

FOURTH EDITION

International Encyclopedia of Education

Globalization and the Shifting
Geopolitics of Education

VOLUME
1

Editors-In-Chief

Robert J. Tierney
Fazal Rizvi
Kadriye Ercikan

Volume Editors

Fazal Rizvi
Jason Beech



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VOLUME 1

**Globalization and the Shifting
Geopolitics of Education**

VOLUME 1 EDITORS

Fazal Rizvi and Jason Beech



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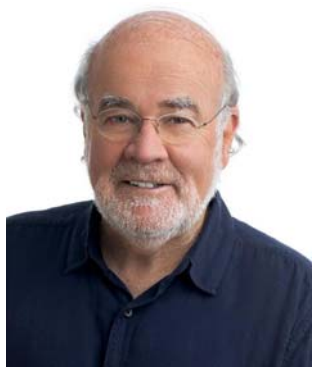
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Robert J Tierney

Rob Tierney is an international educator whose passion is for developing research partnerships to address local literacy needs with educators in different countries. Rob began his career as a classroom teacher in Australia, then proceeded to work in the United States, Canada, Australia and China. He is Dean Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia, the former Dean and Honorary Professor of the Faculty of Education and Social Work at University of Sydney, and a Distinguished University Professor at Beijing Normal University. In the United States, he has served on the faculties of the University of Illinois, University of Arizona, The Ohio State University, Harvard University, and the University of California. Rob has written a number of books and numerous articles on literacy especially related to global issues, diversity, and literacy development. His most recent book was entitled *A History of Literacy Education: Waves of Research and Practice* published by Teachers College Press in 2021. During his tenure as an educator, he has served as the President of the International Literacy Association, President of the Literacy Research Association, an Editor for the *Reading Research Quarterly*, the President of the Association of Canadian Deans of Education/ L'Association Canadienne des Doyens et Doyennes d'éducation, as well on a number of committees and boards for professional groups and government and nongovernment

agencies. In addition, he has been involved on a range of groups on projects globally including in Africa and Asia including for UNESCO, Children's Television Workshop, and Apple Computer.



Fazal Rizvi

Fazal Rizvi is an Emeritus Professor of Global Studies in Education at the University of Melbourne, as well as at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is also a Visiting Professor at the Universities of Turku in Finland and Pretoria in South Africa. He has written extensively on issues of identity and culture in transnational contexts, globalization and education policy, and Australia-Asia relations. He has published widely, and his book, coauthored with Bob Lingard, *Globalizing Education Policy* (Routledge 2010) is used widely in courses around the world. A sequel to this book, *Reimagining Globalization and Education* (Routledge 2022) has been published recently. Fazal is currently researching educational reform in Bhutan. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences, a past Editor of the journal, *Discourse: Studies in Cultural Politics of Education*, and a past President of the Australian Association of Research in Education.

**Kadriye Ercikan**

Kadriye Ercikan is Vice President of Research and Measurement Sciences at the Educational Testing Service and Professor Emerita at the University of British Columbia. She is responsible for ETS's foundational and applied research and psychometric support of ETS's major testing products and contracts, and the NAEP contract for ETS. Her research focuses on validity and fairness issues and sociocultural context of assessment. Her recent research includes validation of score meaning using response processes, use of response process data for comparing groups and examining fairness and validity of interpretation, and use of scores from artificial intelligence–based automated scoring.

Ercikan is a Fellow of the International Academy of Education. Her research has resulted in 6 books, 4 special issues of refereed journals, and over 100 publications. She was awarded the AERA Division D Significant Contributions to Educational Measurement and Research Methodology recognition for another

coedited volume, *Generalizing from Educational Research: Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative*

Polarization, and received an Early Career Award from the University of British Columbia. Ercikan has been selected to serve as the NCME Book Series Editor (2021–2026).

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Jason Beech is Associate Professor (Global Policy) at the University of Melbourne and visiting professor at Universidad de San Andrés in Buenos Aires where he holds a UNESCO Chair in Education for Sustainability and Global Citizenship. He is senior researcher of the National Council for Scientific and Technical Research of Argentina (CONICET), and Associate Editor of *Education Policy Analysis Archives*. He has been a member of the Board of Directors of the Comparative and International Education Society (2014-2016). Jason has published extensively on the globalization of knowledge and policies related to education. He has also written and is passionate about the challenges of educating for global citizenship and a sustainable future. He has taught in several universities in the Americas, Europe and Australia.



Professor Qing Gu is Director of the UCL Centre for Educational Leadership and Professor of Leadership in Education. She is the Past Chair of the *British Association of Comparative and International Education* (BAICE), Co-Editor of *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, Associate Editor of *International Journal of Educational Development*, a member of the Research Standing Committee of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), and a member of the Research Evidence and Impact Panel for the Leadership College for UK Government. Professor Gu has directed and codirected many government and research council funded projects in the areas of teacher professional development, school improvement, and systemic reform and change. She has led a £1.9 m UK Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded project *Schools as Enabling Spaces to Improve Learning and Health-Related Quality of Life for Primary School Children in Rural Communities in South Africa*. Some of her books have been translated into Chinese, Japanese, and Spanish.



Professor Smith is a New Zealand Maori of Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Ngati Porou, Kati Mamoe Ngati Apa, Ngati Kahungunu descent. He is a highly regarded and internationally recognized, Maori educationalist and scholar. He has been at the forefront of transforming Maori and Indigenous social, economic and cultural conditions through re-developing education and schooling outcomes. His work links theoretical thinking and practical applications within an ongoing cycle of transforming praxis.

Professor Smith trained as a teacher at Auckland Teachers College and taught in Auckland schools. He also lectured in Education at the Auckland College of Education. He was one of the first teachers and developers of a Kura Kaupapa Maori, an alternative, Maori philosophy and principles-based School. These Maori immersion schools have grown from a single entity in 1988 to over seventy-five publicly funded schools in 2015. His theoretical leadership in the Education Department at the University of Auckland helped inform the emergence of Maori Education as a distinct field of study across the New Zealand Tertiary Sector. This work has encouraged a wide range of academic studies focused on overthrowing persisting inequities within and as a result of education and schooling in New Zealand. His significant contribution to New Zealand education is to be seen in his work related to Kaupapa Maori as a theory of Transformative Praxis. All of these elements derive from his PhD research entitled, “The Development of Kaupapa Maori: Theory and Praxis (1997)”.

Professor Smith’s later academic work centered on developing theoretically informed strategies related to transforming high and disproportionate levels of Maori cultural, political, social, educational, and economic marginalization. He has been a significant scholar involved in the emergence of Tribal “university” institutions (Wananga) and is the former foundation Chair of the Council for Te Whare Wananga O Awanuiarangi. He led the successful Treaty of Waitangi Claim and settlement for Awanuiarangi. In his former position as Pro Vice Chancellor (Maori) at the University of Auckland, he was responsible for developing significant structural change within the institution while working within the Office of the then Vice Chancellor, Dr. John Hood. Notable achievements included implementing a Maori development strategy within the University which required all Deans to be responsive in their performance results for Maori and Pacific advancement; the oversight of the Proposal and winning of a National Centre of Research Excellence (Nga Pae o te Maramatanga); the initiation of the Maori and Indigenous doctoral program aimed at creating 500 Maori PhD graduates across the country in five years; the recruitment of top Maori academic scholars into the University of Auckland; and the development of Kaupapa Maori as a theory of transformative praxis and which has had national and international influence. Professor Smith also served on the University of Auckland Council for three years as the Professorial representative for Academic staff.

In 2007 Professor Smith accepted a role as the Universitas 21 Distinguished Visiting Professor in Indigenous Education hosted by the University of British Columbia (within the Faculty of Education). Although the position was initially intended for two years, the role was extended for a further three years. While situated at the University of British Columbia, Professor Smith also chaired the Educational Policy Studies Department for three years. These positions allowed engagement with many Canadian universities as well as other universities across the world.

Professor Smith has made significant contributions to the political, social, economic, and cultural advancement of Maori and indigenous communities in New Zealand and around the Pacific Rim. He has worked extensively with other Native/Indigenous/First Nation’s peoples across the world, including in Canada, India, US mainland (including extensive work in Hawaii and Alaska), Norway, Taiwan, Chile, Australia, as well as with selected Micronesian and Pacific nations. He is a regular contributor to national and international forums and conferences. Professor Smith has been an authoritative voice within the critical debates on *social, cultural and economic inequality* both in New Zealand and abroad, and he maintains a strong influence in the Maori/Indigenous languages revitalization movements.

Professor Smith stepped down from the administrative position of CEO/Vice Chancellor at Te Whare Wananga o Awanuiarangi in 2015 after eight years in the role. He resumed his academic research and writing career. In 2019 he was invited to take up a special Chair – Te Toi Ihorei ki Purehuroa – A “distinguished Professorial position at large” established for him at Massey University.

Professor Smith has been recognized and honored for his international contributions, receiving an Honorary doctorate (D.Litt.) from the Okanagan University College in 2005, and an Honorary doctorate (LLD) from the University of Northern British Columbia in 2013; he was elected as a Fellow of the American Education Research Association in 2014, and was awarded a Queens Honour – a CNZM in 2014. He was given the Prime Minister’s Life-time Achievement Award (2017); and received the Te Ururangi National Award for Education (Matariki Awards, 2019).

Professor Smith is married to Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith and they have one daughter and two mokopuna (grandchildren).



Therese N. Hopfenbeck is Professor of Measurement Analytics in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne. Before starting her position in Melbourne, she was Professor in Educational Assessment and Director of the Oxford University Centre for Educational Assessment. She is a Visiting Fellow at Kellogg College, University of Oxford, elected Vice-President of *The Association for Educational Assessment-Europe* and Lead Editor of the journal *Assessment in Education, Principle, Policy and Practice*. Dr. Hopfenbeck's research agenda focuses upon bridging research on self-regulation and classroom-based assessment and making sense of international large-scale studies in education. In collaboration with Professor Nancy Perry, University of British Columbia, she is currently leading an international network of researchers disseminating classroom-based research, funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2020–2022). She is also currently Principal Investigator for two research projects funded by IB, on critical thinking in PYP schools internationally and evaluation of education reforms in Kent, UK (2020–2022). In 2020, she led the research on Critical Thinking in the Diploma Program in Australia, England, and Norway (<https://ibo.org/research/outcomes-research/diploma-studies/critical-thinking-skills-of-dp-students/>). Dr. Hopfenbeck was Principal Investigator for the PISA (2022) study in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales, in collaboration with Pearson UK (2018–2023). She was the Research Manager of PIRLS (2016), funded by The Department of Education, UK.gov, and Principal Investigator of a major ESRC-DFID research study, Assessment for Learning in Africa (ES/N010515/1) (2016–2019).

Since coming to Oxford in 2012, she has been the recipient of funding from ESRC-DFID, OECD, The Norwegian Research Council, Education Endowment Foundation, State Examinations Commissions Ireland, Jacob Foundation, and the International Baccalaureate totaling more than £2 mill in addition to a single grant of £4 mill in collaboration with SLATE: Centre for the Science of Learning & Technology at the University of Bergen, Norway. Prior to her appointment at Oxford, she worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Oslo's research group for Measurement and Evaluation of Student Achievement at the Unit for Quantitative Analysis of Education (2010–2011). She is Adjunct Professor of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), member of the Visiting Panel for Research at the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, expert member of the PISA (2022) Questionnaire Framework group, appointed by ETS and OECD (2014–2023). She has advised on the implementation of formative assessment programs in India, South Africa, Norway, and the Emirates and carried out policy work for UNESCO/OECD and the Norwegian Ministry of Education Norway.

Therese has a presence on LinkedIn, ResearchGate, [Academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu/), and Twitter: @TNHopfenbeck.



Nataliya Ivankova, PhD, MPH, is Professor in the School of Health Professions at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). As an applied research methodologist working at the intersection of mixed methods, qualitative, community-based, action, and translational research, she is internationally recognized for her empirical and methodological publications. She shares her research expertise through teaching mixed methods and qualitative research courses, conducting workshops and guest lectures, mentoring doctoral students and junior faculty, and serving as key personnel on funded research projects. At UAB, she directs an online graduate certificate program in *Applications of Mixed Methods Research* and oversees the design and analytical aspects of qualitative and mixed methods studies through the Center for Health Informatics for Patient Safety and Quality. She is a founding Coeditor of the *Mixed Methods Research Series* (Sage) and serves as an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*.



Professor Jahnke is Director of Toi Kura Centre for Maori & Indigenous Education. She was the 2019 inaugural Toi o Te Wananga Fellow. Professor Jahnke holds professional qualifications in education and is cofounder and immediate past Chair of the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific Special Interest Group of the American Education Research Association (AERA). She currently serves on the AERA Executive Committee. She was a member of the Social & Human Sciences Sub Commission of the NZ National Commission for UNESCO, the NZ Bioethics Council, the NZ Ethics Committee on Assisted Reproduction Technology, and Chair of NZ Health Research Council Ethics Committee. She is currently Cochair of the Aotearoa Research Ethics Board and a Fulbright Scholar.



Berit Karseth, PhD, is Professor at the University of Oslo, Department of Education. Karseth's main research and publications lie in the field of education policy, reforms, and curriculum studies. She has edited four books and written several journal articles and book chapters in both Norwegian and English. Her most recent publications in English include articles published in the *Journal of Education Policy*, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, and *European Educational Research Journal*. Karseth was the elected dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Oslo 2013–2016 and is currently in the leadership team of the research group Curriculum studies, educational leadership, and governance (CLEG) at the same institution.



Dr. Kenneth Leithwood is Emeritus Professor at OISE/University of Toronto and an honorary professor at the University College London and the University of Nottingham. His research and writing is about school leadership, educational policy, and organizational change. He has published extensively on these topics. For example, his most recent books include *Leadership Development on a Large Scale: Lessons for Long-term Success* (2018, Corwin), *How School Leaders Contribute to Student Success* (2017, Springer), and *Linking Leadership to Student Learning* (2012, Jossey Bass). Professor Leithwood is the inaugural recipient of the University of Toronto's *Impact on Public Policy* award, AERA (2011) *Outstanding Leadership Researcher Award*, the 2012 *Roald F. Campbell Lifetime Achievement Award* from the University Council for Educational Administration, and the Ontario Principals' Council *Outstanding Educator of the Year* award for 2017. He is a *Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada*. A recently published bibliometric analysis found that Dr. Leithwood was the most frequently cited, highest impact educational leadership researcher in the world.¹ Research.com's 2022 Ranking of the Top 1000 Scientists in the area of Social Sciences and Humanities ranked Dr. Leithwood 70th in the world and 7th in Canada.



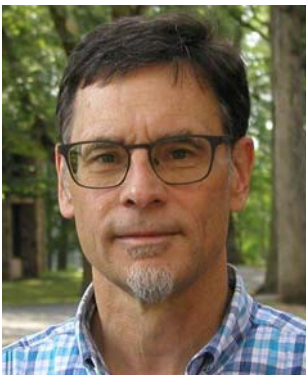
Xiufeng Liu is a Professor of Science Education at State University of New York, Buffalo, and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). He obtained his PhD from the University of British Columbia in 1993. Before his current position, he taught high school chemistry in China, and was a tenured faculty member at St. Francis Xavier University and University of Prince Edward Island, both in Canada. From September 2020 to August 2022, he served as a program director in the Division of Research on Learning of the National Science Foundation. Dr. Liu conducts research on measurement and evaluation of STEM education and student learning of cross-cutting concepts of matter and energy. Dr. Liu is currently a Coeditor-in-chief for the journal *Disciplinary and International Science Education Research* (Springer) and an Associate Editor for the *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, a premier journal in science education.



Margie Maaka is a Professor of Education at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Her PhD is in educational psychology. She also holds professional qualifications in education from the University of Waikato and Hamilton Teachers College. She is cofounder and current Program Chair of the Indigenous Peoples of the Pacific Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). From 2017 to 2020, she served as a member of the AERA Executive Council and Chair of the SIG Executive Committee. Before that (2014–2017), Professor Maaka served as a member of the SIG Executive Committee. She has also served as a member of the Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Center of Research Excellence International Research Advisory Panel. Her research on community-based educational renewal saw her recognized as a national scholar with the Goodlad Institute for Educational Renewal. As Cochair of the Sovereign Councils of the Hawaiian Homelands Assembly's Committee on Education, she prepared educators and educational leaders for public schools in the Hawaiian Home Lands Trust communities. Currently, Professor Maaka is committed to the preparation of indigenous educational leaders in higher education. Her research interests include community partnerships, educational psychology/indigenous educational psychology, indigenous development and advancement, educational policy, multiliteracies, and language and cognitive development.



Diane Mayer is Professor Emerita at the University of Oxford. Her research and scholarship focus on teacher education and early career teaching, examining issues associated with the policy and practice of teachers' work and teacher education.



Daniel McCaffrey is the Associate Vice President of Psychometric Analysis and Research in the Research and Measurement Science unit of the Research and Development division at ETS. Dan's research interests include the evaluation of artificial intelligence scoring of constructed responses, developing tools and methods for causal modeling, evaluating the psychometric properties of student achievement growth measures derived from annual test scores, and methods to account for measurement error in secondary data analysis. Dan received his PhD in Statistics from North Carolina State University in 1991.



Judy Parr is Professor Emerita at the University of Auckland, Faculty of Education, where she was the founding Head of the School of Curriculum and Pedagogy. A psychologist, Dr. Parr's research program is located broadly within improvement science. Her expertise is in literacy, specifically writing and its development, encompassing instructional issues like teacher knowledge and practice and the assessment of writing. Much research has been collaborative, with colleagues and practitioners within major national projects for school improvement aimed at raising achievement in literacy and, internationally, as part of funded large-scale research projects, for example in Canada and Norway. Dr. Parr has published widely in the areas of literacy, assessment, and professional learning.



Jeong-eun Rhee is a Professor of Education, Long Island University, Post, New York. Born and raised in Seoul, Korea, she earned her bachelor's degree in Educational Psychology from Ewha Women's University. In 1992, she came to the US as an international student and received an MA in Educational Psychology from West Virginia University and a PhD in Educational Policy and Leadership from the Ohio State University. As an interdisciplinary cultural researcher and educator, her recent work focuses on developing and supporting transnational, intergenerational, and decolonial feminist knowledge projects in/through antioppressive education. She recently published *Decolonial Feminist Research: Haunting, Rememory, and Mothers*, which received an honorable mention for the 2022 Qualitative Book Award of International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry.



Fazal Rizvi is an Emeritus Professor of Global Studies in Education at the University of Melbourne, as well as at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is also a Visiting Professor at the Universities of Turku in Finland and Pretoria in South Africa. He has written extensively on issues of identity and culture in transnational contexts, globalization and education policy, and Australia-Asia relations. He has published widely and his book, coauthored with Bob Lingard, *Globalizing Education Policy* (Routledge, 2010), is used widely in courses around the world. A sequel to this book, *Reimagining Globalization and Education* (Routledge, 2022), has been published recently. Fazal is currently researching educational reform in Bhutan. He is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Social Sciences, a past Editor of the journal, *Discourse: Studies in Cultural Politics of Education*, and a past President of the Australian Association of Research in Education.



Theresa Rogers is Professor of Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. Her research interests include youth arts, media and critical literacies, adolescent literature, and teacher education in literacy. Most recently she published "Youth Activism through Critical Arts, Transmedia, and Multiliteracies" in the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia*. She is author of the book, *Youth, Critical Literacies and Civic Engagement: Arts, Media and Literacy in the lives of adolescents* (Routledge) and numerous articles in scholarly journals such as *Literacy Research: Theory, Method and Practice*, *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Pedagogies*, *Language Arts*, *Children's Literature in Education* and *Journal of Literacy Research*. See: <https://ubc.academia.edu/TheresaRogers>.



Professor Chika Sehoole is a Professor of Higher Education and the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria. He obtained his PhD at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in December 2002. In 2003/4 he was a visiting Rockefeller postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for African Studies at the University of Illinois in Urbana Champaign. In 2005/06 he was a New Century Fulbright Fellow, again, at the same university. His research interests are in the areas of higher education policy, internationalization of higher education, higher education in Africa, and teacher education. He has served in several international research projects focusing on higher education and providing expertise from the South African and African perspectives. In 2013–2017 he served as the Chairperson of the Board of the African Network for Internationalisation of Education (ANIE). He currently serves as the chairperson of the Education Deans' Forum of South Africa. He has published a singled authored book titled "Democratising higher education policy, constraints of reform in post-apartheid South Africa" by (Routledge); three edited scholarly books on higher education and more than 40 articles in journal articles, book chapters, and popular media.



Roland Sintos Coloma is a tenured Full Professor of Teacher Education at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. A scholar of history, cultural studies, and education, his research addresses critical questions of race, gender, and sexuality from transnational and intersectional perspectives. His publications include *Asian Canadian Studies Reader* (2017), *Filipinos in Canada: Disturbing Invisibility* (2012), and *Postcolonial Challenges in Education* (2009). His articles have been published in top-ranked peer-reviewed journals, including *Curriculum Inquiry*, *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, *Educational Studies*, *Educational Theory*, *History of Education Quarterly*, *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *Paedagogica Historica*, and *Race Ethnicity and Education*. He has successfully garnered over \$2 million of external funding from federal, education, and nonprofit agencies, including the US Department of Education, National Education Association, Spencer Foundation, and Schultz Family Foundation as part of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Grand Economic Challenges. Roland has served in various university leadership roles as an assistant dean, department chair, graduate coordinator, and center codirector. He was president of the American Educational Studies Association (2018–19), editor of the *Educational Studies* journal (2014–17), and program cochair of Division G (Social Context of Education) in the American Educational Research Association (AERA). He received the 2017 Distinguished Scholar Award from the AERA Research on the Education of Asian Pacific Americans SIG and the 2015 Article of the Year Award from the AERA Queer Studies and Education SIG. In 2020, he was appointed to the Governor of Michigan's statewide Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission. Born in the Philippines and raised in California, he completed his PhD in Cultural Studies in Education and Minor in African American and African Studies from The Ohio State University in 2004.



Roger Slee is the Founding Editor of *The International Journal of Inclusive Education* and *The Journal of Disability Studies in Education*. A former Deputy Director-General of Education in Queensland, Australia, he has advised governments on inclusive education policy and practice. His published books include: *The Irregular School*; *Inclusive Education Isn't Dead, It Just Smells Funny*; and *Ethics and Inclusive Education: Disability, Schooling & Justice* (with Gordon Tait). Roger was commissioned by the UNESCO to write the scoping paper for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report, *Inclusion and Education*. Roger also held the Chair of Inclusive Education at the Institute of Education, London, and is now the Diamond Jubilee Professor of Disability & Inclusion in the School of Sociology & Social Policy at the University of Leeds.



Ninni Wahlström is a Professor of Education at Linnæus University, Sweden. Her current research focuses on transnational and national policy discourses and their implications for national curriculum and classroom teaching from a perspective of curriculum theory and educational philosophy. Most recent publications are "School and democratic hope: the school as a space for civic literacy" in *European Educational Research Journal* (2022) and Wahlström (Ed.) *Equity, Teaching Practice and the Curriculum*, Routledge (2022).



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PREFACE

An encyclopedia has traditionally been defined as a compilation of academic work that either contains information on a particular branch of knowledge in the form of short entries or includes longer articles arranged by subjects or topics. It represents a body of knowledge useful to students, scholars, and researchers interested in an overview of key concepts and theories, and an introduction to the emerging issues and debates within a discipline. Although encyclopedias often seek to be comprehensive and objective, they seldom achieve this goal, not least because knowledge is invariably ordered from a particular perspective, against the backdrop of an understanding of the context in which it is produced. The access that the editors have to various epistemic traditions and scholarly communities is also not irrelevant. In this way, it needs to be acknowledged that articles contained in any encyclopedia represent a selective portrayal of a field of knowledge—diced and differentiated, ordered into segments and divisions, with some major topics often overlooked.

This was inevitably the case with the previous three editions of the *International Encyclopedia of Education* published by Elsevier. Looking back at their contents, the topics and themes included in those editions evidently reflected an understanding of the field of education that prevailed at the time. The articles drew on theoretical resources that were widely used then. The claims made in the articles were based on a range of assumptions about the nature of educational knowledge itself, and how it might be useful to scholars, policymakers, and educational practitioners. Among these was the assumption that the knowledge that is most valuable needed to be either general and universal or positioned within various national contexts. Little attention was paid to transnational crosscurrents within which educational knowledge is produced and utilized, despite the use of term ‘International’ in the title of the *Encyclopedia*. The idea of ‘International’ appeared more honorific than substantive, since much of the research reported emerged out of Anglo-American traditions, with the misleading assumption that this body of knowledge applied equally to all systems of education around the world.

In this, the fourth edition of the *Encyclopedia*, we have actively resisted this assumption and, in constructing the current volume, have, wherever possible, sought to problematize the meaning of the idea of ‘International’. We have recognized that the concept of ‘International’ is deployed in several different ways, has multiple meanings, and is highly contested. Furthermore, we have viewed internationalization as a process in knowledge-making, more like a journey than a destination. We have therefore regarded this edition of the *Encyclopedia* as a project in which an attempt is made to be mindful of the ways educational research, policy, and practice are shaped by both historical forces and emerging global conditions and are enacted in local contexts in a wide variety of different ways. We have acknowledged that the idea of internationalization itself has been used ideologically to promote various interests. In this way, the idea of internationalization has both empirical and normative meanings: it describes things as they supposedly are, but also prescribes how they ought to be.

These considerations have led us to approach the compilation of this edition of the encyclopedia from ‘an international perspective.’ What this means is that we have sought to ensure that the contents included in this edition reflect educational knowledge produced in all regions of the world. To so ‘deparochialize’ the information and analysis provided, as editors in chief, we have sought out the expertise of educational scholars drawn from every continent of the world, with knowledge of diverse cultural and epistemic traditions. We have thus tried to depart from the assumptions of both nation-centricity and universality, toward an ‘international’ perspective, not only by inviting exploration of issues, examples, and citations drawn from around the world but encouraging also the interrogation of the facts of transnational connectivity and exchange and how these are historically constituted and politically negotiated.

We do not believe, however, that this approach is based on a choice we have made but is rather demanded by the changing global conditions and their implications for education. The world of education has clearly been

transformed over the past two decades, driven by new developments in technology, resulting in: new modes of communication; the globalization of economy, politics, and culture; the changing nature of work and labor relations; the growing awareness of environmental crisis and climate change; the recognition of the ubiquity of cultural diversity and exchange and the legitimate claims of the colonized populations; an increasing level of distrust in traditional values and institutions and the rise of populist politics; and the growing interconnectedness of populations, practices, and policies through data collected from all aspects of life in artificial intelligence algorithms. These developments, among others, have transformed the space in which education now takes place, leading to the need to rethink the purposes of education and its governance.

The requirements of education knowledge and the ways of conducting and reporting research have been transformed by these significant shifts, highlighting the need to understand how educational experiences are shaped by locally and nationally specific conditions, and that the Anglo-American traditions of knowing can no longer be assumed to apply globally. Therefore, it is paramount to hear the voices of those who had previously been marginalized and to appreciate the local knowledges they produce, their priorities for education, the ways in which they wish to negotiate forces of globalization, and imagine their futures. We take these principles of inclusivity as fundamental to the normative concept of internationalization and have therefore sought to include, in this edition of the *Encyclopedia*, issues, themes, and debates that are global in their reach and significance, as interpreted by authors drawn from around the world.

Moreover, this edition of the *Encyclopedia* represents an effort to offer more than what might be derived from most Internet searches—in view especially of their likely unevenness or lack of trustworthiness in their treatment of topics. It is a compilation of chapters by section editors who in turn have mapped out subsections, topics, and authors to discuss key and timely issues being addressed in their fields of expertise. It is the section editors who approached the authors with request to represent the issues related to key topics and to do so in ways that animate the topic, especially going forward. Each of the chapters thus aims to provide background on important past developments largely as a way to call attention to contemporary issues that are being pursued or to represent new challenges and possibilities. The orientation to exploring issues as they are unfolding is a purposeful departure from more definitional approaches or from historical recantation. The emphasis upon internationalization begins to move us beyond what has been a form of western insularity. For aspiring scholars of education, we think the various chapters offer foundational deliberations intended to provide more lively overviews, and to not only generate understandings of where we have been but also where we are heading, and to do so in ways that spur questions and further inquiry.

This encyclopedia contains over 850 papers structured around 14 volumes on themes that we, as editors in chief, selected but which are thoughtfully developed, reviewed, and vetted by the content-specific editors for each volume, which in turn is divided in certain sections. The themes addressed within the volumes represent, as we have noted, a particular take on the currently existing body of knowledge in education. Inevitably some major themes are not included, and others only tangentially so. Nonetheless it is hoped that as a collection they introduce readers to a complex array of topics and issues, along with approaches to addressing them that have emerged over the past decade and remain poignant for thinking seriously and critically about education from an international perspective. In this way, our desire has been to complement and expand past considerations of developments in the field and to move forward beyond almost exclusively Anglo-centric representations that have predominated in past representations of the state of inquiry in the field, especially in annals in education such as highly cited journals, handbooks, and reviews.

We are pleased with the ways in which volume editors have helped us to move beyond an exclusive focus upon tropes within western scholarship. Their guidance has led to contributions from “northern” and “southern” educational scholars and to expanded discussions of developments in the field that extend to international examples and perspectives. So, for example, one of the volumes describes the shifting geopolitics in education and how they have posed new challenges for education. Another volume highlights issues of indigeneity and decolonization in education, addressing the reckoning between global and local understandings and issues of indigeneity, sovereignty, and domestication. Issues of how the curriculum is now contested across various cultural, political, and epistemic traditions is the theme of another volume.

In keeping with the expanded nature of studies of literacy and languages, a new comprehensive volume is included in this edition. The papers chronicle burgeoning forms and modes of languages and literacies as well as literature for young people, and the global contexts of their use. The myriad practices of language and the rich set of guiding theoretical and epistemological perspectives, from psychological to posthumanist, that guide inquiries are well represented here.

Just as many of the issues in language and literacy have become deeply political, the debates about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, a focus on which reflects the shifting goals of education toward meeting the needs of the global economy. Another section involves a volume focused on the cultural politics of difference, and how this relates to issues of democracy and social justice. The politics of difference are also discussed in the volume on inclusive education and disability, which considers how issues of disability have traditionally been conceptualized and addressed in education, and why new approaches are now necessary. The focus here is on issues of access and participation in education through an interrogation of and call for inclusion—the mitigation or dismantling of barriers to access, participation, and success in education for all children and young people.

In the past two decades, issues of educational governance have been widely debated, especially with the growing embrace of the policies of marketization and privatization around the world. These have given rise to new techniques of educational administration and leadership. A volume in this encyclopedia throws critical light on these developments, exploring alternatives to the neoliberal imaginary. The issues of policy and governance are also central to a volume devoted to higher education and another focused upon teacher professionalism representing critical and global discussions on issues and trends related to teaching and teacher education that exposes the connections and disconnections with policy, and the impact of policy on teacher and teacher educator professionalism and practices.

Consistent with these aforementioned developments, the volume on cognition, learning, and human development, central aspects of all levels of education, has in recent years been researched from a wider variety of theoretical perspectives on learning, informed by sociocultural theories, as well as cognitive perspectives. It explores a broad array of topics (e.g., learning sciences, embodied cognition, social and emotional learning, learning analytics, and machine learning) covering themes of knowledge, epistemic cognition, cognitive load, executive function, curiosity and interest, self-efficacy, grit and resilience, academic self-concept, and emotion.

A discussion of the current developments in education is not possible without an examination of recent thinking in student assessment and research methodologies used in gaining insights about these developments. One of the volumes focuses on educational assessment, evaluation, and accountability. Since the last edition of the *Encyclopedia*, there has been an immense increase in the role of educational assessment in informing learning, policy, practice, and governance. Growth in expectations has been accompanied by expansion of methodologies used in educational assessment as well as challenges to its underpinnings. With these developments comes an awareness of a bidirectional relationship between assessment and social and cultural contexts, including its role in perpetuating social inequities.

And, finally, over the past decade, developments in use of computer technologies in daily life as well as education have transformed the ways it is possible to collect a vast amount of data. This has led to major innovations in research methods, both quantitative and qualitative. Two volumes in this encyclopedia explore these innovations, highlighting not only their technical aspects but also their efficacy and potential to assist attempts at educational reform. The volume on quantitative and measurement methodologies includes chapters focusing on foundational methodologies such as regression and reliability as well as machine learning and intelligent tutoring. The section on qualitative, multiple, and mixed methodologies includes philosophical and methodological aspects of these methodologies as was done in the previous edition. However, there are a significantly larger number of chapters on mixed and multiple methods.

This *Encyclopedia* is thus constituted by diversity in all its forms arising from recent developments, including the need to consider how our hegemonic approaches to educational thinking in the past had narrowed our perspectives, spaces, and voices and diminished the sovereignty and respect given nonmainstream groups. We hope the encyclopedia reinforces a shift to embracing transcultural matters in keeping with postcolonial matters and heralds the end of solely western ways of knowing in Education. We also hope the discussions advance a reconsideration of education and educational research in ways consistent with a fuller global embrace of the local. We believe that the global discussion of issues here reflects some of the wider sociocultural-political developments perspectives emerging in education.

Putting together this *Encyclopedia* has been an enormous task. It has taken us 3 years of hard work under the difficult conditions of COVID-19. Its completion would not have been possible without the collaborative support we have received from the volume editors, who volunteered to contribute not only because of their passion, commitment, and generosity, but also their sense of responsibility to the field of Education. And of course, we are enormously grateful to the rich complement of excellent authors, established and new voices in their respective fields, who have done their best to meet the deadlines and address editorial queries in a challenging time. We would like to offer a special note of thanks to the staff at Elsevier, and especially to

Paula Davies (Content Project Manager) who oversaw and ensured the integrity of the papers as well as managed the production processes for all of us. While there may be only a few brave souls who review the entire 4th edition of the *Encyclopedia*, we hope that the material will be valuable to a range of scholars in education, to students engaging with the many subfields, and to our various stakeholders. We offer this edition of the *Encyclopedia* as an exploration of issues represented in ways that transcend what we often encounter in the news or in social media, or even in our respective journals and other scholarly outlets, and to challenge conventional thinking in favor of vital ways of knowing and understanding our ever-changing landscape of Education.

Rob Tierney, Fazal Rizvi, and Kadriye Ercikan
Editors in Chief

Volume 1: Globalization and the Shifting Geopolitics of Education

Fazal Rizvi and Jason Beech

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Introduction

The papers in this volume of the 4th edition of the *International Encyclopedia of Education* are based on the premise that geopolitical shifts invariably affect the ways in which the purposes of education are conceptualized and its governance organized. This much is clear when we look at the major shifts that the world has experienced historically since formal educational systems were first established in the early 19th century. These systems were created then against the emerging demands of colonization, industrialization, and urbanization. They reflected the pursuit of modernity, with the use of industrial techniques to expand the populations that received formal education. While churches and other civic organizations had always promoted education for some sections of the community, from early 19th century the state began to play a dominant role in cultivating subjects that it felt the processes of modernization demanded.

The geopolitical shifts associated with colonialism deeply shaped the ways in which systems of education were organized, both in the colonizing and the colonized territories, and also in newly independent postcolonial states in the Americas. In this way, the spatial politics of colonialism largely created and fashioned modern systems of education, as well as the relationship between them in most parts of the world. The colonial powers, such as Britain and France, thus forged the character of education in the lands they occupied in ways that invariably served their interests, though in ways very different to each other and other colonial powers such as Spain and Portugal. Everywhere, however, education systems operated within the registers of the geopolitical imagination of the colonizers. Their curriculum and pedagogic approaches were designed mostly to produce subjects who were loyal to the colonial interests. Conversely, to ensure the legitimacy of colonial exploits, educational institutions in Europe had the task of providing their own local populations an understanding of the colonialized world which portrayed the colonized people as inferior, who needed to be civilized.

As more colonies began to gain political independence after World War II, the geopolitics of the world shifted markedly. Yet most of the colonial arrangements persisted, despite attempts to cultivate new nationalist sensibilities (Fanon, 1967). This persistence was partly due to the failure of the decolonized states to imagine new ways of thinking about the nature of knowledge and the role that their own educational institutions could play in creating and transmitting a new appreciation of their place in the world. The lack of resources also led them to turn to the economically developed countries, their former colonizers, for development assistance to expand their systems of education, to create a knowledge and skills base they regarded as necessary to realize their nationalist aspirations.

The notion of development with its binary categorization into developed and underdeveloped country became a fundamental feature of the geopolitics of education and in the expansion of international organizations as key actors in promoting certain educational principles worldwide. The so-called developed nations often portrayed foreign aid as their moral responsibility. Strategically, however, such aid was always a way of extending their political influence and commercial interests, as the World Systems Theories (Wallerstein, 2004) demonstrated. This ideology of “developmentalism” (Escobar, 1995) also played an important role in the machinations of the Cold War, with education becoming aligned to the competing geopolitical interests. The Soviet Union and the United States competed for hearts and minds around the world in a cultural war that was fought through propaganda, cultural influence, and through education. The Soviet Union, for example, influenced the education systems of China and Cuba, while the United States had a strong impact on education in Brazil. The two superpowers also sought to extend their geopolitical influence through the scholarships they offered to students in the “developing countries,” supposedly to prepare them to meet the requirements of national economic development. Many scholarship students remained in these countries and now constitute a highly influential diasporic community.

Since the end of the Cold War, while this understanding of education and development persists to an extent, it is now tied to a view of geopolitics that has increasingly been shaped by modes of thinking associated with the ideologies of free markets and liberal democracy. This geopolitical shift is both driven by and associated with the discourses of globalization. The idea of globalization has of course been defined in a wide variety of ways (Held and McGrew, 2005), but its generalized definition highlights “the acceleration and compression of spatial and temporal relations” facilitated by the radically new developments in communication and transport technologies (Ray, 2007). It is expressed in and through the rapidly growing levels of mobility of people, money, ideas, and goods across nations and regions. This embedding of global flows has helped to cultivate active subjects whose interactions, intentions, and meaning now constitute global forms of sociality. It has created conditions that have reconstituted economic, political, and social institutions, including education, based on new policy settlements, articulated in various perceptions of global imperatives and opportunities.

Over the past three decades, these developments have encouraged various theoretical innovations underpinned by what has been referred to “the spatial turn” (Nieuwenhuis and Crouch, 2017), involving a new understanding of the relationship between geography and politics, encapsulated by the term “geopolitics.” While the idea of “geopolitics” has been widely used in the academic field of International Relations, a core argument of this volume is that it is also helpful in theorizing the ways in which

globalization has transformed the economic, political, and cultural institutions, relationalities, and practices, and how educational systems are now embedded within its evolving dynamics. It is possible therefore to speak of the geopolitical shifts in education, in attempts to understand how the various contours of education the ways are now invariably shaped by global forces, connections, and imaginations.

The concept of geopolitics, however, is a slippery and highly contested one: it refers both to a set of practices and institutional arrangements as well as various discursive constructions. At its core is the premise that geography plays an important role not only in determining the great power politics of International Relations but also in shaping the conduct of citizens, corporations, international bodies, social movements, governments, as well as institutions. The idea of geopolitics thus suggests that the connections between place, the state, and politics are affected by geographical arrangements, such as boundaries, coalitions, spatial networks, natural resources, and mobilities. These arrangements have the potential to redefine the ways in which political power is exercised, enforced, or undermined at global, regional, national, and local levels. In this way, an understanding of spatiality is helpful in making sense of global changes and in providing insights into the future behaviors of states, and their likely impact on individuals and institutions.

In the literature in International Relations, the concept of geopolitics has mostly been addressed through a realist lens (Dalby, 2013). The realist approach to geopolitics assumes that the relations between nation-states are largely anarchical since there is no world government capable of restricting their actions. Hence, self-interests often drive the exercise of power in International Relations, with nation-states viewed as primary actors. The core function of nation-states is to provide security and protect the domestic space and its citizens from the threat of the chaotic international sphere. In this way, realism presupposes a binary between the “inside” and the “outside” of the state. It also assumes the relationship between states to be inherently asymmetrical. It regards a stable global political space to be one in which chaos and anarchy can only be brought under a degree of control either through various forms of strategic agreements between nations or through the dominance of some nations over others.

The critics of this approach in the field of International Relations (for example, Sharp, 2009) argue that the realist understanding of geopolitics overstates the extent of conflict and competition in the world, and that the interstate system equally displays a capacity of both states and institutions to collaborate, negotiate international law, and work cooperatively through intergovernmental bodies such as the European Union. Without denying their importance, they insist moreover that nation-states are not the only actors in the configuration of geopolitics. Furthermore, the critical reading of geopolitics refuses to see the world as it supposedly is but highlights instead the need to examine the relationship between geography and politics as ideologically constructed, ‘imbued with social and cultural meaning’ (Dodds, 2019: 34). It regards the relationship between place and politics as always contingent, complex, and contextually determined. The critical approach thus insists “the everyday experiences of people and the strategies they have to adopt to in order to cope with the geopolitical and geoeconomic processes as fundamentally varied” (p. 36), subject to interpretations of the dynamic shifts in International Relations.

The papers in this volume are largely inspired by a critical reading of recent geopolitics shifts in education. They point to the ways in which the facts of global interconnectivity and interdependence have been debated and have reshaped our understanding of education, its purposes, as well as its modes of governance. They highlight how educational ideas and ideologies travel across national boundaries, broadening the scope of educational networks across various spatial configurations. This realization does not only give rise to new issues and challenges but also demands new ways of understanding educational policy processes and priorities, based on the assumption that the facts of global interconnectivity and their implications for education are never self-evident but can be imagined in a variety of different ways. Yet what has become abundantly clear is that in recent decades the idea of globalization has acquired a hegemonic meaning, linked to the ideological assumptions of neoliberalism. The neoliberal understanding of globalization involves a kind of political imagination that does not quite abandon the traditional norms of education but rearticulates them in commercial terms, commodifying educational outcomes.

This neoliberal imaginary highlights the benefits that can be derived from a global interconnected market economy, suggesting that education needs to create citizens who are well equipped to participate in economic activities that are increasingly knowledge based and globally extended. This understanding of economy has given rise to a wide variety of institutional practices, including organizational reforms such as globally stretched production, outsourcing, strategic alliances, clustering, and diversification and technological innovations especially in the areas of information, communication, and transport. It has promoted the formation of transnational networks to boost the production and distribution of goods and services, leading to the expansion of the movement of capital, goods, services, and people, and the uses of high information technologies, telecommunication networks, and intellectual capital to promote productivity in all fields of human endeavors. It has encouraged most aspects of education to be viewed in neoliberal terms (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010).

A range of explanations have been put forward to explain how market ideologies have become hegemonic. Some authors have pointed to the crisis of socialism on a global scale, rendering neoliberalism triumphant. At the same time, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), global corporations, and other non-state actors have been highly influential. Since the early 1990s, the World Trade Organization, for example, has negotiated various rules to govern patterns of international trade, in goods and services alike to embed competition in most spheres of life, including education that has been recasted as a global commodity. The World Bank has become highly effective in persuading nation-states to adopt policies consistent with neoliberal precepts, while the OECD has created mechanisms to encourage global competition in education. Global corporations, such as Pearson and Microsoft, are no longer reluctant to steer national education policies in the direction of its preferred understanding of education. Other non-state actors such as foundations and think tanks are also major carriers in the global circulation of neoliberal sentiments. These shifts

have reconstituted the geopolitical space within which the nation-states now relate to each other, contributing to now only to massive changes in economic policy but also in setting educational priorities.

These developments have created conditions under which systems of education around the world have undergone major changes. The ways in which educational institutions are now governed have been radically transformed. The role of the state in funding education has diminished, with nonpublic sources, including student tuition, becoming dominant. The neoliberal sentiments have now begun to define approaches to teaching and learning, as well as approaches to assessment and accountability. Narratives that legitimate education have also shifted, as humanist ideals of human progress, salvation, equality, liberty, and access to truth have been marginalized at the same time as “the capacity of countries ... to compete in the global knowledge economy” (Schleicher, 2007: 9) is given precedence. At the same time, the number of students attending schools globally has grown rapidly and has more than doubled over the past three decades. This has transformed the demographic landscape of educational institutions, making diversity ubiquitous, giving rise to a new politics of difference that can no longer be ignored, and putting issues of inequalities at the center of educational debates.

These changes are historic and have seemingly become entrenched in our imagination regarding the purposes and governance of education. The papers in this volume attempt to understand this historical transformation, showing how educational changes have been promoted, managed, and contested and pointing to the major issues that systems of education now face, in various regions of the world. Of course, the issues and challenges examined in this volume do not claim to provide a complete and exhaustive account but are illustrative of how various geopolitical shifts are transforming educational landscape, such as those linked to the emergence of knowledge capitalism, privatization, the changing nature of work and labor relations, the mobility of students, and the like. Many issues that are equally if not more important are not included in this volume. This is so because some of these issues are addressed in other volumes of this encyclopedia, but also because some invitations were not taken up for a variety of perfectly understandable reasons, including the daunting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, beyond these practical limitations, it needs to be admitted that no account of the geopolitical shifts in education can ever be complete. The best that can be done is to highlight some of the key debates, albeit in an admittedly selective manner, to demonstrate how current developments in education take place within the context of the geopolitical shifts associated with a neoliberal imaginary of globalization. Within this context, the national systems of education are affected by the work of international organizations, both intergovernmental and nongovernmental, though in ways that vary and often contested. A theme common to many of the papers in this volume is that the contradictions and deeply harmful consequences of neoliberalism are now increasingly evident, and this provides a space in which the purposes and governance of education can be reimaged. The volume is structured in seven sections.

The first section shows how geopolitics shifts associated with globalization have challenged some of the traditional modes of theorizing educational purposes, priorities, and processes. As a result, new concepts, approaches, and methodological tools have been advanced in recent decades to apprehend the conditions emerging from the shifting geopolitics. The papers show how globalization has demanded new ways of thinking about comparative education, the world systems theory, and the notion of development in education and have investigated the potential of spatial theories, Southern Theory, as well as the idea of transnationalism. Also highlighted throughout these papers are the ways in which neoliberalism has transformed the social and ethical space of education, in ways that are both destructive and unsustainable.

The papers in the next section, “Global Norms and Challenges in Education,” discuss how recent geopolitical shifts have unsettled some of the traditional norms associated with education, such as equality, human rights and democracy, and peace education. The papers show how these issues now must be addressed in new registers, under conditions of global interconnectivity and interdependence. These conditions have also produced new economic, political, and economic challenges for education relating, for example, to migration and new diaspora formations. These changes have had profound impact on youth cultures around the world, demanding new approaches to curriculum and pedagogy.

Under the title “Policy Responses to the Shifting Landscape of Education,” the next set of papers considers how policy responses to these geopolitical shifts have been diverse, predicted on a contrasting range of assumptions relating to the nature of the good life and the ways in which education should be organized to promote it. Based on neoliberal assumptions, the dominant response has come in the form of what has been called the Global Educational Reform Movement. This has involved attempts to privatize education, with the corporatization of public education and the imposition of structural adjustment programs that restrict the investment of state funds on public education. The politics of foreign aid for education is increasingly aligned to the geopolitical interests of global markets and profit-making in and through education and can now be viewed as an exercise in public diplomacy. Global student mobility and the internationalization of education is often linked to the imperatives of the global knowledge economy and competition over skills. New communication technologies have also engendered in practices in online education, often as a way of expanding the reach of education, both through state-sponsored and commercially driven technology companies.

In the next section, “Policy Mobilities and the Global Politics in Education,” the discussion commences with the recognition of how recent changes in education display a remarkable drift toward what has been called “isomorphism” produced by patterns of policy transfer and borrowing across educational systems in the pluriverse. While this isomorphism does not imply global convergence of ideas and ideologies across the world in any absolute sense, it does indicate how the global forces are at play in their impacts on education, creating complex patterns of policy transfer, borrowing, and adaptation, creating possibilities of both competition and collaboration across national borders. Emerging also are new ways of organizing education at various levels of education.

Major differences in educational responses to the geopolitical shifts can be observed across regions and nations. The next section of this volume, “Global Imperatives and Regional Configurations,” includes a range of papers that explore the ways in which

globalization has impacted on educational policy and practice in various regions, including the Middle East and North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, the various regions of Asia, and in the small island states in the Pacific and the Caribbean. What these papers demonstrate is the importance of examining how, in responding to the pressures of globalization, educational systems within the regions both collaborate and compete with other and are a major factor in shaping the geopolitics of education.

The next section in this volume examines the role of IGOs, such as the OECD, the World Bank, and UNESCO, in the formation and ongoing dynamics of the contemporary geopolitics of education. The papers in this section seek to explore of IGOs and influence national systems of education through the construction of assessment and accountability regimes, encouraging cooperation and competition, developing various conventions such as Bologna, and sharing information, as through various mechanisms of coercion, such as those involved in development assistance and demands of structural adjustment. Of course, these institutions do not promote the same ideological preferences for education, but often sponsor contrasting ideologies. UNESCO and UNICEF, for example, promote social democratic ideals, which the World Bank and the OECD view education in terms of human capital formation. Along with IGOs, nongovernmental organizations and for-profit corporate and philanthropic organizations have feature prominently in the processes of policy development and implementation in education.

The final section in this volume, "Emerging Conditions and Challenges in Education," points to the growing recognition of the complexity and contradictions of education spawned by the geopolitical shifts in education that have been witnessed over the past three decades. The papers point to the rapidly changing global conditions, relating, for example, to the greater recognition of the environmental crisis and climate change, inequalities, and the changing nature of work and communication; datafication and the emergence of new technologies of governance; the revival of nationalism; and anti-globalization sentiments (Rizvi et al., 2022). These developments have shaped educational politics itself, albeit in contradictory and conflicting ways. On the one hand, attempts to consolidate a neoliberal imaginary of education, through the relentless drive toward privatization, datafication of educational processes and the growing appeal of right-wing populism continue to hold power, while on the other hand, calls for the decolonization of knowledge and curriculum, and the reassertion of the educational significance of the values of equality, democracy and human rights strive for a different role of education in the construction of a more fair, sustainable and secure global order.

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CONTENTS OF VOLUME 1

<i>Editors in Chief</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>Editors in Chief – Biographies</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Editorial Board</i>	<i>ix</i>
<i>Section Editors</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xix</i>
<i>Volume 1: Globalization and the Shifting Geopolitics of Education</i>	<i>xxiii</i>
<i>Contributors to Volume 1</i>	<i>xxvii</i>

THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Globalization and education <i>Steven Lewis</i>	1
Comparative education: then, now, and next <i>Robert Cowen</i>	11
World-systems analysis <i>Tom G Griffiths and Marcin Starnawski</i>	19
Spatial theories, methods and education policy <i>Kalervo N Gulson, Dan Cohen, Steven Lewis, Emma Rowe, Ee-Seul Yoon, and Chris Lubienski</i>	29
Southern theory as an educational project: Shinto, self-negation and comparative education <i>Keita Takayama</i>	37
Transnationalism <i>Niranjan Casinader</i>	45
Development and education <i>Simon McGrath</i>	52
The neoliberal dispositif: understanding the transformation of the social and ethical space of education <i>Bronwen MA Jones and Stephen J Ball</i>	60

GLOBAL NORMS AND CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION

Global human rights <i>Anja Mihr</i>	70
The light in the distance: global democracy and humanity's hope for the future <i>Ruthanne Kurth-Schai</i>	79
Peace education in conflict zones: general trends and Israeli particularities <i>Zvi Bekerman</i>	94
Enhancing a Global South-North partnership to promote global justice in K-12 classrooms: a Botswana case study <i>Agreement L Jotia, Karen L Biraimah, and Brianna A Kurtz</i>	104
Parental unemployment and children's educational outcomes – a Literature review <i>Hannu Lehti</i>	118
Diaspora and internationalization of higher education: a critical approach <i>Annette Bamberger</i>	128
Education of refugees <i>Helen Avery</i>	135
Online education <i>Ricardo Montelongo</i>	148
Digital learning divide <i>Josef Kuo-Hsun Ma</i>	157

POLICY RESPONSES TO THE SHIFTING LANDSCAPE OF EDUCATION

Global education reform movement revisited <i>Pasi Sahlberg</i>	165
The privatization of education. Drivers, social effects and regulatory challenges of private sector participation in schooling <i>Antoni Verger, Clara Fontdevila, and Adrián Zancajo</i>	174
Making the public private: the privatization of public education <i>David Hursh and Zhe Chen</i>	183
Shifting priorities of foreign aid to Pacific Island Countries: some considerations of new imperialism and geopolitics <i>Juliana Mohok McLaughlin</i>	193
Six decades of development: the impact of structural adjustment programs on education in developing countries <i>Óscar Espinoza and Noel McGinn</i>	205
Erasmus(+) student mobility: individual and institutional motivations and effects <i>Manuel Souto-Otero, Luca Favero, Kristyna Basna, Martin Humburg, and Stephanie Oberheidt</i>	218
Academic mobility: global trends and future prospects <i>Robin Shields and Jack T Lee</i>	230
Internationalization of higher education <i>Ulrich Teichler</i>	239

Global processes: global trade in international education and the international education-migration nexus <i>Ly Thi Tran and Diep Thi Bich Nguyen</i>	250
Teach for all and the visual regime of global teacher education reform <i>Daniel Friedrich and Andrew Greene</i>	260
POLICY MOBILITIES AND THE GLOBAL POLITICS IN EDUCATION	
Policy isomorphism: a lens for understanding the influence of globalization on national education policymaking <i>Yuzhuo Cai</i>	271
Knowledge economy meets development imaginaries <i>Alejandro Artopoulos</i>	280
Redefining educational transfer and borrowing in the pluriverse <i>Byoung-gyu Gong, Jieyu Jiang, and Iveta Silova</i>	290
Global mobility and middle class families—parenting and education <i>Claire Maxwell and Miri Yemini</i>	302
Transnational academic collaboration: a critical analysis of the global and national contexts and constraints of co-authorship <i>Terri Kim</i>	308
South-South Cooperation in Education <i>tavis d jules, Richard Arnold, and Victoria Desimoni</i>	317
Global testing regimes: accountability, standardization, racial inequality and the rise of audit culture <i>Goli M Rezai-Rashti and Shirin Abdmolaei</i>	327
International schools: shifting sands and winds of change <i>Mary Hayden and Jeff Thompson</i>	336
International Baccalaureate: meanings, uses and tensions in a globalizing world <i>Paul Tarc</i>	344
Low-fee private schools <i>Geoffrey Walford</i>	355
False and distracting promises: early childhood education and care in low income countries <i>Helen Penn</i>	366
English as a medium of instruction and research in education: an international and comparative analysis <i>Birgit Brock-Utne</i>	371
GLOBAL IMPERATIVES AND REGIONAL CONFIGURATIONS	
Impact of globalization on higher education in the Middle East and North Africa <i>Abdeljalil Akkari</i>	380
Challenges facing education in Sub-Saharan Africa <i>Isaac Quist</i>	388
Shifting policies of education in Latin América <i>Carlos Ornelas</i>	398

Asia-Pacific-realist and imaginary constructions <i>Kerry J Kennedy</i>	412
Education in South-East Asia. Much achieved, much still to do <i>Anthony Welch</i>	419
Globalization and political economy of education development in South Asia <i>Jandhyala BG Tilak and Pushkarni Panchamukhi</i>	425
Regionalization of higher education and geopolitics in Northeast Asia <i>Kiyong Byun and Bawool Hong</i>	447
Education in small island (and micro) states <i>tavis d jules, Victoria Desimoni, and Caitlin Donnelley-Power</i>	456
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	
The work of international organizations: ten theoretical approaches and a way forward <i>D Brent Edwards, Jr. and Mauro C Moschetti</i>	465
The World Bank and education in a changing global arena <i>Xavier Bonal, Clara Fontdevila, and Adrián Zancajo</i>	480
UNICEF: self-transformation in a reconfigured global childhood space? <i>Jennifer Guevara and Mathias Urban</i>	488
European Union <i>Marcella Milana</i>	494
The World Trade Organization <i>Susan L Robertson</i>	503
UNESCO: promising education multilateralism? <i>Yusuf Sayed, Gunjan Sharma, and Aditi Desai</i>	510
Education for all and MDGs: global education policy translation in India <i>Mousumi Mukherjee, Amar Mali, and Tenzin Dolma</i>	526
The education Sustainable Development Goal 4: a critical appraisal <i>Nigel OM Brissett</i>	539
Labor markets, SDG4 and vocational education and training <i>Leona M English and Peter Mayo</i>	547
Global Education Monitoring Report <i>Robyn Read and Aaron Benavot</i>	553
NGOs & international development: ongoing trends and new architectures <i>Sahara Pradhan, Verity Norman-Tichawangana, and Sangeeta Kamat</i>	565
Education International and its global contribution to educational debates <i>Jim Baker</i>	574
Global education philanthropy <i>Kenneth J Saltman</i>	586
For profit corporations and education reform: global dimensions and impacts <i>Patricia Burch and S Srinivasa Rao</i>	591

EMERGING CHALLENGES IN EDUCATION

The geopolitics of climate change and education policy <i>Marcia McKenzie</i>	597
Ecopedagogy and ecopedagogical literacy <i>Greg William Misiaszek</i>	601
What works or what matters? Contested ideas of girls' education, gender equity and global connection <i>Elaine Unterhalter</i>	613
Global connective media: YouTube as an educational infrastructure <i>Inés Dussel and Patricia Ferrante</i>	622
Global competition over skills <i>Sin Yee Koh</i>	630
Public diplomacy and international higher education <i>Eva Hartmann</i>	640
Populism and education <i>Edda Sant</i>	648
The China challenge; China's challenges <i>Anthony Welch</i>	658
China's engagement with Southeast Asia in higher education <i>Kejin Zhu and Rui Yang</i>	666
Datafication <i>Matthew Thorpe and Sam Sellar</i>	673
Issues: neocolonialism and global languages <i>Suzanne Majhanovich</i>	682
The mangle of contemporary geopolitics <i>Radhika Gorur and Joyeeta Dey</i>	691

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Globalization and education

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Introduction	1
Globalization as spaces and flows	2
Theorizing global spaces and relations	4
Scalar understandings of space	4
Topological understandings of space	5
Conclusion: the implications of globalization for education research	7
Acknowledgments	8
References	8

Introduction

In 2021, we find ourselves amid unprecedented uncertainty as COVID-19 continues to rage unchecked across the world. By its very definition, a global pandemic presents humanity with a crisis that is uniquely *global* in nature, regardless of one's geographic location or national allegiance. The extent of this shared experience is perhaps best expressed by the common responses countries have employed to limit virus transmission: the sudden halting of the mass circulation of people and products; the (re)erection of hard security borders along political boundaries to curtail freedom of movement; and the desperate scramble of national (and sometimes subnational) political leaders for ventilators and vaccines on the international market. Perhaps unlike any time in recent history, a significant majority of humanity is caught within an inescapable paradox, whereby global transportation, travel and trade bring both the risk of COVID-19 infection and, at the same time, the very means of overcoming the pandemic via the development and distribution of viable vaccines. Like Homer's Odysseus, we all now all caught somewhere between Scylla and Charybdis; that is, between a rock and a hard place, with neither option especially appealing.

Be it reliance on global supply chains or an aversion to international travel, a common – and necessary – concept to explain and hopefully resolve these diverse COVID-related issues is globalization. And yet, like many similarly nebulous terms (see here *neoliberalism*, *liberal*, *expertize*, *truth*, etc.), *globalization* has become something of an empty signifier, a catch-all term to diagnose and denote whatever feature of contemporary life is at hand, be it positive or negative or ambivalent. While ostensibly removed from the significance of global pandemics, I would note here that education is by no means immune to the processes and effects of globalization. Indeed, many of the more profound developments in education (and, for that matter, education research) have involved the global mobility of people, policies and products. Consider, for example, the now ubiquitous work of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), including the numerous iterations of its Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) test; or the various local inflections of global discourses concerning standards-based reforms and standardized assessment in schooling systems; or the multiple instances where local schooling communities have sought to challenge and contest the imposition of solutions “from elsewhere”. In short, globalization is arguably alive and well in terms of informing how education is understood and practiced, even if a singularly agreed conceptual definition of *globalization* might well remain elusive.

It is clearly beyond the scope of any one chapter to adequately address every such possible definition, especially given that diverse epistemological and ontological possibilities will necessarily shape how one approaches globalization, both conceptually and empirically. That said, it is still worthwhile defining the contours of globalization theorizing, if only to acknowledge the complexities of globalization as both an empirical/theoretical construct and, relatedly, a site of study. To this end, [Axford \(2013\)](#) distinguishes between *globalization* as a process (i.e., how globalized connections are made and sustained) and *globalism* as a set of ideological frameworks that seek to endow globalization with certain values and meanings. For instance, [Steger \(2009\)](#) establishes three main forms of globalisms: (i) *market globalism*, associated with neoliberal notions of the free market; (ii) *justice globalism*, based on global solidarity and redistributive justice; and (iii) *religious globalism*, which serves to counter the forces of secularism and consumerism. Such diverse ideological underpinnings, comprising “patterned clusters of normatively imbued ideas and concepts” ([Steger and James, 2013, 19](#)), suggest, arguably, that the study of globalization *can never be* politically neutral, and a close reflexivity is therefore warranted when considering the theoretical legacies inherent in adopting different approaches, as well as how they then shape the (globalized) object of study.

These foundational definitions are further complicated if we also consider the related concept of *globality*; that is, how one practises and experiences the globalized world, in which “the totality of global flows, networks, interactions and connections (...) triggers a shift in the organization of human affairs and in ways of thinking about social relations and enacting them” ([Axford, 2014, n. p.](#)). Here, *globality as condition* transcends globalization as process and globalism as ideological assumption, and instead offers what [Axford \(2014, n. p.\)](#) describes as “a constitutive framework for action and a framework itself constituted through action and

consciousness". Put differently, globality seeks to undermine any *a priori* assumptions regarding a "global" entity, process or consequence, which also precludes essentializing any particular vantage point (geographical, social location, theoretical, ideological ...) from which to observe and study globalization. In a related manner, Connell's (2007) critique of "northern theories of globalization" notes the all-too-common absence of Southern and non-metropolitan social theory (and theorists), suggesting the future study of globalization needs to be far more global and inclusive, in both intent and substance. As Connell (2007, 379) pointedly remarks, there is very often "no one with a black face, no women, and no one from outside Europe", which might cause us all to reflect on how studies of globalization can ever be truly *global* under such circumstances.

Despite these caveats, and fully realizing the limitations of my efforts here, this chapter nonetheless seeks to explore and describe some of the major theoretical traditions that have informed thinking about globalization and, in turn, its implication for education policy and governance. I particularly situate an understanding of globalization within broader developments in the social sciences around spatial issues, as well as the various theoretical frameworks that have been mobilized to better understand *where* and *to whom* education policy is spatially and relationally located in a globalized setting. As Rizvi and Lingard (2010, 69) well note, "critical policy analysis in an era of globalization requires that we recognize the relationality and interconnectivity of policy developments". Put differently, a concern for globalization and education requires our attention to how different constellations of people, practices and places are brought together coherently; how policies, in a material and discursive sense, are mobilized to flow (or not flow) within and between these spaces; and, finally, the implications these movements have for how power relations are exercised. In short, globalization suggests that space needs to be employed "not simply as an object of concern but [also] as a conceptual tool for analysis" (Larsen and Beech, 2014, 201).

Deriving from this interest in spatial matters, I introduce here two theoretical approaches for studying globalization in education and the socio-spatial dynamics of policymaking and governance. These include (i) *scalar approaches*, or an understanding of space as nested multi-levelled scales, such as national, subnational and international (Papanastasiou, 2016; Fraser, 2010; Brenner 1999b, 2004; Jessop, 2002); and (ii) *topological approaches*, or an understanding of space as constituted through relations between social actors (Martin and Secor, 2014; Lury et al., 2012; Lewis et al., 2016; Decuyper and Simons, 2016). This is not to presume these frameworks are the only means by which to interrogate globalization and related spatial matters; however, they arguably provide two of the key (and most cited) approaches to apprehend global processes in education policy. I would also emphasize that both scalar and topological understandings of space foreground, importantly, the inherent relationship between space and power (Massey, 1993, 1999; Allen 2011, 2016; Allen and Cochrane, 2010). Attending in this way to the spatial dimensions of globalization helps bring to light the multiple complex processes at play in the constitution of "educational space", and the manner in which space is "deeply implicated in power, production and social relations" (Robertson, 2010, 15).

The structure of the chapter will proceed as follows. After first discussing globalization itself as an object of study, I then consider, in turn, scalar and topological theorizations of space, including their origin within the field of critical human geography and how each provides a distinct spatial lens through which to view globalized spaces and relations. I conclude the chapter with a discussion of how these scalar and topological approaches help us better apprehend the implications of globalization for undertaking education research, whereby space is not only – after Larsen and Beech (2014) – a matter for concern but also a central theoretical and analytical focus.

Globalization as spaces and flows

Although it has often been ambivalently defined within academic and popular literature, globalization is foremost concerned with how spaces and people beyond the traditional focus of the nation-state are situated in relation to one another. It is focused on "meanings of place and space ... and raised global connectivity" (Amin, 2002, 385), and how these have come to shape, and be recursively shaped by, a diverse array of social, economic and political exchanges. Different academic fields and traditions, drawing on different theoretical frameworks, will necessarily be driven to a variety of specific interests associated with globalization. Consider, for instance, how labor is spatially divided (Massey, 1993); how the world is imagined and the effects of this imagining (Appadurai, 1996); how the "Global North" (itself a problematic construction) has witnessed the hegemony of Americanized culture (Conrad, 2014); or how comparative testing regimes help constitute commensurate spaces of measurement and comparison (Meyer and Benavot, 2013; Lewis, 2020; Lingard, 2021a). But regardless of one's onto-epistemic orientation, a globalized world is connected and dynamic, in which world-level *organization* and *flows* bring forth competing sites and sources of political authority and social collectivity.

As noted previously, a concern for globalization requires our attention to how people, practices and places are brought together across countries and regions; how material and discursive flows are mobilized within and between these spaces; and how these movements shape the exercise of power relations. Although now well-known and oft-cited, the foundational definition of globalization by Held et al. (1999, 16) still warrants inclusion here:

[G]lobalization can be thought of as a process (or set of processes) which embodies a *transformation in the spatial organization* of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact – generating transcontinental or interregional *flows* and *networks* of activity, interaction, and the exercise of power. (emphasis added)

This highlights the processual nature of globalization as an ongoing and dynamic development that – while often sharing many features between “globalized spaces” – unfolds in highly contingent and context-specific ways. While there is no single experience of globalization that completely transcends individual cultures and histories, as these characteristics will always manifest in highly “vernacular” ways (Appadurai, 1996), the utility of such a definition is that the *spatial* and *relational* are explicitly emphasized. In short, it provides a lens for viewing a world of multi-lateral connectivity between spaces that are no longer reducible to the nation-state. Rather, we can see globalization making possible a “stretching and deepening of social relations and institutions” (Held, 1995, 20), whereby our activities are both shaped by and shape activities that might otherwise be considered geographically distant and distinct from one’s own.

Among the many implications of moving away from strict state-centrism is that all places, and their respective people and objects, are now “tied into at least thin networks of connections that stretch beyond each such place” (Sheller and Urry, 2006, 209), meaning no person or place can any longer be considered an island, entire of itself. Such wholesale changes to the spatial arrangement and connectivity of the world challenges, in turn, the primacy of political territory and geographic location as the sole determinant of “where” one is. To cite a well-worn example, so-called “global” cities – think here London, New York and Hong Kong – arguably exist in *multiple spatialities*. They are each at once part of broader national and subnational polities, and yet they also exist in direct relation to and alongside other similarly global metropolizes, seemingly disembodied from their broader territorial contexts through their advanced international transport, financial and cultural connections. It is not that one spatial configuration automatically needs to supersede another (for instance, London is not necessarily more “aligned” to New York than it is to the city of Manchester, or to the UK more broadly), but it does clearly introduce new complications to how place is spatially embedded. We might say that it occurs both topographically (i.e., *location*) and topologically (i.e., *relation*). Accompanying this shift in spatial belonging is the need to reimagine the ontological distinction between the local and elsewhere, in which we can no longer assume that “local happenings or geographies are ontologically separable from those ‘out there’” (Amin, 2002, 386).

However, it is equally important not to conflate efforts to complicate the ontology of global (“out there”) and local (“in here”) spaces with a view of globalization as somehow totalizing in nature, whereby the global overwhelms the local. Such a “determinist fallacy” (de Sousa Santos, 2006) wrongfully positions globalization as something spontaneous and irreversible, an *ex nihilo* process complete with its own inner logic that can be externally imposed “from above” upon local people and spaces. Rather, globalizing developments – such as Sahlberg’s (2011) *Global Educational Reform Movement* in education, or Ritzer’s (2013) *McDonaldization* in society more broadly – are always, to a greater or lesser degree, locally inflected by the historical and political specificities of a given locality or context. As de Sousa Santos (2006, 396) notes, “there is no originally global position; what we call globalization is always the successive globalization of a *particular localism*” (emphasis added). Such a position suggests there are no uniquely global spaces, processes or actors that exist entirely decoupled from their more local (be it subnational or national, as relevant) origins or contexts, as if they could be free-floating in some global ether. We can well observe many subsequently “global” policies as first being developed through either urban or regional initiatives. For instance, “Vancouverism”, as well as the conditional cash transfers (CCTs) of Mexico and participatory budgeting (PB) of Brazil, are clear examples of urban design policy taken up around the world *after* first originating in specific cities and regions (McCann and Ward, 2012; Peck and Theodore, 2015). In short, global policy does not need to solely emanate from notionally “global” intergovernmental organizations and agencies, like the OECD, to exert a global effect (see also McKenzie et al., 2021).

We can thus move away from a sense that globalization is somehow ontologically distinct from sub/national processes, and instead recognize the implicit relations that exist between the global and local. To take a specific education example, GERM may be regarded as a “globalized localism” (de Sousa Santos, 2006), or the progressive globalization of an approach to schooling accountability that first originated in the US and UK; that is, largely test-based, evidence-based, top-down and marketized (see Lingard and Lewis, 2016). The national origin of the policy advice proffered by the OECD, now arguably an influential policy actors in its own right, often explicitly references the policies and practices of PISA “poster children”, or schooling systems that have demonstrated high performance on the PISA survey, such as the much-fêted Singapore and Finland (Lewis, 2017). Moreover, the actors who inhabit national and subnational policy spaces are themselves frequently networked into whatever we might consider the global to be, with such “thought leaders” and policy entrepreneurs – or, in education, *edupreneurs* – often key nodes and facilitators in the development and dissemination of policy solutions (see also Lewis et al., 2020). Thus, even if global organizations are subsequently involved in promoting or revising initiatives that were originally local in origin (e.g., the World Bank promoting CCTs), these policy solutions cannot be considered to have simply dropped from the (global) sky.

Conversely, the manner that global(ized) policy is adopted by and informs local places (cities, states/provinces, countries) in material and discursive ways itself necessarily reflects the local and highly contextualized peculiarities of the local places in question. Such a process of mediation highlights what de Sousa Santos (2006) describes as a “localized globalism”, or the local inflection of a “globalism” that first emerged elsewhere (e.g., the Anglo-American approach to schooling accountability first emerging in the UK and US). Put differently, the local touching-down of “global” developments will always occur in “vernacular” (Appadurai, 1996) or “path-dependent” (Cohen, 2017; Tan and Yang, 2019; Takayama, 2012) ways that are mediated by local histories, politics and cultures. Given these more localized and context-driven enactments, it is more correct then, for instance, to recast the diverse expressions of Sahlberg’s (2011) GERM as *GERMs*, rather than otherwise suggest there is an essentialized version of global policy ensembles. And while politics and policy are never wholly local in nature, it is equally important to acknowledge that “neither do local spaces, nor local enactments of policy, ever entirely cease to retain their local-ness, regardless of the persistent (and increasing) presence and influence of global flows” (Lewis, 2021, 7).

We can thus see that “global” policy flows are still very much shaped by decidedly “local” conditions and contexts, which requires our attention to both dynamic movement and, simultaneously, the contextual embeddedness of so-called globalized policy, *vis-à-vis* the diverse people and places through which policy is developed, travels and is enacted. Rather than appearing from nowhere or else solely being imposed “from above”, there are considerably more nuanced processes at hand that risk being overlooked if globalization is instead reified as something always being done “here” from elsewhere.

Theorizing global spaces and relations

So far, we have defined globalization as something processual and contingent, rather than totalizing; and as deeply implicating local context through the development and importing of “global” policy solutions, rather than superimposed on unsuspecting recipients below. Taken together, it is foremost a concern with spaces and, importantly, how these spaces are held in relation to one another via the “stretching and deepening” of social connections. And yet, this seemingly simple focus is complicated not just by how one theorizes globalization as the constitution of relational spatiality, but also how one even more fundamentally understands what *social spaces* are. Despite the previous ontological primacy of the Westphalian nation-state, the acceleration of globalization and digital technologies in recent decades has problematized how the concept of space itself is understood, both ontologically (i.e., as spatial configuration) and epistemologically (i.e., as socially shaped category of practice). Critical geographers have long grappled with this problem, and the increased deployment of human geography within education research – or, the study of geographies of education (policy) (McKenzie et al., 2021) – provides an even greater impetus to explore how globalization in/of education is spatially enacted. There have been two main responses to these questions of spatial onto-epistemology, and how globalized social organization is arranged: (i) *scalar* approaches, and (ii) *topological* approaches. We will now consider each of them at length, respectively.

Scalar understandings of space

At its simplest, a scalar understanding of globalization recognizes different levels, or *scales*, of spatial organization and action, with subordinate scales (i.e., the local) nested within a series of progressively larger and notionally more complex spaces (i.e., the regional, national, international, transnational). The oft-quoted analogue of scalar space is the Russian *Matryoshka* doll, whereby carved dolls of decreasing sizes are placed within one another to represent the nation-state alongside other supranational and subnational political entities, which then aid or impede one another through the dynamics of inter-scalar contestation and/or cooperation (Jessop, 2002). Federal political systems provide a ready example of this inter-scalar jostling, especially in countries with a vertical fiscal imbalance between the revenue-raising powers of the federal government and the service-provision responsibilities of the states or provinces (e.g., Australia, Canada, Germany). We can also see such dynamics at play between the supranational European Union and its various member states and territories via the process of subsidiarity, which preserves responsibilities for certain policy areas for individual EU members and precludes “over-reach” by central authorities in Brussels.

Whichever scale is of particular focus, the common feature of all such scalar spaces is their definition via “geographically proximate links or as territorial units” (Amin, 2002, 386); that is, spatial organization is frequently determined by well-established political boundaries between or within countries that enclose continuous political units. This position does not assume that scalar spaces are somehow ontologically pregiven or stable, as territorial spaces and scales are always social constructions that reflect what Agnew (1999, 504) describes as the “historicity of spatiality”. Scalar thinking does, however, arguably foreground nation-states as fixed and mutually exclusive units of sovereign space, which are defined, more or less, by the territory within which they can exercise power (Agnew, 1994). As such, the nation-state effectively becomes a “container” of society that is centered upon the territory of the State, with smaller or larger organizational units arranged below or above such nationally defined territories. The presence of scalar logics, as well as the continued centring of the State (see Axford, 2014), is even implicit in the naming of fields such as “international relations” and “international development”, as these are defined by virtue of their activities occurring *beyond* the bounded scale and political territoriality of national space.

Attempts to view globalization through scalar lenses have been especially prominent within the field of political economy, especially regarding the increasing complexity of inter-territorial relationships and the resulting proliferation of spatial scales outside the strictures of the nation-state (see Jessop, 2002). One need only consider the rise of the “global city” (e.g., London, New York, Hong Kong), supranational political institutions (e.g., the European Union) or the increasing role of intergovernmental organizations in processes of global governance (e.g., the OECD, United Nations and World Bank) to observe how national territory has conceivably become but one spatial scale – and site of political authority – among many (for instance, see Brenner, 2004; Jessop, 2008; Sassen, 2006; Wallner et al., 2020). Importantly, the presence of multiple scales and globalized activity does not preclude the continuing relevance of the nation-state, nor the “simple replacement of national scales by a global scale of action” (Amin, 2002, 387). It does, however, acknowledge that the nation-state has been de-centred and can no longer be considered the “sealed container” of socio-economic activity, leading to what Brenner (1999b) has described as the “rescaling of territoriality”. In short, these attempts recognize the reconstitution of spatial scales and, in turn, the growing importance of subnational and supranational forms of political organization (Brenner, 1999a).

Such a scalar understanding of globalization also posits that “non-global” spaces (i.e., the national and subnational) are frequently the very sites where the global is practiced and where its effects are most apparent. For instance, Brenner (1999b) makes the useful distinction between, on one hand, the significant role of the *nation-state* as a site for the reterritorialization of global capital and, on the other, the reduced importance of the *national scale* as the means for delineating and organizing socio-economic relations. Put differently, the nation-state still clearly retains significance, but this role does not need to be solely exercised through nationally scaled institutions; that is, the organization and effects of the State are not automatically coterminous with the national scale of the State. The former ontological privileging of the national is thus overcome through scalar “relativization”, in which State power is rescaled downwards via devolution to subnational scales – turned “inside-out” – and, at the same time, rescaled upwards toward supranational institutions of regulation, or turned “outside-in” (Brenner, 1999b, 442). Relativization thus captures not only that the national scale is no longer preeminent, but that “no spatial scale is currently privileged” (Jessop, 1998, 90; emphasis added). This accommodates the so-called *re-scaling* of statehood (Brenner, 2004), whereby political authority and organization is relocated within new scalar dimensions.

