

Private Equity History Governance And Operations

Private Equity History Governance And Operations Private equity history governance and operations have evolved significantly over the past few decades, transforming from niche investment strategies into a major force within global financial markets. Understanding the roots of private equity, its governance structures, and operational practices is essential for investors, industry professionals, and scholars alike. This article explores the history of private equity, examines its governance frameworks, and delves into the operational mechanisms that drive its success today.

The Evolution of Private Equity: A Historical Perspective

Origins and Early Developments

Private equity (PE) as an industry traces its origins back to the mid-20th century. The earliest form was venture capital, which focused on funding startup companies and early-stage ventures. In the 1950s and 1960s, institutional investors began to recognize the potential for higher returns outside traditional stock and bond markets, leading to the formation of dedicated PE firms. One of the pioneering firms, American Research and Development Corporation (ARDC), was established in 1946 and is often considered one of the first venture capital firms. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, private equity expanded into leveraged buyouts (LBOs), where firms acquired controlling stakes in mature companies using borrowed capital, aiming to improve operational efficiency and eventually realize significant returns.

Growth and Maturity in the 1980s and 1990s

The 1980s marked a period of explosive growth for private equity, driven by innovations in deal structuring and the rise of highly active PE firms like Kohlberg Kravis Roberts (KKR) and Blackstone. The famous leveraged buyout of RJR Nabisco in 1989 exemplified the industry's capacity for large-scale deals and garnered significant media attention. During this era, private equity firms began adopting more sophisticated governance structures, emphasizing active management and strategic oversight. The industry also saw increased institutional participation, including pension funds and endowments, which provided a stable capital base. In the 1990s, private equity expanded globally, with firms establishing operations in Europe, Asia, and other regions. The industry also saw the emergence of venture capital funds specializing in technology startups, fueling innovation and entrepreneurship.

Private Equity in the 21st Century: Challenges and Resilience

The early 2000s introduced new challenges, including market volatility and increased regulatory scrutiny post-2008 financial crisis. Despite these hurdles, private equity continued to grow, driven by innovative deal structures, operational improvements, and a focus on value creation. During this period, governance models became more formalized, with increased transparency and investor oversight. The industry also embraced environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations, reflecting broader societal shifts. Today, private equity is a multi-trillion-dollar industry, with funds managing diverse portfolios across industries and geographies. Its history is characterized by adaptability, innovation, and a continuous evolution of governance and operational practices.

Governance Structures in Private Equity

Fund Structure and Limited Partnerships

Most private equity funds are organized as limited partnerships (LPs), comprising general partners (GPs) and limited partners (LPs). The GPs are responsible for managing the fund, sourcing deals, performing due diligence, and executing

investments. LPs are passive investors, providing the capital but typically not involved in day-to-day operations. Key features of fund governance include: Legal agreements outlining the rights and responsibilities of GPs and LPs Fund lifecycle management, including fundraising, investment period, and harvest period Distribution waterfalls to allocate profits Active Management and Board Oversight Private equity firms often take an active role in portfolio companies, appointing board members and implementing strategic initiatives. Governance practices focus on aligning interests, monitoring performance, and ensuring value creation. Major governance mechanisms include: Board of directors or advisory committees with voting rights and oversight responsibilities Performance-based incentives for GPs, such as carried interest Regular reporting and transparency requirements for LPs Regulatory Environment and Compliance Governance also involves navigating regulatory frameworks, which vary across jurisdictions. In the U.S., private equity firms must comply with SEC regulations and 3 reporting standards, especially when managing public or institutional funds. Globally, governance standards continue to evolve, emphasizing transparency, fiduciary duties, and risk management. Operational Mechanics of Private Equity Firms Deal Sourcing and Due Diligence Successful private equity operations start with identifying promising investment opportunities. This involves: Building a network of industry contacts¹. Analyzing market trends and company fundamentals². Conducting comprehensive due diligence, including financial, legal, and operational³. assessments Deal Structuring and Financing Once a target is identified, PE firms negotiate deal terms, often employing leverage to enhance returns. Deal structuring involves: Determining equity and debt proportions Negotiating purchase agreements Establishing governance arrangements post-acquisition Operational Improvements and Value Creation Private equity firms actively manage portfolio companies to improve operational efficiency, expand markets, and develop strategic initiatives. Common operational practices include: Implementing cost-cutting measures Optimizing management teams and governance structures Driving innovation and growth strategies Exit Strategies and Realization The ultimate goal of private equity investments is to realize gains through: Initial public offerings (IPOs) Strategic sales to other companies Secondary buyouts or recapitalizations The timing and method depend on market conditions, company performance, and 4 strategic considerations. Key Trends Shaping Private Equity Governance and Operations Adoption of ESG Principles Environmental, social, and governance considerations are now central to private equity operations. Firms integrate ESG criteria into due diligence, portfolio management, and reporting, aligning investment practices with societal expectations. Technological Innovation and Data Analytics Advanced data analytics, artificial intelligence, and digital tools enhance deal sourcing, operational improvements, and performance monitoring, making private equity operations more efficient and strategic. Globalization and Regulatory Changes As private equity firms expand internationally, they face diverse regulatory environments and governance standards, necessitating adaptable operational practices. Increased Transparency and Investor Scrutiny LPs demand greater transparency, leading to more detailed reporting, independent oversight, and enhanced governance protocols. Conclusion The history, governance, and operations of private equity have been shaped by innovation, market dynamics, and a relentless focus on value creation. From its humble beginnings in venture capital and leveraged buyouts to its current status as a global investment powerhouse, private equity continues to evolve with new governance frameworks, operational strategies, and societal expectations.

