas que le están vendiendo, que les dicen que son amigos míos, todo el mundo es amigo mío pero yo no ofrezco cupos por amistad’”

—Principal CEC 22, Bogotá, March 4, 2014

Enrollment processes: student selection (cream skimming)

“De pronto piden el último boletín [escolar];”

—Parent 1 CEC 24, March 26, 2014

“pues yo vine con los documentos, evaluaciones, de pronto ... sí, con las evaluaciones que le hacen a los niños. [E: ¿qué tipo de evaluaciones?] A mi niño que está en séptimo le hicieron una prueba para poder entrar;” and Parent 4 CEC 22 “para entrar sí le hicieron una prueba, o sea que da uno como en espera, hasta que haya la opción de cupo, seleccionan los niños, ponen un cartel en la puerta, los llaman, les hacen unas pruebas... yo me acuerdo que [en las pruebas] les hacían sumas, dibujos, cositas así, porque ella iba a entrar a cuarto y entonces había la selección, habían cuatro niños, tres cupos.”

—Parent 2 CEC 22

“no se piden tampoco muchos requisitos, pues si, los más fundamentales, exactamente como la conducta, sus, sus resultados académicos ... o sea se tiene que ser buen estudiante.”

—Focal group CEC 25, February 10, 2014

“el doctor me hizo unas preguntas y me pidió los boletines del otro colegio. ... Depende de las notas [hacen o no exámenes] ... pero hubo un tiempo, hace como 4 años, que abrieron cupos para algunos cursos, y ese día sí les hicieron pruebas a los que querían entrar.”

—Focal group CEC 22, February 22, 2014

“[la prueba que hacen al matricularse] Pues lo que nosotros habíamos visto allá [a la escuela pública], la prueba de aquí era un poquito más avanzada, sin embargo teníamos buenas bases de allá”

—Focal group CEC 13, March 5, 2014

“[¿Y ustedes por ejemplo cuando entraron a ustedes les hicieron algún tipo de prueba?] Sí una prueba ... Como entre las materias básicas por ejemplo matemáticas, español, inglés, física, esas materias.”

—Focal group CEC 20, February 8, 2014

Consequences of student selection (cream skimming)

“[si se da selección de alumnado] es necesario investigar y hacer auditoria, o sea está mal que lo haga, hay algunas prácticas que uno ha notado, pero hay digamos si se da hay que corregir, hacemos auditoria de una al colegio si hay alguna una queja, pero en la práctica no debe ser es, algo anormal ... o sea en la práctica no debería ser ... quizá hubo más laxitud para que los colegios en concesión escogieran a sus alumnos, es posible ... yo llevo aquí [a la SED] 6 meses ... porque nosotros llegamos cuando ya esto [la selección de alumnado] estaba andando, entonces eso fue imposible [cambiar esa dinámica] ... en la práctica lo que vienen haciendo siempre lo han hecho. Entonces no, desde hace como 8 años esto sigue tal cual, entonces nosotros seleccionamos tal, pero el colegio en concesión sigue.”

—Key informant, SED planning responsable, Bogotá, February 18, 2014

“el día que yo me enteré [que hay selección de alumnado] que fue cuando volví acá en abril del año pasado, mi nivel de rigor en el control de eso fue total ... Y además cuando hicimos las matrículas que me tocaron a mí, yo instalé en cada institución educativa la base del SISBEN para verificar que el niño fuera prioritariamente de SISBEN 1, 2 o 3 como está en el contrato, y pedir un recibo de servicio publico para verificar la dirección y que estuviera... Vecino, esto fue me odió todo el mundo, yo allá con mi base instalada ... Para que no hubiera ningún tipo de selección que no fuera positiva, pero en términos de pobreza... Discriminación positiva, bueno todo perfecto, después me entero que con los años resolvieron decirle a los concesionarios que hicieran lo que se les diera la regalada gana. [E: ¿Eso altera?] Pero por supuesto, seguramente, yo no sé quién, ni cómo lo han hecho, ni que pasó.... [El sentido original] Era usted tiene que recibir a los que están alrededor y a los más pobres, esa era la orden contractual y eso fue lo que yo verifiqué hasta el último día ... ¿Por qué hicieron eso? esa es la pregunta para mí del millón, ¿quién decidió eso?”

—Key informant, former responsible of CEC implementation, Bogotá, March 31, 2014

“si no se cumple el concepto de la cercanía están violando el contrato y la Secretaría no debiera permitir eso ... la Secretaría de educación le está haciendo concesiones adicionales que no tendría por qué hacerle al colegio. ... si la Secretaría permitiendo eso está violentando principios muy claros de la... que están además en la ... [son contractuales] actuales. [E: Por qué la SED que probablemente conoce esas prácticas las permite?] Yo hay si no sabría [responder], yo por lo menos durante los 6 años que estuve en la Secretaría hicimos, eso no se permitía, no podía haber procesos de selección de los colegios, la única selección posible la hacía la Secretaría de Educación y la hacía no por razones académicas, sino una selección por cercanía o había algunos factores adicionales muy secundarios como por ejemplo unificar los hermanos [en el mismo colegio], etc.

—Key informant, former SED responsible and FECODE leader, Bogotá, March 11, 2014:

“siempre lo he dicho [que los CEC seleccionan alumnos] ...[E: ¿Qué respuesta de los colegios en concesión, de los de Secretaría?] No, yo nunca [he recibido respuesta] ...Nadie lo aborda ...Porque esa es la actitud y eso se hace si se institucionaliza, y se hace una forma de actuar].”