More recent thinking around scalar space has sought to move further away from ontological understandings of scale, which has followed prior critiques of scale as a category of analysis (Robertson et al., 2002; Brenner, 2004). Such work has instead emphasized that scale should be understood more as an epistemological concept (see Papanastasiou, 2017; Savage et al., 2021), with scalar space seen as constituted through socially constructed relations. While this position aligns with earlier work that emphasized the historical nature of scalar spaces (see Agnew, 1999), it also reflects that “scale” arguably provides a useful lens through which to view and understand the world, both in respect of social science research concerned with globalization and, more mundanely, how individuals seek to imagine and construct their understanding of the world. Indeed, Papanastasiou (2016) has argued that scale is useful not because vertical scalar hierarchies are a pre-given feature of the globalized social world, but rather because they are (or, at least, have been) central to how many policy actors *imagine* a globalized social world to be one that comprises “local”, “national” and “international” scales. Attending to this active constitution of scale by policy actors – otherwise described as *scale-craft* (Papanastasiou, 2017) – is arguably useful to help reveal the political practices of policymaking, especially given that “scale is a central category used by policy actors to imagine and assemble political spaces and reforms” (Savage et al., 2021, 2; see also McKenzie and Aikens, 2021). A related consideration to this approach is concerned with recognizing the political and social processes of “territorialization”, where territory is seen as purposefully constructed to achieve certain ends (e.g., national policy consensus for federal systems), rather than construing territories as necessarily bounded and static (Lewis, 2021).

It should be noted, however, that this more epistemological notion of scale, even while accounting for the influence of spaces outside and within the nation, is still arguably overlaid upon a preconceived territorial spatiality and logic. Indeed, the scales on which globalization unfolds, even if only the imaginings of policy actors, “simultaneously bound social relations within determinate geographical arenas” (Brenner, 1999b, 447), effectively creating a series of hierarchized places and territories made coherent through complex inter-connections. More traditional notions of the nation-state, territory and borders are thereby retained, which arguably does little to move beyond a strict interior (“in here”) and exterior (“out there”) binary of territorialized socio-spatial relations. Amin (2002) uses the useful example of expatriate or diaspora populations to highlight the inability of scalar thinking to overcome this lingering local-global knot. Specifically, do these cosmopolitan populations belong to their new countries of work and residence, or are intimate connections still retained with the local spaces from whence they moved? And, relatedly, which scale(s) do they now occupy: local, or national, or transnational? And, if there are multiple scales, which one is most influential or present? While not negating the utility of a scalar approach, I would simply argue there are limits to its explanatory powers when considering “overlapping near-far relations and organizational connections that are not reducible to scalar spaces” (Amin, 2002, 386). As such, I will now consider another key effort to theorize spaces of globalization that attempts to address these more relational, non-territorial issues: *topological approaches*.

Topological understandings of space

Topology was initially envisaged as a strictly mathematical heuristic, with the first steps in its development taken by Leonhard Euler in 1736 as a means of solving the Seven Bridges of Königsberg (present-day Kaliningrad) problem; that is, whether a pedestrian could walk through the city and cross all seven bridges only once (Shields, 2012). The concept has since exceeded its earlier perambulatory confines to emerge, in recent decades, as an increasingly influential conceptual device in social and cultural theory, and across disciplines as diverse as political science, economics, human geography and, increasingly, education. Despite its broad application, the central principle of topology is the representation of space as emergent instead of absolute, moving beyond Euclidean and Cartesian geometries “to introduce a new spatial thinking that identifies lines of relation, rather than discontinuous points and lines” (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2012, 60). In short, a topological space is a space of flows that is defined by relations *between* points, instead of only considering the spatial location of points. Thus, topological understandings of globalization are post-Euclidean and post-territorial spatial theories (Martin and Secor, 2014), at least in contrast to more territorially-oriented scalar spaces (i.e., subnational, national, supranational ...).

Consider, for example, the space represented by the iconic map of the London Underground, in which different train stations (in topological parlance, *nodes*) are connected by a series of train lines, or *arcs* (see <https://tfl.gov.uk/maps/track/tube>). Upon inspection, it is readily apparent that the location of stations on the map *does not* correspond with the exact physical location of stations across the city of London, and neither are the distances or directions between stations on the map at scale with the

actual train lines. And yet, the map is still exceptionally useful for those wishing to travel around London using a transport system that is significantly underground and which, in turn, denies commuters the possible benefit of above-ground landmarks as a visual reference. The map is perhaps most useful because, topologically speaking, it eschews any precise alignment with physical location and focuses instead on the connections (i.e., train lines) *between* points (i.e., train stations). What we then have is a map whose purpose is not to accurately represent physical features of the space in question (e.g., location, elevation, distance), but which instead helps us apprehend how this space is made to relationally cohere through social practices (e.g., designing and using a functional public transport network). As such, the creation and use of such a map requires a decidedly topological approach to space, in which relational continuities are considered *in addition to* physical location alone (Lewis et al., 2016; Lury et al., 2012).

Topological imaginings of space have gained a particular traction, perhaps unsurprisingly, in studies of human geography, which is concerned primarily with the relational issues of how people organize, move and interact. Such thinking has sought to approach space *relationally*; that is, as “co-constituted, folded together, produced through practices, situated, multiple and mobile” (Amin, 2002, 389), and thus not reducible to prefigured scalar spaces. A key premise of topological understandings of globalization is that space is no longer a passive backdrop upon which actions unfold, but instead it *actively unfolds* and is constituted through actions and relations. Moreover, spaces once notionally distant and distinct from the local are now increasingly relevant and, perhaps more significantly, *present*. The current COVID-19 pandemic provides a clear example of how once-distant global spaces are now readily enfolded within and made near to the local by virtue of relational practices. Consider, for instance, how international travel and global supply chains, or the ubiquitous Zoom meetings that characterize working remotely, can technologically compress space-time (Harvey, 1989), or *timespace* (May and Thrift, 2003), and bring otherwise distant spaces together through relations. On the other hand, the initial onset of the pandemic from a specific location clearly reflects the ability of localities to shape more globally oriented processes and spatio-social dynamics, which can then affect other relationally connected local spaces. This suggests that the local very much retains its significance, rather than globalization leading to a wholesale effacing of difference into an amorphous and dematerialized global space of flows. It is not that space no longer matters in a globalized world, but rather that there are now so many spaces that *do matter*. Put simply, topological understandings of globalization signal the “rise of new spatio-temporalities affecting what goes on in place” (Amin, 2002, 392).

To consider globalization through the lens afforded by topology is then to apprehend spaces as emergent: as *a posteriori*, rather than *a priori* (Lash, 2012). These insights have particular importance for helping to overcome the ontological distinction between the local and global. Rather than territorial borders determining what is near and far via the mediating presence of the nation-state, it is the “mutable quality of relations” (Harvey, 2012, 78) that most determines whether something is proximate or distant. In other words, actors, organizations or places are rendered near if they can exert influence through their relations with other actors, organizations or places (Allen, 2011; Lata and Minca, 2016). This forces a rethinking of globalized space to not only involve scalar layering, but also how the folding of topological space can connect previously distant points to enable placement and proximity in multiple spaces. As Lury et al. (2012, 13) note, globalization creates a topological spatial continuum of the *in-between* that “not only enacts the scalar entities of the “local”, the “national” and the “global”, but also puts them in multiple relations to each other”. This enables an exploration of global and local places and processes, but without having to explicitly ground such endeavors within external territorial framings or “parametrization” (see Michael and Rosengarten, 2012).

To draw on a now commonplace example from education, the OECD’s PISA has contributed toward creating a globally commensurate space of testing and comparison (Lingard et al., 2016), whereby each participating (national or subnational) schooling system can be known and evaluated using the same PISA-derived metrics. Given this universal measure of “effectiveness”, high-performing PISA “poster children” (e.g., Singapore and Finland), as well as the OECD’s own educational policy work, can now be readily enfolded within more local schooling spaces, discursively shaping what counts as successful policies and practices (Grek, 2009; Sellar and Lingard, 2014; Lewis, 2020). Within such a topological space, it then matters less than these countries and schooling systems might be geographically distant from one’s own. What matters is that these schooling spaces can be rendered near in a relational sense via spatial “reach” (e.g., schooling systems comparing themselves with Singapore), thereby establishing a direct presence between actors, organizations and localities. The distance separating the local and global are then overcome by the relational enfolding of the global *into* the local; as well as by local people and places “reaching out” to global discourses and organizations, in order to inform and shape their own local politics and policymaking (Allen, 2016; Allen and Cochrane, 2010). By this reasoning, it can be argued that governing or steering “at a distance” (Kickert, 1995; Rose, 1999) is something of a misnomer, an artifact from a strictly Euclidean mindset in which power has defined coordinates of both origin and extension. Instead, the topological folding of space brings relations of influence into direct contact with those upon whom it acts, assembling new geographies of power and, in turn, possibilities for action.

Such an emphasis on topological relations should not, however, be entirely at the expense of considering physical location or territoriality. Although topology does admittedly draw attention to the numerous spaces, overlapping relations and organizational connections that shape the materiality of everyday life (Urry, 2007; Amin, 2002), and despite globalization being associated with a prevailing “ontology of movement” (Smith, 2003), this is not to say that topological space entirely discards connection to fixed places or locations. Indeed, topological spaces are invariably *woven into* Euclidean spaces to produce what Smith (2003, 569) describes as “a world of transitory hardenings and fluids”; or, put differently, a world of (territorial) frictions and (topological) flows (Lewis, 2021). As Hartong and Piattoeva (2019) suggest, topological space-making can perhaps not occur without an underpinning topographical frame of reference. Returning to the example of the London Underground, the

utility of the topological map is ultimately predicated on someone needing to get to an *actual* physical place. Similarly, the topological spaces of comparison enabled by PISA tests are meaningful only to the extent that sub/national territorial jurisdictions and political authorities can draw on such data to mobilize and justify their own local policy initiatives. Nevertheless, topological renderings of space would assert that the character of these jurisdictions and spaces, even if outwardly territorial in appearance, are no longer determined *solely* by recourse to territorial characteristics. Rather than seeing the local as exclusively embodying a politics *of place*, which only reflects local practices, topological accounts of globalization instead gesture toward a politics *in place* (see also Amin, 2002); that is, a localization of different spaces folded together through their relations and inflected through their various contexts.

Conclusion: the implications of globalization for education research

A key purpose of this chapter has been to explore how globalization has complicated social organization and relations, meaning that new spatial lenses (including scalar and topological approaches) are useful, and perhaps even necessary, if we are to apprehend the ongoing processes of relational space-making. In this concluding section, I would like to now briefly consider how these spatial frameworks are being productively applied to better understand the complexities of education policy and governance in a time of globalization. Put simply, education policies are now being realized in relational spaces not defined solely by the territorial boundaries of the nation-state (Ball, 2016; Lewis, 2020); are developed by actors and organisations not necessarily situated in government bureaucracies and traditional sites of policy formation (Gulson and Sellar, 2019; Decuyper et al., 2021); and, judging by their global reach, transfer and take-up, are in constant states of movement, mutation and local adaptation (McKenzie and Aikens, 2021; Lewis, 2021). Not only has the ontological primacy of the nation-state been challenged through expanding sites and locations of political authority, but the socio-spatial processes of policy production have also brought new policy spaces into focus as sites of policy making and intervention. Accommodating these empirical changes, I would like to sketch an outline of how – and, perhaps most importantly, *where* – globalization and education research are now intersecting by addressing two points in particular: i) the danger of *theoretical churn*; and ii) the rise of *interdisciplinary approaches*.

As we have seen, the need to accommodate spaces, relations and processes associated with globalization is now increasingly apparent. These new frameworks of scalar and topological spatialities are both empirical and theoretical, insofar as contemporary social life is marked by the growth of globalized spaces and cultural practices that, in turn, provides fertile ground for deploying space as an analytical tool, both in everyday life and in social and cultural theory. Spatiality at once provides a new conceptual vocabulary (i.e., the analytical), while at the same time indicating new, or at least newly explored, empirical phenomenon (i.e., the descriptive). But despite the utility of scalar and topological lenses, or whatever else may subsequently follow, I would argue that it is equally important to not prematurely jettison theoretical models or frameworks in our haste to adopt new approaches. As former advocates of scale, Jessop et al. (2008) have since cautioned against what they describe as the “unflexive churning” of spatial turns, including the rush to privilege any particular dimension of socio-spatial relations (e.g., territory, scale, topology) as the essentialized feature of globalized space. To that end, I have sought here to present scalar and topological approaches as two separate but related attempts to reconcile the emergence of new globalized spaces. And while I personally find much to commend a topological spatiality, I have reserved casting some final judgment in this chapter, not to attempt an objective ambivalence but rather to allow researchers interested in these approaches to determine utility for themselves.

I would also hesitate to assume the current delineation of these approaches, or any such others, is the final statement or endpoint of their development. For instance, the rising relevance of spaces beyond the nation-state, especially following the end of the Cold War, led policy scholars to challenge the presumptive homology between the nation and the social, a situation that has been described pejoratively in research as “methodological nationalism” (Beck, 2000). While questioning the prerogative of national bureaucracy as the “natural” home of policymaking and political authority has undoubtedly been useful, there is also a clear danger of the pendulum swinging too far in the opposite direction; that is, where the (territorial) space of the nation is overlooked at the expense of attending to global spaces and flows. Indeed, Clarke (2019) and Lingard (2021b) argue we are now at risk of “methodological globalism”, or an inflexible attention to global(ized) socio-spatialities, organizations and actors that downplays more national and local policy processes. This recognition of the continuing relevance of the nation-state, in addition to the presence of new scalar and non-scalar (topological) spaces, should encourage a deep and considered engagement with these spatial lenses, and a commitment to observe where and how globalization is occurring, but without recourse to a presumed spatial coordination.

I would also like to say something here about the importance of interdisciplinary approaches to studies of education and globalization. There has been increasing scholarly awareness and attention in policy sociology and cognate fields, such as policy mobilities and geographies of education (policy), regarding how one should research education in the context of globalization if spatial matters are to be emphasized. Indeed, Ozga’s (2021, 298) useful categorization of policy as “made and remade in process; as multi-sited, fluid and unstable; and as open to contestation” suggests that the spatial imagination of the policy researcher needs to similarly be attuned to the globalized and dynamic spaces of education policy processes. This has resulted in numerous theoretical and methodological approaches being adopted and adapted into education research to accommodate

these new spatial realities, including *policy mobilities* (Gulson and Symes, 2007; Lewis, 2021; McKenzie, 2017), *policy assemblage* (Savage, 2020; Thompson et al., 2021), *social topology* (Decuyper, 2021; Decuyper and Lewis, 2021; Lewis et al., 2016), *scalecraft* (Savage et al., 2021) and *digital data infrastructures* (Decuyper, 2019; Lewis and Hartong, 2021; Williamson, 2017). While remaining alert to the dangers of theoretical churn noted above, the complexity of contemporary policy processes has encouraged, and likely even requires, a further broadening of our conceptual and methodological horizons if we are to adequately foreground spatial issues in education research.

By way of closing, I return to the concise definition of globalization offered by Amin (2002, 392); that is, as the “rise of new spatio-temporalities affecting what goes on in place”. For all the complexities that globalization entails and for all the uncertainties it introduces, a central consideration for education research is the need to address these new globalized spaces, as well as the always-emerging relations and effects they make possible. I hope this discussion has contributed in some small way to encourage work with and the adoption of spatial approaches to understanding globalization, and thus fosters the further development of these ideas in education research.

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Comparative education: then, now, and next

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Introduction	11
The invention of traditions	11
Traditions and tensions: science	12
Traditions and tensions: the practical	13
The end of “history” and the fragmentation	14
Globalization and governance	15
Conclusion	15
References	17

Introduction

Comparative education is an academic subject taught in universities and teacher education institutions, in many countries. It can also, more broadly, be thought of as a complex form of action on the world which creates policy knowledge through, for example, consultancies, funded research, and advisory work for governmental agencies (of whichever country) that stress the development of educational systems in other countries. Even more loosely, the phrase “comparative and international education” can be stretched to include international testing of children’s attainment (such as that undertaken by PISA) and the advice which international agencies (like the World Bank or OECD) give on educational reform. This article comments only briefly on such forms of “applied comparative education” and concentrates on trying to analyze comparative education as an academic subject. Overall, the argument of the article follows a “then, now, and next” sequence.

As might be expected, there are around the world considerable variations in how the academic subject has been defined in universities since what was arguably the first “taught course” in comparative education in 1899–1900 (Bereday, 1963). The bibliography that is available on comparative education grew rapidly during the 1960s and even more rapidly after (Altbach and Kelly, 1986; Cowen and Kazamias, 2009). The consequence is that, currently, in addition to the perennial problem of the potential hegemonies of the English language, there are considerable differences between, say, “comparative education” as this is understood in southern Europe (Palomba and Cappa, 2018) and how comparative education is thought about in what is normally referred to as CIES, the (American) Comparative and International Education Society (Cook et al., 2004). These variations, in how “comparative education” is defined by university academics, involve different assumptions about the relations of comparative education to other branches of educational studies, varying choices about which political and geographic spaces should be investigated, and divergent expectations about the “usefulness” of comparative education for sorting out educational or social problems at home, and overseas.

These patterns and differences have been discussed in greater and greater detail in the last 30 years (Bray et al., 2007a; Halls, 1990; Wolhuter et al., 2008). What has also been documented is, in the phrasing of Erwin Epstein (2008), the “professionalization” of the field of study in academic societies and specialist journals (Masemann et al., 2007; Cook et al., 2004; Cowen, 1990). All this adds up to a considerable body of literature and - not least as part of the invention of a field of study—there are the textbooks.

The invention of traditions

Some of these textbooks were written in the interwar period and soon after 1945—partly to construct an academic field of study but the books were also intended to be read by students. Some of the best-known early texts which suggest a scope and focus for “comparative education” include Hans (1949) and Kandel (1933) and in the late 1950s—at a lower level of intellectual difficulty, presumably because the texts were intended to be attractive to a wider student audience—books by Edmund King (1958) and Malinson (1957). Subsequent introductory textbooks became more self-consciously “theoretical” (e.g., Jones, 1971; Trethewey, 1976). By the 1990s and after, the concept of “textbook” included relatively complex constructions of the field of study, outlines of its new ideas, and explanations of its epistemic choices (Alexander et al., 1999; Arnone and Torres, 2007; Bray et al., 2007a; Burns and Welch, 1992; Kubow and Fossum, 2003; Phillips and Schweisfurth, 2008).

Thus, since the 1960s with its first major expansion of the literature, and certainly by the 1990s, it has been possible to use the expression “the history” of the field of study to mean scholarly literature, published in journals or in book form, which offers accounts of “comparative education” as this has been thought about in the last couple of hundred years. Some of the journal literature on that history, not least because of illustrations *en passant* of, say, Tolstoy’s interest in “education elsewhere”, remains fascinating (Brickman, 1960) but the raw materials of history—documents—were also beginning to be assembled (Fraser and Brickman, 1968) and there were succinct “histories” in books written for students doing courses in comparative education.

One of these early books is of major assistance in identifying some of the peculiarities of the conventional definition our “tradition”. The first part of Noah and Eckstein’s (1969)—with the title *Towards a science of comparative education*—offers a lengthy “history”, but it is a missionary history; teleological in its unfolding and destination, and also missionary in that it was designed to persuade. Its finishing point is similar to its starting point: comparative education should become a science. The “history” is in the first part of the book. The account is enthusiastic, well written, and informed by library research. Just in case the reader misses the strategic point, the remaining parts of the book and a companion volume (Eckstein and Noah, 1969) give examples of the proper architecture of good comparative studies. Of course, fifty years later, we have better histories—notably Maria Manzon’s (2011) book *Comparative Education: the construction of a field*—as well as some new problems with our “history”.

Nevertheless, the Noah and Eckstein text is useful as a tribal myth. It offers a neat over-simplification of a story—a history—that tends to become more detailed and more interesting each year (Epstein, 2020; Manzon, 2019; Phillips, 2020a; Takayama, 2018) and the Noah and Eckstein book is also good as a starting point because the text deliberately creates tensions about the identity of comparative education—a theme which is still being strenuously debated in 2020, albeit on very different terms.

Traditions and tensions: science

The invocation of the theme of “science” is (within comparative education) normally linked to the name of Marc-Antoine Jullien (Fraser, 1962). Jullien’s argument included looking at the cantons of Switzerland to see patterns of variation in educational provision and using this “comparative” perspective to escape from the whims and prejudices on which educational decisions had (allegedly) been based earlier. Jullien deliberately used the expression “science of education”. Given he was writing in 1817, his reason for using this vocabulary is normally linked to the Comtean positivist movement in French thought. Currently, as work on the history of comparative education grows more nuanced and refined, there is a question in the specialist literature about whether Jullien really was “the Father” of comparative education—but that is not the point here.

The question, here, is how did comparative education get positioned, ideologically, as a science? The short answer is “early” and by Jullien. A more difficult question to answer is: how does this positioning get re-enforced over time and what tensions does this create? Interestingly, the struggle is not at the end of the nineteenth century as the social sciences (e.g., economics and, gradually, sociology) begin to be so labeled in some university systems. Nor was the struggle part of the rebalancing in universities of the importance of “classics” (the study of the Greek and Latin languages and the civilizations of Greece and Rome) versus the natural or exact sciences. Because comparative education was part of educational studies—studies often not institutionalized at university level in the English-speaking world until the 1930s—recovery of the theme of a “science” of comparative education did not occur until the mid and late 1960s. But then the debate was quite sharp and at the same time, paradoxically, quite muddled.

The muddle was, and is, that the academics involved judged that their debate was about methodology, but the debate is more complicated. It was simultaneously a debate about the usefulness of comparative education for the purpose of shaping educational policy *and* about the earlier academic identities of the academics themselves *and* about modes of explanation. Thus, for example, George Bereday in Teachers College Columbia saw comparative education as an empathetic way of understanding the patterns of educational systems—including one’s own. Bereday was originally from Poland and his epistemic vision was that of a European encyclopedist: all forms of social science knowledge should be used to describe and understand patterns of education—with perhaps a slight preference for understanding via “political science” (Bereday, 1964). In contrast, Harold Noah, with an original training in London School of Economics and Political Science (and despite, later, attending the lectures of Nicholas Hans in King’s College in London) tended in his work with Max Eckstein in New York to prefer a perspective that emphasized “variables”, almost as if the ideal form of comparative education would be akin to econometrics. This was in complete contrast to the perspective of Edmund King who, after Hans, also worked in King’s College London. King (originally trained in classics) was perhaps the most extreme advocate of the mainstream British post-war knowledge-tradition in comparative education, which Bill Halls (1973) called a “culturalist” perspective, emphasizing languages, and an understanding of “the local” culture (in whichever “local” was being discussed). And worse: the Bereday and Noah and Eckstein and King positions contrasted with Brian Holmes’ firm view (Holmes had originally trained in physics) that both academic understanding and policy advice were dependent upon science. However—and this was the originality of Holmes’ work to the point where he was prepared to claim toward the end of his career that he had invented a new paradigm within comparative education (Holmes, 1984)—science was not a matter of following Roger Bacon or J.S. Mill and discovering causes, but of having theories which are able to predict, successfully. This, in comparative education, means being able to predict the consequences of “borrowing”; that is, the transfer of educational ideas and principles, institutions and practices, from one country to another.

The term “science” lingered on. For example, Barber (1973) offered a good article on science and comparative education. By the time we are in this century, the concept of science is centrally positioned by Gita Steiner-Khamsi in her opening chapter as a frame for the 2012 *World Yearbook of Education* (Steiner-Khamsi and Waldow, 2012). Her argument was that comparative education is a policy science. Juergen Schriewer (2000) discusses a “science of complexity”. Paradoxically the comparative educator most fully trained in the natural sciences, Joseph A. Lauwerys—who held degrees in both biology and chemistry and who began his career as a Lecturer in Science Education in the Institute of Education of the University of London—had tended to follow Nicholas Hans in the way in which he lectured and wrote about education. Lauwerys retained the word “science” mainly to confirm that his personal world-view was that of a “scientific humanist.” When Lauwerys reflected on comparative education and its uses—as he did in

writing but also in action as one of the core creators of the Comparative Education Society in Europe—he used the expression “educational statesmanship” (Cowen, 2020a).

Traditions and tensions: the practical

The theme of “educational statesmanship” (although it is left implicit and undefined) is in “the history” of Noah and Eckstein (1969). They note the work of some of the major administrators of education of the nineteenth century—persons such as Victor Cousin in France, James Kay-Shuttleworth in Britain, and Horace Mann in the United States. Historically, the point is much more complicated than merely a motif within comparative education—as the current crisis in Canada over the name of Egerton Ryerson demonstrates. Nevertheless, the original point made by Noah and Eckstein is clever: to include practical people in the history of an academic subject. The move makes “the history” more sequential and legitimates the theme of educational reform.

These administrators, in a series of practical actions, did indeed create “the educational system” in its initial nineteenth century models and also undertook “research”; that is, they collected information from other countries about the elementary school, its teaching practices, the training of teachers for it, and its finance and administration. Prussia was of major interest, but the search for information roamed widely across Europe and “Reports” became an early form of “comparison”. Thus, the sense of shock that “educational administrators” should be included in a history of academic comparative education is reduced. The administrators addressed two “unit ideas” of comparative education (Cowen, 2021): “transfer” and “the educational system” itself. They were also “investigating” foreign educational systems. Like so many doctoral theses currently, they did have research questions (though they were spared having to write interminable chapters on “the literature” and “the method”) and so an important way to think about the administrators is to note how they link information about “education elsewhere” with policy-and-practice. That is, they do an early version of “normal-puzzle” comparative education.

Indirectly, the administrators also help to construct current tensions over “normal-puzzle” comparative education and its political positioning. By the end of the 19th century, a famous question is asked by Sir Michael Sadler—himself a policy person and a senior administrator in the English university system (Phillips, 2020b). In what seems—from its title—to be a very simple lecture, Sadler asks, “How far may we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education?” (Sadler, 1900). His answer is far from simple—he invokes the battles of Kosovo and Waterloo to illustrate how difficult it is to extricate educational principles and practices from the flows of history; but the question is a crucial one because the title of the talk provided a legitimation for decades of work in academic comparative education—and it still does. Sadler’s question and the work of the major administrators of national systems of the 19th century permit the routine assumption, particularly after 1945 and in the 1960s and 1970s debate about “methodology”, that the purpose of comparative education is to contribute to the (gradual) reform of educational systems and to advise on educational policy.

This tradition takes various forms. One is when Lauwerys and a small group of founding professors constructed the Comparative Education Society in Europe (whose meetings these days are much more like a lively and relaxed family conversation) as something like an “Academy of Letters”, in which educational statesmen, carefully elected by their peers, would be available to advise Ministers of Education. A similar “practical-policy” framing was also given to the (World) *Yearbooks of Education*—initially edited by Lauwerys and Hans in the Institute of Education in the University of London and later edited mainly by Lauwerys and George Bereday from the late 1940s until the beginning of the 1970s. The books were (or were intended to be) “useful”: for example, after volumes on post-war reconstruction, there were Yearbooks on teacher education systems; secondary schools; vocational-technical education; examinations; curriculum; and on universities and their reform. That pattern of doing “normal-puzzle” comparative education in the WYBs continued until about 2004 (Cowen, 2022).

The tradition was very strong. In the 1960s and 1970s, when the nominal theme of “methodology” splintered a generation of mid-career comparative educationists, almost the only point of agreement among them was that comparative education should continue to aim to be useful for policy purposes. The convention that the normal-puzzles of comparative education are sectors of the education system continues. For example, the comparative literature on higher education is very large indeed. There is also a copious comparative literature on teacher education, vocational-technical education, secondary schools, examinations, and curriculum in comparative perspective, and the relatively small comparative literature on early childhood education has just been revitalized (Sousa and Moss, 2022).

Overall, then, the long tradition of writing on policy themes which are often, de facto, the administrative boxes of schooling systems and reflecting on reform and “amelioration” seems to be continuous within comparative education. It is, but there are two interesting changes in the topography of the field of study. One redrawing of our topography is deliberate, recent and very visible: the investigation of new patterns in the “governance” of education. (That theme will be discussed later as part of the theme of “globalization”). The other theme is the change in assumptions about the importance of history as an approach to doing comparative education. This had major consequences for our topography. However, these consequences are not held together in the literature, not even in the brilliant “mapping” done by Rolland Paulston (2009). The consequences have not been seen as patterned; but they are.

The end of “history” and the fragmentation

The debate about “history” as if it were merely “a method” has already been mentioned. Kandel and Hans had worked within the perspective of history but the new embracement of a range of social sciences (e.g., by Bereday) and enthusiasms for something akin to a Noah and Eckstein vision of variables, rapidly affected the journals and the articles they were publishing. The debate about history seemed to have a simple beginning and end. Historians became Humpty Dumpties. More precisely, Andreas Kazamias, who has a sharp sense of the visual, chose when he was the Editor of *Comparative Education Review* to publish a drawing of Humpty Dumpty, fallen to the ground, with the dramatic consequences of a large fall made visible. This was a brilliant visual *aperçu* in a journal not given to using the visual. Later—the ironies of history being what they are—Kazamias was to write of persons he saw as historians-and-philosophers-and-liberal humanists as “forgotten men” (2009). This is in many ways true, but it also understates the complexity of the theme of history as a way of thinking in comparative education and the consequences of not worrying about history.

What at first glance seems a minor aberration, a touch of overconfidence by the new generation of comparative educationists in the 1960s—separating comparative education from history—marks the growth of a massive strategic problem for the identity of comparative education as a field of study. The problem was and is how to see the multiple shards of the fragmentation of the field of study as one “event”. It is not until this century that the literature has become sufficiently complex to see how the crisis “in methodology” had multiple effects that were far more serious. Hence the label used here: “The Fragmentation”: the burst of incoherence that came from separating what had—almost—been kept together.

The Fragmentation includes sudden limits on our thinking about (i) educated identity; (ii) time; (iii) space; (iv) political belief systems, including nationalism; (v) Empires; and (vi) confusions hidden within the re-naming of the field of study itself.

The flow of assertions that comparative education should address questions of policy and reform in “modern” educational systems meant that forms of “educated identity” in which different assumptions about society and power were compressed—for example, in the education of The Prince, in the education of the samurai, in the education of the courtier—were taken out of the imagination, despite the obvious originality of questions raised by conventional books on the history of education, but also by comparative analyses such as Max Weber writing on the Chinese literati (Gerth and Mills, 1970) or the new work of Margaret Archer (1979). More generally our professional sense of time was rebalanced: we became interested only in contemporary-time and future-time, in which to see the effects of policy advice. Meanwhile, the historians continued to develop a specialist comparative literature of their own to the point where we are now trying to catch up on the themes of transnational, comparative, and global history (Cowen, 2020b) and to rescue and redefine our sense of “uneven times and places”; a theme that was extremely well discussed by the McLeod, Sobe and Seddon *World Yearbook of Education* (2018).

However, the job is massive and some points are worth continued attention. For example, comparative educationists got themselves into a muddle over space, a rather interesting thing for comparative educationists to get muddled about. And they have not yet recovered. There used to be a broad but fairly clear definition—Bereday used to write of the “northern crescent”: Europe and Russia, and north Asia and China and then north America and back to Europe. This was the “space” that comparative educationists thought about, with the occasional excursion into, say, Chile. The point was paralleled in the Institute of Education in London where the Comparative Education Department was created in 1948. It also tended to study “the northern crescent”. However, as the economics of education as a set of theories about development became influential and the politics of the Cold War grew colder, this terminology collapsed. Societies were now being variously labeled: developed or underdeveloped; agricultural or industrial, or “newly-industrialized”; traditional and modern; and there was a Third World (and a first, second and fourth). The confusions seem retrospectively to be dramatic—but in one way, there were no confusions at all. At one point, it was sensible to think of Alex Inkeles or Talcott Parsons as the relevant theoretician and labeler of spaces; at another, maybe Theodore Schultz or C. Arnold Anderson; or the World Bank or OECD. The themes that Kandel and Hans had begun to explore (such as nationalism and fascism) were forgotten. The theme of Empire almost disappeared (although cf. Clignet and Foster, 1964; Madeira, 2008); but where is the comparative education work on, say, the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires?

Indeed, the theme of the British Empire—much analyzed by historians—came close to being an embarrassment within comparative education. The Institute of Education in London had established a Department for “Education in the Colonies” in 1928 (about 20 years before the Comparative Education Department was established under Lauwers). Of course, post-1945, there was a rather embarrassed—and embarrassing—sequence of renamings, which included the remarkable title “Education in Tropical Areas” before “Education in Developing Countries” fitted comfortably into a changed *Zeitgeist*. What did pop up suddenly (given that Noah and Eckstein had issued their challenge—become a science—in the very late 1960s) was writing on “education as cultural imperialism” (Carnoy, 1974) and on “colonialism” (Altbach and Kelly, 1978). But the theme languished. The concept of Empire took less and less attention, and only now has Empire and the themes of “post-socialism”—not least in the superb analyses of Iveta Silova—and concern with the “post-colonial” and globalization marked early by Tikly (1999), become a major contemporary debate (Takayama et al., 2017) and brought everything back to life in a very serious way.

However, *entre-acte*, as it were, there was a fascinating debate that is far from finished: a renaming of the field. The vocabulary of “comparative and international education” permitted the absorption of the theme of development. Two academic societies changed their name—the American Comparative Education Society founded in 1956 became CIES and the British Society, initially a branch of the Comparative Education Society in Europe, finally became the British Association of International and Comparative Education (BAICE). David Wilson (1994) rather charmingly uses the expression “twins” which perhaps glides past the point of flows of international power captured in the question: who exports and who imports. The broader debate was considerable and it continues

(Carnoy, 2006; Crossley, 1999; Epstein, 2016) though this is slightly obscured, hidden by the muddle-headed absorption of the concept of “globalization” into comparative education.

Globalization and governance

“Globalization” became a major word for work in education and comparative education from, let us say, 1979. That date is a useful as a symbol, rather than an historical fact. The date however can be used as marker of the choice between a soft version of globalization which merely emphasizes mobile factors of production (capital, labor and sites of production) and a harder version which was well captured by Mrs. Thatcher’s first government and the insistence that “there is no alternative” (TINA). Despite some major efforts to stabilize the concept for comparative education, for example, in the writing of Tony Welch (2001), the soft version of the topic of globalization tended to edge into an even softer version of “internationalism” or be routinized and reduced to normal-puzzle solving comparative education and the reform of skills and curricula. However, there is hard-edged work in the literature, especially on the economic ideologies which began to inform policy thinking, notably by Rizvi and Lingard (2009) and Arnove (1980) working within and contributing to the Wallerstein tradition of thinking about the global. Fortunately, the theme of globalization rapidly overlapped with governance and the international agencies (Beech, 2009; Grek, 2009; Lawn and Grek, 2012; Li and Auld, 2020). A shift in one of the “unit ideas” was occurring: the nature of the State and loci of “governance” were changing and international economic relations were moving into a new form. Finally, this attracted the term “neo-liberalism”—attended by its major inequalities, about which historians such as Tony Judt had been grumbling for some time.

Amid these politics, a new kind of quasi-comparative education was finally taking very clear shape—as part of “governance” and implicitly as part of a hard-data “science” of governance, which will provide “solutions”. One of the major forms of “comparing-as-a-solution” is international testing (Cowen, 2014). An early version of this (part of the work of the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement—the IEA) was framed by the power politics of the Cold War and ranked the achievements by children of different nations (for example and famously, in mathematics). A contemporary version of this is PISA—whose testing is as exact as contemporary social science permits. Thus, the technical work of PISA might be termed “scientific” and PISA testing manifestly “compares”.

However, it would be more cautious to note that a thermometer is not medicine. PISA will give you a low or a high score (and the score may move you into PISA shock or Finland frenzy) but PISA tells you nothing useful about the social embeddedness of the Finish education system, nothing useful about “transfer”, and it embraces specific notions of educated identity. PISA is politics (Auld and Morris, 2016; Auld et al., 2019; Tröhler, 2013). The OECD and the World Bank and UNESCO are part of the problem which comparative education, in its theory work, is analyzing: the flows and mix of international and domestic power as these are compressed into educational forms (Cowen, 2009).

And that, amazingly, brings us back to “science” and what academic comparative education has done, and should do next. The term “science” re-gathers its full strategic force for comparative education in Novoa’s (2018) paper. That brings us almost—but fortunately not quite—back to the starting point of this analysis.

Conclusion

The analysis began by trying to sketch “academic comparative education” and its “traditions”. The word “tradition” implies stability, and while it is possible to stress the continuities of “normal-puzzle” comparative education, tensions became obvious in academic comparative education by the 1960s. By the end of the 1970s, the discontinuities in academic comparative education had become dramatic, to the point where it becomes possible—even without examining seriously difficult concepts such as “context” or “inter-disciplinarity”—to discuss fragmentation.

Currently there are new questions giving an edge to contemporary discussion: for example, the theme of the politics of “epistemic space”, and its cultural and hegemonic significance. The “history” of comparative education sketched here is a history of Anglo-American and European work, which has influenced comparative education in Latin America, Australia, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea (and so on). Maybe the strategic shift in vision will come from thinking about “Asia-as-method”, but continued progress on that theme is slow and is visible in the rest of Asia including East Asia, rather than in mainland China where comparative education is tending to take on a politically safe, “applied”, identity.

As an extension of this point, comparative educationists have not systematically addressed the theme of internal political space: the political, economic and cultural limits which shrink academic “comparative education” until its imagination and analytical reach is trivialized in universities by States which have become authoritarian—whether this authoritarianism is a consequence of populist parochialism, political philosophy, religious belief, or the infallibility of the Local Great Leader. This problem is not raised rhetorically: the demand by English politicians for “robust and relevant research” and later for “impact” has been corrosive (Cowen, 2000) altering both the external relations of the university—increasingly to be understood and measured in economic terms—and internal definitions of the “quality” of teaching and “good” research.

Such political questions are crucial for comparative education the moment it decides that it is not its job to advise the local Minister of Education. Unfortunately, except in the Cold War—or perhaps even because of the Cold War—it has not bothered much with its political positioning. It should, now, do that. The world recovering from the Second World War, a world energetically

expanding educational provision as part of a proper definition of citizenship, is the world of George Bereday and Joseph Lauwerys, a world of optimism. We have perhaps returned to a world in which the questions are more brutal: for which kind of political regimes should “comparative education” be useful these days?

Amid these serious (and rather esoteric) anxieties, the traditional normal-puzzle work of comparative education continues—and it should do so for perfectly proper reasons which have to do with a commitment to teachers, children, and education. Efforts to think about the improvement of education, with education normally thought of in its “boxes”—higher education, teacher education, vocational-technical schools, curriculum (including “teaching and learning”)—is our normal-puzzle work, but this is rooted in delicacies (and difficult theorization) about the nature of “educated identity”—our moral fulcrum and one of our core ethical questions. This normal-puzzle work emphasizes children and the “re-forming” of the educational service itself. It would be improper to ignore or denigrate normal puzzle work because it includes a powerful commitment to the importance of teachers (and, where this is possible, to initial teacher education). In addition, it is our consultancies and funded research (usually on normal-puzzle problems) which help comparative education to survive as an academic subject in some university systems. Right now, “comparative education” is a goose laying rather golden eggs.

That said, the reasons for looking beyond normal-puzzle work in comparative education are important. Comparative education has never quite sorted out its ethical issues (Cowen, 1973) as it tries to act on the world. We need to worry about that. There was no end to history, nor indeed to “our history”. We need to re-think that history and “The Fragmentation” and to offer fresh readings-of-the-global; not least by noting the global political economic and cultural relations of the contemporary period and redefining what should be studied—accepting fully that certain themes such as inequalities in human rights, and inequalities in education in region and race, gender and class, nations and ethnicities will continue to need major and unremitting attention. As this work proceeds (and as argued earlier), the international agencies—including even UNESCO—should be thought of as part of the problem, part of the problematic of new readings of the global; and not absentmindedly accepted as a benign.

Of course, among these pressures and problems—and perhaps partly because of them—the acquisition of a coherent sense of “tradition” seems proper. However, settling too comfortably into the self-identity given by “a tradition” is dangerous because the problem suddenly mutates. It becomes how to shake loose from tribal memories and to re-imagine. And we should re-imagine. For example, we have:

- forgotten war and revolution and the massive problems of understanding (comparatively) Empires—except through our discussions of colonialism and post-colonialism and post-socialism;
- until very recently, failed to wonder about the Gaia hypothesis’ and global warming;
- tended to treat the words “development” and “international” and “globalization” as if they were politically neutral and benign;
- until very recently, forgotten about the problem of nationalism—whether banal or virulent;
- often avoided questions about the political positioning of academic knowledge about societies, as if such knowledge is neutral (which it ceases to be once a choice of place, time, and topic is made);
- not linked our literature with new thinking about transnational and global history and the best work in “intercultural education”; and
- we have tended to assume “educational systems” will—with some fine-tuning—continue in their 20th century forms.

Overall, our literature tends to be based not only on “normal-puzzle” comparative education, but also on “normal-theory” comparative education which has a weakness for complexities that need very long words—post-structuralism, post-foundationalism, neo-institutionalism—and an urge to borrow from “savior saints” who have included Beck, Bourdieu, Derrida, Foucault, Giddens, Habermas and Luhmann. That is in a way reassuring; almost a bad tradition. Earlier generations of comparative educationists drew on racist versions of British anthropology, structural functionalism, human capital theory, Talcott Parsons, Walt Rostow, and so on. The mono-optical deduction of the future of comparative education from one perspective, from one theoretician or from one social science, has the virtue of simplicity, and is perhaps to be preferred to a scattered future deduced, *seriatim*, from all of the social sciences.

There is another way, fortunately. A risky but exciting step into the future might be to put more emphasis on inventing some theories of our own. The good news is that there is already grit in the oyster: there is comparative writing of major originality available in the literature by those who would not routinely label themselves as “comparative educationists” (for example, Margaret Archer, Stephen Ball, Roger Dale, Martin Lawn, Bob Lingard, Heinz-Dieter Meyer, Jenny Ozga, Tom Popkewitz, Terri Seddon, Theda Skocpol, Fazal Rizvi, Susan Robertson, Daniel Tröhler, Rupert Wilkinson).

Substantively, there are also a number of World Yearbooks of Education which break new theoretical ground. In addition to the 2018 WYB on “uneven time and spaces”, there is, depending on personal interest, quite a choice in terms of topics and new theorization. For example, the 2005 WYB was on globalization and nationalism; the 2006 volume addressed the politics of educational research; the 2008 volume reflected on “geometries of power” and changes in higher education; and the 2014 WYB analyzed “governing knowledge”. The latest volume (Tröhler et al., 2022) recovers a sense of history and takes a fresh look at nationalism and its “global universalization”.

Furthermore, there are currently three short but major papers within the specialist comparative literature which raise vital, strategic, theoretical, and political questions. The pattern of answers to those questions will re-orient the field: Nóvoa (2018), Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal (2003), and Takayama (2018). Happily, the energy to answer those questions is there: some of our early and mid-career scholars are already creating disruptive and challenging theories. Their work has also begun to affect the “unit ideas” (including time and space); to reassert the relativisms of difference in educated identity while using that concept as an ethical

bedrock for comparative education; and to trace the flows of international and domestic power as these are compressed in educational systems. The earlier problem of “the fragmentation” of comparative education has not yet been fully and coherently stated, but ways to think about it and finally to move on, past it, are emerging.

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World-systems analysis

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World-systems analysis: origins	19
World-systems analysis: major concepts	20
World-systems analysis in educational research	23
World-systems analysis and education for a just, utopistic, transition	25
References	26

World-systems analysis: origins

World-systems analysis (WSA) developed within a wider tendency of social science scholarship in the later part of the 20th century working to integrate research on contemporary realities with the study of history. Historical and comparative methods featured prominently early on in the late 19th and early 20th century works of political philosophers, sociologists, economic historians, and state theorists. Still, an integrated analysis of the past and the present, the material and the symbolic, structure and agency, etc., was long overshadowed by disciplinary particularisms and epistemological divergences leading to supposed gaps between “explanation” and “interpretation,” or nomothetic and idiographic perspectives generally reflecting divisions between humanities and “proper” social sciences. For example, mainstream Western sociology around the 1950s was exemplified by a turn toward, on the one hand, abstract models (“grand theory”) that were difficult to operationalize, and, on the other hand, empirical approaches that prioritized statistical explanations of the present phenomena over other accounts, including those based on knowledge of long-term processes and qualitative inquiry. It was largely against these tendencies that a more comprehensive approach was famously reclaimed by Mills (1959, p. 6) in the statement that the “sociological imagination enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society.” The proponents of *historical sociology* in the later decades attempted to bridge diachronic and synchronic dimensions of social analysis, and it is this field that WSA is often associated with.

Wallerstein (2004a, pp. 7–15) pointed to a number of developments after World War II, both socio-political changes and vital scholarly debates, which formed major contexts that inspired the shaping of WSA. All these changes resulted in questioning of the structures of social sciences that had crystallized by the early decades of the 20th century, and were in fact the previous century’s ideological legacy that divided research and knowledge disciplines in several ways. One division was between disciplines studying the “West” and “the Rest” (the non-West), the former coming with a focus on the past (history) and on the present, further marked by split between the market (economy), the state (political science) and the society (sociology). Separate from this was study of the “non-West,” organized into the disciplines of anthropology, exploring cultures viewed as non-literate or “primitive,” and oriental studies examining texts and artifacts of, mostly Asian, regions dominated by the non-Christian world religions and former empires.

The shifting realities of the post-1945 world that challenged the established view of social sciences included, firstly, the hegemony of the United States and the growth of *area studies*, focused on the notion of development and modernization as a challenge and a major stake in the cold war rivalry between “the First World” (capitalist and liberal-democratic West) and “the Second World” (the state-socialist bureaucratic “people’s democracies” mostly dominated by the Soviet Union). Secondly, the need for new knowledge and new political perspectives was prompted by the rise of anti-colonial movements, the decline of Western colonialism, and the formation of “the Third World” (largely overlapping with the Non-Aligned Movement). In fact, it was Africa of the independence era, including countries such as Ghana and the Ivory Coast, that drew early scholarly interest of Wallerstein (Wallerstein, 1961, 1964, 1967, 1986; Rich and Wallerstein, 1972). The third factor was the expansion of the university system and the growth in the number of scholars who increasingly borrowed from the related disciplines and shifted interests either toward topics demanding cross-disciplinary expertise, or away from their traditional focus (e.g. anthropologists turning to their own countries).

The significant scholarly debates that set the scene for the emergence of world-systems analysis included discussions among Marxists on the role of transnational factors in the origins of capitalism, as well as economic histories of non-European empires. These debates manifested beyond Marxist orthodoxy and coincided with the growing popularity of the French school of historiography (associated with the *Annales* journal) that sought to analyze long-term structures and patterns (*longue durée*) beyond narrow empiricism of political history. Of particular importance for WSA were the works of Fernand Braudel of the *Annales* school with his use cross-disciplinary inquiry, focus on different categories of social time, problematization of the notions of “market” and “capitalism,” and the treatment of *world-economy* as the unit of analysis (Wallerstein, 2001a,b; Braudel, 1982, 1985). Finally, and perhaps most importantly, WSA drew on dependency theory developed in the 1960s that was grounded in the analyses undertaken in the late 1940s by experts from the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (Prebisch, 1963). The main tenets of the

theory identified patterns of economic domination of the stronger countries over the weaker ones, i.e. obtaining surplus value by “center” from “peripheries.” This was further developed into notions of the “development of underdevelopment” as a result of international capitalist dynamics (Frank, 1978, 2009) and unequal exchange (Emmanuel, 1972) as opposed to the classical concept of comparative advantage.

As Wallerstein emphasized, WSA is not a finished theory (“not a theory about the social world, or about part of it”; Wallerstein, 2001c, p. 237), but an analytical perspective and method to use in empirical studies of various sorts and, possibly, on which to build theory-oriented reflection. WSA can thus be seen as a heuristic framework drawing on historiographic accounts and diverse conceptual tools, and as such it constitutes a basis for a range of thematically specific research programs. World-systems analysis transgressed traditional disciplinary divisions, and rejected the supposed incongruity of the idiographic and the nomothetic epistemologies, seeking a more inclusive and “undisciplinary” domain that can be called *historical social science* (Wallerstein, 2001c, 2004a). The emergence and growth of WSA represented an intellectual protest within social science

against the ways in which social scientific inquiry was structured for all of us at its inception in the middle of the nineteenth century. ... World-systems analysis maintains that this mode of social scientific inquiry, practiced worldwide, has had the effect of closing off rather than opening up many of the most important or the most interesting questions. ... World-systems analysis was born as moral, and in its broadest sense, political, protest. However, it is on the basis of scientific claims, that is, on the basis of claims related to the possibilities of systematic knowledge about social reality, that world-systems analysis challenges the prevailing mode of inquiry.

Wallerstein (2001c, p. 237).

There were several targets of this “protest.” Firstly, modernization theory and its universal concept of development were contested for their determinism, linearity, and ideological premises. The latter echoed earlier West-centric notions of “progress” (as in Enlightenment’s philosophies) and “evolution” (as in some variants of positivist sociology and anthropology). Secondly, WSA challenged the dominant methodology that equated “society” with “nation-state,” and debated whether these terms were adequate units of analysis for historical social research. These were replaced by the term of *historical system*, or *historical social system*. Thirdly, WSA called for overcoming disciplinary divisions among social sciences as well as the gap between sciences and humanities as “two cultures” (Snow, 2002), and it also rejected both ahistorical approaches and narrow views of history (i.e. history as a sequence of events, mainly political ones, and based exclusively or mostly on archived written documents testifying on such events). Fourthly, WSA criticized social science for its avoidance of discussions on moral and political dimensions and consequences of scholarly endeavors. This criticism was evident in challenging modernization theory and in turning to analyses, such as dependency theory, that had been linked to political efforts by experts and scholars outside the Global North. Two publications marked the beginning of WSA, both published by Wallerstein in the same year: an overall article on the world capitalist system and the first volume (out of four) of his *opus magnum*, devoted to the origins of capitalism in the 16th century (Wallerstein, 1974a,b).

Institutionally, WSA was promoted by the Fernand Braudel Center at the Binghamton University (<https://www.binghamton.edu/fbc/>), operating between 1976 and 2020 within a scheme of conferences, research groups and a publication program. The research working groups focused on world-systems structures and processes (e.g. structural trends, crisis, hegemonies, world labor, antisystemic movements, cultural forms), regional historical patterns (e.g. Atlantic slavery, economic development in Americas, East Asia) and issues of social science knowledge (methodology across the disciplines, structures of knowledge and categories of social knowledge as well as “utopistics”) (see Report, n.d). While the center’s website provides a list of over forty books or thematic journal issues published by the late 1990s by scholars associated with it, the actual output of WSA-related works is much greater. The journal which functioned as a key forum for WSA scholarship was *Review*, published by the Fernand Braudel Center between 1977 and 2016 (thirty-nine volumes; for contents, subjects and abstracts see <https://www.binghamton.edu/fbc/review-journal/index.html>). Another major outlet is a biannual cross-disciplinary *Journal of World-Systems Research*, initiated in mid-1990s by Christopher Chase-Dunn and hosted by the University of Pittsburgh, and since 2008 and official journal of the Political Economy of the World-System section of the American Sociological Association. Twenty-seven volumes have been published by 2021, with a purpose of theory-building “to take the world-systems approach beyond the stage of a perspective” (<https://jwsr.pitt.edu/ojs/jwsr/about>).

World-systems analysis: major concepts

The central concept in WSA is that of *historical (social) system* (Wallerstein, 2001d, 2004a). The term is not only an abstract reconciliation “between the static and the dynamic, the synchronic and the diachronic” of “long-term entities,” but rests on defining characteristics. These include the relative functional autonomy of systems with unique internal processes, that is, “life within it is largely self-contained, and ... the dynamics of its development are largely internal” (Wallerstein, 1974b, p. 347), temporal boundaries (beginning and end), and spatial boundaries (changeable over time). Besides *mini-systems* that once constituted basic entities of such kind, the major type of historical (social) system is *world-system*, which includes

two main types: *world-empires* and *world-economies* (Wallerstein, 2001d, pp. 229–233). The distinction consists in the fact that a world-empire is a single political unit, that is, politically centralized, with cultural and ethnic plurality, and a world-economy that is characterized by political plurality of statehoods as much as with ethno-cultural plurality. The hyphenated form of the term indicates that

we are talking not about systems, economies, empires of the (whole) world, but about systems, economies, empires that are a world (but quite possibly, and indeed usually, not encompassing the entire globe). ... in “world-systems” we are dealing with a spatial/temporal zone which cuts across many political and cultural units, one that represents an integrated zone of activity and institutions which obey certain systemic rules.

Wallerstein (2004a, pp. 16–17).

The *modern world-system* has its beginnings in the “long 16th century,” and takes the form of *capitalist world-economy* (Wallerstein, 2001e, pp. 267–268). It is the first historical system to eventually encompass the entire globe in our times, although for much of its history there remained external zones that were successively incorporated into it. That this world-economy is *capitalist* is defined not by the market mechanism as such—which, following Braudel, Wallerstein treats as a form of economic organization predating capitalism—but on the principle or imperative of endless accumulation of capital, a factor that forced the system’s spatial expansion and secured its existence for the past 500 years. Another crucial characteristic of the capitalist world-economy is an axial division of labor across the multiple polities, the transfer of surplus value via unequal exchange between core and periphery, and the existence of semiperipheral zones with both core-type and periphery-type processes. This structural dynamic is manifest on a political plane in that such a positioning characterizes single states or groups of states, or regions within them. Nonetheless, while “centrality” and “peripherality,” and the relationship between them, are spatial, the term “core–periphery” should not be simply reduced to geographic distinctions. Furthermore, the capitalist world-economy is composed of institutions: markets, firms, households as well as hierarchies of social classes and status groups or identities (echoing Weber’s distinction of *Klassen* and *Stände*).

The scope of the capitalist world-economy overlaps with that of an *interstate system* of sovereign states, some of which are hegemonic. From the period between the French Revolution and the revolutions of 1848 onwards, the modern world-system has been also an arena of rivaling ideologies: conservatism, liberalism, and a range of radical (left-wing) ideologies. The latter produced anti-systemic movements that historically have simultaneously undermined and reinforced the system (Wallerstein, 2014). The rivalry of ideologies led to the shaping of what Wallerstein termed *geoculture*, a shared cultural framework of norms and discourses across diverse polities and ostensibly competing ideologies. The geoculture of the post-WWII period, labeled “centrist liberalism” (Wallerstein, 2011), reflected a consensus between conservative, liberals and the “old Left” about progressive (over time) change, progress, and development, via state power and legislation “to change the world.”

The geoculture rested on three pillars: (1) the inclusion of populations into citizenship, with civil and political rights and freedoms not always de facto granted but at least accepted in principle, as reflected in the nation-states involvement in the creation of the UN human rights system; (2) the expansion of socio-economic rights, again to varying degrees, but manifested either in the Western-welfare state or in state-socialist variants of limited egalitarianism; (3) nationalism, that is, the unification of citizens into a nationhood possessing or aspiring to a nation-state. The revolts of 1968 marked the emergence of the “new Left” against both US hegemony and Soviet-style socialism (and the established workers’ movements), the turn toward race, gender and sexuality as political issues, democratization movements in socialist states and later environmentalism. The 1968 “world revolution,” seen as a marker in the declining legitimacy of the dominant geoculture of liberalism, was also an international crisis that led to the neoliberal phase of capitalist expansion that further exacerbated structural tensions of the world-economy (Wallerstein, 1999a, 2003a, 2004a).

Finally, the system has dynamic features that are both short/mid-term (conjunctural cycles or “waves” of growth and contraction as conceptualized by Kondratieff (1984)) and long-term (secular trends). The existence of cyclical rhythms and secular trends creates a paradox: the capitalist world-economy, as any historical system, changes constantly, yet its fundamental features remain the same. Nonetheless, the secular trends—long-term increase in wages, taxation, and externalization of costs in production, coupled with the shrinking of non-proletarian, mostly rural, reservoir of labor force—signal the structural crisis of the capitalist world-economy. This structural crisis begs the question of possible directions that such a transition takes toward a new system to replace capitalism, and possible choices or “utopistics” (Wallerstein, 1998a) available to individuals and movements to achieve a more democratic, just, and more egalitarian world-system.

WSA has been criticized from different angles: positivist or neopositivist (for shortage of quantitative data as well as insufficient reduction of clear variables and weak verifiability of hypotheses), orthodox Marxist (for being circulationist, overlooking production in accumulation processes and not emphasizing class struggles within nation-states), state-autonomist (for economic reductionism and downplaying the role of political agencies on the state and interstate levels), and culturalist particularism (for economism and providing a totalizing and Eurocentric “grand narrative” that ignores plurality of cultural identities). Wallerstein (2004a, pp. 19–22) recounted these major criticisms and highlighted their weak points or even their misreading of WSA. Firstly, world-systems analysts are not against quantification but rather opt for methods and data adequate to the task of explaining long-term and broad-scale changes. Secondly, WSA sees wage (productive) labor among many labor forms in the capitalist world-economy (Wallerstein, 2001f), and points to the fact that class conflict should be considered within a wider framework of the world-system, for which core–periphery relations are a vital feature. Thirdly, WSA does not neglect the state but rather posits

that states form an interstate system that is an integral element in shaping the historical processes of capitalism. And lastly, drawing on Braudel and other proponents of “total” historiography, WSA includes culture and identity among the components of the capitalist world-economy.

That WSA constitutes a “grand narrative” is inevitable and typical for any product of knowledge-building. The fact that WSA tracks the history of capitalist expansion and domination that initially led to the formation of the “European world-system” (Wallerstein, 1974b) is not in itself Eurocentric but reflects knowledge on long-term and large-scale processes. Moreover, Wallerstein (2004a) noted that:

What these four critiques have in common is the sense that world-systems analysis lacks a central actor in its recounting of history. For nomothetic positivism, the actor is the individual, *homo rationalis*. For orthodox Marxism, the actor is the industrial proletariat. For the state-autonomists, it is political man. For cultural particularists, each of us (different from all the others) is an actor engaged in autonomous discourse with everyone else. For world-systems analysis, these actors, just like the long list of structures that one can enumerate, are the products of a process. They are not primordial atomic elements, but part of a systemic mix out of which they emerged and upon which they act (p. 21).

A critical feature of WSA is the relationship between the universal and the particular, whether in terms of the historical structures of knowledge in accordance with nomothetic and idiographic epistemologies (Wallerstein, 2004b), or the dynamics between hierarchical constructions of universal and particular cultures (e.g. Wallerstein, 1990) and competing particularist claims. WSA consistently identified and elaborated the phenomenon of European universalism (Wallerstein, 2006) including in terms of how the shared cultural framework of the capitalist world-economy was based on European scientific universalism, its associated conceptions of development and progress, such that these particular world-views were given universal status. Moreover, Wallerstein wrote repeatedly about the struggles against Eurocentrism and its manifestations in the social sciences, and how within the structures of the capitalist world-economy such struggles against Eurocentrism may inadvertently reinforce it (Wallerstein, 1997b).

Many insights of WSA have been taken by authors not identifying with this particular framework but analyzing how Eurocentric or North-dominated epistemologies misrepresented histories and experiences of regions, countries, peoples and nations located beyond the “core” zones (e.g. Santos, 2016; Mignolo, 2021). A moderate criticism has been raised against Wallerstein’s and especially Braudel’s West-centrism in explaining the origins of capitalism, and even the very use of the term, something they share with classical authors such as Marx and Weber (Goody, 2006). On a still more critical note, Connell (2020, pp. 67–68) places WSA among other strands of “metropolitan social science,” which represent “the northerness” in that “a system of categories is created by metropolitan intellectuals and read outwards to societies in the periphery, where the categories are filled in empirically. ... [Such approaches] treat the majority world as object. This closes off the possibility of social science working as a shared learning process, a dialog, at the level of theory” (Connell, 2020, pp. 66–68). Her critique of WSA consists of two major points. Firstly, she exposes “the short list of social actors ... bourgeoisies, proletariats, intermediate classes, state elites, and not much more” adding that “[t]he difficulty this framework has in dealing with issues of gender and race–constitutive structures of colonialism, on other reckonings–is familiar” (Connell, 2020, p. 67). This critique is concise and lacks elaboration, but reflects the culturalist charges mentioned above.

While WSA is not gender studies or a theory of race, it integrates race/racism and gender/sexism within its framework (Wallerstein, 2004a) as demonstrated by analyses of households (Smith and Wallerstein, 1992), a number of studies on non-metropolitan cultural and political realities including social movements (Wallerstein, 1999b, 2002a,b, 2003b) and a multi-thematic preoccupation of diverse research working groups at the Fernand Braudel Center with these issues and with the dynamics of knowledge production relevant to them. Wallerstein’s interest in Africa, cited earlier, and his particular interest in Fanon (e.g. Wallerstein, 2000b, 2009) are examples of WSA drawing on non-metropolitan knowledges. Wallerstein (2004a) placed Fanon’s (1963) *The Wretched of the Earth* in the “Bibliographical Guide” among “Relevant Works: Forerunners or Influential Writings of Other Large-Scale Analysts” (p. 104). Wallerstein (2009) concludes that Fanon “offers a brilliant delineation of our collective dilemmas. Without violence the wretched of the earth can accomplish nothing. But violence, however therapeutic and however effective, solves nothing. Without breaking from the domination of pan-European culture, it is impossible to move forward” (pp. 124–25). Moreover, being an analytical perspective and not a complete theory (a closed system of concepts and prepositions), WSA is not incompatible with empirical and theoretical developments in research on gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, nationalities and other culturally-grounded categories or identities. To the contrary, WSA leaves plenty of room for detailed empirical analyses and novel theoretical constructs, often inspired by the world-systemic framework rather than reproducing its full conceptual toolkit.

Connell’s second critical point is even less clear. She pointed to a “powerful tendency to reification” in WSA scholars’ use of the concept of social system (actually, Wallerstein talks about *historical [social] systems*) and other related concepts such as “a boundary, internal differentiation of functions, subsystems, and so on,” a tendency that “led one current of world system research to devise models of the pulsations within a capitalist world-economy, and led another into a trawl through history for world-systems ... It led quite early to the idea that the future could be inferred from world-systems’ laws of motion. ... the once-fruitful research paradigm has turned into portentous speculation” (Connell, 2020, p. 68). The reification charge seems off point

not only because it would have to be directed against *any* concept in social science, but first and foremost because WSA is fundamentally a constructivist perspective (though usually not presented as such), which is demonstrated in its treatment of time and space:

it must be emphasized that for world-systems analysts, time and space—or rather that linked compound TimeSpace—are not unchanging external realities which are somehow just there, and within whose frames social reality exists. TimeSpaces are constantly evolving constructed realities whose construction is part and parcel of the social reality we are analyzing. The historical systems within which we live are indeed systemic, but they are historical as well. They remain the same over time yet are never the same from one minute to the next. This is a paradox, but not a contradiction. The ability to deal with this paradox, which we cannot circumvent, is the principal task of the historical social sciences. This is not a conundrum, but a challenge.

Wallerstein (2004a, p. 22).

Furthermore, Wallerstein's idea of *utopistics*, that is, a systematic study of possibilities and choices in the period of systemic crisis and transition, is not a speculation but a call for a social science that treats human dilemma seriously and does not avoid considering moral (and political) stakes within the activities of knowledge-building. And while it is but one of the many themes of the methodological orientation of WSA, it not only facilitates opening of the social sciences to various non-dominant and non-metropolitan modes of thinking, but also possesses a great educational potential in encouraging new directions in public imagination.

World-systems analysis in educational research

The usefulness of WSA in educational research has not been immediately obvious. The work of WSA scholars has primarily focused on historical trajectories and the contemporary crisis of the modern world-system, analyzing broad economic and political dynamics. Little attention has been given to, for example, the *longue durée* of educational ideas and institutions as part of the capitalist world-economy, or to the role of antisystemic movements in shaping and transforming educational spaces. Notable exceptions include the critical discussion on the formation and institutionalization of the social sciences and on the effects of the revolts around 1968 on Western university curricula, as well as some works on core-periphery patterns in academic knowledge production and circulation (Schott, 1998; Demeter, 2019; Warren et al., 2020). Nonetheless, in WSA scholars' reflections on social sciences, education is not mentioned among the major disciplines developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, despite its emergence by the early 1900s from philosophy, sociology and psychology, and its subsequent, however short-lived, international flourishing both as a scientific endeavor and a democratization and peace effort during the era of the New Education movement after World War I. As discussed below, the use of WSA has been greatest in the broad field of Comparative and International Education (see for example Arnove, 1980). Used in this way, WSA framework helps to see education as a cross-disciplinary research effort, a socially engaged practice (i.e. committed to changes on various levels, from the institutional system to human interactions in the learning process) and as a transnational field of ideas, much in line with the late 20th century calls for open and pluralistic unity in social and human sciences (cf. Wallerstein et al., 1996). Within labor sociology, worth mentioning is Silver's (2003) study partly inspired by WSA, which discusses protests in "the education industry" within a global and historical perspective. Her work takes a particular focus on the context of post-Fordist changes and the "knowledge-based economy," pointing to proletarian conditions of "education workers (teachers) [who] are central to processes of capital accumulation in the 21st century" (p. 114). An outlet occasionally publishing WSA-related educational research is the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* (<http://www.jceps.com/>).

How is and can WSA, as a macro account of the historical development and trajectory of a single capitalist world-economy encompassing multiple polities across a hierarchical global division of labor, be applied to educational research? What insights can it offer to the study of educational systems, their organizational, curricular, and pedagogical forms? Like other macro-level theorizing such as that under the banner of globalization in which some locate world-systems analysis (e.g. Sklair, 1999), the task of bringing WSA to bear on analyses of educational phenomena, and operationalize its application, brings certain challenges.

WSA directly connects with efforts within comparative and international education, and across the social sciences, to overcome "methodological nationalism" (Dale, 2005, p. 120) manifest in research focused on single national-case studies. It also adds the historical dimension to the study of the present educational systems, models, and values as an effect of long-term societal patterns, not limited to most recent policy changes and reforms. As outlined above, part of WSA's protest against established concepts and methodologies in the social sciences includes this dimension, locating analyses of phenomena within nation-states in their inclusion and trajectory within the capitalist world-economy. The concept of globalization invites similar methodological approaches, incorporating the influence of trans or supra-national forces on national and local phenomena. Wallerstein (2000a) provocatively argued that the discourse of globalization studies was "in fact a gigantic misreading of current reality—a deception imposed upon us by powerful groups and an even worse one that we have imposed upon ourselves, often despairingly" (p. 250). The provocation here was that globalization studies misread phenomena like the growth and power of international institutions and of transnational corporations, for example, without reference to their longer historical development as part of the modern world-system. In so doing, it deflected attention from the actual systemic crisis of the capitalist world-economy, and the potentials for human agency to influence the shape and nature of its transition toward an uncertain alternative.

Leaving aside the question of systemic crisis and transition for one moment, the general point for educational research is that the study of national systems of education, including their core structures and purposes, is enhanced by reference to the capitalist world-economy in which the nation-state is historically and structurally located. It is worth noting that a similar approach had been employed before, without direct reference to WSA, by Hobsbawm (1987) who pointed to various dynamics in the expansion of education in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These included its function of composing and recomposing class stratification, its role in nationalisms of both liberating nations and oppressive nation-states, grassroots education in workers' movements, its emancipatory role for women, and a general progress associated with literacy that still revealed core-periphery discrepancies between states, regions, and racial groups. While Hobsbawm's historiographic account does not operate within WSA conceptual framework, his take on capitalism parallels that proposed by Wallerstein who clearly drew on Hobsbawm's idea of the "long 19th century" stretching between 1789 and 1914 (cf. Hobsbawm, 1962, 1975, 1987; Wallerstein, 2011).

Within the field of comparative and international education, WSA-framed educational research is also a point of departure from the "neo-institutionalist" branch of research also referred to as "world culture theory," that explains identified convergence in educational policies across the world in terms of an institutionalized world culture of the modern nation-state, its forms and ideas of national progress, extending to models and contents of mass education systems (see for example Baker, 2014). The world culture perspective downplays or excludes both the economic imperatives of capitalism as a world-economy, and the power-dynamics associated with its effective functioning, discounting them as significant factors in accounting for the spread of mass education systems (see for example Griffiths and Arno, 2015).

In contrast, WSA offers a more comprehensive framework for contextualizing, and understanding, single and comparative case-studies. At an important level, WSA offers a casual account of phenomena like the global expansion of systems of mass education, tying this phenomenon to nation-states' operation within the capitalist world-economy, and the interstate system. Specifically, WSA highlights nation-states efforts to advance projects of national economic development, whether efforts to "catch up to the wealthy countries" (Wallerstein, 2000a, p. 263) by states located in the periphery or semi-periphery; or the ongoing programs of endless, linear, growth and development in states within the core working to maintain their relatively privileged position. For educational research, the immediate connection is to the well documented conceptualization of education by international policy makers and institutions, and their national and local counterparts, in terms of the human capital formation deemed as required for national economic growth and development. This application of human capital theory by policy makers aligns with orthodox modernization theorizing projecting universal paths of (capitalist) national economic development, narrowing the focus and scope of mass education to such instrumental demands (see for example Klees, 2008).

The substance of this sort of macro-account of the phenomenon of mass education, its character and official purposes, can be fleshed out in terms of WSA's articulation of a shared geoculture or cultural framework of "centrist liberalism" (Wallerstein, 2011) across diverse political systems during the past century of the modern world-system. This shared cultural framework included a "developmentalist" logic related to modernization theory. It extended to a shared belief across diverse and ostensibly competing political systems, in the ability of policy makers, through the exercise of state power, to make use of scientific and technological knowledge and advances in (modernizing) projects of national economic development. In ways not dissimilar to Rostow's (1959) universal claims, the shared assumptions of the geoculture presented national development in these terms as universally possible, and capable of delivering the promise of material abundance for all at some point in the not too distant future (e.g. Wallerstein, 2005). Analyses of efforts by institutions like the World Bank to present education in terms of these universal development promises, and measure the economic return (to the nation) on investments in education, logically follow.

Educational research from this perspective highlights and builds on the identified shared aspirations of historical socialist and capitalist states, that arguably continues post-1989, to further pursue this agenda. Despite failings, the geoculture of the world-economy maintains that all nations can achieve desired levels of national economic growth and development, toward "a more prosperous, more egalitarian world" (Wallerstein, 2000a, p. 262), toward a promised utopia of material well-being and abundance for all. The particular perspective of WSA is important here, in which Wallerstein identifies the collapse of historical socialism (as a mid-term process between 1956/1968 and 1989/1991) as a marker of the demise of centrist liberalism as the dominant geoculture of the modern world-system, and so a marker in the crisis and period of transformation of the capitalist world-economy. The "end of liberalism" argument highlights the failures of both capitalist and historical socialist states and systems to deliver the universalized promises of endless growth, of improved social and material security, health, well-being, of abundant consumption for all (see for example Griffiths, 2009); attributing these failures to the systemic operation and requirements of the world-system and hierarchical distribution of surplus value across participating states in peripheral, semiperipheral, and core zones of the world-economy (Wallerstein, 1995, 1999a, 2005).

Importantly, educational research inspired by this perspective brings to the examination of educational phenomena the simultaneous crisis and a loss of legitimacy of states due, in part, to their failure to deliver the liberal promises, despite more than half a century of UN "decades of development" since the 1960s. For example, the phenomenon of "credential inflation" undermines the promised upward social mobility for individuals, through the attainment of educational credentials, coupled with global phenomena of de-industrialization, automation, and ongoing neoliberal prescriptions that reduce the role of the state in the provision of public services and so as an employer, underpinning structural unemployment (e.g. Collins, 2013). As Warmington (2015) argues from the United States context, "The fact is, however, that not everyone can learn their way out of poverty ... The economic system that makes some affluent is the same system that locks others into poor work" (p. 274).

WSA foregrounds these constraints on a world-system level—how the capitalist world-economy, and its "normal" operation, impose on educational policy goals like learning one's way out of poverty as the counterpart of human capital logic. WSA requires

researchers to present such policy ambitions as a structural impossibility for many, including increasing numbers and groups located within wealthy, core countries, and disproportionately those located in relatively poor, semiperipheral and peripheral contexts. That the promise continues to be offered and reflected in educational policy, and that people across the world continue to pursue improved social and economic conditions in part through participating in formal education, are phenomena worth investigating. But the persistence of the phenomena does not change the structural impossibility of the liberal promise, without a structural change to the operating principles of the capitalist world-economy.

In earlier work analyzing the use of WSA in a major comparative education journal, we found its use in terms of supporting the shift away from “methodological nationalism” as raised above, and building on dependency theory, but with some critiques of WSA that we argued missed the mark (Griffiths and Knezevic, 2010). In particular, WSA was positioned by some as overly deterministic, and so as excluding opportunities for local agency over educational policy and practice. Accounts of its theorizing tended to position WSA as a now redundant point in the linear development of theorizing in the social sciences, overtaken by more contemporary approaches. Such accounts fail to acknowledge WSA’s consistent emphasis on the constant interplay between structure and agency within particular historical conditions. Moreover, they fail to engage with WSA’s argument that the period of systemic crisis and transition that we are living in provides heightened possibilities for human agency to influence the course of history (Wallerstein, 1997a). Crucially, some of the characterizations of WSA present it as a static “theory,” failing to understand it as a knowledge movement and protest against established structures of knowledge that work to support existing systemic injustices and inequalities.

Importantly for educational research, WSA directly connects with well-established traditions of critical education and critical pedagogy. Wallerstein, for example, frequently conceptualized WSA in terms of politically engaged academic work, citing three key “tasks” of such work: (1) the intellectual task of understanding social reality; (2) the “moral” task of imagining alternatives that are more egalitarian, just, equal, democratic; and (3) the “political” task of conceptualizing and taking action to change reality in such egalitarian directions (Wallerstein, 1998a,b). The alignment with Freire’s concepts of developing critical consciousness through the analysis of existing reality and its injustices and inequalities, as a basis for taking action in the world to change the world, are clear and consistent in WSA (see for example Griffiths, 2019). WSA sets out to construct a social science that can “speak to the worldwide social transformation through which we shall be living” (Wallerstein, 1999a, p. 201).

World-systems analysis brings explicit political ambitions to educational research, including explorations of the potential for educational work to contribute to and influence the transition from capitalism to an uncertain alternative. Cho’s (2013) volume, for example, provides a good account of critical pedagogy that draws on Wallerstein’s work, elaborating the potential of critical pedagogy to further fulfill its “language of possibility,” and for WSA to inform this work in terms of defining and constructing an alternative education, including its purposes and potential contributions to the creation of a more egalitarian future.

As we suggest below, it is in this area that WSA’s take up/application in educational research holds most promise, notwithstanding the difficulties of operationalizing such a project. This application is based on a number of premises about capitalist world-economy in a period of crisis and transition, linked to a set of irresolvable contradictions or tendencies reaching their absolute limit, and so bringing this analysis to bear on our thinking about and practice in educational settings. In concrete terms, the WSA tasks of critical interpreting existing social problems and inequalities and their systemic character, and of imagining alternative and more egalitarian world-systems, are a guide for educational curricular and pedagogical practice. These are general principles that have, more or less, characterized critical pedagogy for decades. What does WSA specifically bring that makes its application to educational research necessary?

World-systems analysis and education for a just, utopistic, transition

In this chapter we have emphasized how WSA’s identification of centrist liberalism as the dominant geoculture of the capitalist world-economy has included its overt commitment to and focus on “economic development linked to social amelioration,” these being seen as “obverse sides of the same coin” (Wallerstein, 2011, p. 107). Regardless of their location and highly unequal states of “development,” the promise and aspiration were aligned and promoted, grounded in an expressed belief in the universal potential for such development. As Wallerstein (1995) observed:

The possibility of the (economic) development of all countries came to be a universal faith, shared alike by conservatives, liberals, and Marxists. The formulas each put forward to achieve such development were fiercely debated, but the possibility itself was not. In this sense, the concept of development became a basic element of the geocultural underpinning of the world-system.

Wallerstein (1995, p. 163).

So while this insight is not new, the ongoing influence and application to educational policy and practice remains, albeit under pressure in various ways linked to the structural failings of the “universal faith.” WSA foregrounds the manifestation of this promise in education systems as another indication of the weakening legitimacy of the geoculture and the nation-states and their institutions that continue to promote it.

This critical position is necessary now more than ever, in the face of the current global climate crisis, the incapacity of mainstream conceptions of capitalist “development” based on linear and endless growth and capital accumulation to resolve the climate crisis, and so the urgent need for educational interventions to contribute to and advance feasible alternatives. In Wallerstein’s (1998a) utopistic terms, this involves

... the sober, rational, and realistic evaluation of human social systems, the constraints on what they can be, and the zones open to human creativity. Not the face of the perfect (and inevitable) future, but the face of an alternative, credibly better, and historically possible (but far from certain) future (pp. 1–2).

The climate emergency, and fledgling global efforts to constrain carbon emissions and increases in global temperature, highlight the tensions in tackling this crisis within the constraints of the economic system and its cultural assumptions that has, through the systemic requirement of endless growth and capital accumulation, produced the climate crisis. One of the secular trends contributing to the crisis and period of transition of the capitalist world-economy has been capital’s externalization of environmental costs of production to the state, to maintain rates of profit and capital accumulation (Wallerstein, 2013). This trend added to seemingly impossible pressure on the state to meet these and other costs, alongside pressure to reduce taxation, and so arguably to some shifting of the costs of global warming and remediation efforts back to capital that has exacerbated pressures on profits and capital accumulation. Clearly the global climate crisis exacerbates such tensions, and has the potential to build support for the utopistic work for system change.

WSA provides an important and relevant perspective for current analyses associated with the global climate emergency, and efforts to achieve some sort of just settlement across space and time. Work like Hicckel’s (2020) volume, for example, seeks to make the case for a post-capitalist (in his case, degrowth) future. The crucial point is that the argument is based on the incompatibility of capitalism’s logic of endless growth and capital accumulation which, even with the growth of renewable energies and efforts at carbon capture, cannot reduce emissions sufficiently to avoid irreversible climatic tipping points being passed. We argue that this and other important work (e.g. Smith, 2016) constitutes the sort of politically engaged work that Wallerstein and WSA consistently advocated. It locates fundamental causes of the current climate problem in the systemic operation and structures of the capitalist world-economy economy; attempting to “imagine” and elaborate an alternative (non-capitalist) system; and strategies to advance or build such alternatives. For educators, the work provides material for use in classroom activities designed to engage students in these critical issues and debates.