Understanding these elements provides valuable insight into how private equity firms operate, govern, and adapt in an ever-changing financial landscape. **Question** What is the historical origin of private equity as an investment class? Private equity originated in the mid-20th century, with early forms including venture capital and buyouts, evolving from industrial investments and focusing on acquiring control of private companies to improve their value before exiting via sale or IPO. **5** How has private equity governance evolved over the decades? Private equity governance has shifted towards more active involvement by investors, with increased emphasis on transparency, alignment of interests, and the implementation of formal oversight structures such as advisory boards and governance policies to monitor portfolio company performance. What are the key operational strategies used by private equity firms? Private equity firms employ strategies such as operational improvements, cost reductions, revenue growth initiatives, management incentives, and strategic repositioning to enhance portfolio company value prior to exit. How did regulatory changes impact private equity operations in the 2000s? Regulatory changes, including increased disclosure requirements and anti-trust laws, led private equity firms to adopt more transparent practices, reshape their governance structures, and implement stricter compliance protocols to adapt to evolving legal standards. What role does governance play in private equity's success? Effective governance ensures proper oversight, aligns interests between managers and investors, reduces agency problems, and facilitates strategic decision-making, all of which are critical to achieving strong operational performance and successful exits. How has private equity's operational focus changed with the rise of technology and digital transformation? Private equity firms now emphasize digital transformation, leveraging technology to optimize operations, improve efficiencies, and create scalable growth models within portfolio companies to maximize value. What are common challenges faced by private equity firms in governance and operations? Challenges include balancing control with management autonomy, ensuring proper oversight without stifling innovation, managing regulatory compliance, and aligning incentives among stakeholders to drive long-term value creation. How do private equity firms measure operational success post-investment? Success is measured through key performance indicators such as revenue growth, EBITDA improvements, cost efficiencies, market share expansion, and successful exit valuations that exceed initial investment multiples. In what ways has private equity transparency and reporting standards changed in recent years? There has been a push towards increased transparency, with firms providing more detailed reporting to investors, adopting standardized metrics, and complying with regulatory frameworks to build trust and meet stakeholder expectations. **6** What is the significance of governance structures like limited partnerships and advisory boards in private equity? These structures define the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes, ensuring effective oversight, protecting investor interests, and enabling strategic guidance to optimize portfolio company performance. **Private Equity: History, Governance, and Operations** Private equity (PE) has emerged as one of the most influential sectors within the global financial landscape, shaping corporate strategies, investment paradigms, and economic development. Its evolution over the decades reflects shifts in market dynamics, regulatory environments, and investor appetite for alternative assets. Understanding the history, governance frameworks, and operational intricacies of private equity is essential for investors, managers, and policymakers alike. --- **The Evolution of Private Equity: A Historical Perspective** Origins and Early Development (1940s–1970s) -

