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THE EVOLUTION OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

IN EL SALVADOR:

A CASE STUDY

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This case study explores the politics and organizational dynamics of educational planning in the government of El Salvador. This country is one of the few in Latin America in which a governmental planning unit (ODEPOR) exerts a major influence on educational priorities and expenditures. The paper shows how and why ODEPOR was created, who have been the main actors in its unfolding, what impact it has had both inside and outside the Ministry of Education, the difficulties it has faced and the conflicts it has generated in carrying out its work, and the degree to which it has taken root in the Ministry. The analysis draws on lengthy interviews with key actors in the creation of ODEPOR as well as other sources.

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THE EVOLUTION OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING IN EL SALVADOR: A CASE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The educational planning experience of El Salvador is anomalous in several regards. First, El Salvador is one of the few countries in Latin America in which a formally constituted, government planning unit exerts a major influence on educational priorities and actual expenditures. The Office of Planning and Organizational Development (ODEPOR) in the Ministry of Education is acknowledged both within the Ministry and without to be a preponderant force in planning, budgeting, and monitoring the government's formal education programs. Other units in the Ministry may love, hate, or simply tolerate ODEPOR, but no one accuses it of being a bureaucratic cipher.

A second striking feature is that ODEPOR was established after a large-scale educational reform had taken place. Its predecessor, a feeble and isolated planning office in the Ministry was abolished at the outset of the reforms. The reforming minister considered that planning office as not only useless but as a potential brake on the quick action needed for effective change. Thus the irony is that one of the strongest educational planning units in Latin America was created under a minister who had already extinguished a weak member of the species and who openly expressed skepticism about the need for another.

Also noteworthy about ODEPOR is that from the beginning its key staff members have been, with one exception, architects and engineers rather than teachers or duly certified educational planners. Both the first and the present director are architects with a background in city planning, while the heads of two of three of ODEPOR's departments come from engineering. From all indications the infusion of these new professional perspectives into a traditional, humanistically-oriented

bureaucracy has been at once a source of vitality in planning and of a running clash in mentalities.

This case study is meant to show how and why ODEPOR was created, who have been the main actors in its unfolding, what impact it has had both inside and outside the Ministry of Education, the tensions and ambiguities it has generated, and the degree to which it has taken root within the Ministry. Some comment will be made on the impact of foreign assistance on ODEPOR's structure and effectiveness. The sources to be drawn upon include lengthy interviews with almost all of the individuals involved in the creation and evolution of ODEPOR; documents made available both by Salvadorean authorities and the Agency for International Development (AID): published materials; and informal conversations and observations.¹

¹The perspective of this case study should be compared with that in two other papers in this series. "Planning in the Ministry of Education of El Salvador: The Organization of Planning Activity", provides a detailed history of the sequence of events leading up to the creation and organization of ODEPOR, prepared by one of the participants in those events. *The second paper, "Sector Analysis in Education: A Case Study with Recommendations" provides more detail on how the later history of ODEPOR was shaped by the introduction of sector analysis. **

*Development Discussion Paper No. 70, HIID, June 1979.

**Harvard Graduate School of Education, Center for Studies in Education and Development.

1.1 Summary Statement of the Case

Planning began before ODEPOR and developed principally through a series of successive improvements rather than being born full-grown. There have been improvements in the ways problems of education are defined, in the variables on which data are collected, and in the process of employing these data to yield informed recommendations for change in the educational system.

One major problem in the writing of the history of that process of change is the definition of planning to be used. Some people consider that "planning" in the Ministry of Education did not really begin until ODEPOR was created in 1972. Prior efforts are dismissed as mere statistics-gathering. ODEPOR staff take care to point out that Minister Beneke, who led the Reform, did not believe in planning and had abolished the Office of Planning existent in 1967 when he took office. The first Director of ODEPOR commented that when he joined the Ministry (in 1971),

I found no belief in planning. The belief was action now, and we'll correct mistakes later on. There was a plan document, but no mechanisms to implement it.

On the other hand, a key figure in the Reform pointed out that planning was going on, in the school construction agency (COPLACE) where he worked to coordinate school construction, and in the national planning agency (CONAPLAN) which handled capital budgeting for education.

Fortunately there was an unusual guy in the Planning Secretariat -- Román Mayorga... The function of educational planning was soon switched from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Planning, and Mayorga was put in charge of it. In many ways it was an ideal situation. Beneke was an incredible doer, but he had to be understood in the planning office. Mayorga put his ideas in order, criticized them, softened them,

put numbers on them, gave them a rationale or a budgeting justification. The Reform Document #2 (Plan Quinquenal de Educación, Julio 1967-Junio 1972) was put together by Mayorga in CONAPLAN. This structured what the Minister wanted to get done. (Interview with Roberto Murray-Meza, January 18, 1977)

With the departure of Murray-Meza from the Ministry of Education, and a switch in Mayorga's interests from education to health and housing in 1971, Beneke no longer had control over the planning function. At that point, interest in re-creating a planning office within the Ministry of Education crystallized.

Apparently some planning had been going on in the Ministry, at the level of the individual operating divisions. A consultant brought in by AID to help design a new planning office commented,

I interviewed (in 1971) all the administrative people in the Ministry. I got two things out of that. First, there's a hell of a lot of planning going on anyway. In my report I was able to name offices and give examples of attempts to make rational decisions. (Interview with Russell Davis, March 2, 1977)

But Davis also recalled that Mayorga,

... was bearish on the possibility of doing any planning -- he had broken his neck in the Ministry of Planning and hadn't gotten very far. He didn't think it would be possible to get people to agree to a rational set of criteria for decision-making.

What seems most reasonable is that some of the elements included in planning were present before the creation of ODEPOR, before the Reform.² These elements largely were limited to data collection and

²"Educational reforms" were a familiar process in El Salvador, having occurred in the 1940s and 1950s, dates still fresh in the memory of some educators. The curriculum and structure of primary and secondary education, in effect in 1967, had been generated in the Reform of 1954.

some diagnostic analysis of problems of the educational system. To the extent that these statistics and the picture they painted motivated decision-makers to set objectives for improvement, there was planning. But there was little or no analysis of alternative policies, nor any link between diagnosis of problems and proposals for action. The action link was added to the Ministry with the arrival of Walter Beneke, but policy analysis came only with the creation of ODEPOR and the beginning of the Sector Analysis. This then was the evolution of educational planning in El Salvador.

2.0 Planning Before ODEPOR

2.1 First Steps

The first mention of educational planning appeared in documents of the Ministry of Education of El Salvador in 1957. At that time the Ministry carried out a "diagnostic" study to be used as part of the National 5-Year Economic Development Plan. The published report of this diagnosis carried no narrative or description of methodology; it was only a set of tables. Although there were no statements of goals or targets, the tables included enrollments, number of teachers, number of physical facilities, descriptions of teaching materials, and unit and total costs by level of education between 1957 and 1962. The approximately 200 pages of mimeographed tables also listed information such as the names of the winners of athletic events held in the country during the year.

The next formal diagnosis appeared in 1964. This document began with a review of all legislation, decrees, statutes and agreements that pertain to education in El Salvador. It then provided a description

of the responsibilities and operation of each of the branches of education: primary, secondary, and so on. This description included a listing of the official curriculum for each of the educational programs in each branch. The second half of the document dealt with problems faced by the educational system of the country. Particular attention was given to primary and secondary education. The major needs were identified as: curriculum reform; teacher re-training; new materials; complete schools (labeled "unitary" in this statement); and emphasis on vocational and technical training at the secondary level. The diagnostic statement argued for, "With respect to vocational and technical education, diversification of professions to the maximum, emphasizing the formation of skilled manpower and experts for industrial and agricultural production." (Diagnóstico de la Educación, 1964, p. 102, emphasis added.) Fourteen factors were listed that contribute to limiting the performance (rendimiento) of the educational system. These include student nutrition, the fit of education with needs of society, academicism in programs, and inter-organizational cooperation. No supporting statistics were presented to support these assertions.

Also in 1964, Minister of Education Revelo Borja created the Department of Planning, supported by a joint UNESCO-USAID team invited to help in the identification of educational needs. The Department included units for Administration, Statistics, Study Plans, Budget Planning, and General Services. The 1965-1966 Report of the Ministry of Education stated,

The Department of Planning is destined also to coordinate the activities of the educational sector, following the directions indicated by the Secretary of Education and by the National Council for Economic Planning and Coordination. (page 6, memoria)

In 1965 the Department had 35 employees.