At this macro-level, WSA continues to stand as a guiding framework for politically engaged educators and policy makers at all levels. The scope of WSA is and should be broad, working to avoid non-productive debates and concentrate attention on the systemic nature of existing inequalities, tied to the operation of the capitalist world-economy, and so to ambitions to create more egalitarian, just, and democratic alternatives. From a WSA perspective, these are the key characteristics of this approach that are applicable to educational research, whether empirical work explaining and critiquing current realities, or critical education advocacy and interventions (e.g. see Misiaszek, 2020, on ecopedagogy).

World-systems analysis explores how capitalism, as a world-economy, came to incorporate the whole geographical world, and how it established and requires the highly unequal and unjust structure across nation-states, for its normal operation. This rests on capitalism’s historical expropriation of land, resources, and labor; on the unequal transfer of surplus value from the periphery to the core; on the incapacity of the system to maintain this mode of capital accumulation and deliver promised development universally at the same time; and crucially, on the fundamental contradiction between the requirement for endless compound growth, and the rates of resource use and consumption this demands, and the mitigation measures needed to contain global warming. One could argue that Green New Deal advocates, and even the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals’ limited efforts to respond to the climate crisis, and its call for differential growth rates across the globe linked to historical carbon emissions and associated levels of “development,” implicitly invoke some of these basic premises of WSA.

We conclude then by reasserting WSA’s contribution to our examination and understanding of the unequal and unjust dimensions of our current world, and particularly the urgent global climate emergency that confronts the world. WSA, and the work of Wallerstein in particular, is unequivocal about the capacity of social science to approximate the truth, and so develop “scholarly analyses that are more correct ... [and are] ... more socially useful” (Wallerstein, 1997a, p. 1254), contributing to the construction of “alternative, credibly better, and historically possible” (Wallerstein, 1998a, p. 2) futures. This understanding can be utilized by politically engaged educators, embedded in educational efforts to prepare students who might in turn contribute to a just and genuinely sustainable transition.

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Spatial theories, methods and education policy

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Spatial theories, methods and education policy	29
Marxist political economy and spatial dimensions of education	30
A (post)spatial turn	31
Power and topological space	31
Geospatial research development in education: a focus on method	32
Conclusion: asking spatial questions of education policy	33
References	34

Spatial theories, methods and education policy

While education policy can be understood as a temporal intervention into the world (Thompson and Cook, 2014), the increased emphasis in the last decade on the globalized aspects of policy has raised the importance of the geographical aspects of policy. As Rizvi and Lingard (2010) posit, “[t]he disposition for critical policy analysis in an era of globalization requires that we recognize the relationality and interconnectivity of policy developments” (p. 69). Part of this work has been to emphasize the ways that globalization requires a focus on power, boundaries, the global flows of policy ideas and people, and the ways policy is created, moved and modified in “vernacular” ways. Broadly, there has been an increased use of spatial language in understanding education policy.

In this article, we focus on the *where* of policy to understand how and why policy is made and enacted. We locate this article in what can be called the “critical geographies of education policy,” a subfield of the broader field of “critical geographies of education” that is concerned with the spatial dynamics of issues of power, inequality and difference (McCreary et al., 2013; Pini et al., 2017; Nguyen et al., 2017). In this article, the work we are outlining is part of what Thiem (2009) highlights as an “inward-looking” geography of education, where education policy is “the ultimate ends of investigation, with spatial variations in the provision, consumption, and outcomes of schooling considered to be phenomena in need of exploration” (p. 156). This article outlines what could be seen as the utility of spatial theories and methods in investigating education policy and politics, where we are primarily looking at the analytical outcomes of using spatial theories. Thiem (2009), however, also outlines the potential of “outward-looking” geographies of education, where the spatial dynamics of education are themselves a generative site of theory building.

As will also be clear as the article proceeds, spatial theory has traveled through interdisciplinary fields and in this travel, and this theoretical expansiveness, has at times lacked a clear road map. While geography is the logical home of spatial concepts, these concepts travel particularly through and between social theory and application in empirical work (Bourdieu, 1999), such as in education (Yoon, 2020). Gulson and Symes (2007b) note, “In many ways the spatial trajectories in education have mirrored those of other disciplines in borrowing, appropriating, and employing the spatial theories of geography” (p. 5). The increased spatial language, or tropes of space, and the use of imagery or metaphors of space in education policy studies can be described by what Said (1993) calls the conjuring of a “geographical imagination”. It is unviable, Said’s work suggests, to explore notions of power or knowledge without also considering territory, geography and space. This “geographical imagination” is conceptualized as the “spatial turn”, a growing attention to notions of space in the social sciences (Gulson and Symes, 2007b). Tropes of space, such as belonging or unbelonging, spaces of inclusion or spaces of engagement, point to the spatial turn. After all, “the language of exclusion is, by and large, spatial” (Gulson and Symes, 2007a). However, at times this spatial language is left as self-explanatory. There are numerous examples of spatial metaphors utilized in self-explanatory ways; for example, Lefebvre’s (1968) famous reference, “The Right to the City”, is commonly used in educational work, but often without reference to Lefebvre. A search for Lefebvre will produce only a handful of results within an education search engine, whereas “the right to the city” will produce thousands.

Therefore, in being cognizant of the movement of ideas, we have tried in this article to be precise about definitions and usage of spatial ideas. We accept Gregory’s contention that it is important that when using the language of space that we should “interrogate its common-sense understandings” (Gregory, 1994). A brief foray can illustrate the importance of interrogating common-sense understandings, namely the example of power and space. Spatial theories are characterized by their focus on power and how this is layered and textured. This is reflected in one of Massey’s (1993) signature concepts, “power-geometries”, and her attention to the spatial division of labor. Access to resources and means of production is embedded within space, and individuals retain unequal access depending on their class, race, gender and able-bodiedness. Power is embedded within space, or as Soja (1996) writes, “power is ontologically embedded”; whereas for Lefebvre (1976), “power is everywhere; it

is omnipresent, assigned to Being. It is everywhere *in space*" (p. 86, emphasis in original). An interpretation of spatial theory, then, will depend on one's epistemological and ontological positioning; that is, one's reading of knowledge and constructs of power. In this article, we outline, rather than synthesize, a range of work that spans across critical and quantitative studies.

This article outlines key ways in which space has been used in education policy work, providing overviews of concepts and examples of application in education. These are necessarily broad strokes, but we hope to provide some insights into the richness of spatial ideas and the range of ways that they can help us understand education policy. In the first part of the article much of what we cover can be broadly located within the premise that geography shapes social relations and practices, and this geographical connection between things and people can be broadly understood as "spatiality" (Keith and Pile, 1993). Spatial theory is concerned with the epistemological and ontological; space is fundamentally tied to place-bound expressions of power and representations of power. Yet, space is not bounded or closed; it is interminable and open. We move from Marxist political economy to a focus on postmodern theories and notions of relationality, including the extension of this into ideas of place, and topological approaches. The second part of the article concerns how method and geospatial research are re-focusing on place and education policy, while also bringing back quantitative methods into critical geographical scholarship that emphasize inequity and opportunity gaps. We conclude with some brief thoughts on the types of questions and issues that an explicit focus on space allows in education policy studies.

Marxist political economy and spatial dimensions of education

One strain of spatial theory that has been influential in education policy, particularly in the North American context, is the use of Marxian political economy associated with geographer David Harvey. Harvey's work, beginning with *Social Justice and the City* (1973) and *Limits to Capital* (1982) and spanning decades since, emphasizes the importance of the circulation of capital and commodities in shaping spatial relations. Like Lefebvre and Massey, power for Harvey imbues spatial relations, but this power is rooted in the social relations of the capitalist system. This is most clearly illustrated in Harvey's concept of the "spatial fix" and its manifestations in urban space, where the over-accumulation of capital requires the production of spaces that can absorb surpluses of capital and labor. Here, the booms and busts of urban real estate are understood as the result of how the search for high returns on investment leads capital to alternatively flow in and out of neighborhoods, cities, and countries. Related concepts such as uneven development and the "rent gap theory of gentrification" further highlight how the circulation of capital unevenly shapes urban spaces in ways that maximize capital accumulation (Smith, 1982).

This work, and the work of geographic political economists following in Harvey's footsteps, has been taken up by scholars of urban education in order to understand the relationship between schools, policy, and the production of urban space (Pedroni, 2011; Lipman, 2011; Buras, 2015). As put forward by these authors, we cannot understand changes to urban schooling policy without investigating their connection to the capitalist spatial relations that continually make and remake cities and their neighborhoods, notably in the production of disequilibrium between inner-cities and suburbs in metropolizes, and in the subsequent gentrification of inner-cities. Most commonly, this has taken the form of in-depth examinations of how school closures, the marketization of school systems, and other facets of urban education reform have facilitated processes of gentrification (Butler et al., 2013; Hankins and Martin, 2006; Nethercote, 2017; Lipman, 2011).

As Anyon (2005) describes, in this view, "urban schools are at the center of the maelstrom of constant crises that beset low-income neighborhoods" (p. 179), crises that are the consequences of suburbanization and resource redistribution. For Lipman in their investigations of Chicago, education reforms can therefore best be understood as part of projects that "remake public education to remake the city" (Lipman, 2011). Through detailed work and longstanding activist engagement, Lipman describes how marketized reform policies allow for class and race segregated schools to act as the "third leg" (2011, p. 93) of the gentrification process. They do so by allowing middle-class residents to avoid schools deemed as "failing" and thereby facilitate their movement into the city, thus unlocking windfalls for real estate developers. Linking similar processes in Detroit to Harvey's ideas, Pedroni (2011) argues that educational policy "supports and guides" the spatial fix of capital into urban real estate, and furthers this argument by arguing that this spatial fix is also a "racial fix" that intensifies urban inequalities. Cohen (2020), in cognate work on Detroit, focuses on the intersection of race and urban change through a framework of market logics.

Working in the Australian context, Nethercote (2017) documents how this connection between the circulation of capital and schooling may take different forms according to particular spatial conjunctures. Examining school policies in Melbourne, Nethercote highlights that the underfunding of public schools in that city has resulted in middle-class displacement from the urban core in ways that contrast with the American experience, but which nonetheless aid "the production of exclusive, privatized urban spaces fueled by and for global capital flows" (p. 462). This highlights how approaches to understanding education policy through studying the spatial dimensions of Marxist political economy require an attention to how capital, schools, and the production of (urban) spaces coalesce in different sites. Also in the Australian context, Rowe (2015) utilizes Harvey's theories of relational and absolute space in order to explore geographically-bound school choices of the gentrified middle-class, arguing that class-identity is constructed in relation to geographical (or residential) positioning. While space is fluid and flexible—always manipulated and in flux—space can be operationalized as fixed and constrained within the context of a highly competitive urban schooling market. Drawing on Harvey (2006), relative space speaks to the *relationships* between objects, whereas absolute space is conceptualized as fixed and immovable, a grid that is calculated by measurements, maps and physical geometry. Harvey (1973) argues absolute space is limited and too definitive, as it becomes a "thing in itself" (p. 13). A schooling space and community is relative space, in

that it is always moving and reshaping itself; but one could simultaneously argue that a school is located in absolute space and the class status that it becomes attached to becomes a “thing in itself”; while it is clearly subject to change, it is simultaneously essentialized, known and conceptualized as fixed and stable. Thereby, space is rooted in performativity of its relations.

A (post)spatial turn

Another strain of spatial thought has been connected to postmodernist spatial theories. The spatial turn is marked out by a shift away from positivism and essentialism, and instead a move toward postmodernism, postcolonial and feminist spatial theorists. It is interesting to see how ideas that seem located in one theoretical aspect can be taken up across areas. For example, the work of Henri Lefebvre is located in French Marxism. A spatial reading of capitalism in his famous book *La production l'espace* outlined in a wide ranging and at times frustratingly meandering manner,¹ that space is socially produced, engineered and constructed; and importantly, that social relations are made, or produced, relative to space (Lefebvre, 1991). The eclectic nature of Lefebvre's work has allowed it to be taken up by postmodern theorists such as Soja (1996), who argues for “thirdspace”, and the “trialectics of spatiality”, drawing on Lefebvre's three-way “perceived, lived and conceived spatiality”. Soja reworks Lefebvre's ideas into “spatial justice”, which was meant to create a series of emerging ideas held together by the contention that “everything that is social (justice included) is simultaneously and inherently spatial” (Soja, 2010).

Education research drawing on reworkings of Lefebvre has drawn out his analysis of the connections between social production, practices and capitalism, including Rowe's work on school choice, middle class practices and urban change (Rowe, 2017, 2020). Soja's work both on “thirdspace” and “spatial justice” has been the focus of work, interestingly, on education policy work on rural spaces and policy change (Green and Letts, 2007; Beach et al., 2018).

Another key thinker whose work developed from political geography through to social and cultural geography is Doreen Massey. Massey's work from a focus on the spatial dimensions of labor (Massey, 1979), on gender and space (Massey, 1994b), and connecting globalization, cities and space (Massey, 2007) emphasized that space was a key site of politics (Massey, 1992, 2009). Her work, particularly in reference to cities, broadened and challenged spatial understanding of globalization as a Western, colonial economized idea (Massey, 2005). The conceptual apparatus to do this work was relational space with three key components. There is no room to fully expand on these ideas but for now it is enough to identify them: (1) *Interrelations*, in that space is constituted by relations between people, and between people and the non-human; (2) *Multiplicity*, that rather than being one thing, space can be simultaneously multiple; and (3) *Openness*, that rather than being a non-political fixed arena, space is political (Massey, 2005). This doesn't mean space is never fixed, for as Thrift posits, “Spaces can be stabilized in such a way that they act like political utterances, guiding subjects to particular conclusions” (Thrift, 2003).

Space and place have tended to be conflated when taken up in education policy studies. Butler and Sinclair (2020) suggest that “while a growing body of theoretical and conceptual work has explored the role of place in education practice ..., place has been somewhat underconceptualized in education research” (p. 65). When place has been conceptualized in education policy research, not as a conflation but a discrete spatial category, it has tended to draw on work that has attempted to show how places (schools, neighborhoods) have interconnections that reconfigure the idea that place is local. This idea draws on relational notions of place and space and identity such as those advocated by Massey, who asserts the importance of the relationship of place and space, arguing that space is not more important than place, but rather that place “is best thought of as a particular part of, a particular moment in, the global network of those social relations and understandings” (Massey, 1994a). The key here that place is not static, closed and only local or proximal. This idea has been extended to focus on ideas of spatial encounters that comprise place as an event, with Amin and Thrift positing that places “are best thought of not so much as enduring sites but as moments of encounter, not so much as ‘presents’, fixed in space and time, but as variable events; twists and fluxes of interrelation” (Amin and Thrift, 2002).

Work on relational notions of space and place has spanned areas such as globalization, policy and the construction of the teacher (Maguire, 2002), and notions of personalization and de-schooling (Pykett, 2009). Other work has used Massey's ideas of the links between politics, race and openness and relational space to explore how space works to shape political possibilities in education (Gulson and Parkes, 2009). Additional work has used relationality as a way to connect the materiality of urban change, such as gentrification with education policy change, such as school choice (Smith and Lupton, 2008; Gulson, 2011). While Massey's work on globalization has been often linked to cities, educational scholars have used it to explore the globalized spaces of rural education, policy and marginalization, including in Australia and Chile (Oyarzún, 2020; Reid, 2017).

Power and topological space

The focus on relationality is a key part of topological conceptions of power, or “power-topologies” (Allen and Cochrane, 2010), has proved useful to theorize how power is exercised in contemporary spaces and relations associated with globalization (Amin, 2002). While Euclidean space provides the a priori backdrop against which power relations are situated and exerted, power-topologies

¹This wide-ranging nature of his writing may well have been connected to his writing habits, or indeed his series of secretaries and relationships (Merrifield, 2006, p. xxii).

instead constitute the very spaces in which their effects and influence are exerted, in which power relationships are “not so much positioned in space or extended across it, as they compose the spaces of which they are a part” (Allen, 2011). Power-topologies also express how policy actors are able to overcome physical distance to “make their presence felt in more or less powerful ways” (Allen, 2011). These ideas have been taken up in education policy in a focus on two main concentrations of education research. These are the movement of policy, as well as processes of datafication and infrastructuring, respectively.

Education policy sociology research concerned with the movement of policy has primarily drawn on topology to emphasize the dynamic movement (*flows*) of policy and, at the same time, the contextual embeddedness of its uptake, contestation and enactment (*frictions*) by people and places. Adopting a topological approach to policy sociology requires: (1) accounting for the new relational spaces of the policy cycle; (2) observing how these policies move within and across, and simultaneously reconfigure, these spaces; and (3) noting how these interactions and movements through space, as well as local processes of implementation, reshape the policies in question. Often, this framework has been translated into research via a rationale of “following the policy” (Peck and Theodore, 2015; McCann and Ward, 2012), where one follows (virtually or in-person) the people, places and processes through which policy is made and moves. Arguably, this is now central for policy sociologists who seek to address the networked nature of education policymaking, as well as for understanding how the enactment of “global” policy flows is still very much shaped by decidedly “local” conditions and contexts. More recently, there have been an increasing number of contributions that study the movement of education policy via a topological lens (Gulson et al., 2017; Lewis and Hardy, 2017; Gulson and Sellar, 2019).

At the same time, topology has also provided generative means for exploring how digital data are now increasingly central to the constitution of schooling systems as knowable and governable spaces. The concept of data infrastructures – or the process of *data infrastructuring* – refers here to socio-technical assemblages (of databases, software platforms, people, buildings and practices) that laboriously translate things into data and fabricate supposedly objective governing knowledge (Piattoeva and Saari, 2020). Topological modes of culture have emerged through processes of continuity and ordering, and significant advances in computational capacities to collect, calculate and compare such data have enabled new kinds of “ordered-ness” to emerge. For example, the generation of large data sets relating to the comparative performance of education systems (perhaps best typified by the OECD’s PISA) enables modes of reasoning focused on the relationships between policy settings, despite such policies being deployed in geographically distant and contextually distinct schools and schooling systems. There has similarly been a rising body of critical attention devoted to the ongoing datafication of schooling in recent year (Hartong, 2020; Lewis and Holloway, 2019; Takayama and Lingard, 2019).

Geospatial research development in education: a focus on method

This section discusses an emerging body of educational research that focuses on geospatial analytical approaches and their further development, as part of mixed-methods approaches that connect space (e.g., location, proximity, and distance) to place (e.g., sense of belonging, neighborhood boundaries, and lived experience) (Waitoller and Lubienski, 2019; Yoon et al., 2018a). Geospatial research is based primarily on the use, application, and extension of “geographic information systems” (or “science,” but “GIS” in either case), a fusion of georeferenced data (with locational details) and software that enables the analysis of such data. Harvey (1972), for instance, uses GIS-generated maps to illustrate his analysis of urban inequality. In education research, any kind of demographic or school data (e.g., achievement, absenteeism) can be transformed into geographic information when it is linked to longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates on the earth’s surface. Researchers thus emphasize the role of GIS, referring to geospatial research as GIS-based or GIS research in education, highlighting the indispensability of GIS to this type of research (Cobb, 2020).

GIS-based or geospatial research has been used in social sciences like sociology and economics, as well as in commercial endeavors such as market analytics, for some time. In education, GIS has been used by school boards since the 1980s for the purpose of school planning (Rob Brown, personal communication, November 20, 2020), while academic researchers started using this type of research in the late 1990s, especially in the United States (Cobb and Glass, 1999, 2009). This early group of educational researchers who adopted GIS leveraged it as a technology and an analytical tool to create and manipulate geographically referenced information, such as the impact of charter schools or school choice on ethnic and racial segregation and stratification (Cobb and Glass, 1999). Also, in the United Kingdom and Europe, researchers started using GIS to explore the impact of parental choice of schools on student flows across catchment boundaries or competition between schools in local areas (Parsons et al., 2000; Taylor, 2002), as well as ethnic segregation as a result of school choice (Karsten et al., 2003). This body of work builds on the notions of spatial segregation that are associated with social and ethnic exclusion and hierarchy.

During this early period of geospatial research, educational researchers applied GIS to their research to varying degrees. Some applied it at the core of their analysis (Taylor, 2007), while others used only the products of GIS, such as maps, merely to complement or illustrate their studies, without stating explicitly why or how they used it (Lipman, 2002). Also, it is worth noting that the rise of GIS research among educational researchers came in the wake of a similar trend among human geographers, particularly as computer software became more advanced. This trend, which arose in the 1990s, followed extensive debate between the computer scientists who develop GIS software to measure spatial relationships, and the human geographers who co-construct maps that reflect a variety of voices (Nyerges et al., 2011). It was after this debate that human geographers began to accept the use of GIS as part of their place-based research that focuses on participants’ meanings of communities, neighborhoods, and mobility. The rise of GIS research in education is thus linked to these developments in human geography and computer science.

So, why has GIS become so popular among educational researchers? As is notable in the publications by an early group of educational researchers, geospatial research has been applied to answer some of the long-standing questions that are pertinent to education and can be (re)examined using a spatial lens, with a particular attention paid to geographical clustering, proximity, distance, or accessibility. For instance, questions related to school outcomes, school catchment or attendance areas, and educational quality, including teachers, curriculum, and resources, have a spatial dimension because schools are located in particular neighborhoods. Since the appearance of schoolhouses in the 19th century, educational researchers have studied school outcomes and how they vary from school to school. By introducing GIS, researchers have been able to use maps to more effectively illustrate which schools have higher or lower outcomes, especially against the backdrop of neighborhood characteristics and development. More importantly, geospatial research has facilitated the theorization of how school outcomes vary according to the resources that are (un)available in the surrounding neighborhoods, including the level of affluence, community resources, libraries, or economic resources, which are now commonly referred to as the geography of opportunity (Gulosino and Yoon, 2020; Tate, 2012). It also allows for an examination of gerrymandering of school attendance zones (Richards, 2014), and curriculum variations (Gulosino and Miron, 2020). Overall, geospatial approaches have been able to help us see the geographical dimension of these perennial issues, which are universal across different time periods and countries (Mann and Saultz, 2019; Yoon et al., 2018b). Themes explored in this area of educational research resonate with the political economy of urban education as well as theories of educational reproduction, that are rooted in Marxism and critical theories.

GIS has become particularly invaluable for the study of school choice reforms. As Lubienski and Dougherty (2009) note, the issue of school choice reforms was at the forefront of geospatial research because “choice is inherently a spatial issue, with geography, location, and distance all primary concerns for parents choosing schools” (p. 487). Geospatial tools available in GIS software are particularly well suited for understanding the importance of school proximity and accessibility (Burgess et al., 2011; Marshall et al., 2010). The tools allow for the analysis of school segregation and stratification patterns by race and class in the growth of different types of school choice options, including charter schools (Butler et al., 2007; Saporito and Sohoni, 2006). Geospatial research is effective in illustrating the racialized manipulation of school admission policies and the gerrymandering of school attendance policies by schools that wish to maintain their competitive position by keeping only “desirable” students (Lubienski et al., 2009, 2013). Also, when linked to critical social theories, GIS can provide a geographical dimension to school choice and its reproductive function (Yoon et al., 2018b, 2020).

While initially used to analyze quantitative education data, recent decades have seen geospatial research increasing come to complement qualitative research in education. Historically, ethnographies and case studies have focused on the places where schooling happens (Willis, 1981; Gewirtz et al., 1995; Anyon, 2005). Interview-based case studies and ethnographic studies dominated, for instance, place-based research on school segregation by race and class, and these studies were used to analyze historically-formed racialized neighborhood schools and the politics of school closures (Andre-Bechely, 2007; Lipman, 2011; Yoon, 2017). Further, critical race theory and disability theory have been applied to shed light on how different racial and ability groups perceive and co-construct places of educational policy and schools (Waitoller and Super, 2017; Armstrong, 2003). Yet, more recently, building on the epistemologies of critical, hybrid, and heterogeneous constructivism, a new group of researchers – in both human geography and the geography of education – has taken a much more mixed-methods approach that incorporates GIS with qualitative data, such as field notes, interviews, or sketch maps (Kwan, 2008; Yoon and Lubienski, 2018). These researchers use a mixed-methods design to layer analysis of macro-level patterns with micro-level practices and politics. These methods are robust and have been developed based on a wide range of critical, feminist, and postmodern social theories that scaffold spatial methods.

Connecting space to place, mixed-methods researchers use maps to show what is going on across a city, region, and even countries, and to tell the stories of maps using micro-level data. These maps, moreover, leverage individual meaning-making, social capital building, and politics, all of which shape macro-level patterns of education. Their approaches are particularly powerful in telling local stories that other maps can miss (Lubienski and Lee, 2017), including the views of historically racialized groups (Yoon and Lubienski, 2017); the desired versus actual choices of first-generation, low-income college students (Jabbar et al., 2017); and historically-formed social networks along class backgrounds that underpin higher education choices (Gamsu and Donnelly, 2020). Also, participatory GIS mapping has shown that students from marginalized communities can participate in map-making in ways that challenge poverty and deprivation in their neighborhoods, thereby calling for greater spatial justice (Ghose and Welcenbach, 2018). These emerging studies indicate that geospatial research in education has enormous untapped potential that can help generate reflexive scholarship, in which researchers challenge the notion of GIS as a neutral scientific tool while also serving as catalyst to bring about social and spatial justice (Crampton, 2010; Yoon et al., 2018a).

Conclusion: asking spatial questions of education policy

Educational policy is very much considered a temporal intervention into the education systems and societies that produce and maintain them. Indeed, when a new party is elected to form a government, they introduce a set of new policies to mark the “era” of their political regime. Nevertheless, in this article, we explored some major theories and methods as rooted in critical geographies (of education) scholarship, and how they can help us not to lose sight of *where* power, inequality and difference are (re) generated in times of change, especially in the current education systems that are increasingly privatized and digitized.

Over a decade ago, [Gulson and Symes \(2007b\)](#) argued that, “Drawing on theories of space contributes in significant and important ways to subtle and more sophisticated understandings of the competing rationalities underlying educational policy change, social inequity, and cultural practices” (p. 2). As the above aspects outline, this has only become more evident in the intervening years. Since [Rizvi and Lingard \(2010\)](#) argued that globalization requires an understanding of the interconnectivity of policy developments a decade ago, we have seen further connectivity through processes such as the datafication of education, but also reminders of the unevenness of geographic flows, as circulating policies, pedagogies, and even viruses articulate with the politics of place to shape educational practice.

While it is obvious that there is no theoretical or methodological fidelity to what we have covered, and we have indeed glossed over important epistemological and ontological debates within human geography, we do think that what has been provided can be an impetus to ask new questions about enduring and novel educational problems. That is, what educational policy questions could be asked, or asked differently, with spatial approaches? A critical researcher needs to consider such questions. Traditionally, the study of education policy has been rooted in science and positivist approaches to understanding policy change and reform. As this has evolved to a more critical approach and sociology of education, there is a significant need to consider the role of space in education reform. Studying education policy traditionally takes place in “flatness”, an inert and even space by disinterested researchers. This is the unoccupied and distant lens, one that is inattentive to the politics and power of space. To take up a spatial approach is to occupy space; that is, noticing how the researcher and participants occupy and *take up* space in ways that are performative and rooted in “power-geometry” ([Massey, 1993](#)).

In this regard, the approaches reviewed in this article highlight that spatial theories are not unidirectional but relational, and ask us to consider educational policy in ways that push against tendencies to take the “local”, “national”, or “global” for granted. Whether understanding the role of schooling in producing urban spaces for capital, the relational encounters that make up educational practice, or “following the policy” through “flows” and “frictions”, the geographies of education serve to unbound the study of education as a discrete space and, instead trace both inwards and outwards to examine how educational practice and policies shape (and themselves reshape) the networks with which they are connected ([Lewis, 2020](#)).

As such, we hope that future research continues to take up questions related to the spatial dimensions of policy, whether place-specific or mobile. We hope this future research examines, moreover, how policies unfold in informal or formal learning spaces, open or closed programs of choice, public or private schools, open or gated communities, and locally elected or independent school boards, in the current reforms sweeping across the globe. Spatial theories and methods can offer a new generative lens for critical studies of educational policy, and help illuminate how educational spaces are inherently tied to the (re)production of power and privilege in the past, the present and future.

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Southern theory as an educational project: Shinto, self-negation and comparative education

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Doing southern theory	37
Ecofeminist and decolonial turns	38
Shinto's decolonial potentials	39
Politics of shinto	41
Salvaging shinto	42
Conclusion with self-negation	42
References	43

Doing southern theory

Raewyn Connell (2007) coined the term Southern Theory in her book *Southern Theory: The Global Dynamics of Knowledge in Social Science*. The term South is deployed to draw attention to the “periphery-center relations in the realm of knowledge” (Connell, 2007, p. viii). Her intension is not to “name a sharply bounded category of states or societies, but to emphasize relations—authority, exclusion and inclusion, hegemony, partnership, sponsorship, appropriation—between intellectuals and institutions in the metro-pole and those in the world periphery” (p. viii–ix). By recognizing the South as a source of critical theoretical insights, Connell demanded that social sciences address the differential global power relations in knowledge practice, which have left the existing theoretical tools parochial at best. Her work forces us to problematize the kind of relations often implicitly accepted in the process of academic knowledge production and invites us to do research differently, in a way that subverts the prevailing structure of knowledge. Drawing on her work as well as other cognate postcolonial and decolonial scholarship, I have, along with other colleagues, explored what it means to do Southern Theory in the field of comparative and international education (see Takayama, 2018, 2020a,b, 2015; Takayama et al., 2016; Takayama et al. 2017).

In my view, doing Southern Theory involves two critical moves. First, it requires us to explicitly recognize the “othered” lands and peoples as a source of intellectual work with global implications. Southern theory departs from the usual relations in social scientific knowledge generation, where the “othered” lands and peoples are treated as “data mine” or “informants”. It repositions them as a source of multicentric intellectual work and theoretical insights whose implications extend beyond the original places of generation. That is, it is a call for epistemic justice on the planetary scale. Second, it involves putting those insights and knowledges generated in the othered lands in critical dialogue with the Eurocentric knowledge widely circulated as “universal”. It involves provincializing, peculiarizing and then reconstituting the so called “foundational knowledge” or “theories” of a given discipline. It distances itself from postcolonial politics of resentment and nativist essentialism that simply ascribe to and solidify the colonial division of the world (Bhambra, 2014; Chen, 2010). Instead, it calls for a critical engagement with the existing disciplinary knowledge. That is, it recognizes both the indispensability and inadequacy of the existing disciplinary knowledge developed under the strong influence of Western modernity/coloniality (Chakrabarty, 2000). A project could be called Southern Theory, postcolonial or decolonial, depending on the specific intellectual lineages drawn upon, which inform the particular diagnosis of the challenges and the strategies proposed to address them (Alatas, 2006; Bhambra, 2014; Chen, 2010; Connell, 2007; Kurasawa, 2004; Mignolo, 2011).

In pursuing Southern Theory work over the last decade or so, I have attempted to operationalize Connell’s notion as an educational project while grounding it in the field of comparative and international education. Firstly, it is an educational project because doing Southern Theory demands that we take up a role as a “teacher” in relation to fellow researchers both in and outside education. It involves inviting others to take the risk of venturing into the unfamiliar intellectual world that sits outside the academic centers of the “West” so as to broaden their epistemic horizons. Assuming the role of teachers means that those who advocate Southern Theory must demonstrate to others how it can be done and what implications, both intended and unintended, it might generate for one’s research work. A self-reflective account on the very process of doing this work and its complexities, including this article, forms a valuable pedagogic resource.

Secondly, it is an educational project because doing Southern Theory necessarily requires a series of learning and unlearning, or “negations” (Takayama, 2020b). It demands that we question the taken for granted premises of disciplinary knowledge and reconstitute it through a set of insights that have been historically excluded from the discussion. But this epistemological shift is incomplete without an equally transformative ontological shift, that is, a shift in how we make sense of our being and relationality to others (Takayama, 2018, 2020b). Taking cues from Keiji Nishitani, Andrea English and Tim Ingold among others, I have elsewhere situated it at the core of the Southern Theory project to transcend the modern empiricist separation between knowing and being and to embrace the view that a shift in knowing necessarily results in a corresponding shift in being (see Takayama, 2020b).

The proposed ontological shift is what makes Southern Theory an indispensable part of the notion of comparative education as cultural critique, as recently articulated by Rapple (2020). Drawing on his extended transnational experiences, Rapple (2020) puts forward the notion of “immigracy of being” as the key disposition that invites “a deep experience of Otherness” to “completely shift the ontological ground” of the researcher self (p. 15). In his view, to compare necessarily involves a cultural critique of self and by extension self-negation. The same cross-cultural critique was at the heart of some of the founding scholars of sociology, including Marx, Weber and Durkheim (Kurasawa, 2004). Kurasawa (2004) coins the same methodological disposition “ethnological imagination,” which he defines as “a critical and cross-cultural hermeneutics of Euro-American modernity whereby engagement with other societies has been essential to the project of self-understanding and self-critique of their own times and places” (p. 4). Practicing ethnological imagination is deeply self-transformative, as “learning about others is not simply an act of cosmopolitan open-mindedness, but an integral part of learning about ourselves and even viewing ourselves as other” (p. 5). What is proposed here is not a call for postmodern relativism, but rather to let “the force of difference” release our imaginations (Geertz, 2000, p. 259). Doing Southern Theory sees disruption and self-negation as central to its educational project. It is necessarily disruptive, as it forces us to particularize and peculiarize the deep-seated assumptions shaping what and how we know and how we exist. It demands that we let go of a secured sense of self, acknowledge the partiality of our knowing and unlearn things that have been embraced as part of what makes us who we are (see Rapple, 2020; Takayama, 2020b).

Building on the discussion of Southern Theory as a pedagogical project, I am going to deploy my own experience/reflection as a central pedagogical tool. The article documents how I have done Southern Theory over the years, with a hope of inviting others to pursue this line of knowledge practice. It is a story of learning through disruption and self-negation, or cross-cultural unlearning, whereby I came to recognize my “home” as the other in an unexpectedly way, and in the course of unlearning, struggled to let go of my secured sense of self. It demonstrates how I learned to embrace the discomfort of having my own subjectivity and “expertise” challenged as a point of departure for renewed understanding of self and others.

Ecofeminist and decolonial turns

My latest unlearning journey began when I was introduced to ecofeminist and decolonial literature through a special issue project in Shanghai (see Silova et al., 2020; Takayama, 2020a). In a nutshell, both ecofeminist and decolonial literatures open up space for different epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies that have been suppressed by the global spread of Western modernity-coloniality nexus and global capitalism. Ecofeminism recognizes the more-than-human worlds and stresses the need for the coexistence of humans with multispecies communities. Triggered by the human-induced ecological challenges of planetary scale and learning from the Indigenous communities of Australia, Rose (2005), for instance, rejects the human exceptionalism of the Anthropocene era and rearticulates humans as a member of multispecies communities. Rose (2005) draws on her anthropological work with the Australian Indigenous people in Northern Territories to unsettle the human centric premises of Western philosophy. By describing how the Indigenous concept of “country” operates upon the mutual entanglement of benefits that cuts across the human-nature dualism, she puts forward an alternative vision of philosophical ecology that decenters human agency, knowledge, and intentions.

In addition to anthropological studies with Indigenous people, historical studies of the world that once existed is another source of wisdom. To encourage us to remember what has led us to the current epistemological and ontological conditions of modernity and what has been done to those who dare to be different, Stengers (2012) asks us to remember “the smell of burning witches”. It is an evocative reminder that there existed social worlds where witches and fairies were embraced as part of the “real” world of humanity and where the distinctions between science and superstition were left opaque and constantly transgressed. The hegemony of scientific rationality and its underside, the eradication of “other” worlds, were not a natural consequence of human progress but of ontological violence. By smelling the burning of witches’ flesh, we could develop “our closeness with those who have already been destroyed in the name of rationality, objectivity, and the great divide between nature and culture” (Stengers, 2011, p. 58).

Much of this literature has been taken up in recent “common worlds” educational scholarship, in particular within early childhood education (see Blaise, 2015; Taylor, 2017). These scholars push us to imagine education where humans learn to decenter themselves and reposition themselves as part of multispecies common worlds, and to recognize the agencies of non-human others. They raise important questions about the current articulation of education for sustainability which preserves the central humanistic assumptions, including the logic of human exceptionalism. Taylor (2017), for instance, challenges the positioning of children as environmental stewards, and humans, in general, as the sole agents for solving the current ecological crisis. Furthermore, these post-humanist and ecofeminist studies call upon us to recognize how existing early childhood pedagogic practices already allow for transgressive space where children disrupt the nature-culture binary and where children interact with the more-than-human worlds (Taylor, 2017). Silova (2019) also suggests the tenacity of the “creature communities” today and how social science, including education scholarship, has been blinded to numerous students’ encounters with the more-than-human worlds during their schooling.

Decolonial scholarship, represented by Mignolo (2011) and other South American thinkers (e.g., Grosfoguel, 2011), raises a similar set of questions about the powerful genocidal effects of the global spread of Western modernity-coloniality nexus, which began in the late 15th century European colonization of America. The South American decolonial project historicizes with the intention of de-historicizing it, the current structure of knowledge and recognizes the centuries of Western colonial violence as the constitutive aspect of its “epistemicide”, the obliteration of other epistemologies and ontologies from the surface of the planet

(Grosfoguel, 2011). It problematizes the modernist, Cartesian premises of science and knowledge that set up the hierarchy of knowing and being and privileged for European countries as the only legitimate source of knowledge and science. On the basis of this historical critique, it calls for the resuscitation of marginalized epistemologies and ontologies in colonized parts of the world that have been pushed to the limits by the Eurocentric geopolitics of knowledge. It is a call toward the world of “pluriversity” where multiple epistemologies and ontologies coexist side by side (Mignolo, 2011).

In a number of places, Mignolo (2011) uses de-westernization and decoloniality to distinguish between different levels of critique of Western modernity/coloniality project. According to Mignolo, de-westernization is a shallower critique of the West in that it rejects the West while maintaining its allegiance to its fundamental logic of modernity. In economy, for instance, de-westernization refers to the rejection of US or World Bank interventions in South America, while still aspiring for a regionally or nationally based model of “development” and “progress” that accepts the same economic rationality and exploitative logic of modernity toward the planet. In the domain of knowledge, de-westernization refers to the rejection of knowledge generated in the West, while still accepting the fundamental philosophical foundations of Western knowledge, namely its epistemology and ontology. Drawing on Mignolo (2011), Silova et al. (2020) recognize that the most penetrating critiques of the modernity/decoloniality nexus are to be found in the decoloniality, not the de-westernization, project, particularly in the realm of spirituality and ontology.

Needless to say, the decolonial critique of Western modernity/coloniality resonates closely with ecofeminist scholarship. Most crucially, both identify the role of culture in constituting the violence of modernity/colonial nexus, more specifically in securing the hyperseparation between adults and children, humans and nature, men and women, civilized and barbaric, and science and myth (see Plumwood, 1993). The Western Enlightenment notion of reason provides the logic of hyperseparation with the former terms defined as the embodiment of reason and the latter terms as “everything that reason excludes” (Plumwood, 1993, p. 20). Both decolonial theory and ecofeminist theory encourage us to engage in cross-cultural critique and practice ethnological imagination: the particularization and peculiarization of now and here. They invite us to imagine different ways of being and knowing that have been suppressed, or even erased, by a set of cultural norms and practices of modernity and imposed through colonial violence.

The above exploration of the ecofeminist and decolonial scholarship led me to one interesting/uncomfortable observation; the critique of modernity/coloniality resonates with what I knew about Shinto, a Japanese animism/religion. Growing up in Japan, I intuitively knew that the nature-centered world view and the rejection of human exceptionalism echoes the core ideas of Shinto animism, although I grew up in a non-traditional household where Shinto was not particularly embraced. It was uncomfortable, because I was aware of the tainted history of Shinto, its close link to Japan’s imperial aggression during the past wars and its postwar association with the nativist politics. Indeed, my previous scholarship was scathingly critical of any attempt to invoke Shinto-informed spiritualities in Japanese education (see Takayama, 2010, 2008). I was not sure how I could possibly reconcile the idea of drawing on Shinto as a potential intellectual resource toward ecologically minded and decolonial education with its unfortunate past. It was with a deep sense of discomfort and uncertainty that I ventured to learn about Shinto.

Shinto’s decolonial potentials

As Jensen and Blok (2013) point out, “Japan is probably the only major industrialized country in which widespread discussion of animism is still a part of ordinary intellectual discourse” (p. 97). Indeed, the Shinto-inspired, animated worldview pervades all of Japanese society, underpinning mundane aspects of life as well as art forms and cultural practices (Carter, 2013; Nakayama, 2019). Shinto values and practices are so enmeshed in Japanese people’s everyday life that they have become their second nature (Kasui, 2004). According to Nelson (2000), shrine Shinto is “one of the most long-lived of all Japan’s institutions, largely because (after nearly fourteen centuries) it continues to help form, orient, and empower a sense of local and ethnic identity” (p. 3).

True to much of animisms in the world, Shinto stresses the greatness of the universe and the relative insignificance of human presence in its entire history. It also recognizes the agencies of the more-than-human worlds and their spiritual impacts on humans. Shinto locates spirits in both humans and non-humans, including stones, rivers, trees, foxes, thunder, ancestors, rice and waterfalls, that is, radical personalization of the universe (Jensen and Blok, 2013). According to Shinto principles, “gods, men, animals, plants and inanimate objects are mutually permeable entities, appearing as a unified and dynamic field of existence, characterized by particular forms of immanence and vitalism” (Jensen and Blok 2013, p. 97).

The Shinto cosmology continues to influence the meaning of the term *shizen*, the Japanese translation of nature, the Western concept introduced to Japan in the late 19th century. As Nakayama (2019) explains, the Japanese concept of nature does not contain the hierarchical Christian idea, where the creator of the world God exists at the top, then man created in the image of God, with all the other creatures comprising nature at the bottom. Here, “God as a transcendent being does not exist within nature, nor are human beings a part of it” (p. 8). This dichotomy between human beings and nature was central to the emergence of the new science in the 17th century, further developed via Bacon and Descartes into the Cartesian worldview and subsequently the conceptualization of nature merely as an object to be controlled by humans (Plumwood, 1993; Hickel, 2020). In contrast, the Shinto animistic view of nature recognizes something sacred in all the creatures who are both physically and spiritually a part of nature. Hence, it defies the usual “opposition ... between human subjectivity and natural objectivity” (Nakayama, 2019, p. 9).

The same reverence toward the more-than-human worlds is central to the Japanese thought and philosophy, according to Robert Carter (2013). In explaining the central component of the Zen/Shinto philosophy, Carter quotes a Japanese landscape architect/Zen monk, Shunmyo Matsuo:

I wonder just what kind of spirit a certain stone has and how it would prefer to be set out. This is also true of plants and I always consider how I think the plants would like to be displayed. I always feel at one with the plants, when I am planting them, and with the stones, when I am arranging them. (p. 34)

Carter (2013) refers to Matsuo in his illustration of the key thinkers of the Kyoto School of Philosophy, Kitaro Nishida and Keiji Nishitani, who were likewise influenced immensely by the Zen and Buddhist thought (see Sevilla, 2016). Matsuo's approach to landscaping epitomizes the kind of empathic identification with non-animated objects that transcend the modernist culture-nature, subject-object dualism. Through self-cultivation, one learns to be one with an object (flowers, stones, and trees); it is a state of nothingness where one comes to know a thing not through reason and language but through intuitions developed through direct experience. Much of this Shinto-informed sensibilities toward nature permeate various Japanese arts, including traditional garden architecture, calendar pictures and poetry (see Kato, 2021).

Though Shinto is not explicitly taught in Japanese education due to its principle of secularity (Nakayama, 2019), research has shown that the Japanese curriculum, most notably in the Japanese language textbooks, implicitly teaches children emotional identification with non-human creatures and their worldviews (Gerbert, 1993; Ishihara, 2005). In comparing primary school readers in Japanese and American schools, Gerbert (1993) highlights the nature centered view of the world and the relative insignificance of humans in Japanese school readers. Her analysis shows that in many of the stories included in Japanese readers, "human protagonists drop out of the picture altogether" (p. 162). In one of the texts that she closely examines, "(t)he self identifies with and merges with nature. It never become a fully constituted "personality" as often seen in American readers (p. 164). Japanese children are encouraged to develop "a passive attitude toward nature" (p. 163), "be sensitive to small changes in the environment" (p. 163) and "quietly lose the self in the contemplation of nature" (p. 165). This is contrasted to the American primary school readers where an explicit emphasis is placed on formal reasoning, analytical thinking and a strongly anthropocentric view of nature.

More recently, the Ministry of Education introduced moral education supplementary texts, arguably to counterbalance the increasing (Western-inspired) emphasis on critical literacy (Ishihara, 2005). What follows is an excerpt from one of the moral education booklets, *Kokoro no nooto* (*Notebook for Heart*):

Humans are moved by beauty.
When faced with the magnificence of nature, we feel moved and hold our breath.
Calm, great ocean that spreads endlessly
Vast hills and fields, and towering mountain ranges.
It feels as though they mercifully embraced us, as though we melted into them.
But, would this be true?
When nature bares its fangs
it engulfs us with its overwhelming might.
Thundering noise of crashing waves, the volcanic smoke that shuts out the sky
and the massive earthquake that shatters the earth.
A feeling of awe and respect towards the existence of matters beyond human control springs up. (MEXT, 2002, p. 65)

Similar texts are also found in more recently published moral education readers.

To feel the greatness
Rainbows after rain
the bright red sun about to set
shining aurora
drifting ice masses approaching the seashore
and splashing waterfalls.
(Our) heart moves with the overwhelming
presence of natural phenomena and sceneries.
When faced with supernatural world beyond
humans, (we) experience the beauty and
greatness of nature.
They move (us), and (we) appreciate human
Heart (MEXT, 2014, p. 114).

In these passages, children are to leave behind the modern scientific form of learning where they are to understand, comprehend, and control the awesome. Instead, they are to cultivate "a feeling of awe" (*ikei no nen*) by simply standing "under it, feel themselves to be inherently part of it and it part of themselves" (Kasulis, 2004, p. 167). The MEXT moral education readers, including the ones cited above, are organized around the interconnectedness of self to the broader universe, the environment (nature), family, school, local community, nation and the global, or an interdependent sense of selfhood (Komatsu et al., 2021). As Japanese children progress with the readers, they learn to position themselves within the broader collectives of expanding scales, but they all stress somewhere in the texts the sense of awe toward the overwhelming presence of nature, insignificance of self, and the existence beyond humans.

According to Kasulis (2004), the author of *Shinto: The Way Home*, the feeling of awe is central to Shinto. He argues that Shinto, as a contemporary religion in a highly technological society, is striking in its insistence that awe is not to be understood, nor to be comprehended in any systematic way. The point of Shinto practice is "more to make one feel at home with awe rather than try

to understand or control it" (p. 167). Kasulis argues that in contemporary modern societies, we have lost this attitude toward the awesome. According to him, "one result of the predominance of scientific thinking is that today our initial response to the awesome is to try to understand it rather than to stand under it. Instead of filling us with a sense of humility before the unknown, awe has come to challenge us as only the not-yet-known. I don't know has become an ego-bruising admission of ignorance instead of a sign of wisdom" (p. 167). Following Shinto, Kasulis invites us to "accept the awesome as part of the world in which we live" (p. 12). Kasulis seems to suggest that the feeling of awe has much to do with letting go of our sense of ego and embrace ignorance as virtue.

It is this rejection of liberal principle of rationality and critical reason and the restricted sense of self that results from it that are crucial for Bowers' (1993, 1987) articulation of eco-justice pedagogy. In his view, liberal and critical educational thoughts, represented by Dewey, Skinner and Freire among others, are fundamentally antithetical to the generation of culture that is ecologically sustainable. This is because the liberal theories of education accord the absolute status to reason and rationality as practiced by individuals, and this undermines the authority of traditional patterns of knowledge. As he states, liberal educational thoughts are guided by the Enlightenment notion of rational, autonomous and self-directing self, and this conceptualization of self as "the epicenter of the social world" (p. 23) has the effect of "relativiz(ing) the communal foundations of a shared sense of moral authority, with the consequence that individual judgment reflects what is perceived as useful, fulfilling, and pleasurable" (Bowers, 1987, p. 25). With "the subjectivism of personal experience" as "the final refuge" (p.28), it breeds nihilism; it erodes "the sense of being interdependent with the large social and biotic community," which is defined as "an unwelcomed constraint on individual freedom" (Bowers, 1993, p. 27). Hence, the crucial shortcoming of liberal educational theories in light of their potentials for ecologically balanced world is their inability to offer the self-limiting principle, the very cultural condition for small and interdependent notion of selfhood. As a possible source of the alternatives, Bowers draws attention to indigenous, place-based and intergenerational knowledges (see also Hickel, 2020).

Most recent education scholarship for sustainable future reinforces Bowers' conclusion reached more than a few decades ago. For instance, Komatsu et al. (2021) undertook a series of quantitative analyses to identify the possible relationship between what they call ontological individualism, which is diametrically opposed to relational, interdependent selfhood, social unsustainability and student-centered teaching in schools. They establish the empirical foundation for the very assertion made by Bowers more than three decades earlier; student-centered teaching, underpinned by the liberal principle of rational and autonomous self, can accelerate social and ecological unsustainability. Then, they take up the suggestion made by Bowers (1993), to "study other cultures that have evolved in more ecologically balanced ways" (57), and discuss three examples of alternative pedagogic practices designed to promote interdependent sense of self, namely from Japan, Botswana and minority groups within USA. As an intergenerational body of local knowledge, Shinto can be one of such "othered" cultures that have not only survived the imposition of modernity but is actually thriving today. It can serve as much needed resources to promote the kind of fundamental cultural shift required toward ecological sustainable, post-growth society (Hickel, 2020).

Politics of shinto

Endorsing the Shinto animism and its cosmologies in Japanese schooling, however, is a complicated matter. This is because of the highly politicized context within which Shinto has been articulated within Japanese education throughout its postwar history (see Koyasu, 2004). The use of Shinto beliefs in schooling has been intensely contested since the end of the Asia Pacific War. During the wartime, Shinto was incorporated into the state apparatus and played a central role in interpellating the people into the wartime imperialist ideology. Public education was the key state mechanism through which the widely accepted Shinto beliefs in nature were mobilized for ideological indoctrination (Hardacre, 2017; Shimazono, 2003). The postwar US-led Occupation ordered the complete removal of Shinto religious elements from state apparatus and put in place constitutional mechanisms to ensure separation of church and state and freedom of religion (Koyasu, 2004). The Occupation blamed Shinto as the ideological source of Japan's wartime ultra-nationalism and imperialism, while turning blind eyes to the roles played by other religions (Hardacre, 2017). Its hunt for any remnants of the ostensibly Shinto-informed wartime ideology was so comprehensive that it even banned Japanese martial arts, calligraphies, and other benign cultural artifacts and practices (Shibata, 2004; Tanikawa, 2021).

The US-led Occupation's "demilitarization" of education planted the seed for the postwar political struggles in Japan. Since Japan's formal independence in 1952, those on the political right have consistently demanded the resurrection of the traditional Shinto cosmologies and patriotic values back within formal schooling (see Takayama, 2010, 2008). They call their political agenda the "normalization" of Japanese education, that is, normalizing the "unusual" situation left by the Occupation's imposition of liberal values, which has arguably detached the postwar generations from the nation's cultural "essence". By contrast, the Japanese liberal and left see such a move as a retrogressive desire to reinstate the imperial state and its ideology. They insist on protecting the liberal, democratic and pacifist principles and constitutional frameworks introduced during the US Occupation. Constitutional arguments were frequently made to prevent Shinto-informed values and any patriotic teaching from entering into education, with liberal critics arguing that they violate the constitutionally guaranteed separation of church and state and freedom of thought (Koyasu, 2004; Miyake, 2003; Nishihara, 2006). The wartime indoctrination through education and the people's general remorse for its consequences were the broader historical backdrop against which the concerns have been expressed by liberals and supported by the broader public (Takayama, 2008, 2010).

Situated within this highly politicized policy context, the seemingly benign Shinto-informed concepts such as "awe and respect toward nature", or "matters beyond humans", and "the insignificance of humans in the whole universe" assume highly contested

meanings. Liberals argue that teaching the Shinto-informed worldview reinforces students' passivity toward nature and by extension toward the authority and the state. It is the unquestioned devotion to nature that was then politically appropriated to generate people's allegiance toward the emperor/imperial state and the catastrophic "sacred" war for the imperial household. Instead of teaching children to be passive, hence, the liberal-left critics call for teaching the principles of rationality and critical reason that are central to democratic citizenship (see Irie, 2004; Iwakawa and Funabashi, 2004; Miyake, 2003). To those on the political left, the Shinto-inspired moral education readers, quoted earlier, are nothing but an expression of neo-conservative desire to render people obedient in time of neoliberal economic restructuring. This is exactly the argument that I made in my assessment of the 2006 revision to the Fundamental Law of Education (see Takayama, 2008). As Grosfoguel (2011) points out, nationalism, as a response to the Eurocentric colonial imposition, "reproduces an internal coloniality of power within each nation-state and reifies the nation-state as the privileged location of social change" (p. 23). When Shinto is so tainted with the discriminatory nativist politics of exclusion, could it be "conceptually freed from its historically over-determined connotations of political regression"? (Jensen and Blok, 2013, p. 94).

Salvaging shinto

Would it be possible to salvage "the multivalent ethico-pragmatic character of Shinto" from the nationalistic overtone that has dominated its domestic articulation? (Jensen and Blok, 2013, p. 108). In a sense, Shinto is a placeholder for multiple interests within Japan. The dominant, nationalistic discourse of Shinto, or what Kasulis (2004) calls the highly normative and prescriptive, "essentialist" Shinto spirituality, is certainly with us. But there is also the ad-hoc, flexible, and descriptive form of Shinto as a popular praxis, or what Kasulis (2004) calls the "existentialist" Shinto spirituality, which pervades much of place-based invocations of Shinto cosmologies in festivals, rituals, and mundane life moments. The localized, existentialist Shinto spirituality gives us a way to be radically different today that centers on immanent connectedness of humans and non-humans, hence with considerable implications for reimagining education for sustainable futures. This is the aspect of Shinto that Jensen and Blok (2013) also sees as of great value for science and technology studies, when they argue that Shinto embodies "an alternative politics of the polymorphous enchantments of non-human agency" (p. 108) that can help broaden the theoretical horizon on the entanglements among science, technology, ecology, and cosmos.

However, as Kasulis (2004) reminds us, the two forms of Shinto spiritualities—essentialist and existential—should not be treated as another form of binary. They are "not separate religious traditions but instead overlap in an internal relation with each other" (p. 153). The history of Shinto in Japan has been infused with the tension between these two forms of spirituality, which remains unresolved today (Kasulis, 2004, p. 6). To complicate the matter further, this distinction is not available in the Japanese vocabulary for talking about Shinto, according to Kasulis (2004). Partly because of the nationalist political dominance in the domestic discourse of Shinto, the language of Shinto necessarily implicates essentialist assumptions. This poses immense challenges in terms of "reclaiming" Shinto (Stengers, 2012), that is, teasing out and mobilizing the existential, localized form of Shinto without invoking the essentialist form of Shinto spirituality that has exclusionary effects on the domestic political front. For now, all I can do is sit with the enormity of the conceptual and political challenges and suggest that this conundrum is not necessarily particular to Shinto and Japan. This discussion has wider international implications for education for sustainable futures, given that the political appropriation of nature and the popularized form of animism has been central to the modern formation of nation-state and its physical, epistemic, and ontological violence.

Conclusion with self-negation

The purpose of this article is educational in that it aims to show what it all means to do Southern Theory in educational research. The narrative exposes the sense of vulnerability one might experience as a result of doing Southern Theory and embracing the disruption that it causes. In my case, it all started with engaging with decolonial and ecofeminist literature and realizing its close relevance to the discussion of Shinto animism. Attempting to embrace Shinto as an alternative source of knowledge, however, forced me to unlearn my well-established views, largely shaped by the postwar political discourse of education in Japan, and let go of the political sensibilities. The whole Japanese domestic debate over the place of Shinto cosmologies in education remains trapped within the discursive legacies of the Occupation and the Cold War. Rethinking the role of Shinto in education is part of what Chen calls the de-cold-war politics, which he argues is central to decolonizing imagination in East Asia. It is "to confront the legacies and continuing tensions of the Cold War" so as to "reopen the past for reflection in order to make moments of liberation possible in the future (Chen, 2010, p. x).

While recognizing the need to rethink the usefulness of postwar binary politics, I remain deeply ambivalent about leaving behind altogether the liberal principles underpinning education. Here I am acutely reminded of the dangers in transferring purely philosophical arguments to the domain of politics that Davis (1998) highlights. In discussing the historical role of Japanese philosophers in promoting Japanese cultural nationalism, Davis makes the following point: "The collapse of subject and object, thought and action—long the aim of Japanese philosophers—may be innocent enough as epistemology or Buddhist soteriology—but it can have a devastating effect when applies to politics" (p. 183). Like Davis, I am worried about the political implications of the Shinto cosmologies in Japanese schools today, when Japanese scholars identify the rise of retrogressive nationalism as well as the

depoliticization of education as the major concerns and call for resuscitating the roles of education for democratic politics (see Hirata, 2015; Kodama, 2013).

Foremost scholar of Japanese traditional unlearning and *mushin* (no mind or nothingness), Nishihira (Nishihira and Rappleye, 2021) makes the following observation about the risk of political appropriation of Japanese traditional concepts of learning for ideological indoctrination:

For those of us that write about Japanese thought and tradition, we still operate in the shadow of the war, to some extent. We worry that the element of trust and persistence embedded within this model may get co-opted, in a nationalist context, and transformed into a tool of indoctrination. It is a wariness of getting mistaken for nationalists or apologists for the prewar period, and lingering uncertainties about the possible dangerous potentials of self-negation, that has prevented many Japanese scholars, including myself, from more assertively discussing these models. Future work needs to remain vigilant of this. That said, this “just trust” call to faith is not unique to this “Japanese” model, but is a major issue for virtually all forms of tradition-religious, secular, and otherwise (p. 10).

While Nishihira does not refer to Shinto, the “just trust” call to faith embodies the same rejection of liberal principle of rationality, reason and individuality as expressed in Shinto’s call for awe. It is notable even some like Nishihira, the foremost expert on the Japanese traditional thoughts in education, express reservation about possible political appropriation of his work toward nationalistic agenda.

What Nishihira’s reflection illuminates is the predicament of reclaiming what is indigenous or traditional in a context where Western liberalism and its associated educational thoughts permeate the political and educational discourse and institutions. In the postwar politics of Japanese education, the rejection of liberal ideas, which is always coupled with the assertion of what is traditional and indigenous, has been so tainted with regressive politics of nativism. As a result, the discourse of Shinto in education has been thoroughly politicized, and its potential for sustainable future has remain largely unexplored. In the face of the planetary ecological crisis, however, there is an urgent need to reassess this mainstream discourse of Japanese postwar education scholarship, “where Japanese-ness is automatically equated with negative distinctness, prewar myths, and an escape from the responsibility of making Japan “fully modern”” (Rappleye, 2018, p.17).

This is not at all an endorsement of the nationalist attribution of anything liberal to the postwar US “imposition” and of romanticizing of Japan’s imperial past. Instead, it is a call for a careful discerning of what is desirable and otherwise toward both ecologically balanced and politically engaged educational thoughts. The outcome of this discerning work is like to be a creative eclecticism of elements that are Indigenous and modern (Western), inviting students to live in multiple worlds simultaneously (Silova, 2019). In this regard, it is encouraging to know that the daily lives of the people in Japan are saturated with both advanced forms of technology and science and the penetrating presence of Shinto animism. It is a country where rocket scientists visit a local shrine for their successful space endeavors (Nelson, 2000, p. 1). And indeed, as amply demonstrated by Gerbert’s (1993) study, the strongly nature-centered view of the world has been quietly integrated into Japanese schooling.

It is important to note that Gerbert’s insights were only made available to us, as she was willing to look at Japanese primary school readers not through political lens but through cultural ones. This point takes me back to my earlier critique of the English-language comparative education scholarship of Japanese education and forces me to reflect how much I have shifted over time. About 10 years ago, I published a discursive analysis of the whole scholarship of Japanese schooling and identified the continuing Orientalist logic in this body of research (Takayama, 2011). I rejected its predominantly culturalist framing of Japanese schooling, whereby nation-state was unproblematically conceptualized as a cultural “container” and the assumed existence of “fundamental cultural differences” between Japan and the West (usually USA) remained unquestioned. I maintained that the whole scholarship was deeply apolitical and re-inscribed the nationalistic thesis of cultural homogeneity. The critique included some of the best-known scholarship of Japanese schools, including those by Lewis, Tobin, Cave and Tsuneyoshi. The argument in this article has forced me to reconsider my critical assessment of the scholarship. While I still consider valid much of the critique of the predominantly culturalist framing of Japanese education, I now acknowledge my own blind spot; my critique was strongly shaped by the postwar discourse of Japanese education scholarship whose preoccupation with politics trumps any consideration of culture. After all, I would not have been able to acknowledge the tremendous potentials of Shinto animism for eco-justice pedagogy, had these scholars not offered a culturalist reading of Japanese schools (e.g. Gerbert). Culturalist accounts are problematic, so is a categorical rejection of culture.

Dealing with all these tensions and complexities, involving both intra-national and inter-national politics of difference (Ge, 2015; see also Takayama 2020, 2018), is part of what doing Southern Theory entails. It demands constant self-critique and reflecting back on where we have come from and continual search for ways to release ourselves from our habitual modes of thinking and being. Doing all these is a constitutive part of what I consider as doing Southern Theory, and it is one way to make comparative and international education research transformative, meaningful and politically astute at the same time.

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Transnationalism

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The problematics of transnationalism as a 21st century concept	45
Transculturalism and contemporary transnationalism	46
New formations of transculturalism	47
The education - transnationalism nexus	48
Transnationalism as an activator of rights in education	49
Acknowledgments	50
References	51

The problematics of transnationalism as a 21st century concept

In the first quarter of the 21st century, the contemporary vision of transnationalism is that it is primarily a transactional concept, involving the movement of phenomena across national borders. In particular, it is often applied in the context of global demographic movement, whether that be temporary and short-term in the undertaking of employment or recreation, or whether it be more permanent, long term and diasporic, as in cases associated with migration or refugee movement. The result is that studies of migration or locational shifts in international population tend to focus on the impact of that geographical shift on the people concerned, such as in the use of language (see, for example, [Kirsch and Gogonas, 2018](#); [Robert and Yu, 2018](#)).

At the most visible level, such an obvious interpretation of transnationalism is not unsurprising, given the extent to which current demographic movement has been linked to modern globalization, which in many ways is symbiotically linked to the notion of international movement across national boundaries. In its initial emergence during the 1990s, the modern phase of globalization was formulated primarily as an economic phenomenon, umbilically linked to an emerging neo-liberal context ([Burbules and Torres, 2000](#)) that emphasized the value of freedom of economic thought and action – the transaction of commerce - across global spaces ([Rizvi and Lingard, 2010](#)). In this, and in concert with its associations with demographic mobility, the contemporary phase of globalization is no different from earlier iterations, such as the Ancient Roman Empire, the naval ventures of 13th Century China or the Christian Crusades of medieval Europe ([McGrew, 2007](#)) However, one of the fundamental principles of the modern sovereign State that makes the present phenomenon different from earlier manifestations of globalization is that it has formal control over activity within its defined territory, a power that it establishes and maintains through the maintenance of its geographical areal location, as well as the physical and psychological integrity of the borders of its demarcated territory. The degree of control over those borders, and thus the effectiveness of a State's power, is further influenced by one of the key criteria for the continued viability of a sovereign State; that is, its existence and the location of its boundaries are accepted, agreed to and supported by the actions of other sovereign States. Conflicts between sovereign States are often expressed in terms of the lack of cogency and acceptance of the boundary positions in question.

However, another defining aspect of contemporary globalization in the first quarter of the 21st century is the frequency, scope and extent of transnational events across national borders, facilitated and fueled by the rapid expansion and accessibility of modern communications technology, ranging from transport to electronic media. As a result, the global human system has evolved into a form where national boundaries are increasingly amorphous and seemingly more porous. Whether economic, social, or cultural, human activity in the 21st Century is characterized by an enhancement in the extensive nature and degree of global connectivities ([Rizvi, 2009](#)). Consequently, it is arguable that the entity of the sovereign State has now lost some of its initial lifeforce, existing now only in terms of creating the international and political environment or skeleton around which geographical exchanges of human activity can take place, accompanied by movements in related necessities for a globalized society. One of these is a workforce that is more mobile, diverse and transitionary than had been the case previously. As a result, transnational behavior and actions in the modern idiom are more accurately framed within the context of global corporate power, which possesses the capacity to transcend national boundaries independent of national governments. Ironically, such power has resulted from the freedom given to global corporations by the same sovereign States in the desire for greater and more stable national growth, either individually or through multilateral agreements, brokered through organizations such as the United Nation or World Trade Organization.

The second decade of the century has seen the gradual emergence of national resistance in reaction to the more negative, localized aspects of globalization. Economic restructuring into a global economy, in which national production specialization and global trade agreements has played a key role, has led to the decline and disappearance of many national traditional jobs and industries in various countries. While part of that resistance has been economic, with countries such the USA being more resistant to multilateral international agreements, much of the observable transnational impact has been largely selective and demographic. As a series of global and international socio-political conflicts have led to increases in numbers of refugees and asylum seekers migrating from their places of origin, governments in each inhabited continent have used them as a means of justifying and symbolizing their right to control their national territories. The fluidity and prevalence of contemporary demographic transnationalism has

been invoked by such forces in an attempt to cement the importance of international political boundaries and the maintenance of perceived nationalized cultural identities. Instead of so doing, these actions have only served to highlight the reverse; that is, the dominance that transnationalist behavior and activity continue to exert on global events, as well as the decreasing significance of national borders in the imaginary of those who seek to cross them.

Such realities reinforce the tensions of conceptual structure that are exacerbated in the case of transnationalism because, despite its embodiment of human activity that transcends national borders, its very name is founded on the concept of a defined, delineated space; that is, a sovereign State. Transnationalism only occurs when national borders are crossed, but more extensive and ongoing movement over these political boundaries only leads to a diminution of the significance of national borders in the life imaginaries of those involved. The prevailing notion of transnationalism is therefore a form of paradox. It assumes that there is an underlying constant; that is, the border or boundary to be crossed is permanent and unyielding, clear to all. However, the reality is that the effectiveness of national borders, regardless of any international legality, are dependent on people accepting the existence, reality and validity of a specific region or "place", the boundaries of which are considered to be highly managed and under the control of a governing authority. The strength of a national border is only as robust as its existence being accepted by the people affected by it.

This current paradox of transnationalism arises because of the persistence in people's conception of location and place as fixed entities. However, such a notion of "place" in a globalized society has long been challenged by geographers. Under the geographical interpretation of place, the fixity of boundaries that governments of nation-states desire - "... a site of an authenticity, as singular, fixed and unproblematic in its identity" (Massey, 1994) - is a false illusion, as it relies on the assumption that any space on the Earth's surface is, in fact, unchanging. In truth, any "place" is inherently transnational, the character or identity of which is being created and modified continually by forces within it and by its connections with phenomena or places beyond it; it is forever in a process of formation, never a completed and stable entity. The sovereign national boundaries on which the contemporary definition and utilization of transnationalism depend are, and have always been, themselves unfixed and permeable, evolving in location, nature and degree of porosity as a matter of course. Their geographical fixedness has always been temporary in the reality that their positions have changed over historical time in response to political change (often driven by military events). Further, while national boundaries may have had some impact in actual demographic movement, they have rarely been effective in excluding cross-border interaction based on more psychological or non-corporeal phenomena.

Such discontinuities are a strong argument for a reconfigured notion of transnationalism that is more reflective of a globalized and globalizing world, one which also reconstitutes the concept as a human condition in a way that is as much representative of the past as it is of the present and future. The starting point for this rebirth is the combination of ideas about transnationalism and its association with cultural identity(ies), or more specifically, its connections to more hybrid and multi-faceted substantiations of personal identity.

Transculturalism and contemporary transnationalism

To confine transnationalism to an imperfect perspective of the transactional is to deny its capacity and power to describe and explain patterns of human behavior and action in far more complex ways. The principal constraint on a wider and more reflective conceptualization of transnationalism is this intellectual umbilical cord to 21st Century globalization. In such a context, the rationale for the argument that transnationalism is a transactional process of movement, and not a phenomenon in itself, depends ultimately on the degree to which the notion of the sovereign State - itself only a conception that is no more than two hundred years old - is confirmed or compromised. Consequently, any intellectual shift that can expand the potential of the term to contribute to a wider understanding of human experience, depends ultimately on the negation, or at least a reduction, in the significance attributed to the notion of territorial "borders" or "boundaries".

The notion of transnationalism as being primarily founded on the physicality of geographical movement across national boundaries ignores the holistic nature of human "existence", in which the mind is vital as the corporeal. Instead, we need to both acknowledge and promote the view that transnationalism also incorporates a very distinct psychological, attitudinal belief in the power and the necessity of thinking beyond one's existing social/political/economic/national borders. In essence, this deeper conceptualization of transnationalism involves a subjective, universal consciousness, one that absorbs a disposition or state of mind in favor of international movement and change that is present across all periods of time and space. It is not just a spatial movement of people between locations, but an attitudinal drive and way of thinking that does not see national boundaries as unsolvable restraints.

Such a renewed configuration is not, as some might suggest, better identified as a "post-colonial cosmopolitanism", nor is it totally aligned with Arjun Appadurai's notion of transnationalism as being comprising "post-national" forces that counteract "territorial nationalism" (1996). Further, some might argue that his conception of global cultural flows as comprising a set of individually constructed "imaginary worlds" or scapes, which incorporate the "... way some transnational forces have come to be configured in the imagination of residents ..." (1996, p. 60), resembles the subjective consciousness outlined above. However, Appadurai's constructions still rely ultimately on the proposition that they result from movements of people and identities between places, even if the "de-territorialization of culture" has diminished the significance of the boundaries associated with sovereign or nation-states in an era of more rapid and frequent global mobility. Instead, in its posited reconfigured conception, transnationalism

is its fullest sense is more of a *pre-existing* sensibility that is *fundamentally* dis-associated from place, location and boundaries, one in which the notion of “transculturalism” is an essential aspect.

New formations of transculturalism

A conceptual reconfiguration of transnationalism is best served by a renewed focus on the meaning and significance of its prefix. To interpret the “trans-” in transnationalism as signifying a change of location across national boundaries is simplistic and unnecessarily instrumental. Instead, in the current state of an increasingly diverse world community at both the global and local scales, it is far more apt to view “trans” as embodying a more prominent emphasis on changes or shifts in personal identity or culture as a result of global mobility.

Similar arguments can be found in the work of, for example, Papastergiadis (2000) and Rizvi (2011); indeed, for Papastergiadis, the key feature of transnationalism is its “deterritorialization of culture”, or the

... the ways in which people now feel they belong to various communities despite the fact they do not share a common territory with all the other members. It also refers to the way the national or even the regional culture can no longer be conceived as reflecting a coherent and distinct identity (Papastergiadis, 2000).

Cultures have moved on from “... being formed in particular territorial relationships with carefully established borders, separating one from another ...” (Papastergiadis, 2000), founded on anthropological constructions that are based on a “... notion of culture as a visible set of manifestations of a way of life ...” (Casinader, 2014, p. 31) that is shared by its adherents. Reflections of the wider parameters that a more comprehensive conception of transnationalism embodies can be also found in the contention that transnational migration has placed more priority on the need for decolonization of knowledge.

In concert with Vertovec (2009), Rizvi (2011) and Alexander (2001), Papastergiadis has argued that the increased degree and spatial extent in the movement of people and ideas between territories demanded an image of culture that was not “... a fixed script which actors are bound to follow ...” (2000) Instead, culture needed to be viewed as a more dynamic entity, not located within the “... objective conditions of a society, or purely in the subjective consciousness of the individual, but [more in] the constantly mobile and transformative exchange between the two ...” (p. 109). Culture is a mind-centered, personal entity, in which identity is more dependent on the inner manifestations of attitudes toward values of life than outward indicators (Casinader, 2020).

Transnationalism, then, is more accurately and comprehensively viewed as personifying the dynamic instability of transformative transition that occurs when people and ideas from different parts of the world meet and cross-pollinate dimensions of thought. These perspectives are also reflected in Ong’s reminder that the increasingly rapid processes of cultural interconnectedness and mobility across space are inherently symbolic of transnationalism (Ong, 2004). Embedded in this term, she argues, are the concepts of trans denoting “... moving through space or across lines, as well as the changing nature of something ...”. In addition to suggesting “... new relations between nation-states and capital ...” the term also “... alludes to the transversal, the translational, and the transgressive aspects of contemporary behavior and imagination that are incited, enabled, and regulated by the changing logics of states and capitalism.” (Ong, 1999).

One of the more interesting assumptions in the current dominance of the transactional view of transnationalism has been an almost universal conviction that the conceptualization and enactment of thinking skills is culturally neutral. In part, this has derived from, as previously outlined, a conception of culture as an immutable construction, a phenomenon that is seen as being clearly identifiable, despite the fact that the inevitable dynamism of cultures as entities over time and space has been part of the discourse for several decades (for example, Said, 1993; Bhabha, 1994; Alexander, 2001; Rizvi, 2011; Casinader, 2014). Instead of being a fixed representation of the stasis within a society at the moment in time, culture is a mobile and liquid entity that is continually evolving as result of the tensions between societal conditions and individual perceptions. Indeed, Papastergiadis argues that the commanding of multiculturalism as the basis of national identity by some nation-states shows a lack of “... appreciation of the dynamic flux mobilized in all cultural identities ...” (2000, p. 113).

The concomitant of this fixed notion of culture is that there can be no “transcultural” way of thinking or reasoning. If thinking processes are the same across all cultures, or are not influenced by cultural difference, there is only one way to “think”, and ipso facto, there can be no process of thinking that incorporates multiple cultural approaches to thinking because multiple variations do not exist. This conclusion about the relationship between culture and thinking has emerged as one of the consequences of “Western” educational systems and principles dominating global education over the last century. It is one of the key outcomes of contemporary globalization and its geographical spread, which has facilitated the diffusion of such educational philosophies, conceptions and processes at a rapid rate.

However, over the last decade or so, a number of researchers, such as Dahl (2010), Singh (2013) and Casinader (2014), have argued that the notions of reasoning that are embedded in the educational systems of more industrially developed societies have been almost exclusively derived from Euro-American or “Western” perspectives. They argue that different cultural contexts do utilize different approaches to thinking, with Casinader referring to these as “cultural dispositions of thinking” (2014, p. 148), in which different cultural groups view and enact skills such as critical thinking in contrasting ways.

In themselves, the linear and abstract forms of critical thinking that underpin Euro-American systems of thought do not encourage a more inclusive notion of reasoning; that is, one that derives from an acceptance that there are cultural variations in how thinking takes place. It is more a matter of whether or not a priority is placed on the value of contextual thinking and group problem solving, as opposed with a philosophy that prizes individual resolution above all else, which is one of the underpinning common values of “Western” societies. As a result, the concept of a “transcultural disposition of thinking” (Casinader, 2014) accepts the existence and natural validity of all cultural approaches to thinking, and generates the capacity for individuals to operate and function across multiple cultural contexts. The development of such transcultural dispositions is arguably more apparent those who have been more exposed to globalizing experiences (Casinader, 2014, 2020), which enable individuals to acquire the capacity to relate to and work in thinking approaches across cultural identities and spaces. In order to be effective in this transformation, the nature of these globalizing experiences must involve the individual experiencing some form of cultural displacement, or “... the learnings that derive from [being] physically and psychologically ... embedded in a culturally unfamiliar environment for a period of time” (Casinader, 2020, p. 149). Fundamental to these lessons that emerge from the acquisition of attitudes of transcultural capacity is the perspective that cultural variation is endemic in human society; it is uniformity that is more “unreal” than the “problem” or “anomaly” that cultural diversity is seen by some to represent. It is possible, therefore, to conceive of “trans”-nationalism as being more about the reflection of attitudes that transcend (rather than cross) national borders. In such a configuration, which is more representative of the cultural soup within contemporary global society, transnationalism can be viewed as embodying transcultural attitudes that are derived directly from the positive absorption of the cultural flux of globalization and are not bound territorially.

In this new framework, transnationalism becomes a far more sophisticated and long-reaching concept that extends beyond essentialized references to population movement; it is more inclusive of ideas of transferability that are able to incorporate notions of mutually inclusive cultural consciousnesses, which are themselves born out of globalized migrations of people, notions and perceptions. Consequently, as a phenomenon, rather than a process, transnationalism personifies the dynamic instability of transformative transition that occurs when people and ideas from different parts of the world meet, cross-pollinating dimensions of thought in the process. It is a function of the rejection of prior and existing assumptions that have been asserted as to the definition of culture. Whether demarcated in terms of anthropology or a more mind-centered conception based upon consciousness, cultures are not necessarily nationalistic and co-existent with political territorial borders. Instead, a more holistic notion of transnationalism exists, promoting “... that the movement of people and cultures contributes to a *Welbild* (conception of the world) in which borders and boundaries of nation, culture, race, and gender need to be reconceptualized, blurred, challenged, and, potentially, eliminated” (Friedman and Schulermandl, 2011, p. 6). This more encompassing umbrella of transnationalism has, at its heart, a high degree of embedded transcultural understanding, the nature of which is characterized by acknowledgment and acceptance of difference as the norm. Cultural diversity is better characterized as a collective of cultural dispositions of thinking, rather than being approached as a chess set of cultural pieces, existing side by side but in opposition to each other. The crucial feature here is the acceptance of cultural difference as the standard state of human society, one that needs to be confronted and mediated with the aim of co-existence, rather than seeing difference as a boil that needs to be lanced with policies of homogenization and assimilation. More significantly, the reality of globalization demands that this shift in the perspective toward transnationalism must take place, because it is “... [a paradox] of globalization ... that difference is becoming increasingly normative” (Suárez-Orozco and Baolian Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

The education - transnationalism nexus

A reconfiguration of transnationalism as an attitudinal and aspirational phenomenon, as opposed to being just a simple geographical transaction, provides a deeper understanding of its educational associations in both school and higher education. Another of the salient symbols of contemporary globalization has been a substantial growth in the number of international students from the industrially emerging economies attending schools and universities in Euro-American societies and economies, such as those in North America, Australasia and Europe. However, such interactions and the manner in which they have been perceived by relevant institutions in these regions have been overwhelmingly utilitarian, in which transnationalism has been seen primarily in the context of the international commodification of teaching and learning; the economic aspects of the globalizing process have been very much in focus.