—Principal public school 3, March 19, 2014

School autonomy and human resources management

“A estos maestros [de escuelas públicas] se les paga de acuerdo a un escalafón que está establecido en el estatuto docente, mientras que a este colegio [en concesión] no se le obligaba a pagar ...¿qué fue lo que hicieron los colegios en concesión? Todos contrataron maestros de 7º categoría ...es decir que hay una economía de costos a costa de los derechos laborales y profesionales de los maestros. ...no reconocer a esos docentes las condiciones laborales, económicas, salariales que tenían en los colegios [públicos].”

—Key informant, former SED secretary and FECODE leader, Bogotá, 11 March, 2014

“Cuando entra aquí a trabajar en la concesión o con la Alianza el contrato que teníamos era categoría del distrito, categoría 7º ...siempre estamos un poquito por debajo del distrito, la remuneración sí.”

—Teacher 1 CEC 20, Bogotá, February 28, 2014

“E: ¿se les reconoce aquí el rango? Sí, nos pagan hasta 10º [pero no más].”

—Teacher 2 CEC 13, Bogotá, March 5, 2014

Teachers' labor unions exclusion

“No, sindicatos no [hay], Colsubsidio es enemigo de los sindicatos, hay con otro tipo de personal un pacto colectivo que ellos han firmado como tal, pero los profesores no participamos de eso.”

Principal 12

“[E: ¿Hay algún sindicato en este colegio?] No, prohibido ... creo porque la parte privada, acá no nos dejan formar sindicato ... en el Estado sí hay posibilidad, no se puede hacer posible. [E: Que de pronto una persona que tenga una iniciativa sindical, ¿qué pasaría con esa persona en un colegio de estos?] Chao ... De una vez, eso es rápido que no hay, lógico pues los contratos de nosotros son contratos a 11 meses y un contrato termina a los 11 meses muy discretamente le dicen a uno ha terminado su contrato ¿sí?, es muy diferente cuando hay un contrato a término indefinido y puede la persona montar su sindicato, pero es muy imposible.”

—Teacher 3 CEC 22

“[E: ¿Usted qué cree que pasaría si alguien comenzara hablar del tema del sindicato?] o pienso sinceramente que le llamarían [la atención] ... porque hay como cierto temor de que de pronto si yo digo me echan, me retiran del cargo ¿sí?”

—Teacher 3 CEC 24

“nosotros hemos tenido aquí profesores que se han ido para el distrito ¿sí? y estos profesores vuelven ... nos dicen: ‘la situación es muy diferente, la situación de planeación, allá no se planea, entonces uno llega y pues haga lo que pueda con su materia, nadie te revisa clases, tú no planeas.’”

—Principal CEC 22

Principal and teachers’ planning activities

“yo tuve compañeros maestros del distrito y eran coordinadores y rectores, siempre que yo presentaba el plan operativo del colegio, me decían ‘¿ustedes a qué horas hacen todas esas cosas?’ ... nos la pasamos casi todo el día acá, salgo a la 5 de la mañana y regreso casi a las 5 de la tarde estoy en la casa’ ... los del distrito no pueden asumir eso: ellos no planifican ... ellos se asustaban que yo llevaba las planillas”

—Teacher 3 CEC 22

“tengo compañeros (que se fueron a trabajar a colegios distritales) ... y me cuentan: ‘Ricardito extraño a Fe y Alegría, extraño’ ... no hay trabajo en equipo.”

—Teacher 1 CEC 24, March 26, 2014

“yo tengo una amiga muy querida que está trabajando ... en el colegio Distrital Entrenubes ... y ella que trabajó acá, porque ella se presentó y salió seleccionada. Ella dice que aquí hay mucho trabajo, mucho formato para llenar, porque acá se le da prioridad a eso y no al proceso ... en el Distrital les toca estar detrás de las coordinadoras para que les regalen las guías.”

—Teacher 1 CEC 13, March 5, 2014

“los colegios en concesión son muy aprovechados ... porque es mucho trabajo, mucho requisito, mucho papel, mucho formalismo, muchas cosas.”

—Teacher 3 public school 3, April 11, 2014

“[los profesores públicos se caracterizan por] la franja de tranquilidad, la franja de descanso, la franja de bienestar, ‘ya llegué aquí, aquí ya no me explotan,’ y entonces se hace una respuesta que no es ética ... y yo me convierto en la persona que llego tarde, la persona que mira si puedo esquivar hoy el día.”

—Principal public school 3, Bogotá, July 11, 2014

“en los colegios oficiales los profesores prácticamente tienen su puesto asegurado, aquí hacemos evaluación de gestión y si en un término no cumple con el perfil, no cumple con las metas, sencillamente se cambia y no pasa nada. A nivel Distrital les garantizan la permanencia a los profesores.”

—Principal CEC 13, Bogotá, March 5, 2014

“como profesor, teniendo la oportunidad de ir a la pública es muy bueno porque al fin y al cabo estoy asegurando mi futuro ... Pero sin embargo, ya que he estado en las dos caras de la moneda, se vuelve uno más mediocre como docente; al fin y al cabo te relajas, no tienes problemas de que si no llegaste, escribes y listo ... que de pronto en un colegio privado sí te tiene de control.”