Soon after its creation the Planning Department published a 60-page mimeographed document entitled "Five Year Plan". This paper included projections of needed enrollments, teachers and facilities, to 1969, but no description of methodology nor supporting analysis. The Five Year Plan also was included as a chapter in the national plan document Plan de la Nación para el Desarrollo Económico y Social, 1965-1969, published by CONAPLAN. Chapter 11 of this document dealt with "Population, Employment and Human Resources". It specified new positions to be filled during the plan period, taking into account expansion and mortality, tabulated by occupation and level of education, and estimated that for the period 1965-69, 242,000 new jobs would have to be filled in El Salvador: 7900 with persons trained to higher education; 36,000 with persons trained through secondary education; 43,000 with persons trained through complete primary education; and the remainder with up to 5 years of primary education. Another table compared the demand for educated labor with the projected supply of graduates for the same period, and calculated the deficit or oversupply of educated manpower that would be available. The system would, the table concluded, just fail to produce the necessary number of graduates for higher education and would over produce at the level of secondary school and primary school. There would be a deficit of unskilled manpower.

In his report to Congress in August 1965, the end of his third year in office, Minister Revelo Borja called attention to the fact that El Salvador now had a Five Year Plan for education.

For the first time in its history, Salvadorean education has a five year plan for its orderly development. The Plan shows that we still have not solved the problems which confront the system of education, but we forecast an adequate solution for those problems which have been given a number one priority.

The plan document was similar in content and form to many other country plan documents at that period of time and also today, but several features merit attention. First, there was specific reference to Educational Television and investment requirements of ₡ 870,000 as necessary for a pilot program. No text was provided, however. Specific attention was given to the need to re-organize secondary education, and to create up to 24 specializations in a diversified high school. The plan called for a re-organization of the Ministry to streamline its operation, but no details were provided. Finally, the plan urged the development of annual operating plans, for the Ministry and for each of the operating divisions within it.

The plan document developed and published under Minister Revelo Borja was not implemented during his period of office. Between 1965 and 1967, the Office of Planning apparently did nothing more than generate annual statistical bulletins, and publish a few studies on various aspects of education.

By 1967 what had looked like a powerful Office of Planning in 1965 appeared to be discredited. Much of the productive activity of the Office in 1964 and 1965 had been the result of a concerted effort by UNESCO and USAID to bolster the planning operation, and to generate a reform process through planning. The plan failed to excite much attention, and most of the advisors in planning left. The country focused its attention on the election of a new president.

2.2 Planning Under Beneke

In 1967 a new political regime, headed by President Fidel Sánchez Hernández, took office. It was clear from the outset that the Sánchez government had a firm commitment to educational reform. Lic. Walter Beneke, who had served as the country's ambassador to Japan and, more recently, as head of its educational television committee, was appointed Minister of Education.³

Beneke was given a strong mandate for change. Reflecting back in 1977, he commented:

Before this time there had been no political will for reform. When I came in we had backing from the top, and especially from the President. Even before he took over his office he stated that education was going to be his top priority. When I started, the education budget was 55 million colones; when I left it was three times that amount. The Ministry of Finance was also very much for us then. There is nothing you can do in government without that kind of support.

Beneke took over the Ministry of Education with a passion for action, firm ideas on what had to be done, and a suspicion of planners; but he used the jargon of planning.

The first reform plan was so logical -- it was obvious

³ Beneke had returned to El Salvador in 1965 and almost immediately was named as Chairman of the Commission. By 1966 the Commission had reached some consensus on what had to be done. Television would begin with grades 7 through 9, would be controlled by an autonomous institute directly responsible to the President, and would be financed with foreign aid and staffed with foreign technical advisors. The decision to work only with grades 7 through 9 was conditioned principally by the conviction that El Salvador's economic development would come through industrialization, and that industrialization required an adequate supply of skilled workers with at least 9 and preferably 12 years of education. Grades 7-9 were identified as the "bottleneck of development" because enrollments were low and completion rates lower. These conclusions appear to have been based on data in the 1964 Diagnostic Study, the Five Year Plan, and calculations done by the Commission itself.

what had to be done.⁴ We had over 3000 teachers out of work, and still a system of teacher training schools that was producing more. It was logical to close these schools. We also saw that the idea of literacy recommended by UNESCO was nonsense. If people in the country were to get anywhere they had to have nine years of education. So we increased the minimum from six to nine years. But if we did this it was also logical to have more teachers at the new level, so we set up the Ciudad Normal (normal school) to produce them... The real question was whether we were going to solve all of these problems one at a time, or take them all on at the same time. We decided to attack them all.

Convinced that what had to be done was largely obvious, Beneke saw no need for the existing planning unit in the Ministry of Education, so he abolished it in 1968. According to one close associate, he feared that the presence of a planning office could be used to slow down the reforms. Someone who was opposed to a given action could easily say, "let's look at this or that before we go on." Beneke's opinion was:

I have planning teams coming out of my ears -- from the World Bank, the U.S., Sweden, and so on. They all give me books of plans. But by the time I would do everything they say I should do, I would be out of office. I have to get this baby born and on its feet before I worry about planning. (Interview with USAID official, March 1977)

But despite his impatience with planning, much of the Reform seems to have been "planned", at least in the sense of not being the result of a disconnected set of spontaneous or whimsical actions. In the Report for 1968-69, Beneke began by stating that the Reform, as

⁴Beneke's closest advisor at this time, Bruno Stiglitz, a UNESCO expert sometimes referred to as the "Black Pope" of the Reform, said in 1971 that "as an idea it was there, it wasn't an idea of Beneke... however, the idea of having to reform all the programs wasn't true, that came out of the ETV project." Several features of the Reform had been proposed in the Five Year Plan produced by Revelo Borja, notably the diversified high school.

started in 1967, was accompanied by a five year plan capable of carrying it out.

Given the extraordinary limitation of human, physical and financial resources that we could count on, efficiency was indispensable to make fullest use of these resources.

- The principal concrete programs in this area were:
- (1) elaborate a five year plan of action;
 - (2) carry out an administrative reorganization;
 - (3) improve the system of supervision;
 - (4) transform the administrative system of secondary education; and
 - (5) improve the productivity of Rural Education.

The first was to elaborate a plan of action realistic enough to be carried out in the five years of this government. That five year plan would give a unity to the project, would concentrate problems, would avoid the dispersion of efforts and give to any participant or observer of the reform a clear idea of what it was trying to do. (Memoria, p. 5)

The five year plan referred to eventually was published in 1970 as Reform Document No. 2.⁵ When interviewed in 1977, Beneke referred to this as the first five year plan in education. His UNESCO advisor claimed in 1971 that the design of the Reform was laid down by September 1967.

When the planning office was shut down in 1968, Beneke transferred

⁵The Plan was published as a 60-page booklet, mostly narrative describing the objectives of the Reform, and the actions being taken to meet those objectives. The objectives were stated as: extension of schooling to more persons; improvement of quality of teaching by relating it to needs of the present society; and improvement of the efficiency of the system.

The document included a detailed specification of increases in enrollments, teachers, and facilities needed to meet these increases, and implied capital costs. It described and justified changes in the structure of the Ministry, as well as in curricula, and explained the advantages of educational television. It appears to cover every possible aspect of education.

The Plan also included a detailed listing of all the activities of the Reform, by semester, beginning in 1968 and extending through 1972, separated by level and function (e.g., primary, ETV, teacher training), administrative reform, construction and teacher welfare. Approximately 300 activities are included in this listing.

one educational planning function from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Planning (CONAPLAN). The main reason appears to have been the presence in CONAPLAN of Ing. Román Mayorga, a person in whom Beneke had great confidence. Trained as an electrical engineer, Mayorga had a reputation for intellectual breadth, analytical capability, and effective organization. In 1967 Mayorga had moved from the Television Commission to CONAPLAN, where he was given responsibility for looking into the social sectors, including housing and education, as part of the capital budget programs. With Mayorga in that position Beneke felt comfortable in asking that he be given responsibility for the budgetary aspects of educational planning. One of Mayorga's main tasks was to take the lead role in drafting the documents that eventually became the operating plan for the reforms. As a knowledgeable observer says it,

In many ways it was an ideal situation. Beneke was an incredible doer, but he had to be understood in the planning office. Mayorga put his ideas in order, criticized them, softened them, gave them a rationale or budgeting justification. The Reform Document No. 2 was put together by Mayorga in CONAPLAN. This structured what the Minister wanted to get done. (Interview, January 18, 1977)

But this kind of planning was not enough. As the Reform moved into high gear, capital expenditures, especially for school construction, became crucial. Formally CONAPLAN held power over all capital budgeting. With Mayorga as CONAPLAN's representative in this area, Beneke and his associates had no difficulty in winning a sympathetic ear for the capital expenditures needed to accomplish the reforms. At the same time, however, Mayorga could not do the homework necessary to

put the Ministry of Education's capital budget in shape. One key figure in the development of ODEPOR made this comment during an interview with us:

All of a sudden it became extremely important to have a small body inside the Ministry to coordinate between capital development and the Ministry people... Beneke wanted an office in the Ministry to manage the capital budget; he wanted someone to work with Román (Mayorga). CONAPLAN had veto power over this budget. He wanted a little center between the educators and the capital budget, but he didn't want too much coordination. He was afraid that if you had too much planning you would come out with plans, but nothing would get done. (Interview, January 18, 1977)

In the area of capital budgeting, the main tasks facing the Ministry at that time were to work out the negotiations for three major loans: one from AID for constructing primary schools in rural areas, a second from AID for educational television, and a third from the World Bank for vocational high schools. To provide the center necessary for linking the Ministry to CONAPLAN, Beneke established the Committee for the Construction of School Rooms (COPLACE). In announcing the creation of COPLACE Beneke wrote (in the 1968-69 Memoria):

In order to proceed systematically and in an orderly way to plan the most ambitious plan of school construction in the history of Salvadorean education, we created, within the Ministry, a School Construction Planning Committee. (p. 28)

Roberto Murray Meza, who had worked with Beneke on the National Education Commission, was appointed coordinator. Murray later commented:

Beneke made this position critical in the Ministry. The Ministry's capital budget went from about 1 million colones in one year to 25 million in 8 months.