Such a limited perception does not mirror the range of transnational priorities reflected in Vertovec’s six-part classification of the phenomenon (2009). In the main, the transactional nature of population movement across national borders has been overlain with the singularity of utilitarian individualism, focusing on either those who migrate to other countries, usually temporarily, for the sole purpose of obtaining qualifications, or on the delivery of education by an institution in a country outside that institution’s home base. The globalization of MBA degree studies to include regions outside the traditional cosmopolitan centers such as North America is an apt example of such an emphasis, illustrated by the Caribbean context, which links regional universities to Australia (Allahar and Sookram, 2018).

In many ways, the current vision of transnationalism as a commercial concept in higher and school education, in which people move temporarily (at least, initially) from one State to another for the purposes of acquiring education for a paid fee, is not unexpected. An interesting reflection of how different educational sectors are perceived by higher level policy makers can be observed in the general application of transnationalist principles to higher education more than school education, no better exemplified by the

definition of transnational education (TNE) adopted by the Council of Europe and UNESCO, in which transnationalism is reduced to simple definitions of student origin:

All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system Transnational arrangements should be so elaborated, enforced and monitored as to and education widen the access to higher education studies ...

(Council of Europe, 2014)

Under a more expanded configuration as a disposition of the mind, the transnationalist concept offers a much deeper lens for interpretation of how global events can have an impact on educational demographic movements, both temporary and permanent, educational or otherwise. The wider limitations of such a constricted vision of transnational education was illustrated by one of the major educational impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic that began in 2020. The sudden loss of income that would have come from international students transferring from countries throughout Asia, Africa and South America to study in countries along the Euro-American axis had dramatic economic and intellectual impacts on the education sectors of those countries. For instance, In Australia, and in the face of minimal financial assistance from the Australian government for what were arguably ideological reasons, universities that had high proportions of international students had to retrench staff, contract their operations and reduce the extent and scope of their research activities considerably. This was in contrast to the policies of governments in countries such as the United Kingdom and Canada, which determined that the cost of supporting international students would have longer term benefits in terms of goodwill.

What the Australian Government and some institutions in the higher education sector were unable to fully comprehend was that transnationalism also embodies a desire for self- and life-improvement that transcends the mere utilitarian. International students are examples of people who possess the dispositional attitudes that accompany the willingness to follow educational opportunity, even if it means migrating internationally for a few years. The desire to improve the lives of oneself and that of the wider family overrides any feelings of separation, especially in a digital world where communication and contact are now only a click away.

The damage caused by the pandemic to international students, and the impact of the effective abandonment by the Australian government, was therefore not just confined to the inability to fulfill the transactional requirements for a qualification. It struck far more deeply as it tore into the long term effort to improve prospects for a better life, for which individuals – and often, their families in the place of origin – had worked and sacrificed much. Fundamentally, governmental attitudes such as these totally misunderstood the significance of the international student experience, in that it created the life-changing possibility of “ ... transforming themselves through mobility.” (Tran and Thao, 2018).

Transnationalism as an activator of rights in education

Contrary to popular imagination, this psychological nexus between education and transnationalism on an international skill is not a new phenomenon. The perspective is an established historical phenomenon, well-illustrated by examples from an earlier phase of globalization that peaked in the mid-twentieth century, which was aligned with the age of European colonialism. Of particular relevance are those that emerged from the British sphere of direct colonial influence, and the notion of education as an emancipator of individuals or groups who wished to actualize their own cultural priorities, rather than being empty vessels that succumbed to the colonizing power as the dominant form.

The principle that formal education is the primary and most effective means toward personal liberation and self-improvement is, arguably, one of the more enduring aspects of Euro-American colonial philosophy, especially in the context of the British Empire. It also provides one exemplar of the main contention of this article, that transnationalism is not only a more personal psychological orientation, but one that has been in existence throughout recorded history and is not just a feature of the contemporary globalized era. In that context, it is an intellectual precept that dates back to the Age of Enlightenment in Europe and John Locke’s assertion that, since all are born equal, the quality of the life that people will experience depends upon how the mind is molded by the quality of education that they receive. It is a principle that itself can be threaded back, in the “Western” context, to the Socratic emphasis on reason as the highest form of human achievement on the one hand, as well as to the prominences placed on the search for truth through the focus of mind and spirit that are inherent in Eastern philosophies, including those in Hinduism and Buddhism, on the other.

In this sense, the capacity of education to elevate individual lives can be presented as a universal truth, even though the form, organization and accessibility of that education has been, and remains, one of the debatable aspects of human existence. Until the nineteenth century, civilizations throughout the millennia have generally seen education as being reserved for those with economic and political power, or for whom there was a perceived need, in the mold of Plato’s philosopher kings. Of more universal relevance, however, is the capacity and readiness of individuals to harness the powers of education when they become accessible, as well as the relationship of education to the generation, existence and impact of transnationalism as a personal attribute, rather than a societal phenomenon. An example of this can be outlined in relation to colonial education during the period of the British Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries.

One of the more fundamental intellectual bases of postcolonial perspectives is that imperial education was a destructive force because that it denied the right of local people to actualize their own traditions of education and knowledge in ways that reflected their own way of life. However, such rationales lack some nuance in their construction and application, for they automatically deny self-agency to those who were colonized and do not allow for forms of pushback by that group in ways that benefited them directly. One example of this was how transnational disposition, in its posited sense, was harnessed by certain minority groups in colonial Sri Lanka during the 19th and 20th centuries and used to position themselves within Ceylonese society.

For ethnic groups such as the Ceylon Tamils and Burghers in British Ceylon, colonial education was the means through which a renewed cultural integrity within the community was able to be born out of the colonial experience, centered on their grasp of English and willingness to use the trappings of colonial administration for their own purposes and benefit (Casinader, 2017). The introduction of mass education helped to open up lines for improvement and lessen the socio-economic gap between the elite and the general population (Hobsbawm, 1989), providing the means by which these groups and individuals could activate their transnational drive for freedom from existing socio-political structures. It was the means by which they could choose to enforce their own rights to emancipation from socio-economic constraint, assisted by a capacity for transnationalism of the spirit and mind, as part of which personal, spiritual, social and economic advancement and security were more important than attachment to any particular location or cultural home.

Although the process and practice was initiated by missionary and religious groups in the early 1800s, the British colonial administration presided over – albeit in an ad hoc manner until the Colebrooke-Cameron Report of 1831 (Colebrooke, 1831) – the development of a mass education system that reached into rural communities, targeted both boys and girls, and saw education being conducted in the local vernacular languages, unlike in India, where English was the nominated language of administration and education. However, the schools that were established as English-language institutions to educate Ceylonese for what was to become the Ceylon Civil Service in the colonial administration were predominantly created, not by the colonial government, but by religious groups such as the churches and missionary societies. Regardless of sector, these schools were characterized by their egalitarian approach, open to able students across all ethnocultural groups, and being either low-fee or free. This pattern had been established largely because of the lack of available funds for education in the early years of the colonial administration. Governors such as Robert Brownrigg were nevertheless keen for education to be established as part of the colonial imperative and supported the ventures of missionary groups from the early 1800s.

As a result, marginalized minority ethno-cultural groups such as the Dutch Burghers and Ceylon Tamils, especially those who were Christian, were able to use the system of educational accessibility and equity within colonial Ceylon as an administrative framework to forge new directions of life and fulfill longstanding aspirations. For many, it freed up their ability to shift status, lifestyle and social position, activated in the process by a previously dormant sense of transnationalism that was later translated into a mind-centered disposition, a change guided by principles of self-improvement and security, and not necessarily an attachment to place, as assumed in the current interpretation of transnationalism (see Casinader, 2017, for further detail).

Overall, the example of transnational thinking and its connections to education from colonial Sri Lanka highlights the need and value for a more enlightened concept of transnationalism in current educational thinking, especially in the context of developing pedagogies and teacher education structures that are more compatible with the increasing cultural complexities in the mindsets of 21st Century students and communities. The growing recognition of such an educational imperative is perhaps best reflected in arguments that suggest that Spivak's notion of transnational literacy (1999) – a knowledge and understanding of how globalization is affecting the nature of education and the national implications of international developments – has now become a global imperative for educational leaders, and not just an optional extra. In one example, Brooks and Normore (2010) argued that a greater understanding of glocalization – the notion that globalization has re-energized the connections of individuals to their local place (Appadurai, 1996) – is becoming indispensable in the preparation and practice of educational leaders in the 21st century. Noting the scarcity of literature on connecting glocalization with educational leadership, they suggest nine literacies of glocalization (which can re-interpreted as a form of transnationalism) that are essential for leaders to promote if students are to be educated for a transnationalist era: political; economic; cultural; moral; pedagogical; information; organizational; spiritual and religious; and temporal. All of these are expressed within a framework of a definition of literacy that incorporates new information and communication technologies, critical thinking, active citizenship and linguistic and cultural diversity. Since educational leaders are in positions to provide direction and exercise influence, the educational resources that they make available to their students and school systems need to be more reflective of the realities of their students' futures, countering current deficiencies in student literacies across these areas. As we move toward the middle of the 21st century, it is not enough to educate people to live in a world where transnationalism merely involves movement across borders as a common occurrence. It is now necessary to acknowledge that transnationalism incorporates attitudes of self-improvement and awareness that are essential and integral parts of global mobility.

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Development and education

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Introduction	52
Education and economic development	53
Education and human development	54
Education and sustainable development	55
Education and human rights	56
Radical critiques of education and development	57
Conclusion	57
References	58

Introduction

The relationship between development and education is widely seen in policy circles and in popular understanding as education for development. That is to say, education is the servant of development. Indeed, most of the time the core understanding is of schooling for development. However, the intention here is to see both development and education as inherently contestable concepts both separately and when viewed in relationship with each other.

Although educational expenditure has long been an important part of development assistance, both official and non-official, and education featured in the world conferences of the 1990s and the resultant Millennium Development Goals, education has occupied a marginal role in development studies departments and journals.

As debate raged around 2012–2014 as to what should be included within the proposed new Sustainable Development Goals, it was seen as quite plausible that education would not “get its own SDG” for contradictory reasons. For some prominent economists, education issues were so easily solvable as to be unworthy of a focus in the SDGs. Sachs (2008: 301–2), for instance, declared that “Of all the MDGs, universal access to basic education is surely the easiest to achieve. The technology is the best understood and the most straightforward.” (cf. McGrath, 2010 and 2014). Burnett (2012), on the other hand as an economist with a far more detailed understanding of education, was concerned that it was the intractability of achieving desired education outcomes that would make it seem a poor focus of a target for the SDGs, as policymakers would inevitably look for easier wins. Yet, education did get included under SDG4, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (UN, 2015: 17). Moreover, educationalists stressed that education was integral to the wider SDG program, mapping the need for educational input to the achievement of all goals (UNESCO GEMR, 2016; McGrath, 2018; Tikly, 2020).

I have hinted at the power of economists in driving development thinking, and the orthodox position of development policy and studies is still that education is an investment in individuals that then has firm and economy level pay-offs. However, there are many other accounts of the education-development relationship. In a piece of this length, a selection of these can only be dealt with. Which then to choose? In a widely cited paper, the philosopher, Ingrid Robeyns, focuses on three main accounts: “rights, capabilities and human capital” (Robeyns, 2006). I follow her lead in my book-length exploration of the education-development relationship (McGrath, 2018), although noting a series of other positions there too. Economic development, human development and human rights, therefore, will be the foci of **Education and economic development**, **Education and human development** and **Education and human rights** sections of this article respectively. In returning to this issue some three years later, my relegation of sustainable development to the supporting cast seems unjustifiable in the light of the climate emergency. It is clear that the long-standing education for sustainable development (ESD) tradition needs more mainstream attention in light of the climate emergency, and this will form the focus of **Education and sustainable development** section. In my book, I note also more critical perspectives on the negative sides of both development and education, and I will summarize these debates in **Radical critiques of education and development** section.

Of course, other themes could be highlighted. For instance, SDG target 4.7 brings together environmental concerns with a range of others. To take one example, education for peace is enshrined at the start of the Constitution of UN’s specialized agency for education, UNESCO: “since wars begin in the minds of men [sic], it is in the minds of men that peace must be constructed” (http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=15244&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

For space reasons, I am going to concentrate on contemporary debates. However, it is also important to remember that education has had a long and complex history of relationships with small “d” development long before big “D” development emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War (see McGrath, 2018, for a review of this history). And a final caveat: while I present these five accounts separately, reflecting their origins in distinct traditions, policy and theory reality is far messier, with considerable blending of approaches, a point I will reflect on in the conclusion.

Education and economic development

In the rise of both high and low-cost private schooling, in increasing expenditure on supplementary tuition for children, in the introduction of loans for higher education, North and South, there is a clear understanding that education is a good investment. It is a good investment for individuals and families, to be reflected in higher incomes, and for entrepreneurs, who can make good profits from private schooling. Even for the state, education can still be a good investment, particularly where it is acting against market failures (most notably, under investment by parents in girls' education).

For nearly two hundred years after Adam Smith's account of economic development, a notion of intangible human capital lay under the surface of economic theory. Only in the 1960s did this coalesce into a theory (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1964). This human capital theory (HCT) argued that forms of human capital, most obviously schooling, contribute to economic productivity. Emerging at the time of rapid decolonization, and the heightened attention this gave to development assistance, it was quickly grasped by planners, North and South, that education could play a crucial role in development by enhancing national productive capacities. By 1980, this convergence of development theory and aid practice led to the World Bank replacing UNESCO as the leading global actor in education and development. Indeed, several of the key texts about education and economic development were written by Bank staff (McGrath, 2018).

The key concept that the Bank helped move into the education policy mainstream was rate of return analysis. If education is understood as an investment in the development of capital, then the decision to invest in education should be subject to the same calculation as other investments, that is, a calculation of the expected rate of financial return on the sums invested. For an investment in education to be justified, at either household or national level, its expected rate of return on education (RORE) should be higher than the alternative rate of return from other possible investments.

We have had nearly 50 years of rate of return to education analyses, generating thousands of publications. These tend to show relatively high rates of return on education as compared to other possible investments, and have been key to continued national and international investment in education, and particularly in the education of girls.

The analysis was quickly developed to suggest that all education did not matter equally. In developing a RORE methodology, Mincer (1974) had assumed constant returns to years of education. However, the newly-formed World Bank economics of education team soon focused on which level(s) of education provided the best returns (Heyneman, 2003; Psacharopoulos, 2006). Three World Bank research projects formed the core of an argument that retains its intellectual and policy influence 40 years later. First, Cochrane (1979) showed that an investment in primary schooling for girls had positive effects on fertility and infant mortality. Second, Lockheed et al. (1980) showed that even a few years of primary schooling brought benefits for farmer productivity. Third, and most influentially, Psacharopoulos (1981) showed that primary schooling had the best RORE of all forms of education. While these accounts have been subjected to widespread methodological, theoretical and philosophical critique, their core arguments remain hugely powerful and more recent work in the tradition is far more methodologically sophisticated (see McGrath, 2018, for a summary of the criticisms and of key developments in the approach).

A major concern has been that the use of years of schooling as a central variable is not robust enough given what we know from other research about variations in time on task and learning outcomes, both nationally and internationally. In response, Hanushek and Woessmann have pioneered attempts to measure educational quality rather than quantity for RORE. Using data from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) as a superior proxy for human capital, they argued that this provides triple the explanatory power of the years of schooling approach (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2007). Indeed, they have subsequently argued that years of schooling are statistically insignificant once they are combined with measures of quality (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2012). Thus, we have seen a shift in policy focus from quantity to quality of schooling.

Although the argument that investments in primary education (especially for girls) are the most justified continues to be powerful, the past 40 years has seen research that also makes a case for other sectors of education being the best investment, such as early childhood development (Carneiro and Heckman, 2003) and higher education (McCowan and Schendel, 2015).

As noted briefly above, HCT has received considerable criticism from a number of angles. Many neoclassical economists of education argue that the social RORE is actually far greater than the private RORE at the heart of the Mincerian approach (McMahon, 1999). This has spawned the "wider benefits of learning" literature (Feinstein et al., 2008). Heterodox economists stress the role of education as part of more complex interactions between firms, state and market that drive innovation in economic development (Malerba, 1999; Lall, 1992; Von Tunzelmann, 2010; Kruss et al., 2015). Other economists, most famously Bennell (e.g., 1996), have pointed to very serious problems in using HCT in economies with high levels of public, informal and subsistence work, as is prevalent across the South. Similar weaknesses of course lie in the systematic underestimation of the economic value of care work, predominantly done by women (Donath, 2000). There have been criticisms too of the move toward measuring quality through PISA in particular, which is seen to be highly flawed (Meyer and Benavot, 2013). For Marxist economists, such as Bowles and Gintis (1976), the approach is flawed in its assumption that there is no conflict between capital and labor. Sociologists have continued this critique, and have focused on what they consider to be the false assumptions of HCT that mean that it is a highly partial account of how economic development takes place and what it means for individuals and society (Lauder, 2015).

While the education for economic development has well-defined tools and clear practice and policy implications, such critiques point to concerns about whether it has only the semblance of authority. Put simply, more than a half-century of this orthodoxy has not resulted in well-functioning education systems or economies around the globe. In many countries, and particularly for those most marginalized, the prospect of a smooth transition from quality education to decent work is a mirage.

Education and human development

Although the 1960s saw the emergence of the human capital orthodoxy, the decade also saw the emergence of a counter-narrative as it quickly became apparent that the expansion of schooling was not leading to the presumed economic take-off. This basic needs account (Streeten, 1979) laid the foundation of an approach within the United Nations Development Program that resulted in the Human Development Index and Report (McGrath, 2018). The driving force behind these two outputs, Ul Haq (1995), argued that the objective of development should be to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. This work was developed in a new direction by his close collaborator, Amartya Sen, and by Martha Nussbaum, into the human development and capabilities approach (HDCA). Sen argues that economic development is simply a means to the ultimate goal of human flourishing. Thus, "Development can be seen ... as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy." (Sen, 1999: 3).

Sen places the building of individual capabilities at the heart of this. For him, capabilities mean "what a person is able to do or be ... [and represents] the opportunity to achieve valuable combinations of human functionings" (Sen, 2005: 153). Sen is concerned to stress that these vary between individuals and that we should respect this. Nussbaum (2000), in contrast, seeks to offer a set of capabilities that might be universally valuable that could then form the basis for legal and policy enactment.

Education is seen by both Sen and Nussbaum as crucial to the larger human development project. Underpinning the notion of capability for both is the ability of an individual to identify their "valued beings and doings" through reasoning. Education is explicitly seen as building this reasoning.

Yet, some later education and HDCA scholars, most notably Unterhalter (2005), have made it clear that education may actually diminish certain capabilities, such as where traveling to or attending school is unsafe, especially for girls. More positively, the HDCA approach to education allows two new questions to be asked about education. First, what are the multiple capabilities that learners value? Second, how are educational institutions successful, or not, in supporting capability achievement?

The first restates Sen's objection to a simple assertion that education is an investment with economic outcomes. Rather, it encourages us to consider why an individual has enrolled and persisted in education. Among the myriad reasons might include to be a better parent, to contribute more to one's community, or to be better able to take part in religious activities (Powell and McGrath, 2019).

The second follows on from this to develop a critique of evaluation of educational institutions' performance that emerges from new public management and HCT and which focuses on pass rates and employment destinations. Rather, the emphasis in HDCA-inspired evaluation is on measuring capability promotion (Walker and McLean, 2013; Powell and McGrath, 2014).

Like HCT, the approach was originally applied to schooling but has come to be used increasingly in other areas of education, such as higher education (Walker and McLean, 2013; Walker and Fongwa, 2016) and vocational education and training (VET) (Powell and McGrath, 2019; McGrath et al., 2020).

The HDCA approach to the development-education relationship has been critiqued in a number of ways. From within the tradition, there has been a strand of writing that has sought to make up for the perceived limitations of an approach that emanates from liberal economics and philosophy. The status of individualism in the approach is much debated (Robeyns, 2017) with some arguing for inclusion of a notion of collective capabilities (Evans, 2002; Ibrahim, 2006).

Recent work in education seeking to take a more post-colonial stance has stressed the need to think more relationally about capabilities (De Jaeghere, 2019; Tikly, 2020). Others within the HDCA tradition have also pushed for a stronger sense of the way that structure impacts on capability formation (Deneulin, 2011; Stewart, 2013). In her review of the nearly 40 years of capability writing, Robeyns (2017: 66) argues, "having an account of structural constraints is therefore non-optional: every capability theory has one; although sometimes this account will be very implicit." Within the education and development community, VET researchers have gone furthest in seeking to address this by recourse to combination of HDCA with sociological theory and political economy accounts (McGrath et al., 2020). There has also been criticism that the approach tends to privilege the interests of current generations at the expense of later ones, although here again more recent work has done much to address this and the links between human and sustainable development (Watene, 2013; Schultz et al., 2013).

From outside HDCA, there has been considerable sociological critique (Dean, 2009; Sayer, 2012) that focuses on HDCA's lack of an adequate account of institutions, society or power, although there are attempts to address this in some of the internal critique noted above. The approach is also questioned for its methodological limitations. These critiques focus largely on the works of Sen and Nussbaum, which are philosophical rather than empirical. The capability approach has been applied in methodologically pluralistic ways that make it ill-suited for the development of highly refined methodological tools as used in HCT. However, this pluralism also leads to a further challenge that HDCA work is not an orthodoxy in any discipline, and so subject to methodological critique from a wide range of directions.

The approach is also widely criticized for its limited policy value (cf. Robeyns, 2017). Clearly, Nussbaum's list is an attempt to talk to policy. However, it is not clear that the academic mainstream of the approach has strong enough theories of power and change to get much purchase at national or global policy levels. It is contended that an approach that stresses the position that we need to recognize individual's complex and multiple agendas rather than a simple set of measurable targets is very far from what policymakers and planners find useful. In the case of education, it is difficult for this liberal position to compete with the instrumental argument that we should prioritize those parts of education that provide the greatest economic returns and those elements that do the most to reduce income poverty.

Where HDCA does appear to have most policy purchase is through the Human Development Reports and Human Development Index at the global level, and their use to generate national reports in a number of states. However, there is a tension here within the tradition regarding whether HDCA is even a thing (Robeyns, 2017). Many academic philosophers, such as Robeyns, see HD and CA as separate approaches, though having common roots. In this view, policy work on human development is not work within the capabilities tradition. Others, most notably development economists, are much more comfortable with the notion of HDCA (Alkire and Denuelin, 2009) and so see the UNDP's work on human development as within the wider family.

Such work has been at the macro scale but there is also policy potential at the meso level. For instance, there does seem some potential that the evaluative perspective offered by HDCA can help educational institutional leaders to refocus their practices on expanding learner freedoms (Walker and McLean, 2013; Powell and McGrath, 2014, 2019).

Education and sustainable development

Just as the origins of the human development counter-narrative can be found in concerns about the problems of economic development in the South in the 1960s, so the origins of sustainable development can be seen in concerns about the costs of apparently successful economic development in the North at the same time (Carson, 1962; Boulding, 1966; Meadows et al., 1972). These concerns entered the global policy stage in 1972 through the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, quickly followed by the 1974 Cocoyac Conference. This called for the harmonization of development and environment concerns through "eco-development". The 1980 World Conservation Strategy saw the first international policy use of the term "sustainable development", popularized in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission report, *Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1988).

The dominant position of these international reports is that environmental sustainability and economic development can be successfully harmonized, and this remains the global policy orthodoxy, as represented by the SDGs. However, many researchers and activists have been skeptical about this optimistic picture from the outset and such views have grown hugely as the extent of the environmental crisis has become clearer (Rockström et al., 2009; Jackson, 2017; Raworth, 2017). Belief in a tension between capitalism and the environment is put starkly by the journalist, Naomi Klein, "our economic system and our planetary system are now at war" (2014: 21). Attention has turned, therefore, to calls for transformative change, such as degrowth (D'Alisa et al., 2014) or just transitions (Swilling, 2020).

This tension between an ameliorative and a transformative vision of sustainable development plays out in accounts of education for sustainable development (ESD) (Vare and Scott, 2007). Vare and Scott characterize two broad trends within ESD. They see ESD1 as promoting changed attitudes, behaviors and skills, what they term "learning for sustainable development" (2007: 193). They see this as an expert-led and official approach to ESD, as reflected in UNESCO's UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and this can be extended to much of the work around SDG 4.7. In contrast, ESD2 seeks to build a range of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to support sustainable futures that need to be struggled for. It sees capitalism as being at the root of the environmental problem and calls for a radical transformation. It is critical too of formal education as being part of a wider system of extraction and exploitation.

Crucially, as Sterling (2019) notes, the patterns of learning embedded in conventional education have contributed to behaviors that exacerbate and accelerate the climate crisis, what Wals (2020: 825) calls a "hidden curriculum of unsustainability". Therefore, proponents of ESD2 call instead for transgressive learning and democratic pedagogies. Wals (2020) identifies three dimensions: criticality, emancipation and relationality. Criticality requires allowing learners the space to ask disruptive questions about why we are where we are today in terms of the climate crisis and how we can move toward sustainable futures, including what are the barriers to this. Emancipation requires empowering learners to find their own paths toward sustainability rather than directing them to one "correct" set of responses. Relationality is about supporting learners to connect to the environment at local levels while seeing the global connections, to other species in respectful ways, and to other people, especially across different backgrounds. What much of ESD of either mode 1 or 2 has is a place-based element that sees the centrality of the adage of "acting locally and thinking globally".

There is considerable attention in ESD to addressing key elements of formal educational systems: pedagogy, curriculum, institutional policies, etc. This has led to major initiatives to "green" schools, vocational colleges and universities (Sterling et al., 2013; Majumdar, 2011). However, there is also a very strong strand of ESD thinking that focuses on non-formal and informal learning sites as offering greater potential for transformative practices (Chaves et al., 2017; Lotz-Sisitka et al., 2017).

Tikly (2020: 57) offers a synthesis of post-colonial, sustainable development and human development perspectives on ESD, defining it as, "socially and environmentally just education that facilitates the capabilities of existing and future generations and of natural systems to flourish". He insists that an environmental education is not enough, but that ESD must be about environmental, economic and social justice.

In contrast with the other accounts of education and development above, ESD has generated a huge wealth of well-theorized critical reflection on educational practice. However, even ESD1 type approaches have struggled for purchase in formal education systems characterized by curriculum overload, resourcing constraints and performative pressures. The more radical approach that Vare and Scott characterize as ESD2 is necessarily threatening to powerful interests and dominant discourses of what matters in education and how it should be organized. The approach is far better at pointing to the need to change than offering ways of

overcoming resistance to change or providing a clear route map to an inevitably complex future. Nonetheless, its identification of many problems and priorities cannot be ignored.

Education and human rights

The three above accounts all explicitly talk about development, even if their visions of it radically differ. However, interacting with all of them is a powerful alternative account that does not seek to adjectivize development at all: the human rights account. Philosophical accounts of human rights are long-standing and well-known (e.g., Paine, 1984(1791); Wollestonecraft, 2004(1792)). However, it is with the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) (UN, 1948) that the modern rights movement, centered on international legal conventions and in the work of NGOs and activists on the ground, begins.

There are three “generations” of rights: civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights, both of which are enshrined in the UDHR; and a more recent set of rights that focus on group and collective rights to self-determination, development and environmental sustainability (de Schutter, 2010).

Education is clearly an economic, social and cultural right and is reflected both in the majority of the core UN human rights treaties and in all regional human rights systems. The right to education is expressed in Article 26 of the UDHR. This states:

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Since the UDHR, the right to education has been widely recognized and developed by a number of key rights documents from the United Nations. The two most important of these are the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989. The right to education is also addressed in a series of documents from United Nations specialized agencies, most notably UNESCO and the International Labor Organization. This normative work goes significantly beyond the CRC in stressing a lifelong perspective on the right to education, but has less legal force.

To say that education is a human right means several things. It establishes that it is legally-enforceable and a right inherent to everyone without any discrimination. States are obliged to act on this and can be held accountable for any violations, at least in theory.

Although the language of rights is universal, it is evident that the ability to enjoy them is clearly unequal. This leads to a particular focus on the right to education of the most marginalized, such as cultural, ethnic and linguistic minorities, people living with disabilities, nomads, and migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons UNESCO (2008a,b).

The most comprehensive framework for thinking about the right to education is the “4A” model developed by the first UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomaševski (2001):

Availability—Education is free and there is adequate infrastructure and trained teachers able to support the delivery of education.

Accessibility—The education system is non-discriminatory and accessible to all, and positive steps are taken to include the most marginalized.

Acceptability—The content of education is relevant, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate, and of quality; schools are safe, and teachers are professional.

Adaptability—Education evolves with the changing needs of society and challenges inequalities, such as gender discrimination; education adapts to suit locally specific needs and contexts.

The position of the rights perspective in education and development is disputed. McGrath (2018) argues that what made the international development commitments to education so powerful from the 1990 World Conference on Education for All to the SDGs is the conjunction of human capital and human rights arguments,

That primary education could be shown to be both a right and an investment created a previously unprecedented alliance between the lead UN specialized agencies, UNESCO and UNICEF, and the World Bank, as well as national governments, bilateral agencies and national and international NGOs.

McGrath (2018: 116).

This coming together of two powerful agendas was instrumental in the very significant progress on accessing schooling that has occurred since 1990. Right to education activists have pushed hard and successfully for the achievement of the joint commitments of the rights system and the international development targets. International civil society has been mobilized behind slogans such as

“no child left behind”. The increased policy focus on the right to education has encouraged the huge growth in research in this area. These are very real achievements.

Nonetheless, there are arguments that the rights agenda has been compromised by its accommodation with aid agendas and the education for economic development account. What has resulted is such an attenuated achievement of the right to education for many millions that has undermined that right and the ability to claim that it was not being realized (McGrath, 2015). At the same time, the combination of world conferences and international development goals has disempowering actors at the local and national levels who could be advocates for educational rights (Unterhalter, 2014; McGrath, 2015; McGrath, 2018).

From a lifelong perspective, there is a danger also that the right to education approach, with its emphasis on primary schooling as first priority, taken together with the problematic claims of the early World Bank economists of education, encourages a narrow emphasis on this single part of education systems (McGrath, 2018). Robeyns (2006) argues that there is a danger that rights provide a minimum floor for governments that allows them to underinvest in building real quality education. By using the notion of progressive realization, that states only have to meet the full set of rights as they can afford them, international human rights law can make it hard to determine whether a country is doing all it can, and what responsibility lies with the donors. What is clear from research on international education finance, such as presented in the Global (Education) Monitoring Report series is that funding is inadequate in spite of international promises. This appears to be one of the key areas of weakness of the right-based approach.

Finally, Robeyns argues that there is a major problem with thinking about quality from a legal rights perspective, and this is compounded by attempts at measurement that remain too focused on the tangible and more easily measurable inputs and outputs of education, and have a limited and overly formalistic sense of educational processes.

Radical critiques of education and development

While rights arguments are often combined with development accounts, of all three kinds outlined above, there are positions that offer far more radical critiques of both development and education.

In the case of development, Hettne (1995) highlights a series of alternative imaginings of development, which he collectively termed “Another Development”. He includes basic needs in this category, as well as self-reliance; eco-development; women and development; and ethno-development. In the subsequent quarter-century, we have seen further elaboration of the former strand around “indigenous” notions as *buen vivir* in Latin America, *ubuntu/ukama* in Africa and radical *swaraj* in India (e.g., Gudynas, 2011; Kothari, 2014; Swilling, 2020). Taken together, these accounts are more radically relational than the Northern development discourses, a relationality that extends to other persons and to nature. Each insists “on the social as well as the economic; the growth of the person over the growth of economy; and the location of that person as a member of a wider community with responsibilities as well as rights” (McGrath, 2018: 51).

Others have written from what have been called variously anti and post-development positions (Ferguson, 1990; Sachs, 1992; Escobar, 1995). Much of this work has been influenced by post-structuralism. This has led to a critique of the discourse and practice of development as constituting a new neocolonial phase of Western domination (Ziai, 2015). Ziai detects two broad trends within this literature, which he terms skeptical and neo-populist, although he suggests that much writing in the field is a confused mixture of the two. He argues that the skeptical strand contains a critical, dynamic, constructivist concept of culture that seeks to engage with development practice but in reflexive ways. However, he contends that neo-populism tends toward a romantic rejection of modernity and celebration of peasant societies that essentializes and ossifies culture. This may be contrasted with the neo-populist’s superior insights. As Ziai argues, this tends to a reactionary and, perversely, elitist dismissal of people’s desire for “development” as false consciousness, making post-developmentalists look very much like the “development experts’ they criticize so sharply” (2015: 837).

All of the accounts above take it as a given that education is a good thing, although I cited Unterhalter as noting that “actually existing education” can lead to capability diminution. Here, however, I want to briefly note some of the arguments that exist about education as not simply a passive bystander in violence but as being itself implicated in it. This in some way has echoes in Wals’ critique above of unsustainable education.

For critics in this area, education is understood a set of systems, institutions and actors that generates multiple forms of violence. Education is seen as playing a role in increasing levels of ethnic/racial, sexual and class-based violence (Bush and Salterelli, 2000; Dunne et al., 2006; Paulson and Rappleye, 2007). It also commits symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1984) or epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007) through valuing certain cultures, languages and knowledges over others, and more conventional violence that results for those societies and individuals marginalized and disempowered in its wake (Smith, 1999; Santos, 2014). These accounts are largely framed as critique but where there is a call to positive action, it lies in educational moves that are similar to those being advocated in ESD2.

Conclusion

Although there are fundamentalists who can only see merits in one of these five accounts, it is evident to me that each has strengths, and weaknesses. Education can bring economic benefits but is a fundamental human right regardless of this. Economic development and preparation for the work are important but need to be located within a wider framework of human flourishing. However,

it is increasingly evident that economic development threatens the future of our environment, of nature and of us. Indeed, development has come with very particular costs for many, linked to colonialism, extraction and the destruction of cultures. Education has been deeply complicit in this.

That the education and development relationship should be seen as both pluralistic and two-edged seems obvious to me, but it also feels that it need to be regularly repeated in the face of much education and development research and policy that acts as if there is only one possible understanding of education and development, and that this is entirely unproblematic. However, academic critique of this imperial project is not enough. Rather, what is needed from academics is that they become allies of those who are actively resisting a narrow education for development account and actively building educational alternatives that are pluralistic, democratic and relational, and which seek to build opportunities for flourishing for people and planet now and into the future.

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The neoliberal dispositif: understanding the transformation of the social and ethical space of education

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Introduction	60
Neoliberalism as “almost” a doctrine	60
Neoliberalization	61
The dispositif	62
The neoliberalization of education	63
The education market: epistemological, ontological and ethical reorganizations	64
Choice and accountability—the prioritization of instrumental ethics	64
The commodification of education-choice	65
The commodification of students-accountability	65
The commodification of the self	66
The discourse of numbers—epistemological dominance	67
Discussion	67
References	68

Introduction

Neoliberalism is a term that has enabled insightful and meaningful analysis of many of the economic, political, social and cultural changes that have occurred across the globe since the 1970s. It is impossible to make sense of the wholesale and significant changes in the world of education over this period without coming to terms with the phenomena that is neoliberalism. However, there is considerable disagreement over how best to conceptualize neoliberalism.

In some respects, neoliberalism appears to have assumed the status of a political theory or ideology, without many of the requisite defining characteristics. There is no central text, no validated list of key founding principles against which to define an idea, value or practice as neoliberal. We might reference the Washington Consensus as a “quintessential expression” (Hilgers, 2012, p. 81 cited in Collier, 2012, p. 192), or Hayek’s *Road to Serfdom* (1944) as a seminal text but to call neoliberalism a “theory”, economic, philosophical or political, offers it a cohesion and unity it does not have. Furthermore, the various ways in which neoliberal ideas and principles have been enacted and modified have pushed and pulled at the limits of any general doctrinal framework that could be attached to neoliberalism. It is hard not to concur with commentators that as an analytic category, neoliberalism is a “rascal concept” (Peck, 2013, p. 133), a “rather overblown notion” (Dean, 2012, p. 70) with “a perplexing mix of overreach and under-specification” (Brenner et al., 2010, p. 183). Moreover, it is impossible to ignore that much discussion of neoliberalism has something of the end of days about it. Referenced as a “big Leviathan” (Collier, 2012), a “slouching beast” (Ball, 2016) it has arguably become “loose shorthand for a prevailing dystopian zeitgeist” (Venugopal, 2015, p. 168) and in certain quarters has evolved into “a generic term of deprecation” (Thorsen and Lie, 2006, p. 9). There is no shortage of rhetorical flourish in the academic debate about neoliberalism, it is personified as sly and deceitful, insinuating itself into societal structures and governance—a cannibalizing and colonizing force programming the population to embrace the market and its concomitant social relations. Neoliberalism is often anthropomorphized as the villain in a grand narrative lamenting the global shift away from the golden era of the Keynesian welfare states (Barnett, 2005). Compelling though this story is, caution is needed. We do not offer a fully comprehensive re-telling of the story of neoliberalism, rather we highlight some of the key aspects and transitions in the way it has been understood and employed. This includes an exploration of the concept and practice of neoliberalization and also addresses the evolving and problematic nature of “actually existing neoliberalism.” Prompted by some of the shortfalls in existing accounts of neoliberalization, we introduce Foucault’s concept of the dispositif as an analytic device. We then focus on education, examining first how the two main approaches to neoliberalization have been used to make sense of the impact of neoliberal reform on education. Finally, we explore the usefulness of the *dispositif* by employing it as a methodological and conceptual tool to examine the way neoliberal education reform has transformed the social, cultural and ethical space of education.

Neoliberalism as “almost” a doctrine

Most accounts of neoliberalism begin with its emergence as an economic “approach” in the aftermath of the Second World War. The founding of the Mont Pelerin society in 1947 serves as a convenient marker for the development of neoliberal thinking. Following

the catastrophic resurgence of nationalism in 1930s Germany and faced with the spread of communism, this society brought together economists, philosophers and historians to discuss the role of liberalism in securing the freedom and rights of the individual over and against the role and responsibilities of the state. The likes of Hayek in Europe and Friedman, Stigler, Becker, Schultz and like-minded economists of the Chicago school feted the potential of laissez faire market economics as an alternative to collectivist political philosophy and Keynesian economics (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 388). At this point, neoliberalism can be described as a theoretical and abstract undertaking, existing in a “proto” stage (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 384), which saw it evolve to exhibit a degree of intellectual coherence, refining what can be described as a “neoliberal” economic perspective:

a free market ideology based on individual liberty and limited government that connected human freedom to the actions of the rational, self-interested actor in the competitive marketplace.

Stedman Jones (2012, p. 2).

However, this coherence should not be over-emphasized since even at this stage of “abstract intellectualism” (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 388), a range of different convictions and principles informed the broad agreement on the value of market practices (Blomgren cited in Thorsen and Lie, 2006). This is unsurprising, given the different approaches and disciplines represented among its advocates—neoliberalism does not represent a unified and consistently justified set of principles or tenets. This is significant because it means that the enactment and practices of neoliberalism carry greater weight in helping to define and understand it. The difficulties scholars grapple with in terms of how to conceptualize and analyze neoliberalism do not really pertain to its diversity or lack of rigor and coherence at a theoretical stage. They come from what is understood to be the enactment of neoliberal ideas into “actually existing neoliberalism.”

The 1980s marked the transition of neoliberalism into an active political project, partly as a consequence of and response to the perceived failure of Keynesian economics, the Oil Crisis, stagflation in the 1970s. Neoliberal economics was positioned as an alternative to state planning and *ungovernability* (Jessop, 2016) and a route out of global crisis. In the US and the UK, this was pursued in combination with *neoliberalism* as what was termed the politics of the New Right. The elections of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan inaugurated an era in which neoliberal thinking came to dominate and frame political thinking and practice in parts of the West (Hall, 2003; Jessop, 2004). Indeed, neoliberalism became a global project exemplified by the Washington Consensus and policies of structural adjustment promoted by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Enactments of neoliberalism across the world in multiple, different ways intensified the debate about how best to understand it. From the 1980s onwards then neoliberalism began to reference something “actually existing” (Peck et al., 2018) with all the accompanying epistemological and ontological complications that “actually existing” brings. It became necessary for researchers and commentators to account for and understand certain continuities and coherences and differences and contradictions that characterize neoliberalism in practice. A key question was how to explain the rapid and extensive but uneven development and spread of neoliberal thinking—to understand how and why it is that “neoliberalism seems to be everywhere” (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 380). To capture this complexity, scholars turned their focus to the processes of *neoliberalization*. Studies of neoliberalization pay attention to context and change, to neoliberalism as an ongoing “process, not an end-state” (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 383), as practice rather than theory. This emphasis on empirical study is both a means of sharpening theoretical understandings of neoliberalism and capitulation/recognition that “There is no such thing as neoliberalism!” (Barnett, 2005, p. 7) since its contingent existences call into question its existence as anything other than “a pure archetype” (Castree, 2006, p. 4). Either way, these explorations of the ways neoliberal thinking has been adopted and adapted in practice raise difficult questions about the form and nature of neoliberalism itself. We present below an overview of the two main approaches that have emerged in respect of analyzing and understanding neoliberalization.

Neoliberalization

Heuristically speaking, accounts of neoliberalization have fallen into two camps. Firstly, those that identify neoliberalization at a macro structural level as a phenomenon exhibiting key characteristics and practices of the market form. This kind of macro approach attempts to convey and apprehend a “common thread” (Hall, 2003, p. 22) or “pervasive metalogic” (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 383) identified in a range of economic, political and social changes that have taken place in some manner or another across the globe. These are analyses of big N neoliberalism or “neoliberalism writ large” (Ong, 2007, p. 4). They can frame neoliberalism as a “Leviathan” (Wacquant, 2010, p. 197), “an economic tsunami that is gathering force across the planet” (Ong, 2007, p. 1), a monolithic radical free market project whose practices of deregulation and privatization and reduction or reformation of the state are recognizable to all. This approach helps us to apprehend commonalities in processes of neoliberalization. Often these macro structural accounts include within or alongside them a sense of neoliberalism as a hegemonic project. It is “the spider at the center of the hegemonic web that is world wide market rule” (Peck, 2013, p. 133).

By contrast, an alternative camp begins by critiquing macro structural approaches for portraying neoliberalism as a monolithic and hegemonic venture rolling out a template of neoliberalism across the world. It points to variations, contingencies and discrepancies in the way neoliberalization has proceeded. The “flux and diversity” of neoliberalism is highlighted and explored (Brenner et al., 2010, p. 183) and neoliberalization is observed to take place in “circumstances of contradictory cohabitation” (Peck, 2013,

p. 140) reflecting its input “as just one of many pulses” (Peck, 2013, p. 141) in a local situation. Ong is an exemplar of this approach with her analyses of the way neoliberal strategies have been taken up by East and Southeast Asian states as exceptions to their usual practices. Proposing an understanding of neoliberalism “not as a standardized universal apparatus” (Ong, 2007, p. 5) but a “migratory set of practices” (Ong, 2007, p. 4), Ong highlights the diversity and contingency of new manifestations of neoliberalism (Ong, 2007, p. 1). In this schema, neoliberalization occurs not as an imposition but as an interaction with pre-existing social, political and cultural conditions to give rise to varied and diverse manifestations. This mirrors the more general notion of *glocalization* (Robertson, 1995) as opposed to globalization. This “low flying” (Brenner et al., 2010, p. 199) case study approach works with an understanding of political power not as a “hegemonic, thoroughly structural, state dwelling power” (Cotoi, 2011, p. 110) but as governance. Indeed, examining neoliberalization as a contingent, relational process inevitably problematizes the idea of neoliberalism as a hegemonic ideology. That neoliberalism may co-exist with alternative or even competing government rationalities necessitates an understanding of it as exhibiting a more “light touch”, adaptable model of power.

The second approach is associated with another distinction in the general field of neoliberal studies. Rather than an exclusive focus on structural and economic aspects of neoliberalism there is, to a greater or less extent, an attempt to explore the neoliberalization of social, ethical and personal experience—the way neoliberalism makes up people. This is tied to an understanding of neoliberalism as “a hybrid form of governmentality” (Brenner et al., 2010, p. 183) with its inclination “to speak in terms of neoliberal modes of subject reformation and strategies of rule” (Brenner et al., 2010, p. 199). That said, putting together the understandings of neoliberalism as a flexible, contingent and diverse assemblage with “neoliberalism as governmentality” do present some problems. The latter tends to present neoliberalism as a dominant or ruling government rationale in a way similar to the overblown, dystopian accounts of economic change noted previously.

This cursory review belies much of the nuance that informs different conceptualisations of neoliberalization. Peck and Tickell acknowledge neoliberalism as “necessarily variegated and uneven” and stress that “analyses of neoliberalization must be sensitive to its contingent nature” (2002, p. 383). Similarly, Ong makes repeated mention of the mobility of neoliberal logic (2007). Thinking about the abstract and the concrete together is never easy but doing so allows us to consider the ways that neoliberalism is implicated and imbricated in multiple relations of power. These relations of power facilitate its spread as a discursive regime and at the same time enable it to take hold in specific and mundane places where one might not expect it—the personal, social and ethical spaces of human life. At the heart of these tensions is the struggle to understand and articulate how neoliberalism appears to transform the way we understand and relate to ourselves, others and wider society. The question is how best to address the suspicion that we are somehow unwittingly and unwillingly created and shaped as neoliberal subjects. It is this concern with restructuring of our personal and social life that underlies and provokes descriptions of neoliberalism’s pernicious and manipulative nature. Fundamentally, the anxiety is that neoliberalization represents an extension of government power, of neoliberal governance. Many accounts of neoliberalism and neoliberalization are limited in their capacity to explore this. Hence, we suggest Foucault’s concept of the dispositif as a way of tracing and exploring/connecting, though not necessarily resolving, these tensions and anxieties.

The dispositif

As discussed, macro structural approaches of neoliberalization often imply or work with notions of a neoliberal hegemonic ideology. However, the emphasis on social and cultural dominance is a blunt instrument with which to interrogate the apparently weasel-like, infiltrative ability of a global discourse—neoliberalism—to reframe social and personal life. Equally, the creation of individual subjectivities that embody and instantiate a government rationale seems to miss something of the wider diffuse atmosphere and milieu, the lived experience, produced by neoliberal practice. Foucault’s concept of the dispositif embraces these tensions and in doing so allows us to understand and unpack more subtly how neoliberalism and neoliberalization operate as modes of power.

Foucault is often referred to as a theorist of power and indeed his work proposes and traces multiple categorizations of power: disciplinary, sovereign, pastoral, bio power and governmentality. However, the dispositif is not a categorization of power but rather a way of conceptualizing and apprehending experience that allows relations of power to be foregrounded. It directs our attention to the bricks and mortar of neoliberalism and neoliberalization and enables us to identify how they might constitute, develop and connect different modalities of power.

Foucault describes the dispositif as a:

thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble consisting of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions—in short, the said as much as the unsaid (1980, p. 194).

This heterogeneous ensemble is cohered and connected by a particular web of meaning, a theme, a concept. To examine or propose a dispositif is to understand and analyze its existence as a formation that encompasses multiple forms. However, it is the relations between such diverse items that visibilize the dispositif and is critical to naming it. Analyzing a dispositif begins with an interrogation of concrete, quotidian practices and discourses. It involves tracing a varied and dynamic network of policies, practices, and discourses and establishing patterns of connection and coherence across material and discursive and macro and micro

levels of enactment. This is not a straightforward or finite process since the dispositif is based on or generated by constituents that are multivalent. They have their own genealogies and potential trajectories that may concur or contradict any overall strategic direction of a dispositif and in doing so alter it. It is the set of relations, a net of meaning that holds together a motley selection of discourses, practices, buildings, gestures, signs etc. that is the dispositif. "The apparatus [dispositif] itself is the system of relations that can be established between these elements" (Brenner et al., 2010, p. 194).

These relations involve a play of power and Foucault talks of and distinguishes between local tactics and overall strategies while reflecting on the mutuality of them both. They are conjoined at specific "points of contact." While individual parts may be connected by strategic objectives, they are also subject to "strategic elaboration" in ways that may be unforeseen, contradictory or both. The key in deploying the dispositif is to identify how these strategic affiliations, elaborations and relations cohere to generate, exert and manifest power.

The dispositif makes it possible to conceptualize the production, maintenance and evolution of a neoliberal social, cultural and ethical milieu. It is able to do this by capturing the uneven, diverse and evolving network of regimes of knowledge and practice that comprise our social reality. It looks to highlight the relations of power that lend coherence to this network and traces them across material and discursive and macro and micro levels of enactment. In taking seriously the materiality of thought, of power and knowledge, it is able to track the instantiation and reiteration of neoliberal truths as they cohere to produce a tangible and identifiable regime of truth. The materiality and contingency of its component parts and the conceptual relations that cohere them are integral to the structure of the dispositif. Without both and without an apprehension and experience of both, there is no dispositif.

We now want to turn our attention to the way in which neoliberal thinking and neoliberal practices have influenced and manifested themselves in the world of education. In other words, we want to examine those processes and developments that have been understood as the neoliberalization of education. Following this, we illustrate how the construct of the dispositif can develop our understanding of how the neoliberalization of education develops, is maintained and expands.

The neoliberalization of education

Education systems around the world have been subject to patterns of reform that speak to the influence of neoliberalism. Drawing on the wider theoretical debates concerning the nature of neoliberalism and neoliberalization can help in tracing the extent and evolution of educational reform, both nationally and globally.

Approaches that emphasize macro structural accounts of neoliberalization have been valuable in apprehending how the neoliberal reform of education has spread as a global practice. They aim to identify fundamental structural patterns that have been repeated across the world as a kind of "orthodoxy" that can be traced back to early "New Right" education reforms introduced in the United States and England and Wales (Fuller and Stevenson, 2019, p. 1). This is most clearly represented by Sahlberg's evocation of GERM-Global Education Reform Movement-in which he outlines five defining features of the global manifestation of neoliberal practice and approaches to education. Sahlberg's acronym-come -analogy also neatly conveys the reifying tendency of scholarship with regards to neoliberalism, conceptually constructing neoliberal reforms as "an epidemic that spreads and infects education systems through a virus" (Sahlberg, nd).

This level of analysis has also provided an understanding of the "staging" of the cumulative and extensive nature of the structural change many education systems have undergone. Stages of neoliberalization are identified in which the role of the state is progressively reconfigured from a "deregulation and dismantlement" of the Keynesian-welfare state to an "emergent phase of active state building and regulatory reform" as neoliberal principles are enacted more extensively and creatively (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 384). Peck and Tickell refer to this as roll back and roll out neoliberalism. Studies of the "ratchet" (Ball, 2007, p. 19) from endogenous to exogenous privatization in education in England and Wales illustrate this kind of theorizing as we set out below. England and Wales are not alone in exhibiting this pattern and are seen by some commentators as a testing ground for neoliberal reforms, which are then mimicked or adapted elsewhere (Grek and Ozga, 2010).

The UK's 1988 Education Reform Act initiated the deregulation and devolution of power and funding away from Local Education Authorities to individual schools and parents and concomitantly the assertion of central state control (Ball, 1990). This was a form of endogenous privatization through which the education system was restructured and re-cultured as a quasi-market—a market made and managed by the central state (Glennister, 1991; Whitty, 1989). At the same time parents were given the opportunity to choose between competing providers, where competition was articulated by institutional performance, and funding followed choice on a per capita basis. These moves were of strategic importance in paving the way for, or making thinkable and therefore doable forms of exogenous privatization. That is, the introduction of private firms, companies, organizations and individuals as providers within the education marketplace. It is the intensification and extension of the latter that has been understood as a more extensive and ongoing phase of roll out neoliberalism that far from representing a shrinking of the state represents a reconfiguration of the state and intensification of governance. Examining this pattern of reconfiguration, scholars such as Ball and Junemann (2012) have drawn on the work of Jessop to argue that this extensive neoliberal reform has resulted in the reconstitution of the state as a form of network governance involving a complex inter relationship of private, public, voluntary organizations in the role of governance. This kind of analysis has implications for how education relates to wider forms of governance. The important point here is that neoliberalism may be set over and against the state in many respects but as a practical project it is also dependent on the state—in particular the facilitative role of the state as a "market maker."

In order to explore the nature and manner of that dependence, accounts of neoliberalization that emphasize the hybridity and contingency of its manifestations have proved particularly useful. These approaches have placed greater emphasis on variations in the manifestation of neoliberal influence on national education systems. They also point to a more complex process of policy borrowing and policy mobility that acknowledges the variations in the pace, extent and convolutedness of neoliberal reform (Ball, 2012a, 2017). Studies of school choice and accountability in particular have evidenced the diversity and adaptability of neoliberal practice to its contingent political and social environments. Chile is cited as the most extreme example of a neoliberal system of school choice with its adoption of a voucher scheme in the 1980s. England and Wales with policies of local management of schools and the more recent development of Academies and Free schools in England are equally seen as an outlier of neoliberal adoption (Gunter, 2011). The key is that while a global spread of choice policies is evident, increasingly research has identified the idiosyncrasies and specificities of the way they are taken up and enacted (Lingard, 2010; Wu, 2014). A good example of this is Tan's adoption of Ong's notion of neoliberalism "as exception" (Ong, 2006) to characterize Shanghai's neoliberal school choice and assessment policies as "neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics" (2019).

Most pertinent are those analyses that marry this emphasis on hybridity and contingency with an understanding of neoliberalism as a form of governmentality. Work in this area investigates how the neoliberalization of the structures and economics of education has changed the way in which education is understood and practiced and how this in turn positions those involved with education. It probes the social, cultural, ethical transformation of education as strategically fundamental to the promotion and production of particular kinds of neoliberal subjectivities. This emphasis maintains the importance of modalities of state power but focuses on the operation of these as the production of particular kinds of social and ethical subjects (Youdell, 2004). Ball discusses the manifold ways in which neoliberal education policy reworks us into neoliberal subjects (2003, 2012b, 2016). Further studies extend this kind of analysis to explore neoliberalization as a process that effects the formation of neoliberal subjectivities across education (Bailey, 2015; Bradbury, 2019; Spohrer et al., 2018). However, this approach acknowledges neoliberalization as a process of messy overlays and complex interpenetration with earlier and different forms of governance in which other forms of power are constantly evoked and interacted with (Allen, 2014; Gore, 1995; Hunter, 1994).

The neoliberalization of education undoubtedly entails structural change, but it also references a transformation of the social, cultural and ethical milieu and meaning of education—what it means to teach and learn, to be educated. Whether situated within the debate about the nature of neoliberalism or not, this transformation of our understanding and articulation of education is a recurring theme of much educational research over the past thirty years. Drawing on and bringing together some of this research, we develop the argument that neoliberalization is not just a process that occurs "out there" in structures and economic relations but also takes place "in there" as a social, cultural and ethical process, as experience. Neoliberal education rests upon, brings about, and flourishes not simply on the basis of a set of tenets or principles, or through a set of changes in systems of delivery, or in the enactment of new forms of social relations but in and through a complex arrangement and ensemble of practices, methods, ethics, interactions and subjectivities that alter, perhaps profoundly the epistemological basis of social and educational experience. It is in outlining and exploring the elements of this ensemble that the Foucauldian concept of the *dispositif* proves valuable.

In order to explore how it is that the social, cultural and economic spaces of education are constituted within and as part of a neoliberal dispositif, we have identified the epistemological, ontological and ethical coherences and affinities that span and frame relations between policies, practices and discourses. We interrogate two critical aspects of the neoliberalization in education: the generation and securement of neoliberal principles and practices as truthful and sensible and their evolution as an ongoing and contingent process. It is unwieldy to trace this from a global perspective and so we have focused on education reform in the "neoliberal heartlands or neoliberal 'home' spaces" (Peck and Tickell, 2002, p. 382) of England and Wales. This focus acknowledges the role of English education as "a social laboratory of policy ideas" that have been exported to and adapted by many other national systems (Exley and Ball, 2014).

The education market: epistemological, ontological and ethical reorganizations

We focus on school choice and accountability while recognizing the impossibility of separating these from each other or from concomitant and subsequent policy developments. Our aim is to consider how structural changes and particular discourses interact and connect. In particular we focus on the way these practices and discourses are cohered by and consequently instantiate, replicate and promote particular epistemological, ontological and ethical approaches. These approaches are fundamental to building and constituting a neoliberal social, cultural and ethical educational milieu.

Choice and accountability—the prioritization of instrumental ethics

Focusing on the UK as an exemplar of neoliberal education, the structural changes brought in by the 1988 ERA of devolving financial control to schools, per capita funding and open enrollment were the first steps in a continuing process that is reconfiguring almost all educational spaces as a competitive market in England and Wales (Ball, 1990; Bowe et al., 1992). This process of structural reorganization was accompanied by the development of a National Curriculum with standardized testing. This testing regime served as a system of accountability in a devolved market ensuring comparability across organizations and individuals. Systems of accountability are fundamental to the competitive environment of an education market in which schools, teachers, and children are constantly assessed, compared and selected (Ozga, 2009, 2013; Power, 1997) (see below). These changes to the education system in

England and Wales are seen as exemplifying a fundamental characteristic of neoliberalism and processes of neoliberalization. They evidence a devolvement of power and responsibility from government to a variety of providers and contractors while simultaneously instigating comprehensive national regimes of accountability that represent a modification, arguably an increase and extension, of government power. Over the past thirty years, processes of devolvement and systems of accountability have escalated and intensified and the school system in England and Wales is now a fragmented, competitive and diverse market simultaneously subject to centralized imperatives and interventions. The acceleration of the Academies program and the development of Free Schools have seen an influx of new providers that have been explored as various forms of heterarchical network governance (Ball and Junemann, 2012). Alongside competition and freedom and diversity and innovation the educational apparatus is animated and inundated by a bewildering and reactive form of “policy hyperactivity”—mostly aimed at raising performance—that is driven by ministerial enthusiasms and biases, international orthodoxies and often ill-informed and ill-thought out borrowings from other systems (Morris, 2012).

Policies and practices of choice and accountability as they are enacted in England and Wales are part of a seemingly ad hoc ensemble. We want to examine how they are cohered in relatively consistent way at the level of and by social and ethical relations. Below we identify processes of instrumentalization and commodification and the dominance of numerical knowledge as features characteristic of many of these relations.

The commodification of education-choice

Policies and practices of school choice reposition schools, parents and students as producers and consumers of education (Gewirtz et al., 1995; Olmedo and Wilkins, 2017; Rowe and Lubienski, 2017; Vincent and Ball, 2006; Wilkins, 2010). This reworks education as a product or commodity to be marketed as schools competed with one another for students (Gewirtz et al., 1995, chapter 5; Whitty and Power, 2000). The introduction of a National Curriculum and national testing to facilitate choice further enables the commodity education to be defined, standardized and measured so that parents are able to make informed choices. The academic performance of a school as recorded and published in league tables stands for and represents the value of the product education offered by each school (Ball, 2004). Both school choice and accountability entail and contribute to the commodification of education. Education is now positioned as a private rather than public good that is of value to the individual student. This prompts an instrumental appreciation of education and knowledge with an emphasis on what value it can accord them in the future.

The process of school choice is situated within a wider framework of how education is understood and valued. The notion of the knowledge economy, introduced by Drucker (1966), references the idea that knowledge can be treated as a product, valued in terms of its transactional leverage in the competitive job market. Whereas once workers had exchanged their labor for reward, now information and knowledge are the new “wealth creating assets” (Ball, 2017, p. 25). Again, this positions knowledge/education as a private good valued and chosen for the capacity to improve success in a competitive job market. This is an economic perspective on education that commodifies knowledge/education, instrumentalizing their value to produce a kind of educational *homo oeconomicus* (Foucault, 2010, p. 268–269). This wider policy context of the knowledge economy imports economic rationalism into education (Lingard et al., 2003) and in so doing, reiterates the commodification and instrumentalization of education that already characterize practices of school choice.

We can see two processes of commodification here, one embedded within the other. The wider market of the knowledge economy shapes the contours and orientation of the education market, and reiterates the relationship with education as one of self-interested instrumentality. This involves a layering and legitimation of an instrumental ethic and logic that runs through both and secures markets as sites of veridiction and value allocation (Foucault, 2010, p. 31).

The commodification of students-accountability

The commodification of education is also a product of and integral to systems of accountability. While school choice and accountability are integrated and overlapping practices, commodification is contextualized differently with different consequences. Systems of accountability are framed by and imbricated within wider policy discourses of efficiency, standards, “what works”, productivity and performance. These systems of accountability place emphasis on the performances of individuals and organizations as “measures of productivity or output, or displays of ‘quality’, or ‘moments’ of promotion or inspection” (Ball, 2003, p. 216). A performative culture uses measures and indicators to judge, compare, punish or reward and not only spotlight the individual or institution, but position them in a relation of competition with each other. It produces winners and losers, averages, norms and trends-numerical data- and this process has outcomes not only for the way those involved perceive themselves but also how they relate to others. Ball describes this process as performativity.

Research shows that due to the pressure for schools to “perform” and to “compete”, schools that are able to seek students who will perform well in public examinations with minimum input and at minimum cost (Ball, 2004; Ball and Gewirtz, 1997; Kenway and Bullen, 2001). In addition, the pressure for schools to produce good exam results has led to practices that can be understood as “gaming the system”, the construction of admissions strategies, exclusion policies, direction of teacher attention to “productive” students, putting children in for easier exams (Lingard and Sellar, 2013; Waslander et al., 2010). In the classroom, research has shown how teachers focused on students on grade boundaries in order to maximize percentage pass rates (Gillborn and Youdell, 2000; Youdell, 2004). These strategies make clear that children are valued, or not, as producers of academic performance, and

approached as commodities. The commodification of education that necessitated the marketization of education has led to the commodification of students:

Thus, schools and teachers are effectively encouraged to value students according to what these children can offer the school financially and in terms of exam performance and image. In this way, students have become objects of the education system, to be attracted, excluded, displayed and processed, according to their commercial and semiotic worth, rather than subjects with needs, desires and potentials

Gewirtz (2002, p. 124).

Ball refers to this as an economy of student worth:

The demands of competition, the “information” provided by League Tables, pressures from the state for performance improvement and target-achievement and per-capita funding, in a period of spending constraints, work together to create local “economies of student worth” (2004, p. 10).

The commodification of the child as a bearer of potential and realized academic performance transforms the relationship between the school, teacher and student. The academic performance of the child becomes highly significant to the teacher and school as an indicator of their own professional value, which in some systems is translated into performance related pay. It charges those relationships with an ethic of self-interested instrumentality; a built-in imperative to see and treat others as a means to an end, more specifically your own end. There is little doubt that this has brought about a radical transformation of the nature of the ethical relationship between teacher, student and school. Moreover, that this has been an issue of considerable concern. Academic research has identified anxiety about the impoverished relationship between students and teachers that result from neoliberal policy and practice (Ball, 2003; Codd, 2005; Cooper, 2004; Gewirtz, 1997; Gewirtz et al., 2009; Jeffrey and Woods, 1998). Teacher stress, generated by work overload resulting from the pressure to perform, has allowed little space for teachers to develop relationships with students or to care for them in a way that many teachers feel they wish to (Gewirtz, 2002). Such change has made it increasingly difficult to maintain personal relationships. Cooper summarizes what this looks like:

Empathic teachers exhaust themselves finding pockets of profound empathy for needy children in corridors and in the entrances and exits to lessons, but it is never enough (2004, p. 20).

All of this exemplifies the ways that structural changes associated with the market, school choice and accountability serve as a hinge that prompts the emergence of a particular ethical stance to others. The creation and maintenance of a quasi-market in education precipitates processes of commodification and instrumentalization that shape school practices and teacher student relationships. It fosters a particular kind of ethical practice. In such articulations the social and the economic blur or converge as more and more of the social, the educational, the psychological, and the interpersonal is opened up to the possibilities of calculation and competition in our relations to ourselves and to others.

The commodification of the self

Allied and integral to this process of commodification is an understanding of the self as a form of human capital (Becker, 1964). It is clear that the practices and structures of market competition in education position the child, and indeed schools and teachers, as sites of investment, projects demanding work and improvement in order to succeed. The positioning of education as a private good to be acquired for the benefit of the student means the student is prompted to understand him or herself as a site of investment, to approach their own development as a means to an end. It creates a divided self, a kind of self-commodification and a relationship of instrumentality toward yourself. This is a particular ontological organization of the self. Students are encouraged to “turn themselves into a project” in order to best compete. This echoes Foucault’s notion of the *homo oeconomicus*, the enterprising self—a character fleshed out in policies of entrepreneurialism and recently resilience (Peters, 2001) The enterprising self is characterized by autonomy, self-interest and a calculative logic in their decision-making (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 169–170). This represents another reiteration of instrumental ethics and alters profoundly the social relations of teaching. Both the teacher and the student are exhorted to be entrepreneurs of themselves and the moral implications of this are clear. “Every social transaction is conceptualized as entrepreneurial, to be carried out purely for personal gain” (Olssen et al., 2004, p. 137). Indeed, the reiteration of self-interested ethic of instrumentality demonstrates an ability to infiltrate even those areas of the curriculum that might have been intended to offer an authentic opportunity to engage students. Thomson and Gunter comment on the appropriation of “pupil voice”:

Within the education portfolio, there is a marked tendency for senior policy makers to bring “pupil voice” into the policy conversation as a means of achieving school improvement and higher standards of attainment, rather than as a matter of the UN convention, citizenship and rights (2006, p. 840).

This pervasive understanding of the self and others as a form of human capital reiterates a form of instrumental ethics that effectively acknowledges and secures the power of the market—a school or job market—to define and fix value. This process is facilitated and characterized by the privileging of certain types of knowledge and we want to consider this below.

The discourse of numbers—epistemological dominance

The discourse of the number and numerical “knowledges” are integral to practices of school choice and accountability and processes of commodification and instrumentalization. The privileging and disproportionate emphasis on and employment of numerical knowledge is fundamental to the restructuring of education as a market (Ball, 2017, p. 218; Ozga, 2008). The economic model of the market is rooted in scientific and numerical knowledge, as are the discourses of efficiency, productivity, and standards etc. that come from it. Such epistemological dominance extends beyond the league table and begins before it framing policy through a privileging of quantitative methodologies and policy agendas that are “research based” (Ozga, 2008). The education policy field has become dominated by and preoccupied with the production of numerical data (Bradbury and Roberts-Holmes, 2018). Numerically based knowledges hold an epistemological grip on the way that education is understood, articulated and practiced. It is important to understand the role of this discourse in transforming education.

In the context of education, numerical knowledge effects and represents the reduction of complex personal, social and moral realities for the purposes of assessment, comparison and competition; a process neatly described by Rose as “a rhetorical technique for black boxing” (1999, p. 208). In other words, the hegemony of the “number” through technical, mathematical, statistical, scientific discourses serves to obfuscate the complexity and fragility of the processes, relationships and commitments that lie behind and beyond the production of a number. This is an oversimplification, invisibilization and invalidation of categories of experience that many see as fundamental to the educative experience. Numerical discourse intensifies commodification by reducing and sidelining emotional, affective, social and moral relations. The numerical articulation represents an epistemological framework that facilitates commodification not only cohering multiple practices and discourses but by shaping them. This is a key way in which the ethical and social space of education is re-formed.

Moreover, the production of techno-scientific data at once constitutes that which it claims to represent while portraying itself as a neutral and purely representative form of knowledge. It hides not only the complexity of real-life processes but its own value-driven perspective (Ozga, 2008). It is a reductive account of education that presents itself as objective, impartial fact.

Numerical and economic and scientific discourse is a key strand of epistemological coherence that runs across and joins up elements of a neoliberal dispositif. It is fundamental to systems of accountability and performativity; it facilitates processes of commodification and instrumentalization. It is a language that articulates market logic and legitimates and renders neutral practices such as accountability while devaluing relational aspects of the educational experience. It creates and reiterates a frame of reference that bastardizes aspects of the educative process, the self and relationships with others.

Discussion

Outlined above are some of the ways that structural practices of neoliberal educational reform embody and facilitate the prioritization of particular epistemological, ontological and ethical standpoints. In tracing the key epistemological, ontological and ethical continuities and affinities that run throughout neoliberal discourses and practices, we are able to identify a critical strand cohering the neoliberal dispositif. This strand contributes to a powerful context in and through which “neoliberal education” takes place and is defined. It also helps to set discursive boundaries that delegitimize alternative competing discourses and practices that might encourage us to think differently about education. The dispositif then allows us to visibilize points of ethical coherence, neoliberal moral truths, that come together to create an environment that is, somewhat ironically, greater than the sum of its parts—a powerful milieu and marriage of calculation and judgment.

Policies of school choice and systems of accountability work hard on various fronts to standardize commodify and instrumentalize education, individuals and relationships. These processes overlap and are replayed from different perspectives and on multiple fronts. Education is instrumentalized by the prioritization of examination results but also by an economic understanding of education. There is a layering of this epistemological and ethical framework that serves to normalize and legitimate particular ways of understanding education, the self and others.

Equally, these processes are circumscribed and sometimes contradicted each by the others and by other discourses—they are bordered by multiple horizons. Supporting discourses and practices are manifold: the knowledge economy is a powerful frame within which the quasi market of education operates, performance culture lends a degree of urgency and commitment to both commodification and instrumentalization, numerical discourse provides a cloak of objectivity and facilitates easy practice.

In tracing their intersections and abutments, we can see the way that policies and practices of choice and accountability interact to open up spaces in which the prioritization of particular epistemological, ontological and ethical positions becomes “logical” and legitimate. Reiterated in a cumulative process of multiple, intersecting policies and practices, they constitute a powerful regime of truth. This goes beyond the logic and practices of the market and is about the assumptions and values built into that logic that makes it valid and tenable. They tether the market logic to wider, possibly more “substantial” discourses of truth concerned with the dominance of science and the number. This is a deeper level of epistemological and ontological and ethical coherence that locates neoliberalism’s intransigent existence not only in the nature and force of its own rationality but also in its kinship

and affinity with wider supporting discourses or regimes of truth. But where does this leave our understanding and conceptualization of neoliberalism?

Peck argues convincingly that the term neoliberalism remains necessary because it effectively, though not perfectly, marks out space that can be the focus of resistance. That seems right, but the question remains how best to mark out such “neoliberal” space. Neoliberalism needs to be conceptualized in a way that centers those aspects of its “actually existing” nature that are problematic. For many, this boils down to the way neoliberalism works as a form of governance—ineluctably referenced in terms of its persistent and pernicious global spread and adaptability and its surreptitious and sinister reformation of the soul. We have focused specifically on the extension of that governance from the “out there” of the structural reform of education to the “in there” of ethical constitution. We argue that the methodological construct of the dispositif helps us to “mark out” and understand the changes that have taken place in the social and ethical understanding and practice of education in three critical ways.

The dispositif captures the materiality of power. It is rooted in analysis of the concrete and quotidian practices and discourses that constitute part of the mundane educational environment in which education is defined and people are constituted as neoliberal educational subjects. Importantly, it recognizes the force and power that the reiteration and replaying of consistent themes and tropes lend to practice. The dispositif captures the dynamic creation of a milieu that circumscribes what constitutes reasonable and legitimate thought and action. This is the delineation of a neoliberal space within which relationships, meanings and subjectivities develop and are enacted while they in turn reiterate and extend that space.

Furthermore, the dispositif takes seriously the notion of neoliberalism as process. As a model, it places at its center the constant tension between fixedness and fluidity of the social reality of neoliberalism. As a methodological construct, it is not misled by the singular and intimidating moniker of “neoliberalism” that can direct us to essentialism and all the problems associated with that. The notion of a neoliberal dispositif is premised on and takes account of the ongoing and perpetual construction of social reality.

Lastly, and again because of its inherent epistemological and ontological foundations, the dispositif directs attention to coextensive and supporting discourses and practice at its edges and boundaries. This is important. Discourses of instrumental ethics and of the number exist beyond the remit of neoliberalism. They stand and fall on their own merits and limitations and can be tackled on this basis. It’s important to acknowledge when we are addressing neoliberalism and when we are addressing its support acts, even when they have been coopted. The resistance Peck refers to should be accurately directed because the process of unraveling does not always begin with the most obvious strand.

The dispositif is a methodological tool that adds process, fluidity and evolution as key characteristics to the modality of a noun. It is therefore founded on and expresses a model of social reality that allows us to capture how neoliberalism works as a form of power/governance in setting boundaries of thought and action. The process of constant thematic layering of the heterogeneous ensemble of practices, discourses, policies and technologies together mark out the “strategic envelope” of a neoliberal dispositif (Foucault, 1998, p. 100). Identifying and analyzing this thematic ordering as done here allows us to trace the transformation of the social and ethical space of education. It enables us to understand that transformation as the development of a neoliberal dispositif that directs and shapes the way we think about and practice education. In doing this, it visibilizes and explicates that transformation as an extension of neoliberal governance.

To return to Peck, if neoliberalism as a concept “does define a problem space and a zone of (possible) pertinence ... this represents the beginning of a process of analysis” (2013, p. 153). We suggest Foucault’s notion of the dispositif may prove a way forward in this process of analysis and one that encourages us to think differently about, and outside of neoliberalism.

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Global human rights

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Introduction	70
Global human rights	71
Global human rights education	71
Global programs for human rights dissemination	73
Global human rights regimes	74
The (r-)evolution of global human rights	74
Glocal human rights: from the global to the local	76
Conclusions	77
References	77
Relevant websites	78

Introduction

Global Human Rights is a composition of universally shared moral values, such as friendship, solidarity, fairness, respect, and trust, encompassing legal and political bindings instruments. One vital human rights instrument is the United Nations (UN) International Bill of Human Rights.¹ It enshrines ten key declarations and conventions that define and outline universal human rights norms and standards—most of them legally binding in customary law. They define the right to physical integrity (torture and ill-treatment), anti-racism and xenophobia (discrimination), women and girls rights, social, cultural, religious and economic rights, political and civil rights, the rights of migrants, the fight against disappearances, the rights of people with disability and the rights of children. These human rights are norms and standards, and for some, they are “tools” or “keys” to develop or “unlock” our capacities. Enhancing, respecting, and enforcing human rights also prevent us from harm in the form of ill-treatment and discrimination that could prevent us from prospering. One of these rights (Art 26 in the UDHR) is our entitlement to education which allows us to develop ourselves to the best of our capacities and live a dignified life. From that article, the concept of Human Rights Education (HRE) and, later, the 2011 UN Declaration on Human Rights and Learning derives.

Globally and locally, human rights can only be upheld and enforced by duty bearers and rights holders. State authorities are the most genuine duty bearers, but business and we as individuals bear the duty to respect these rights vis-à-vis others. These “negative human rights” protect us from violence, discrimination, and any form of abuse by third parties, overall corrupt state authorities, or armed groups. An example of a negative right is our human right to a fair and open trial in front of a court. The transparency of a trial and non-partisan judges aim to protect us from corrupt and arbitrary judicial systems. Other rights, such as freedom of religion and media, allow us to express and share our thoughts in a mutually beneficial way (Mihr, 2009). Nevertheless, human rights are a two-way road, always. If one expects that his/her physical integrity is respected and protected, that person needs to do anything in his/her capacity to do respect the rights of others, too.

Globally and locally, human rights are monitored, implemented, and enforced through legal and political mechanisms, such as human rights commissions, committees, courts, councils, human rights defenders or rapporteurs, and other monitoring bodies. Educational and training programs in schools, higher education institutions, think tanks, training of judges, and massive open online courses and video clips are other means to disseminate universal human rights norms.

International and regional courts, such as the Inter-American Court, African Court or European Court for Human Rights, OSCE and Council of Europe or African Union parliamentary commissions, and UN treaty-bodies are other legal and political binding means and ways of monitoring state obligations toward human rights fulfillment, as well as the human rights situation in general.²

Overall global human rights norms have become part of our awareness, daily judgments, and subsequently identity and conscience, habits, and behaviors (Fischlin and Nadorfy, 2007). We not only expect human rights standards to be fulfilled by others toward us, but we all have also become entrepreneurs, defenders, and agents of human rights promotion ourselves. That is what has made human rights truly glocal, hence global and local, today.

¹International Bill of Human Rights, ten core global human rights treaties: UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, International Bill of Human Rights, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FactSheet2Rev.1en.pdf>.

²UN OHCHR <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/udhr/foundation-of-international-human-rights-law>.

Global human rights

Nevertheless, our globally shared thrive for justice and equality needs instruments and mechanisms that allow us the best personal and community-based development. Universal human rights norms and international human rights law (IHRL) are guidelines and standards for materializing the thrive people share. How we live and realize these values and norms are paraphrased in principles, laws, and rules in UN or other regional EU, CoE, OSCE, AU, OAS, ASEAN, and SCO treaties, declarations, and guidelines.³ For example, the human rights standards and law on the “right to a fair and open trial,” to a proper wage, to adequate housing, clean water, or our freedom to move and migrate, have to be formulated in such a way, that they are universally applicable and realistic.

Organizations institutions such as the UN monitoring treaty bodies and commissions, committees, and regional human rights courts, for example, aim to safeguard these global human rights norms. Nevertheless, they can have different regional priorities, often based on the history, memory, and legacy of war or conflicts in a country or region. Regional human rights regimes, such as the African Union (AU), the Organization for the American States (OAS), or the Council of Europe (CoE) and its monitoring committees, reporting systems, commissions, and courts, respond to domestic and local human rights matters.⁴ These instruments and mechanisms are complementary and mutually reinforcing toward the UN instruments and mechanisms, such as the Human Rights Council, the Treaty Body Regime, or the Special Procedures by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Representatives of the different mechanisms, such as regional or domestic courts and human rights commissions, are in constant dialog and negotiation with decisions taken by international courts, claims, and reports by civil society organizations (CSOs) and human rights defenders (HRD). National and international governmental and non-governmental human rights organizations (NGOs), such as national human rights institutions (NHRI) and governmental bodies, complete the picture of the global human rights mechanism and regime (Christopher and Roberts, 2015).