—Teacher 2 CEC 5, Bogotá, February 12, 2014

“yo estuve en las dos partes, y la calidad es diferente ... hay maestros que son malos en los privados y en todo lado; pero en el colegio privado, si eres malo, te sacan, acá no, tú haces las barrabasadas que quieras y lo que hacen es trasladarte para otro lado. En el sector privado, si tú llegas tarde te dicen ‘¡pilas!’ en el distrital no.”

—Teacher 2 public school 2, Bogotá, July 12, 2014

Implementation of the double full school day

“[E.¿Hubo resistencias [a la implantación de la doble jornada?]] Unos colegios si, algunos de ellos fueron muy reacios y la prueba es que el aumento de la matricula fue muy leve, pero otros aplicaron el concepto, el criterio económico porque resulta que pues se le seguía pagando la misma plata por alumno ... el Estado le iba a pagar si pasaba el colegio de 1.000 a 1.500 alumnos, le iba pagar 1.500 alumnos”

—Key informant, former SED responsible and FECODE leader Bogotá, March 11, 2014

“Mira, así como se alteró la jornada completa, así como se alteraron tantas cosas”

—Key informant initial responsible of CEC implementation, Bogotá, March 31, 2014).

Centralized elaboration of the Institutional Educational Project (PEI)

“Yo era el asistente de la gerencia de educación de Comfenalco y tuve la oportunidad de elaborar la propuesta licitatoria para la SED de estos tres colegios [CEC: Nueva Roma, S. Vicente y S. Cayetano].”

—Principal CEC 12, Bogotá, February 4, 2014

“Bueno nosotros llegamos acá efectivamente la propuesta de la concesión [durante la licitación] y empezamos a buscar las temáticas, los estándares, de qué se regían digamos en cada área ¿sí? de 0 a 11 para español, para matemáticas, entonces se hicieron unos grupos de docentes de los cinco colegios, más unos capacitadores y docentes de la Universidad de Los Andes, en conjunto presentamos, pusimos en la mesa cuáles eran los estándares para ese entonces, los estándares, las necesidades de las localidades porque más o menos todas las localidades tienen las mismas localidades, el estrato 1 y 2 tuvimos en cuenta las necesidades y de ahí partimos para iniciar cada currículo, teniendo en cuenta primero las necesidades y los estándares que habían en ese momento.”

—Teacher 2 CEC 22, Bogotá, February 27, 2014

“[Todos los CEC Don Bosco] Llevamos la misma propuesta, los mismos lineamientos ... Si, textos, llevamos todo, todo va como por la misma línea”

—Teacher 2 CEC 7, Bogotá, February 10, 2014

Labor orientation and entrepreneurship in Colsubsidio

“La idea es que los estudiantes no salgan para ser empleados, sino que tengan su propia empresa”

—Teacher 3 CEC 13, Bogotá, March 5, 2014

“Que tengan visión como hacia el futuro en cuestión de empleo”

—Parent 1 CEC 12, Bogotá, February 26, 2014

“que sean personas capaces de salir el día de mañana de acá y puedan formar su propia empresa”

—Parent 3 CEC 12, Bogotá, February 26, 2014

The impact of the context on teaching practices: awareness of contextual differences

“mucha prostitución, mucho de maltrato allá, y los papitos de allá, son niños que sus papás han estado en la cárcel, es un entorno en esa parte difícil, muy difícil, en [AAE Miravalle] por ejemplo hay un poco de maltrato infantil, entonces hay maltrato infantil para los niños, en [AAE] Argelia los papitos en su entorno los niños vienen de hogares desintegrados cosas así”

—Teacher 1 CEC 22, Bogotá, February 27, 2014

“en [AAE] Atalayas es un ambiente digamos que prácticamente se logró crear [desde los inicios] un ambiente académico de disciplina y convivencia ... era muy fácil hacer academia porque ya todo el resto estaba ya encaminado, el nivel académico estaba mucho más alto, en el [AAE] Jaime Garzón hay mucho papá que ha sido ya estudiante de universidad, por lo menos técnico o tecnológico entonces eso eleva un poco, acá [AAE La Giralda] no, acá tu encuentras un contexto donde hay mucha madre soltera que vive de lavar ropa, muchos recicladores, algo de delincuencia, entonces es un espacio mucho más pesado. Entonces luchar contra eso para construir lo académico es fuerte”

—Principal CEC 20, Bogotá, February 25, 2014

“el contexto [de los distintos CEC de Colsubsidio] es bien diferente ... este sector [San Cayetano] es más vulnerable, hay más pobreza, hay más abandono, de ellos mismos, entre comillas ellos mismo se pobretean, y eso los hace ver uno poco más disfuncionales con respecto a la localidad de la Victoria y de Nueva Roma ... ellos son más centrales en la ciudad, aquí ya es como más rural ... acá los chicos tienen una problemática fuerte yo digo que como de vandalismo afuera”

—Teacher 3 CEC 13, Bogotá, March 5, 2014

The impact of the context on teaching practices: pedagogical readjustment

“La idea original era que un modelo pedagógico que funcionaba bien para la clase docta, tuviera la experiencia de desarrollarlo en los sectores populares ... para nosotros no fue traumático el aterrizaje en los sectores populares, porque nosotros toda la vida hemos estado en los sectores populares ... [pero] los comentarios que se escucharon [de otros EMO] es que sí era muy complicado trasladar un modelo a un contexto con condiciones totalmente diferentes”