Funding was available and a lot was done. We let out tenders for buildings, sometimes as many as 5 or 10 a day.

In essence, COPLACE brought together three functions: the budget; the architects and the engineers involved in school construction; and the educators, although only in token form. Beneke's objective was stated as follows:

In budgetary functions we have looked for a unitary and complete conception of the educational problem, and not the sum of the budgets elaborated in an unconnected fashion by each of the dependencies.
(1968-69 Memoria, p. 9)

But the mechanisms for close control of the operating dependencies, specifically the departments of Primary and Secondary education had not yet been developed.

The third type of planning going on during the Reform was curriculum planning. Three committees worked together on devising the new curriculum: Servicios Técnicos Pedagógicos; the National Committee on Technical Education; and the Advisory Committee on Plans and Programs.

We talked about restructuring the educational system, and this was done in STP. We were involved in changing the programs for the bachillerato. In the period after the old planning office was eliminated and before ODEPOR, much of the planning function was in STP and these committees. (Interview with Julio César Rosa Manzano, Director of STP at that time; January 20, 1977)

Each of the persons heading the various groups doing planning recognized both that their own efforts were insufficient to shape the direction of the Reform effectively, and that with a change in government much of the Reform could be undone without some form of institutionalization of the many changes introduced by the Reform

process. This concern was shared by Beneke,⁶ but those who had been involved in the planning units (Murray Meza, Mayorga, Rosa Manzano) felt more strongly that a formal, central planning office within the Ministry of Education was needed. Rosa Manzano reported:

So between 1968 and 1971 we began to see the need for a planning organization, for a brain to carry out planning and evaluation and so on. In 1971, there was the first meeting to discuss the question. Beneke didn't believe in committees, but he went along with it. (January 20, 1977, emphasis added)

⁶Despite apparent antagonism toward "planners", his public writing expressed strong belief in the need for planning, as revealed in this quotation from the 1970-71 Memoria.

As on other occasions, this report describes another advance made by the Educational Reform, which constitutes a unity of decisions and achievements planned and programmed since 1968. It does not constitute, then, a story of events occurring by chance, brought about by the impulse of good intentions. The Reform, as a harmonic organism, grows and becomes more complicated each day, without losing its identity... This repetition (of activities mentioned in previous reports) is not a sign of poverty or routine of action, but rather an evidence of the indispensable continuity of a task carried out with effort and faith, in agreement with a reasonable planning... (p. 1)

The characteristics of the stages of the Reform have been: planning and design; initiation; evidence for its first accomplishments; the persistence of continuity and intensification of its material work; creation of juridical instruments. (p. 2)

The Memoria also pays considerable attention to a variety of seemingly small changes in the operation of the Ministry, such as the development of capacity to pay salaries on time; working out a new salary schedule with six instead of four steps; use of written examinations to choose people for promotion within the Ministry; central purchasing; development of maps of all districts for use by supervisors. The importance given to these achievements might be taken as evidence for a conception of organizational development and reform in which internal system operation is as important as the linking of the system's products with needs and demands of the environment. They also suggest a keen awareness of the political environment within the Ministry.

Murray Meza saw the situation in this way:

I... knew that I was going to leave the Ministry and had to get someone to help me out. The Minister felt that all of this was fine, but said that a new Minister would come in and wipe it out. We needed a bridge to institutionalize all of this so that someone can't come in and say, "I don't believe in vocational high schools" and use that as a justification for closing them down. I convinced the Minister, who was a doer, to have a planning office -- this was the only way to guarantee continuity. (January 18, 1977)

The AID official involved in the Reform planning commented:

I was beginning to get nervous about the lack of planning. So I wanted to get a person, not some institution, who could nibble around at the subject there. (March 4, 1977)

When interviewed in August 1971, several weeks before the expected arrival of this person, he had said:

... we're bringing down an educational planner whose job it will be to do a feasibility study of the areas in which the Ministry ought to be thinking. And if that is acceptable to the Minister, the proposal is to bring down, under loan money, somebody for a year to train the staff in educational planning...

The Minister is interested that this man, who is coming, do two things. First, to develop his own in-house ability in educational planning so that when he leaves there will be lower-level people with ability. The second reason is more immediate, to help draft the new five year plan for the new Minister... (Interview with USAID official, August 13, 1971, emphasis added)

Bruno Stiglitz, who had worked closely with Beneke on many aspects of the Reform (and who had drafted the Reform Five-Year Plan together with Mayorga), also indicated in August 1971 that UNESCO was looking for an expert in planning. "... it's a gift that Beneke is leaving for the next Minister," he said.

Murray could see only three possible candidates to head a central planning office: Mayorga, who had already made other plans; a

second person who had served in CONAPLAN but who did not want to return to the government; and Alberto Zuñiga, an architect then pursuing graduate studies in California. Around May 1971, Murray called Zuñiga in California and asked if he would be interested in heading the possible planning unit. Zuñiga said that he was interested, but pointed out that he would have to be freed from a commitment to return to CONAPLAN.

Before Murray could make any further moves, however, he thought he had to convince Beneke of the need for a planning operation. Though the Minister was well aware of the fragile roots of his own reforms, he seemed to be far from persuaded that a planning unit would do much to fortify them. As he said in 1977,

I wasn't very much in favor of the idea... I am against waste, and I have seen so much waste in the name of planning, especially here in Latin America. The problem isn't planning in itself, but the use of it.

Murray decided that the most effective strategy for winning over Beneke was to have a respected outsider tell him that planning was essential. At this point the Ministry had a surplus of funds available for technical assistance from AID, and was under some pressure to use it. Murray thus asked the AID education officer to send the curricula vitarum of several potential consultants in the field of educational planning. One stood out -- that of Russell Davis of the Graduate School of Education at Harvard. Davis was invited to visit the Ministry for one month beginning in August 1971.

3.0 The Davis Report⁷

After preliminary conversations with Beneke and several of his

⁷See "Planning in the Ministry of Education of El Salvador: Organization & Planning Activity" Development Discussion Paper No. 70, HIID, June 1979.

closest advisors, Davis set out to interview all of the key administrators in the Ministry. His aim was partly to determine how much planning was, in fact, taking place in the various dependencies of the Ministry, partly to allays their fears and suspicions about his mission, which were abundant. Toward the latter end he deliberately played down the likely results of his visit, saying that not much was likely to come out of it. Murray took roughly the same position when he was asked about why Davis was there.

Davis soon concluded that there was a great deal of planning in the Ministry, but that it was decentralized and disconnected.

In my report I was able to name offices and give examples of attempts to make rational decisions. Beneke liked that. Then I went around to the guys and told them how much planning they were doing and they liked that.

Davis also found several kinds of reactions to planning among the various divisions. Broadly speaking the administrative officials were concerned that planning would interfere with day-to-day decisions, while the heads of operating units were interested in a better way to resolve conflicts over resources. The head of a key staff unit, by contrast, had philosophical objections to planning as he understood it. He was particularly concerned that a heavy emphasis on manpower analysis would wash out the traditional humanistic concerns of the teaching profession. According to Davis, he said,

You come in and do all this manpower analysis and forget about the real outcomes of education. This is a Ministry of Education, remember, not a Ministry of Defense.

In his final report, dated September 17, 1971, Davis proposed three alternatives for consideration:

1. Continuation of the existing decentralized, dispersed, and informal planning found in the Ministry. Davis showed that planning went on in at least nine different places within the organization, and noted several problems with this system:

Capital budgeting is linked to physical planning in COPLACE but there is no linkage to the budgeting of current expenditures that takes place generally in the Directorate General of Administration and specifically in the Directorate of Finance. The loss of effective coordination is obvious, inasmuch as the planning of capital expenditures through plant expansion will have direct impact on the need to budget current expenditures...