Beginnings in the Post-War Era: Private equity's roots trace back to the post-World War II period, characterized by entrepreneurial ventures and small-scale buyouts. Early investments primarily involved wealthy families, high-net-worth individuals, and institutional investors seeking high returns outside public markets. - Formation of Pioneering Firms: Notable early players include firms like American Research and Development Corporation (ARDC) founded in 1946, which is considered one of the first venture capital firms. Similarly, the 1960s saw the emergence of leveraged buyouts (LBOs), with firms experimenting with acquiring distressed companies using borrowed capital. - Regulatory Environment: During this period, regulation was relatively lax, allowing private equity firms to operate with minimal oversight, which contributed to rapid innovation but also to some high-profile failures. Growth and Institutionalization (1980s–1990s) - Rise of Leveraged Buyouts: The 1980s witnessed a boom in LBO activity, driven by firms like Kohlberg Kravis Roberts (KKR). The use of debt to finance acquisitions became a hallmark strategy, enabling larger deals and higher returns. - Fund Formation and Limited Partnerships: The 1980s and 1990s saw the formalization of private equity as a distinct asset class through the establishment of private equity funds structured as limited partnerships. Limited partners (LPs) included pension funds, endowments, and wealthy individuals, while general partners (GPs) managed the funds. - Global Expansion: While initially concentrated in the U.S., private equity expanded into Europe and Asia, adapting to regional regulatory and economic environments. - Notable Transactions and Failures: The era saw both blockbuster deals and notable failures, such as the collapse of certain Private Equity History Governance And Operations 7 high-profile buyouts, which underscored the importance of sound governance and risk management. Modern Era and Mainstream Acceptance (2000s–Present) - Proliferation of Funds and Strategies: Private equity diversified into sectors like growth equity, distressed assets, mezzanine financing, and sector-specific funds. - Regulatory and Public Scrutiny: Post-2008 financial crisis, private equity faced increased regulation, transparency demands, and calls for greater accountability, prompting industry self-regulation initiatives. - Technological and Data-Driven Approaches: Advanced analytics, operational improvements, and digital tools have become integral to PE operations, enhancing deal sourcing, due diligence, and portfolio management. - Increased Capital Flows: Record fund sizes and investor commitments, with some funds exceeding \$20 billion, demonstrate the sector's maturity and investor confidence. --- Governance Structures in Private Equity Ownership and Control Mechanisms - Limited Partnership Model: The predominant governance structure involves a limited partnership, where: - Limited Partners (LPs): Provide the capital and have limited liability but typically minimal day-to-day control. - General Partners (GPs): Manage the fund, make investment decisions, and are responsible for operational oversight. - Fund Governance: The Limited Partnership Agreement (LPA) details rights, responsibilities, fee structures, and exit mechanisms, serving as the primary governance document. - Portfolio Company Governance: Once an investment is made, private equity firms often install or influence management, establish boards of directors, and implement governance policies to align incentives and ensure operational improvements. Key Governance Principles - Alignment of Interests: Ensuring GPs and LPs share risks and rewards through performance fees (carried interest) and co-investments. - Transparency and Reporting: Regular updates, financial disclosures, and adherence to industry standards (e.g., ILPA principles) foster trust among stakeholders. - Active Oversight: GPs typically take a hands-