—Key informant EMO Fe y Alegría director, Bogotá, February 4, 2014

“Para la Alianza ... manejar grupos de 18 muchachitos, es decir, allá manejaban grupos de 10 y de 12 muchachitos en las condiciones ... unos niñitos que llegaban leídos, a llegar a enfrentarse a cursos de 35, 40. Entonces, ahí hay una cosa que a mí me dijo [de la universidad de] Los Andes alguna vez ... ‘¿sabe qué?: entender el bachillerato, entender toda esa problemática nos ha llevado hasta a nosotros a cambiar currículos aquí’”

—Key informant former SED responsable, February 13, 2014

“la educación no solo es un colegio y unos docentes, hay unos factores asociados, hay un universo socioeconómico, o sea, eso tu no transfieres el modelo del colegio Los Nogales [de Alianza Educativa] que es uno de los colegios más caros de Colombia a Ciudad Bolívar”

—Key informant initial responsible of CEC implementation, Bogotá, March 31, 2014

“Yo creo que en el imaginario de las personas que formularon el proyecto [de los CEC] desde el comienzo no cayeron muy en cuenta de la realidad socio económica de estas poblaciones, ellos hicieron un PEI [de AAE] muy académico que tiene sentido y vale para nuestra sociedad pero ... eso es muy difícil y sobre todo en esos contextos, igual acá, el contexto aquí socioeconómico es muy pesado, si uno de alguna forma no maneja esos ambientes es muy difícil hacer [academia]”

—Principal CEC 20, Bogotá, February 25, 2014

Leadership styles: planning activities

“allá [en las escuelas públicas] no se planea, entonces uno llega y pues haga lo que pueda con su materia, nadie te revisa clases, tú no planeas”

—Principal CEC 22, Bogotá, February 25, 2014

“yo tuve compañeros maestros del distrito y eran coordinadores y rectores ... ellos no planifican”

—Teacher 3 CEC 22, Bogotá, February 27, 2014

“tengo compañeros (que se fueron a trabajar a colegios distritales) ... y me cuentan: ‘Ricardito extraño a Fe y Alegría, extraño’ ... no hay trabajo en equipo.”

—Teacher 1 CEC 24, March 26, 2014

“yo tengo una amiga muy querida que está trabajando ... en el colegio Distrital Entrenubes ... y ella que trabajó acá, porque ella se presentó y salió seleccionada. Ella dice que aquí hay mucho trabajo, mucho formato para llenar, porque acá se le da prioridad a eso y no al proceso ... en el Distrital les toca estar detrás de las coordinadoras para que les regalen las guías.”

—Teacher 1 CEC 13, March 5, 2014

Leadership styles: incentives schemes

“[los profesores públicos se caracterizan por] la franja de tranquilidad, la franja de descanso, la franja de bienestar, ‘ya llegué aquí, aquí ya no me explotan’, y entonces se hace una respuesta que no es ética ... ‘aquí como no me molestan entonces yo bajo la guardia’ ... y yo me convierto en la persona que llego tarde, la persona que mira si puedo esquivar hoy el día”

—Principal public school 3, Bogotá, July 11, 2014

“en los colegios oficiales los profesores prácticamente tienen su puesto asegurado, aquí hacemos evaluación de gestión y si en un término no cumple con el perfil, no cumple con las metas, sencillamente se cambia y no pasa nada. A nivel Distrital les garantizan la permanencia a los profesores”

—Principal CEC 13, Bogotá, March 5, 2014

“como profesor, teniendo la oportunidad de ir a la pública es muy bueno porque al fin y al cabo estoy asegurando mi futuro ... Pero sin embargo, ya que he estado en las dos caras de la moneda, se vuelve uno más mediocre como docente; al fin y al cabo te relajas, no tienes problemas de que si no llegaste, escribes y listo ... que de pronto en un colegio privado sí te tiene de control”

—Teacher 2 CEC 5, Bogotá, February 12, 2014

“yo estuve en las dos partes, y la calidad es diferente ... hay maestros que son malos en los privados y en todo lado; pero en el colegio privado, si eres malo, te sacan, acá no, tú haces las barrabasadas que quieras y lo que hacen es trasladarte para otro lado. En el sector privado, si tú llegas tarde te dicen ‘¡pilas!’, en el distrital no”

—Teacher 2 public school 2, Bogotá, July 12, 2014

School day

“era una situación que yo calificué de discriminatoria en el Consejo de Bogotá. ¿cómo es posible que haya niños que son de los mismos estratos 1 y 2, pobres, que tengan la posibilidad de estar en una jornada completa, y otros que se les mantenga la situación de una jornada incompleta en niños [de medio día]? Eso era discriminatorio.”