Another missing link is in pedagogical planning and analysis, in the Directorate of Technical and Pedagogical services (sic), which is unrelated to both current and capital budgeting and fiscal planning. The essential programs and technology of education are studied and planned, but without an effective link to the organizations that decide how they will be housed and supported. (p. 12)

Davis concluded that "it seems sensible to regroup, reorganize and prepare for the next advance. Coordinated and institutionalized planning may well serve this situation and time better." (p. 13)

2. Establishment of a separate planning office, which can have varying degrees of scope for coordination. At one extreme is the office which has no power of coordination at all, and so is left mainly to prepare diagnoses of educational problems. Davis noted that such offices were all too common in Latin America, especially after the planning craze inspired by the Alliance for Progress. At the opposite extreme is the planning unit with full power to coordinate the work of the operating units. This, too, has severe limitations:

This leads to the creation of an empire or monster within the organization. The planning office, which is itself free from the responsibility of carrying out programs, is assigned the right to coordinate the activities of offices that are charged with program responsibility. To do this the planning office must create a corps of competent supervisors for every major field of activity. The result is costly duplication and misuse of already scarce professionals, or constant struggle between the planning office supervisors and the functionaries in the operating divisions. Usually there is both duplication of effort and struggle. (p. 16)

One way around these difficulties, Davis thought, might be an office with responsibility for liaison with the operating units but no power of coordination. The costs, however, are high and the results meager: "The office becomes a dumping ground for second-rate professionals too weak to survive in a functioning office." (p. 16)

3. The creation of a committee or commission "composed of the heads of the major functioning offices of the Ministry of Education, presided over by the Minister, and supported by a technical secretariat that will be called the Office of Planning and Organization Development." (pp. 16-17) In this arrangement, which Davis saw as the most sensible for El Salvador, the committee members would themselves be the links to planning, supported by a technical staff.

Reflecting back on the significance of the Davis visit, a Salvadorean close to the scene commented:

Russell was particularly important at all levels. First, he jibed with the Minister -- he didn't turn him off. The last thing he projected was being a Harvard professor. He didn't look or act like one. Second, it was obvious that he was not only capable in models of planning, but in the organizational aspects of planning. Here these were much more important than any planning model. That's what made his proposal the right kind of model. He was again the right type of person at the right time. Third, Alberto (Zuñiga) and Russell got together well. Russell would come, go, come back to audit how it was going.

After his first visit Davis returned to ODEPOR, at the invitation of Alberto Zuñiga, in 1972 and in 1974. In both cases he prepared a frank report on the progress and difficulties of the planning unit, and made specific recommendations for changes.

4.0 Enter ODEPOR

The Davis report gave Murray Meza and his associates the added ammunition they had wanted to convince Beneke of the need for planning. Their case was strengthened by the availability of a well-qualified candidate for the directorship in the person of Alberto Zuñiga, whom Beneke knew and respected. Beneke finally acceded to their advice, though with continuing hesitations, and agreed to establish the Office of Planning and Organization (ODEPOR). Zuñiga took office in September 1971 with the understanding that he could have several months to study the situation and make his own recommendations for the structure and operation of the new office.

Compared to most planners, Zuñiga brought a distinctive perspective to his new assignment, one that gave heavy weight to the political and organizational dimensions of planning. Trained as an architect, he had worked for several years with CONAPLAN on the specific task of developing a master plan for the city and region of San Salvador. In 1977, he said this experience brought home to him the salience of competing interests in urban planning:

One of the five issues identified in the planning exercise was the central business district, which involves a lot of conflicts and the need to take into account several different, and competing, interests in the planning process. But the approach at that time was to produce a physical plan document. An obvious result was that the plan was neglected, politically, as it did not resolve the conflicts of interests in the situation.

Zuñiga said that this failure convinced him of the need for planners to move away from idealized, apolitical visions of design and to present feasible solutions to the politicians.

From CONAPLAN Zuñiga went to the University of California at Berkeley to obtain an M.A. in urban planning. While there he took courses in public administration and organization theory and, in general, sought ways of moving beyond a physical approach to planning.

Entering the Ministry of Education, Zuñiga found a well-motivated staff who had been through a very exciting experience under Beneke.

But I found no belief in planning. The belief was action now, and we'll correct mistakes later on. We had a plan document, but no mechanisms to implement it. We needed to be able to convince the politician of the need to act, and we had to give him the instruments he needs to do what he wants. Given the transition to a new government that was coming up, the politicians weren't interested in doing much.

Zuñiga saw his first task as studying the situation carefully and then producing a document which would discuss what planning could and could not do. The document should also deal with the organizational structure of the Ministry, which Zuñiga saw as being essential to the success of ODEPOR.

I used my own observations and those in the Davis document for producing a paper. The Davis document laid the basis for doing planning, but didn't describe enough of how to go about it. I wanted to write a paper that would begin where Davis left off, and indicate the organizational form and procedures that would be necessary for planning.

4.1 Zuñiga's Definition of Planning

The first draft of the paper appeared in December 1971, under the title "Toward an Updated Concept of Planning". The document, which came to some 80 double-spaced pages, drew extensively on both organi-

zation theory and public administration. The 10 propositions used to structure the discussion convey the flavor of Zuñiga's approach:

1. Any proposal for development will inevitably produce results that are undesirable for one or more members or elements of the sector considered.
2. The planning process will be valid only if it guarantees a certain administrative capacity which establishes the basis of negotiation necessary for reconciling, or compensating for, the differences.
3. Meaningful planning propositions can be derived only if the agents responsible for executing the norms proposed are incorporated into the initial phase of the planning process.
4. Beginning with a recognized problem, with the aim of establishing a reason for organization, the administrative capacity required at the beginning of the planning process requires the incorporation of only some of the agents chosen from among those who will be charged with executing the proposals.
5. The general objectives of educational policy will have to be derived from the national policy for economic and social development when there exists the global frame of reference desired.
6. Considering the dilemma of efficiency vs. equity, a healthy planning process will recognize the need for reconciling both groups of interests.
7. The objective of the task of planning and organization consists of achieving not only a "complete cycle" in the short term within the planning process, but also of establishing a basis of continuing negotiation for reconciling conflicting interests during the process of execution...
8. The educational sector operates within an environment which fluctuates between uncertainty and near-certainty and vice versa.
9. Environmental uncertainties suggest complex technologies for the task of planning and organization which, in turn, demand "reciprocal interdependencies" among the component parts. Moreover, the heuristic direction of the process requires flexibility and organizational adaptability.

10. The Ministry of Education should be structured in line with its four principal functions and its three hierarchical levels, all mutually interrelated by means of "grouping" (agrupamiento) its component parts... (iv-v)

The document also included a detailed statement on the major positions which should be included in ODEPOR. Following the Davis report, Zuñiga proposed three major sections: planning, programming and applied studies, and information and statistics. This structure was adopted (and remains roughly the same at the present time).

Zuñiga circulated this lengthy paper to key members of the Ministry and asked for their comments. He also sent a copy to Beneke, who seemed reasonably pleased with the effort but by no means convinced on that account that ODEPOR would have much practical effect.

The next task was to find section chiefs who could meet the rather demanding position requirements established by Zuñiga's document. As noted earlier, the first wave consisted entirely of architects and engineers, a pattern which did not escape notice elsewhere in the Ministry.

It was pretty much an accident that we turned to architects and engineers. There were a lot of city planners because some international scholarship money had trained about 50 of them. Most of the economists had training at too low a level to do planning. There were no people at that time trained in educational planning. (Zuñiga interview, 1977)

The first person hired was Carlos Heymans, the present director of ODEPOR, who had just returned from Louvain University with a Master's Degree in City Planning. Another key appointment was that of Edgardo Martínez as Director of the Statistics and Information Section. In his case what was required was an organizational transfer. Martínez was then employed as head of the statistics section in the Directorate of Technical and Pedagogical Services. Zuñiga arranged to have this

unit, as well as Martínez, switched over to ODEPOR (where he remains at present).

4.2 The Five-Year Plan

Beyond Zuñiga's organizational document, ODEPOR's first substantive task was to generate a Five Year Plan for the incoming government. Zuñiga confesses that he and his staff were confused about how to focus on the varied components required for such a plan. Bruno Stiglitz of UNESCO aided them by providing basic suggestions about the planning process, as did Russell Davis through discussions during his first return visit in 1972.

The Plan was produced in a hurry, in the eight month period between ODEPOR's creation in September 1971 and the delivery of the Plan to ex-Minister Beneke in May 1972. Work on the Plan did not actually begin until sometime after December 1971, when Zuñiga finished his paper.