Apart from the norm and standards-setting mechanism, for example, the UN treaty bodies and committees or commissions, CSOs or international human rights mechanism such as the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and the Interamerican Court for Human Rights (IACtHR), that have often clarified, determined, and wrote human rights law and implemented them; the dissemination of human rights largely depends on the way human rights are put to practice, adhered to and enforced.

Human Rights Education (HRE) has thus become an indispensable tool and method to empower, lucite, teach, train, build capacities, illustrate and describe human rights, to adhere and fulfill them. By this, HRD, trainers, teachers, and academics empower individuals of all ages and backgrounds to understand the meaning and purpose of human rights and how to realize and materialize them in day-to-day life. Through HRE and empowerment, we understand how to implement equity, fairness, and mutual respect on a day-to-day basis (Mihir, 2010).

The fact that over the past decades, millions of young people have started their protest movements against social injustice, unfair trials, inequal payment, climate injustice, and unbearable living standards. The number of CSOs has dramatically risen in all parts of the world, and human rights have become an integral part of political rhetoric and business, resulting in HRE. The way the global human rights idea can be disseminated is defined in the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (2011).⁵

In the Declaration, HRE is defined as threefold, namely, (1) a lifelong process that fosters knowledge about human rights and acquiring skills to exercise them in daily life; Secondly (2) the shift of understanding and attitudes that determine our values and beliefs that uphold human rights; and Thirdly, (3) this learning process is about our behavior and taking action to defend and promote human rights.⁶

Global human rights education

In line with the 2011 Declaration, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights describes HRE today as a tool.

promotes values, beliefs, and attitudes that encourage all individuals to uphold their rights and those of others. It develops an understanding of everyone’s common responsibility to make human rights a reality in each community.

UN Declaration for Human Rights Education and Training (2011).

Consequently, Global Human Rights is a universally and internationally agreed set of human rights norms enshrined in international human rights law (IHRL) since the UN Charter of 1945 and the UDHR in 1948. Global Human Rights results from the worldwide mainstreamed dissemination process through CSOs, governments, Human Rights defenders, movies, media, pieces

³A general overview of Regional Human Rights systems, regimes, and mechanisms can be found under: “A Rough Guide to Regional Human Rights” <https://www.universal-rights.org>; The International Justice Resource Center <https://ijrcenter.org/regional/>; and the UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights, Regional Mechanism <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/NHRI/Pages/Links.aspx>.

⁴International Justice Resource Center: Regional Systems: [https://ijrcenter.org/regional/\(2021\)](https://ijrcenter.org/regional/(2021)).

⁵<https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/education/training/pages/undheducationtraining.aspx>.

⁶UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training, GA, December 2011, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/education/training/pages/undheducationtraining.aspx>.

of training, and online portals of which HRE is one aspect. HRE has become the focus of disseminating the idea of Global Human Rights since the World Conference for Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 and the subsequent decade for human rights education (1994–2004). Several World Programs followed up the decade in Human Rights Education over the past 30 years until the present.⁷ Global human rights norms and their implementation and enforcement tools, such as HRD, courts, changing of laws, and others, manifest themselves in a plethora of textbooks, educational video clips, and training programs in all languages, ideally free and easy to be download textbooks. Hence, HRE became global with the rise of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and even with Artificial Intelligence (AI) which allows for more straightforward multiplication of information, data, and access to HRE. ICT and overall the Internet is seen as a double sword in human rights promotion because they also allow for false, fake, and manipulated information and images about human rights abuses. Because of this challenge of fake information today, HRE programs include Internet literacy in their pieces of training. It empowers people to know about human rights and abuse and detect false from accurate information. Furthermore, algorithms and intelligent AI programs can help scan and detect human rights violations both online and offline. Depending on how they are programmed, they can also discriminate based on skin color or age, exclude and censor Internet users based on their political ideas or sexual orientation, and hence increase the level of control and suppression in the hands of autocratic regimes.

Against this backdrop after the UN World Conference for Human Rights in Vienna in 1993, where all UN members states of the world agreed on the fundamental principles and norms of human rights and made human rights a truly global project, the first-ever UN Decade for HRE was launched and lasted until 2004. The idea of individual empowerment was universally endorsed—albeit not practiced. The more and better people are informed and trained in their human rights, the more they pose a threat to authoritarian regimes and organizations.

Albeit we notice a dramatic backslide of democracy and a rise of populist ethnic-nationalistic governments over the past two decades, at the same time the UN passed the HRE and Training Declaration in 2011, and in the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) a few years later.⁸ Both enshrine human rights standards as the essential tools to solve the world's critical problems and challenges, such as climate change, migration, and digitalization.

The recent fourth phase of the World Program on Human Rights Education was launched in 2020 and lasts until 2024, focusing on Youth and their needs for human rights empowerment in times of migration urbanization. At the same time, bearing in mind that a third of the world's population is young and frustrated about bad governance and lack of social mobility, the program comes in timely. The program responds to the continuous protesters and Youth movements ranging from Hong Kong, Bangkok, Moscow, Beirut, Tel Aviv, Khartoum, Almaty to Santiago de Chile. Today's Youth protests and demands result from HRE, yet they are demanding more human rights compliance within their social and political regimes, not less.

Furthermore, the number of online and offline materials used to teach and train citizens on their human rights has reached a record number, thus resulting in people's empowerment to stand for one own and the human rights of others. The first three decades mark an essential era for human rights education and pedagogy, and since 1993 millions of globally acting international, national and local CSOs and globally acting NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, elevate human rights empowerment and education to one of their primary goals to unlock human rights. HRE is seen as the most effective prevention against human rights violations (Steven and Jensen, 2016).

Article 26 in the UDHR from 1948 and Articles 13 and 14 in the UN International Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights from 1966 underline that everyone has then natural right to education and that the fulfillment of these rights should be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Education and lifelong learning should also be directed to fully developing the human personality and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It has been specified in many conventions, treaties, declarations, working programs, and action plans.

Furthermore, in the 1999 UN General Comment, HRE is seen as a tool to promote global human rights, namely that "(...) education shall be directed to the human personality's sense of dignity, it shall 'enable' all persons to participate effectively in a free society, and it shall promote understanding among all 'ethnic' groups, as well as nations and racial and religious groups".⁹ Moreover, but philosophically, it is emphasized that HRE is a method that enables "(...) a well-educated, enlightened and active mind, (able) to wander freely and widely, is one of the joys and rewards of human existence".¹⁰

HRE has come a long way, from being a subject taught in school and an activist campaign to raise awareness to a pro-active tool to change our minds, attitudes, habits, and behavior. Nevertheless, teaching *about* human rights and knowing them remains its primary purpose and hence, is only half the story of global human rights. To know about human rights is not yet empowered to proact in the name of human rights-beyond the awareness-raising and attitudinal aim.

Nevertheless, HRE aims to guide our day-to-day decisions and options to materialize human rights. Today, millions of people are forced to leave their homes based on their religious or ethnic background, failed governmental policies combatting climate

⁷UN World Program for Human Rights Education and Training since 2004, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/education/training/pages/programme.aspx>.

⁸The UN Human Rights Council, in its resolution 24/15 (October 8, 2013), decided to focus the World Program's third phase (2015–2019) on strengthening the implementation of the first two phases and promoting human rights training for media professionals and journalists. This resolution was adopted following the OHCHR consultation on the focus of the third phase, as presented in the High Commissioner's report A/HRC/24/24. OHCHR, in consultation with States, intergovernmental organizations, national human rights institutions, and civil society elaborated a plan of action for the third phase (2015–2019) of the World Program.

⁹UN OCHCHR, *General Comments (1999)*: CESCR General Comment No. 13: The Right to Education (Art. 13) *Adopted at the Twenty-first Session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, on 8 December 1999 (Contained in Document E/C.12/1999/10)*.

¹⁰UN OCHCHR, *General Comments (1999)*.

change pollution or overpopulation, and war is one key challenge for human rights. These people need to be integrated, empowered, and resettled in different societies and cultural environments, asking each member of that society, migrants and citizens alike, to act according to IHRL and standards.

To get evidence of concentration and labor camps, humans being trafficked and tortured, people starving, disappearing, and getting abducted is putting a gloomy picture against the rise of human rights awareness. One of the reasons we wish to stop this injustice is our awareness of human rights and the dramatic rise of human rights activists, HRD and CSOs, trained attorneys, and judges that aim to put an end to it. Overall, human rights abuse is a sign of failed state authority to be guardians of human rights, the duty bearers. Instead, they are the key violators. The corrupt misconduct of civil officers, paramilitaries, and governmental authorities also allows non-state actors, warlords, and organized crime to operate within their state territories and violate fundamental rights. The challenge is that many warlords, paramilitaries, and organized criminals cannot easily be held accountable in front of courts since they operate within a deep-state, in the remote uncontrolled territory, in cyberspace, or under the umbrella of the government.

Moreover, the current challenges and developments in global human rights illustrate that even though we globally share the horror and aversiveness about these conducts, we feel individually incapable of resolving such issues. HRE helps to understand better the root causes of such violations of human rights and what to do about it.

Global programs for human rights dissemination

On December 10, 2004, the UN General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed the first World Program for Human Rights Education to advance programs in all sectors (General Assembly's resolution 59/113, December 10, 2004). The World Programs are globally implemented and promoted, mainly through NGOs (Mahler et al., 2009). As enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights and IHRL, global human rights norms have been an integral part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) action plans on national and local levels since 2015. Millions of capacity building training, information sessions, films, projects, programs, training activities, and clips on YouTube, Instagram, and other social media channels, seek to promote a common understanding of the three basic principles of HRE within the SDGs, namely (1) knowledge, (2) attitudes and (3) behavior. In order to show mutual respect and fairness and guarantee not only my rights but the rights of others, we need tools, methods, and a level of self-determination to act and decide in this matter.

If one lives and works in a society that is dominated by authoritarian rules—as is the case in over 50% of the world's countries, often rooted in the past, ethnical rivalries or ideologically disputes, the options to realize human rights and protect them are restricted to the private realm, such as family, school, neighborhood, work or city (Coysh, 2018). The critical question is, what can one do to safeguard human rights, and what is one capable of doing under the existing circumstances? Whether HRD, Youth organizations, CEOs of companies, policymakers, or city councilors, the various actors and stakeholders who commit to HRE provide a concrete framework for action and strengthen partnerships and cooperation from the international level down to the grassroots (Oberleitner, 2013).

The recent UN World Programs to foster global human rights awareness and HRE have been structured in consecutive phases to target specific sectors/issues national efforts. For example, some focus on primary and secondary school systems or exclusively on higher vocational and university education and human rights training programs for teachers and educators, civil servants, law enforcement officials, and military personnel. Human rights awareness-raising programs target media professionals and journalists: relevant resolutions, plans of action, reports, and other information.

In 2018, the UN Human Rights Council, in its resolution 39/3, makes Youth and civil society a priority. The council wants to strengthen those who are often the only forces to oppose corrupt security forces, judges, and authoritarian governments. In some countries, up to 40% of the population is below 30. The emphasis is on empowering these young women and men to understand better and use the tools striving for equality, development, and non-discrimination.

Likewise, in the Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and specifically with target 4.7, the UN OHCHR, in collaboration with national governments, elaborated a Plan of Action which puts Youth in the center of activities (World Program (A/HRC/42/23—adopted by the UN Human Rights Council through resolution 42/7 on September 26, 2019)).¹¹ The consequences were a dramatically rising global Youth Movements activism. Millions of activists, supporters, and groups network against racism, climate change-induced violations, and the lack of social mobility worldwide. The Youth and citizen movements are the strongest ever seen across the globe.

¹¹ Provisions on human rights education have been incorporated into many international instruments and documents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 26); the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention against Discrimination in Education (art. 5); the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (art. 7); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (art. 13); the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (art. 10); the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (art. 10); the International Labor Organization Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) (arts. 30 and 31); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (art. 29); the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (art. 33); the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (arts. 4 and 8); the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action (Part I, paras. 33–34; Part II, paras. 78–82); the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (paras. 7.3 and 7.37); the Durban Declaration and Program of Action (Declaration, paras. 95–97; Program of Action, paras. 129–139) and the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference (paras. 22 and 107); and the 2005 World Summit Outcome (para. 131).

The UN OHCHR believes that HRE methods increase awareness changes attitudes, such as race, political diversity, religion, and gender, and hence aims to promote peaceful and participatory (democratic) solutions that lead to sustainable development and social justice. Still today, opinions vary on achieving social justice, democracy, the rule of law, and sustainable development through education. Even though studies have shown that HRE is fundamentally important in transitional justice processes and during the societal and political transition process, continuous learning about human rights and becoming self-reflective and critical is an ability that also helps consolidated democracies to stay a tune (Dalsgaard and Paulsen, 2009).

Global human rights regimes

Regional human rights regimes are vital mechanisms to uphold and enhance human rights realization, such as the AU, the CoE, the OAS, the European Union (EU), ASEAN or the Office for Human Rights, and Democratic Institutions of the OSCE in Warsaw (ODIHR). The monitoring, read the report, hold a hearing, write recommendations, and regional courts hold sessions on the country or individual cases that breach human rights. ASEAN has recently adopted the Bangkok Declaration of Human Rights. Other international organizations or summits have called global human rights norms integral to their statements, declarations, and policies (Sundrijo, 2020).

Human rights norms, principles, and values as laid out in the UN International Bill of Human Rights with its core treaties, including the UDHR and the UN Treaty Bodies (OHCHR Database), underpin international human rights mechanisms and instruments. With the establishment of the UN Human Rights Council in 2006, its legal and political instruments and mechanisms, and the reforms and rise of regional human rights regimes in the existing realm of the OAS, AU, CoE, EU, OSCE, AU, and ASEAN. They all incorporate, to some extent, elements of the Bill and foster human rights promotion of women's rights, minority rights, and elements of security (Tsutsui, 2018).

International human rights law (IHRL) and the concept "universal jurisdiction" that allows any domestic court to charge a person who commits crimes against humanity and HRE have grown into universal tools to unlock human rights in any aspect of life and any corner of the world. Universal jurisdiction refers, for example, to the practice of national courts. In Belgium, Germany, the US, or the Netherlands, for example, individuals have been prosecuted and charged for serious crimes against international law, such as crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide, and torture, and thus crimes that are enshrined in the 1999 Rome Statute and practices by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. This universal and thus global act of jurisdiction can also be applied by domestic courts in any part of the world and has thus contributed to globalizing human rights.

Universal jurisdiction and any human rights compliance are based on the principle of not harm others, in the light of IHRL. Hiding, escaping, fleeing to avoid jurisdiction has become more difficult for war criminals and torturers over the past year (Macedo, 2006).

International Law based on global norms and its jurisdiction is no longer of temporal nature. It can be applied anywhere at any time and is truly global. Other forms of justice, such as transitional justice (TJ), are temporal by referring to a particular past period, i.e., civil war, genocide, Apartheid-era, or autocratic regimes. TJ aims to bring the perpetrator to justice by illustrating and exemplifying the importance of human rights norms and the Rule of Law.

The (r)-evolution of global human rights

The earliest foundation of HRE and universal jurisdiction in modern times is embodied in the UN Charta of 1945 and the UDHR of 1948. Chapter 10 of the UN Charta empowered the Social and Economic Council (ECOSOC) to act on behalf of human rights and was later in 2006 replaced by the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

However, human rights never really became an integral part of UN activities but instead had to be laid down in additional treaties and a plethora of non-legally binding declarations, resolutions, and recommendations ever since the UDHR of 1948. The core human rights conventions, of which there are ten today that define human rights as global norms against discrimination of any kind, based on gender, faith or ethnicity, consciousness or race and promoting freedoms to self-determination and individual development in which our idea of dignity is based, came in the decades after. The international UN covenant on social-economic rights (ICESCR), and the international UN covenant on civil and political rights (ICCPR) from 1966 (1976), are probably the two most significant legally binding agreements that have thus far determined our globally shared understanding of safety and freedoms. Moreover, article 26 of the UDHR guarantees the promotion, understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (UN General Assembly *Universal Declaration for Human Rights. Resolution 217 A (III)*, 1948).

The subsequent UN Treaty Bodies, emerging in the 1970s first on political and on women, children, economic and migrant rights, and later on torture, disappearances, and people with disability, have become standard setters and best practices for NHRI and regional organizations regimes and courts, such as the African Court and Commission for Human Rights (2006) or the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) since 2010. The foundation of regional human rights regimes started in post-WWII Europe (Strasbourg), followed by initiatives in the Americas (Costa Rica) (Pereira, 1997).

The Universal Period Review (UPR) of human rights was installed in 2006 by the UN OHCHR and the Human Rights Council. Up to the present day, it is the most universal, inclusive, and hence global procedure to monitor human rights performance and violation. The UPR procedures, led by the OHCHR, regularly list the human rights records of all 193 UN Member States equally, based on the International Bill of Human Rights. Governments are seen in this process as the duty bearer vis-à-vis billions of individual right-bearers worldwide. Governmental representatives at the UN level have to justify why certain human rights are not upheld and implemented or violated, and thanks to the ICT, today often as live-streams and webinars, in front of a world's public audience, at least in all vital world languages, Arabic, Chinese, English, Russian, Spanish and French.

When we ask how and who disseminated the principles, norms, and standards of human rights first in modern times? The answer is NGOs and CSOs, respectively. The story of global human rights dates back to the rise of NGOs, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, during the high times of the Cold War. A period also describes one of the battles of the minds between communist totalitarian regimes in the East and democratic liberal regimes in the West. The notion that human rights are a “Western” concept often dates back to when human rights activists and human rights courts could only be active in the West. In the 1960s, Amnesty International and other civil rights and non-governmental organizations started to fight for the rights of political prisoners. Later in 1977, the Helsinki Committees and Human Rights Watch emerged. Soon HRE, campaigning, advertising. Became an integral part of awareness-raising and behavior shifts these NGOs aimed at. With NGOs’ rise of human rights campaigns in the 1980s, people became more aware of human rights and their abuses. The growing human rights awareness, triggered through peace education and human rights campaigns, evolved into a more elaborated concept of HRE, which became an educational concept of its own.

Human rights awareness campaigns, HRE and HRD, gained more legitimacy after NGOs and UN agencies such as UNESCO worked jointly in the 1990s. After the Cold War, human rights NGOs became an integral part of governmental advice and monitoring procedure. Human Rights Master programs, summer schools, and training have flourished at Academic Institutions since the 2000s. LL.Ms and MA programs focusing on human rights, peace, sustainability, governance are found in all major universities today. Business and transnational companies have human rights policies and hire “human rights officers.” Any political statement or campaign by governmental leaders highlights—in one way or the other—the importance of human rights, knowing that sooner or later, they can be held to account for it. CSOs and NGOs are growing by the day and in numbers focusing their work on a large array of human rights matters.

For decades, UNESCO, for example, organized expert meetings based on Article 26 of the UDHR and called upon governments to introduce HRE, but without much success. HRE remained a rather elite and extra-curricula endeavor, only subject to voluntary teaching and training. After the 1993 Vienna Conference that led to the Global Action Plan for Human Rights, HRE, training and capacity building slowly became part of the international human rights agenda. Former ideological borders of the Cold War no longer blocked the dissemination of human rights. Many newborn states wanted to become members of the UN and the Council of Europe.

International governmental organizations (IGOs), governments, and CSOs work together more closely than ever to safeguard human rights. However, much of today’s human rights protection and dissemination is left to CSOs, media, and IGOs, particularly in terms of schooling, in remote areas, and in protecting minorities and migrants, which poses a challenge to global human rights. Human rights have become more local than ever, and hence glocal, but at the same time, state authorities withdraw more and more from taking responsibilities as the vital duty bearer. That leaves human rights fulfillment often to HRD, CSOs, individual judges, and even business, whereas the state withdraws. Alongside various stakeholders, private, governmental, non-governmental, and public have embraced the concept of HRE as a means to strengthen civil society and democracy (Brysk, 2018).

Private companies, enterprises, startups, and development organizations make political and constitutional concessions within their business plans, including human rights compliance procedures, such as supply-chains, environmental and labor laws, human resource policies, and practice equal opportunity guidelines, etc.

Since the beginning of global human rights, outsourcing human rights protection from governmental duties has remained a crucial challenge. Millions of CSOs today are the job of the governments, but also IGOs such as the CoE, the EU, the AU, the OAS, and the UNESCO, or OSCE and the UN established offices, branches, and agencies in countries and regions supporting governments and NGOs. They conduct programs and projects to safeguard human rights.

Consequently, it was just a matter of time before Cold War established education concepts. Those working in the informal peace, tolerance, democracy, genocide, and inter-cultural education sectors would want to participate in HRE (Mihir, 2015). From then on, NGOs which traditionally worked in tolerance, peace, or development issues also started competing for money and resources for HRE with other agencies in this field. That is also why today, many of these agents and NGOs claim that their concepts, such as peace, tolerance, development are equally essential parts of HRE. Most educational concepts that deal with peace, conflict resolution, reconciliation, history, tolerance or democracy, and civic issues claim today that they are, in their essence, HRE programs. The problem is that they do so often without changing or adapting their pedagogical or didactical outlines to the objectives of HRE (Mahler et al., 2009).

Overall, the early 1990s constituted a window of opportunity for international organizations, NGOs, and progressive states alike to foster HRE and promote full-spectrum human rights education programming. This became most evident when the Council of Europe.

Glocal human rights: from the global to the local

Human rights have become glocal when global and universal norms and standards meet local realities and civil societies (Mihr, 2019). Think global-act locally: *glocal* practices are the norm, not the exceptions, and are the new normal today. Glocal human rights mean that global norms are individually and locally understood and lived by all of us on a day-to-day basis—or at least aimed to live by.

Glocalizing human rights have always been the UN's aim when inviting CSOs and public-private partnerships to make the UDHR a living document to begin with. It is written in any human rights treaty that human rights can only be achieved through and by people's will. Governments are one among many actors to realize human rights. However, other stakeholders such as CSOs, CEOs, NGOs, businesses, and HRD worldwide are crucial ones to make human rights a glocal reality.

Article 10, of the Convention of the Right of People with Disability from 2006, for example, states the glocality of human rights, when highlighting that it is national governments, that “reaffirm that every human being has the inherent right to life and shall take all necessary measures to ensure its effective enjoyment by persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others” (Mihr and Gibney, 2014).

In practice, this means that governments have to support, facilitate and undertake any possible measure to ensure full realization by and for the people, namely full inclusion of people with mental and physical disability and those with none, in school, sports, public administration, police, military. This, and all other core treaties, guarantee equal opportunities for all people.

Notwithstanding, realizing universal human rights norms is often a long way. It faces obstacles in political will, doability, and money. However, Article 6 of the ICCPR from 1966 was already paraphrased in Article 1 that

“All peoples have the right of self-determination. Under that right, they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development (...) and that government shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination, and shall respect that right, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations (...) and hence for every person or citizen living in their territorial boundaries”.¹²

Conventions such as the ICCPR aim to support and empower people, make decisions, and resolve on a day-to-day basis what has always been the core problem of humanity, namely inequality (Tibbitts, 2020). Whether inequality is perceived or actual, when people are treated unequally and unfairly, they will strive for either revenge or justice. To regulate that strive in a fair, free and peaceful manner, this is what the Bill of Rights aims at. HRE is one way of explaining how that can be done. People-driven global movements for human rights and HRE have always faced challenges and obstacles, mostly politically and culturally driven (Moses et al., 2020).

Language obstacles, cultural diversity, political regime type, or so-called “traditional values” which are never closely defined have challenges and shaped HRE programs, as illustrated by Nancy Flowers, one of the founders of worldwide HRE initiatives since the 1970s. It was in fact, during the Cold War, “(...) radical teachers in the Global South who showed the world the power of HRE to further both civil-political and social-economic rights”; had always argued any exceptionalism when it came to global human rights, as she argues (Flowers, 2015, p. 2). As written in the Bill and hundreds of other regional or domestic action plans, conventions, and Declaration, human rights have always been aimed at all people equally, not at nationalities. Their purpose is not to privilege any ethnic or gender group, any age or religious group over others. The fact that privileges and exceptionalism are often the root cause for human rights violations is why HRE has mattered so much over the past decades.

Today, think global—act locally is the norm enshrined in the SDGs from 2015. The 75th UN Anniversary Working Groups in 2020 and 2021 have tirelessly reiterated and addressed local threats to global human rights, such as girls exclusion from schools, climate change-induced migration, access to clean water, and so on; all matters that increase inequality and hence lead to a breach of global human rights norms. Daily challenges and threats to equal development for all determine the framework of HRE in the present and the future. Against this backdrop, to dedicate the fourth UN World Program for HRE to Youth in 2020 has not been a coincidence. It targets those peers that are mostly affected by the challenges.

In this *glocalized* and interconnected world, HRD and governments must address three broad goals: how human rights awareness and knowledge firstly, (1) can first detect the root causes of human rights violations that fuel a fearful, weak, and socially dysfunctional society. Secondly, (2) the need for a legal and political framework to foster human rights and empowerment to take action, to emancipate and build confidence among people? Thirdly, (3) collaboration between duty-bearers and right-holders, governments, businesses, and CSOs, to effectively protect people from violation? Organizing and financing safe houses for women victims of domestic violence, promoting police training, and protecting people from genocidal violence can best be realized in collaboration among different stakeholders. HRE can properly equip scholars, learners, students, and people to tackle these issues and find sustainable solutions (Fischlin and Nadorfy, 2007).

¹²UN ICCPR (1966) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights Adopted and opened for signature, ratification, and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of December 16, 1966 entry into force March 23, 1976.

Conclusions

Think global, act locally—*be glocal!* Since the end of the Cold War in 1991 and the World Action Plan for Human Rights in 1993, human rights norms have undergone breathtaking dissemination and glocalization process. A multi-stakeholder governance approach, in which CSOs, NGOs, private enterprises, and governments have primarily cooperated to enhance human rights compliance, has led to a “natural alliance” between the global norms and local actions. Today, global human rights can be best seen in a certain level of glocality, namely implementing them in day-to-day life by HRD, local authorities, and CSOs while adhering to global principles of equal treatment, fair trials, free elections, inclusive schooling etc. Hence Glocalizing Human Rights is a new analytical framework to contextualize global human rights. Glocality, and the process of bringing global norms to local stakeholders, hence glocalization, thanks to ICT, volunteers, educators, and international mechanisms, give practical guidance to everyone, no matter where.

Globally, we see networks of human rights cities and human rights educator networks such as HREA, with over 20,000 educators involved in over 140 countries. Human Rights Campuses and programs are mushrooming, not decreasing. The Global Campus for Human Rights in Venice, Italy, and subsequent regional MA in Thailand for Southeast Asia, in Buenos Aires for Latin America, in Johannesburg for Africa, in Yerevan for the Caucasus, in Sarajevo for the Balkan, in Beirut for the Middle East and Venice for Europe; and the plethora of academic programs for human rights in law, social work and sciences, international relation and public policy, around the worlds. In addition, we count today millions of local, school projects, activities and programs, human rights days and defender days, awards, celebrations, anniversaries, commemorials, and others, that have mushroomed over the past decades—hundreds of Think Tanks working on global justice locally. Human Rights Research Centers, Schools, and Universities for Peace in Costa Rica, Tokyo, or Helsinki set academic and normative standards further to promote the understanding and implementation of human rights. Most of these initiatives can be traced back to the massive endeavors to promote HRE on higher and primary education in the formal and informal sectors after 1994 to the present times. It has since developed its dynamics, as shown in Joseph Zajda’s edition on Human Rights Education Globally (Joseph, 2020).

The fact and experience that the glocal realization of human rights takes time because our understanding best progress when we experience human rights both in a positive and also negative way, by experiencing exclusion and discrimination or violence, but also by being protected from it through equal opportunity acts, gender policies, or winning lawsuits over a property against corporations. Even in discomfort and as an experience of injustice and violation of our freedoms, we learn about human rights. This can only be achieved locally and in person, where concrete examples of violation, abuse, and discomfort can be discussed. Nevertheless, human rights-related rhetoric, movies, clips on YouTube and Instagram, campaigns, and actions raise awareness and offer solutions. Hence promoters of human rights have to be sensitive and reasonable in establishing trust and being compassionate. Indeed, we need to move toward a “strategic empathy,” which is an admittedly long and challenging task that needs the entire continuum and years of training and teaching. This is because the mere understanding of human rights is not enough, as emphasized by the UN Declaration for HRE and Learning in 2011. Scholars of human rights will become more susceptible to affective transformation when they enact compassionate action early on in their lives, starting with simple things such as learning to be more patient and tolerant with peers who do not grasp a “difficult” concept in language or mathematics, as Nancy Flowers, a teacher, schoolmaster and one of the earliest pioneers for HRE, has summarized (Flowers, 2015, p. 12).

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Relevant websites

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International Justice Resource Center: Regional Systems, <https://ijrcenter.org/regional/>.
OHCHR Database, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TreatyBodies.aspx>.
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The light in the distance: global democracy and humanity's hope for the future

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The peril and promise of global democracy	79
Divided in darkness: the crisis of neoliberal globalization	80
Neoliberalism as justificatory social vision	80
Consequences of compliance	81
Returning to the wellspring of democracy: politically engaged holism	82
Toward a transformative social philosophy	83
The path toward voluntary embrace	84
Evolving democracy: re-envisioning civic life	84
Cultivating the social-self: re-envisioning civic learning	85
Clarity	86
Communion	86
Creativity	86
Courage	87
Compassion	87
Inspiring principled action: re-envisioning civic pedagogy and practice	87
Pedagogies of enlightenment	88
Insight	88
Inspiration	88
Pedagogies of empowerment	89
Social inquiry	89
Social advocacy	90
Moving toward the light: our call to action	90
References	91

The peril and promise of global democracy

(We) have taken democracy for granted ... it has to be enacted anew in every generation, in every year and day, in the living relations of person to person in all social forms and institutions.

Dewey (1937a, pp. 472–474).

The struggle for democracy has to be maintained on as many fronts as culture has aspects: political, economic, international, educational, scientific and artistic, religious.

Dewey (1939a, p. 187).

Throughout the 20th century, John Dewey heralded the peril and promise of democracy, calling each generation to accept a formidable task. He noted that democracy is always fragile. In every time, in every place, in every social and cultural context, it is necessary for all people to participate in processes of democratic reform and renewal. He further asserted that democratic renewal requires reimagining and revitalizing all aspects of culture, all forms of association, all public processes and institutions—most importantly mass state-supported education. In this exploratory essay, informed and inspired by diverse perspectives across time and cultures, I advocate response to Dewey's call, moving first to confront the challenges of our time and then to chart a path forward.

We live in dark times. Sustained exposure to greed, corruption, inequality, intolerance, violence and environmental degradation has taken its toll. Troubled by deepening divides within and among nations, I argue that the constellation of humanitarian and environmental crises we now face is compelled and intensified by the imposition of neoliberalism as the dominant worldview. A justificatory social vision emphasizing consumption, competition, fear and compliance; neoliberalism breeds oppression, division, delusion and despair. We retreat from the natural world and from each other, from unfamiliar ideas and experiences, from our hopes and our dreams. We seek certainty and control as if this will keep us safe. We abdicate agency—our capacity and responsibility to think, feel and act on our own and others' behalf. Global democracy is threatened; mass state-supported education is imperiled.

And yet there is hope. The challenges before us, though daunting, are not unprecedented. Inspired by philosophers, teachers, community and spiritual leaders representing diverse contexts and perspectives, I trace the development of a socially transformative

worldview that I will refer to as 'politically engaged holism'. In response to seemingly insurmountable social and environmental crises, reform advocates have worked tirelessly to compel collective experience of a unifying ethical vision. In sharp contrast to neoliberalism, politically engaged holism emphasizes clarity, compassion, creativity and courage; thereby promoting connection, collaboration, integrity and hope. Embracing this vision, we find guidance necessary to restore the promise of global democracy—to extend and evolve its processes and institutions, to reimagine and revitalize our aspirations for, and our approaches to, civic learning and life. This is our task. Herein lies humanity's hope for the future, our collective path from the darkness into the light.

Divided in darkness: the crisis of neoliberal globalization

Neoliberalism is a philosophy in which ... the operation of a market or market like structure is seen as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, and substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs.

Treanor (2005).

The great wave of globalization sweeping contemporary society ... is a contrast of light and dark ... the negative aspects are war and conflict, rising economic disparities ... destruction of the global ecology. These dark shadows ... stir a vortex of malice and mistrust and provoke an identity crisis in the very depths of the human spirit.

Ikeda (2005, p. ix).

Grounded in classical liberalism and neo-classical economics, emanating from US based global institutions including the IMF and the World Bank, then embraced by power brokers across the globe; neoliberalism has become the transformative ideological paradigm of our time. This comprehensive worldview now dominates social, political, economic and educational landscapes, driving understanding of and response to systemic social and environmental crises (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001; Dardot and Laval, 2013; Olszen et al., 2004; Shah, 2010; Treanor, 2005).

Pervasive acceptance of global capitalism permeates contemporary public discourse, policy and practice. Priorities centered on acquisition and security define and drive nearly all aspects of human identity and interaction. From commerce and entertainment, to civic discourse and interpersonal relationships, to governance and schooling; pressures toward increasing competition, consumption, privatization, compliance and inequality shape our lives (Gabbard, 2008; Giroux, 2004; Harvey, 2005; Stromquist, 2002). Justifications for public policy and practice are framed within a logic of inevitability. As noted by Michael Apple, neoliberal policies reflect an emerging global consensus, one that defies justification having acquired "something of a sacred aura, especially since we are repeatedly told there are *no* alternatives worth considering" (2006, p. 15).

Though framed as common sense or "just the way things are", neoliberalism entails powerful assumptions regarding pivotal philosophical questions: What is the nature of reality? What does it mean to be human? What is valued knowledge and how is it acquired? What does it mean to live an ethical life? Neoliberal responses to such questions reflect unacknowledged ideological commitments; self-perpetuating and mutually reinforcing assumptions that constrain social vision and restrict social action.

Neoliberalism as justificatory social vision

Neoliberalism as a social philosophy is characterized by faith in economic determinism, acquisitive individualism, entitlement ethics and meritocracy. Its central tenets are explicitly materialistic. Economic determinism, granted status similar to natural law, is accepted as the fundamental force shaping learning and life. To be human is to experience, to interpret, and to act within materially constrained social and physical worlds.

The individual is the central focus of human development, taking precedence over collective social entities. Humans are characterized as essentially and necessarily self-interested and competitive. Individuals act as autonomous agents exercising rational choice across transactional systems at all levels of experience from interpersonal relationships and family life, to public service provisions and consumer transactions, to national and global political and economic systems. Personal development is advanced through accumulation of material goods—understood as wealth—that is exchanged in free, impartial and competitive markets. Acquisitive individualism is required for survival and equated with personal virtue. Consequently, retreat from efforts aimed at advancing the "common good" is socially sanctioned.

Neoliberalism's emphasis on acquisitive individualism is reflected in its commitment to the ethics of entitlement. Ethical treatment is centered on protection of individual rights to acquire property and to seek opportunity defined largely in economic terms. Justice is defined as access to a "level playing field" and to fair and impartial "rules of the game." Worthiness and reward, framed as human capital, are distributed in response to personal merit determined in relation to social hierarchies mirroring pervasive economic structures.

To live an ethical life is to act as a conscientious decision-maker, a well-informed and skilled consumer. Core personal values include responsibility, industriousness, competitiveness, realism and efficiency. Personal responsibility entails being accountable for one's situation and reliable when relating to others. Industriousness combines personal ambition with a strong work ethic engaged in economic-political-social contexts that are fundamentally competitive. To be realistic means to conform to prevailing

materialistic assumptions and to subordinate all non-material aspects of human experience. To be efficient means to rely almost exclusively on economic prescriptions (e.g., “more for less”, “cost/benefits analysis”) in navigating a moral path through life.

Society is considered ethical to the extent that its institutions protect freedom of choice across individual and collective transactions. Free markets provide the mechanism for individual gain and social progress while governance institutions manage stable exchange systems with minimal interference. Order and security are maintained through adherence to the rule of law. In exchange for compliance with legal authority, citizens are entitled to protection (e.g., civil rights, limitations on government intrusion) and to public services not provided by the private sector.

Society is organized on the basis of what are accepted as natural and necessary hierarchies responsive to differences in individual merit. Entrepreneurial risk-taking is rewarded by monetary gain and widely regarded as a definitive indicator of social superiority. Wealth is asymmetrically distributed and correlated with power. Its directives and justifications shape not only the business sector, but also all levels of politics and governance, of public and private education, of high and popular culture including the arts, recreation and sports.

Political and economic elites define truth, determine priorities, impose standards and regulate public processes. Significant differences between people, groups and nations are assessed in relation to economic disparities. It is understood that inevitable inequalities in resource distribution will determine differences in quality of life, rather than barriers to access or opportunity associated with race, religion, gender or ethnicity. Gaps between the rich and the poor widen and deepen over time.

Engulfed in this pervasive, largely unacknowledged yet determinant social vision, the direct and often dire implications for human development and interaction—for social and environmental sustainability—are rarely articulated. Beyond the immediate political and economic consequences of neoliberalism are profound implications for what it means to survive, to live and to learn as fully engaged and evolving people; to participate in governance, civic life and mass state-supported education.

Consequences of compliance

Among the consequences of global compliance with neoliberal philosophy, policy and practice are increased energy consumption reliant on fossil fuels, large scale corporate agriculture/mining/deforestation, urbanization, industrialization, population growth and dislocation. Environmental systems begin to fail resulting in a cascade of dire consequences—global warming, ozone layer depletion, loss of biodiversity, pollution, lack of arable land and fresh water, intensification of natural disasters including global pandemics.

Social and cultural crises are exacerbated as competition for scarce, non-renewable resources intensifies. Expressions of white supremacy, neo-colonialism, political and religious intolerance; dramatic economic inequality and associated loss of political representation; human rights violations, violent conflict resolution, starvation, unmitigated disease and dislocation; deepen and expand.

Tragically, the imposition of neoliberal culture renders individuals, voluntary collectives and social institutions woefully unprepared to address systemic, mutually reinforcing humanitarian and environmental crises. Although actively promoted as a culture of unbridled opportunity, neoliberalism in reality is experienced as a culture of fear and constraint. Across all social domains, global capitalism diminishes human experience, development and potential by amplifying proclivities toward self-centeredness, greed, aggression, insecurity and demoralization. As opportunities for personal intellectual, social, emotional and ethical development are diminished, so too is the efficacy of primary social institutions—most significantly, systems of governance and mass state-supported education (Casey, 2016; Giroux, 2004, 2008).

Democracy as a form of governance, while always difficult to sustain, is uniquely threatened during times of deep material and moral challenge. When confronted with intertwined environmental and social crises, typical societal responses feature diminishing equity aspirations, seeking certainty and control, and persisting along familiar policy paths even though these may not have proved effective in the past. As political processes are corrupted via access to wealth and power, democracy is reduced to the illusion of representation masking underlying totalitarian tendencies. Both established and emerging democracies are threatened not only by authoritarian regimes beyond their borders, but also by extremist populist movements within. Relentless disinformation campaigns, voter suppression, civil rights violations, restrictions on free press and political protest fuel dangerous levels of distrust, aggression, political tribalism and legislative impasse (Applebaum, 2020; Diamond, 2008; Snyder, 2018; Ziblatt and Levitsky, 2018).

Dependent upon full participation of diverse, civically educated and engaged populations, democracies are further threatened by demonstrable declines in the quality of education provided for the masses. State-supported school systems are confronted with a convergent constellation of pressures emerging from increasingly centralized and bureaucratized government policies (e.g., restrictive ministry directives, NCLB) and global mandates (e.g., IMF/World Bank), aggressively marketed entrepreneurial initiatives (often associated with emerging educational technologies), powerful special interest lobbies (e.g., test preparation and curriculum development/textbook publishing) and persistent efforts to privatize public educational systems. Instructional strategies are crafted to ensure conceptual control and ease of replication. Curriculum is narrowed to support strong performance on standardized tests in addition to promoting proficiency in subjects contributing directly to competitive state economies (Apple et al., 2005; Apple, 2006; Burch, 2009; Casey, 2016; Hyslop-Margison and Sears, 2006; Lipman, 2004; Porfilio and Malott, 2008; Suarez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004; Ward, 2012).

Of particular concern to democratic governments is the decline of civic education. Documented loss of time and attention is accompanied by efforts to propagate inaccurate and socially unjust historical representations that perpetuate state-sanctioned, though unacknowledged, systems of social oppression (e.g., colonialism, white supremacy, racism, patriarchy, heteronormativity).

Decline is further intensified by efforts to promote shallow representations democratic participation limited to acquiring basic understanding of the functions and structures of government accompanied by episodic voting. Capacities critical to sustaining vibrant democracy—social empathy, inquiry, critique and imagination—are neither recognized nor supported; in many cases, actively discouraged. Aspirations for governance and state-supported education are conceptually and strategically narrowed in response to changing demographics, financial crises, civil unrest, relentless natural disasters and deeply polarized politics. Retreat from deep, systemic, democratic reform is repeatedly reinforced (Allen and Reich, 2013; Banks, 2021; Barrow, 2017; Heybach and Sheffield, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Noddings, 2013; Tarozzi and Torres, 2016; West, 2004).

Overall, neoliberal culture constrains expression of human intelligence and integrity thereby threatening global democracy. Any social vision that discourages social inquiry and civic participation, thereby diminishing the overall quality of human life, can neither be ignored, nor unwittingly perpetuated. There must be another way to respond to deep crisis; another way to orient ourselves to our world and to each other. In response to the significant challenges posed by neoliberal globalization, careful and continuing enactment of a contrasting social philosophy, an alternative justificatory social vision, is required.

Returning to the wellspring of democracy: politically engaged holism

The spirit of democracy is not a mechanical thing to be adjusted by abolitions of forms. It requires a change of heart.

Mahatma Gandhi.

Democracy is a form of government only because it is a form of moral and spiritual association.

Dewey (1888, p. 18).

The challenges before us, though daunting, are not unprecedented. In response to severe social and environmental crises, in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, reform advocates across time and cultures have worked tirelessly to create, and then to compel, collective experience of a unifying ethical vision. Of particular importance to prospects for global democracy are two streams of imagination and activism reflected in the words and actions of “spiritually engaged Progressives” and “socially engaged Buddhists”. Although both Progressivism and Buddhism encompass diverse yet interconnected perspectives, each originating and then developing within dramatically different social contexts, complimentary aspirations for and approaches to social and educational reform are evidenced in distinctive streams emergent within each tradition.

Informed by original works and contemporary interpretations, we find streams of Progressive thought signaling that spiritual development is necessary for full expression of human potential and therefore, education of the masses must acknowledge and attend to a spiritual dimension of learning and life. Drawing from both Western and Asian interpretations of classical Buddhist texts and lay Buddhist social movements, we find Buddhist reform traditions embracing the belief that spiritual development is promoted not through distancing oneself from the trials of human life, but instead by working to alleviate personal and collective suffering on a day by day, moment by moment, basis.

Glimpses of a spiritual dimension consistent with Progressive philosophy are expressed by proponents of *Pragmatism* (Dewey, 1934; Richardson, 2010; Garrison, 1997, 2010; Hickman, 2007; Kesson, 2003; Unger, 2007), *Critical Theory* (Freire, 2000; Greene, 1995; Purpel, 2004b; Shapiro, 2009), *Feminism* (Hooks, 2003), *Postmodernism* (Carlson, 2002; Oldenski and Carlson, 2002), and the *Black Radical Tradition* (Du Bois, 2019; McCluskey, 2014); in addition to teacher/scholars advocating *Indigenous/Anti-colonialist* (Cajete, 1994; Deloria, 1979; Sefa Dei, 2011), *Ecological Justice/Sustainability* (Riley-Taylor, 2002), *Montessori* (Standing, 1957) and *Waldorf* (Steiner, 2008) education. As noted by Thomas Oldenski and Dennis Carlson, “Progressive conceptions of spirituality are about the *transcendence* of human consciousness and culture ... the journey inward leads outward again, with a renewed sense of engagement with life and a sense of being reconnected to others (2002, p. 5).” The call to attend to the spiritual development of all learners is carried through the 20th century and on into present, gaining renewed attention in relation to systemic crises (over-consumption, violent conflict resolution, religious and political fundamentalism, environmental destruction) deemed irresolvable within the philosophical frameworks dominating contemporary schools and society.

Concurrently, social activism consistent with Buddhist reform traditions—including Nichiren, Zen and Tibetan streams of Mahayana and Thai Forest and Vipassana streams of Theravada—is expressed through teachings of clergy and lay practitioners throughout Asia. Included are Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (Bethel, 1973), Daisaku Ikeda (2010a, b), Thich Nhat Hanh (Ellsberg, 2001), Aung San Suu Kyi (2010), Somdech Prea Maha Ghosananda and A. T. Ariyaratne (King, 2006), Bhikkhu Buddhadasa (2005), Sulak Sivaraksa (2005), and His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso (1999). These teachings, responsive to contexts shaped by war, political oppression, mass dislocation and natural disaster, are enacted as social movements referred to as “engaged Buddhism”. In the words of the Dalai Lama, “the purpose of life is not to transcend the body, but instead to embody the transcendent.”

Emerging within tragic social contexts, spiritually engaged Progressives and socially engaged Buddhists have charted parallel paths to guide collective movement. Rather than submitting to imposed constraint and control; rather than accepting an impoverished view of humanity and the natural world; rather than lapsing into fear, anger, cynicism, apathy and despair; philosopher/scholar/teacher/activists representing both traditions have attempted to educate the masses to confront social crises with creativity

and courage. They have centered their hope in an expansive assessment of human potential, united in the belief that as humans are complexly unique and equally worthy. They have framed their parallel visions as a new “way of being”—an existential construct asserting dynamic integration of purpose and process, means and ends, path and destination; an inclusive, life affirming and sustainable global worldview; a social philosophy and political framework that I will refer to as “politically engaged holism”—the “change of heart” required to reclaim, to reimagine and revitalize global democracy.

Toward a transformative social philosophy

Looking beyond neoliberal assumptions regarding the primacy of materialism are visions of a multifaceted reality that holds the “material” and the “spiritual” in dynamic balance. Spirit is defined not as a distinct or separate dimension, but rather as a fundamental attribute that infuses and radiates from all entities; an exploratory, integrative, inherently idiosyncratic and unpredictable yet unifying force. Spirit is further defined not as a religious doctrine or prescribed set of practices, but instead as an orientation aimed at revealing ultimate meaning to be expressed as fidelity of high purpose (achievable aspiration) and comprehensive action (transformation). Though understandably controversial in societies embracing either secularism or religious fundamentalism, recognition and cultivation of a spiritual dimension provides a generative frame for guiding learning and life in a fiercely materialistic, competitive, cynical and divisive neoliberal age.

The nature of reality, and of humanity, is further perceived as inherently relational and profoundly social; everything and everyone are joined in webs of complex, ever evolving relationship. People exist, interact and learn as social selves—actively drawn to sustain relationships within (integration of multidimensional and integrative personal identities); relationships among (engagement on a person-to-person basis, building connections that build community); and relationships that move beyond (connections with broader, at times newly emergent, social and environmental systems and forces). Humans are difficult to limit or contain. They are necessarily curious, creative, experimental, altruistic; compelled to imagine and enact more expansive and more powerfully life-affirming ways of living and learning. Humans are empathetic and pragmatically collaborative. Although imperfect, still they possess unlimited potential to create and to express all forms goodness. Resources are received and distinctive contributions developed in light of insightful analyses of personal and communal needs and aspirations. In response to human efforts to initiate and sustain purposeful, diverse, multidimensional relationships; deep learning and deep change occur.

In sharp contrast to neoliberal assumptions asserting a profoundly instrumental appraisal of socially sanctioned knowledge and values, are aspirations for widespread participation in processes of social inquiry aimed at experiencing and evolving wisdom. Wisdom is relational—at once intensely personal and essentially social. Wisdom is multisensory, interdisciplinary, multi-paradigmatic—effectively connective across physical, temporal, emotional, intellectual, ethical, political and spiritual domains. Wisdom is exploratory—open, divergent, creative, prophetic, surprising. Wisdom is integrative—synthesizing efforts toward truth, beauty and justice thereby extending unrestricted and unlimited access to learning experiences of highest significance and deepest meaning. As such, wisdom is experienced and evolved as a gift, rather than as a commodity; valued not for short-term utility approached through narrowly rational means/ends strategies, but cherished instead for the promise of timeless possibility, for access to significant challenge and opportunity that yields transformative response on personal and societal levels.

Wisdom is acquired by means of fully relational, exploratory and integrative processes. Teaching/learning takes shape as an ascending spiral moving from active preparation (seeking, questioning, expanding receptivity while focusing intent), to inspiration (attending to experiences of intellectual, emotional, social, ethical and esthetic resonance), to meaning-making (reflecting, interpreting, grounding knowledge of inspirational quality in order to fully comprehend its real world significance), to sharing (translating, living, giving one's knowledge in a manner that enhances the quality of life, the quality of relationships among self and others—this, the very essence not only of teaching/learning, but also of principled social action).

A social ethic refusing to accept the ideological constraints of neoliberalism emphasizes mobilization of communal resources to protect personal freedom to be included, to create and to collaborate; over freedom to segregate, to compete and to acquire. Relationships among diverse individuals, within voluntary collectives, within social institutions, are characterized by expressions of mature interdependence. Diversity is necessarily maintained within any and all expressions of social unity. Social order and security, states reflective of enduring aspirations rather than paralyzing fear, are reliant on expressions of equity—collective creativity blending justice with compassion. Social prosperity is measured in terms of the extent to which public policy is experienced as responsibly empathetic and evaluated as demonstrably effective in enhancing collective well-being.

Released from the grips neoliberalism, a contrasting vision of personal ethics provides the foundation for movement toward new ways of living and learning in the world. Beyond an ethic assigning personal responsibility for pursuit of personal gain restricted only by principles of non-interference and market driven fairness/impartiality; emerge possibilities for an individual ethic aimed at “social-self realization” (Brameld, 2000) whereby capacities for self-cultivation and social contribution are continually expanded, deepened and integrated. Although a highly individualized process, moral development—the ascent of human spirit—is equally and necessarily a cultural and communal endeavor (Adorjan and Kelly, 2008; Doll and Gough, 2006; Eppert et al., 2015; Garrison et al., 2014; Hansen, 2007; Jackson, 2003; Kimmerer, 2013; King, 2006; Kurth-Schai, 1992; Kurth-Schai and Green, 1997; Maslow, 1971; Mason, 2008; Miller, 2019; Reagan, 1996; Rogers, 2009; Scott, 2000; Standish and Naoko, 2012).

The path toward voluntary embrace

Both spiritually engaged Progressives and socially engaged Buddhists understood that full realization of politically engaged holism as a pervasive justificatory social vision could only be achieved and sustained through persistently experiential, experimental and relational processes; through complex pedagogies grounded in creative response to the challenges of daily life, yet radiating outward to shape principled action in response to emerging crises on a global and planetary scale. Orchestration of such processes would only be possible within dynamic social contexts steadfastly engaged in reimagining and revitalizing democratic governance, civic participation and mass education.

Evolving democracy: re-envisioning civic life

Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part to help build the Beloved Community, a nation and world society at peace with itself.

Lewis (2020).

Democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living (1916, p. 93) ... a way of life controlled by a working faith in the possibilities of human nature ... the task of democracy is forever the creation of a freer and more humane experience to which all contribute.

Dewey (1939b, pp. 341–343).

In search of a vision of democracy aligned with politically engaged holism, we turn to the writings of John Dewey, reinforced and extended by contemporary democratic theorists and practitioners (Ansell, 2011; Burch, 2000; Freire, 1998; Green, 2008b; Gutmann and Thompson, 2009; Hytten, 2009; Katz et al., 2009; Lummis, 1996; Palmer, 2011; Purpel, 2004a; Noddings, 2013; Wang, 2009; Westbrook, 2005).

A social philosopher in the American Pragmatist tradition, Dewey asserted that the fundamental purpose of philosophy is to afford all people opportunities to pursue life with dignity, affiliation and an ever-evolving sense of purpose and possibility. To this end, he re-envisioned philosophy as a moral process, to be tested in action, requiring continual reconstruction to remain responsive to changing contexts of time, place and culture (1919, 1920).

Dewey's philosophy was grounded in an evolutionary form of naturalism; a religious form of humanism that assumes an active, inquiring, esthetic, immediate, inspiring, transformative and "intimate relation with existence wherein our creative acts matter in the course of creating cosmos from chaos" (Garrison, 2008, p. 6); see also Garrison et al. (2014), Hickman (2007, 2008). Dewey described his spirituality as a common faith (1934); a metaphysics of human relationship grounded in lived experience with nature and with each other. This process-oriented metaphysics would become particularly important in times of deep crisis (Green, 2008a).

In 1916, Dewey identified *Education and Democracy* as the entwined perennial path toward enacting his philosophy across all dimensions of human activity. His conceptualization of and commitment to democracy as a creative, evolving approach to learning and living continued over the course of his lifetime, culminating with the writing of two pivotal essays, *Democracy is Radical* (1937b) and *Creative Democracy—The Task Before Us* (1939b).

Though aspirational, Dewey's vision, his faith, was not naive. He understood that the "end of democracy is a radical end" that could only be achieved through radical means (1937b, pp. 338–339). He knew that it was necessary to move beyond conventional enactments of democracy as a form of governance that limits personal freedom by promoting majority rule at the expense of minority perspectives, or restricts interaction for the sake of the public security. Instead, Dewey envisioned creative democracy as an expansive and experimental process through which the needs and aspirations of diverse individuals could be fulfilled within the context sustained communication and social contribution (1916, 1927, 1939b).

Dewey's path toward creative democracy was centered in collective experience of a radically social, experimental, exploratory, ethical and esthetic approach to interaction and inquiry—responsive to "belief in the ability of human experience to generate the aims and methods by which further experience will grow in ordered richness" (1939b, p. 343).

He argued that the experience of creative democracy is radically social in that it demonstrates the "power of voluntary action based upon public collective intelligence" (Dewey, 1937b, p. 339). Public collective intelligence is achieved through complexly inclusive and collaborative deliberation that accommodates free expression and full consideration of numerous and varied positions (1916).

The experience of creative democracy is radically experimental in that the multiplicity of perspectives on societal crises—their causes, consequences and possible solutions—are accepted as "hypothetical, demanding trial in terms of social action" (Dewey, 1928, p. 314). The experience becomes radically exploratory as the knowledge acquired through social experimentation is then subjected to human "need and desire—out of which grow purpose and direction of energy ... (that) continually open the way into the unexplored and unattained future" (1939b, p. 343).

The experience of creative democracy is radically ethical and esthetic as these critical dimensions of learning and life are engaged to ensure that collective action is undertaken with integrity (Dewey, 1927, 1932). Deeply felt personal and communal values play

a pivotal role in shaping public policy and practice. Rather than accepting moral or esthetic judgments derived from a transcendent reality, tradition, social convention, self- or special group interest; collective action is to be evaluated experimentally, assessing the harmonization of aims/means/ends and the capacity to generate what Dewey referred to as “contributory efficacies” (1922, p. 273). Esthetic and ethical expressions further serve as sources of inspiration. In response to profound challenges of human existence, artistic and ethical expressions affect and sustain public imagination and determination as needed to support continuing civic engagement.

Perhaps most important, Dewey understood that creative democracy is always vulnerable. Among the greatest threats is complacency; unreflective or resigned passivity that renders processes of communal decision-making and civic action irrelevant and ineffective. In order to remain vibrant, democracy must continually evolve. Each time/culture/location offers distinctive challenges that must be confronted with focused intent, wisdom and strategic response. Rather than depending on political institutions or legislative mandates, it is the continuing responsibility of all people, in all aspects of their lives, to participate in sustained, experimental and pluralistic interactions that support diverse expressions of openness, humility, cooperation and willingness to grapple with uncertainty and ambiguity.

In light of continuing threats to democracy held captive by the crippling effects of neoliberal globalization, drawing from Dewey and related contemporary democratic theorists/activists, I propose that collective experiences of democratic civic life be designed and assessed in relation to the following performance-based aspirations. Such experiences can be developed socially and evaluated experimentally, repeatedly striving to answer the question: In what manner, and to what extent, are the following criteria realized both individually and collectively?

- Shared Inspirational Purpose
 - clarifying the primary purposes to be advanced in relation to clearly articulated and widely embraced philosophical assumptions and values, in addition to ethically and esthetically compelling aspirations
- Free Expression
 - giving voice to all citizens, especially those whose access to power is limited
- Full Consideration
 - ensuring free and full participation of all participants, with special attention devoted to the deliberative barriers posed for historically disadvantaged populations
 - ensuring unbiased analysis across power differences and social divides
- Enriched Relationships
 - increasing the depth and variety of connections among diverse participants
- Multi-Dimensional Learning
 - engaging varied dimensions of human experience and understanding; intellectual, emotional, intuitive, ethical, esthetic, sensory, spiritual
- Creative Insight
 - challenging assumptions of certainty; inspiring new, often surprising, ideas
- Skilled Social Analysis & Imagination
 - encouraging movement beyond personal experience to deepen analysis and imagination regarding social systems (education, government, economy) and social forces (racism, colonialism, classism, patriarchy, political or religious intolerance, etc.)
- Authentic Consensus
 - facilitating group commitment to a common cause while sustaining respectful attention to diverse perspectives and experiences
- Enhanced Social Efficacy
 - translating collective goals into principled and effective social action
 - supporting sustained engagement in principled and effective social action

Cultivating the social-self: re-envisioning civic learning

The task of education must be to stimulate and unleash the wisdom that lies dormant in the lives of all young people ... This is not a forced process ... but rather drawing out the potential that exists within. I firmly believe that every young person has the power ... to change the world.

[Ikeda \(2010b, p. 151\).](#)

The *problem* of education ... is one with the *problem* of finding out what democracy means ... Democracy means ... a social order in which all the forces that make for friendship, beauty, and knowledge are cherished in order that each individual may become what he(/she), and he(/she) alone, is capable of becoming.

[Dewey \(1937c, pp. 416–417\).](#)

The call to initiate and sustain participation of large and diverse publics in genuinely collaborative, visionary, resourceful and effective personal and social transformation is daunting. Education of the masses, consistent with politically engaged holism, marks the path. Emergent within contexts of crisis, it is a path that seeks to prepare all people, not only to cope with challenges of personal and communal life, but also to contend with systemic change arising in response to large-scale social and environmental forces. It is a path that engages complex knowledge, skills and dispositions in a manner accessible to everyone; a path that must be experienced, refined, expanded and evolved over the course of a lifetime.

Understanding that civic learning toward creative democracy must be secured across all ages and social settings, those engaged in education reform guided by politically engaged holism have found it necessary to re-envision the very purpose of state-supported education. Rather than seeking to prepare all individuals to serve the political and economic needs of the nation-state; state-supported education is redirected toward preparing all people to find meaning, to act with integrity, and therefore to experience genuine hope, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable barriers. Wary of mass education that serves to perpetuate proclivities toward self-centeredness, greed, aggression, insecurity, and demoralization; spiritually engaged Progressives and socially engaged Buddhists have worked diligently to cultivate the distinctive potential of each person to act as a higher self—a socially conscious self—expressing clarity, communion, creativity, courage and compassion throughout all aspects of their lives. Collectively, it is asserted that:

Clarity

All people can be supported in learning to interpret the world with clarity. Clarity is the expression of integrative and illuminating potential. Clarity reveals a comprehensive interpretive frame characterized by synthesis of varied dimensions of truth, of truth and value, of multiple ways of knowing. Truth is understood as complex and profoundly consequential. Although some aspects of truth are perceived to be intrinsic—representative of essence, of found order inherent within the very nature of reality; other aspects are accepted as socially constructed and subject to continually changing conditions and contexts.

The civic function of clarity is to seek, to challenge and continually refine shared truth necessary to guide collective action. Neither universal nor relativistic aspects are to be passively accepted as abstractions, distant from the rigors of daily life. Instead, assertions of truth must be subjected to careful observation, experimentation and verification within a community of inquiry. Yet pursuit of truth alone is not sufficient to ensure clarity. Dimensions of truth must fully engage with dimensions of value, thereby entering the intricate dance of evaluation—a dance that draws from varied ways of knowing (sensory, cognitive, emotional, intuitive, kinesthetic, ethical, esthetic) to form judgments necessary to guide social action in a constantly changing world (Bethel, 1973, 1989; Dewey, 1922, 1932; Ellsberg, 2001; Garrison, 1997; Hickman, 2007; Ikeda, 2004, 2010a; Hanh, 2012).

We educate to cultivate clarity so that we might illuminate the complexities of human existence. For only through clarity are we freed from personal prejudice; from the allure of propaganda, deceit and disinformation; so that we might engage in social inquiry and civic contribution in an open, enlightened and efficacious manner.

Communion

All people can be supported in learning to establish and sustain communion. Communion is the expression of connective and harmonizing potential. Communion defines the quality of relationship necessary to enhance life across all dimensions of existence—interdisciplinary (across fields of inquiry), intrapersonal (within one's self), interpersonal (among self and others), and transpersonal (among self and broader social and natural systems, phenomenon and forces). Although each unique self is inherently expansive, growth can only occur within the context of reciprocal, trusting, generous and supportive yet challenging relationships.

The civic function of communion is to transform the experience of diversity as an enduring threat, to diversity as an integral and generative aspect of collective life. "Diversity within unity" cannot be sustained by abandoning or actively ignoring competing perspectives. Neither can it be sustained by blurring critical differences through forced compromise. Instead, through genuine dialog and empathetic deliberation, individual and special group interests are freely expressed and fully considered making it possible to more genuinely engage with each other, to learn from each other, to synthesize new patterns of response and to experience strength and solidarity when confronted with challenge and change (Bethel, 1989; Lama, 1999; Dewey, 1916, 1927; Garrison, 2010; Garrison et al., 2014; Hickman, 2007; Ikeda, 2004, 2010a,b).

We educate to cultivate communion so that in response to diverse perspectives we might seek common ground rather than resort to conflict; so that we might join together to "continuously recreate an inquiry-guiding, imagination-stirring 'big picture' or 'background map'" of who we collectively are, and who we might become, beyond our differences (Green, 2008a, p. 43).

Creativity

All people can be supported in learning to respond to discord and uncertainty with creativity. Creativity is the expression of poetic and resonant potential. Creativity is a generative process engaging conceptual, material, emotional, ethical and esthetic dimensions. Jim Garrison suggests the essence of creativity is poiesis, the act of calling into existence that which has never appeared before. He contends that for Dewey, the very act of inquiry—the pursuit of wisdom necessary to support creative democracy—lies in envisioning "ethereal things", for such imaginings move us to "accept life and experience in all its uncertainty, mystery, doubt ... and turns that experience upon itself to deepen and intensify its own qualities" (1997, quoting Dewey, p. 84). This unlimited poetic potential

exists within us all. As we cultivate it we are transformed, capable of recognizing and responding to each new situation in an innovative, unique and harmonious manner (Garrison, 2009).

The civic potential of a creative act is engaged as its power resonates beyond its source. Positive qualities are amplified and radiated outward through webs of interdependent relationship. Evoking the metaphor of “strong poet”, Ibrahim (2009) notes the depth of eloquence, vision, faith and audacity needed to engage, to understand, to walk through and effectively address conceptual impasses and emotion-laden controversies crossing personal to global domains.

We educate to cultivate creativity so that we might “intervene in the world to ameliorate suffering and discord. Such poetry recognizes the possibilities of experienced situations and overcomes obstacles by creatively transforming them to realize our ethical ideals” (Garrison et al., 2014, pp. 203–204).

Courage

All people can be supported in learning to confront crisis with courage. Courage is the expression of the exploratory and ethical potential required to sustain more deeply democratic approaches to learning and life. As noted by Ikeda (2021), “No matter how wonderful our dreams, how noble our ideals, or how high our hopes, ultimately we need courage to make them a reality.” Those engaged in comprehensive democratic reform will unavoidably face loss of confidence, hope and resolve. Advocates will always operate within contexts of scarcity and injustice. They will be called to push beyond constraints of past action and present resistance, to outperform those in positions of power, to accomplish more with less. Yet the future of global democracy is at risk. Systemic change is neither easy nor safe. It takes courage to enact bolder, more beautiful visions (Ellsberg, 2001; Freire, 1998; Ikeda, 2010a).

The civic function of courage is to engage and sustain social advocacy—principled risk-taking with and for those who are least well served by neoliberal social, political and economic arrangements. The path toward social justice requires mutual trust, shared aspiration and collective imagination; and so we challenge each other to dream. Yet dreaming is dangerous; aspiring to advance the greater good, we face possibilities for even larger loss. Failure is rightfully feared, for expectations—when heightened and then denied—can only deepen disillusionment among those who have already lost too much.

We educate to cultivate courage so that we might encounter civic risk-taking with integrity. To act with integrity is to act on the basis of principle; to hold fast to one’s ideals regardless of circumstance or consequence; to exhibit sensitivity, strength, patience and resilience in the face of adversity; to respond with sincerity, efficacy and honesty across all forms of interaction thereby diminishing dissonance between voiced intent and lived experience. The spirit of democracy is forged in the fires of civic courage and then liberated through persistent, inventive, impactful expressions of civic virtue (Kurth-Schai and Green, 2016).

Compassion

All people can be supported in learning to respond to life’s challenges and opportunities with compassion. Compassion is the expression of empathetic and emancipatory potential. While responsive to individual needs and aspirations, approaches to education aimed at nurturing compassion emphasize each person’s unique capacity and responsibility to contribute acts of courage, respect, caring and solidarity in support of others (Bethel, 1989; Lama, 1999; Hooks, 2003; Ikeda, 2010b; Noddings, 2005; Palmer, 2011). Genuine empathy expressed in action is not paternalistic, passive, unimaginative or self-sacrificial. Compassionate response instead marks the path toward liberation from personal and societal limitations. Responding with sensitivity and generosity promotes personal growth and fulfillment as, “self-realization is reciprocal ... Bestowing value, generating love, creating goodness enhances others while affirming and expanding ourselves” (Garrison, 1997, p. 40). As we practice compassion we acquire wisdom and therefore grow in our capacity for ethical response, not only to like-minded others, but also to those whose life experiences and commitments differ significantly from our own.

We educate to cultivate compassion so that we—as individuals, community members and citizens—might consistently express our highest ideals as intelligent, creative and benevolent response to whatever comes our way. For this is the basis of personal and social transformation—imaginative, substantive, sustained collective effort toward ever more enlightened, more principled, ways of knowing and being in the world.

Inspiring principled action: re-envisioning civic pedagogy and practice

We have to continue to learn. We have to be open. And we have to be ready to release our knowledge in order to come to a higher understanding of reality.

Thich Nhat Hahn.

Knowledge emerges only through invention, and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.

Paulo Freire (1970, p. 58).

The task of re-envisioning civic learning and life in times of division, distrust and despair can only unfold along challenging paths. As educators and citizens our pressing responsibility, our critical opportunity, is twofold. We must cultivate our personal potentials for clarity, communion, creativity, courage and compassion while working to shape collective experience of these qualities across educational settings, inclusive of all people.

This is of course a daunting challenge considering the depth and extent of change required on individual, classroom, community and societal levels. It is in relation to this challenge that pedagogy and practice consistent with politically engaged holism holds promise. Compelled by ethical and practical imperatives to ameliorate pressing social and environmental crises, pedagogical approaches are developed, evaluated and evolved across complementary Progressive and Buddhist perspectives. Drawing from historical and contemporary crisis-driven education reform efforts, I propose “pedagogies of enlightenment” and “pedagogies of empowerment” as conceptual and experiential maps to guide our path forward.

Pedagogies of enlightenment cultivate personal and communal gifts of intrapersonal growth. Transformative experiences of insight and inspiration are engaged through skilled and persistent individual practice. Pedagogies of empowerment cultivate personal and communal gifts of interpersonal growth. Transformative experiences of social inquiry and social advocacy are engaged through skilled facilitation of diverse and inclusive collective participation. Pedagogies of enlightenment and empowerment represent categories of varied and complex approaches to teaching and learning. There are many options; each to be approached and implemented as a science, an art-form and social mission (Dewey, 1897); each holding important implications not only as teaching strategies but also as research methods. Based upon my own efforts to re-envision democratic civic education in times of crisis—in collaboration with students, teachers and community colleagues in the United States, Japan and Thailand—I offer examples of accessible points of entry as follows:

Pedagogies of enlightenment

Even in the darkest times, individuals can experience renewed meaning, fulfillment and growth through skilled and persistent expression of insight and inspiration.

Insight

Insight is the capacity to suspend habits of thought and emotion, thereby enhancing receptivity and heightening awareness, leading to deepened understanding and enriched relationships.

Surprising, expansive, integrative, resonant, uplifting, transformative—experiences of insight are described across time and cultures. Often framed as religious or spiritual experience, insight entails profound “awakening—a reorientation of the whole person” (Hickman, 2007, p. 199). Such moments of enlightenment are accessible to all, emergent within the rhythms of daily life (Garrison, 2010, 2019; Garrison et al., 2014; Ikeda, 2010a; Maslow, 1971; Hanh, 2012; Reagan, 1996).

Insight, as direct unmediated perception, cannot be planned or orchestrated. Insights can however be cultivated as gifts of disciplined openness; all people can learn to invite insight. The process of refining and expanding awareness often begins by honing skills in naturalistic observation (Bethel, 1989; Dewey, 1938; Hickman, 2008; Ikeda, 2010b). The process can be advanced through meditative practice.

Although there are many approaches to meditation—varied sitting and walking forms, tai chi, yoga, chanting, calligraphy, dance, uplifting anthems, creating mandalas—the path of inquiry remains the same. When practiced with discipline and persistence, the learner moves through experiential stages progressing from focused attention, to freedom from distractions, to enhanced receptivity, to heightened awareness whereby the self is not lost but instead expanded to “stand at the threshold of infinite” while maintaining identity and capacity necessary to act in the finite (Garrison, 2010, p. 3). It is in this state that insight may occur, and when it does, we are fundamentally changed. Rather than seeking to escape the pressures of the world to dwell in some utopian state, instead we are compelled to engage our daily lives with deeper clarity and compassion.

Meditation is a discipline, an art to be practiced and refined throughout the course of a lifetime. And yet there are accessible points of entry suitable for use in secular or mixed-faith settings. A simple 15 min meditation, composed of five 3 min components, is described as follows:

- Exploring Alignment: Sit or stand in an uplifted yet relaxed position.
- Exploring Focused Awareness: Attend to dominant physical sensations.
- Exploring Undifferentiated Awareness: No words, no images, no boundaries; concentrate on the sound of silence, a sense of space, the background of discrete experience.
- Exploring Heightened Awareness: Attend to subtleties not previously experienced; sustain a sense of expectant openness.
- Free write to ground the experience.

Inspiration

Inspiration is the capacity to find meaning and hope that motivate altruism and determination when confronted with social challenge and change.

Poetic representations—including storytelling and other esthetic linguistic forms—emphasize emotional, ethical, artistic and spiritual dimensions of civic life. As noted by Gregory Cajete, indigenous traditions of oral poetry were engaged to discourage conceptual analysis and suspend critical reflection in order to “‘enchant’ the hearers and draw them into ... a dance of meaning

in which complex images, symbols, and meanings are explored in direct and personal ways ... affecting and engaging individuals deeply and multi-dimensionally" (1994, p. 133). Beauty thereby awakens wisdom and deepens informed commitment.

Use of poetry as a source of inspiration pervades politically engaged holistic practice. For example, both Thich Nhat Hahn (1999) and Daisaku Ikeda (2014) have published multiple volumes of moving poetry designed to inspire in times of crisis. John Dewey, also a poet, was taken by the work of Walt Whitman who described democracy as a spiritual force (Garrison et al., 2014). But it was Tsunesaburo Makiguchi who pioneered the use of poetry as an approach to esthetic inquiry accessible to common people (Bethel, 1989; Goulah and Gebert, 2009).

While visiting Soka University in Tokyo, I heard stories of Makiguchi's use of a disciplined, exploratory approach to poetry. His approach was disciplined in that it was highly structured and repetitive—centered in Japanese non-rhyming forms of either haiku (3 lines: 5-7-5 syllables) or tanka (5 lines: 5-7-5-7-7 syllables)—both aimed at focusing intent, at moving to the heart of the matter. His approach was exploratory in that it was open-ended and creative; aimed at awakening, at motivating principled action. Because their lives were so harsh, Makiguchi encouraged young children to write a poem at the beginning of each school day describing how they might create, or do, or offer something of value. Teachers and older students were asked to write at the end of each day so that they might capture and enact the most important lessons learned.

Poetry can be used not only to inspire oneself, but also to encourage and sustain each other, particularly in response to traumatic social events. In classrooms and community settings, poetry as a socially redemptive process, can be engaged as follows:

- Using a structured format, each participant is asked to compose a poem reflecting their response to a specific social event or concern for the future.
- Individual poems are then shared in small groups, attending to both common themes and unique perspectives.
- Together group members then compose one or a series of poems describing actions they might take to address critical concerns raised (Kurth-Schai and Green, 2016).

Pedagogies of Enlightenment, experiences of insight and inspiration often entwined, expand beyond pedagogical applications (Cajete, 1994; Ikeda, 2004, 2010b; Kumar, 2013; Miller et al., 2005; Hanh, 2017; Rudd and Garrison, 2012; Seidel and Jardine, 2014), to reconceptualize and revitalize research. In research settings, pedagogies of enlightenment can be used to promote introspection and enhance clarity among researchers; this, essential at all stages of the research process in pursuit of complex, evolving, unbiased truth. Equally important, pedagogies of enlightenment can be employed to enhance personal expression and reflection among research participants, thereby enhancing interpretation of research findings and recommendations. Applications aimed at deepening qualitative and phenomenological research traditions include poetry, storytelling, portraiture, reflection/contemplation/meditation and efforts to center research ethics on developing authentic understandings of researcher positionality (Creely et al., 2020; Eisner, 1997; Feldman, 2004; Janesick, 2015; Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997; Leavy, 2009; Stone, 2018; Vagle, 2018).

Pedagogies of empowerment

Even in the darkest times, we can join together to deepen democracy and promote life-affirming systemic social change through skilled and persistent facilitation of social inquiry and social advocacy.

Social inquiry

Social inquiry is the capacity to learn with, from and for diverse others; to construct knowledge in a respectful, consensual and purposeful manner.

Social inquiry, a fundamental act of empowerment, can be approached by engaging all people in learning to teach and teaching to learn; this, I believe to be a fundamental human right, responsibility and source of valued civic contribution. The science, the art, the power of teaching as a primary means of advancing both personal and social transformation is a resonant theme throughout politically engaged holistic practice; as is the call to support all people in taking on such tasks within the context of their daily lives. These pivotal themes are best captured in descriptions of the "Bodhisattva way".

I was first introduced to this metaphor while visiting a temple in northern Thailand. A young monk focused our attention on an ancient painting of the Buddha seated under a bodhi tree beside a lotus pond. He said it was at this moment that the Buddha, though enlightened, decided to forgo the opportunity to leave this world, choosing instead to remain as a teacher assisting others in moving along the path. He further explained that all beings, like each lotus, chart a distinctive course as they rise through the turbulent waters of life. Therefore the Bodhisattva, the effectively responsive teacher, must continually engage deeper wisdom and compassion so that they might grow in their capacity to tailor instruction to the varied needs and interests of diverse learners.

The works of politically engaged holists—from Freire and Dewey to Montessori and Makiguchi—suggest that we all have the potential, the opportunity and the responsibility to practice the Bodhisattva way (Bethel, 1973; Dewey, 1939b; Freire, 1994; Garrison, 2010; Goulah and Ito, 2012; Hooks, 2003; Ikeda, 2010a,b; Hanh, 2012; Standing, 1957). Instructional strategies framed as peer teaching, co-teaching, communities of inquiry, cooperative and community-based experiential learning are effectively utilized across ages, disciplines and educational settings around the world. We all can engage in complimentary processes of learning to teach and teaching to learn; within our schools, our families, our communities and beyond.

An accessible point of entry would be to routinely require all participants engaged in educational and civic settings—regardless of age, race, gender/sexuality or perceived academic ability etc.—to learn specific concepts or skills for the expressed purpose of

teaching these to others (e.g., peers, younger students, family or community members, civic leaders). Diligent, skilled facilitation must then be devoted to guiding teacher/learners in developing emancipatory learning goals, mastering content, understanding learner characteristics, exploring engaging methods, receiving feedback, reflecting on implementation and refining practice (Kurth-Schai, 2014).

Social advocacy

Social advocacy is the capacity to deepen understanding across domains of power and difference in order to effect inclusive, egalitarian, just and compassionate social change.

In his classic text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (2000) charted what was to become a widely embraced philosophical and pedagogical path toward effective social advocacy. He began by asserting that education is inherently a political act. He said that teaching/learning for social stability is accomplished through the “banking approach” whereby strategically controlled knowledge is imposed by the powerful on the masses. He asserted that teaching/learning for social justice must begin with those whose power is limited, and then move to engage others across political spectrum. To this end, he developed “problem-posing education”—a cyclical process designed to grant “voice” to the oppressed, moving from expression of individual experience to a sense of shared solidarity; engage “critical consciousness”, moving from the personal to the political, demystifying systems of structural oppression; and then facilitate “praxis”, reflective participation in principled social action (Freire, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2005).

Committed to a parallel democratic social ethic, John Dewey envisioned and evolved “deliberation” as an inclusive, contextually responsive, imaginative and conciliatory approach to social advocacy. Rather than attempt to determine a course of collective action, or to resolve social disputes via debate—an approach designed to persuade by force of argument—Dewey worked to ensure free and full consideration of diverse, often conflicting perspectives as necessary to yield authentic consensus; acts of creative compromise through which multiple positions and aspirations could be included and represented with integrity. Such an approach would prove to be critical, not only in developing empathy and solidarity across dimensions of power and difference, but also in mounting effective response to both immediate/local and long-term/systemic social challenges (Dewey, 1916, 1927, 1932, Dewey, 1939b).