— Key informant former SED responsible and FECODE leader, Bogotá, March 11, 2014

Appendix 2: Additional Tables and Figures

Table 11—*Contracts of the schools of the CEC program*

EMO	Number of CEC	CEC	Localities	Localities' % Sisben 0 and 1	Beginning of the contract
Cafam	4	Cafam La Esperanza	Bosa	9.2	1999
		Cafam Los Naranjos	Bosa	9.2	
		Cafam Santa Lucia	Rafael Uribe	9.9	
		Cafam Bellavista	Kennedy	1.1	
Fenur	1	Durán Dussán	Kennedy	1.1	1999
Don Bosco	5	Don Bosco I	Ciudad Bolívar	61.9	1999
		Don Bosco II	Usme	46.6	
		Don Bosco III	Usaquen	4.7	
		Don Bosco IV	Usme	46.6	
		Don Bosco V	Suba	1.4	
Colsubsidio	5	Col. Torquigua	Engativá	1.9	1999
		Col. San Vicente	San Cristóbal	7.5	
		Col. San Cayetano	Usme	46.6	
		Col. Nueva Roma	San Cristóbal	7.5	
		Col. Las Mercedes	Engativá	1.9	
Gimnasio Moderno	1	Sabio Caldas	Ciudad Bolívar	61.9	1999
Calasanz	1	Calasanz Buenavista	Ciudad Bolívar	61.9	2000
Alianza Educativa	5	AAE S. de las Atalayas	Bosa	9.2	2000
		AAE Argelia	Bosa	9.2	
		AAE La Giralda	Santa Fé	9.0	
		AAE Miravalle	Usme	46.6	
		AAE Jaime Garzón	Kennedy	1.1	
La Salle	1	Juan Luis Londoño	Usme	46.6	2002
Fe y Alegría	2	FYA José Mfl Velaz	Suba	1.4	2003
		FYA San Ignacio	Bosa	9.2	

Table 12—Percentage of pedagogical activities performed monthly in CEC and public schools

	Public schools %	CEC %	CEC difference	Cramer's v. coefficient	
Meetings on school vision and mission	16.2	49.2	+32.0	0.322	moderate
Develop curriculum	40.8	58.7	+17.9	0.190	low
Discuss class material	34.1	48.8	+14.7	0.150	low
Exchange materials with colleagues	42.5	59.2	+16.6	0.148	low
Grade team meetings	74.0	86.7	+12.7	0.149	low
Define common evaluation standards of students	43.4	64.5	+21.1	0.212	low
Discuss learning of certain students	65.9	81.5	+15.6	0.164	low
Teaching together with colleagues	36.5	54.6	+18.2	0.157	low
Participate in professional development actions	22.2	57.5	+35.3	0.302	moderate
Observe colleagues classes and feedback	6.2	16.6	+10.4	0.216	low
Do activities with other courses (i.e., projects)	36.3	52.4	+16.1	0.167	low
Coordination with responsables of different areas	45.5	69.8	+24.3	0.218	low

Source: Own elaboration, based on survey.

Table 13—Percentage of principal's activities performed "very often," in CEC and public schools

	Public schools	CEC %	CEC difference	Cramer's v. coefficient	
The principal discusses goals with teachers	57.1	92.0	+34.9	0.446	strong
The principal ensures consistency of teaching practices	65.1	94.1	+29	0.444	strong
The principal observes teaching practices	26.5	81.2	+54.8	0.558	strong
The principal suggest how to improve teaching practices	47.3	85.0	+37.7	0.431	strong
The principal reinforces teachers' own initiative	66.1	88.8	+22.7	0.300	moderate
The principal takes the initiative to solve teachers' problems	46.0	70.4	+24.4	0.285	low
The principal ensures training opportunities for teachers	61.3	79.6	+18.4	0.222	low
The principal congratulates teachers who achieve goals	62.8	79.7	+15.9	0.200	low
The principal supports innovative teachers	67.0	82.3	+15.4	0.184	low
The principal and teachers work together	72.8	95.4	+22.6	0.365	moderate
The principal encourages teamwork	78.3	94.7	+16.4	0.332	moderate
The principal defines the goals of teachers	67.3	88.3	+21	0.434	strong
The principal promotes a good climate	82.1	94.1	+12	0.258	low
All staff act together to ensure quality education	79.3	91.9	+12.5	0.343	moderate

Source: Own elaboration, based on survey.

Table 14—Evolution of teachers' salaries of Teachers Statute Act 2277 of 1979

Teachers rank	Salaries 2001*	Salaries 2014**	Salaries evolution (2001=100)	Cumulative inflation (200–2014)***	Difference
A	355,438	665,380	187.20	170.80	16.40
B	393,748	737,094	187.20	170.80	16.40
1	441,273	826,060	187.20	170.80	16.40
2	457,408	856,266	187.20	170.80	16.40
3	485,399	908,662	187.20	170.80	16.40
4	504,561	944,535	187.20	170.80	16.40
5	536,385	1,004,109	187.20	170.80	16.40
6	538,490	1,062,143	197.24	170.80	26.44
7	611,955	1,188,666	194.24	170.80	23.44
8	693,689	1,305,676	188.22	170.80	17.42
9	771,010	1,446,417	187.60	170.80	16.80
10	846,115	1,583,721	187.18	170.80	16.38
11	969,719	1,808,388	186.49	170.80	15.69
12	1,161,776	2,151,184	185.16	170.80	14.36
13	1,293,970	2,381,197	184.02	170.80	13.22
14	1,482,149	2,711,939	182.97	170.80	12.17

Source: Own elaboration based on * Act 1465/2001 (regulation of Teacher Status Act 2277 of 1979); ** Act 172/2014 (modification of the remuneration of the teachers' salaries of the 2277/1979), and *** Banco de la República de Colombia.

Table 15—Evolution of teachers' salaries of Teacher Status Act 2001, 2004–2014

Rank	Salaries 2004*	Salaries 2014**	Salaries evolution (2004=100)	Cumulative inflation (2001–2014)***	Difference
Superior normalist or technologist	609,435	1,121,819	184.08	142.10	41.98
	829,290	1,430,005	172.44	142.10	30.34
	1,251,513	1,843,384	147.29	142.10	5.19
	1,437,871	2,285,199	158.93	142.10	16.83
Licensed or professional (=2)	766,950	1,534,628	192.09	142.10	49.99
	1,161,802	1,960,718	163.78	142.10	21.68
	1,499,673	2,429,075	152.83	142.10	10.73
	1,618,722	2,874,648	168.33	142.10	26.23
Licensed or professional with a Master or PhD (=3)	1,157,310	2,748,898	237.52	142.10	95.42
	1,448,434	3,238,872	223.61	142.10	81.51
	1,648,697	4,053,508	245.86	142.10	103.76
	1,749,648	4,671,871	267.02	142.10	124.92

Source: Own elaboration based on * Act 4181/2004; ** Act 171/2014; and *** Banco de la República de Colombia. Note: Licensed or professional is a average of “with specialization” and “without specialization;” and Licensed or professional with a Master or PhD is an average of “with a Master” and “with a PhD.”