on approach, participating in strategic decision-making, governance reforms, and monitoring performance metrics. Regulatory and Ethical Considerations - Regulation: Varies by jurisdiction but generally includes securities laws, anti-money laundering regulations, and tax compliance requirements. - Ethical Standards: Industry Private Equity History Governance And Operations 8 bodies promote best practices, emphasizing responsible investing, avoiding conflicts of interest, and maintaining fiduciary duties. --- Operational Frameworks in Private Equity Deal Sourcing and Due Diligence - Deal Origination: GPs leverage networks, proprietary sourcing, industry contacts, and intermediaries to identify investment opportunities. - Initial Screening: Evaluating strategic fit, growth potential, financial health, and management quality. - Due Diligence: Comprehensive analysis covering financial, legal, operational, commercial, and environmental aspects to assess risks and valuation. Transaction Execution - Valuation and Negotiation: Using multiples, discounted cash flow (DCF), and other valuation methods. Negotiating terms that include governance rights, covenants, and exit provisions. - Financing Structure: Typically involves a mix of equity and debt, with careful consideration of leverage levels to optimize returns while managing risk. - Legal Documentation: Drafting purchase agreements, shareholder agreements, and other contractual documents to formalize the transaction. Post-Investment Management - Operational Improvements: Implementing strategic initiatives, cost efficiencies, management changes, and technology upgrades. - Monitoring and Reporting: Regular financial reviews, performance dashboards, and governance meetings ensure progress aligns with targets. - Value Creation: Focused on growth, operational excellence, market expansion, and strategic repositioning to maximize exit value. Exit Strategies - Initial Public Offerings (IPOs): Listing the portfolio company on public markets to realize liquidity. - Trade Sales and Strategic Buyers: Selling to other companies in the same or complementary sectors. - Secondary Buyouts: Selling the stake to another private equity firm. - Recapitalizations and Dividend Recaps: Returning capital through debt refinancing or special dividends. --- Key Challenges and Future Trends in Private Equity Challenges - Market Cyclicity: Economic downturns can impact deal flow, valuation, and exit Private Equity History Governance And Operations 9 opportunities. - Regulatory Scrutiny: Increased oversight may lead to compliance costs and operational constraints. - Fundraising Pressures: Competition for capital has intensified, making fund raising more competitive. - Operational Risks: Underperforming portfolio companies can erode returns and reputation. Emerging Trends - ESG and Responsible Investing: Integrating environmental, social, and governance factors into investment decisions. - Technological Disruption: Leveraging data analytics, AI, and automation for deal sourcing, due diligence, and portfolio management. - Globalization: Expanding into emerging markets and cross-border investments to access new growth avenues. - Secondary Markets Growth: Increasing liquidity options through secondary fund sales and direct secondaries. - Fund Structuring Innovations: New fund formats and hybrid models to meet diverse investor needs. --- Conclusion Private equity has evolved from a niche investment strategy into a dominant force shaping industries and economies. Its history reflects innovation, resilience, and adaptation to changing market and regulatory environments. Governance remains a cornerstone of its integrity, balancing investor interests with operational oversight. Meanwhile, operational excellence—spanning deal sourcing, management, and exit—dictates success in this competitive landscape. As private equity continues to mature, embracing technological advances, sustainability principles, and global opportunities, it promises to

remain a vital component of the alternative investment universe. Stakeholders who understand its complex history, governance frameworks, and operational nuances will be better positioned to navigate its opportunities and challenges. --- In summary, private equity's journey from modest beginnings to a sophisticated, globally integrated sector underscores its significance. Its governance structures ensure accountability and alignment, while operational strategies drive value creation. Staying attuned to emerging trends and maintaining rigorous standards will be essential for private equity's continued growth and positive impact. private equity, investment history, governance structures, fund management, portfolio companies, due diligence, operational improvement, investor relations, fund lifecycle, exit strategies

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an authoritative guide to understanding the world of private equity pe investing governance structures and operational assessments of pe portfolio companies an essential text for any business finance professional s library private equity history governance and operations second edition begins by presenting historical information regarding the asset class this information includes historical fundraising and investment levels returns correlation of returns to public market indices and harvest trends the text subsequently analyzes pe fund and portfolio company governance structures it also presents ways to improve existing governance structures of these entities a specific focus on portfolio company operations including due diligence assessments concludes the text seamlessly blends historical information with practical guidance based on risk management and

fundamental accounting techniques assists the book's professional audience in maximizing returns of their pe investments highly conducive to advanced graduate level classroom use purchase of the text includes access to a website of teaching materials for instructional use learn more about pe history governance and operations with the authoritative guidance found in private equity history governance and operations second edition

praise for private equity private equity history governance and operations is an invaluable guide to understanding the world of private equity investing harry cendrowski and his colleagues have drawn on their extensive experience and expertise to produce a book that is remarkably comprehensive and authoritative robert larson chairman lazard real estate partners llc and larson realty group managing director lazard alternative investments private equity history governance and operations is an essential text for any business finance professional's library applicable to both seasoned private equity gurus and students of the industry its in depth analysis of best practices is well researched and clearly written william campbell managing director w y campbell company this is an interesting and very well written book it not only clearly describes the history and techniques of private equity investing it also provides a thorough examination of the rarely appreciated relationships among internal control design and operation corporate governance and sound investment decision making and management it is an important contribution to the literature of finance barry epstein phd cpa partner russell novak company llp and author of wiley gaap 2008 the handbook of accounting and auditing and wiley ifrs 2008 harry cendrowski really hits a homerun with his newest book about the private equity pe industry a definitive authoritative text on the subject it answered all my questions plus some and gave me a complete frame of reference where i now feel well informed on pe i would recommend this book to anyone connected to the pe industry business advisors academics and business owners parnell black mba cpa cva chief executive officer national association of certified valuation analysts nacva the timing could not be better to learn more about the current best practices and governance in the world of private equity what was once an exclusive asset class reserved for the largest most sophisticated investors has now become a mainstream alternative investment option for investors of all sizes still many investors do not fully understand how the business works private equity history governance and operations endows its readers with an a to z education on this emerging asset class irrespective of their previous experiences maribeth s rahe president and chief executive officer fort washington investment advisors inc fort washington capital partners as a private equity practitioner in the financial services space i found this book to be a comprehensive and comprehensible resource covering all relevant aspects of the business of private equity this book provides valuable how to's for improving the likelihood of having successful portfolio companies with successful exits furthermore both veteran and prospective pe investors now have a resource available to help them screen pe opportunities that best fit with their risk and return objectives scott b mccallum principal resource financial institutions group inc for years private equity has been a misunderstood asset class harry cendrowski's book defines private equity in clear concise terms anyone in the financial world will benefit from the insights guidelines and experiences detailed in private equity history governance and operations bob clone senior portfolio manager alternative investments division michigan department of treasury