The Five Year Plan was characterized by two major attributes that distinguish it from prior plan documents. First, rather than proposing a series of enrollment objectives that might or might not be reached, the 1973-1977 Plan set out specific targets to be reached by the various operating agencies during the plan period. The Plan stated:

What is proposed is just that necessary to meet the objectives. We are familiar with the bad habit of asking for more than what is required and the reaction of cutting back that this vice provokes. But we are sure that the pertinent organizations and the authorities will see the detail and sincerity of this Five Year Plan. (p. vii)

The second major feature of the Plan is that it described the decision-making process followed to set the targets. Consultation with the directors of operating departments, and consideration of

financial feasibility, allowed ODEPOR to choose among a set of alternatives, and then to specify the educational policies that would have to be followed to reach targets contained in the chosen alternative. The educational policies (essentially statements of the kinds of emphasis that will have to be given) were defined through repeated meetings with administrators, so that, in fact, they represent a commitment on the part of the operating agencies.

The process of choosing among alternatives involved examining their effect on competing criteria of equity and efficiency. Proposed in Zuñiga's December 1971 paper, these two concepts were used in the Plan for a qualitative evaluation of the numerical outcomes described in each alternative. Equity was used to refer to the proportion of the population served by a given educational program. As more people are served, equity increases. Efficiency was used to refer to the contribution of the results of an educational program to national productivity. Costs (both total and unit) were used as a constraint variable or limiting function. Primary education was considered as more equitable than secondary education, but less efficient. Higher education was considered more efficient because it prepares skilled manpower. (Ed. Note: data were provided or cited to support these contentions.) The eventual choice, among 27 alternatives of three levels of expansion of each of the three levels of education, was to give most attention to the first two cycles of Basic Education (grades 1-6), and lesser attention to the upper grades and post-secondary education.

The data considered necessary for this analysis were enrollments, availability of classroom space and teachers and unit costs.

The document did not describe the data used to estimate the capacity of the operating agencies to implement the policies chosen, to evaluate alternative sets of policies to reach the same goals, or to estimate the extent to which implementation of the policies would in fact result in reaching the specified enrollment objectives. On the other hand, the statements of educational policies, reached through negotiations with the various administrators, did specify the kinds of actions that would be taken. For example, for the first two cycles of basic education (grades 1-6), the Plan called for expansion of the double shift for 44% of the teachers, paying them a 50% increment in salary where necessary and feasible. It specified emphasis in rural areas, based on a school location study to be done. It called for regularizing the distribution of students by age in grade, supposing that this would occur by implementation of the Guided (Automatic) Promotion policy adopted the previous year. It programmed the introduction of educational television in the 4th grade, specifying the number of students to be covered and class size (larger than that without ETV). It also specified the number of TV receivers to be purchased each year.

ODEPOR officials thought their statistical base particularly weak in terms of evaluating the outputs of education, such as student learning, and began, in 1972, to design a plan for an evaluation study. It was felt that the information prepared was not always assimilated by the operating divisions.

We gathered all the information -- an entire mass of data. This was passed on to the various dependencies of the Ministry. But because of several circumstances they didn't know what to do with this information. First, they were not used to working in this way. Second, the tables we prepared were not digestible. (Interview with Edgardo Martínez. January 19, 1977)

But the experience set a precedent in which ODEPOR would collect evaluative information on the dependencies and use it in discussions with administrators to encourage them to set more realistic targets.

When Zuñiga and his colleagues completed the Plan in May of 1972 they showed it to Beneke. Zuñiga reports that Beneke was impressed and "very satisfied when he saw that his efforts would be preserved in long-range policies." From all indications it was only at that point that Beneke was willing to concede that the planning unit might, in fact, be of practical value in institutionalizing the reforms.

5.0 Consolidation: 1972-77

Quite to everyone's surprise, the new group of titulares in education (the Minister and the two Vice-Ministers) turned out to be supportive of both the Beneke reforms and of ODEPOR. The Minister appointed in 1972, Rogelio Sánchez, entered office with a broad background in law, sociology, and administration, including a Master's Degree in Business Administration. The Vice-Minister for Education, Gilberto Aguilar Aviles, had held several positions within the Ministry under Beneke, and was generally considered favorable to the reform effort. The greatest surprise of all, however, was the appointment of Alberto Zuñiga as the second Vice-Minister.

The new Director of ODEPOR was Carlos Heymans, who was already on its staff. The other key appointment in this period was that of Julio Rosa Manzano as Director of the Planning Section. Even in 1972, ODEPOR was widely criticized in the Ministry for being a technocratic unit operated by "architects and engineers." Many feel that Rosa Manzano's appointment was motivated in part by a desire to mute such criticisms and improve ODEPOR's image in the eyes of the teachers.

As a former teacher and someone closely identified with the teaching departments during his term as director of the Technical and Pedagogical Services unit, his credentials were excellent for this purpose. One senior official in the Ministry stated in 1977:

Rosa Manzano was highly respected among the teachers, and it was a happy coincidence that he's a capable man as well as being respected. His appointment proved to the teachers that planning was a professional activity in which they could be involved.

5.1 Planning and Programming

Between 1972 and 1977, the history of ODEPOR can be told in terms of two major sets of activities: those connected with the Sector Analysis and those carried out by the Programming and Applied Studies unit.⁸ Most of the time of the staff in the Planning and Statistics unit was taken up with the Analysis, although in some cases there was important cross-over between the two.

Facilitated by the work that had been done to meet the World Bank's requirements for statistics to justify a loan application, ODEPOR found it easy to collaborate with AID in the preparation of Statistics for the Analysis of the Education Sector: El Salvador, published by AID in 1973. In March 1973, ODEPOR included with the annual data forms to collect information on enrollments and teachers, a survey of the physical conditions and available space of schools. These data later formed the basis of the sampling frame for studies connected with the Sector Analysis.

⁸The impact of the Sector Analysis on ODEPOR is described in "Sector Analysis in Education: A Case Study with Recommendations".

But the basic planning work in ODEPOR began with the further implementation of Zuñiga's notions about the involvement of the operating dependencies in the planning process. As part of the work for the Five Year Plan, the Directors of the operating divisions had been asked to identify the functions of their units. The next stage was to get them to specify projects that would carry out those functions, and move the system toward the achievement of the enrollment targets specified in the annual operating plan. Targets for the plan were set by the operating divisions with assistance from ODEPOR.

Additional information about activities of the various divisions was collected for the annual Project Programming statements, the first of which was published in November 1973. These statements included a list of all the activities to be engaged in by each of the units of the Ministry (including ODEPOR), start-up date and expected completion date. The annual operating plans and programming statements taken together provided ODEPOR with a set of quantified targets that could be used to evaluate the performance of each of the other units.

Each year we carry out the annual programming of projects. The idea is to indicate the projects and the persons who will be working on them that year. The steps are Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation. The idea of projects is really quite new in public administration in El Salvador. Every year we try to think of better ways of doing what we are doing, hiring people, opening schools, etc. Programming is basically the way to quantify the goals by project. First we set down the goals, then the objectives, then the accomplishments. All of this is contained on a board in the Minister's office. (Interview with Associate Director of ODEPOR, January 20, 1977)

The main function (of the Programming unit) is the instrumentation of the plans -- making them operate through organizational instruments such as manuals of operation and the programming system for projects. When I came almost anything was called a project. Later we tried to identify them as a set of activities with specific objectives. The first big difference I saw as a result of this was a separation between the routine approval of papers and activities with well-defined objectives. (Interview with head of Programming Unit, January 21, 1977)

In the beginning the major problem was that the operating divisions were not used to providing this kind of information.

... in some dependencies the Director was the only one informed about the whole project -- no one else was in touch with the total picture. But there was a problem in always going to the Director. They were busy with many things and so didn't like to be interrupted. But there was also the big complaint that we were exercising a controlling function by checking on the state of the projects. The basic problem was that they didn't want to give us the information because they were afraid it would be used to evaluate them. Later in some cases the Directors delegated this function to someone below them. For example, Primary Education delegated it to a section head when they reorganized their office. This worked well. In Adult Education, the Director gave it to a sub-Director, but in other areas this wasn't done. (Head of Programming, January 21, 1977)

The operating dependencies saw the process in slightly different terms.

Our relationships (with ODEPOR) are directly through work. We determine our needs, work out strategies, develop projects. They tell us the technical way to go about it. This happens both for annual planning as well as for project planning. In practical terms, this means we check with them during our monthly meetings, and they check with us from time to time about execution of the plan... This unit determines what it would like to do and ODEPOR provides the technical support necessary to get things done. They provide the grand lines also, but the little world of details is ours. (Director of Primary, January 19, 1977)

In 1976 the process was modified in several ways.