Table 16—Agreement with statements about families' participation, in CEC and public schools

	Public schools	CEC	Difference	Cramer's v. coefficient	
Families participate in school	44.7	79.8	+35.08	0.364	moderate
Suggestions of families are taken into account	75.2	95.1	+19.9	0.358	moderate

Source: Own elaboration, based on survey.

Table 17—Ratio student/teacher by localities, Bogotá 2011

Localidad	Preescolar	Básica primaria	Básica secundaria y media	Total
Usaquén	25.85	30.81	29.04	28.23
Chapinero	23.73	26.85	21.88	22.07
Santa Fe	24.97	27.72	27.18	26.09
San Cristóbal	23.36	29.75	28.38	27.35
Usme	28.58	33.35	31.07	30.72
Tunjuelito	24.52	28.99	25.94	25.91
Bosa	30.74	44.58	38.87	39.02
Kennedy	27.54	37.00	32.29	32.41
Fontibón	26.40	29.95	27.38	27.06
Engativá	26.27	33.27	29.45	29.34
Suba	36.19	52.88	43.53	44.40
Barrios Unidos	21.27	24.36	22.52	22.10
Teusaquillo	14.33	27.09	18.23	19.29
Los Mártires	23.06	27.15	23.00	23.60
Antonio Nariño	24.35	29.70	24.52	25.01
Puente Aranda	23.35	26.31	23.44	23.54
La Candelaria	23.33	28.79	27.14	25.57
Rafael Uribe	26.03	29.10	27.12	26.78
Ciudad Bolívar	28.57	37.90	34.66	34.29
Sumapaz	6.70	5.53	9.52	7.31
Total	27.11	34.94	31.06	30.98

Source: Own elaboration, based on SED (2012: 42, 59).

Table 18—Approval rate, repetition rate and dropout rate for Bogotá official sector by type of school

	Approval rate (2011)	Repetition rate (2013)	Dropout rate (2013)
Public schools	84.8	7.1	3.7
CEC	91.7	4.8	0.8
Difference total	+6.9	-2.3	-0.9
Dif. preschool	+1.8	-0.2	-1.8
Dif. Primary ed.	+2.8	-0.7	-2.2
Dif. Low Secondary	+8.9	-4.7	-1.2
Dif. Upper secondary	+5.0	-2.1	-2.8

Source: Own elaboration, based on SED (2013b and 2014).

Table 19—Academic continuity and labor insertion of AAE (2009–2013) and Colsubsidio San Vicente (2001–2013)

	Alianza Educativa (2009–013)		Colsubsidio San Vicente (2001–2013)**	
Studying in post-obligatory	1,280	57.32%	376	64.61%
Others courses, non-formal education	170	7.61%	s.d.	
Total studying	1,450	64.93%	376	64.61%
Working	s.d.		170	29.21%
Own business	s.d.		15	2.58%
Other situations*	783	35.02%	222	38.14%
Total	2,233	100.00%	582	100.00%

Source: Own elaboration.

Notes: * include housewife, military service, emigration, and no occupation.