As a point of entry to social advocacy, skilled facilitation can be employed to ensure that all participants engage fully in each of the following steps adapted from Dewey’s (1910) conceptualization of a “complete act of thought”:

- Identify the problematic situation, a complex dilemma that creates confusion because it cannot be understood or resolved based solely on past experience.
- Define and clarify one specific problem; identify and analyze every important dimension devoting special attention to issues of immediate collective concern.
- Develop a series of possible strategies for resolving the specific problem.
- Arrive at genuine consensus regarding one potentially promising solution path.
- Assess the solution path’s validity by acting on it in a challenging community-based setting and then evaluating the social impact.
- Collectively evaluate participants’ experience of the deliberative process; then join together in determining next steps.

Pedagogies of Empowerment, acts of inquiry and advocacy often entwined, expand beyond applications posed by politically engaged holists to include teaching/learning techniques drawn from *democratic* (Hyslop-Margison and Sears, 2006; Noddings, 2013; Parker, 2002, 2004; Stitzlein, 2012), *critical* (Freire, 1998, 2005; Giroux, 2020; Greene, 1995), *feminist* (Hernandez, 1997; Hooks, 2014), *eco-justice/sustainability* (Bowers, 1992; Kurth-Schai, 1992; Martusewicz et al., 2015; Nolet, 2015; Sulak, 2009), *culturally responsive* (Gay, 2018), *anti-racist* (Casey, 2016; Giroux, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 2003, 2004; May, 1999), *anti-colonialist* (Calderon, 2014; Sefa Dei and Kempf, 2006; Zainub, 2019), *indigenous* (Cajete, 1994; Deloria and Wildcat, 2001; McCoy et al., 2017; Sefa Dei, 2011), and other categories of liberatory pedagogy.

Related research methods—aimed at enhancing the relevance and utility of research findings by engaging both researchers and participants in social inquiry and advocacy—include critical participatory action research, youth participatory action research, cultural futures Delphi and ethnographic futures research (Caraballo et al., 2017; Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009; Fine, 2018; Kurth-Schai et al., 2000; Mirra et al., 2016; Textor, 1978).

Moving toward the light: our call to action

When the day comes, we step out of the shade,

aflame and unafraid,

the new dawn blooms as we free it,

for there is always light,

if only we're brave enough to see it,

if only we're brave enough to be it.

Gorman (2021).

Escaping delusion, division and despair requires sustained and mindful grappling with deeply troubling personal and collective concerns. Seeking the light, seeking wisdom, requires discipline, humility, persistence, creativity and compassion. We can afford neither to remain constrained, pessimistic and exclusionary; nor romantic, disorganized and naïve. Systemic, inclusive, egalitarian reform requires careful orchestration and pragmatic innovation. And so we are called to engage pedagogies of enlightenment and empowerment in all aspects of our lives—in our classrooms, boardrooms, voluntary associations, political institutions, public service bureaucracies, philanthropic organizations, and on into the streets as social movements. Herein lies the path toward creative, evolving democratic learning and life capable of bridging the gap between cherished hopes and challenging realities. Herein lies our collective path from the darkness into the light.

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Peace education in conflict zones: general trends and Israeli particularities

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Historical development	94
Theoretical premises	95
Peace education in Israel	96
The educational settings	96
Research findings	97
Critical perspectives and more	99
Adding educational concerns to critical perspectives	99
Adding methodological concerns to critical perspectives	100
Conclusion	100
References	101

The purpose of this paper is to offer readers a short introduction into the multifaceted field of Peace Education. In the first section, we offer some insights into the historical development of peace education, and point at the main intellectual perspectives and activities which have evolved since its inception. We then summarize three of the main theoretical frameworks which support peace educational work; the contact hypothesis, the socialization and social learning theories, and the social-cognitive developmental theory. In the following section, and with hope of helping readers envision the implementation of a variety of peace educational programs and their potential influence on conflicted societies, we introduce the case of Israel detailing some of the educational programs that have been developed in this country and presenting findings of research that investigated these programs. In the last section, we challenge present perspectives on peace education and research to (re) consider some larger educational and methodological concerns so as to become more effective in their path to contributing to peace and justice in complex global and local contexts.

Historical development

Presently, our world seems to be ailing from political and social instability and conflict. This is not really a new phenomenon. Technological developments have shortened distances and expanded our potential to witness conflicts afar adding to our growing sense of alarm and anxiety. Political and social instability and conflict are, for the most part, considered to be the product of group's territorial conflicts (and/or other material resources) set at the background of the group's differentiated cultures.

When considering possible solutions, to existing tensions, governments and international organizations point at education as one of the main arenas through which to manage and sooth existing conflicts. Educational institutions are expected to help overcome social divisions and thus contribute to social stability and peaceful development. Schools as central sites for socialization through carefully designed curriculum and pedagogies have in their power to improve interpersonal relationships and international understanding and thus help deal with a variety of intra and interstate conflicts. Educational initiatives of this sort go under the general title of Peace Education. In this compound, education points at the formal institutionalized efforts (mostly within state dominated educational systems) to transmit to younger generation knowledge and skills and a set of values and norms accepted in a given society; yet peace is a fussy concept one which evades clear definitions or which's definition suffers from ambiguity.

Peace has been conceptualized as being positive or negative; John Galtung (1969, 2008) one of the contemporary fathers of peace education, defined negative peace in terms of absence of war or direct or physical violence, whereas positive peace is defined as a process aimed at achieving the absence of indirect or structural violence. Neologisms such as "non-violence," "non-aggression" and "non-conflict," identify the negative peace approach while buzzwords such as cooperation, collaboration and harmony, are set as identifiers of positive peace approaches (see Fox, 2013). While the negative definition might allow, paradoxically, for the understanding of a state of absolutism as a situation contributing to peace, positive approaches link peace to justice not allowing for peace to be acknowledged as the result of violent imposition.

Historically, Peace education can be traced back to Comenius, the Czech educator who by the seventeenth century assumed that the road to peace could be facilitated by universally shared knowledge (Harris, 2010). In the 19th and 20th centuries, interest in the field of peace education dramatically increased following the horrors of the world wars and growing threats of nuclear confrontations. In 1946 The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded as an umbrella institution of the United Nations, and it was charged with planning, developing, and implementing general changes in education for it to align to the newly articulated international politics of peace and security (Lerch and Buckner, 2018).

Peace Education, however, is not an exact term but includes a variety of initiatives, programs, and studies conducted from numerous intellectual perspectives. These perspectives govern value criteria whose roots lie in the seminal works of scholars such as Galtung (1969, 1973), Brock-Utne (1985), and Reardon (1988). Galtung, as mentioned, distinguished between negative and positive peace. Brock-Utne, from a feminist perspective, identified different levels at which violence must be addressed distinguishing between the “organized” state level, and the “unorganized” level, pointing at violence that occurs in micro-structures, such as in families and communities. Reardon (1988) emphasized the connection between education as an intentional ethical and political activity, and the development of social value which can support peace.

More recently, there has been a rise in critical approaches to peace education (Bajaj, 2015; Brantmeier, 2011; Hantzopoulos and Bajaj, 2016; Bekerman, 2000, 2002, 2007, 2016). These approaches offer contextual and conceptual resources for understanding the structural impediments to advancing the promise of peace education in diverse locations; their main contribution rests on the analysis of both power dynamics and intersectionalities among race, class, gender, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, language, religion, geography, and other forms of stratification in conflictual settings (Bajaj, 2019).

Moreover, diverse theoretical approaches, underlying philosophies, and goals support the multiple issues on which peace education may focus. Issues ranging from bullying in schools to collaboration on areas of international security, from conflicts between the industrialized and the undeveloped world to the protection of the environment, and sustainable growth. Critics could argue that the field is too wide and that peace education lacks a unique theoretical framework, a firm methodology, and evaluation tools that will allow it to, properly, measure its outcomes.

The main approaches developed in Peace Education come from different appreciations of what is needed to deal with conflict (Minow, 2002), understood as the result of cultural heterogeneity on the local and national levels. Although heterogeneity is not new, much conflict is ascribed to the fact that technological developments and economic needs have made heterogeneity, in and among nation-states, the rule and not the exception. In spite of the recognition that diversity can enrich human experience, nation-states wrestle with tensions they see as following necessarily from diversity. In both the public and private spheres, equal distribution, citizenship, minority rights (including language), democratic participation, and cultural recognition are only some of the issues perceived to be a threat to peace in any of its forms (Opatow et al., 2005).

Other educational approaches share similar goals. Such are Conflict resolution, Multicultural education, and Intercultural education. Conflict resolution (for a review see Garrard and Lipsey, 2007) can be considered a retroactive approach trying to solve a conflict after it has already occurred; Multicultural education is based on a theory of cultural pluralism; ideals of social justice and the end of racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination. Multicultural education asserts the centrality of culture in the teaching and learning process; and as a prerequisite for educational equity and excellence (for a review see Nieto, 2017). Intercultural education, in its traditional approaches, focuses on supporting and celebrating diversity while more critical approaches support cultural diversity and social justice as well as the need to counter marginalization and discrimination in education and society (for a review see Zilliacus et al., 2017).

Peace education could be conceptualized as trying to provide a more comprehensive framework that includes the aims noted above and adds to them the need to address fears; to offer information regarding security systems; to support world disarmament; to understand violence and violent behavior; to provide for a future orientation; and to teach peace as a process (Harris, 2002). One of the great challenges of Peace Education as any other education geared toward the bettering of that which is human is its need to confront and change the ways in which education devalues diversity, and nurtures violent attitudes (Fredland, 2008; Singh, 2015) for education can prevent conflict but can also exacerbate it.

Theoretical premises

All peace educational initiatives base themselves in one way or another on a variety of theoretical developments, the most important of which we review in the following.

In general, we can think of peace education as guided by diverse perspectives on the type of societal unity needed to sustain a peaceful environment. These perspectives can be described as ranging from a rather strong sense of unity through integration/assimilation to a somewhat more relaxed sense of unity sustained through social cohesion. In both cases, education is supposed to be able, to contribute in this direction by helping groups overcome prejudices and reduce intergroup tensions.

The contact hypothesis, the socialization and social learning theories, and the social-cognitive developmental theory are the three main theoretical models through which to approach educational frameworks, which’s goals are the bettering of intergroup relations (Berger et al., 2016).

The “contact hypothesis” is the basis of most educational efforts toward integration. It can be traced far into the past, but it was given its contemporary form by Gordon W. Allport in *The Nature of Prejudice* (1954). The contact hypothesis suggests that promoting contact between members of different racial and/or ethnic groups will reduce tension, resulting in more tolerant and positive attitudes. The contact hypothesis lists a large number of variables which might influence the outcomes of intergroup contact. Contact will be more successful when it occurs under conditions of equality and interdependence that permit sustained interaction between participants as well as friendships in situations legitimized through institutional support (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1976; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006).

Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), suggests that under certain conditions, people change from viewing the “self” and “other” as individuals to seeing them as representatives of broader social groups. Different social-cognitive processes operate

when such a shift takes place (Dovidio et al., 2003): individuals belonging to the in-group and who share salient characteristic, are chosen as interaction partners, while out-group members are negatively stereotyped. Thus, social settings in which social identity is salient lead to reduced intergroup contact, increased ethnic segregation, and increased intergroup prejudice (Gaertner et al., 2000; Rosenthal and Levy, 2010). Contact in this context can also become a beneficial option to remedy tensions but also other strategies are considered such as for example, individuation (Wilder, 1986) which renders members more distinctive and blurs the a prior categorization. Crisscrossing categories by forming new groups, which now include members from former groups, changes clarity as to who belongs to which group (Brewer et al., 1987; Vanbeselaere, 1996). Another possible strategy is re-categorization that in contrast to de-categorization is not designed to reduce salient categories but rather to redefine group affiliations in ways that reduce intergroup bias and conflict.

Social learning theories propose that attitudes toward outgroups are shaped by information and knowledge assembled from immediate social contexts as well as from multiple media channels. Both intercultural training (Stier, 2003) and anti-bias information (Bigler and Liben, 2006) are seen as capable of breaking down negative generalizations.

Social cognitive developmental theory establishes that children's attitudes are based on the developmental stage of their cognitive skills (Aboud et al., 2003); research in this field has argued against a unidirectional understanding of prejudice development anchoring it in complex variables as these relate to social contexts and relationships with others that make particular conflictual relationships between groups and group identities highly salient or place an emphasis on the universal application of moral principles of fairness and equality (Killen et al., 2016).

In addition, to the just mentioned, it is worth pointing at Bar-Tal (2013) who underlines the socio-psychological repertoire (i.e., collective memories and an ethos of conflict, and collective fear, hatred and anger orientations) which makes intractable conflicts especially difficult to resolve. These socio-psychological structures paradoxically work both to enable better adaptation to the conflict conditions, and also to help maintain and prolong the conflict. Thus, even when the parties to the conflict find a peaceful resolution to the existing conflict the socio-psychological repertoire does not change overnight. For it to change, Bar-Tal states, what is needed is a long process of peace building, which requires thoughtful planning and active efforts to overcome the narrow vision which have evolved and which exclude incongruent information and alternative approaches to the conflict.

Though, relatively less identified with the educational sphere, social cohesion and acculturation theories can also help substantiate the work of peace educational initiatives. Space limitations prevent us from expanding on them here but the interested reader will benefit from reviewing literature on social cohesion as it relates to social exclusion and inclusion (Sobhi Tawil and Harley, 2004; Tawil et al., 2003), integration (Green et al., 2011; Green et al., 2009), and critical perspectives (Green et al., 2009; Soudien, 2012). Issues related to acculturation can be pursued reading, among others, Berry (1997, 2005), Esser (2010), and Rudmin (2003).

Peace education in Israel

The educational settings

Intergroup encounters within the Israeli context have been implemented from the early 1950's. Yet, encounters with a specifically educational focus designed to overcome hostility and contribute to coexistence were initiated in the 1980s (Helman, 2002) in response to the publication of a survey (Zemach, 1980) that revealed anti-democratic attitudes among Jewish Israeli youth toward the Palestinian-Arab minority. This disclosure generated fears that Israeli society might reject its democratic character (Katz and Kahanov, 1990) and brought about the formation of what Rabinowitz (2000) defines as the "coexistence sector," which focused on the development of activities geared toward building coexistence (Maoz, 2009; Suleiman, 2004). During the 90s, following the Oslo accords, coexistence dialogs focusing on the conflictual relations among the national groups expanded notoriously under the hospices of dedicated NGOs (Bar et al., 1995).

The above initiatives which can be considered as belonging to alternative or informal educational efforts have been complemented since the 1980's with formal ones in the shape of integrated schools. The first integrated Israeli Jewish Palestinian school was created at Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam in 1984. Toward the end of the 90's dedicated NGO's followed this new direction and today there are eight such schools serving a population of approximately 2480 students (Meshulam, 2019).

A rather recent development has been the creation, in 2012, by the Ministry of Education of the Shared Education program in mixed Israeli cities (there are five such cities in Israel - Haifa, Jaffa, Lod, Akko and Ramle - of which Ramle and Jerusalem are the main beneficiaries of the program). The shared education program offers Arab and Jewish neighboring schools in Israel the opportunity to share classes together on a variety of disciplinary subjects (Payes, 2017).

Lastly, a few programs emphasize active educational approaches - sports, the arts, and social activism - rather than cognitive ones. Since 2001 "Football 4 Peace" has used sport to deliver values based training which aims at endorsing respect, responsibility, inclusion, neutrality, and equality (Sugden, 2008). "Peace Child Israel" was founded in 1988 to teach coexistence using theater and the arts. Their programs bring together Palestinian and Jewish teens from Israeli schools to meet weekly for 8 months before creating original dramas about coexistence and its challenges (Ross, 2015). The Sadaka-Reut program was founded in 1983, with the aim of educating and empowering through uni-national and bi-national programs Jewish and Palestinian Israeli youth and university students to pursue social and political change through binational partnership (Ross, 2015). Seeds of Peace is a peacebuilding and leadership development organization founded in 1993 and headquartered in New York City. Seeds of Peace conducts yearly a summer camp program for Israelis and Palestinians (other groups in conflict are represented in smaller numbers e.g., Indians and Pakistanis) which necessitates the complete immersion of youth in an interactive exchange with youth from the other side of the

conflict, as well as with the predominantly American staff (Hammack, 2006). The Parents Circle - Families Forum (PCFF) established in 1995 is a joint Palestinian Israeli organization of over 600 families, all of whom have lost a close family member as a result of the prolonged conflict. The organizations conduct a variety of educational projects with both adult and younger populations geared toward building trust and supporting reconciliation efforts (Kuriansky, 2007). The Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (MEET <http://meet.mit.edu/>) is a three-year program developed in partnership with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology which brings together young leaders through the common language of technology, entrepreneurship and leadership (Ramadi et al., 2019).

For whatever their organizational context all of these initiatives in one way or another consider their work as evolving from the theoretical developments described in the previous section. This is not to say that they developed their programs based on these theoretical perspectives nor on the results of research produced by academic circles. Yet these theoretical perspectives, in one way or another, serve as reference points for the activities developed or, at least, to rhetorically justify them.

Research findings

As a rule research on the effects of educational initiatives toward coexistence, conflict resolution, and peace are limited and not definitive (Salomon, 2004; Smith, 2010) (for some more positive results see Goldenberg et al., 2017; Ross, 2019; Shani and Boehnke, 2017), Israel is no exception (Abu-Nimer, 2004; Bar-Tal and Rosen, 2014; Maoz, 2011). In this section, we first report on research findings on mid/short term intergroup encounters, and then we move to research findings on long term encounter initiatives (e.g. the integrated bilingual schools).

During the 80s, studies were conducted on a variety of short term intergroup encounter programs through a variety of quantitative and action research methods (Hertz-Lazarowitz et al., 1998). These studies replicated previous findings from the 70s on casual meetings between Palestinians and Jews in Israeli universities (Hertz-Lazarowitz et al., 1998) which indicated that while the groups involved expressed a high level of readiness for social contact, the Palestinian-Arab group's desire was consistently higher than that of the Jewish group.

Studies conducted by Bar-Natan (cited in Salomon, 2004) and Maoz (2000) on intergroup encounters in the post-Oslo era found that youth from both groups arrived at the encounters with a limited acquaintance of each other and holding mutually negative stereotypes. The qualitative analysis undertaken showed that after participating in the workshops, each group's perceptions of the other significantly improved according to dimensions such as "considerate" and "tolerant," indicating that transformative practices can be effective in spite of a harsh socio-political context. Yet, in Bar-Natan's study, while for the Jewish group the encounters experience seemed to have also contributed to the legitimization of the Palestinian group narrative, the same effect was not found for the Palestinian cohort. Biton and Salomon (2006) and Maoz and Ellis (2008) found that participants in intergroup encounter programs became more positive about compromise solutions when compared with individuals who did not take part in such programs. Rosen (2006) examined the encounter settings for the possible differential changes in central and peripheral beliefs, as well as the durability of the impact. The study showed that peace programs could efficiently influence youngsters' peripheral attitudes and beliefs (e.g. stereotypes, prejudices, and negative emotions).

Recent qualitative critical studies show less reason for optimism. Studies that tracked university students participating in intergroup encounter courses revealed the dominance of Jewish participants who focused on the interpersonal level of the dialog while avoiding confrontation with the Palestinian-Arabs on issues related to conflict and national identity (Halabi and Sonnenschein, 2004). Helman's (2002) interpretative analysis showed that when intergroup encounters were positioned in contexts of domination and structural inequality, the dialogs tended to reproduce monological discourses of culture and identity, turning the dialogs into tools that ultimately legitimized power differentials and structural inequality. Similarly, Bekerman (2002) examining the discursive resources used by participants in dialog encounters, observed that national majority-minority rhetoric was shaped within the context of the nation-state, which also seemed to guide the encounters' communicational exchange, casting the participants' ethnic/national identities in an essentialist framework. Maoz et al. (2004) illustrated the dynamics of "good enough" dialogs that fulfill the basic purpose of an intervention in contexts of conflict, i.e. one in which different and divergent voices actually can be heard. Hammack's (2010) study of a group of Israeli Jews, Palestinian-Arabs (Israeli citizens), and Palestinians from the Palestinian Authority showed mixed results. On the one hand, participants were able to construct new narratives, transcending the initial polarized identity discourse that had sustained and reproduced the conflict. On the other hand, identity accentuation was seen among the participating adolescents for as long as two years after the encounter.

A longitudinal study conducted by Litvak-Hirsh and Bar-On (2007) described the results of a four-year qualitative study of Jewish and Palestinian-Arab university students who took part in a year-long encounter group workshop based on a narrative/life story model. Interviewees in both groups agreed that the narrative/life story model contributed to their personal enrichment and to the creation of a positive and favorable communication on the interpersonal and group levels. The interviews also demonstrated a growing complexity in the way participants to the dialog perceived each other. Ross (2016, 2019) in a comparative study of the Peace Child and Sadaka Reut programs concluded that for intergroup encounters to provide encouragement for continued participation in social change activities they need offer opportunities for critically examining the role of one's in-group within conflict contexts.

Hager et al. (2011) studied a college Jewish Arab dialog model recognized as part of a bachelor degree requirement within the Department of Education. The program, which was successful in turning the campus into a place which advances equal opportunities and dialog between the national groups, encouraged reflexive identity study and the examination of existing power structures,

and directed participants toward social activism. David et al. (2017) using both qualitative and quantitative methods studied Jewish-Israeli undergraduate students who underwent a yearlong process learning about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the Palestinian narratives, and the ways in which the Palestinian “other” impacts on their own identity. The study showed that participants developed an increased capacity for acceptance of both Israeli and Palestinian collective narratives, and demonstrated a greater willingness toward reconciliation.

Golan and Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2014) studied regularly accredited action-learning courses taught by joint Palestinian–Jewish faculty teams, and in which both Palestinian and Jewish students participated in them. Their research reveals that the participants, though well aware of the political situation and social inequalities, were reluctant to engage in political discussion or activism. The authors suggest that when neither the faculty nor the students in these courses are willing to challenge the hegemonic silencing of political issues pertaining to the conflict in Israeli academic institutions much of the potential benefits of the mixed programs are lost.

We move now to research results related to long-term educational initiatives. Research on the integrated bilingual schools, though less extensive, has added educational considerations and perspectives into the research scene which has been traditionally dominated by psychological perspectives (Bekerman, 2007). Feuerverger (2001) qualitative study highlights the complexities with which integrated bilingual/binational education must contend in its attempt to respect differences, sustain dialog, and inspire a moral vision. The study also reveals how an ever-changing political reality constantly frustrates the participants’ efforts to reshape the boundaries that divide their existence; making political contexts central to an understanding of transformative educational initiatives.

Glazier’s (2003) ethnographic study focused on the ability of children in one of the Jewish/Palestinian schools to step back and forth between cultures, a skill she calls “cultural fluency.” Glazier’s study underlines that contact alone does not always promote cultural fluency; rather, curriculum and pedagogy needs to guide individuals to engage in ongoing, meaningful shared tasks across borders. Mark (2013), investigated classroom participation and interaction that might characterize and differentiate the work of Jewish and Palestinian children and teachers. Marc concluded that although distinctive classroom discourse patterns could be identified in the Jewish and Palestinian uni-national discussions (sessions in which the groups study separately), the patterns were associated not with different ethnicities but with different socioeconomic groups.

The influence of language on discourse patterns and conceptions of identity was explored by Schlam-Salman and Bekerman (2011) in their examination of how students in a Palestinian/Jewish integrated school defined their identities in an advanced English-learning group. The study showed that the students’ use of a third language enabled them to step outside of ideologies that are culturally embedded in Arabic and Hebrew, and that the discussion in English provided the students with resources that influenced the ways in which they constructed their identities.

Meshulam’s (2011) study extended the research lens beyond the Israeli context. In a comparative study between a Spanish-English bilingual school in Wisconsin and a Palestinian-Jewish school in Israel, Meshulam found that the Israeli school’s attention to the binational encounter constricts its critical perspective. He noted that criticism of oppression in the Israeli school was limited to lines of national affiliation and that discussions did not challenge racism and oppression. In Meshulam’s interviews with teachers in the Israeli school, only one teacher brought up the topic of racism. In the Wisconsin school, on the other hand, multiculturalism was explicitly connected to antiracism. There Meshulam found a critical approach “... which expands culture to denote any category of oppression and marginalization. Under this conception, culture also encompasses gender, sexuality, ability, and so on” (p. 262).

Bekerman has conducted research on Jewish – Palestinian integrated bilingual schools for over two decades. He examined the connection between power relations in Israeli society and the difficulties of creating a truly bilingual educational program for Jews and Palestinians in Israel (Bekerman, 2005), and, how the different status of Hebrew and Arabic in Israeli society influences each group’s motivation to acquire the language of the other (Bekerman, 2009a). The practical importance of Hebrew language acquisition is clear to Arab children and to their families. As a minority group, Palestinians need Hebrew to advance academically and professionally and they regularly require Hebrew to communicate on the street. On the other hand, Jewish parents generally hope that their children will learn Arabic, but there is no apparent price that the children will pay if they fail to acquire the language. Without a practical need for the language, the Jewish pupils’ level of Arabic is generally far below the Palestinians’ level of Hebrew, despite the great educational effort invested in the bilingual program. Amara (2007) presented similar findings regarding the place of and the challenge of Arabic language acquisition. Bekerman and Tatar (2009) demonstrated how the different social realities of Jews and Palestinians influence the families’ motivation to send their children to the Jewish-Palestinian integrated schools.

Bekerman (2003) has also examined how the multicultural goals of the schools shapes religious and national narratives and shown how parents and teachers see culture and religion as areas in which mutual understanding can help bridge the gaps that separate the populations in Israel. Parents emphasize getting to know and understand the others’ culture more deeply and believe that the schools are achieving this goal. Teachers emphasized similar goals and educational activities/celebrations around these issues appear to be conducted with ease and in fruitful collaboration. These celebrations carry a strong religious emphasis. In fact, it could be said that religious aspects are disproportionately emphasized given that the majority of the Jewish parents belong to secular sectors of Israeli society and the Muslim populations, though more traditional, are also mostly non-religious. While at times, Jewish parents expressed concerns and ambivalence about this religious emphasis, they also seemed to find solace in the religious underpinning of cultural activities given their (mostly unarticulated) fear that their children’s Jewish identity will be eroded as a result of participation in an integrated binational program.

The ethnographic data gathered also suggests that issues of national identity (Bekerman, 2009b) and historical narratives have become the ultimate educational challenge for parents and educational staff alike (Bekerman and Zembylas, 2012). National issues are compartmentalized into a rather discrete period in the school year corresponding, in the Jewish Israeli calendar, to Memorial

Day and Israel's Independence Day and, in the Palestinian calendar, to the Day of the Nakba. In accordance with the policy of the Ministry of Education, all schools hold a special ceremony for the Jewish cohort on Memorial Day, which the Palestinian cohort does not attend. Depending on the schools' (complex) relations with the surrounding community and the Ministry of Education's supervision, a separate ceremony is conducted for the Palestinians in commemoration of the Nakba. For the Palestinian group, tensions are apparent, particularly among the teachers, who see themselves at the forefront of the struggle to safeguard the Palestinian national narrative, which remains unrecognized by Israeli educational officialdom. For most liberal Jews, Israeli Palestinian cultural and religious expression in school is legitimate. However, national identification with the Palestinian Authority is not welcomed, and neither are perspectives that would, in any way, try to deny the right of Israel to be a Jewish state.

A recent study on graduates of the school (Bekerman, 2018) has shown that in line with recent research conducted at bilingual and integrated educational initiatives (Cameron and Rutland, 2008; Wright and Tropp, 2005) the Palestinian and Jewish graduates show decreased in-group favoritism and higher perceived similarities between the groups. Exposed, as they are, to high levels of intercultural education and interethnic contact within the school setting they show, if at all, low levels of stereotyping and discrimination supporting previous findings in multicultural and anti-bias research (Banks, 2006). The graduates, for the most part, have little romantic expectations from education; they realize its limitations and yet profoundly appreciate what the integrated school has afforded them. Palestinians value the pragmatic benefits of what an integrated school has to offer them relative to the benefits of participating in the regular Arab educational track in Israel and Jews, though complaining at times about the difficulties of participating in a setting which in a paradoxical sense (at least at the high school level) reverses the asymmetry which benefits them in the wider Israeli context, stay assured that their parents' choice has profited them significantly.

All seem to have come to realize that belonging to one's group does not necessarily imply the denial of the other group and that acknowledging the existence of multiple perspectives does not necessarily need to be interpreted as renouncing one's own, but might enrich one's repertoire and open a path to dialog.

Finally, the research shows school activities, at the intergroup level, to be working well. While knowing and clearly recognizing their own ethnic/religious/national affiliation, the children seem able to create and sustain social interactional spheres where identity is not necessarily addressed. This ability of children stands in sharp contrast to the adult stakeholders' tendency to adopt a purely categorized identity approach, based on the premise that strengthening ethnic and national identities is the path to achieving their aims. The study suggests that the adoption of a categorized approach needs to be critically considered and revised if the schools do not want to replicate the discourse of the reification of rigid identities, which are central to the present conflict (Bekerman, 2000, 2009).

As the research shows, the bilingual school initiative is comprised of multiple, overlapping facets that must be viewed in concert. Moreover, even perspectives that strive to be critical often overlook alternative explanations or crucial processes that might open doors to potentially successful educational strategies. The path toward reconciliation, tolerance, and recognition in conflict-ridden societies presents difficulties that cannot easily be overcome.

Critical perspectives and more

A variety of scholars have expressed skepticism regarding the possible influence of peace education initiatives in general (Bajaj, 2018; Hajir, 2019; McKeown and Dixon, 2017) and those conducted among Jews and Palestinians in particular (Bekerman, 2007; Maoz, 2011; Schimmel, 2009; Silberberg, 2019). Though, these initiatives might have some short-term effects on changing intergroup attitudes they seem to have failed to influence attitudes in society at large. Among the reasons mentioned are the short-term exposure that most encounters afford participants, the lack of follow up activities build into these programs, the fact that participation in them are usually self-selected (Schimmel, 2009), their essentializing and utopian tendencies (Silberberg, 2019), and their lack of criticality (Bajaj, 2015). It has also been argued that group encounters are for the most part detached from participants' daily lives and focused on rather essentialized perspectives of culture and a static understanding of identity while dealing almost exclusively on interpersonal issues. Such an approach, is stated, helps avoid any confrontation with deep structural and institutional asymmetries between groups thus possibly contributing to diminish the extent to which social injustice is acknowledged, rejected and challenged (Bekerman, 2007; Dixon et al., 2013; Saguy and Kteily, 2014).

The above limitation, important as they are, seem to focus narrowly on peace and coexistence educational initiatives and their practice; as if these critiques would be carefully accounted for, the said education could achieve its goals.

Adding educational concerns to critical perspectives

Bettering peace education in its multiple varieties might be indeed possible; but we believe this change, to be achieved, needs to take into account more foundational issues, which are usually not accounted for. The issues relate to wider educational concerns, more specifically to modern massive state education being guided by functional, psychologized, and idealistic perspectives (Bekerman and Zembylas, 2018). Thus, guided these educational initiatives echo modern white, western, totalizing conceptualizations that identify the individual mind as the locus of an illness (conflict) which needs to be treated. The treatment is offered to (universalized) individuals while ignoring their socio historical contexts. Doing so replicates premises that are constituted and constitutive of the modern Western world, under which many of the conflicts that coexistence education is expected to help smooth and ultimately overcome have flourished, bringing us to wonder if these premises are the right basis for peace education.

Within this paradigmatic perspective peace and reconciliation if properly managed and applied could eradicate violence and conflict from the face of the world. This approach bears remarkable similarities to the paradigmatic dichotomies set by Western epistemology (male/female, good/evil, us/them) and as such seems to be able only to replicate past outcomes. Inasmuch as there is a “true” way all need to follow, the understanding, recognition, and dialog with alterity becomes a difficult task (Biesta, 2004). In the Western tradition, differences need to first be pointed at, and then assimilated or destroyed; denied differences are the secret of “our” (good, right) existence; and what is more important, differences are set in the realm of meaning and not in the realm of power relations.

When peace education is regarded everywhere as an universal ideal it disregards the social arrangements which institutionalize inequality and injustice, avoiding the problem of questions such as who “we” are, what perceptions of justice we hold to, what dialog we want to sustain, and under which conditions. If peace education is not just a rhetoric of affirmation for the recognition, and rehabilitation of “alterity” it needs to critically approach the epistemological and metaphysical certainties of Western modernity (Bekerman, 2007). It needs to confront the Western construct of alterity which seems inevitably to demonize those who are not like us, those who do not comply with the hegemonic standards of white western males – the ones who have successfully replace the force of arms with the coercion of currency and consumerism.

Adding methodological concerns to critical perspectives

Any critical approach to peace education will also need to consider the main product of political modernity the nation state, which has radically changed past traditional socio-political orders by implementing new forms of territoriality and novel surveillance capabilities that monopolize effective control over social relations across time–space distances and over the means of violence. The nation state exercises its control over the population comprising it by establishing a culture that is at once homogenizing, universal, and anonymous (all members share the culture the state has canonized). Moreover, nation state erases all individual and group affiliations (church, family, tribe, etc.) not allowing them to stand between state and citizen. Given the above, peace education will have to acknowledge what Michael Mann (2004) has identified as the dark side of democracy – ethnic cleansing. Ethnic cleansing, product of the Western inclination to confound into one *ethnos* and *demos* the two concepts inherited from classical Greece as the pillars of its democratic states. Modernity has added “ethnos” (a group that shares a common heritage) to “demos” (the rule of the people) thus allowing for “the people” to rule democratically but also “tyrannically” over any minority in the midst of its nation state. Along similar lines, Louis Dumont (1966) has argued that racism is a correlate of liberal democracies for if, as its credo goes, “All men are created equal,” then the evidence of inequality requires the dehumanization of the many. Equality from this perspective is a quality of man’s “nature,” not of the context within which he evolves.

The elements mentioned carry implications for social sciences research in general and more specifically for educational research. Research in these disciplines needs to acknowledge their unfortunate contribution to the naturalization to the global regime of nation-states thus surrendering their analytical scope to what Wimmer and Schiller (2003) have christened as methodological nationalism. They will also need to review their epistemological colonialism (Poulter, 2012); so as for researchers to better understand how their secular rational underpinnings bias their judgment and appreciation of traditional cultural/religious phenomena which in no small part is the phenomena they are trying to understand. Confusing political or ideological concepts with analytical ones can never be a good path to serious research. States are not natural entities, societies are not necessarily countries organized as states, minorities/immigration are not the flow in or between nations, and identities and cultures are not traits of solipsistic individuals. Taking them as such blinds research to the profound influence of socio-political contexts and processes in shaping present conflictual realities. Focusing on (created) units of analysis might be justifiable when approaching the study of complex realities but when these analytical units blind us to the wider spheres needed to understand complex processes they lose their relevance. As the political context of the nation state is not bounded, the individual and his or her culture are not bounded either; when the social sciences uncritically surrender to conceptualizations such as identity and culture, without attending to the potential dangers of naturalizing folkloristic concepts while embedding them in analytical discourses, they risk hiding the phenomena they intend to uncover.

Conclusion

In the last 70 years or so, peace education has emerged as a field of practice and research global in scope. In the first sections of this rather short piece I have offered a review of the historical and conceptual development of peace education, anchoring it in the Israeli reality, hoping that doing so offers practical insights into the potential benefits and challenges peace education confronts. In the last section I hope to have added to traditional critical perspectives some foundational, epistemological and methodological, issues which if not considered might prevent peace education from developing more effective tools for research and practice in its way to achieving its vision for peace and justice.

Freeing the imagination to take new educational paths and/or research approaches might imply adopting the old Hypocritical adagio “cura te ipsum” (take care of yourself first) while struggling to confront our paradigmatic perspectives so as to expose and try to overcome the structures and practices that have established the present conflict. Even if this is done it would be good to remember that the long standing and bloody conflicts that peace/coexistence educational initiatives hope to remedy are grounded in and sustained by the very material unequal allocation of resources more than in the heads of troubled individuals.

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Enhancing a Global South-North partnership to promote global justice in K-12 classrooms: a Botswana case study

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Introduction: development of equitable Global South-North partnerships to support quality study abroad programs	104
Reflecting on two decades of research: the transformation of study abroad programs rewards and challenges	105
The need for intercultural competencies and pedagogy	105
Issues related to the Global South and North	105
Notions of decoloniality and “othering”	106
Developing two-way learning through sustainable partnerships	106
Reflecting on two decades of research: the need for sustainable and equitable Global South-North partnerships to enhance and support study abroad programs	106
The University of Botswana (UB) and the University of Central Florida (UCF) partnership	107
The challenge of over-committed faculty from the Global South	107
The challenge of linking collaborative partnerships to quality study abroad programs	107
Financial hurdles	108
Studying abroad while staying at home: a new partnership perspective	108
Theoretical perspectives on the impact of globalization, study abroad, and the global partnerships which sustain these initiatives	109
Internationalization and global competence: impact on culturally responsive pedagogy	109
Internationalization and global competency as perceived by the Global North and South	109
Colonialism, decoloniality and their impact on globalization	110
Critical cosmopolitan and social justice theories	110
Global citizenship	111
Moving from theory to practice	111
Research methodology	112
Participant demographics	112
Results	113
Basic knowledge acquisition	113
Participants’ most rewarding experiences	113
Participants’ most challenging experiences	114
Professional growth and development of educators through study abroad programs in emerging nations	114
Impact on participants’ professional development	115
Concluding remarks	115
References	116

Introduction: development of equitable Global South-North partnerships to support quality study abroad programs

The geo-political space and the diversity of cultures that exist between the Global South and Global North should be embraced in pursuance of education for co-existence of humanity. Institutions of higher learning therefore have a duty to train learners holistically beyond the boundaries of socio-economic and political disparities as well as beyond the limitations of the geo-political space. We have based this article on the concept that effective global teaching and service-learning experiences cannot come to fruition through unilateral plans that exclude input from and collaboration with host institutions. Thus, we focus initially on the absolute need (and challenges) of developing a durable and equitable partnership between universities in the Global South and Global North. To this end, we include a brief synopsis of “lessons learned” over a decade of mutual engagement to develop a truly equitable partnership between the University of Botswana (UB) and the University of Central Florida (UCF). In doing so, we explore the challenges embedded within such partnerships, as well as a path to develop durable, quality study abroad programs that can positively influence both the partner universities, and the host community. Our approach is that education should be advanced as a unifying factor between the Global South and Global North so that learners can have an appreciation of diverse cultures. Consequently, they can play instrumental roles at their professional as well as community levels by ensuring that appropriate lenses are applied when appreciating global multicultural diversity.

Reflecting on two decades of research: the transformation of study abroad programs rewards and challenges

Historically, study abroad programs have depended upon educational experiences designed to enable participants to focus on global issues and their responsibilities to contribute to the greater good (Kommers and Bista, 2021). For example, a decade ago scholarship (Biraimah and Jotia, 2012; Foronda and Belknap, 2012; Schroeder et al., 2009; Woolf, 2006) emphasized the need for study abroad programs to include effective communication skills, community engagement, and meaningful service-learning projects for all participants. Onyenekwu et al. (2017) also argued that previous promotional material for study abroad programs included depictions of host countries and cultures as “othered” (Caton and Santos, 2009), as well as the use of consumerism to envision programs through a tourism lens (Bishop, 2013; Woolf, 2006). This negativity was also represented within Western mass media where representations of the Global South often relied on poverty porn (Glick, 2015) and the White savior complex (Cole, 2012; Brown, 2013) which often prompted emotional responses from Global North participants that enhanced misconceptions of the developing world.

More recently, these foci, whether constructive or problematic, have begun to be replaced by new factors, such as the commercialization of study abroad, which seems to be reshaping program goals and outcomes, as well as impacting issues of equity and student mobility (Kommers and Bista, 2021). With an increase in the outsourcing of university study abroad programs to third-party vendors these scholars suggest that tourism, rather than educational purpose, is being promoted and learning goals are being replaced by marketing ploys that these programs will now provide participants with a competitive edge when entering the job market. Unfortunately, regardless of their end results, study abroad programs remain problematic for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, thus perpetuating and reproducing societal inequalities (Lorz et al., 2016).

Given this evolution of study abroad programs over the past few decades, the purpose of this study was to examine key factors, such as the need for intercultural competence, as well as the challenges presented when participants from the Global North descend upon their host countries and communities in the Global South, an experience which can either reflect continuing challenges to move beyond tourist perspectives and “othering,” or provide opportunities for the development of two-way learning and equitable partnerships. Finally, this study will examine the degree of professional growth and intercultural competence and attitudes that occurred during a 2017 study abroad program to Botswana.

The need for intercultural competencies and pedagogy

Recent research (Baecher, 2021; Pfingsthorn and Czura, 2017; Tripp et al., 2021) reflects an ongoing need and “compelling evidence for the creation of teacher study abroad programming that is intentionally conscious and critical of structural inequities and their connection to schooling” (Baecher, 2021, p. xvi). To this end, preservice and in-service teachers who participant in these programs enhance their intercultural competence while expanding critical perspectives and pedagogy informed by their global experiences and knowledge (Pfingsthorn and Czura, 2017). For Baecher (2021), there also exists an enhanced potential for international learning that promotes teachers’ global and critical perspectives regarding the potential impact of their roles as educators with increasingly culturally diverse classrooms. Baecher’s (2021) research documents the “transformative learning experiences which impact the way teachers think about learning, teaching, and identity” (p. xiv). Reinforcing these perspectives, Tripp et al. (2021) suggest that “the study abroad experience adds value in terms of cultural and language experiences, thus resulting in greater awareness of the diverse needs of students and their backgrounds” (p. 131). They continue by underscoring the need to provide more opportunities for preservice teachers to “develop greater awareness of and sensitivity to those whose backgrounds differ from their own [and they also posit a] critical need for data to inform international program developers about specific academic and cultural benefits and potential challenges associated with study abroad experiences” (p. 132). Recent research has clearly underscored the need for more culturally sensitive study abroad programs.

The authors analysis of a study abroad program in the emerging, Global South nation of Botswana provides insights and informs the design of sustainable study abroad programs within teacher education that supports the development of intercultural competence, while preparing teachers to provide quality instruction to their increasingly diverse students.

Issues related to the Global South and North

A few decades ago, traditional study abroad programs usually involved students and host countries within the Global North (such as American students studying in Italy). However, with expansion of globalization, programs increasingly provide opportunities for students from the Global North to participate in programs within the Global South (such as our study abroad program that provides American preservice teachers with cross-cultural experiences in the emerging nation of Botswana). With this broadening of opportunities also comes a need to develop sustainable programs that are mutually beneficial to both participant and host communities; programs where simply “helping” has been replaced by mutually beneficial partnerships between visitors and their host communities. This notion of helping, according to Tripp et al. (2021), is often linked to the “White Savior Complex” which calls upon participants to ask if this desire to “help” also meets the needs of their host community. (p. 136).

With this enhancement of study abroad programs to the Global South also comes the responsibility to move beyond tourist excursions to exotic destinations. However, program designers cannot simply replace these shallow excursions with assumptions that participants from the Global North have arrived to solve their host nation’s educational challenges. Unfortunately, even if study abroad programs in emerging nations avoid inappropriate or superficial philosophies, numerous and potentially negative

consequences remain. Jotia and Biraimah (2016) suggested that “Not only is there the problem of participants flaunting their ‘first world’ wealth and dominance over local communities, but there are real threats to a host nation’s environment, economy and cultures” (p. 94). For example, their presence could further deteriorate diminishing clean water supplies, or their obvious use of advanced technology could inflate consumerism within a rural, and relatively poor population.

Notions of decoloniality and “othering”

As the popularity of study abroad programs to the Global South increases, there are also added concerns regarding issues of decoloniality (the need to move beyond colonial perspectives), and the “othering” of host nationals by Global North participants. When programs extend beyond the usual Eurocentric destinations to include emerging nations, it also becomes essential to consider the unique challenges study abroad programs might have upon fragile social and economic environments, and the need to avoid “a kind of voyeurism in which privileged young Americans go to observe relative poverty in a developing country” (Woolf, 2006, p. 136). In these instances, it is necessary for participants to transform themselves from a helping/savior mentality to one that views their study abroad program as a learning experience that can benefit all involved. These new perspectives can enhance participants’ intercultural awareness, knowledge and competence while simultaneously enabling them to better understand and respect diverse cultural groups.

Tripp et al. (2021) have noted and built upon the scholarship of Von Wendorff (2013), that suggests when participants from the Global North first arrive in their Global South communities, there is often “A sense of separation and ‘othering’ [that] can create barriers to successful communication and understanding of the social climate in international settings” (Tripp et al., 2021, p. 131). This concept of “othering,” as explained by Powell and Menden (2018) is “a set of dynamics, processes and structures that engender marginality and persistent inequality across any of the full range of human differences based on group dynamics” (p. 17). In the case of study abroad programs, participants from the Global North often view their Global South counterparts as “others,” who do not necessarily share similar attitudes, aptitudes, knowledge or experiences. While the theories explaining “othering” will be explained in more detail below, it is of interest to note that recent research also suggests that study abroad participants from the Global North may also see themselves as “others,” at least at the beginning of their study abroad program. For example, Tripp et al. (2021) found that “Participants themselves felt like ‘the other’, because of a lack of knowledge of social norms, as well as linguistic miscommunication” (p. 136). They also reported that preservice teacher participants in their Malawi study abroad program often saw themselves as the “outsider” when initially immersed within the culture and people of Malawi.

Developing two-way learning through sustainable partnerships

Tripp et al. (2021) have noted that study abroad participants from the Global North often initially reflect a “‘one-way’ attitude of coming to help the poor, African people,” instead of being more receptive to learning from their host communities (p. 140). To remedy this shortcoming, they underscore the need for their hosts to contribute to the program’s learning exchange, which they later observed led to participants shifting their perspectives to more of a two-way learning pattern while in Malawi.

While the need to establish solid, sustainable partnerships that support quality study abroad programs will now be addressed, it will also be suggested that we might need to expand our understanding of these partnerships, and the medium for these study abroad programs. As suggested by Joseph and Johnson (2021), during periods of travel restrictions, such as the current pandemic, educational leaders need to envision new “study abroad” experiences that omit traditional travel to distant locations, yet include virtual, sustained and more inclusive intercultural learning opportunities, at no additional cost.

Reflecting on two decades of research: the need for sustainable and equitable Global South-North partnerships to enhance and support study abroad programs

Moving beyond the importance of sustainable and transformative study abroad programs, we will now address the need for sustainable and transformative partnerships capable of supporting these programs, particularly when programs include Global South-North partnerships. We will also examine the impact of study abroad programs that are supported by these Global South-North partnerships. As the goal of developing sustainable, quality programs that positively impact both partner universities is often made more difficult due to varying expectations and miscommunications, these are also frequently exacerbated by socioeconomic disparities. As previously mentioned, partnerships that support vibrant study abroad programs may take multiple forms, but regardless of the medium, factors that undergird a successful, equitable, and sustainable partnership remain. While new forces and factors may occur over time, some issues raised nearly two decades ago often remain applicable to current challenges when building sustainable partnerships capable of ensuring quality study abroad programs.

For example, when analyzing the challenges of establishing an equitable Global South-North partnership, Wohlgenuth and Olsson (2003) suggested that the usual domination by the Global North be replaced by dialog, along with the encouragement of shared values. Moreover, while “capacity building” is often seen as an essential outcome of international partnerships, “power relationships (based on inequitable wealth) may become a significant barrier to communication and immersion,” and hinder anticipated positive study abroad program outcomes (Woolf, 2006, p. 142). Thus, engaging in such partnerships can only become productive when partner institutions respect one another within a common vision for advancing education within

cultural differences. These challenges remain concerns within current scholarship, as demonstrated by [Rose and Cooper-Duffy's \(2021\)](#) scholarship which reflects upon the critical role played by partnerships enabling a Fulbright-Hays program for Global North special educators and speech-language pathologists in Botswana. They emphasized that their successful Global South-North partnerships (between North Carolina and Botswana's Ministry of Basic Education) had to have a "bi-directional relationship where educators from both counties have participated in study abroad experiences to learn about teaching students with disabilities" (p. 149). They continued to explain the level of cooperation within the partnership that made their program successful:

The instructors cannot overstate the importance of the partnership created with educators and administrators in the host country and the support provided by the [Fulbright-Hays] grant. Many of the participants would not have had the opportunity for an international experience without grant funding. Partners in the host country took the lead in preparing for school visits, accommodations, transportation, meetings, and cultural activities. Additionally, several of our host country partners accompanied the group throughout the trip and assisted with navigating challenges that arose. This close partnership facilitated participant growth in cultural competence (p. 163).

It should also be noted that this partnership was truly "two-way," with US participants in Botswana during 2016, followed by reciprocal trips to North Carolina by a Botswana delegation of teachers and administrators in 2017. We now extend our examination of a continuing partnership through an in-depth look at the decade long challenges faced by two universities in the Global South and North.

The University of Botswana (UB) and the University of Central Florida (UCF) partnership

To review various theoretical perspectives regarding the development of equitable Global South and North partnerships, which in turn support viable Global South-North study abroad programs, we provide an in-depth look at one partnership between an institution in the Global South, the University of Botswana (UB), and one institution in the Global North, the University of Central Florida (UCF). To this end, we examine various challenges to maintaining a viable and equitable partnership including those emerging from (a) over-committed faculty in the Global South; (b) the need for a truly collaborative partnership; and (c) multiple financial barriers.

The challenge of over-committed faculty from the Global South

The strain on emerging universities due to heavy faculty teaching loads can negatively impact the quality of their research and service, including participation in Global South-North study abroad programs. While not a perfect solution, program directors scheduled their study abroad programs in Botswana during their long winter vacation (which coincided with Global North summer vacations). This one factor positively impacted UB participation by providing more time to devote to these programs, as well as concomitant research, publications, teaching practice supervision and future grant proposal submissions. Regarding study abroad programs for US students in Botswana, not only were they scheduled during months when most UB and UCF students and faculty were on break between semesters, but the partnership was designed to provide numerous opportunities for scholarly activities, which to date, have resulted in multiple joint publications and conference paper presentations ([Biraimah and Jotia, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2021](#); [Jotia and Biraimah, 2016, 2017, 2018](#); [Jotia et al., 2020, 2021](#)).

The challenge of linking collaborative partnerships to quality study abroad programs

Even when logistical challenges mentioned above are overcome, numerous problems related to establishing an equitable and sustainable partnership between institutions in the Global South and North remain. For instance, even perspectives regarding timelines and program details can challenge a partnership. As an example, logistical issues involving itineraries and time spent in rural communities and schools are often addressed from different levels of urgency by partners in the Global South and North. Program coordinators from UCF who were responsible for submitting final itineraries and budgets to their institution several months prior to the actual departure date may be driven by internal deadlines that are of less significance to their UB partners. More precisely, when developing a final budget, it is critical that actual travel locations and schools are identified, as these directly impact transportation and other related costs. However, when viewed from UB's perspective, these urgent demands for final itinerary and school destinations seemed unrealistic. For example, before our UB coordinator could identify with certainty which schools would participate in the study abroad program, multiple communication and travel challenges to various remote localities had to be overcome. As many rural schools had only unreliable cell phone connections, and usually no wi-fi, rapid communication was replaced by hours of driving over dusty, and often unpaved gravel roads to make personal contact with school heads to obtain the necessary permission. While all this was playing out in rural Botswana, the UCF counterparts waited impatiently for their phone calls or emails to be returned. In this case, the disparity in the socio-economic factors comes into play as a partner in the US can usually obtain necessary information rather quickly, while their counterpart in Botswana may have to wait for days to (hopefully) obtain internet access. Consequently, frustrations come to the fore as academics in the Global North may assume that their counterparts in the Global South are lax and less motivated, while in fact they are doing their very best, given travel and communication challenges.

This same erroneous assumption that Global North practices and expectations will automatically be reflected in Botswana often becomes quite clear the moment their students arrived in Botswana. It has been our experience that often the first comment or request uttered by UCF study abroad participants arriving in Botswana is “what is the wi-fi-password?” However, as program directors hoped, they soon began to grasp the shocking realities of global diversity and inequities when they are informed that wi-fi has not been available for days, is very slow, or that due to electrical outages they may have to wait hours, if not days, to catch-up with their online world.

Unfortunately, these unrealistic perspectives and expectations, as seen from the Global South, are often perceived as menacing and unrealistic, as well as displays of power and control from the Global North, with little regard for mitigating socio-cultural issues. Regrettably, this naivety on the part of Americans may be viewed as power plays by our Botswana colleagues, and can easily derail, if not eliminate future study abroad programs if left unattended. What remains crucial, however, is that the partnership successfully navigates these challenges effectively and from a shared perspective. However, these goals are often quite difficult to achieve, given that many learners from the Global North may not have been properly prepared for the realities in Botswana, and therefore may be perceived as entitled and privileged by those in the Global South. Thus, not having wi-fi, for example, may be viewed as an incomprehensible scenario, while those in the Global South view the same predicament as normal, remaining hopeful that at some point in time the electricity and the slow internet will return.

Financial hurdles

Programs funded through US government grants, such as the U.S. Department of State’s international grants and the U.S. Department of Education’s Fulbright-Hays programs, support a clearly uneven playing field as the US recipient is placed in a dominant financial role, though this inequity can also occur in smaller student-funded university study abroad programs. In these instances, the UB/UCF partnership has endured financial inequalities where UB may be allowed to manage a small portion of the budget, but the overall fiduciary responsibilities remain with UCF. This leaves the Global South partner in more of a dependent and/or observer role, as opposed to a partnership where both entities wield equal programmatic and financial decision-making. While in the above instances UB was allocated limited funds through sub-contracts (covering expenses such as lecturer fees, dormitory rentals, and program coordinator/student assistant stipends), these payments were usually based on a reimbursement model, which remains a challenge for emerging university budgets that may not have sufficient fiscal reserves necessary to manage lengthy repayment cycles. This lack of budgetary involvement also makes it more difficult for Global South institutions such as UB to take financial advantage of a grant’s lucrative overhead revenues, which are generally calculated based on the amount of actual spending by each institution. As UB had extremely limited spending authority regarding programs funded by federal grants, their ability to receive overhead revenues was also curtailed.

Beyond these unequitable funding issues, other factors may also keep a Global South-North partnership on unequal terms. These include complex and competing accounting procedures (Jotia and Biraimah, 2016), and differing perspectives regarding “due diligence” linked to receipts, currency conversions and auditors’ expectations. As Bradley (2008) posited, these asymmetrical relationships between Global South-North partners are often perceived as major obstacles to productive and collaborative research. This disproportionality influences Global South-North partnerships that include project administration, budget management, and the development of research agendas.

Studying abroad while staying at home: a new partnership perspective

Given the economic challenges regarding Global South-North partnerships and study abroad programs, along with current travel restrictions due to the pandemic, colleagues (Joseph and Johnson, 2021) in Australia have initiated a new form of study abroad while staying at home. This approach also addresses the issue of economic inequality linked to program participation, as lower socio-economic status (SES) students are often unable to participate in expensive study abroad programs. For those concerned about the current cycle of global warming, this option also provides a way to reduce carbon emissions due to airline travel.

Built on collaborative partnerships with universities in Australia, Spain, South Africa, Sri Lanka and New Zealand, Joseph and Johnson (2021) have developed the Internationalization at Home (IaH) program which provides “an alternative option of IaH at our respective workplaces [at] no cost to the university or to the student. We see this option as a fair, equitable and accessible opportunity for our students” (p. 141). While their concept may first appear to be an oxymoron, this “alternative to study abroad allowed for authentic learning experiences to take place through a blended environment (face-to-face and through technology) where our students were able to reflect on their intercultural understandings and learn from it across the semester” (p. 151). Moreover, this sustained experience, rather than the usual brief international visit that may seem more like a tourist excursion than an academic endeavor, provides for more intercultural experiences for students, at no additional cost. In the words of Joseph and Johnson (2021), “... our alternative option of internationalization at home proved to be a rich cultural and linguistic learning experience where the process of integrating an international and intercultural dimension was intentional” (p. 151). While those of us working with study abroad programs may not have considered this option, it certainly has merit and deserves more careful analysis.

Theoretical perspectives on the impact of globalization, study abroad, and the global partnerships which sustain these initiatives

Moving beyond the significant challenges to successful Global South-North partnerships, and the study abroad programs they sustain, it is advantageous to deconstruct these experiences to better understand the forces and factors which impact these programs. In past decades, researchers (Alfaro and Quezada, 2010; Merryfield, 1995; Phillion et al., 2009) have stated the need for educators to prepare their students to productively engage in a globalized world, using study abroad experiences as one tool to achieve this goal. More recent research (Engel, 2017) reiterates the positive impact of study abroad programs on post-secondary academic achievement and retention of US students, based on studies conducted by state university systems in Georgia, Florida and Texas. Farrugia and Sanger's (2017) research also found that university study abroad programs enhanced the career prospects of their participants, regardless of major, when compared to colleagues who did not engage in an international experience. These scholars also posited that study abroad programs might also effectively aid teachers in addressing stereotypical prejudices within their classrooms, while simultaneously enhancing their students' knowledge regarding a more globalized world. To this end, we will now briefly discuss select theoretical perspectives which are often at the core of international study abroad programs and partnerships. These select theoretical perspectives include (a) internationalization and global competence, (b) critical cosmopolitan theory, (c) colonialism and decoloniality, (d) social justice, and (e) global citizenship.

Internationalization and global competence: impact on culturally responsive pedagogy

During the past two decades we have seen a continued emphasis on the need for culturally responsive pedagogy as initially defined by Gay (2010) as "using cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 31). This conceptual framework has been expanded over the years, suggesting that culturally responsive pedagogy is an important outcome of study abroad engagement. For example, Gay (2018) points to an increasing cultural divide between teachers and students, suggesting that pre-existing cultural biases and stereotypes continue to erode the quality of education provided to marginalized populations.

For Lopez and Morales (2021) globally competent teachers must not only acquire academic knowledge with an international dimension, but must also apply numerous pedagogical skills for their students to value multiple points of view and to work toward becoming more globally responsible citizens. More specifically, these scholars believe that global competency may include both dispositions and skills that underscore and sustain cultural interconnectedness, while affirming diversity and contributing to a fuller understanding of their students, families and communities. This infusion of a more critical analysis of inequities within the world requires that globally competent teachers help their students "identify local issues and connect them to global trends and employ a range of critical pedagogies to guide students in examining root causes of issues and facilitate opportunities for students to take action" (Kopish, 2017, p. 21).

Internationalization and global competency as perceived by the Global North and South

Over a decade ago, Zhao (2010) perceived global competence as being the skills and knowledge necessary "to be aware of the global nature of societal issues, to care about people in distant places ... to appreciate the interconnectedness and interdependence of peoples, to respect and protect cultural diversity, [and] to fight for social justice for all" (p. 426). Relating this theme more directly to teacher education, Byker and Putman (2019) suggested that internationalization with a Global North perspective means "integrating international experiences and intercultural dimensions into teaching and learning" (p. 90). To achieve these results, they suggested the need to foster greater global awareness among preservice teachers through enriched coursework and study abroad programs focusing on multiple geographic regions, global issues, greater cultural understanding, and intensified language learning.

However, Byker and Putman (2019) also warned that perceptions of global competency might be seen quite differently from different locals, suggesting that for the Global South, the goals of internationalization and global competency may seem well intentioned, but could also reflect tacit hegemony and the further reproductions of inequities. For example, participation in study abroad programs from the Global North are often skewed toward the urbanized wealthy, leaving behind students marginalized by poverty, location and race or ethnicity. This perspective is expanded by Lopez and Morales (2021) with research that suggests that contrary to previous results for participants from the Global North, students from the Global South do not necessarily reflect their experiences as being personally transformational. Explaining that the Global South often relies on the Global North for significant levels of development and is aware of the power dynamics between students and academics in the Global North and South, participants in study abroad programs initiated from the Global South may define global competency quite differently. For example, globally competent teachers from the Global South, unlike their Global North counterparts, may not see themselves as the center of the universe, as they are quite aware that they must also view global issues from a position of less power when compared to the US. According to Lopez and Morales (2021) their Chilean teacher candidates come from a previously colonized country with a unique history and indigenous cultures which, for the most part, were replaced by external hegemonic cultures. Thus, the way in which they perceive their role as teachers may be quite different from their counterparts in the Global North as they do not necessarily see themselves as superior to others, including ideologies that reflect the need to help other countries.

As we have seen, the conceptualization of globalization and global competencies remain fluid, and at times contested, depending on perspectives regarding the role and value of study abroad programs, and the partnerships which often struggle to bring them to fruition. To extend this conversation, we now consider the issues of how colonization and decoloniality may impact not only our current understanding of globalization, but how it might be improved.

Colonialism, decoloniality and their impact on globalization

Present day participants in study abroad programs, particularly initiated by the Global North, may be quite unaware of the continuing impact of colonization, naively assuming it simply disappeared with the independence of former colonies during the mid-twentieth century. However, its negative impact did not simply disappear with the decline of official colonial systems, as nations and individuals continue to exert power over one another, complete with systems of rules and laws that determine the rights of peoples and provide the most reward for those who dominate. The reality of the 21st century is that the inequality among countries, as well as the impact of powerful countries from the Global North, continues to influence the lives and livelihoods of citizens in the Global South.

Today, there continues to be a need to confront the impact of colonization through both education and action (which can include more equitable study abroad programs and partnerships). However, there is also a need to understand perspectives from the Global South which underscore their omission from essential and equitable roles within globalization. Clearly, global perspectives, attitudes and programs are often skewed toward the Global North, which reflect Global North positions of privilege through the continuing lens of colonialism. From the South African perspective [Christie \(2020\)](#) advances the notion that the concept of decoloniality, which moves us beyond continuing cycles of colonialism and unequal power among nations and people, must first separate knowledge production from its former Eurocentric focus, while leaving behind the obsolete assumptions regarding the superiority and universality of Western knowledge and culture, particularly regarding education and curricula decisions. For [Lopez and Morales \(2021\)](#), there is a need to recognize the historical (and often continuing) relationship between the colonizer and the colonized that can shape individual identities while impacting and influencing knowledge production with the inclusion of colonial ideologies and mythical assumption, often without the input or consent of those colonized. To this end, both educational institutions, and the study abroad programs they support, must resist practices of domination and oppression while working toward goals of equity and inclusion, particularly for historically subjugated peoples.

When applying theories of colonialism and decoloniality to current study abroad programs, participants and partnerships alike must challenge continuing reflections of privilege and positioning supported by the lens of colonialism. This might begin with an analysis of Global North study abroad participants' motives, which often include personal growth, travel and adventure. While not necessarily invalid, they do reflect "one-way" benefits that favor the Global North while failing to challenge colonialism. For example, often absent from the motivations for participating in programs destined for host nations in the Global South were the goals of social justice and solidarity. Program directors and partnerships need to examine the true ethics reflected within their study abroad programs, while ensuring the inclusion of a more critical reflection that will help move us all beyond the legacy of colonialism in global education. For example, participants might question the role of a colonizer's language within a Global South nation, as well as if dichotomies such as native/non-native speaker remain valid.

Unfortunately, colonialism is not limited to the political and economic realms, but also pervades the perspectives and mindsets of those involved in international study abroad and partnership activities. For example, [Sharpe \(2015\)](#) mentioned a study abroad program in Cuba where participants from the Global North reflected colonialist tendencies by maintaining comfortable American style pedagogy and daily routines, as if they were tourists, while further reinforcing "othering" identifications between themselves and their host community. Throughout their study abroad program, the American students continued to view their Cuban counterparts as "others," while maintaining colonialist perspectives such as consumerism, personal growth, and economic advancement.

Clearly, study abroad programs and the partnerships which support them must not only decolonize their goals and curriculum, but must also move beyond simplistic and colonialist views of "othering" those who do not share their home cultures. Building upon these theoretical notions is a clear need to move toward a more critical cosmopolitan citizen theory that underscores themes of social justice. The following discussion will briefly describe the development and infusion of critical cosmopolitan theory, as well as the need to work toward greater social justice globally while strengthening a more comprehensive and impactful vision of global citizenship.

Critical cosmopolitan and social justice theories

For [Byker and Xu \(2019\)](#), the goal of Critical Cosmopolitan Theory (CCT) is to develop global citizens that continue to develop an increased awareness of a wider, and more interrelated world. Moreover, CCT works toward creating more compassionate and inclusive global citizens who continue to work for social justice. It should be noted that this theory moves us beyond neoliberal perceptions of global citizenship that were focused on issues related to the global economy. With a call for global citizens to engage in both local and global dialogs aimed at challenging oppression while working collaboratively to overcome social injustices, CCT calls upon individuals, including participants in international study abroad programs and partnerships, to denounce social injustices while promoting an individual's human dignity and future contributions. Moving beyond rhetoric, however, Byker and Xu also view CCT as another means for teachers and students to positively impact future history through social action, instead of simply reading history as written by others.

Building upon these concepts, [Newton et al. \(2020\)](#) recommend that study abroad directors design programs that not only focus on intercultural sensitivity and perspectives such as global competence and culturally responsive pedagogy, but must also provide preservice participants with opportunities to critically reflect upon issues of social justice. These critical reflections should include all aspects of study abroad programs, including context, curriculum, and co-curricular activities, as well as essential pedagogical strategies. To this end, effective study abroad programs will need to transform preservice teachers' understanding of how their social class, gender, and race/ethnicity impact their perceptions of the world.

Within teacher education program study abroad field experiences should also provide a way for preservice teachers to begin linking theory to practice through programs that offer service-learning opportunities. For [Newton et al. \(2020\)](#), short-term study abroad programs offer potential opportunities to prepare teachers for their future classroom which will undoubtedly include increasingly diverse cultures. Programs that incorporate critical approaches to issues such as global social justice enhance preservice teachers' experiences, abilities, and propensity to promote concepts of globalization, while enhancing mutually beneficial partnerships with their host communities.

This goal, of course, requires significant transformations that move study abroad participants beyond tourist experiences and limited preconceived notions and expectations regarding their host communities. To this end, program leaders need to encourage their participants to move beyond viewing their host communities as "others," to perspectives that promote empathy and partnership. To achieve this goal, study abroad programs must include critical multicultural coursework that helps to develop participants' intercultural competencies. These assignments and activities should also be designed to counter a "white visitor" complex. This hypervisibility within their host communities, where they are viewed as outsiders due to their lack of knowledge regarding the local language and cultures, will hopefully diminish through extensive orientation and in-country programs and activities designed and managed through an equitable and sustainable Global South-North partnership.

Unfortunately, these goals will remain challenging until we move beyond the current population of preservice teacher candidates and study abroad participants that continue to represent a majority of white, middle-class, female participants. This ongoing underrepresentation of marginalized and economically poorer student populations remains a challenge that must also be addressed to promote programs that promote cultural diversity and social justice.

Global citizenship

For [Byker and Putman \(2019\)](#), the concept of global citizenship itself remains contested and continues in many instances to reflect Western ideals, often driven by neoliberal perspectives which are more focused on the development of economies than on social justice. Their research also suggests that our Global South colleagues may have a different approach to global citizenship which focuses more on the issues of power and inequality. Thus, when viewing global citizenship from a Global South perspective, there needs to be more emphasis on participatory citizenship which addresses systematic and historical issues of powerlessness; views which are challenged by Global North domination and colonization.

While infusing issues of global citizenship within international study abroad programs and partnerships remains a priority, this process needs to be initiated within teacher education curricula. For example, professional organizations such as the [National Council for the Social Studies \(2016\)](#) continue to highlight the importance of including global perspectives within K-12 classrooms to facilitate a better understanding of the benefits from an increasingly interdependent global network of cultures, economies, and political systems. During the past few decades researchers ([Gaudelli, 2016](#); [Hadis, 2005](#); [Stachowski and Sparks, 2007](#)) have continued to suggest that one of the most effective means for preparing citizens for a more globalized world is by immersing themselves in another's culture. However, to make the most of these opportunities, the concept of global citizenship, along with other perspectives such as social justice, are best introduced early in a student's schooling.

Moving from theory to practice

While the previous theoretical perspectives provide us with a better understanding of the forces and factors that impact international study abroad programs and partnerships, it is critical to apply these perspectives to actual study abroad programs. Moreover, to better understand the dynamics such as global competency and decoloniality that influence Global South-North partnerships, and the study abroad programs they support, we will now examine the outcomes of a study abroad program which took place in Botswana during in the summers of 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019. This program, and its' participant outcomes, are part of a decade-long partnership between UIB and UCF bringing students to Botswana for educational lectures, cultural engagement, and a two-week stay in Remote Area Dwelling (RAD) schools where they immersed in authentic classroom experiences at primary and junior secondary schools. Our research focused on whether study abroad programs can effectively prepare educators to engage in inclusive pedagogy, while building upon both cultural and contextual knowledge to help meet the needs and challenges of a culturally and linguistically diverse K-12 student community.

In this article we analyze the outcomes of one university-based study abroad program, whose overarching focus was on understanding that culture is a major variable in society and schooling, and as such must be valued by educators to promote educational equity and equality among all students. Moreover, international programs need to be designed such that both home and host institutions and nations benefit from the exchange and interaction of participants, and that participants are enabled to interact with their

host country and local schools to enhance meaningful communication. To this end, the authors suggest that study abroad programs, when carefully designed and supported by an equitable global partnership, will enhance an understanding of the roles and impact of diversity and plurality within and beyond educational institutions.

Research methodology

In order to ascertain participants' knowledge growth as well as their qualitative perspectives on the program itself, a mixed-methods methodology was employed using a multi-level model of triangulation design in accordance with Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998). Through this method, program participants engaged in two pre-departure knowledge assessments as well as a pre-departure reflection, which were completed five months prior to departure and before any synchronous orientation meetings. The pre-departure knowledge assessments fell into the categories of "Cultural Perspectives and Curriculum Resources" and "Background and Setswana." With the "Cultural Perspectives and Curriculum Resources" survey, students were asked to gauge their own feelings and experiences on interactions with different cultures, comfort in the classroom, and related teaching-specific qualities. For the "Background and Setswana" assessment, a forty-question quiz on background knowledge of the country, culture, and Setswana language was administered. On the qualitative side, the pre-departure reflection served as an open-ended survey asking participants the following questions:

1. Has your impression of this project changed from the time of your initial interview? First describe what this impression was, and then explain why it has, or has not, changed.
2. Have your expectations regarding Botswana changed from the time of your initial interview? First describe what these expectations were, and then explain why they have, or why they have not changed.
3. What do you expect will be the most rewarding experience(s) during your stay in Botswana?
4. What do you expect to be the most difficult experience(s) during your stay in Botswana?
5. At this point, how do you think this experience will affect you as a future educator and/or professional?
6. What is the one, most important thing you expect to bring back from Botswana?
7. Please share with us any other thoughts or impressions that you may have with us at this time.

As a follow-up, one month after returning from the study abroad experience, participants were asked to complete two post-program knowledge assessments in the same areas mentioned before for quantitative analysis. A post-program reflection was also submitted by students with the past tense versions of the seven-question survey of the pre-program reflection. This pattern was maintained for each of the four study abroad year cohorts analyzed: 2015, 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Participant demographics

Over the course of the four program cycles, there were a total of forty-two participants in the study abroad program to Botswana, with ten participants in 2015, eleven in 2017, eight in 2018, and thirteen in 2019. In total, four participants (9.5%) identified as male, while thirty-eight (90.5%) identified as female. Participants came from a wide variety of racial backgrounds, as seen in Fig. 1 below:

Regarding academics, the vast majority of program participants were in the last two years of their undergraduate careers, with twelve (28.6%) being rising juniors and twenty-two (52.4%) being rising seniors at the time of program participation. Graduate students only comprised seven (16.7%) of program participants, with the final participant having been a rising sophomore. As

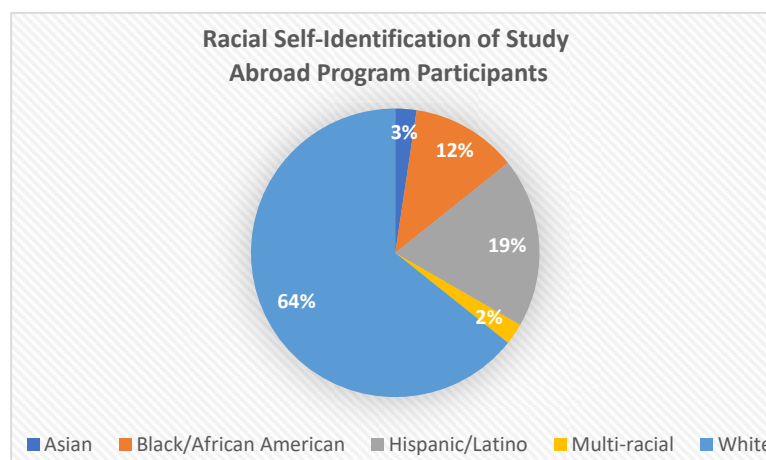


Fig. 1 Racial self-identification of program participants.

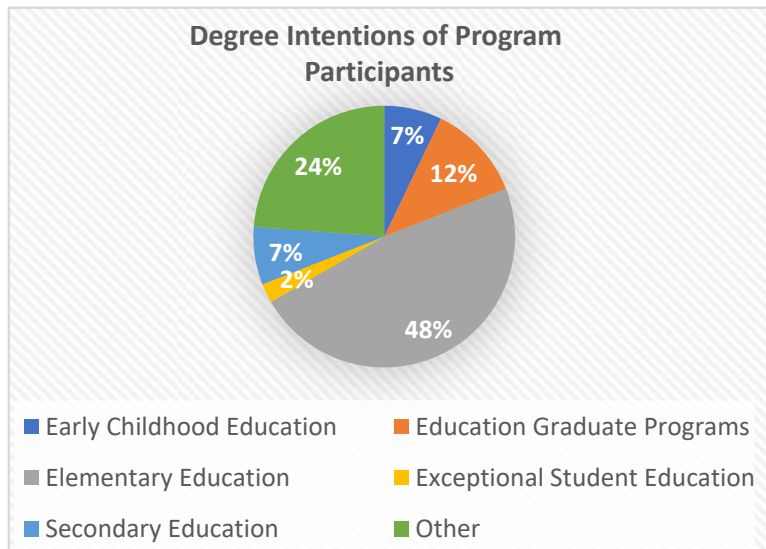


Fig. 2 Degree intentions of program participants.

the program was managed through the education colleges at the respective universities, most of the student participants’ intended degree ran in accordance with this, with a breakdown of majors seen in Fig. 2 above. Majors in the “Other” category included such options as English, French, Health and Exercise Sciences, and Hospitality and Tourism Management.

Finally, one interesting point regarding the participant demographics was that 15 of the 42 (35.7%) self-identified as the first members of their family to attend college.

Results

In this section, we discuss the quantitative and qualitative results of data collected from the four cohort years. All data collection and informational storage procedures were conducted with the express permission of UCF’s and UB’s Institutional Review Boards, and student consent was also obtained.

Basic knowledge acquisition

In order to analyze participant’s acquisition of knowledge regarding Botswana, a dependent samples t-test was performed on the pre-departure and post-program assessments for “Background and Setswana” on both the aggregated and individual data from the four cohorts. All recorded positive gains. Using all 42 participants’ results, it was found that there was a statistically significant increase in basic knowledge acquisition in terms of country, culture, and language knowledge from pre-departure to post-program ($t = 11.291, p < 0.001, df = 41$). These statistically significant increases were identified regardless of a participant’s academic year at the time of the program, racial identification, or first-generation college student status. As the data set only included four male participants, it was determined that there was not enough information to make a sound conclusion about gender results and comparison in basic knowledge acquisition.

Participants’ most rewarding experiences

Participants repeatedly and overwhelmingly cited their in-school encounters as the most rewarding experiences they had in the study abroad program. One White Female participant from 2019 noted, “I loved teaching the students, but also learning from them (they taught me about their country, culture, and language).” Even as some of the participants faced teacher absenteeism in some of the schools, this in itself was also cited at times as a rewarding experience. One participant from 2018 noted:

My most rewarding experience was definitely being in the classroom with the kids. For the first week, they had no teacher, so I essentially had to be the teacher. This was so challenging, but beyond rewarding because I was able to see the issues that each child faced first-hand.

White Female, 2018

Another participant from 2017, who went on post-program to join Teach for America, agreed with the schooling experience being the most rewarding but specifically discussed the rural school environment and tied it into her own experience as a first-generation college student:

What drew me most to this project was the fact that we would be teaching in rural schools. Being part of She's the First, education is very important to me and I'm passionate about working to provide education to students who normally wouldn't attend school, or would attend a poor-performing school.
White Female, 2017

This participant then continued to cite the relationship she developed with one student and the positive impact it had upon her include overall experience in the program. Although many study abroad programs cultural experiences, visits to historical sites, and lectures by host country faculty, it appears that the in-school experiences made the UB/UICF program compare quite favorably to those from other institutions.

Participants' most challenging experiences

In terms of challenging experiences, a common theme among participants across the years was the cultural differences in the classroom environment, including the witnessing of corporal punishment. As one participant stated:

The most difficult part of this trip was how the students were treated in the rural schools. Most teachers I spoke to seemed indifferent to the students. I witnessed a teacher whip his students because they didn't bring in their assignments.
Hispanic/Latina Female, 2019

Although corporal punishment and its prevalence in a variety of nations in the Global South was discussed during the pre-departure orientation sessions, in readings and during in-country lectures prior to the school experience, there was a disconnect for multiple students between what they read, and what they observed within the classroom. This theme emerged within participant reflections.

Yet another challenge cited by multiple participants was a feeling of homesickness that emerged from being in a new environment and away from one's family and friends for an extended period of time, as was the case with these four years of programs. One student, a White female from the 2019 cohort, stated she did not anticipate "how hard it would be to detach from what was going on at home." Another White female from the same cohort stated that she had times when she felt "overwhelmed" but also grateful that she "was willing to go outside my comfort zone and sign up for this trip to travel 7000 miles away with a group of strangers." Creature comfort adjustments were also mentioned as challenging both in their classrooms, and in their homestays, and included varying amounts of hot water and internet access. Nonetheless, multiple participants did state that their previous notions of what a Global South nation looked like were shattered due to unexpected levels of urbanization and development within Botswana's capitol city, Gaborone, and its second-largest city, Francistown. In addition to living in rural communities during their school experiences, participants also visited and lived in these two urban areas during their program.