In the beginning of 1976 we adopted a new strategy. This consisted of a programming sheet, on which we could list information about dates for completion of each project and activity along with the content. When the work would fall behind, we asked them to indicate that on the sheet, and then to re-program it. Our job was to help them with the programming, and to modify the tasks. Thus with one sheet, you could indicate the dependencies among the various projects, the personnel involved, the problems, and the solutions. If the project was stopped because technical assistance was needed, this could be indicated on the sheet and we could take care of it. Sometimes this need could be predicted so that we could attend to it in advance. (Head of Programming, February 21, 1977)

ODEPOR also became involved with the operating divisions in other ways. First, they offered to help the divisions in the formulation of annual budget requests. Response from the divisions was positive; ODEPOR was seen as providing a service rather than a controlling function.

(Another) area... is Organization and Methods. We have proceeded mostly in the financial area. There are four main projects: (1) Redesigning the method of payment to suppliers; (2) The centralization of payments in the Ministry; (3) Rationalization of the system of registry and financial information; (4) An inventory control system. For things like furniture and equipment we would like to know where they are... These are the four big projects we are involved in now. There have also been bigger ones, such as re-organizing Secondary Education. On that we did a study and came up with a proposal for change. Also, in Personnel we changed the procedures followed. (Head of Programming, January 21, 1977)

The Statistics Department works with all of them, for example, with Primary Education. We have an annual meeting with the directors to discuss the policies we will follow on data-gathering. Then we will have talks with the supervisors (of Primary) about the easiest way to get to the schools for collecting data. We also have contact with those involved in non-formal programs. For instance, we have done surveys for them in such places as the Zoo, the libraries, the museums, and with users of publications. This is costing us a bit of work, especially with the surveys of the audiences -- music, the museums. We are trying to help them get more information about the use of these services... (Head of Statistics, January 19, 1977)

With the acquisition through the Sector Analysis of a computer, ODEPOR was able to provide statistical services to the operating divisions in ways previously impossible. For example, the teachers in El Salvador proposed a new law on retirements. By ODEPOR's calculations, the cost of implementation of the proposal would have been excessive, beyond the country's capacity, but it seemed obvious that the teachers had not realized this when they made the proposal. The Director of ODEPOR recalled that in 1968, when another, less expensive proposal had been made, the Ministry rejected it out of hand because it had no means to figure or determine its real cost. The result had been a prolonged strike that nearly ended the Reform. This time ODEPOR was able to work out a set of alternative proposals that would both meet the teachers' demands, and be within the bounds of financial feasibility for the state. ODEPOR also uses the computing facility for more routine tasks such as data tabulation for the divisions, and teacher transfers.

5.2 Sector Analysis

Sector analysis is mentioned as an ODEPOR activity in each of the annual programming documents beginning in 1973, but it is unlikely that the Analysis made much positive contribution to planning prior to 1977. First, it seems that the kind of data generated by Sector Analysis was not appropriate for annual planning. Most of what is called planning at this level would be better labeled as programming, that is, the scheduling of the realization of targets already set. What target-setting activity there is seeks principally to strengthen the commitment of the executing divisions to the achievement of objectives established in the Five-Year Plan. The annual target-setting activity also allows for the administrators of the executing divisions to come

up with new ideas for implementation, for which evaluative information of the kind generated by the Sector Analysis may not have been seen as appropriate.

Perhaps as a consequence of resistance to the controlling function of ODEPOR, there were few requests from the operating division for the kind of evaluative data that ODEPOR was developing through the Sector Analysis. As one ODEPOR informant put it, "Mostly what they want in the dependencies is for us to leave them alone."

A more powerful reason, however, for the Sector Analysis results not influencing the annual programming process, is that the data were not available in time to be used in that way. The first statistical document published by ODEPOR using data collected as part of the Sector Analysis was released in November 1975. That reported results from the Audiencia survey with tabulations of responses classified by region, sex, and educational level. One of the earliest publications with data from the National Examination (given in late 1974) was Statistical Document Number 11 published in March 1976. This report included mean achievement scores of students grouped according to attitudes of school principals and supervisors. In July 1976 ODEPOR published results of the Examination with students grouped by type of school, residence of student, subject matter and geographic area. Furthermore, data published in the Statistical Working Documents were voluminous and complicated in their presentation and might have well scared off persons from outside ODEPOR without experience in numerical analysis. Those persons would have found more useful the Analytical Working Documents which provided an interpretative text based on further processing of the data. AWD #1

was published in November 1974 but is based on existing Census and enrollment data. AWD #2, on dropouts and repeaters, was published in November 1976. In addition, ODEPOR involvement in the analysis and interpretation of the data was limited to a small group of people whose time was so constrained that they could not share much of what they were learning with other parts of the Ministry.

6.0 The 1977-1982 Five Year Plan

The latest Five Year Plan has been published in two parts. The first part, the Diagnostic statement, contains background data, operating assumptions, methodology for describing and choosing among alternatives, the budget implications of preferred alternatives, and policies associated with these alternatives. This document is more than 300 pages long and was prepared in rough draft form as early as September 1976. The Plan document itself is 50-pages long, and was published in late July 1977. It is a summary statement of educational policies (with comparisons between 1972 and 1977), and specific activities required to carry out these policies. The two documents are considered together for the purposes of the analysis that follows.

The 1977-1982 Five Year Plan has three unique features in comparison with the previous Plan. These are: the specific attention given to the role of planning in the development of education in El Salvador; the explicit criticisms made of the existing educational system; and the use of a process of planning that involves information about the quality of education provided by the system.

The latest plan assigns a unique and powerful role to planning in the governance of the educational system of El Salvador. While ODEPOR appears to have been created principally to insure the continuation of the innovations introduced by the Educational Reform of

1967-1972, it may very well be that its activities during the 1973-1977 period were aimed as much at introducing new activities as ensuring the continuation of those already underway. For the 1978-1982 period, however, the Plan calls for continuity rather than change, consolidation instead of innovation. After pointing out that many governments have started educational reforms, and that the results of structural changes need a number of years to work themselves through (for example, nine years in the case of Basic Education), the Plan states:

The conclusion that this view of reality leads us to is that any government program in education during its period of power (call it a Five Year Plan) should link itself up with previous efforts that represent, in many cases, the period of "sowing" of new activities that can be "harvested" during the period of the Plan... innovations in education on a national scale are not born, they develop and give results in periods hard to anticipate... And consequently the proposals contained in the next Five Year Plan should fit within a vision of the past, the present and the future. (Plan Quinquenal 1977-1982, p. 2-3)

What this means, the statement makes clear, is that decision-makers cannot change the direction of a system once it has been laid down, and that much skill has to be exercised in anticipating the outcomes that will result years into the future of decisions made now. To do this well requires good information and the kinds of technical abilities that planners have.

Policies have to be defined within an institutional framework, and with strict attention to a time dimension. They also must respond to contemporary and national values and attitudes. The Plan lists three values that must be taken into account in evaluation the impact of educational policies. In the Diagnostic paper these are: Access, Efficiency, and Relevance. The term "access" is used to refer

to the proportion of the age cohort served by the educational system. Essentially the same definition was used for the term "equity" in the previous plan. "Efficiency" is defined as academic achievement (knowledge received) per colon (dollar) invested. This term differs significantly in definition from that offered by Alberto Zuñiga in 1971 and as used in the 1973-1977 Five Year Plan. "Relevance" is defined as pertaining when the product of education is related positively to the economic and social development of the nation and the progress of the individual. Education will be relevant, the report asserts when it achieves equity and productivity. Equity in this case is defined in terms of improvement of the income of individuals, especially when income improvement occurs more in the most needy groups and less in the most privileged groups. Education increases in relevance when income disparities are reduced. Productivity is to be measured in terms of GNP, and education is relevant when it has contributed to increments in GNP (pp. 223-224).

The Plan document proper returns to the use of "equity", using "access" to refer only to total enrollment (instead of enrollment as proportion of age cohort). Equity is achieved by "a greater equality of access to centers of teaching and an effective opportunity to enjoy the minimal education specified in the Constitution." (Plan Quinquenal 1977-1982, p. 5) "Efficiency" is defined as the optimal use of human and financial resources to prepare needed manpower. In place of "relevance", the Plan offers a third criterion or value, that of "Cultural Valuation", which appears to be reached "by a cultural current that permits any citizen to identify and develop his individual, social and national role." (Plan Quinquenal, p. 8) This last point appears to be referring to the activities of the Culture, Youth and

Sports Division of the Ministry which is mentioned only in the last pages of the Diagnostic document.