** The total is superior to 100% because there are students which are working and studying simultaneously.

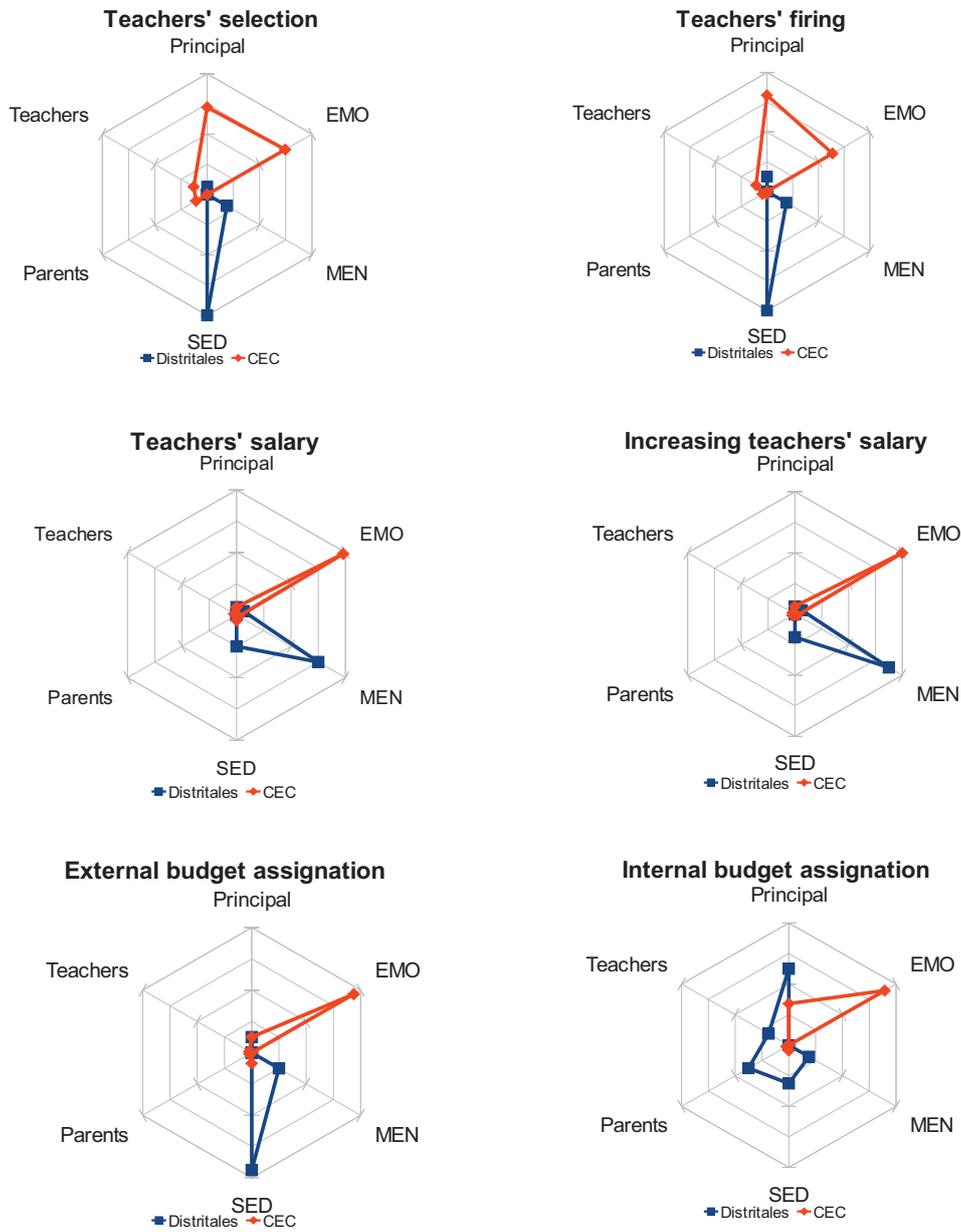
Table 20—*SED (2014) evaluation results*

CEC	EMO	SED (2014) punctuation	SED (2014) evaluation position*	Contract renewal
Jaime Garzón	Alianza Edu.	99.27	1	Contract renewal
Miravalle	Alianza Edu.	97.03	2	
Argelia	Alianza Edu.	96.32	4	
Buenavista	Calasanz	94.95	5	
Jose Mfl Velaz	Fe y Alegría	93.66	8	
Las Mercedes	Colsubsidio	92.64	9	
Santiago Atalayas	Alianza Edu.	92.57	10	
Santa Lucía	Cafam	91.64	12	
Nueva Roma	Colsubsidio	91.16	14	
Don Bosco V	Don Bosco	89.95	16	
San Vicente	Colsubsidio	89.45	17	
La Esperanza	Cafam	87.21	23	
Torquigua	Colsubsidio	87.21	24	
Bellavista	Cafam	85.16	29	
Sabio Caldas	Gimnasio Mod.	82.51	36	
Los Naranjos	Cafam	80.50	41	
San Ignacio	Fe y Alegría	79.34	44	Public transition
Don Bosco IV	Don Bosco	78.20	52	
La Giralda	AAE	73.86	66	
Don Bosco III	Don Bosco	72.24	74	
J.L. Londoño	La Salle	70.74	77	
Don Bosco II	Don Bosco	66.30	92	Public immediate
San Cayetano	Colsubsidio	s.d.	> 100	
Don Bosco I	Don Bosco	s.d.	> 100	
H. Durán Dussán	FENUR	s.d.	> 100	

Source: SED (2014).

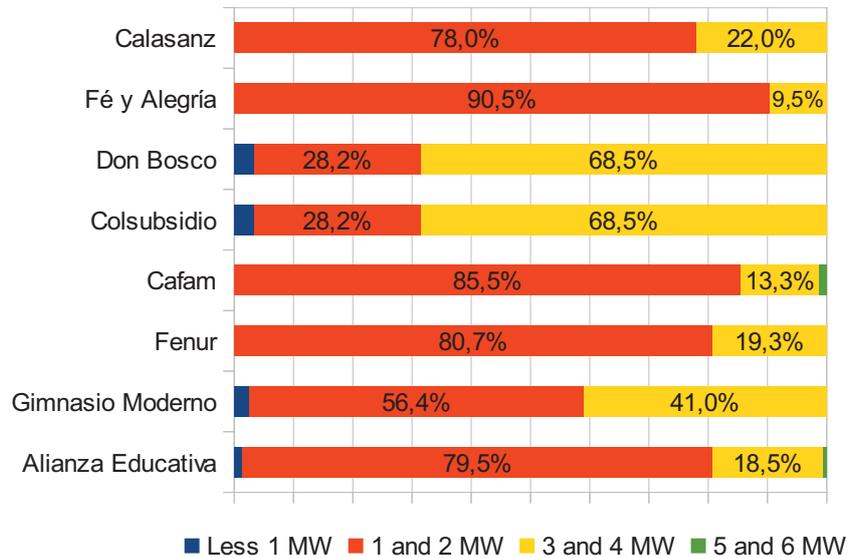
Note: * the rank is not only of CEC, but of all distritales in Bogotá.