this monograph aims to provide an in depth analysis of the legal protection of the private equity pe

investors in china in an academic sense this research mainly focuses on the agency problems in the life cycle of pe investment under the business organization law system in china briefly speaking the agency problems of pe investment derive from the two level separation of ownership and control one of which is the principal agent relationship between the pe investors and the fund manager and the other is the principal agent relationship between the pe shareholders and the management of investee companies it is the first research to provide an in depth examination on the investor protection in the pe investment under the business organization law system in china

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this book discusses the role of capital markets and investment banking in nigeria the largest frontier market economy in the world by both population size and gross domestic product offering a systematic framework combining conceptual principles with real practice the book enables the reader to gain useful insight into how capital markets and investment banking work in the real world of a frontier market the book provides a synopsis of the economic attractiveness financial systems intermediation and capital markets as well as the regulatory framework within a frontier market it explores capital raising through equity and underwriting and private equity paying particular attention to putting capital to work on mergers and acquisitions project and infrastructure finance and real estate finance furthermore it analyses asset management pension industry and securities trading in a frontier market the authors use detailed case studies from nigeria to illustrate the operations of investment banking in frontier markets the cases tables and charts serve as useful illustrations of the topics under discussion with the authors combined experience of more than 50 years as economists finance and investment professionals and in executive leadership positions in the financial services industry this book will interest the academic community professionals in the financial industry retail and institutional investors interested in frontier markets development practitioners in international organizations and policy makers including securities and capital market regulators

for decades the public company has played a dominant role in the american economy since the

middle of the 20th century the nature of the public company has changed considerably the transformation has been a fascinating one marked by scandals political controversy wide swings in investor and public sentiment mismanagement entrepreneurial verve noisy corporate raiders and various other larger than life personalities nevertheless amidst a voluminous literature on corporations a systematic historical analysis of the changes that have occurred is lacking the public company transformed correspondingly analyzes how the public company has been recast from the mid 20th century through to the present day with particular emphasis on senior corporate executives and the constraints affecting the choices available to them the chronological point of departure is the managerial capitalism era which prevailed in large american corporations following world war ii the book explores managerial capitalism s rise its 1950s and 1960s heyday and its fall in the 1970s and 1980s it describes the american public companies and executives that enjoyed prosperity during the 1990s and the reversal of fortunes in the 2000s precipitated by corporate scandals and the financial crisis of 2008 the book also considers the regulation of public companies in detail and discusses developments in shareholder activism company boards chief executives and concerns about oligopoly the volume concludes by offering conjectures on the future of the public corporation and suggests that predictions of the demise of the public company have been exaggerated

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an authoritative guide to understanding the world of private equity pe investing governance structures and operational assessments of pe portfolio companies an essential text for any business finance professional s library private equity history governance and operations second edition begins by presenting historical information regarding the asset class this information includes historical fundraising and investment levels returns correlation of returns to public market indices and harvest trends the text subsequently analyzes pe fund and portfolio company governance structures it also presents ways to improve existing governance structures of these entities a specific focus on portfolio company operations including due diligence assessments concludes the text seamlessly blends historical information with practical guidance based on risk management and fundamental accounting techniques assists the book s professional audience in maximizing returns of their pe investments highly conducive to advanced graduate level classroom use purchase of the text includes access to a website of teaching materials for instructional use learn more about pe history governance and operations with the authoritative guidance found in private equity history governance and operations second edition