The second unique feature of the new Plan is the explicit criticisms made of the present educational system. The Plan opens by taking note of the fact that at the moment El Salvador does not meet its constitutional (promise and) objective of providing education to all its citizens. The Plan then goes on to insist that primary education is fundamental and must be available to all. Reflecting back on problems extant in 1972, the present Plan concludes that teacher opposition to the Reform and the innovations it proposed was more a result of labor conflicts with the Ministry than a reaction to the content of the Reform itself. Page 12 makes note of "inevitable political interferences" from some teachers, and then argues that relationships are now much better between the Ministry and the teachers. A number of policies adopted in 1972 failed to produce the desired results: reasons for these failures are reviewed (and in some cases it is hinted that ODEPOR should have known better). Educational TV is faulted for not having been more imaginative. The high costs of university education are attributed to excessive politicking.⁹

Combined with these more qualitative judgments about problems in the educational system is a detailed quantitative analysis of "problems" at each level. The data employed were generated as part of the Sector Analysis, and utilized in the following way. Mean scores on the

⁹These kinds of comments on educational systems are not rare; what is unusual is that they be made in an official plan document available to members of the Opposition.

National Achievement Test were computed for different combinations of students, grouped according to type of school, region, location (urban/rural), class size and other variables. A separate analysis provided average unit costs of the different kinds of combination or groupings. Differences in level of achievement (and achievement/cost) were shared with educators in the operating divisions, who were asked to speculate on the causes of the differences that appeared.

For Basic Education, eleven major problem areas were identified by the educators. These included inadequate supplies of educational materials, inadequate classrooms, low attendance of students, low student performance in public schools, low acceptance of educational television. Specific causes were identified for each of the problem areas. For example, low student performance was attributed to large class sizes, to lack of professor identification with students, to socio-economic problems, to lack of materials, to problems of transportation, to poor cooperation from the community. The Sector Analysis results were used to argue, for example, that eliminating differences in class sizes would raise achievement scores of the lower group 2.2 percent and affect about 74,000 children, while the eliminating differences as a result of socio-economic factors would raise the lower group only 1.5 percentage points but affect 330 thousand students.

The educators were then asked to specify a set of actions (or measures) that could be taken to raise the achievement score of the lower group in the difference comparison, to that of the higher group. Examples of the kinds of measures proposed by the educators for Basic Education are:

- 1) control the professional performance of the teacher by means of an effective administrative effort of the principal;
- 4) evaluate the effectiveness of the purchasing system;
- 9) develop programs coordinated with the Ministry of Health;
- 18) recondition classrooms according to criteria provided by the Architecture Department.

Altogether 20 measures were proposed, responding to different causes of differences in achievement identified by ODEPOR with the Sector Analysis data.

Each of the measures was costed out and a ratio calculated based on the total improvement in achievement scores that might be realized and the total cost. The 20 measures were then ordered in terms of their cost/effectiveness, and this ordering formed the basis for choosing educational policies.

Judgments in terms of relevance were made using the results of several evaluative studies. One of these was a follow-up of 1974 graduates of the Bachillerato program. Using some of the data from this study the ODEPOR analysts ranked each of the Bachillerato programs in terms of variables such as salary of graduates, time working, level of occupation, type of university program followed. The data were used to draw conclusions such as: those who went to school during the day are more likely to find employment than night school students; sex is unrelated to employment; older students are more likely to be employed; most students find work consistent with what they studied; male graduates earn higher salaries. These conclusions were then

linked with results of an analysis of present manpower characteristics and estimates of future demand for certain occupation, to permit decisions about which programs should receive most emphasis in the future.

7.0 ODEPOR's Accomplishments

How well has ODEPOR as a whole lived up to the expectations held out for it at its creation? What has it accomplished over the past five and a half years? The main accomplishments were reported as follows:

First, ODEPOR has become the central locus of planning and cross-unit coordination in the Ministry of Education. The following comments, both from senior officials in the Ministry, suggest that ODEPOR is much more than a paper organization:

The main accomplishment is an ordering of ideas within the Ministry. Planning is based on objective information, and we prepare our activities acting together. Some of this was done before, but perhaps in an uncoordinated way. Each part saw its own needs, but not those of the Ministry as a whole.

... I think ODEPOR is a good thing for the Ministry. It has become the brain, the intelligence center, of the Ministry. It acts to give the Ministry coherence, a central orientation. It also provides alternatives by which the divisions can evaluate their ideas.

Similar comments were made by other administrators. Asked what he considered ODEPOR's influence to be, the Director commented:

First, we have succeeded in getting the Directors of the Ministry to think in terms of planning, to think of goals, objectives, accomplishments. Sometimes we have been able to introduce them into studying how something could be useful for them. In general, we have helped to replace intuition with research. You can see it in the results of the budget. The goals are better thought out than before, there is more programming and willingness to use such things as bars (bar graphs) to measure their progress toward the goals.

Second, we feel we have had a great influence at the level of the Minister's office. (The Minister) believes in planning; (The Vice-Ministers) have confidence in us. We have, for example, resisted the idea of putting in non-formal education just to have it, because it is fashionable. We have resisted the advice of international agencies in this area. We have had a great deal of influence in the sense that we want everything to be evaluated objectively, rather than just going in for the enthusiasms of the time. (January 18, 1977)

Second, and perhaps most important, ODEPOR has an overwhelming impact in determining the priorities and the pattern of expenditures for the education sector. This is not to say that ODEPOR works alone in setting priorities, for it does rely on extensive consultation with other units in the Ministry, but that it is the final point at which these priorities are articulated. Its recommendations, most notably in the Five Year Plan, pass through CONAPLAN with only negligible changes. As one of the Vice-Ministers noted of CONAPLAN: "They accept immediately what we propose, and sign immediately." An ODEPOR official made much the same point:

CONAPLAN is basically an observer of the educational planning process... Each ministry makes up its Five Year Plan and gives it to CONAPLAN. In some sectors, where CONAPLAN has more knowledge, they will have more influence. In the Ministry we make up the Five Year Plan for education, give it to them, and say: "Here is what we have done." There have been few who have criticized this plan. In fact, CONAPLAN has mentioned our Five Year Plan as a model for other ministries to follow. They have congratulated us a great deal on this work.

Within the Ministry, ODEPOR also plays a central role in ensuring that the projects specified in the Five Year Plan are actually accomplished, and that the spending pattern of the various units is in line with the norms specified. Not surprisingly, this latter function sometimes brings

ODEPOR into conflict with the Ministry's operating divisions, as will be seen.

Third, inside the Ministry, ODEPOR has been responsible for promoting greater communication among the Minister, the Vice-Ministers, and the heads of the various units. In recent years ODEPOR has called regular, often weekly, meetings of all senior administrators to discuss policy matters, the progress made toward the Five Year Plan, and the formulation of a new plan, as well as other topics. While these meetings like most, occasion some grumbling about wasting valuable time, they are generally rated a success. For example, after noting some difficulties between ODEPOR and the operating units, a Vice-Minister commented:

But whatever the tensions it is really a large family at the meetings we have. We are very proud to hear of the accomplishments of groups such as the Patrimony of National Culture and the Museum. The familiarity that does exist is almost unbelievable. Sometimes at the meeting there will be some sharpness, but in the end this sets the stage for a honeymoon. And it also contributes to the diagnosis.

Similarly, the Deputy Director of one of the teaching divisions in the Ministry remarked:

There are lots of meetings. The divisions meet monthly, coordinated by ODEPOR, and the Minister and his staff (the two Vice-Ministers) are present. Usually this is a very good, productive meeting.

Other accomplishments cited included the help given by ODEPOR to the operating divisions in formulating their budgets; some of the specific "organization and management" studies carried out by the programming section; the concrete suggestions made by ODEPOR for improving the educational system, such as the Saturday Kindergarten system; the installation of a computing center which serves not only ODEPOR but the rest of the Ministry; and research assistance to other parts of the Ministry and sometimes to other ministries.

8.0 Conflicts, Tensions and Ambiguities - Authors' Comments

Almost by its very nature a successful planning unit -- one that has an impact on something other than the paper it produces -- will generate conflicts, tensions, or frictions. As Alberto Zuñiga clearly recognized in his opening statement on ODEPOR, planning will inevitably affect group interests. By no stretch of the imagination can it be considered an antiseptic, value-free process floating freely in the skies of political neutrality. Perhaps more than Zuñiga realized in 1971, the political aspect of planning touches not only the vested interests of groups in the larger society, but those of competing or suspicious units within the same ministry. Thus, almost from its birth, ODEPOR has been regarded with a wary eye by various groups in the Ministry of Education. While Beneke worried that it might fast slip into the quicksand of irrelevance, others worried about a take-over by the architects and the engineers, about power plays masquerading as exercises in scientific planning, and about the dehumanization of education through a mindless catering to quantification.