Figure 2—Actors responsible for several management tasks in CEC and public schools



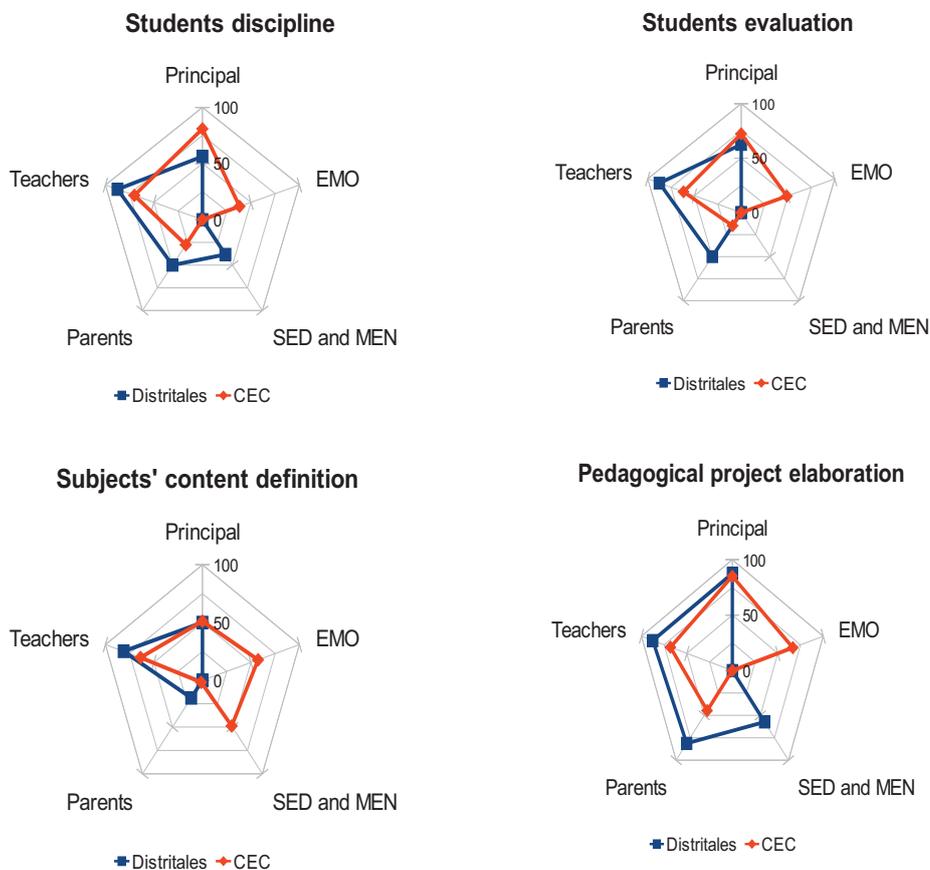
Source: Own elaboration, based on survey.

Figure 3—Teachers' salaries distribution among EMOs



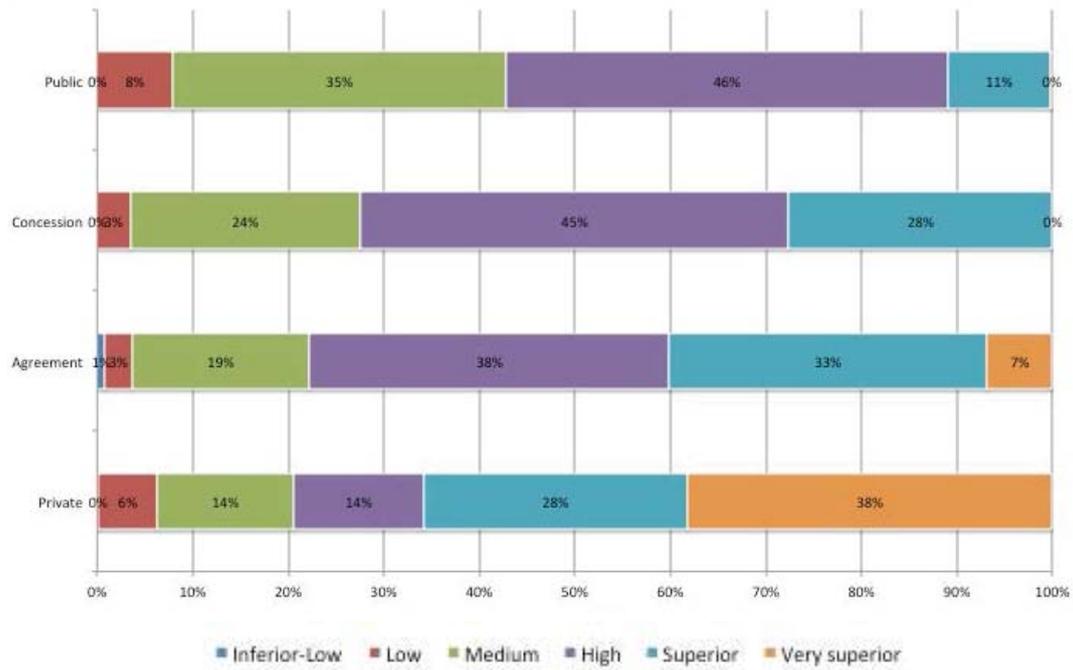
Source: Own elaboration based on our survey.

Figure 4—Actor with an important incidence, in pedagogical tasks, in CEC and in public schools (% of respondents at each category)



Source: Own elaboration, based on survey.

Figure 5—ICFES results by school, Bogotá 2011



Source: Own elaboration based on SED (2012).



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