Professional growth and development of educators through study abroad programs in emerging nations

Many participants reported an increased sense of classroom confidence as well as preparation for teaching in challenging environments upon return to the United States. One student, a Hispanic/Latina female from the 2019 cohort, reported that after her experience, she feels that she "can teach in a Title 1 school" a sentiment echoed by many. Another 2019 participant, a White female, stated that she "look(s) forward to using the skills [she] learned in Botswana to become a better educator in the United States." This sentiment was echoed on the behavioral side by an African-American/Black female participant from 2018, who said she has come to the realization that, "everything doesn't need a reaction - be patient, be kind."

Other participants cited this experience as one that enhanced their desire for more international classroom experiences. Another participant from 2018, a White Female, stated that the experience, "gave me a little glimpse into what it might be like to work for the Peace Corps and made me realize that this is one hundred percent something I want to pursue." Similarly, a 2017 White female participant stated the "huge impact" of the program on her has made her consider entering Teachers Without Borders upon graduation.

Yet another aspect of professional growth reported was participants' newfound respect for language diversity in a classroom setting, and how this impacts equal access to quality education. Many students shared feelings that this experience paired nicely with what they had learned in previous courses, including the need to support second language learners and linguistic diversity.

One particular participant also spoke about realizations regarding the needs of students with disabilities and wanting to make sure appropriate accommodations were taken in their own classrooms once they returned. She stated:

I met two brothers, both suffering from speech disabilities in a school with no accommodations. I can't imagine how helpless and alone they must feel. I want to work to avoid any child feeling that way and do what I can to always provide proper accommodations for students.

White Female, 2019

The recognition of how best to support learners of varying needs was imbedded throughout all programs, regardless of participant gender, race, and academic standing. With this systematic theme carrying through, participants came to recognize the professional development opportunities within the study abroad program they had just experienced.

Impact on participants' professional development

Participants reported anticipating using the skills they learned in Botswana, in multiple ways. Referring back to the corporal punishment theme discussed in a previous section, a White female from 2019 program stated that she now speaks about the experience in her current education class and, "how to make [students] listen without hurting them."

Moreover, the theme of increased appreciation and understanding for the need to have culturally responsive and sensitive curriculum within the classroom also emerged from participants from all four cohorts. As one participant mentioned:

This experience will most definitely have a huge effect on my future professional career. This experience has made me so much more open-minded, aware of prejudices everywhere, conscious and respectful towards other cultures and beliefs, aware of racial differences and segregation in life and schools, and so much more ... I will also be able to add a lot more culture and social issues into my classroom, which in turn will make my students more open minded and accepting of others.

White Female, 2017

Concluding remarks

Educational programs should promote social justice, nurture equitable relationships, and unite people regardless of their global location. Quite clearly, the positive outcomes of this UB/UCF Global South-North collaborative partnership outweighed the negatives, and other study abroad programs may wish to include these outcomes in their partnership design. The multicultural exposure that both Botswana and American academics and students experienced prepared them to be more confident when functioning in an increasingly culturally diverse environment. The intent of these programs was not to assimilate, nor to oppress "the other," but rather to learn how to coexist amid cultural differences. As Mapp (2012) noted, the overall impact of study abroad programs is positive as they help participants to become more open in their ways of thinking, to develop a greater awareness of the culture and values of others, and to enhance their sense of appreciation for differences, especially regarding social justice matters.

That said, the results of this study suggest that while participants' knowledge base regarding their host country increased, though much of this could have been obtained without leaving home. However, as it is often said that "experience is the best teacher," it was through the qualitative and affective domains that the most intriguing results occurred. Participants' perceptions of their own professional development, cultural awareness, pedagogy and curricular material selection generally indicated a sustained positive growth over time. Their exposure to complex and diverse communities has enriched their cross-cultural conceptualizations and we anticipate that their ability to reach and teach 21st Century students will be enhanced. Recent research (Baecher, 2021; Pflugsthorh and Czura, 2017; Tripp et al., 2021) suggests similar outcomes that participation in study abroad programs enhance professional development opportunities for globalizing teacher education. It also suggested that ongoing globalization now demands that educators engage in programs that promote understanding of global issues and interventions necessary to address transnational problems. Both the professional knowledge and social/cultural perspectives of study abroad participants were positively influenced through their in-country experiences in Botswana.

Our discussion also supports the conclusion that equitable and durable institutional partnerships are crucial to the development of transformational study abroad programs. The findings of our study also provide recommendations for developing meaningful programs in emerging nations by establishing a more equitable partnership between universities in the Global South and North. However, to ensure sustainable and collaborative partnerships, there must first be transparent and mutually agreed upon "terms of engagement" regarding the development, management, and evaluation of projects. Above all, partners must exercise collegiality and respect for cultural diversity. These approaches will hopefully curtail situations in which institutions from the Global South are cast in dependent roles, while their Global North partners maintain control of "joint" projects. If ignored, inequities such as these can compromise the goal of mutual capacity building, the key to successful Global South-North partnerships.

Moving beyond the necessity of equitable Global South-North partnerships, we have also underscored the potential positive impact of study abroad programs in emerging nations on professional educators. Reflecting upon our partnership and study abroad programs, cultural immersion appears to play a significant role in developing transformational learning environments.

Undoubtedly, well-structured global experiences are crucial for teachers who must continue to address multiple issues linked to cultural diversity and global justice within their classrooms, while educating the next generation of globally competent K-12 students. We have hopefully provided a “wake up call” for our next generation of educators who will experience increasingly diverse K-12 classrooms.

Finally, as education has clearly become a global enterprise, we cannot afford to prepare teachers who do not have adequate exposure to an increasingly global education system and understanding of the role of global justice, both within their classrooms and worldwide. Study abroad initiatives, such as our programs in Botswana, provide students with global experiential learning opportunities. Study abroad participants supported by the UIB/UCF Global South-North partnership have demonstrated how these international experiences have contributed to their professional growth, with some moving on to positions with national programs such as the Peace Corps, NGOs such as FHI360, or numerous multilateral agencies such as UNESCO. Although scholars will continue to debate the benefits of study abroad programs, the UCF/UIB experience remains both distinctive and positive.

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Parental unemployment and children's educational outcomes – a Literature review

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Introduction	118
Results of the reviewed studies	119
Educational performance	119
Grade repetition	121
School dropout at secondary level	121
Upper secondary enrollment and completion	122
Tertiary education enrollment and completion	123
Mechanisms and institutional context	124
The reduction of family income	124
Noneconomic mechanisms	125
Conclusions	126
References	126

Introduction

Unemployment is a negative experience that produces economic deprivation, stress, and other wellbeing problems for unemployed individuals. The negative consequences of unemployment may not only be restricted to an unemployed individual but also to other people who are dependent on the unemployed individuals' resources, namely their children. Parental unemployment has been shown to be negatively associated with children's self-esteem, psychological wellbeing (Christoffersen, 1994), attitudes toward work (Payne, 1987), educational ambitions (Andersen, 2013), occupational attainment (Karhula et al., 2017) own unemployment in adulthood (Ekhaugen, 2009), and educational attainment (Ström, 2003).

In this article, I review studies that measure the effect of parental unemployment on children's educational outcomes, such as grade point averages (GPAs), grade repetition, educational enrollment and completion, and educational attainment. Because no previous articles have reviewed the effect of parental unemployment on children's education globally, all the studies that have been conducted in developed and developing economies are included. However, only one of the reviewed studies was conducted in a developing economy; thus, the results consider mainly developed countries.

The aim of this article is to observe how parental unemployment influences children's education in different countries and institutions globally. Further, the main mechanism between parental unemployment and children's educational outcomes, as suggested in the reviewed literature, are examined.

This literature review concentrates only on articles published after 2004. Earlier published studies can be found in a previous review on parental unemployment and different children's outcomes (Ström, 2003). I have only reviewed English articles that are published in peer-reviewed journals; thus, I have excluded working papers in the review. Google Scholar was used to find articles using search words such as "parental job loss/unemployment," "father's/mother's job loss/unemployment," and "children's educational attainment/achievement/outcomes/academic achievement." These restrictions and search words produced 20 peer-reviewed articles that studied parental unemployment and children's educational outcomes in 11 different countries, and one article that analyzed 21 countries. Thus, this review consists of 21 articles that have investigated the effects of parental unemployment and job loss on children's education globally. Eight of the reviewed articles were retrieved from sociological journals, one from statistical, and twelve from economic journals. Because some of the articles studied many outcomes, such as GPA and secondary and tertiary attainment, this review reflects on 28 studies in total.

Parental unemployment can be involuntary or voluntary. I have only focused on studies that have investigated involuntary parental unemployment or job loss. Previous literature has indicated that unemployment and job loss are not precisely the same concepts. Job loss is usually referred to as a discrete event, whereas unemployment refers to a state that includes more heterogeneity according to duration. In these studies, job loss or displacement have been described as an exogenous shock, that has enabled better estimates of the effects of parental unemployment on children's educational outcomes (Brand, 2015). Although job loss and unemployment can be understood as separate concepts, I have considered both in this review. Usually, job loss does not always precede unemployment because an individual can be unemployed for a different reason other than losing a job, for example, because an individual is dismissed. Usually, economists have favored the concept of parental job loss, while sociologists have focused on parental unemployment.

Many of the reviewed articles were published after 2010. This indicates that parental unemployment and children's educational outcomes have recently been a topic of interest in the field of unemployment studies. Fig. 1 illustrates a growing publication trend.

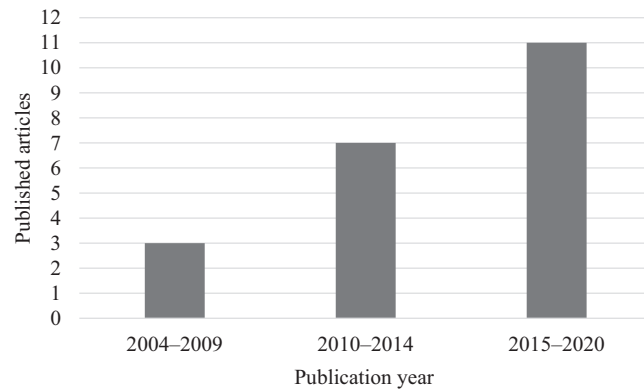


Fig. 1 Number of published articles by 5 years periods.

Only three articles were published between 2004 and 2009, whereas between 2015 and 2019, 11 articles were published on this topic. The Great Recession that started in the US in 2007, and the growing insecurity of the labor markets in many countries thereafter, may have influenced scholars' interest in studying not only how unemployment is associated with individuals, but also how unemployment influences families, particularly the children's prospects regarding education.

Next, I have reviewed the results of the 28 studies in 21 articles, after which I have explored the main mechanisms of the reviewed studies and how the institutional context moderates the effect of unemployment on children's educational outcomes.

Results of the reviewed studies

Table 1 illustrates the basic information regarding all reviewed articles. Five of the 21 articles studied the effect of parental unemployment on children's GPA. Grade repetition as an outcome was studied in two articles, tertiary enrollment or attainment in eleven articles, school dropout at secondary level in four articles, educational attainment, in years, in two articles, and secondary attainment or enrollment in four articles. In total, 21 articles included 28 different studies, because some articles described many outcomes. Overall, almost all studies indicated a negative effect on children's educational outcomes. However, the size of the estimated effect varied, and one study found a positive effect. This indicates that institutional and country contexts influence on the effect of parental unemployment. On average, the effects of parental unemployment are moderate, or marginal for each outcome. The articles incorporate studies conducted in the following countries: USA (6), the Netherlands (1), Germany (2), Finland (2), Hungary (2), Spain (1), Norway (1), Sweden (1), Britain (2), Palestine (1), and Canada (1). Next, I have reviewed the basic results of these studies more precisely, based on the outcome.

Educational performance

Educational performance was studied in five articles. Four articles studied GPA and one examined GCSE point scores (in Britain). Studies were conducted in Sweden, Finland, Britain, Spain, and Norway. All the studies found a negative effect of parental unemployment or job loss on children's GPA, although the effect size varied between countries. The average negative effect of parental unemployment on children's performance measured by GPA or GCSE point scores according to the five studies, is 10.1% of the standard deviation. Thus, the negative effect on children's school performance can be considered to be moderate in effect size.

[Rege et al. \(2011\)](#) studied the effect of parental job loss using Norwegian register data. In their study, they used plant closure for their method, because a plant closure can be assumed to be an exogenous shock, thus removing the problem of selection that is related to unemployment. They found that the father's, but not mother's, job loss had a significant negative effect on their children's school performance, reducing their GPA by 6% of the standard deviation.

In Finland, [Lehti et al. \(2019\)](#) studied the effects of parental unemployment (father or mother) on children's GPA by applying sibling fixed-effect methods. Thus, they could compare siblings within a family, where only some siblings were exposed to parental unemployment before they acquired their final grades from compulsory school. They found that, on average, parental unemployment reduced GPA by 15% of the standard deviation. However, paternal unemployment had a stronger effect on children's GPA (21% on average) than maternal, although the mother's unemployment had a statistically significant negative effect (15% on average).

In addition, [Ruiz-Valenzuela \(2020\)](#) found that parental job loss decreased the GPA by 15% of the standard deviation during the Great Recession in Spain. In the study, she used the individual fixed effects (FEs) model and panel data; thus, he could follow the children and their parents before and after the recession. According to the study, only paternal, not maternal, job loss had a negative influence on school performance.

Table 1 Detailed description of the review articles.

<i>Author(s), year, journal</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Data type</i>	<i>Sample size</i>	<i>Outcome variable</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
Mooi-Reci et al. (2019), European Sociological Review	The Netherlands	Longitudinal survey and register data	812	Educational attainment	Weighted least square regression	Edu attainment = -0.51 education years
Lindemann and Gangl (2020), Social Forces	21 countries	Five different longitudinal surveys	13,769	Postsecondary attainment	Multilevel regression (LPM)	The effect depends on the country
Lindemann and Gangl (2019), Research in Social Stratification and Mobility	Germany	Longitudinal survey	1027, (mothers) 1321 (fathers)	Postsecondary attainment	Propensity score matching	Tertiary attainment = -13.7%-points (only father)
Lehti et al. (2019), Research in Social Stratification and Mobility	Finland	Longitudinal register data	113,100, 2508	GPA, upper secondary and tertiary enrollment	Sibling random and fixed effect regression	GPA = -13 or -17% of std. (depends on age), general sec. enrollment = -10%-points, tertiary = -12%-points
Kalil and Wightman (2011), Social Science Quarterly	USA	Longitudinal survey	1374	Postsecondary attainment	Probit regression	College attendance = -10%-points
Kallio et al. (2016), European Sociological Review	Finland	Longitudinal register data	157,135	Secondary educational attainment (school dropout)	Random effects regression	Secondary attainment = -5%-points
Kalil and Ziol-Guest (2008), Social Science Research	USA	Longitudinal survey	4476	grade repetition	Logistic regression	Grade repetition = 2 odds ratio (father only)
Kertesi and Kezdi, (2008), The BE Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy	Hungary	Longitudinal survey	991	School dropout (no secondary education)	Probit regression	School dropout = 5.8%-points per age year
Brand and Thomas (2014), American sociological Review	USA	Longitudinal survey	4,412, 3,993, 2817	High school completion, College attendance, College completion	Propensity score matching	High school = -5.2, College attendance = -9.9, College completion = -4.3%-points (single mothers)
Stevens and Schaller (2011), Economics of Education Review	USA	Longitudinal survey	53,268	Grade repetition	Individual fixed effect regression	15% increase grade repetition
Ruiz-Valenzuela (2020), SERIEs	Spain	Longitudinal survey	300	GPA	Individual fixed effect regression	GPA = -15% of std. (only father)
Rege et al. (2011), Review of Economic Studies	Norway	Longitudinal register data	16,164	GPA	Plant closure (LPM)	GPA = -6% of std.
Pan and Ost (2014), Economics of Education Review	USA	Longitudinal survey	695	College enrollment	Gotshalk (LPM)	College enrollment = 10% -points
Mörk et al. (2020), Labor Economics	Sweden	Longitudinal register data	332,505-419,300	GPA & high school completion	Workplace closure and propensity score matching	GPA = -2.3% -points (only mother)
Hilger (2016), American Economic Journal: Applied Economics	USA	Longitudinal register data	Over 7 million fathers' layoffs	college enrollment	DID regression	College enrollment = -1% -points (only father)
Hajdu et al. (2019), Acta Oeconomica	Hungary	Longitudinal survey	4765	Secondary education attainment	Linear regression (LPM)	Secondary attainment = -4% -points
Gregg et al. (2012), Fiscal Studies	Britain	Survey	10,028	GCSE point score (GPA)	Linear regression	GCSE = -14% of std.
Di Maio and Nisticò (2019), Journal of Development Economics	Palestine	Longitudinal survey	9539	School dropout	Instrumental variable 2SLS regression	dropout = 9.2% -points
Coelli (2011), Labor Economics	Canada	Longitudinal survey	2403	Enrollment in university and community college (postsecondary enrollment)	Linear regression (LPM)	Any postsecondary -10.5, University -10.1% -points

Table 1 Detailed description of the review articles.—cont'd

<i>Author(s), year, journal</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Data type</i>	<i>Sample size</i>	<i>Outcome variable</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
Müller et al. (2017), Oxford Economic Papers	Germany	Longitudinal survey	2,200, 1800	Completion and enrollment of upper secondary education, college attendance, educational attainment	Sibling fixed effect and Gottschalk	Daughters' upper sec attendance 9.6, upper sec. degree: 33.3, college attendance: 18.4%-points, years education: 0.540% of std.
Ermisch et al. (2004), Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A	Britain	Longitudinal survey	1787, 1183	A-level (postsecondary attainment)	Sibling fixed effect and logit regression	A-level = -5.1%-points

In Britain, Gregg et al. (2012) studied the effect of fathers' job loss on children's GCSE grades during the recession of 1980–83, using the British Cohort Study, and observed the effect of the father's job displacement from major industry. They found that paternal job loss reduced children's GCSE grade points to 14% of the standard deviation lower than their counterparts who did not experience paternal job loss during the recession. In this study, maternal job displacement was not observed.

Mörk et al. (2020) studied the effect of parental job loss in Sweden. They used large and reliable Swedish register data on displaced and non-displaced workers, and propensity score matching. Their findings contradicted other studies that observed parental job loss effects on children's GPA. They reported that the effect was limited in Sweden and was associated only with maternal, but not paternal, job loss. They argued that Swedish welfare institutions successfully support families and provide protection against negative shocks in family. A dual-earner norm and strong incentives for female labor may have contributed to the negative effects of maternal job loss.

Grade repetition

Two of the articles studied the effect of parental unemployment on children's grade repetition. Both studies were conducted in the US, and both found a positive effect on grade repetition. Applying US survey data and logistic regression, Kalil and Ziol-Guest (2008) found an association between the father's job loss and the children's grade repetition and school suspension by two odds compared to those children who did not experience paternal unemployment. The effect was only related to paternal unemployment and was not statistically significant for maternal unemployment. In their subgroup analysis, they found that the association was only significant in households where mothers earned more than fathers.

Stevens and Schaller (2011) conducted a longitudinal survey from 1996 to 2004 in the US, and used an individual fixed effects estimation method. They found that parental job loss increased the probability of children's grade retention by 0.8 percentage points, or 15%.

The results of the two studies were aligned regarding the negative effect on children's school attainment; however, Stevens and Schaller (2011) found a lesser effect than Kalil and Ziol-Guest (2008), although the studies used the same Income and Program Participation survey. This may have been due to the different methods and sample features used in the studies. Kalil and Ziol-Guest (2008) used logistic regression and only one wave that was collected at 1999. Logistic regression can indicate only correlations between variables. In contrast, Steven and Schaller used longitudinal characteristics of the survey with a more accurate individual fixed effects estimation method to indicate causal negative effects of parental job loss.

School dropout at secondary level

Four papers analyzed dropout from secondary school. Studies were conducted in Finland (1), Hungary (2), and Palestine (1). All the studies found a negative effect, and the average effect of parental unemployment on children's secondary school attainment according to all four studies was -6.1 percentage points.

Kallio et al. (2016) used a longitudinal Finnish register dataset and random effects multilevel regression models. They observed children's secondary attainment until the age of 22 years and did not separate maternal and paternal unemployment. They found that parental unemployment, on average, decreased children's secondary attainment by five percentage points.

Kertesi and Kezdi (2008) investigated whether children's secondary school dropout was more likely at the age of 15–20 than if they were younger when they experienced parental job loss. They estimated the effect of parental job loss using Hungarian data at the time of the post-communist transition. They argued that the transition from a communist economy, where virtually everybody in the working-age population had a stable job, to post-communist, where many people lost their jobs, could be considered an exogenous effect. They used the probit regression model and a pooled longitudinal survey. Their sample included only two-parent families that were likely to have a lower skill distribution. They found a substantially stronger effect for younger children

to drop out from secondary education. The dropout rate increased by 5.8 percentage points for each year that the child was younger than 15 when they experienced parental job loss. They did not find any differences between maternal and paternal unemployment.

Hajdu et al. (2019) studied the effect of parental job loss on children's secondary school dropout rate in Hungary when they were 14–21 years of age. This study used linear probability models and a longitudinal panel survey. On average, the authors found that parental unemployment increased dropout from secondary education by four percentage points. However, they also indicated that the average negative effect was concentrated among families that did not provide a stimulus for their children at home. In these families, parental unemployment led to a decrease of nine percentage points in the school completion rate. They did not find any negative effects among families that provided a cognitively stimulating home environment. They also suggested that the home environment was more influential than family income in moderating the negative effect of parental unemployment.

Di Maio and Nisticò (2019) studied the parental job loss in a developing country, namely households that were living in the occupied Palestinian territories. They utilized quarterly variation in conflict intensity across districts in the occupied territories as an instrument for parental job loss in Israel. Their results indicated that job loss of the household head increased the probability of a child's school dropout by nine percentage points. They found that the negative effect varied with household characteristics, and that children with lower-educated parents were more strongly affected. According to their results, the negative effect stemmed from the income reduction in unemployed families.

These studies indicated that country context did not influence school dropout in developed economies, because the estimated effect sizes were similar in every country. The negative effect of parental unemployment was rather marginal in every developed country. However, the negative effect of parental unemployment was approximately twofold in Palestine, indicating that in developing countries, the negative effect of parental unemployment on school dropout could be more detrimental.

Upper secondary enrollment and completion

Four articles analyzed upper secondary school or high school completion and enrollment. The studies were conducted in Finland (1), Sweden (1), the US (1), and Germany (1). Two studies found a negative effect, and one did not find any effect. In addition, one study found a positive effect on daughters. According to these studies, the effect of parental unemployment on children's upper secondary attainment/enrollment was 5 percentage points on average. However, when one study that found a positive effect with a large error term was removed, the effect was negative at 5 percentage points.

Brand and Thomas (2014) studied how single mothers' job loss influenced children's high school completion by age 19 in the US. The study was conducted using propensity score matching and 30 years of nationally representative panel samples from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY). According to the study, single maternal unemployment lowered college attendance by about 5.2 percentage points. However, the negative effect was only observed at age 12–17. Because the children whose mothers had a lower likelihood of job loss had a larger negative effect on children's high school completion, the authors interpreted that the distress and social stigma associated with unemployment explained the results.

Lehti et al. (2019) studied the effects of parental unemployment (father or mother) on children's upper secondary enrollment at age 16 in Finland. They applied sibling fixed effects regression models. With the sibling FE method, they could compare siblings within a family where only some of the siblings were exposed to parental unemployment before they went to upper secondary school. They found that, on average, siblings who were exposed to parental unemployment had an average of 10 percentage points lower probability of tertiary enrollment. Similar to Brand and Thomas (2014), found that parental unemployment had a negative effect only in adolescents age 14–15 during the educational transition period. Parental unemployment had a negative effect only among children of lower-educated parents. Highly-educated parents could compensate for the negative effect of parental unemployment.

Mörk et al. (2020) found no effect of parental unemployment on children's high school completion. This study was conducted in Sweden, and the authors used Swedish register data on displaced and non-displaced workers and propensity score matching. Again, this indicated that Swedish welfare institutions could compensate for the negative effect of parental unemployment on high school completion.

Only the study by Müller et al. (2017) found a positive effect of parental unemployment on children's high school enrollment and completion (or any educational outcomes reviewed here). The study was conducted in Germany, using longitudinal German socioeconomic panel data and sibling fixed effects regression, as well as the Gottschalk method. They studied only the effects of paternal unemployment and found different patterns for sons and daughters. Using sibling FE models, paternal unemployment did not have any effect on sons' high schooling outcomes. Further, paternal unemployment did not influence daughters' enrollment, but it increased the likelihood for daughters to complete upper secondary education. Daughters who experienced paternal unemployment had, on average, 30 percentage points higher probability of completing upper secondary education compared to the sibling who did not. This could be considered a significant positive effect. However, this study was conducted with rather limited data, and many interactions were performed; thus, the error term of the study was significant (and non-reliable). The confidence intervals varied from 8.9 percentage points to 57 percentage points. The authors explained that daughters who experienced their fathers being unemployed were motivated to seek a partner with low unemployment risk and thus had a greater likelihood of completing upper secondary school. However, the test of the marriage market hypothesis was very vague in the study, and authors could only speculate that it was a mechanism behind the positive effect of parental unemployment on daughters' upper secondary attainment.

Tertiary education enrollment and completion

Nine studies of the reviewed articles analyzed the effects of parental unemployment and children's tertiary education enrollment and completion. In addition, two of the articles studied parental unemployment and children's educational attainment in years. On average, the studies indicated that parental unemployment during childhood could have a crucial impact on tertiary educational enrollment and completion. The reviewed studies revealed that children who experienced parental unemployment had, on average, 13 percentage points lower probability of achieving tertiary education compared to children who had not experienced parental unemployment. These studies were conducted in the US (4), Canada (1), Germany (2), Finland (1), and Britain (1).

In the reviewed articles, only two studies examined the effects of parental unemployment on children's educational attainment. In these studies, educational attainment was measured by in years. The studies were conducted in Germany (1) and the Netherlands (1).

Using longitudinal data from Canada, [Coelli \(2011\)](#) found that when children were at high school age (16–17), parental job loss affected post-secondary education enrollment. On average, children whose parents had experienced job loss had 10 percentage points lower enrollment in post-secondary education in general, and also enrollment in university education. He attributed this negative effect to unemployed parents' loss of income. Family disruption, namely parental divorce and household residential relocation, did not explain the effect of parental unemployment. According to the study, parental unemployment may have influenced the financial constraints of families, and that would have affected tertiary education enrollment in Canada, where tertiary education has tuition fees. This study did not distinguish between paternal and maternal unemployment.

[Lindemann and Gangl \(2019\)](#) studied the effect of parental unemployment on entering tertiary education in Germany. They used the longitudinal German Socio-Economic Panel and applied propensity score matching. They found that children exposed to parental unemployment had, on average, 13 percentage points lower likelihood of entering tertiary education, and that only paternal unemployment had this effect, while maternal unemployment had no effect. Contrary to Coelli's study in Canada, they did not find that family income mediated the negative effect of parental unemployment. However, subjective expectations and parental stress levels partly explained the negative effects of paternal unemployment. They also found cumulative effects of parental unemployment because the effect was more disadvantageous when the duration of paternal unemployment was longer.

In Finland, [Lehti et al. \(2019\)](#) studied the effects of parental unemployment (father or mother) on children's tertiary enrollment by applying the sibling fixed effects regression method. Thus, they could compare siblings within a family where only some of the siblings were exposed to parental unemployment before they enrolled in tertiary education. They found that, on average, siblings who were exposed to parental unemployment had a 13 percentage points lower likelihood of tertiary education enrollment. They found that the negative effect was only observed during the educational transition periods and among children whose parents were highly educated. According to their study, family income did not mediate the negative effect of parental unemployment on tertiary education enrollment. Paternal unemployment was, on average, more disadvantageous for children's tertiary enrollment than maternal unemployment, although the differences were not statistically significant.

[Kalil and Wightman \(2011\)](#) studied the association of parental unemployment and postsecondary education among children in Black and White middle-class households, at 21 years of age. They used US data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSIDs) and conducted multivariate regression analyses. They found that among White children, parental unemployment lowered college attendance by 9 percentage points. However, the negative association of parental unemployment and postsecondary education among Black children was three times higher (25 percentage points lower) compared to children who had not experienced parental unemployment. A large share of these different associations between parental job loss and children's college attendance could be explained by household wealth, family income, and parental experiences of long-term unemployment.

[Brand and Thomas \(2014\)](#) studied how single mothers' job loss affected children's college attendance by age 21, and completion by age 25, in the US. The study was conducted using propensity score matching and 30 years of nationally representative panel samples. According to this study, single maternal unemployment lowered college attendance by about 10 percentage points, and college completion, on average, by 4.3 percentage points.

Using the longitudinal Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSIDs) from the US, [Pan and Ost \(2014\)](#) studied how the age when exposed to parental unemployment influenced children's college enrollment. They used Gottschalk and linear probability models. With this method, they could compare children who experienced parental unemployment at different ages. Further, in some analyses, they applied sibling fixed effects models to obtain causal estimates. They find that parental layoff was disadvantageous for the college enrollment at age 15–17 but not in the younger age groups. Parental layoff decreased tertiary enrollment by, on average, 10 percentage points in this age group, compared to children aged 21–23. Further, the authors studied heterogeneity by investigating the association between parental layoff and homeownership status, parental education, and local state tuition fees. They found that the interaction between unemployment and homeownership status was statistically significant. There was a stronger negative effect of parental unemployment on children whose parents did not own home compared to those whose parents were homeowners. Although the coefficient of the interaction between state tuition fees and unemployment predicted that the effect of unemployment was stronger in the states with higher tuition fees, the effect was not statistically significant. In addition, the interaction between parental education and unemployment was not statistically significant. The authors stated that the interaction estimates were only suggestive, because their sample was very small and the interaction should be interpreted with caution.

Hilger (2016) also studied the effect of parental layoff on children's college enrollment in the US, using longitudinal administrative data. His data included seven million layoffs of fathers of children age 12–29, and he used the difference-in-difference regression method. Although he found that unemployment greatly reduced family income, paternal layoff had only a one-percentage point negative effect on children's college enrollment.

Ermisch et al. (2004) studied how parental unemployment was associated with children's A-levels. They used sibling FE modeling and data from the British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). Using sibling FE models, they found that parental joblessness in early childhood reduced the likelihood of children achieving A-levels in Britain by five percentage points, on average. The effect did not vary significantly between daughters and sons.

Müller et al. (2017) studied how paternal unemployment influenced college attendance of children in Germany using longitudinal German socioeconomic panel data and sibling fixed effects regression models, as well as the Gottschalk method. Surprisingly, they found that daughters who experienced a father's unemployment had an 18 percentage points higher probability of attaining college education compared to their sister who did not experience paternal unemployment. This was the only study that found a positive effect of parental job loss on children's educational outcomes. However, they found a negative effect on sons (8.6 percentage points), but the effect was not statistically significant. They also studied educational attainment and found a positive effect on daughters, but no effect on sons. Paternal unemployment increased daughters' educational attainment by 0.5 years compared to their sisters who were not exposed to paternal unemployment.

Mooi-Reci et al. (2019) studied the association between parental unemployment and children's educational attainment in the Netherlands. They used data from the first three waves of OSA, which is a nationally representative longitudinal sample of over 2000 households and weighted least squares regression as a method. They found that fathers', but not mothers' unemployment decreased children's educational attainment by about half a year. This was attributed to parental views about work becoming more pessimistic during their unemployment.

One of the reviewed articles studied the relationship between parental unemployment and children's tertiary education in multiple countries. Lindemann and Gangl (2020) examined how parental unemployment was associated with children's tertiary education in a different institutional context. They used data from five longitudinal surveys and studied associations in 21 countries with multilevel regression models. The datasets used in this study were EU-SILC for 18 European countries, the SIPP panel for the US, the German Socioeconomic Panel (SOEP) for Germany, BHPS, as well as understanding society, and the UK Household Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) for Britain. Their results indicated that the countries that provided insurance against unemployment, namely social transfers, recorded lesser effects of parental unemployment. Further, in countries that provided more equalizing policies in terms of financial support to students, and where there was minimal private expenditure required for tertiary education, the effect of parental unemployment was less than in countries that did not provide these benefits. They observed strong effects in East and South European countries, such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Portugal, and Greece, as well as in the US. However, in the Nordic and some Continental European countries such as Sweden, Belgium, Austria, and Finland, the effects were remarkably less.

Mechanisms and institutional context

Two main mechanisms are suggested to be associated with parental unemployment and children's educational outcomes: (1) Economic mechanisms directly related to parental income reduction due to unemployment. (2) Non-economic mechanisms that initiated by parental unemployment, such as stress and other psychological factors that may influence the behavior of the parents and, subsequently, children's educational performance and choices.

It has been suggested that the mechanisms vary in different countries and institutional contexts (Lindemann and Gangl, 2020). For example, in liberal regimes such as the US, Canada, and Britain, where there are costly tuition fees for higher education, household income may be the primary mechanism that explains the negative effect of parental unemployment on higher education enrollment and completion. In contrast, in Nordic countries such as Finland, Sweden, and Norway, that have been described as social-democratic regimes, where social security is generous and higher education is free of charge, household income may not explain the effect of unemployment. However, parental loss of status and stress may have an effect.

Income loss and stress due to unemployment may also lead to other disadvantages among families, namely parental separation and residential mobility. These disadvantageous life-course events may increase children's stress and disrupt their educational attainment. Children within families that are forced to move for a parent's new job may suffer from stress and a lack of social networks.

The reduction of family income

One of the most obvious result of parental unemployment is the reduction of a family's economic resources, particularly consumption. The effects of economic resources on education are usually explained by parents' potential to invest monetary resources in their children and the material endowments available for the children's use (Becker and Tomes, 1979).

Some empirical evidence supports the assumption that the negative intergenerational effects of unemployment are at least partially related to a family's reduced household income. In Canada, Coelli (2011) found that parental job loss at high school age (16–17) reduced children's postsecondary education enrollment. He attributed this result to the income loss of unemployed parents. Kalil and Wightman (2011) found differences in the effect of fathers' job loss on White and Black children's tertiary

attainment that was mediated by household income and wealth. Household income reduction may have a particularly strong mediating effect in developing countries. In Palestine, as revealed by [Di Maio and Nisticò \(2019\)](#), parental unemployment was associated with income reduction and children's dropout from secondary education. However, this was the only reviewed study from a developing country. Further studies are needed to draw broader conclusions.

Although some studies have found that parental unemployment is associated with household income reduction, many studies have indicated that the negative effect of parental unemployment is not explained by household income reduction. Surprisingly, in the reviewed studies that directly investigated whether parental income mediated the effects of unemployment, only 3 studies out of 12 found a mediating effect.

One explanation for why many studies did not find the mediating effect of household income between parental job loss and children's educational outcomes is that the institutional context appear to influence this relationship. For example, in Finland, [Lehti et al. \(2019\)](#) studied the effect of parental unemployment after controlling family income, and the mediation effect of income loss was negligible. Also, [Rege et al. \(2011\)](#) found a similar result in Norway; the negative effect of paternal job loss was unrelated to the family income. In Sweden, paternal unemployment had no effect on children's educational attainment, and maternal unemployment had only a marginal negative effect ([Mörk et al., 2020](#)). In addition, study by [Lindemann and Gangl \(2020\)](#), using the different institutional contexts of 21 countries, indicated that higher social benefits and lower private educational charges in tertiary education reduced the effect of parental unemployment in general, and may have also influenced the mediation effect of parental unemployment.

Overall the reviewed studies clearly elucidated that institutional context influences the magnitude of the effect of parental unemployment on children's educational outcomes. Further, the mediation effect of parental income could only be found in countries where higher education required tuition fees.

Noneconomic mechanisms

A nonmonetary mechanism related to parental stress and psychological factors could also explain the negative effects of parental unemployment on children's educational outcomes. In general, it is difficult to estimate the extent to which parental stress mediates the negative effect of parental unemployment, because the reviewed studies did not measure stress levels directly. Many studies concluded that distress may be an explanatory factor behind parental unemployment. Other mechanisms, such as residential moves ([Stevens and Schaller, 2011](#)), parental dissolution ([Rege et al., 2011](#)), time spent with children ([Stevens and Schaller, 2011](#)), and income ([Kalil and Ziol-Guest, 2008](#); [Lehti et al., 2019](#); [Lindemann and Gangl, 2019](#); [Mörk et al., 2020](#)) did not explain the negative effects on children's educational outcomes. In addition, some studies found that parental unemployment was only harmful for children's educational outcomes among lower-status and lesser-educated families ([Brand and Thomas, 2014](#); [Lehti et al., 2019](#)). This could have indicated that unemployment generated more stress in families with lower socioeconomic resources. For example, [Brand and Thomas \(2014\)](#) studied the effect of single mothers' unemployment on children's college education, and found that unemployment was negatively associated with college enrollment and completion only in families that had a lower unemployment propensity. They concluded that the distress experienced by unemployed single mothers mediated the negative effect of unemployment on children's college attainment.

Further, according to the reviewed studies, paternal unemployment is more disadvantageous for children's educational outcomes than maternal unemployment. All but one study, that compared the effects of paternal and maternal unemployment, found that paternal unemployment had a stronger negative effect on children's educational outcomes ([Kalil and Ziol-Guest, 2008](#); [Lehti et al., 2019](#); [Lindemann and Gangl, 2019](#); [Mörk et al., 2020](#); [Rege et al., 2011](#)). Because previous studies have shown that men are mentally more distressed by unemployment ([Paul and Moser, 2009](#)), the results indicated that the stress that unemployment generated for men can have an impact on their children's educational outcomes.

One explanation for why unemployment affects men more than women is status loss ([Andersen, 2013](#)). Because men are usually considered the family breadwinners and men's earnings are on average higher compared to women, unemployment may have more detrimental effects on paternal rather than maternal status loss, creating stress that influences children and family dynamics in general. Indeed, some of the reviewed studies found that paternal status loss related to unemployment is associated with children's educational outcomes. For example, [Lindemann and Gangl \(2019\)](#) found that paternal unemployment was associated with children's educational aspirations.

Similar to [Lindemann and Gangl \(2019\)](#), [Lehti et al. \(2019\)](#) found that paternal unemployment is associated with less risky educational choices. Thus, the mediation effect of paternal unemployment is not only related to stress, but it can also trigger a sense of insecurity within families that can lead to the adoption of educational trajectories that are more secure, have more predictability, and thus involve fewer risks for the children. It was also found that paternal status loss due to unemployment was associated with children's school efforts ([Andersen, 2013](#)).

Overall, the psychological consequences are a more important factor explaining the disadvantageous effect of parental unemployment on children's educational outcomes than economic factors, particularly in the institutional context where social security is at a high level and education does not include any tuition fees. Although parental income does not mediate the negative effect of parental unemployment, the psychosocial consequences of unemployment remain and can harm children's educational performance and attainment.

Table 2 The average estimates of the reviewed studies by outcome variable.

Reviewed studies	GPA	Secondary/dropout	Upper secondary	Tertiary	Education attainment	Total
All the studies	−0,10	−0,06	0,04	−0,13	0,02	26
One study removed ^a	−0,125	−0,67	−0,05	−0,157	−0,51	21
All observations	5	4	4	11	2	26

Note. Because of different modeling strategies, the average effect cannot be calculated for studies that measured grade repetition.

^aA study with the most positive effect removed.

Conclusions

In this review article, I have reviewed 21 articles on the effects of parental unemployment on children's educational outcomes. The 21 articles included studies that examined outcomes such as GPA, grade repetition, school dropout at secondary level, secondary and tertiary education, and educational attainment. Articles included five studies on GPA, two on grade repetition, four on school dropout, four on upper secondary enrollment and completion, eleven on tertiary enrollment and completion, and two on educational attainment, totaling 28 studies.

The results of the reviewed articles indicated that parental unemployment or job loss had, on average, negative effects on children's educational outcomes. However, the effect varied according to country and institutional context, and was greater in countries with tuition fees and low social security.

Table 2 illustrates the average effects of the outcomes that were included in the review articles. According to the studies, children who experienced parental unemployment had, on average, 10% of the standard deviation lower GPA than children who did not experience parental unemployment. Parental unemployment increased the likelihood of dropout from secondary education by an average of six percentage points. Because one study found a significant positive effect for daughters regarding upper secondary and educational attainment, **Table 2** shows the average estimates without this study. The results of the study cannot be considered reliable because of the low number of cases and the method used. Thus, it can be suggested that parental unemployment reduces the likelihood of upper secondary enrollment and completion, on average, by 6 percentage points, and tertiary education, on average, by 13 percentage points. Parental unemployment decreases children's educational attainment by an average of five percent of the standard deviation.

Overall, the effects of parental unemployment can be considered small because the estimated effect sizes are lower than 10 percentage points. However, parental unemployment has the largest negative effect on children's tertiary education that can be considered a moderate effect size. A favorable institutional context equalizes the negative effect of parental unemployment on children's educational outcomes, and the average estimates (in **Table 2**) do not take into account that the negative effect varies between countries. However, future research should investigate, in more detail, how different institutional settings can amplify or mitigate the negative effects of parental unemployment, and the deeper mechanisms that can influence children's education when parents face unemployment.

Only one article analyzed in this study was conducted in a developing country. It is evident that more research is needed to draw conclusions on how parental unemployment influences children's educational outcomes in developing economies when there is no suitable social security system.

All the articles included in this review found at least a marginal effect of parental unemployment (one found a positive effect) on children's educational outcomes. However, this could also reflect publication bias, meaning that articles indicating negative effects had a greater likelihood of being published than those that did not find any effect.

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Diaspora and internationalization of higher education: a critical approach

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Introduction	128
Internationalization of higher education	129
Constructions of and approaches to diaspora in HE scholarship	129
Diaspora as human capital and state possession	129
Diaspora as marginalized other and social construct	130
A critical approach	131
Future directions	132
Conclusion	133
Acknowledgments	133
References	133

Introduction

The concept of diaspora, long associated with forced dispersion, exile from a “homeland” and oppression in “hostlands”, has undergone a significant shift in recent years. In the period of contemporary globalization, with its emphasis on global markets and connectivity, a greater demand emerged for “intercultural skills”, global competencies and networks. The advantageous nature of such global networks and skills, for both individual and national competitive advantage, saw a shift occur in which diaspora shed much of its pejorative connotations and became associated with a desirable form of cosmopolitanism which emphasized both dispersion (no longer exclusively traumatic) and connectivity (to a homeland, but more broadly, communities and people around the world, and circuits of migration and mobility) (Bamberger et al., 2021a; Rizvi, 2021). Although the COVID-19 pandemic has spurred increasing racism and nationalism, this positive view of diaspora largely prevails.

The intensive processes of contemporary globalization characterized by interconnectedness and interdependence have changed the conditions of diaspora formation and perpetuation, and its perceived value for individuals, communities, states, regional and supranational organizations. Individuals with the “right” forms of intercultural skills and global connections, have experienced a boon in their opportunities as markets globalized. States began to see the usefulness of diasporas in pursuing their own foreign relations and enhancing their global economic competitiveness. Countries as diverse as China, South Korea, Ireland, Israel, India, Australia have created diaspora schemes, part of what Gamlen (2020) traces as the explosion of diaspora institutions. Likewise, international and regional organizations such as the OECD, UNESCO, World Bank and EU have highlighted the importance and potential of diaspora in spurring development and entrepreneurship and crafted programs, policies, working reports, etc. to this effect. Higher education within these portrayals of development in which “skills transfer,” “knowledge diaspora,” “innovation” and the like are invoked, are closely linked with the oft-touted “diaspora option” and evolving discourses of “brain drain to circulation.” These growing trends connect national, regional, and supranational diaspora strategies, with the aspirations and identities of mobile people – particularly academics and students.

The increasing relevance and changing conditions of diaspora formations in the age of contemporary globalization has triggered a surge in diaspora scholarship and theorization across the humanities and social sciences, particularly in the fields of Migration, Human Geography, Political Science, Cultural Studies and increasingly in Education (e.g. Gholami, 2017; Rizvi, 2021; Shirazi, 2019). Such scholarship, combined with institutional, national, regional and supranational engagement, has broadened the meaning of and approaches to diaspora (Bamberger, 2021; Bamberger et al., 2021a). To the traditional idea of dispersion due to trauma, has been added a more generalized conception of “dispersion” and “exile” (Brubaker, 2017); binary views of homeland/host land are increasingly challenged, and networks, circuits and flows are more often invoked (Appadurai, 1990); homelands are no longer viewed as merely static, physical places, but rather, as symbols of identity, and important cultural discourses (Gilroy, 1993, 1997). These views indicate the different perspectives on what diaspora is and how it can be studied. Broadly, the proliferation of diaspora scholarship has reflected the expanding use of post-modern perspectives and theories, with much diaspora scholarship since the 1990s representing a move from diaspora as a static and essentialized notion of dispersed groups, maintaining distinctive identities to “an indicator of an identity in flux” (Delano and Gamlen, 2014, p. 44), hybridity and third space (Bhabha, 1994).

The relevance and appeal of diaspora, thus, appears widespread. However, it is not always clear how diaspora is being used and how it might represent a more critical and profound concept around which to understand key processes in higher education research, particularly around internationalization. Building on my recent research (Bamberger, 2020a, b, 2021; Kim and Bamberger, 2021; Bamberger et al., 2019, 2021a) I argue that diaspora is becoming a key concept in higher education research, closely connected to internationalization in particular; and that increasing diaspora theorization provides potential tools/lenses for understanding internationalization. I further argue that this potential is not being met, and I suggest a critical approach to analyze diaspora, outlining some possible avenues for future research.

Internationalization of higher education

Internationalization is one of the key features of contemporary higher education. Scholarship abounds on different forms of internationalization (e.g. curriculum, research collaborations), however, [Buckner and Stein \(2020\)](#) argue that the major focus has been on mobility – particularly of students and academic staff. [Rizvi \(2011\)](#) has shown how international mobility of students has, in recent years, been increasingly framed within the precepts of neoliberalism and market rationality. [Bamberger \(2020a\)](#) argues that this mobility is often framed as the rational pursuit of “cosmopolitan capital”, a form of competitive and positional advantage that is associated with being accustomed to travel and foreign cultures, having international social networks, and possessing prestigious credentials ([Bühlmann et al., 2013](#); [Igarashi and Saito, 2014](#)). For academic staff, this may extend to the cultivation of international academic networks and research funding, boosting individual advantage and positional worth in the increasingly stratified global higher education system ([Kim, 2017](#)).

The literature tends to assume that higher education credentials from the Global North are universally desired (for their largely economic returns on investment) and that economic and competitive considerations are a priori driving factors in international student/faculty mobility and migration. This approach does little to explain different trajectories of mobility (e.g. regional, horizontal mobility; North-South trajectories) ([Teichler, 2015](#)) and motivations for mobility. The literature often promotes an ahistorical and apolitical stance, in that it does little to engage with the myriad roots of contemporary mobility, often ignoring local (Global South) histories, cultures, legacies and enduring forms of global domination and coercion (e.g. colonialism), and undervalues individual considerations in mobility. This approach also tends to reflect a view of internationalization as an unconditional good within broadly humanitarian, progressive purposes; its more undesirable affects, such as a focus on meritocracy as opposed to equity, undervaluing “non-elite” forms of cosmopolitan capital, perpetuating inequalities in the Global South, etc. are often under investigated ([Bamberger et al., 2019](#)). Moreover, the role of the state in internationalization research is often relegated to that of a Western, democratic and “small” neoliberal state.

These initiatives, likewise, cast renewed interest in the role of the state in internationalization. A recent special issue of *British Journal of Educational Studies* ([Bamberger et al., 2021a](#)) reveals the intensive role of authoritarian states in diaspora policies and initiatives (e.g. [Brooks and Waters, 2021](#); [Han and Tong, 2021](#); [Rensimer, 2021](#)). The role of the state, however, in internationalization literature, [Bamberger et al. \(2019\)](#) argue, has been largely relegated to that of a market regulator. Thus, diaspora policies and initiatives draw our attention to the myriad roles which different states may take in their approaches to internationalization.

While there is renewed interest in the role of the state, there is also a dearth of critical research on the role of global institutions and international organizations exercising “global governance” on internationalization – beyond the limited scope of global university rankings. Little research has investigated the roles of the OECD, World Bank, UNESCO and other influential international organizations and regional blocs (outside of the EU) in internationalization. Moreover, little research has explored the role of transnational diaspora philanthropies and institutions in promoting and shaping internationalization.

Recognizing the limitations of the widespread economic approach, higher education scholars are searching for more nuanced and sophisticated theoretical lenses to analyze internationalization. In recent years, a research agenda which views mobile academics and students in processes of “becoming,” connecting HE with complex processes of self-formation, that entail multiple, interwoven intentions and identities that include but go beyond rational economic concerns has emerged (e.g. [Marginson, 2014](#); [Tran, 2016](#)). Within this emerging literature, scholarship has revealed the existence of international student mobility along diaspora trajectories (e.g. Israel ([Bamberger, 2020a](#)), South Korea ([Kim, 2011](#)); China ([Jian, 2017](#))). Diaspora has also been shown to play a role in creating international research collaborations, in which feelings of shared culture, language, religion and politics, have spurred connectivity ([Bamberger et al., 2019](#); [Fernando and Cohen, 2016](#)). Thus, an interest in rethinking (long-distance) nationalism and cosmopolitanism within globalization and agency is emerging.

Overall, diaspora has become a topical area of research in internationalization research. “Diaspora” provides a potentially powerful frame for interpreting the main themes of internationalization, moving beyond a focus on “mobility” (e.g. of people, ideas, programs) to focuses on movement, connectivity, identities, agency and control. Thus, I argue that diaspora is both a topical issue and important theoretical lens in contemporary internationalization studies in (higher) education in general, and in internationalization research in particular.

Constructions of and approaches to diaspora in HE scholarship

[Bamberger’s \(2021\)](#) systematic review of the use of diaspora in higher education research, revealed two widespread approaches: diaspora as human capital and state possession; and diaspora as marginalized other and social construct. Below I elaborate on these findings in detail.

Diaspora as human capital and state possession

Articles which invoked diaspora as human capital and state possession, defined people by their dispersion and degree of belonging to the state. Studies were framed around discourses of globalization, national development and competition. The growing importance of HE in driving innovation and national development was highlighted and the increasing competition between states for the

highly skilled. She finds that these studies employed literature, theories and concepts which were based in a “brain drain/gain/circulation” framework and took for granted the “pull” of global north countries and universities for “their” diaspora. States were engaged in attempts to reverse this trend, or at least to entice “their” diaspora to aid in national development from abroad. Against this backdrop, [Bamberger \(2021\)](#) finds that these articles primarily focused on describing and evaluating (state/university) diaspora policies and programs that either acquiesced to these global forces and aimed to create/maintain connections to its diaspora, who would presumably stay in the global north; or to combat these forces with both carrots and sticks, to alternatively entice and penalize scholars/students to encourage homeland engagement or repatriation. She finds that articles were overwhelmingly descriptive, prescriptive, and evaluative, focusing more on outcomes as opposed to processes.

So, what emerges in these articles is that “diaspora” is viewed through a human capital/neo-liberal frame. [Bamberger \(2021\)](#) argues that this produces a view of diaspora as an exogenous source of knowledge capital to be harnessed to the state’s desire for national development and to succeed in the global knowledge economy. There was little (if any) discussion of heterogeneity *within* this group. There was often unquestioned, affective allegiance toward the “homeland” or “motherland” on the part of “its” knowledge diaspora. It was the state (or universities, serving as a proxy for the state) that were leading diaspora initiatives and forging diaspora cooperation in HE. Diaspora members were assigned considerable goodwill and volunteerism on behalf of their “motherland” and were spurred to engage largely through their strong national identities. [Bamberger \(2021\)](#) argues that this rather simplistic approach likewise under analyzes the actual affective connections scholars had with “homelands” and the connections which exist.

[Bamberger \(2021\)](#) reveals that while there were some critical perspectives, these were neither aimed at universities nor states in the Global North, nor the competitive, neoliberal logics at play; rather, critical statements focused primarily on chiding states for not doing enough to harness the potential of their (supposedly eager) knowledge diaspora, thus missing an opportunity to improve their own national conditions. Alternatively, blame was laid on knowledge diasporas for not doing enough to forge connections, give back, and spur national development in their homelands. She finds that these views elicited (policy) criticism and recommendations from scholars, indicating that if states provided the right opportunities, engagement, knowledge and development would follow.

[Bamberger \(2021\)](#) shows that a large concentration of these studies addressed states with authoritarian governments, widespread corruption, and backgrounds of domestic strife and conflict. Despite this, she notes that there was surprisingly little discussion of “dispersion” (e.g. as a result of conflict, political oppression). More common, [Bamberger \(2021\)](#) argues, was an economic framing (often the push/pull approach) in which dispersion was portrayed as rational choice for scholars and students moving toward high-status cities in the global north – similar to the widespread framing of mobility in internationalization literature. This framing was supplemented by considerably underplaying political issues of mobility – and the desirability of return or engagement with the “motherland.” She argues that these ahistorical and de-political tendencies in the literature, disconnected diaspora from its “tragic” roots, indicating that diaspora has come to be a prized “possession” and an extension of the state.

[Bamberger \(2021\)](#) calls attention to which states use – and do not use – “diaspora” – and with what intention. With few exceptions, scholars hailing from the global north appear not to refer to repatriation/diaspora strategies in their own states – neither does it seem that states in the global north are in need of the “diaspora option.” Rather [Bamberger \(2021\)](#) argues that it may be that these Global North states are instead using different words like “highly talented” policies and do not refer to “their” “diasporas” as such (e.g. expatriates, international or global scholars) or to the role they play in creating other state diasporas. She argues that more attention to the types of states, their governments, discursive representations, and so on would greatly help to shed light on this phenomenon and its politics.

Overall, while the state centered approach may be useful for practitioners and/or policy-makers, intellectually, this approach perhaps sheds more light on the field of HE Studies, and normative views of many of its authors, than on diaspora. Criticality is limited and studies exude an essentializing tendency, with limited critical consideration of scholar/student agency. Its lack of reliance on scholarship within international relations, likewise does little to investigate the states themselves (e.g. mechanisms and strategies for creating diaspora; geopolitical positions of states; legitimacy; conflict) thus does little to shed light on diaspora and its connections with HE. In the absence of such analysis, the result is a partial narrative based on global capitalism and competition, which is certainly a part of the story, but cannot be all of it. There is likewise considerable underplaying of the implications these national/state narratives of diaspora have on scholars, students and institutions.

Diaspora as marginalized other and social construct

Articles which invoked diaspora as marginalized other and social construct, linked (implicitly and explicitly) diaspora with a social identity. Articles adopting this view, portrayed people primarily by their (externally imposed and/or self-identified) belonging to an ethnic, racial or religious group. However, there were several studies which went beyond these categories, and employed “diaspora” to understand identity formation processes and experiences of academics and students in HE that were defined along other social categories (e.g. heteronormative culture; first generation), representing a considerable expansion of the term diaspora, to include those with similar social characteristics, or even intellectual interests (e.g. [Jöns et al. \(2015\)](#) “elective” knowledge diaspora).

[Bamberger \(2021\)](#) finds that articles that employed this approach were more concerned with understanding, exploring and critiquing, than with description, prescription and evaluation. Often critical theories were employed, particularly Feminist, Post-Colonial and Pan-African. Literature framed diaspora as a way to explore individual and collective identities, experiences and practices – and the role of HE in this process. Articles emphasized heterogeneity in “diaspora” and several articles aimed to

“unpack” diaspora and its homogenizing effects. These articles often called for greater equality between diasporic views in and de-centering of dominant/majority diaspora views.

Bamberger (2021) reveals that diaspora identities and experiences were alternatively expressed as sources of social alienation, empowerment and support. HE was viewed as an institution to foster, reshape and grapple with a social identity (e.g. through heritage study abroad programs, courses on heritage languages and histories); or as an institution with inherent structural biases and inequalities which should be reformed – but that in the meantime, should be managed through workarounds by students/scholars. Thus, Bamberger (2021) calls attention to the extent of much of the criticality in these articles. She argues that while it is essential for students and scholars to find and build support networks to thrive within discriminatory systems, a lack of attention to social structures themselves, at times led to a discourse that was similar to rationalist (albeit not economic) discourses. She argues that this lack of attention to social structures risks leading to over glorification of hybridity and agency without significant focus on oppressive and discriminatory social structures. Bamberger (2021) further finds that social attributes and categories were largely unquestioned and taken for granted (e.g. few articles focused on how students/staff were “diasporized” – even if racial, ethnic, religious and other social categories were critiqued and problematized). Rather the “fact” that they were part of a diaspora was often taken for granted, and the analysis focused on how individuals used their agency to shape these identities in and through HE.

Overall, considering the portrayals, foci and discourse of the two types of diaspora scholarship, it is evident that they broadly reflect well-rehearsed criticisms of their respective approaches to diaspora. Essentialist/outcomes-based approaches are critiqued for reflecting homogenizing discourses of “the” diaspora (e.g. around nation, state, ethnicity) and for its static view of social reality. Constructivist/post-modern approaches are critiqued for its loose conceptualization of “diaspora,” its focus on agency and neglect of social structures which can at times echo rationalist discourses (see Vertovec, 1997); and for its inattentiveness to history (Alexander, 2017).

In sum, Bamberger’s (2021) review of the field indicates that although there is growing scholarship on diaspora and higher education, the literature is fragmented between those concerned with “knowledge diaspora” that focus on national and institutional diaspora policy and practice (e.g. evaluation, implementation and improvement); and those that focus on the identity processes and experiences of diaspora individuals. Moreover, “diaspora” – is loosely connected to internationalization in higher education research, despite the clear connections with internationalization at the system, institution, and individual levels. Bamberger posits that this is likely because “internationalization” is associated with humanitarianism, cosmopolitanism, global citizenship and the de-centering of states, nations, ethnicities, religions, and particularistic identities (Bamberger et al., 2019). Diaspora is often connected with these latter categories and thus, is shunned as nationalist, essentialist, and so on. However, Bamberger (2021) also argues that the blending of (often conflictual) ideas, intentions, values and identities is precisely what diaspora engages in. And thus, research approaches which aim to connect these areas, and bridge their respective weaknesses are sorely lacking.

A critical approach

I propose a critical approach to bridge the chasm in contemporary diaspora research and to guide a future research agenda. Such an approach would be based on seven precepts: eschewing (national) exceptionalism; developing alternative views of universality; operating from diverse historical bases; employing theoretical diversity and flexibility; pursuing methodological pluralism; focusing on a multiplicity of units of analysis; and developing new bridges and understanding of individual agency and social structure. These tenets and the critical approach I put forward, resonate with Acharya’s (2014, 2016) “Global International Relations” approach, however, also differs in important ways. Below I elaborate.

Eschewing (national) exceptionalism: As revealed in the previous section, there is a distinct strand of literature which views nation-states, institutions or individuals from the perspective of exceptionalism. While the climate of global competition has spurred many nation-states toward narratives of national exceptionalism in HE, a discourse particularly reflected in studies on national branding campaigns to attract international students (e.g. Lomer et al., 2018; Stein, 2018), however, it is imperative for scholarship to maintain a critical distance from such national, promotional narratives. Likewise marketing tropes which address individuals such as “talents” should be critically considered. Thus, an approach which consciously aims to critically interrogate such claims and tropes of exceptionalism – instead of reproducing them - will shed greater light on issues of diaspora and internationalization.

Alternative views of universality: There is a tendency to view a particular reality (often Anglo-European) as universal and to project this into the Global. However, such projections may clash with and/or provide limited explanatory value or hold limited purchase in other societies. An approach which is conscious of such tendencies, and that reflects diverse social and ontological views, and lived realities; greater self-awareness of situated knowledge; caution when applying “borrowed” terms, and recognition of their development and connotation in different contexts, would be beneficial. Such a view would also critically interrogate “Western” views of the “diaspora option” (i.e. as widely positive for combating brain drain, often caused singularly by their own actions; universally appealing to those on the “losing” end of the brain drain equation).

Diverse historical bases: As opposed to primarily Western historical bases for the development of HE and internationalization, a critical approach would recognize a plurality of historical bases from which to view antecedents and developments in these areas. It would also recognize how diverse aspects of world history, often viewed through the lens of the Anglo-European tradition, have different impacts and implications across the world.

Theoretical diversity and flexibility: Scholars must pay attention to the wider theoretical literature and advances in other fields. This should not be a difficult task; HE Studies is already an interdisciplinary field, which borrows widely from other disciplines

(Tight, 2018). However, it is important to consider the extent to which empirical research informs theoretical choices and explanations. Some critical internationalization scholars adopt a priori theoretical and political stances, espousing an agenda for social justice and advocating for radical change. While it is sensible to view scholarship as a tool to better society, greater understanding is the first step to social change, and thus a priori theoretical approaches – which may be led by researcher interest, instead of grounded in empirical data - should be avoided. Such an approach, based in deep empirical investigation avoids many pitfalls, particularly applying theoretical frameworks which are inappropriate to discover and explore other possible influences and interpretive frameworks which could hold explanatory weight in particular contexts. Thus, this approach takes a position that is critical of projecting a priori theories and explanations (particularly in contexts outside of the West); and emphasizes the need for theoretical plurality and flexibility to study and promote understanding of diaspora and internationalization of higher education, and its different articulations across contexts.

Methodological pluralism: It is valuable to bridge the respective gaps in the different approaches in the diaspora and HE literature. For example, many studies focus on the outcomes of policy analysis, while ignoring scholar/student agency; and likewise studies which take the social construction/postmodern approach, tend to underplay/analyze social structures, widespread discourses of state policies, and historical antecedents. To nuance the literature, a shift toward a more critical perspective which focuses on processes and mechanisms (as opposed to solely outcomes), is an important step. Such a step would be aided by methodological plurality. More varied research samples, which would include a wider range of participants (e.g. those who may not espouse “volunteerism” to the motherland); diverse research methodologies, specifically purposeful comparative studies, may have much to offer in understanding the conditions and mechanisms of diaspora engagement; and wider forms of research “data” (e.g. moving beyond policies, surveys and interviews, to include analyses of curricular components, academic networks, historical/archival materials, media analyses) among others.

Multiplicity of units of analysis: While methodological nationalism has been a widespread critique of comparative education, and prominent scholars, notably Cowen (2000) have encouraged scholars to “read the global,” there is still a considerable emphasis on the role of the state. While the state is an important unit, it should not be taken as a single unit, or the only unit. More emphasis on diversity within “the” state and on regions, supranational/international organizations, and local, global and transnational actors would shed considerable light on this area.

Agency and structure: Agency has tended to be largely placed with nation-states or individuals, however, there is a need to recognize multiple sources of agency, as well as continued consideration of how different forms of agency interact with social structures. Specifically, such considerations would avoid the volunteerism narrative in the state possession/human capital framing of diaspora, and also avoid glorifying individual agency while diminishing critiques of discriminatory/oppressive social structures.

Future directions

Employing the precepts outlined in the previous section, a research agenda around diaspora and higher education could be taken in many different directions. Below, I outline a few examples, which indicate how such an approach could be applied to reconsider/ explore higher education institutions; the role of the state; and supranational/international and regional organizations.

Critical analysis of national diaspora policies, programs, institutions and actors – which eschews national exceptionalism and evaluative/descriptive/prescriptive tendencies - has considerable potential to shed light on the roles of (authoritarian) states in internationalizing higher education – both at home and abroad (e.g. China’s encouragement of students to study abroad). Such scholarship would greatly benefit from combining critical approaches with diverse disciplinary theories, particularly those from international relations (e.g. when/how states “deploy” diaspora; geopolitical conditions for nation-building outside state borders; state securitization and legitimization). It would likewise analyze which states are involved in “diaspora”; while recent work has uncovered the strong connection between authoritarian states and national diaspora policies and programs (e.g. Brooks and Waters, 2021; Han and Tong, 2021), more needs to be done to understand this. Likewise, Koinova and Tsourapas (2018), argue that “the state” is often used as a broad, unitary category. Thus, while state actions, discourses, and strategies should be examined, more attention to the plurality of the state is important (e.g. political parties; comparative analyses of different state ministries and departments) could likewise shed light on the plurality of the state, and diverse voices in diaspora “deployment” and relations with the state through HE. Such approaches may reveal the mechanisms, strategies and conditions for state-diaspora engagement and have wide reaching implications for HE. It likewise has the potential to reveal divergent forms of internationalization, shedding light on its multiple purposes and uses around the world. This approach could possibly reveal new discourses around internationalization which are starkly in contrast with much of the dominant internationalization discourses organized around the “unconditional good” or internationalization as a progressive humanitarian/neoliberal construct (Bamberger et al., 2019). This approach could likewise shed greater light on a (re)emerging and increasingly common trope of “soft power” in the role of higher education in international relations, in claiming “hearts and minds” in what is shaping up to be a new global battle for superpower status. Applying a critical approach, Bamberger et al. (2021) alight on a form of internationalization practiced by China and Israel toward Hong Kong and East Jerusalem respectively; it aims to bolster national forms of identity and extend state control over “troublesome” minorities within the nation state. This form of internationalization operates within a broader program of “internal colonialization” that is neither well developed in the literature nor explained by prominent typologies of internationalization.

Institutional analysis of diaspora policies and practices tend to be limited to evaluative/descriptive studies, often in relation to the “execution” of national policies and programs, within universities/HEIs, often focusing on the mobility (“return”) of diaspora

scholars. This leaves much to be explored. There are many different ways in which institutions can craft, lead, and respond to diaspora initiatives from diverse actors. Critical analysis of institutional policies, practices and actors – and their relationship with the state, diaspora individuals, donors, and communities – may shed light on issues of governance and agency which would be insightful. Moreover, beyond HEIs, philanthropic institutions, or NGOs may have diaspora missions which impact on HE, however, may operate outside of the HE system, or direct state control, and may be led by diaspora individuals/donors/communities. Increasing focus on the role of these types of institutions would likewise be insightful.

Supranational/international and regional organizations policy and program analysis is lacking. There has been little critical policy analysis of international organizations role in creating and perpetuating discourses around diaspora, and the implications for higher education. My intuition is that the numerous research papers, policies and programs emanating from such organizations as the UN, OECD, and World Bank promote concepts of diaspora that may be particularly influential in understanding how the “diaspora option” is being portrayed and deployed as part of the global governance of these organizations – and its reliance on the highly skilled and higher education institutions as bases for recruitment and implementation. [Bamberger’s \(2021\)](#) review indicates, and [Brooks and Waters’ \(2021\)](#) study suggests, that target states for such policies may not have fully embraced the simplistic “brain circulation” and “diaspora option” narrative propagated by these organizations. Thus, a critical analysis of these initiatives and their negation and implementation across contexts may shed light on resistance to supranational and regional governance, how HE is implicated therein and the implications which then arise for HEIs, scholars and students.

Conclusion

Over the past decades, a shift has taken place in which diaspora, once a pejorative term associated with a marginalized minority group, in the era of contemporary globalization became associated with a desirable form of cosmopolitanism. This shift in perceptions dovetailed with a significant expansion of diaspora theorization across the humanities and social sciences. I argued that diaspora is becoming a key concept in higher education research, closely connected to internationalization in particular; and that increasing diaspora theorization provides tools/lenses for investigating key areas of internationalization in HE.

The relevance and appeal of diaspora, thus, appears widespread. However, it is not always clear how diaspora is being used and how it might present a more critical and profound concept around which to understand key processes in higher education research, particularly around internationalization. Drawing on a systematic review of the literature ([Bamberger, 2021](#)), I revealed and critiqued dominant portrayals and approaches to diaspora within HE research. I demonstrated that although there is growing scholarship on diaspora and higher education, the literature is fragmented between those concerned with “knowledge diaspora” that focus on national and institutional diaspora policy and practice (e.g. evaluation, implementation and improvement); and those that focus on the identity processes and experiences of diaspora individuals. This fragmentation is largely due to differences in approach and notably, results in limited criticality. Moreover, this research largely ignores diaspora scholarship as part of internationalization, despite its clear connections.

The potential for expansion of a diaspora research agenda in higher education is timely, however, I argued that alternatives and a fresh approach to thinking and researching diaspora in (higher) education is needed. I suggested a critical framework to analyze diaspora, which I propose will shed light on this emerging phenomenon. This critical approach would be based on seven precepts: eschewing (national) exceptionalism; developing alternative views of universality; operating from diverse historical bases; employing theoretical diversity and flexibility; pursuing methodological pluralism; focusing on a multiplicity of units of analysis; and developing new bridges and understanding of individual agency and social structure. As diaspora institutions and initiatives expand, and global mobility and connectivity continue, fresh ways of thinking about diaspora and internationalization in higher education offer consider scholarly potential. This potential is increased in light of rising nationalism and bordering practices during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Education of refugees

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The position of refugee education in a globalized world	136
Who is a refugee learner? Numbers, global distribution and the issue of definitions	137
Refugee learners and the right to education	137
Particular challenges in refugee education	138
Geographical distribution and focus of research on refugee education	138
Pedagogical and psychosocial challenges in international education	139
Challenges in refugee education compared to other international and transnational education	139
Language policies in refugee education and in the global educational landscape	140
Curricular content and pedagogical orientation in refugee education	141
Brain drain, repatriation of refugees and post-conflict recovery	141
Conclusions and further research	142
References	143
Further reading	146
Relevant websites	147

Glossary

Country of origin A country of nationality or of former habitual residence of a person or group of persons who have migrated abroad, irrespective of whether they migrate regularly or irregularly (IOM, n.d.)

Diaspora A population scattered outside a country, region or location, and who retain connections to this location, as well as to other individuals and communities with a similar origin

Displacement The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters (IOM, n.d.)

Global education (GE) Aims at developing awareness and appreciation of cultural difference, recognition of planetary interdependence, social injustice and environmental degradation, as well as commitment to social engagement on these issues (Gaudelli, 2007)

HIC High-income countries—country classification based on economy as used by the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP), 2021

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence (see Displacement) but “who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border” (IOM, n.d.)

International education A broad range of practices, that range from promoting international understanding and peace (UNESCO, 1974), to marketized international schools or internationalization in higher education

LMIC Low- and middle-income countries—country classification based on economy as used by the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP), 2021

Mobility regimes The extent to which processes of globalization are also concerned with the prevention of movement and blocking of access (Shamir, 2005)

Open Education (OE) A philosophy and practices that aim to give access to education for all, including formal and non-formal education, as well as informal learning communities

Refugee Two main definitions: (1) “Under international law and UNHCR’s mandate, refugees are persons outside their countries of origin who are in need of international protection because of feared persecution, or a serious threat to their life, physical integrity or freedom in their country of origin as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder.” (UNHCR, n.d.) and (2) “A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.” (1951 Convention, IOM, n.d.)

Refugee education Formal and non-formal education provided for refugee learners, whether in educational settings dedicated to refugees, integrated in national education systems or provided through international education

Refugee learner Any learners whose educational opportunities and career prospects are affected by their own or their families' experience of forced displacement

Stateless person A person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law (IOM, n.d.)

Transnational education (TNE) All types of higher education study programs, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based (UNESCO/Council of Europe, 2001).

When not otherwise specified, terminology on forced displacement and education follows IOM and UNESCO definitions.

The position of refugee education in a globalized world

Refugee education takes place in a highly politicized context. Various geopolitical and economic interests lie behind armed conflicts across the globe and motivate attitudes of third countries to parties to these conflicts, as well as to the neighboring countries that receive refugee flows (Chimni, 1998; Hyndman, 2013; Avery and Said, 2017; Micinski, 2018; Morris, 2021; Abdelaaty, 2021). Authoritarian regimes are supported or condemned, depending on economic interests in the natural resources or strategic location of the country. Xenophobic and nationalist discourses are deliberately used by politicians to rally support for military agendas, or to avoid responsibility for economic or social problems by instead diverting public attention to the convenient scapegoat of the “foreigner” or other minority groups (Gulmez, 2019; Rossell Hayes and Dudek, 2020; Wang, 2020; Wasem, 2020; Winn, 2021).

Such political and geopolitical agendas shape conditions for teaching and learning, and thus cannot be neglected when considering purely “pedagogical” issues in education. Profound insecurity—and frequently also hostility from the population of host countries—are among the most clearly defining features of refugee education, and which distinguish it from other kinds of education or other educational situations.

For refugee learners, the overall political agendas within which refugee education is embedded translate in the best of cases into a “culture of welcome” (Gereke and Nijhawan, 2019), supported by state policies. For many, however, their studies instead take place in a context of exclusion and bullying (Guo et al., 2019). The hostility of host populations may be aggravated if there is a perception that refugees are “stealing jobs”, or that they benefit from state or humanitarian support that is not available to the country’s own disadvantaged populations. Often welcoming and excluding policies or drivers exist side-by-side in the same national context (Bellino and Dryden-Peterson, 2019; Garvik and Valenta, 2021). Education and support measures may thus be offered with a humanitarian or integration rationale, at the same time that other elements of national policy maintain permanent insecurity regarding settled status, or close pathways to further education and future employment (see Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2020; Baker et al., 2021).

Depending on the context, other geopolitical issues can have significant impacts on the lives and future of refugee youth. This notably includes recruitment as child soldiers by non-state armed groups (Darden, 2019), or by armed groups used by states against neighboring countries. Various forms of “refugee militarization” are used to justify policies of “securitization” (Nanopoulos et al., 2018; Ansorg, 2020), which in turn contribute to deteriorating conditions in which refugee youth live and study, rendering them increasingly vulnerable to exploitation. Host countries may also use refugee populations as money of exchange (refugee “rent-seeking behavior”, see Tsourapas, 2019) to pressure agreements with the European Union or other high-income regions that wish to prevent the entry of refugees. Viewing refugees as a commodity can thus constitute an incentive to perpetuate a state of crisis, as well as to keep refugees in camps where their numbers are countable and their plight is visible. Although corruption and the monetization of refugees in host countries is a well-known phenomenon, donors and international agencies are reluctant to support refugee-led initiatives (Alio et al., 2020; Pincock et al., 2021), leaving a relatively small number of independent NGOs financed by diasporas that are committed to education by refugees, for refugees.

A considerable amount of research has been devoted to the structural ways globalization affects education (see e.g., Stromquist, 2002; Stromquist and Monkman, 2014; Zajda and Rust, 2021). This includes phenomena such as marketization of education, standardization, national curricular content geared toward the needs of transnational corporations, or brain drain of competence toward these corporations and countries of the global North (Marsh and Oyelere, 2018; UNESCO, 2018a). Much of academic research in the field highlights negative impacts on countries of the global South, but may also discuss more general effects of mobility and interconnectedness on identities, life trajectories and worldviews (Rizvi, 2019), or concern strategies adopted by education institutions—particularly in higher education—in order to remain competitive on global education markets. Another body of literature is dedicated to policies at national levels, concerning for instance migration, mobility, and strategies to secure qualified labor, while international organizations tend to frame the issues in terms of development, crisis response, humanitarian aid or rights to protection. While very little of the literature on globalization and education explicitly focuses on refugees, many of the structural phenomena that determine refugees’ education opportunities—such as the power balances of the world order that contribute to armed conflicts, inequity within and between nations, policies and value systems, aspirations of young people, as well as xenophobic backlash or securitization of refugees—are all strongly influenced by globalization.

Who is a refugee learner? Numbers, global distribution and the issue of definitions

There is no simple definition of who shall be considered a refugee (Sandelind, 2020; Cole, 2021), and many learners with a refugee experience or background will not be identified as such in statistics or administrative systems. The term “refugee” is used by researchers and authorities to cover a wide range of circumstances beyond the definition of the Geneva Convention (United Nations, 1951), and a multitude of related designations are used to indicate specific categories and situations. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) uses the term “forcibly displaced people”, to cover the various situations where people have fled their homes “as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events seriously disturbing public order”, estimating their number to be 82.4 million in 2021 (UNHCR, 2021a). Of these, the majority are internally displaced people (48 million, representing 58%), while only a small proportion are asylum seekers (4.1 million, representing 5%). Roughly 15% of forcibly displaced people are children of school age. In several parts of Africa and Asia, the proportion of children can exceed 50%. The vast majority of forcibly displaced are hosted in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), mostly neighboring the country they fled from (NRC, 2021). By comparison, relatively small number of refugees are able to seek asylum in high income countries (HIC). For instance, in May 2021, 8549 asylum seekers were granted refugee status across European countries, while an estimated 792,800 cases were pending (EASO, 2021). Obstacles in access to education for refugees can be compounded by statelessness (Mahruf and Shohel, 2022). Situations of flight can lead to statelessness, but estimating numbers is even more difficult than for other refugees. Thus, while the UNHCR in 2021 estimated that 4.2 million people were stateless worldwide, based on numbers reported by 79 countries), in 2018 Filippo Grandi of the UNHCR suggested that the true figure might be three times greater (UN, 2018).

All statistics concerning refugees must be seen as rough approximations, and estimating numbers is notoriously difficult (Blitz et al., 2019). This is in part because UNHCR statistics aim to assess needs. Refugees who have been granted settled status in high income countries are therefore removed from statistics after 10 years, while refugees in developing countries are likely to remain in need of protection and humanitarian aid and are therefore mostly included as long as the situation of forced displacement continues (NRC, 2021); in some cases, this extends for generations (Dryden-Peterson, 2017). Refugees granted residence on humanitarian grounds and resettlement refugees are also excluded from UNHCR statistics (NRC, 2021). Many refugees are unable or unwilling to register. Thus, refugees living informally in other countries, those who have traveled to countries with no visa requirements, as well as those who have been able to migrate through family reunification, or with work or study permits, are not included in the numbers (Blitz et al., 2019; Cole, 2021; NRC, 2021).