significant increases in regulatory competition have sharpened the comparative awareness of advantages of different national models of political economy governance and regulation the most important change in this regard is a shift in governance from state to the market the transition from corporatist governance to market governance poses a daunting challenge to regulators and academics this book addresses these challenges in a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective including the world s three leading economies and their legal systems the eu the u s and japan

the voting rights act of 1965 which originally was intended to prohibit barriers to black registration and voting has been hailed as a triumph for civil rights and as a catalyst for the election of minorities to public office in both the deep south and the urban north to advance its objective federal courts instructed many cities to change from at large to single member district electoral systems as a way to ensure that minorities had a reasonable chance to elect representatives of their choice in the first book to critique the implementation of this landmark legislation in a major american city ruth morgan examines its effect on local governance over forty years in dallas and shows that it had unintended consequences for racial politics representation and public policy breaking from studies that measure the success of the vra in terms of increased minority representation morgan assesses the consequences of the act for dallas city government and for the wider interests of minorities as well while endorsing the original intent of the vra morgan believes that this intent was subverted by subsequent amendments to the act and by the courts attempts to advance the political standing of particular minority groups she argues that court imposed single member districts have created in dallas a city council infected with parochialism and careerism a result of members no longer having to compromise to win citywide votes and have had an adverse impact on governmental effectiveness and voter turnout with corruption and cronyism now rampant

voting rights legislation and litigation have ultimately failed to fulfill the hopes and aspirations of the unempowered and the district system has created an incentive for continued racial separation governance by decree offers a pointed assessment of the complexities and contradictions produced by the voting rights law while at the same time calling for the federal judiciary to exercise restraint in imposing its will when it lacks the capacity to make choices that are inherently political morgan s powerfully argued case study should inspire much debate and inform forthcoming congressional deliberations over the renewal of the preclearance section of the vra in 2007

corporate governance at the crossroads a book of readings has both groundbreaking and recent articles on corporate governance it is a perfect supplement and packaging item with mcgraw hill irwin s many undergraduate or graduate corporate finance textbooks

against the backdrop of perceived abuse of corporate power alleged violations of human rights degradation of the environment abuse of labor enron style financial scandals and the like the papers in the first part of this collection examine the nature and function of the corporation as well as the way in which we should understand corporate governance and the power of transnational corporations central to the question is the issue of accountability as well as the questions of social and environmental responsibility the authors ask whether corporations should be more accountable relative to the broader public interest and suggest that public law approaches to accountability may offer a way forward the second part of the book considers the most appropriate regulatory locus local regional or international and the most effective form of response to the deficit in corporate responsibility and the abuse of corporate power for example are transnational corporations most effectively regulated internationally regionally or locally

most americans believe that local school districts are the only means by which citizens may exercise control over public education kathryn mcdermott argues to the contrary that existing local institutions are no longer sufficient for achieving either equity or democratic governance not only is local control inequitable it also fails to live up to its reputation for guaranteeing public participation and citizen influence drawing upon democratic theory and the results of field research in new haven connecticut and three suburbs mcdermott contends that our educational system can be made more democratic by centralizing control over funding while decentralizing most authority over schools to the level of schools themselves while enacting public school choice controlled for racial balance to many people in connecticut and elsewhere the tension between equal opportunity for all students and local control of public education seems impossible to resolve in 1996 the connecticut supreme court ruled in sheff v o neill that local control produces unconstitutional segregation of public schools nearly all of the state s 169 towns operate their own public schools and like the towns they serve the schools are generally homogeneous with respect to race and socioeconomic class in the sheff ruling the court declared that making school districts coterminous with town lines is the single most important factor contributing to the present concentration of racial and ethnic minorities in the hartford public school system at the same time the court also acknowledged that the town based school system presently furthers the legitimate nonracial interests of permitting considerable local control and accountability in educational matters in connecticut and elsewhere it has often seemed necessary to choose between local control and equity in public education and local control has

almost always won mcdermott argues that rather than seeing local control and equity as conflicting goals policymakers should regard them as equally important components of democracy in public education in her view a truly democratic system of education should both encourage citizen participation in school governance and contribute to the formation and maintenance of a social order in which equality of opportunity prevails over hierarchies of privilege centralizing distribution of resources and using controlled choice to end racial isolation would provide greater equality of opportunity while decentralizing management of schools would expand citizen participation mcdermott s conclusions break new ground in our understanding of local school governance itself and call into question the conventional wisdom about local participation these findings should interest those who study school governance and reform especially in an urban setting as well as policy makers administrators teachers students and citizens eager to improve their schools

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