The first problem arising from ODEPOR is a clash between the mentality and approach of the rational planners with the style and predilections of other groups in the Ministry. In part this is a problem common to almost any successful planning organization. The very rationality of planning, with its emphasis on using objective bases for relating means to ends, often sets up counter-reactions. As a Vice-Minister put it, "Planning tries to bring rationality to a maximum, but in doing this some things get dehumanized and there are problems." Planners take it for granted that all policy alternatives

should be considered, that each should be assessed to the extent possible by quantitative data, and that final choices should be based mainly, if not exclusively, on the data present in the decision-making matrix. Yet teachers, whose professional background usually does not dispose or equip them to manipulate quantitative data, may feel that the "cold numbers" wash over important considerations suggested by intuition and experience. Politicians, whose success rarely rests on precise quantitative calculations, are even less inclined to accept rational decision-making as a self-evident good. For example, when asked about the future of ODEPOR under a new administration, a senior official speculated:

They may change it, put in people who are "more in touch with politics," but I don't know. They may say: "We need people who are friends of the government." Precisely because planning is a rational process, it does create antagonisms.

If planning, by its nature, provokes a clash between rationality and other values, the particular way in which ODEPOR evolved accentuated these differences. The fact that the first director and the senior staff were architects and engineers quickly led to the perception that planning was a technocratic operation based on numbers rather than human needs. ODEPOR's cause was not helped at the beginning by the close identification between planning and the top-down, precipitous Beneke reforms. Even those who supported the substance of the reforms still harbored lingering resentments about the muscular manner in which they had been introduced, and considered Beneke and his ilk foreign bodies in a traditionally humanistic (as well as highly conservative) ministry.

Thus during our interviews we heard frequent comments about the "communication problem" and the "difference of mentality" between the technically-inclined ODEPOR and the teaching divisions of the Ministry. One senior official, who was generally sympathetic to ODEPOR, summarized the communications gap as follows:

... they have one major problem, which is communication with other groups. We have a long tradition in the administration of the Ministry, in which teachers have made most of the decisions and run most things. With the advent of the reform came the penetration of persons who were foreign to the Ministry... architects, and engineers, and administrators. These were new people who came into the Ministry, who penetrated the Ministry, and who are part of the problem.

The penetration was possible because of support from above. Without it, it would not have been possible. In some cases they have abused that support. In any event, many of the studies done by ODEPOR are based on that special perspective. They haven't gotten very far because these studies are not based on the experiences of other groups.

A specific source of communication difficulties, according to this official, is an over-readiness to apply to the Ministry techniques derived from industry:

So the major problem between ODEPOR and the rest of the Ministry is lack of communication. This communication problem comes about because ODEPOR uses its very good capacity to develop procedures for industrial firms, and tries to implant these procedures in public administration, where the conditions are much different. Sometimes it is possible to do this, sometimes it is not. ODEPOR makes this mistake because its people... have had no experience in public administration.

Another senior administrator made much the same point:

The field of administration began in business. The administrators try to take the techniques of industry and apply them here, but they don't fit. This environment is the product of teachers. The planners have certain concepts which the teacher does not share.

This official added, however, that "there is not an opposition between ODEPOR and other units."

A second and perhaps more serious problem revolves around the issue of control. As Dahl and Lindblom pointed out more than two decades ago, the core ingredients of centralized planning are calculation and control. If a planning unit arrives at the point where its projections and calculations are taken seriously and incorporated into a working plan, the next step is control -- making sure that the plan is implemented. But control by definition involves power -- the ability to impose one's own view of the proper course of action on others who may not share it. As noted earlier, quite soon after its existence ODEPOR successfully passed the hurdle of calculation. When, however, its estimates and recommendations were incorporated into the 1972 Five Year Plan, the question was who would take the role of monitor and, to some extent, enforcer. In their first documents neither Davis nor Zuñiga had really thought through the complexities involved in the control function, although Davis did address this issue on a return visit. With the advent of a new administration in July 1972 -- one which gave ODEPOR strong backing at the highest level of the Ministry -- the planning unit emerged as the logical candidate to take on the control function. The programming section gradually assumed responsibility not only for monitoring the progress of projects in other units, but of generating pressure for budgetary compliance and observance of deadlines. As might be expected, this shift from a cerebral, calculating role to one of auditor and "soft" enforcer precipitated charges that ODEPOR had become a new center of power.

Our interviews produced abundant evidence that the control problem was perhaps the crucial difficulty in ODEPOR's relationships

with the rest of the Ministry. These comments were typical:

First we set down the goals, then the objectives, then the accomplishments. All of this is contained on a board in the Minister's office. It is an attempt to monitor programs, but this effort hasn't functioned well... The attempt to mix help to the dependencies and control of projects has not worked. (ODEPOR official)

But there was also the big complaint that we were exercising a controlling function (fiscalización) by checking on the state of the projects. The basic problem was that (the directors) didn't want to give us the information because they were afraid it would be used to evaluate them. (ODEPOR official)

This desire to want to make the dependencies do more has been prejudicial to ODEPOR. There has been a lack of good relations, a sense of imposing order on the dependencies... We can impose in the area of project management. We don't have the formal authority, but we can point out to the Minister's office that "this unit doesn't have the capacity to run its projects." As a result of the activities of planning and programming the confidence of some units in ODEPOR is disastrous. There has been some change -- we have tried to make them less rigid. There used to be one check-up a month, now there is less. But there is still this type of control. The basic problem is the conflict between helping and controlling. (ODEPOR official)

... some people see ODEPOR's role mainly as that of a watchdog, making sure that the Directors comply with the objectives to which they agreed in the plan. For example, ODEPOR sends people around to check on the achievement of targets. Often they send around people who don't know anything about the work of the division itself, but who are just supposed to pick up that data. The divisions may have forgotten about the targets themselves, and they set up the data just to get the ODEPOR man off their back. They don't have any power -- they can't force the divisions to do anything. The only threat is that they can make you look ridiculous in front of the other directors. (Division director)

The greatest complaint heard in the interviews concerned ODEPOR's tendency to "impose" in the area of project monitoring. The core issue was power; because it was well-known in the Ministry that ODEPOR was well

connected to the top, other units felt under pressure to comply with its wishes. One ODEPOR official was quite frank on this point:

Well, when we call meetings for the other units, they generally come. But the reason may be that they see that the titulares give support to ODEPOR, and so fee that they should come.

This perception of power may produce compliance on the part of other units, but it does not lead readily to admiration or internalization of ODEPOR's total mission.

A third problem is really an offshoot of the second. This might be termed a status gap in ODEPOR's relationships with other units, particularly in the area of program monitoring. The essence of the problem is that, on the one hand, the monitoring function is centered in ODEPOR's programming section and, on the other, that the personnel in this section, with the exception of the Director, lack the rank necessary to carry out their work effectively. There is little doubt that the Programming Department plays a vital role and is a prime source of diplomatic difficulties for ODEPOR. One knowledgeable observer commented:

The executive should understand that ODEPOR is a unit to help, not a powerful unit before the Minister... It is a big problem to put the engineer together with the educator, and we don't have a way to solve it. The formation of teachers is sensitive -- very sensitive. The formation of other professionals is different.

The problem comes up in the office of programming and projects -- this is the nose of the organization, the part that is involved in the business of other units...

What happens? (The programming department) does not have the technical capacity for the Director to be

in technical discussions with the people in other dependencies. But how can a young boy (muchacho) enter into serious discussions with the Director of another unit? He doesn't have sufficient rank. The young man asks the Director: "How is the project going?" Then he writes down: "It isn't going." The result is that ODEPOR becomes a controller.

The problem of rank mentioned by this and other commentators is complex. ODEPOR's programming department has a professional staff, including its Director, largely made up of industrial engineers, with some graduates in economics. Because of ceilings on salary levels this department is able to recruit only relatively young and inexperienced professionals. Given that the Director does not have enough time to make the many calls required for monitoring projects, these younger individuals must take over that responsibility. The difficulty, however, is that in most divisions it is only the Director or the Deputy Director who has the information required to answer ODEPOR's questions on progress. As already noted, the situation is further complicated by the fact that most directors regard this "data gathering" operation as a thinly-veiled exercise in control. Thus, when the young economist or engineer from the programming section arrives in the director's office, the latter may well be insulted by the low rank of the emissary in addition to being irritated by the monitoring operation itself. To make matters worse, the programming section has experienced a very high level of turnover among its professional staff. As the Director put it, "When they get to another level of skill in our office, they leave for better salaries." The net result is that the programming representatives who visit the directors are not only young, inexperienced, of low rank, and unfamiliar with the operating work of the unit they purport to monitor, but constantly changing.

ODEPOR also faces other problems, but those noted above have been the most serious. The long-term question is whether ODEPOR's widely-recognized accomplishments will outweigh the frustrations which it generates. At the moment the balance seems to be in ODEPOR's favor. Even those who are highly irritated with some aspects of its performance, such as its control function, concede that it has been a net asset to the Ministry. Also in ODEPOR's favor is the perception that, whatever the mishaps and blunders of the past, the relationships between ODEPOR and the rest of the Ministry are improving. Most observers give it a fighting chance of surviving the next change of government, mainly because it has proven its worth as an instrument of planning. But only time will tell.