Refugee learners and the right to education

Refugees are protected by international law, through the Geneva Convention of July 28, 1951 (United Nations, 1951), the Protocol of 1967, 1969 OAU Convention, and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration (Freier et al., 2022), as well as other instruments which are based on these, such as the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, or the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. Importantly, the principle of “non-refoulement” ensures that people who have fled cannot be sent back as long as threats persist, regardless of the status they are granted, and regardless of whether the host country is party to the Geneva Convention. Article 22 of the Convention stipulates that refugees should enjoy the same right to elementary education as nationals, while for education other than elementary, they should at least have the same access as non-nationals, including the recognition of prior qualifications. Children’s right to education and protection are established in numerous other international documents, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Sustainable Development Goal 4 of Agenda 2030 (UNESCO, 2018b). The Geneva Convention does not include mechanisms of compliance, however (Willems and Vernimmen, 2018), and in practice a limited proportion of refugees enjoy the rights stipulated in the Convention, including the right to education (see also Freier et al., 2022). Less than two-thirds of refugees have access to primary education, one-fourth get a secondary education, and approximately 3% enroll in tertiary education (UNESCO, 2018a). Statistics often focus on children and young people, but also adults are in need of retraining and further education, since former qualifications are seldom recognized and new skills are needed in the new location.

International instruments which offer protection and rights to refugee learners, such as the Geneva Convention, resulted from specific historical developments in the post WWII period, including the Cold War dynamics and processes of decolonization that significantly affected the world order reflected in UN bodies (Chimni, 1998), as well as ensuring their funding. Since then, the world order is in a process of renegotiation, and the factors that initially motivated wide support and adherence to UN principles have weakened. UN agencies are experiencing a financial crisis (Mir, 2020), while their autonomy, credibility and scope of action is reduced (Thakur, 2020). At the same time, humanitarian crises have been accelerating worldwide, and this trend is likely to increase in the coming years. UN yearly efforts to secure national commitments and to mobilize humanitarian funding from donor countries are thus set to fail.

It is against this background that the UNHCR shifted strategy in 2012 from supporting teaching of the curriculum of the country of origin, to instead aiming at integration in the educational systems of the host country (Dryden-Peterson, 2017; Bellino and Dryden-Peterson, 2019). Similarly, the Global Compact on Refugees corresponds to a need to find viable long-term funding for

refugee education, and entails a renegotiation of responsibilities aiming not to place a disproportionate burden on the countries that host refugees—mainly neighboring countries situated in the global South (Sharpe, 2018; NRC, 2021). There are, however, a number of serious issues with this strategy. Chimni (2018) underlines that the Global Compact lacks mechanisms of enforcement and will therefore, like the Geneva Convention, rely on the goodwill of states. Furthermore, it does not address the pushback policies (see e.g., Parliamentary Assembly, 2019; Auer, 2021) and other obstacles put in place to prevent refugee protection by high-income states (Morris, 2021).

Particular challenges in refugee education

It is seldom possible for local authorities in host countries or international agencies organizing education in refugee camps to assess how long a conflict will last, or what the probable outcome will be. Such uncertainties make it difficult to take appropriate decisions concerning whether to set up temporary arrangements based on the language used for teaching and learning and curricula of the country of origin, or to instead aim at rapid integration in the education system of the host country (Dryden-Peterson, 2017, 2021). Further obstacles are, on the one hand, that curricula in both host country and country of origin are unlikely to be oriented toward the challenges that post-conflict countries typically face for recovery and peacebuilding. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood that circumstances in the country of origin will eventually permit the safe return of refugees. On the other hand, since refugees and returnees face an increased risk of renewed flight or onwards migration, their education should equip them both to continue their education and eventually work in specific national contexts, and to be able to use qualifications and knowledge in other unspecified contexts about which they cannot be sure in advance.

Although legal status and access to protection differ depending on context and individual factors, from the perspective of refugee education, all learners who have been obliged to flee their country of prior residence will share many of the same needs. Their past experience and future expectations will be marked by the trauma of displacement (cf. Sandelind, 2020) and loss of social, economic and cultural capital—a loss that can be more difficult to deal with for learners with high aspirations, who had extensive opportunities before their flight. Refugee learners will face administrative and pedagogical obstacles, and often be exposed to discrimination, social exclusion, financial hardship and a multitude of uncertainties (UNESCO, 2018a). School fees can be a challenge (Aquila, 2022). While refugee learners are likely to face challenges due to various aspects of their background and situation, there is also a likelihood that education they are offered will not be well matched to their needs and aspirations (Molla, 2021).

Furthermore, experiences that characterize refugee learners do not only apply to the first generation. Impacts of forced displacement persist over generations (see e.g., Sajdi et al., 2021), including historical and intergenerational trauma. As with other learners with a migrant background, refugee learners are likely to have friends, relatives and other members of their communities scattered over many countries, leading to a transnational identity and understanding of the world (see Bloch and Hirsch, 2018; Rizvi, 2019). Furthermore, as other learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, refugee learners need a greater degree of self-efficacy and community support to manage negative images they meet in education as well as in society at large. As many learners from disadvantaged backgrounds also, they will face expectations to provide assistance to relatives and members of their community, which increases the pressure to succeed and obtain qualifications that allow social or geographical mobility. Others drop out early, to work and contribute to livelihoods (Erden, 2019), while particularly girls may marry young (El Arab and Sagbakken, 2019; Dagane and Aden, 2021). This can create tensions with educational systems that see learners as individuals detached from their social context.

Geographical distribution and focus of research on refugee education

A search made on August 12, 2021 of peer-reviewed articles in English published in Scopus-listed journals using the search term “refugee education” in title-abstract-keywords yielded 1641 publications in the subject area social sciences. Of these, 21% were published between the years 1958 and 2009, and 79% were published after 2010. The US, Australia, UK and Canada represented 62% of the total publications for the period 1958–2021, while Sweden, Turkey, Germany, the Netherlands, Israel and Norway represented a further 16%. The US alone produced 544 publications (33% of total publications). According to the UNHCR (2021a), the country hosted a total of 1 million asylum-seekers and 300,000 refugees in 2020, corresponding to 0.4% of its population. Among the other major host countries, Sweden produced 66 publications (4%), hosting 267,000 refugees in 2020 (2.6% of its population), Turkey had 62 publications (3.8%, with 3,976,000 refugees (4.7% of population), and Germany 57 publications (3.5%), with 1,454,000 registered refugees (1.7% of population) (NRC, 2021).

Although several host countries, and above all the US, thus contribute substantially to research on refugee education, other host countries are noticeably absent in the academic literature. Excluding Turkey, Germany and the US, the ten main countries that refugees had fled to were Jordan, Palestine, Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda, Lebanon, Peru, Sudan, Bangladesh and Ethiopia, with a total of 15.1 million refugees (NRC, 2021, including UNRWA figures), but together only representing 5.1% of Scopus-listed publications. The largest number of these (28 publications) came from Lebanon, where refugees make up 19.5% of the population. By comparison, Turkey, Germany and the US jointly host 6.8 million refugees, but represent 39.5% of publications, with the vast majority coming from the US. Literature from countries of origin is almost absent, with a total of 13 publications (0.8%) from the ten

main countries of origin. Where funding sponsor was indicated, a total 121 publications were funded by the EU, various national governments, foundations, academic institutions or humanitarian organizations from high-income countries; 17 were sponsored by UN agencies, and 18 were sponsored by academic institutions in LMICs.

The 1641 publications found in Scopus covered a very wide range of topics. However, only less than one-third (511 publications) had keywords that specifically referred to education (e.g., teaching, learning, students, education policy). The most frequent keywords among the 511 articles focusing education were: higher education (68), migration (45), education policy (34), United States (30), female (26), ethnology (25), language (25), economics (24), employment (24), and young population (24).

Many of the types of challenges faced by refugee learners are similar to other categories of learners, and strategies to address these challenges can therefore be found in literature that does not explicitly focus refugees, such as regarding international (IE) and transnational education (TNE), education for newcomers, migrants and learners with an immigrant background, or literature on social justice, anti-racism and inclusion more generally. Other strands of literature relevant to the large proportion of refugee learners hosted in the global South can be found under designations such as “emergency” education, “education for development”, and education in fragile, humanitarian, or low- and middle-income country (LMIC) settings.

Although numerous publications relevant to refugee education can certainly be found using other search terms or in other languages, in journals not listed by Scopus and in the gray literature, the Scopus overview nevertheless suggests certain trends. As in other fields of research, English speaking countries dominate international publications in English. From around 2000, the number of publications appears to increase exponentially, and a certain correlation can be discerned in the geographical distribution between publications and number of refugees hosted. However, there is a sharp asymmetry between publications from HICs and LMICs, and US publications are disproportionately represented. The dominance of US research in the field is accentuated when looking at OA publications, which are likely to have greater impact due to ease of access. Here, of 121 OA publications, 102 (84%) were from the US.

Pedagogical and psychosocial challenges in international education

Refugee education shares many characteristics with what can be broadly termed “international” or “transnational” education (TNE), including internationalization efforts and measures to encourage mobility in education, such as the European Erasmus+ program. Thus, from a purely pedagogical point of view, we are looking at an educational situation where language of teaching and learning and official curriculum contents differ from the curriculum and prior language of the learner (cf. [Waters and Leung, 2017](#); [Dryden-Peterson, 2021](#)). The learner will have to adapt to a different societal and educational culture and may experience social isolation due to the distance from their previous social networks. The needs of refugee learners and other types of learners in international education are also similar, to the extent that there is an assumption or anticipation of transnational life and career trajectories, characterized by mobility.

In the case of transnational and international education, these issues are well known, and are addressed in constructive ways. Teachers and educational institutions are aware of language issues and may have special teacher training to better provide for their international students. The educational institutions may have special support staff or offices, designed to assist students with academic writing. Differences in students’ prior knowledge and educational culture are understood to be normal and a consequence of different educational systems and curricula. Such challenges in transitioning between educational systems are therefore not interpreted as an indication of lower academic capacity or value of the students. Rather, differences in background are one of the arguments for internationalization, since international students enrich the learning environment with their prior experiences, culture, perspectives, and knowledge. Support services for international students ([Arthur, 2017](#); [Ammigan and Jones, 2018](#); [Madden-Dent et al., 2019](#)) may involve mentoring, or specially arranged social and cultural events, to facilitate friendships and interaction, so that international students can fully benefit from their stay, while students at the host institution can learn from their presence ([Arkoudis et al., 2013](#)). Educational counselors are familiar with the mental health issues that international students may have due to isolation and navigating in an unfamiliar environment, and host institutions may also provide support regarding practical challenges, such as accommodation or transport.

Challenges in refugee education compared to other international and transnational education

The most fundamental difference between refugee education and other forms of international education is that, in the latter, the international students are seen as desirable ([Lo, 2019](#); [Serpa et al., 2020](#)), and the different experiences that they bring are seen as an asset to other students, as well as to the standing and reputation of the host institution ([Delgado-Márquez et al., 2013](#); [de Wit, 2019](#)). From a policy perspective, internationalization and transnational mobility are considered means to support the economy, by preparing the future workforce to be better adapted to mobile working conditions, cooperate in multicultural teams, work in international corporations or organizations, support trade relationships, tourism, diplomatic or geopolitical interests, as well as to strengthen future collaborations in research and development (see e.g., [Rose and McKinley, 2018](#); [Waters and Leung, 2017](#); [Wihlborg and Robson, 2018](#)). As well as serving economic interests, educational mobility may be seen as strengthening regional identity. For example, within the European Union mobility is seen as a way of fostering a “European identity”, to ensure

the stability, cohesion and future development of the union (Van Mol, 2018). Similar motivations lie behind the expansion of the Bologna process, or the educational collaboration among countries of the British Commonwealth, as well as in other regions that wish to consolidate their internal cohesion or gain new allies (Ziguras, 2018; Ploner and Nada, 2019; Khan et al., 2020).

In the case of international schools and programmes that receive paying students (see Kim and Mobernd, 2019), as well as in the case of higher education institutions receiving international students, higher fees demanded from international students are often vital to the finances of the educational institution (de Wit, 2019). Such educational institutions are therefore highly motivated to attract the international students, and to make their educational experience positive and academically successful. At the same time, with paying students, financial resources are also available for the various support measures.

By contrast, in refugee education, students can rarely afford high tuition fees. To the extent that host countries do not see refugee populations as an asset, public funding will be limited. Given the high percentage of refugees located in so-called developing countries, which may themselves have difficulty in supporting education systems for their existing populations, much education provision will devolve to international humanitarian organizations and NGOs. However, these have insufficient funding to address growing challenges worldwide and can therefore only offer limited support. In a great number of educational settings, financial resources available to fund necessary support measures are therefore lacking.

Not only do a host countries rarely provide adequate funding for support measures, but in many cases there are hostile policies aimed at controlling refugee populations, deterring them from arrival or facilitating rapid deportation. These may lead to legislation and regulations that multiply formal and administrative obstacles to education; for example asylum seekers and refugees may be required to reside in particular locations or they may be moved from one location to the other at short notice. Grüttner et al. (2021) speak of an “administrative jungle” confronting refugee students. Educational institutions may also not be allowed to show flexibility concerning ordinary requirements of documentation. Translation of prior qualifications, documentation concerning identity, parental custody, health certificates, proof of residence and status, may additionally entail considerable costs and administrative delays. Original records may have been lost (Gilliland, 2017; UNESCO, 2018a) or destroyed due to armed conflict, and contacts with authorities representing the country of origin may expose the refugee or asylum seeker to danger. Even when documents are available, prior qualifications tend to be devalued (see Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018). The administrative formalities connected to enrollments and assessment of prior qualifications can thus become major obstacles to educational access.

Although refugee students are less likely to pursue higher education (UNESCO, 2018a) and also more likely to drop out from pre-study programmes, in their study of a German context, Grüttner et al. (2021) found that this difference no longer appeared when gender, age, social origins and other relevant factors were accounted for. Financial problems were identified as major obstacles, while feelings of social exclusion also increased the risk of drop out. Nevertheless, refugee students were more likely to be resilient in the face of adversity than international students. Experts consulted in Grüttner, Schröder and Berg’s study therefore believed that refugee students would benefit from similar support as other international students.

Language policies in refugee education and in the global educational landscape

The curriculum and language used for teaching and learning in refugee education can be oriented toward the education system of the country of origin, in view of an assumed later return or be oriented toward integration in the national education system of the host country (Bellino and Dryden-Peterson, 2019; Koehler and Schneider, 2019; Reddick and Dryden-Peterson, 2021). Countries that wish to keep the refugees in the long term, will generally encourage learning the host country language, and may provide special support to this effect.

The choice of language of instruction is crucial for refugee learners’ future educational pathways and opportunities but learning any language to a level that allows future studies and careers entails an investment of many years. From the perspective of refugee learners, such choices are particularly difficult in the general context of uncertainty that characterizes refugee education. Inevitably, any choice of language will open certain future pathways, while creating obstacles for others. Some countries and educational institutions have a policy of supporting plurilingualism and high-quality bilingual education—Canada and Bolivia, or the European school of Luxembourg are, for instance, notable examples. However, this is not a systematic practice in settings of refugee education and objectives of national plurilingualism policies are likely to diverge from those relevant to refugee learners. Often also, refugee learners will be reluctant to invest time in developing academic competence in smaller non-dominant languages that are only used locally, and will instead prefer dominant “international” languages such as English, particularly if they hope to move onwards (Karam et al., 2017; Zsófia, 2018; Yilmaz, 2022). For refugee education thus, learning the language(s) of the host country, maintaining language(s) of country of origin or prior education, and acquiring international languages in view of future mobility, all play significant roles in preventing loss of skills and cultural capital, as well as enabling choice of future trajectories. As in the case of other international and transnational education, for elite learners acquiring additional languages is seen by the states or organizations that fund education as a valid investment and advantage, while for refugee learners the issue is framed as a problem and a “burden” that institutions are reluctant to take responsibility for (cf. Hult and Hornberger, 2016).

Refugee learners can be forced into renewed displacement, or may themselves wish to move onwards in search of better opportunities or to live close to family settled elsewhere. However, the landscape of languages that enable mobility is structured around powerful interests, due to the role that language in education plays in diplomacy and geopolitical strategies (Khan et al., 2020). Thus, language, content, curricular structure and education pathways, recognition of qualifications and transnational links between

educational institutions can serve to strengthen the economic and geopolitical position of a country, region or group of allied countries. Internationalization and educational collaboration are therefore often coupled to a strategy of promoting certain languages, thereby also consolidating the role of these languages in research and trade (Diaz, 2018; Erfurt, 2018; De Costa et al., 2021). Student mobility is encouraged in this type of internationalization strategies, since it is anticipated that some international students will remain in the country they received their qualifications in, and thereby contribute to the pool of highly qualified professionals. Others will return to their countries of origin or pursue careers internationally, but still retain their ties and networks to the country where they received their education, as well as an understanding of the perspectives and interests of that country. They will be able to communicate in the language of education and can be expected to show sympathies for that country's interests in future positions of authority and power that they may occupy. For a small group of refugee learners who receive scholarships, similar considerations may play a role, and in some cases global powers involved in the conflicts that led to the flight may wish to support certain groups of refugee learners. Languages used in refugee education in LMICs that is funded by humanitarian organizations is also not neutral to the geopolitical dynamics of donor countries.

From a pedagogical perspective, among approaches of particular interest for refugee education are those involving creativity and artistic expression (McLeod et al., 2020) since these are less dependent on language proficiency and allow refugee learners to be active and visible in the community, express experiences of resilience and process adversity.

Curricular content and pedagogical orientation in refugee education

Since prior knowledge is difficult to transfer (Hajian, 2019; Dryden-Peterson, 2021) self-directed and inquiry-based approaches (Almasri et al., 2019) are suggested to enable learners to independently reorganize and supplement their knowledge or skills, as well as defining their own learning agendas. However, learners with trauma can find it difficult to navigate learning environments that lack clear structure and where instructions are not sufficiently explicit. Similar difficulties may be encountered by refugee learners moving from teacher-led environments to more fluid learner-centered contexts, such as situations experienced during emergency distance learning during Covid (Fujii et al., 2020). Nevertheless, once they have cracked the code of school culture and teacher expectations, refugee learners often have considerable resourcefulness and skills in solving complex tasks, as well as tenacity in dealing with adversity (Sleijpen et al., 2017; Ryu and Tuvilla, 2018).

In refugee camps and settings of temporary residence, educational content may consist of ad hoc assemblages of whatever volunteers, NGOs or donor countries are able and willing to offer (Karim and Hussain, 2019), including curricula modeled on the donor country or informed by the ideological or religious identity of the NGO. Language and curriculum differences in education systems, combined with lack of recognition of prior qualifications mean that moving between systems entails losing years of study, as well as other resources invested in education. To the extent that refugee trajectories have a likelihood to involve onward migration or flight, and from the perspective of enabling refugees to lead meaningful lives, there is therefore a strong argument for offering high status curricula such as the international baccalaureate program, that are recognized and can be pursued internationally (cf. Streitwieser, 2019).

Refugee education is insufficiently funded, however, leaving little resources for quality education (UNHCR, 2011; Mir, 2020), while even high-quality education offers limited protection against discrimination. Also, like other measures to enhance mobility, channeling refugee learners toward elite, transnationally-recognized programmes could aggravate brain drain (UNESCO, 2018a), standardization, or loss of locally relevant curricular content (Stromquist, 2002; Stromquist and Monkman, 2014). As an alternative, Dryden-Peterson et al. suggest including content and using teaching approaches in refugee education that build transferable skills, which will be useful regardless of how the future unfolds (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Dryden-Peterson, 2021). Such approaches are particularly valuable in the context of short-term non-formal programmes directed toward refugees, but to the extent that the strategy only partly addresses issues of recognition of qualifications, it does little to open pathways out of the parallel universe of constrained education and career opportunities that refugees are frequently assigned to.

Drawing on evidence concerning long term outcomes of European education systems for learners with immigrant background, Koehler and Schneider (2019) conclude that early-tracking aggravates educational disadvantage, compared to education systems aiming at "education for all" and with life-long learning perspectives. Policy that does not permanently penalize learners for disadvantage at a particular age is therefore important. Pedagogical approaches and institutions developed in the open education movement (Weller, 2020) are in line with such aims. Distance learning addresses the mobility constraints refugee learners are subjected to, while open educational resources (OER) can be a valuable asset in resource-constrained settings. However, OER do not necessarily correspond to the curricular content, languages or educational needs of different refugee education settings, while digitally mediated instruction comes with a number of other challenges (see e.g., Joynes and James, 2018; Bock et al., 2020).

Brain drain, repatriation of refugees and post-conflict recovery

In the context of refugee education, the issue of brain drain is frequently a focus, since it affects a relatively small number of countries at a massive scale, where the challenges of post-conflict recovery for these countries are aggravated by the interrupted or limited education of populations who remained in the country of origin (see e.g., Avery and Said, 2017; UNESCO, 2018a). Mechanisms of

exclusion directed toward refugees in host countries also mean that the latter only benefit to a limited extent from the influx of educated professionals and youth in education. Although less visible, authoritarian regimes that drive brain drain through flows of refugees suffering individual persecution, also drive a steady exodus of youth and educated professionals who seek better and safer life conditions elsewhere. However, despite the real impacts of brain drain, it is simplistic to frame refugee repatriation as a solution, since this does not address the underlying drivers to flight (Walter, 2011; Bara et al., 2021).

Even in the best of cases, conditions to benefit from an inflow of qualified returnees are unlikely to be favorable in many post-conflict contexts (see e.g., Williams, 2020). In cases where diasporas do not, or only intermittently return, grievances may push them to oppose new governments, while in other cases they play active roles in recovery from afar (Cochrane, 2015). Diaspora remittances can be important, as well as social, cultural and economic initiatives based on the international networks and competences diasporas have acquired (Amazan, 2014; Dryden-Peterson and Reddick, 2019; Williams, 2020; Halilovich and Efendi, 2021; San-dož et al., 2021). For refugee education, a significant issue affecting the ability of diasporas and returnees to contribute to post-conflict recovery are not only the institutional, security and economic conditions of the country of origin, but to which extent their skills and qualifications match needs in the country of origin, and whether knowledge and experience are transferable (Dryden-Peterson, 2021). Curricular content, medium of instruction and qualification structures of national education systems are not geared to meet such needs, while transnational education tends to be oriented toward producing mobile elites at the service of large corporations or national diplomacy and civil service.

The objective of repatriation to countries of origin outlined in the Global Compact is therefore problematic (Chimni, 2018; Tegenbos and Vlassenroot, 2018; Zetter, 2021). While many refugees do hope to return and ensuring the right to return is an important issue, conditions for return are often highly precarious and refugee return is frequently implemented as a deportation (Lemberg-Pedersen, 2021; Naimou, 2021; Lindberg and Edward, 2021; Garvik and Valenta, 2021). Peace agreements seldom settle underlying root causes, and the risk for future conflicts and continued violence is high (Walter, 2011; Bara et al., 2021). In yet other cases, such as Bosnia and Lebanon, the power sharing arrangements of the peace agreements lead to long-term political stalemates that block development and produce a state of protracted crisis. Also, groups having previously experienced persecution remain exposed, as illustrated by recent examples for Rohingya, Syrians, and Afghans. In the best of cases, for refugee learners, repatriation will still represent a disruption of their studies, with efforts to adjust to a place they may never have known, and rebuilding a new life from scratch, rather than resuming “life as it was”. For many, shifting to a new medium of instruction that they may not be proficient in will also represent a significant educational challenge (Reddick and Dryden-Peterson, 2021), since their academic skills will be encoded in another language. Second and third generation refugee returnees may not even have basic proficiency in the languages of the country of origin of their families.

Conclusions and further research

Globalization involves a regime that enables mobility of capital, profits and certain goods and services, coupled with free movement of elites (Bauman, 1998; Solimano, 2020), but reduced freedom of mobility for other groups (Shamir, 2005; Liu-Farrer et al., 2021). This regime makes it possible for strong global actors to externalize negative environmental, social and economic impacts, aggravating global disparities and concentrating wealth. Globalization dynamics thereby contribute to contradictory discourses on mobility and migration, belonging and entitlements, that determine fundamental conditions for refugee education. Travel and mobility can be profoundly enriching, when they are freely chosen. By contrast, refugee lives and the educational opportunities of refugee learners are characterized by forced mobility, and often also by forced immobility, containment or detention (UNESCO, 2018a; Yilmaz, 2022). The largest numbers, and those that are generally focused as a matter of international concern, have been forced to flee as a consequence of armed conflict, while ethnic, political or religious persecution also play significant roles.

The educational trajectories of refugees are transnational, as a consequence both of past displacement and future forced or voluntary onwards migration and uncertainties (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2019; Dryden-Peterson, 2021). Their friends, relatives and sense of belonging are distributed across multiple countries, as are the educators, policymakers and authorities that fund, plan, record, validate and implement their education. International agencies, international law (Willems and Vernimmen, 2018) and global mobility regimes (Schapendonk et al., 2020) play a major part in these processes. Refugee education can thus be understood as a phenomenon embedded in a globalized educational landscape, that is strongly impacted by geopolitical interests and global economic forces. At the same time, the circumstances under which refugees lead their lives place them at odds with national educational systems organized to serve citizens, and which tend to presuppose an uninterrupted educational trajectory within that country. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind that although refugee learners share certain experiences and challenges with respect to the structures of educational systems globally, they can by no means be viewed as a homogenous group. The trajectory, circumstances and aspirations of each learner will always be unique. Also, refugees learners’ situation varies significantly—great differences exist in mobility and opportunities between refugees who have obtained citizenship in a HIC, and those who are undocumented, unrecognized, or living in camps in LMICs.

Refugee education is constrained by global policy, citizenship and mobility regimes that combine to place refugee learners in a position of disadvantage, but also make refugee populations into a “burden” for host countries and the international community. Among the main issues that currently directly impact refugee education globally, renegotiations of responsibility for funding education and livelihoods of refugee learners included in the Global Compact can be noted, coupled with the risk of forced repatriations

(Chimni, 2018; Tegenbos and Vlassenroot, 2018; Zetter, 2021). Another important issue is whether education is respectively seen as a process of integration into the national education systems of host countries in view of permanent settlement, or as temporary arrangement in view of future return (Dryden-Peterson, 2017).

A number of factors combine to place refugees in a position of disadvantage with respect to the intersection of both national and transnational regimes. From this perspective, education systems can be understood as organized globally in a three-tier hierarchy. At the top, are foreign degrees and transnational education, designed to optimize mobility and status for global elites (see e.g., Gardner-McTaggart, 2018; Tuxen, 2019), and for selected groups of professionals that serve their interests. In the middle, national education systems are designed to enable economic activity within countries. National systems can also be stratified internally, while there is a stratification between countries, corresponding to the current world order. At the bottom of the hierarchy, refugee education at best provides limited access to education within national systems, at the same time that it does not address the extended needs of refugee learners for transnational mobility and access to transnational resources. Consequences of reduced freedom of mobility for refugees and refugee learners are particularly dire, since their mobility needs are not only motivated by an ambition to improve their situation, but by survival (Streitwieser, 2019). Also, refugee learners benefit from limited protection by states (Sandelind, 2020), and therefore need to mobilize greater resources of their own, through networks, communities and education (see Dryden-Peterson et al., 2017), in order to compensate for the position of systemic disadvantage in which they are placed. There is thus a fundamental mismatch between the needs of refugee learners, on the one hand, and the education provisions that are offered, on the other (see also Molla, 2021).

Considering limited funding to tailor programmes designed specifically to support refugee learners, global citizenship education (UNESCO, 2014) and global education (Gaudelli, 2007; Nordén and Avery, 2021) have the advantage that they are aimed at enabling societies to collectively address major global challenges. Importantly, these approaches are not specifically aimed at refugee learners, but correspond to general commitments by states to contribute to sustainable development. From the perspective of refugee education, they offer a framework where transnational identities and experiences are highly valued, within a narrative of collective efforts and solidarity, rather than the narrative of transnational elites.

According to the UNHCR (2021b), in 2020 more than two-thirds (68%) of refugees worldwide came from just five countries of origin (Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar), while 39% of all refugees were hosted in the top five countries (Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda, Germany). The vast majority of refugees (86%) were 2020 hosted in developing countries (27% in the Least Developed Countries). The dominance of a relatively small number of HICs in the research, coupled with a low proportion of research from LMIC host countries, thus constitutes a structural bias in the way our understanding of issues in refugee education is shaped, as well as with respect to the perspectives and agendas that are represented in proposed solutions. Other types of bias in the research come from difficulties in access to refugees, finding refugees who are hiding, or not formally identified as such (see Cole, 2021), as well as from the fact that very little research is driven or carried out by refugees themselves. Among topics that would require additional research in the context of refugee education are, for instance, the specific challenges of IDPs, who make up the majority of the forcibly displaced, education issues concerning refugee returnees, and the educational situation of refugees who are not recognized or identified. Disability in refugee education is another neglected area. Just as for other research on, for or with any vulnerable individuals, research on refugee education entails considerable ethical challenges (Clark-Kazak, 2017), and with increasingly stringent requirements for ethical review, future research will face challenges.

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Relevant websites

Academic Network on Global Education & Learning Academic Network on Global Education and Learning, angel-network.net.
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Online education

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Online education defined	149
The development of online education	149
Online education as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic	150
Online education frameworks	151
Culturally relevant online education	152
Student engagement in online education	152
Video introductions	153
Weekly overviews	153
Video feedback	153
Synchronous live meetings	153
Opportunities for interaction	153
Immersive video technologies	153
Finance issues associated with online education	154
Summary	154
References	155
Additional Readings	156

Glossary

Critical Digital Pedagogy A pedagogical approach to online teaching and learning that begins with awareness of critical perspectives (feminist, queer, critical race, etc.) and then examines digital tools, learning management systems, and other digital resources to ensure a relational and human-centered pedagogy is established

Digital Pedagogy Pedagogical skills and practices that considers the relationships existing between course content, teaching activities, and technology knowledge to formulate course instruction effective in virtual online classroom spaces

High-Context Communication Communication that emphasizes relationship-building actions and behaviors between individuals. These relations typically are measured by the level of nonverbal communication that is occurring between individuals, places, and events

Interface Interaction In response to the growth of online education, this form of interaction describes the behaviors and actions students and faculty express when interacting with mobile and digital technology as part of being engaged in online courses, especially through course requirements and experiences

Point-of-View Action Camera Small, mobile, and high-resolution video camera recorders that provide viewers wide-angled perspectives and high-definition image quality. Considered an innovative video technology, these cameras have been used in online education to provide immersive video experiences as part of online course lessons and presentations

Online delivery of courses has a significant presence in the educational experiences of students at all grade levels and post-secondary learning. Since the early-2000s, the expanded use of technology in student learning has influenced the rapid transformation of education to move beyond traditional brick-and-mortar classroom settings (Davila and Montelongo, 2020; Galuszka, 2005; Gourlay, 2021; Zimmerman, 2012). Worldwide, the growing popularity of online education has been enhanced by governmental initiatives to provide digital literacy (e.g., India's *Digital India*) and resources to offer open access online education (e.g., Australia's *Open Universities Australia*) (Palvia et al., 2018). In fall 2018, over six million post-secondary students in the US alone took at least one online course (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019). This trend reflects the steady growth of online enrollments, despite the decline of overall higher education enrollments since 2012 (Seaman et al., 2018). Online education has been seen for its ability to increase course enrollments and lower infrastructure costs for universities (Casement, 2013; Deming et al., 2015; Meyer, 2010). Universities that offered online courses and degrees also provided effective outreach to non-traditional learners and full-time working students who desired flexibility with course scheduling (Seaman et al., 2018; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006).

Despite online education's overall impact in responding to the needs of a more technologically confident citizenry, this mode of instruction still faces challenges on perceptions of becoming an impersonal, anonymous, and less effective learning experience compared to in-person course instruction (McKeown, 2012; Sun and Chen, 2016). Online education also faces criticism with regards to how educational administrators and public policy leaders use such course delivery primarily as a cost-cutting strategy to increase profitability and student enrollments without first understanding the pedagogical issues connected to online teaching and

learning (Meyer, 2010; Montelongo, 2019). While online education continues to increase its presence in educational institutions worldwide, there needs to be further understanding on its evolution, development, and impact on student academic engagement and outcomes which are necessary for its further expansion and enhancement.

Online education defined

Online education is an umbrella term used for any learning and instruction that is presented on a computer or digital device usually virtually using the internet. Online education is also commonly referred to as distance education, online learning, web-based teaching, and electronic learning (e-learning). Online education is also associated with the instructional approaches of blended learning or hybrid learning, where courses provide face-to-face class sessions in combination with lessons which are completed online at the student's pace. Online education is typically linked to the educational trend of flipped classrooms due to its approach of blending face-to-face classroom interaction with independent study at home, which usually makes use of technology and multimedia.

Online education has several common characteristics that is shared among its variety of terms and approaches: Technology use, geographic separation, asynchronous nature, and digital mobility. Online education has reflected the shifts in using technology for student instruction and learning. Since the early-2000s, the use of technology has been evolving to utilize innovative and current software and devices (Davila and Montelongo, 2020; Galuszka, 2005). According to Seaman et al. (2018), technologies used in online education include:

Internet, one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcasts, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite or wireless communication devices; audio conferencing; and video cassette. DVDs, and CD-ROMS, if the cassette, DVDs, and CD-ROMS are used in a course in conjunction with the technologies listed above (pg.5).

Technologies used in online education are dynamic and constantly being updated and introduced to consumers. Thus, some items listed above can be seen as already or quickly becoming outdated (e.g., video cassettes, DVDs). Currently, online education already makes use of application-based social media platforms, video conferencing, video and audio sharing platforms, and immersive video technologies such as point-of-view cameras (Montelongo, 2020; Montelongo and Eaton, 2019b; Sun and Chen, 2016).

Another common characteristic of online education is that the learner is separated physically from the course instructor (Seaman et al., 2018). This physical separation can be perceived as both an asset and disadvantage to online education. By being separated by the course instructor, the earliest critiques of online education characterized this mode of instruction as being “no more than a hodgepodge of ideas and practices taken from traditional classroom settings and imposed on learners” (McIsaac and Gunawardena, 1996; Gunawardena and McIsaac, 2013, p.5). The current forms of online education address this separation by emphasizing the importance of online student engagement and transferring high-impact teaching practices into virtual environments (Bailey et al., 2018; Fink, 2016; Montelongo, 2019). Current online education pedagogies have been developed to encourage online student engagement through intentional use of videos for relationship building (Costa, 2020; Montelongo and Eaton, 2019b), developing virtual community engagement activities (Montelongo and Eaton, 2018) and creating social justice opportunities in online learning (Guthrie and McCracken, 2010).

Asynchronous learning is a key component of the online education definition. By providing self-paced online course lessons, students complete course requirements and content according to their own schedules. While online education does not necessarily free students from stated deadlines and lesson tasks, the asynchronous nature of online education allows students educational opportunities that might have been challenging due to access, financial, and schedule challenges (Sun and Chen, 2016). Online education is seen to serve a large, adult learner population that tends to be older than traditional students (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). The asynchronous nature of online education provides these students learning spaces where they hold various roles outside the course environment and supports their goal-oriented drive for online education (Sun and Chen, 2016).

The last characteristic of online education is reflective of the rapid evolution of digital technologies used in education. Online education is described by its ability to be available anytime and anywhere for students due to the emergence of mobile devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Online education instruction is no longer bound to desktop computers and much like Graham's (2012) assessment that learning spaces built in the 1960s were unlikely to meet the needs of students in the 21st century, online education resources prior to the late 2010s could already be obsolete for today's online learning spaces. Zimmerman (2012) initiated awareness of how students interact with online course content using mobile technological devices and educators need to keep pace with how the newest generation of learners use mobile technology in their academic learning and behaviors.

The development of online education

The exact origin of online education is debatable among educational scholars, but discussions on its evolution tend to start with how postal, radio, and television outlets have been used for instruction in the United States. Some of the earliest forms of online education can be traced back three centuries ago when shorthand was taught to students in rural areas of New England using letters

exchanged in the postal system (Larreamendy-Joerns and Leinhardt, 2006; Palvia et al., 2018). The idea of creating and enhancing correspondence courses reflected a growing idea in the late 1800's of expanding educational opportunities to women in Boston and seeing this form of learning to further democratize higher education (Larreamendy-Joerns and Leinhardt, 2006). Online education, even in its earliest forms in the United States, appeared to reach and recruit students that may not had the means or access to higher learning.

Since its earliest forms using letters sent through the mail, online education has made use of emergent technologies being developed within societies. Radio or television at the turn of the 20th century were being explored as possible modes of providing instruction by higher education institutions. As radio grew to become the primary communication medium during World War I, colleges and schools saw its possibility for use in course delivery (Sun and Chen, 2016). One of the earliest uses of radio for instruction can be found in Wisconsin with its use of a federally license radio station at the University of Wisconsin and the development of the School of the Air, which the Madison Public School district worked in collaboration with the university to deliver programs aimed at primary and secondary schools around the state (Palvia et al., 2018; Sun and Chen, 2016). The growth of television in the 1950's followed which allowed institutions to provide visual elements to distance learning. Visual instruction via television now allowed students to interact with instructors who were not in physically in the same space. Televised course instruction expanded the ability of universities and colleges in the United States to offer courses for college credit.

The emergence of the internet and the World Wide Web provided another wave of technological innovation for educators to consider for course delivery. The early 1990's was seen as a milestone for the forward progress of online education and the eventual study and growth of online teaching and learning (Sun and Chen, 2016). The rise of the internet not only expanded the number of course offerings that colleges and universities could offer to students, but also led to the advent of fully online degree programs and online campuses such as the University of Phoenix. At the K-12 level, school districts and charter schools US started to expand their use of the internet to provide instruction to students and to use it as a strategy to counter teacher shortages in some areas of study such as science and math.

Internationally, the evolution of online education is largely benefitted from governmental support of digital literacy and responding to demands for continuing education by working professionals and jobseekers (Pavia et al., 2018). Online education does face challenges with regards to cultural differences in learning styles compared to western models of education. Online education tends to be critiqued on its lack of providing high-context communication which is valued in global cultures found for example in Latin America, Asia, and Africa (Westbrook, 2014). High-context communication focuses on the visual and auditory facets of individual speaking such as non-verbal cues, hand gestures, vocal tone, and emotion. The asynchronous nature of online learning usually relies primarily on written communication, which misses these high-context elements of interaction. Despite this challenge, the evolving field of digital pedagogy is addressing these concerns and providing advice and strategies on how to provide culturally relevant online course instruction (Costa, 2020; Montelongo, 2019; Montelongo and Eaton, 2019b).

Online education as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic

According to UNESCO, an estimated 850 million individuals transitioned to some alternative form of teaching and learning worldwide as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic (UNESCO, 2020). In March of 2020, as the COVID-19 virus quickly spread throughout the world, educators and students found themselves wondering how their learning would continue in environments where lockdowns, avoidance of crowds in any space, and social distancing were quickly becoming the norm. Educational systems globally were seeking ways to keep students in the classroom to not disrupt their learning. As global societies were dealing with protecting citizens, "decisions to cancel, postpone, or move in-person classes online came within a matter of days in most countries" (Johnson et al., 2020, p.7).

Shifting to online learning in times of disruption such as natural disasters has been a strategy used previously by educational systems. In the United States, especially along the Gulf Coast where tropical weather events are common, transitioning courses to online environments "on the fly" has been a strategy used to assist students with their education when storms impact this area (Lorenzo, 2008, p.5). However, the COVID-19 pandemic was not a localized or regional event. Educational systems nationwide and globally had to respond quickly to transition to online learning environments. As of this writing, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have global impact with variants of the virus (i.e., Delta variant) rapidly spreading across areas of the US, India, and other parts of the world. Despite this variant spread, schools and campuses are planning or considering a return to in-person instruction. The experiences of both students and teachers/faculty with online education during the pandemic continues to be researched and published in the literature. This chapter provides a brief summary of this emergent field of educational research.

Faculty and administrators' experiences with dealing with the COVID-19 educational response was studied by Johnson et al. (2020). In their study, they surveyed 897 higher education faculty and administrators in the US Four-year and two-year colleges and universities were represented and over one-third came from large public institutions student enrollments of over 20,000. Using their study as reflective of the experiences faced by this group of educators, Johnson and her associates found that faculty with no experience in online teaching reported applying new teaching methods in online courses. Key to this quick transition to online teaching and learning was the use of an institution's Learning Management System (LMS) to distribute course content and materials. Also notable for this study was the use of synchronous video (i.e., Zoom, GoToMeeting, Google Hangouts, etc.) as a new instructional tool for faculty and administrators. The rise of synchronous video platforms is one of the most memorable developments of

the pandemic response in education. All levels of education, from kindergarten to doctoral-level seminars, experienced the use of synchronous video class meetings as part of this response. Faculty and administrators also noticed the concern for providing student services and support to provide access to digital resources and tools during this transition (Gourlay, 2021). Care and concern for students was stated as primary and necessary reasons for the changes that faculty made to their courses during the pandemic (Johnson et al., 2020).

Student perspectives on the COVID-19 pandemic transition to online education is assisted by previous research investigating their perceptions of online courses compared to face-to-face instruction. Students tend to perceive online education as being more flexible and friendly to their work and life schedules, but not as effective to learning compared to face-to-face instruction (Platt et al., 2014). A national survey of over 1000 US undergraduates who experienced the transition from in-person classes to remote instruction was performed in spring 2020 (Means and Neisler, 2021). In this study, student satisfaction levels with courses took a sharp decline after transitioning to remote instruction. Students however provided helpful advice and recommendations to make online learning and teaching more effective and satisfying. Teaching practices that made the online education environment more personable and helpful included personal messages providing up-to-date information on how they are doing and course activities that asked students for reflections on their learning (Means and Neisler, 2021). Students in this study responded that their online education would be enhanced if “instructors provided multiple ways for students to engage in their online courses and demonstrate their learning” (Means and Neisler, 2021, p. 23).

Educators will continue to learn from the lessons provided by the transition to online education as a response to the pandemic crisis of 2020. As research is further developed on students, faculty, and administrators with their online education experience, the literature already highlights the need for institutions to enhance and improve their LMS's to match the demands of faculty and students who now have immersed themselves in online teaching and learning environments. Faculty and teachers are now aware of digital resources and technologies to enhance their teaching skills and administrators need to provide additional professional development for faculty and teachers to boost their skills in using educational technology and digital learning tools. Students' perceptions of online education will likely be similar to those prior to the pandemic, but there is now a new knowledge on how to improve online learning through understanding effective digital pedagogies and intentional strategies to break down the anonymous nature of virtual learning spaces by using tools such as video and social media.

Online education frameworks

The rapid emergence of technology in education has created an urgent need for educators to understand how course content, teaching practices, and student engagement intersect within digital spaces. These relationships impact the online learning experience of students and how teachers convey their knowledge of content into online environments. Two frameworks provide conceptualizations in which to understand the complex interactions occurring between digital technology and pedagogical practice: Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Mishra and Koehler, 2006) and Critical Digital Pedagogy (Morris and Stommel, 2018).

Mishra and Koehler's (2006) Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge, also known as the TPACK model, challenge faculty who teach with technological resources to think beyond content knowledge and pedagogical strategy, arguing that educators have undertheorized the relationship between technology, pedagogy, and content. With their model, Mishra and Koehler remind educators when introducing technology into the educational environment, they must also carefully consider how this technology is used and its relationship with content knowledge and pedagogical practices. As Mishra and Koehler (2006) state, “knowledge about content, pedagogy, and technology is central for developing good teaching” (p. 1025). All three are in relation.

Digital technologies come into the educational arena with new possibilities and constraints. The dual nature of technology constraining familiar and opening new pedagogical practices challenge educators to think innovatively and differently with their courses. For online educators, what might be done easily in face-to-face classrooms can sometimes become challenging or impossible to do within online learning environments. The TPACK Model underscores the need for educators, especially those teaching online, to have awareness, knowledge, skills, and understanding of technology use in teaching and learning. Online educators must examine how implementation or engagement with digital technological tools, spaces, and places enhance or detract pedagogical opportunities related to a course or module content.

Critical digital pedagogy is an emerging field of study which looks at how students and educators look at the tools used in online teaching and learning and how these create community, collaboration, engagement, and empowerment in digital spaces (Morris and Stommel, 2018). Online education is viewed as a social environment and digital pedagogy is about human relationships that exist within these spaces. To establish and work on these relationships, online educators consider how technology enhances or weakens this goal within the digital environment. Critical digital pedagogy views technology as neither neutral or value free and that online environments such as those found in the LMS must do more than just be repositories for course content (Montelongo and Eaton, 2019b; Morris and Stommel, 2018). Technological tools are part of this relationship building according to this framework. In using critical digital pedagogy in an online course, educators pay attention to the relationships between teaching and student; between student and student; between user and technological tool; and the social identities held by those within the online course environment (Montelongo and Eaton, 2019a).

Culturally relevant online education

Ideas such as critical digital pedagogy allows online education to expand its purposes to allow educators to reimagine and reconsider what it means to teach and build relationships with students. Online education, thus, can continue efforts to foster cultural diversity and social justice in digital spaces.

Online education can be viewed as a learning space that is not anonymous, impersonal, and value-free (Morris and Stommel, 2018). In fact, online education can become a powerful strategy for educators to strengthen relationships with students, provide agency to improve support, and motivate students to actively engage students in course content.

One area of research that has been addressing how diversity and social justice is presented in digital space is on educators who teach fully online diversity courses. As institutions continue to increase the number of online course offerings and fully online degree programs are established, students have the possibility of enrolling in a required diversity course for their degrees. Online education's growth includes the growth of teaching multicultural education courses that address issues of racism, discrimination, privileges, and other issues involved in equity and inclusion discussions. The complexity apparent in these topics are challenging for educators to address in traditional face-to-face classroom environments, even more so in online environments (Akintunde, 2006). However, the emerging research on online diversity courses allows online educators knowledge and understanding on concepts which should be examined for all online course instruction. Two concepts to consider for effective online teaching from a diversity and social justice lens are culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and high-context learning (Westbrook, 2014).

Culturally relevant pedagogy is described by Ladson-Billings (1995) as a series of pedagogical practices that can be placed along a continuum. This series of practices have educators reflect on how they conceive of themselves and others; how they build relationships with their students; and where they go to find and process knowledge. This form of pedagogy focuses on eliminating the deficit-minded thinking usually placed on students of color with regards to their academic difficulties. Ladson-Billings pedagogical stance focuses more on how educators can develop skills and practices that values student experiences and their communities. Key to advancing these pedagogical ideas is the notion of providing care and support to students in the classroom, along with valuing linguistic and cultural differences to help students navigate a sometimes "inequitable and undemocratic" world (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 474). Advancing this in online education requires digital classrooms to become spaces where students are heard and appreciate, not just seen, through the LMS. High-context communication and relationship building within online course modules are initial strategies to promote this environment.

Recognition of low-context and high-context cultures (Westbrook, 2014) provide awareness of cross-cultural communication between individuals within classroom settings. High-context cultures emphasize the relationship-building that can occur when individuals communicate with each other and messages received through nonverbals such as body gestures, hand movements, and facial expressions. Low-context cultures rely primarily on communication received through written and spoken word with less emphasis on establishment of relationships and use or presence of nonverbal cues. In online education, awareness of these cultural contexts apparent in communication is important in creating effective learning experiences that not only engages online students, but also connects to how diverse students' cultural norms are represented in the digital learning space. When considering high-context communication, attention is placed on communication, visual cues, and relationship building.

Montelongo (2019) outlined the use of high-context teaching in online graduate student instruction. In his recommendations to enhance this form of culturally relevant teaching, he encourages online educators to make extensive use of videos to provide instructor presence within online course modules. The use of videos provides nonverbals such as facial expressions, hand gestures, and emotional reactions. The addition of one or more scheduled synchronous live class meetings in online courses also promotes community building among classmates, where they are joined live together to see and hear each other and to converse on course topics. An understanding of pedagogical strategies to use in online teaching to foster cultural validation also provides opportunities for increase student engagement.

Student engagement in online education

Online education usually faces a level uncertainty and reluctance from both students and faculty due to unfamiliarity and negative experiences within this teaching environment (Bailey et al., 2018; McKeown, 2012). Ideas on the effective pedagogy typically uses the lens of traditional college classroom environments and spaces, which rely on brick-and-mortar physical classroom settings. Despite this bias, a growing body of knowledge is developing strategies to apply in online education.

High-impact teaching practices (Fink, 2016) are being applied by online instructors to strengthen engagement with online course content. Fink created a list of teaching practices highlighting the need to help students learn more about learning, designing courses that are learner-centered, creating academic community engagement activities, and increasing classroom interaction with students. Montelongo and Eaton (2019a) describe how they utilize high-context learning and high-impact teaching in their online courses, especially with their online graduate-level diversity courses for their fully online master's program. Their colleagues in the same program also found that creating learning environments that required active critical thinking and problem solving tend to improve student engagement in online courses (Holzweiss et al., 2014). Strategies to build an online environment for active student engagement include video introductions, weekly overviews, video feedback, synchronous live meetings, opportunities for interaction, and immersive video technologies.

Video introductions

In order to provide an initial faculty presence within the online course environment, video introductions offer students information on the instructor's background and interest in the course topic. These videos, which are usually no more than 5 min in length, are usually placed within the course LMS space at a location easily found outside any course lesson module. The introduction video offers students information on their instructor, including any personal reflections on why they teach the course. Establishing faculty video presence in the online course was found to be an important characteristic of a high-impact, high-context online course (Montelongo and Eaton, 2019a,b). Students who see their instructor's face and voice in the digital space eliminates the anonymous nature usually attached to online learning. Students can also develop video introductions of themselves to share to classmates within their online course. These student introductions can include information about who they are, their interest in the class, and their goals for the course and semester. The video introductions are a possible strategy to reduce the anxiety and uncertainty students may come with due to ideas that online learning is impersonal and distant.

Weekly overviews

Weekly overviews are videos produced by the online instructor which are placed at the start of each online course module. In these videos, which again are usually 5 min or less, the instructor provides their initial thoughts on the module topics for that week and offers any personal experiences with the topics at hand. If appropriate, these weekly overview videos can also connect current, real-time news events to the introduction to further add context to that week's online course module. Weekly overviews support student engagement and helps manage the asynchronous characteristic by enticing online learners to check into their course modules early.

Video feedback

Video feedback is a strategy used to provide students high-context communication on graded assignments where students see and hear comments directly from the instructor via video. In using this strategy, online instructors can produce short videos, usually 3 min in length, with responses and reactions to students' coursework. Rather than just relying on the low-context feedback offered by written comments or grading rubrics embedded in the LMS, students can receive high-context feedback where the instructors voice tone, facial expressions, and body language are observed and heard as part of the grade. Video feedback also offers high-context cues to highlight areas of improvement, quality, and excellence.

Synchronous live meetings

As mentioned earlier, one memorable outcome of education's response to the pandemic was extensive use of video conferencing platforms for synchronous class meetings. While fully online courses are desired largely for their asynchronous nature, including 1–2 synchronous meetings in online courses provide opportunities for students to meet each other, ask questions for the class, and the possibility to include real-time discussions and presentations on course material. To make the synchronous live meetings as effective as possible, instructors are recommended to make student attendance mandatory. Advanced scheduling is necessary for this strategy to be employed. Real-time conversations through synchronous class meetings are effective and simple ways to create high-impact, high-context online education.

Opportunities for interaction

After several semesters of online teaching, Montelongo and Eaton (2018) found that students often enter online courses with a level of uncertainty about online learning, especially with class dynamics. In preparation for online teaching, these instructors in their course planning included opportunities for students to interact with faculty. An effective part of this strategy, especially in teaching online diversity courses, was the inclusion of one-to-one meetings to discuss course ideas. In the diversity course, this was seen in a course activity title "Multicultural Chats." The chats were usually scheduled in the latter part of the semester and offered a chance for both student and instructor to share conversations on personal development and social identity. While this strategy requires time and effort to meet individually, doing so provided a concluding experience where both student and instructor learned more about specific connections, experiences, and personal development on the course topic. In other courses, different approaches to creating this interaction are possible using assignments (e.g., podcasts, interviews, case studies, etc.) as opportunities to connect.

Immersive video technologies

Placing videos with lesson introductions, interviews, and interactions with campus settings provide high-context communication within online lesson modules (Montelongo and Eaton, 2019b). One distinct method for this visual communication is use of point-of-view action cameras (e.g., GoPro) in producing online course lessons. Innovative video technologies like that found in point-of-view action cameras (e.g., GoPro) are being tried and tested in online instruction. Point-of-view camera recordings provide immersive experiences in viewing by providing wide-angled perspectives and high-definition high-resolution recordings. Immersive video technologies were described in their use in teaching in a fully online master's education program (Montelongo, 2020). The

immersive video captures rich contextual information that replaces static presentation slides with dynamic video filled with rich detail. The video technology fosters a culturally relevant teaching approach to online education in the course that goes beyond relying on written text to describe course content and ideas.

Finance issues associated with online education

The increased presence of online education brings attention to the finance issues facing such instruction. As the growth of online education continues to be used as a cost-reduction strategy, caveats are presented to say such strategies diminish the quality of education as an outcome of the supposed cost benefits (Deming et al., 2015). The cost-effectiveness of online education is evident in the literature, but also are its supposed shortcomings. For example, in a comparison of grade-based outcomes between online and face-to-face courses, one study found that struggling university students in the US, especially those with lower grade point averages, struggle with online courses and fare worse in them compared to face-to-face courses (Cavanagh and Jacqueman, 2015). While these researchers focused more on student outcomes and not course experiences, their findings raise the issue on whether online learning experiences provide similar classroom learning experiences compared to brick-and-mortar classrooms. A frequently mentioned outcome in discussions on online education is increased revenue while reducing operating costs (Bailey et al., 2018).

To transform online education into high-impact practice, concentrated focus on effort and resources needed by instructors to develop online courses with these qualities is necessary (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). Online education research findings often feed notions of what this form of learning cannot do, rather than what it can do, especially with regards to its possibilities of providing high-impact teaching. Online education provides beneficial outcomes for faculty, students, and administration when viewed for its potential outcomes. Under the lens of educational finance, awareness of faculty effort, organizational support and professional development, and equitable student support should be considered in fiscal discussions.

Financial considerations need to take account the support necessary to not only provide online delivery of courses, but also the professional training and development of online instructors and faculty. Despite the increasing prevalence of online education, most organizational structures in the US and globally are organized according to brick and mortar, face-to-face models. Organizational support needs to understand what it means to instruct and learn in digital space. Institutions need to provide funding for faculty professional development so that they can navigate a landscape of continually proliferating technological changes. The importance of online educators receiving regular training and professional development in technological knowledge is critical for the improvement and effectiveness of online educational programs (Major, 2015). Online educators need to be kept informed on the rapid innovations apparent in technology and be comfortable with utilizing a variety of technological tools used to enhance student learning and engagement. Educational institutions now support and sponsor a variety of educational and professional development seminars and conferences on digital pedagogy and learning. For example, the Digital Pedagogy Lab based at the University of Mary Washington in Virginia is an international professional development institute specializing in training on critical digital pedagogy and online learning (Morris and Stommel, 2018). Chief academic officers need to understand what this entails and promote professional development to ensure that technological competence is held by online instructors (Montelongo, 2019).

Delivery of online course content starts with a learning management system (LMS) that is functional, reliable, and secure. To move online education toward high-impact levels, there also needs to be institutional support for tools outside the prescribed LMS for course instruction such as video production services, instructional content designers, and additional applications and programs to enhance the LMS' online instruction. Higher education organizational structures tend to reflect the traditional brick-and-mortar, face-to-face model. As we realized in 2020, institutions need significant investments to enhance and improve their online education support offices and staff. This investment should include a "central team of instructional designers, web designers, multimedia personnel, data analysts, quality assurance experts, and student support services staff" (Bailey et al., 2018, p. 29).

In a report six colleges and universities in the US who state having high-quality online learning organizations, all were found in the report to have strong teams of instructional support professionals, instructional designers, web designers, and multimedia personnel, just to name a few (Bailey et al., 2018). The report found that these US institutions provide an investment of between \$2 to \$14 per student credit hour to support these online education support units (Bailey et al., 2018). While the report did mention the economic benefits of institutions reduce their need to provide and maintain physical campus learning spaces, the return on investment included increased retention, graduation rates, and other positive outcomes for institutions in the report. Interestingly, faculty in the report stated that by having the strong institutional online education support, they were able to create online courses that were more rigorous and challenging compared to face-to-face courses (Bailey et al., 2018). Organizational support and a well-developed strategic plan that includes professionals to assist faculty and students in their online experience appears to have positive institutional outcomes, while also providing a reduction of costs in delivering online education. This is in large part in viewing online education more for its potential, rather than its shortfalls (Bailey et al., 2018).

Summary

Since its first presence in education in the late-1800's as correspondence courses using mail, teaching and learning outside traditional brick and mortar classrooms continues to "shake up pedagogical routines" (Larreamendy-Joerns and Leinhardt, 2006, p. 597). Today's online education is constantly evolving to meet the dynamic needs of today's learners and to respond to the rapidly

changing technologies which can be applied to our transforming educational pedagogies. Online education is seen globally as a strategy to apply when disruptions in student learning occur from natural disasters, political upheavals, or health crisis. The strengths and weaknesses of online education have been experienced 2020 academic year by multitudes of students and instructors, from K-12 to all levels of higher education, when classes transitioned to online spaces in a matter of weeks due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Research is being conducted on what we learned from this unprecedented global crisis in education. The experiences from students, instructors, and administrators continue to be investigated and the future literature will offer an abundance of information to use further enhance and improve online education. With this emergent research, theories and frameworks to provide guidance and foundations to online teaching and learning are assured to be reviewed and explored to understand what creates the most effective and high quality online educational experience. Montelongo (2019) writes that in order “to promote online education in the ‘more than’ lens that reflects high impact teaching and learning, institutions need to invest in the effort provided by faculty in developing and implementing rigorous and impactful online learning” (p. 72). As educational institutions worldwide continue to increase the number of online courses, educators need to learn which pedagogical practices are effective in course delivery and which financial issues need to be addressed to effectively deliver online courses. Online education already has significant presence in the educational experiences of students and instructors in all parts of the world. As more students include online elements in their educational careers and more instructors are asked to teach in online learning spaces, the future of education is impacted by current and future trends in technology and growing innovation in digital pedagogy. Online education is constantly dynamic and while most educational organization structures center their instructional models toward a face-to-face classroom spaces, teaching and learning is shifting to include elements of digital pedagogy and understanding strategies to create high-impact online learning environments. The future of online education provides opportunities to reimagine critical thinking, problem-solving, and discovery in digital spaces.

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Digital learning divide

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A glance at the facts	157
Inequality of digital access	157
Inequality of digital use and online skills	158
Theories of the digital divide	158
Different types of digital divide	158
Digital cultural capital	159
Highlights from recent empirical research	160
Issues associated with ICT use at home	160
Problems associated with ICT use at school	161
The role of education in bridging the digital divide	162
References	162

Information and communication technology (ICT) has dramatically changed the educational landscape in recent decades, creating a new form of inequality—the digital divide. In the wake of this inequality, a number of scholars have well documented the causes and consequences of the digital divide. Educators and parents seek to understand how differentiated access and use of ICT influences students' daily lives. At the national and international levels, a number of efforts have been made with respect to minding the digital gap. Although digital inequality has become a worldwide phenomenon that affects every student around the globe, there is substantial cross-national variation in the way ICT is integrated into education as well as how the use of ICT generates educational inequality. In this review work, I integrate findings based on recent international reports, empirical research, review papers, and theoretical articles to present a renewed look at the evolving digital divide. Taking a cross-national comparative approach, I also explain how ICT generates a new form of educational inequality that has become a common problem around the globe.

A glance at the facts

Inequality of digital access

Globally, there remains substantial variation in the digital access divide. According to a report by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU, 2018), in 2018 more than 80% of households among economically developed countries had access to a computer and the internet at home. The number went down to less than 40% among developing countries. In contrast, less than 10% of people living in the least economically developed regions of the world had a computer or an internet connection in their homes. Since the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, the inequality between digital haves and have-nots has apparently worsened. And this form of inequality also has dramatic impact in highly developed and affluent countries. For example, in Korea, more than 200,000 students reported they did not have proper digital devices or internet access which were required to participate in online/remote education when schools were locked down (Bicker, 2020). The same problem has occurred among other affluent countries such as the United States, where many underprivileged or working class children faced obstacles to online education (Vogels et al., 2020). The situation was even worse among poor or less-developed countries, where their ICT infrastructure was not matured and educational technology was not prevalent, which made remote education or e-learning almost impossible when schools were closed due to the surge of coronavirus cases (Vegas, 2020). In summary, the intersection between the digital divide and the inequality of educational opportunities has worsened since the COVID-19 outbreak.

The engagement of digital learning at home has profound impact on students' reading achievement (Dynarski et al., 2007; Kuhfeld and Tarasawa, 2020). Students with limited to no digital access at home have few opportunities in digital learning; the more available ICT resources at home, the more likely that they can apply them in the learning process. On one hand, there is a substantial "global digital learning (or e-reading) divide" that appears *between* countries. A report based on the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) data suggests that more than 40% of fourth grade students living in Scandinavian countries (Norway 58%, Finland 53%, Denmark 49%, and Sweden 42%) had high-level digital access at home; specifically, this means that these students had seven or more different ICT devices in the household that can be used for reading and academic learning. On the contrary, less than 5% of fourth graders in several less-developed countries had high-level digital access in the household. Among these nations, at least a third of pupils reported that they did not have a computer or internet access at all (Morocco 47%, Azerbaijan 34%, South Africa 33%, Egypt 30%, and Iran 23%; IEA, 2017). On the other hand, the digital learning divide is also prevalent *within* countries. The 2018 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which focuses on 15-year-old pupils, reported that, nowadays, more than nine out of 10 students are able to use the internet at home. And from 2012 to 2018, their hours on the internet outside of school lessons increased from 18 h per week to 27 h per week (OECD, 2019b). However, it is important to

note that there are large variations in the speed of internet connection and the kinds of digital devices or ICT appliances that they mainly use when surfing the internet. Until recently, however, more than three out of 10 students from socio-economically disadvantaged households did not have a computer that can be properly used for schoolwork in their households (OECD, 2019a). This indicates that they might need rely on mobile phones or other cheap devices to browse the internet and/or to complete school assignments.

Within countries, the inequality of ICT access is also pronounced, and it has become a critical issue in tertiary education, since college students oftentimes rely heavily on ICT to work on various research projects and out-of-class assignments. In the United States, for example, students who are socioeconomically underprivileged or identified as racial minorities experience hardships as they rely on poorly functioning laptops for schoolwork; they often experience technology problems such as unreliable internet connections, data limits, and broken hardware (Gonzales et al., 2020).

At the school site, the availability of ICT access in the classroom has improved a lot over the past decades (UNESCO, 2015), but there remain sizable cross-national variations in the quantity and quality of ICT provision and the availability e-learning resources at school (Ma, 2021). In 2017, for example, a great majority of primary students in New Zealand (93%), Denmark (92%), Netherlands (87%), and Sweden (83%) were able to use computers in reading lessons. In contrast, only a small proportion of students in Trinidad and Tobago (12%), South Africa (8%), the France area of Belgium (7%), and Morocco (6%) used computers in a reading course. Among most countries around the world (except for a few such as Georgia, 60%, and Denmark, 38%), no more than 30% of primary schoolers were able to attend schools where one-computer-per-student is universally available in classrooms (IEA, 2017).

Inequality of digital use and online skills

For most countries of the world, there is still a lot of room for growth in the development of school curriculums that aim to train students in digital skills and online literacy (ITU, 2018; van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014a). Most teachers rarely or only occasionally require students to engage in computer-based activities in core subject courses such as reading and mathematics. Taking primary education as an example, less than a quarter of students across the globe are engaged in ICT-based activities in reading courses on a weekly basis. The exceptions are Australia, Denmark, Georgia, Israel, and New Zealand, where a larger proportion of students are able to engage in activities such as reading digital texts, conducting research, and looking up information throughout the internet; also, their teachers are more likely to teach strategies for digital reading (IEA, 2017). It is also noteworthy that a growing number of students living in developed societies are mainly engaged in digital learning *outside* of schools (van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014a)—either because schools have not provided adequate ICT training courses or because there have been more e-learning opportunities at home.

ICT can be used for a variety of purposes. And it is widely believed that ICT can enrich lives. But without possessing proper ICT skills and having related online usage experiences, it will be difficult for students to perceive the benefits of ICT. It is also apparent that when online activities get more complicated, fewer people are able to participate in these activities. Within countries, educational status is positively associated with the level of digital skill (Hargittai and Hinnant, 2008). Cross-nationally, people living in more-developed countries possess more basic and advanced digital-related skills than those from less-developed countries (ITU, 2018).

For children and adolescents, the level of the digital divide in ICT-related skills is substantial, which appears both within- and between-countries (ITU, 2018; Ma et al., 2019). Even among countries with similar economic and social backgrounds, the gap in ICT skills exists. Taking eight European countries (France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom) as an example, Dutch children have higher levels of online operational skills but lower levels of online social skills compared to their peers from the other seven nations. Both children from Spain and Italy have relatively low levels of online skills with regard to info-navigation activities and content creation activities (ITU, 2018). A study based on 55 countries suggested that increasing national income is associated with an increase of the internet literacy among teenage students. But more interestingly, national income predicts the size of the digital divide; that is: The inequality in internet literacy between upper-class and lower-class students is greater in its magnitude in poor countries than rich countries (Ma et al., 2019).

In summary, it is equally important to study the digital divide in the access, use, and skills of ICT within countries and between countries, particularly focusing on the differences between more- and less-developed countries. But due to the lack of data collection, it is quite difficult to estimate the level of inequality in ICT skills among people living in the poor and least developed regions of the world (UNESCO-UIS, 2016).

Theories of the digital divide

Different types of digital divide

For at least two decades, a burgeoning literature has well documented the explanations and patterns of the digital divide. In the early 2000s, scholars were more concerned with the inequality of digital access, namely the first-level digital divide (Davison and Cotten, 2003). They focused on the disparities in access to computers and the internet that are associated with economic, social, cultural, and geographical conditions (for instance, see DiMaggio et al., 2004). The main objectives to bridge this form of digital divide are to institutionalize educational policies and initiatives to expand the coverage and access to ICT infrastructure within school systems

(Attewell, 2001; Warschauer et al., 2004). In all, this group of research focuses on digital inequality between haves and have-nots, with an implicit assumption that the more connected to the digital world people are, the better their lives will be (Beuermann et al., 2013).

According to scholarship on the second-level digital divide, it is more important to examine differentiated digital use and ICT-related skills, even if the equality of digital access has been achieved (Hargittai, 2002). The basic thesis under this line of research is that even if ICT devices such as computers and digital tablets become equally accessible to all groups of people, regardless their socio-demographic characteristics, there remains persistent inequality in terms of how people use technology and how much ICT-related skill they already possess. Among developed and high internet-penetration countries, research suggests that those who are more educated are more likely to use the internet in more beneficial ways, which help them accumulate human and social capitals (Büchi et al., 2015; Hargittai and Hinnant, 2008). On the other hand, the less-educated are more likely to participate in online social media activities and gaming that are time-consuming in nature (van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014b). These accounts align with the knowledge gap hypothesis (Tichenor et al., 1970), which states that those who are more educated derive more knowledge from the use of mass media such as radio, television, newspapers and the internet. Finally, it is possible that the social (re) production of digital inequality is a sequential process. This means that those who are not able to engage in a particular way online are less likely to be involved in other ways, and those lacking a certain type of digital skill are also short of another type of skill (van Deursen et al., 2017).

More recently, scholars have highlighted the need to examine both the first-level and the second-level digital divides (van Deursen and van Dijk, 2019; Gonzales, 2015). They claim that even among economically developed and high internet-penetration countries, new ICT devices and appliances keep emerging every day. People who are socioeconomically underprivileged are lagging behind in the access and use of the newest models of digital devices/appliances compared to those who are privileged. Van Deursen and van Dijk (2019) recommended focusing on differences in material access, such as computers (e.g., desktops, tablets, and smart TVs), software (e.g., online apps and web subscriptions), and peripheral equipment (e.g., scanners, printers, additional monitors, and external hard drives). They suggested examining material access inequality in three aspects: (1) differences in device opportunities, including the availability of using other devices with different functions and capacities as replacements, (2) differences in the diversity of ICT devices and peripherals in the household; and (3) variation in the maintenance costs of devices and peripherals as well as the monthly cost of subscribing to high-speed broadband internet service. Even though internet access is more available even to poor and working class people, they tend to rely on less sophisticated or low-end ICT devices to surf the internet (Gonzales et al., 2020; Rideout and Katz, 2016).

Moreover, the use of smartphones may not reduce but aggravate the existing problem of digital inequality. Smartphone use with unlimited data plan increases the likelihood that one uses the internet autonomously and engages in different online activities; it is also associated with greater communication competence in terms of networking, instrumental, and creative skills (Lee et al., 2015). However, we should note that smartphones may not be beneficial or productive for everyone; instead, only those who are able to access wired or high-speed internet from highly functional devices (e.g., desktops and laptops)—when they are at home or in the workplace—are able to accrue advantages from smartphone use.

A review work by Marler (2018) concluded that even in developed countries such as the US, those who are socially, economically, and racially underprivileged are more likely to rely solely on smartphones to access the internet. Due to the limited functionality of smartphones, they may experience barriers while accessing particular websites and online services that are not suitable for mobile phone users (e.g., job application websites). This problem becomes more severe in the developing world, such as Africa, where there is underdeveloped internet infrastructure, leading to the outcome that a large proportion of Africans can only access the internet via mobile phones (Donner et al., 2011). Taken together, because digital technology is changing and developing rapidly, the digital divide as evidenced by differentiated digital use and unequal material access in ICT devices remains crucial across the globe, even among affluent countries that have high internet penetration rates.

Moreover, recent scholarship has called attention to the third-level digital divide that is concerned with variation in tangle benefits of digital/online usage (van Deursen and van Dijk, 2019). In education, this suggests that the outcomes of digital learning may differ across students with various sociodemographic profiles, thereby reinforcing existing educational inequalities. The following section(s) will share insights into understanding the process of how this form of inequality is produced.

Digital cultural capital

Bourdieu (1984) explained how elite and upper-class parents pass on their class privilege to children through “capital.” The capital is presented as different forms of *assets*—such as economic, social, cultural, and technical assets—that can be stored, accumulated, and transmitted within fields, thereby making social differentiation and inequality possible to exist/persist. As Halford and Savage (2010, p. 945) explained, this analytical approach:

allow us to explore how technical skills might allow the accumulation of other capacities—for instance, in terms of reputation among peers, and also the potential to convert these skills into other areas—for instance, in [educational fields], the labor market, or political participation.

Building upon Bourdieu's conceptualization of capital, Ollier-Malaterre et al. (2019) introduced the concept of digital cultural capital. This concept can help us gain new insight into how digital technology (re)generates inequality in the educational landscape due to the following reasons. First, digital cultural capital is about how "individuals perform to gain control over technology and its associated social norms to align their use of technology with their values and goals" (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2019, p. 432), which is called as technology management. Note that a combination of awareness, motivation, and skill is essential to the performance of technology management. Therefore, it is important that children and adolescents are aware of how to properly use technology, but not let technology control them. They need to know the consequences if they immerse themselves into the digital world—either to enrich their lives or to bring more troubles. They also need both motivation and skills to monitor their online activities, so that they are able to extend their learning from school to home while connecting to the internet, discerning the quality and reliability of web content, and knowing from whom to seek help (e.g., teachers, peers, family members) when they are in trouble.

Researchers like Ollier-Malaterre et al. (2019) argued that the awareness, motivation, and skill that are necessary for technology management generate class inequality. When parents transmit digital cultural capital to the next generation, it is likely that children of privileged social class backgrounds end up developing a "digital habitus" that gives them clear advantages over others. For example, parents who are highly educated and affluent know how to help children to sign up for ICT-related activities that can enhance their learning experiences and educational performance; in addition, they also know how to teach their children to avoid certain online usage behavior or patterns that may distract them from learning or put themselves in danger. Therefore, it is important for families to provide an atmosphere to help children learn how to utilize ICT devices in a safe and smart way, and assist them to avoid negative impact from improper digital/internet use (Forkosh-Baruch and Erstad, 2018).

A growing body of empirical studies have applied the concept of cultural capital into their research on digital inequality. Inspired by parental mediation theory, Yuen et al. (2018) referred to cultural capital as the variation in parenting styles, values, and practices pertinent to digital technology. They examined different types of parents' strategies in how to regulate children's online behavior as well as their overall ICT use at home. Highly educated and affluent parents were more likely to employ the kind of parenting strategy to help accumulate ICT skill that can be transformed into digital cultural capital, leading their children to receive better educational and occupational outcomes in the future. Yuen et al. explained that when parents are able to transmit digital cultural capital to their offspring through successful parenting styles and regulations, their children tend to become the "celebrating" users, indicating those who find ICT enjoyable and are able to use digital technology in an effective and productive way. In contrast, students without cultural capital at home tend to become the "copying" users or the "struggling" users; the former refers to those who make conscious efforts to use ICT for academic or productive purposes but fail to do so, whereas the latter indicates those who keep having negative experience of ICT use because of basic problems including poor digital access and lack of basic ICT-related competence. To understand how ICT interacts with students and teachers in school settings, Paino and Renzulli (2013) referred to digital cultural capital as certain ICT-related attributes of students that contribute to teachers' expectations. That is, teachers have greater educational expectations for students with advanced computer competency, despite their actual levels of academic performance in the classroom. This suggests that ICT ownership and its related skill become a signal that can be used by teachers to evaluate or judge students.

Highlights from recent empirical research

Issues associated with ICT use at home

In less-developed societies, public spaces such as schools, libraries, and community centers become the main places where students learn basic ICT competencies such as operational and formal skills. This is quite different from developed societies, where students tend to receive these skills at home through self-learning or by receiving help from family members (van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014a). This prompts the question of what home environment is the best to enhance children's e-learning process.

Socioeconomic status (SES) seems to be one of the most influential factors in determining the quantity and quality of ICT use. Earlier studies found a disadvantage of ICT access at home among students of racial minority backgrounds and those from single-parent households (DiMaggio et al., 2004). But when accounting for the impact of SES, the digital access gap by race and family type becomes relatively smaller in size. This suggests that parents' educational, income, and occupational statuses play a great part in shaping students' experience with ICT at home (Scheerder et al., 2019). Based on the extant research, the digital divide along the socioeconomic line persists even among developed countries [e.g., Australia (Smith et al., 2013); the Netherlands (Goedhart et al., 2019); the United Kingdom (Helsper and Reisdorf, 2016); and the United States (Gonzales, 2015)]. This literature suggests that students of higher SES have greater incentives and are more motivated to engage in online learning activities; in contrast, students of low SES are more likely to use technology with respect to social networking and entertainment. Until recently, a great proportion of low-income students in developed societies lived in an under-connected household because of slow or mobile-online internet access, intermittent disconnection, and poor hardware (Gonzales et al., 2020).

The rise of globalization and the knowledge economy can prompt feelings of increased competition among students. In elite and middle-class families, parents are able to mobilize resources to ensure their children always stay a few steps ahead in the competition for excellence in educational performance (e.g., earning a high grade in class, receiving academic rewards, getting admission to an elite university, and enhancing international learning experience) (Brown, 2013). To help their children succeed in the future, these parents may arrange and pay for additional out-of-school activities both offline and online. In Korea, for example, Park et al. (2016) found that there is a growing demand for online private tutoring services. Teachers with great teaching skills are hired; more

than hundreds of e-courses are offered, and each class is tailored to meet students' needs with an aim to help them top the national college entrance exam. These online learning services may further lead to the growth of educational inequality insofar as only the elite and the middle-class are able to afford this e-form of private education (Choe, 2009).

There is no doubt that all children and adolescents want to succeed in education. As e-learning becomes more important, they all know that ICT can—more or less—help facilitate their learning process. But a question arises as to why the use of ICT is more beneficial to students of higher-SES backgrounds than their lower-SES peers? A qualitative study of Dutch families conducted by Scheerder et al. (2019) gives an insightful glimpse into understanding the differences along the socioeconomic line: First, students of higher-SES families began using new technology in an early age. They described a strong interest in learning ICT as they often had opportunities to participate in computer clubs and see how their parents worked at home through online networked computers. Second, not only did parents in higher-SES families take an active role in helping children learn how to use ICT, but children who were believed to be “digitally savvy” also assisted their parents. It was common that members in these families mutually helped each other to solve problems they encountered with technology. Comparatively, due to the lack of time and know-how, lower-SES parents rarely helped their kids. Third, when buying new ICT devices, members of higher-SES families were more concerned with the functionalities of the device like processor speed and computer memory. They intended to integrate different devices to add value, save time, and make their life more convenient. Also, they developed habits of using ICT for professional and educational purposes. In contrast, lower-SES families were only concerned with the price and cost when they were buying new ICT devices. In most occasions, they used ICT for maintaining social contacts. Similarly, a research on Brazilian young people demonstrates that parents who are more educated are more likely to apply active technical mediation as a way to coach their children, which is effective in promoting children's digital skills (Cabello-Hutt et al., 2018).

In sum, socioeconomically advantaged people are more likely to explore potential benefits accrued from the internet. Additionally, they are also more conscious with regard to the validity and reliability of the information received from the web. In his qualitative study of British adolescents, Davies (2018) found that working class students relied more on Google to seek quick answers. They were less likely to verify the sources of the information behind the web, which is quite different from other upper class students who have greater motivations to think analytically and stay alert to the information provided on the web.

Problems associated with ICT use at school

As noted above, some would argue that schools in developed societies are not the primary place to accumulate a wide range of computer-related skills (e.g., van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014a). Nevertheless, how schools generate digital learning inequality remains a notable issue even in the most affluent regions of the world.

There are at least three main explanations that are helpful to address the digital divide at the school-level. First, school resource explanations contend that different access to material resources (e.g., classroom equipment and school funds) and non-material resources (e.g., teacher credentials and support from professional staff) are associated with differentiated e-learning opportunities. In the US, for example, racial minority and poor students are more likely to attend economically disadvantaged and underperforming schools that are unable to provide enough computers or digital literacy courses (Robinson, 2014). Note that these schools encounter basic problems that are fundamental to keep themselves functioning, such as the lack of eligible teachers, staff shortages, and dilapidated classrooms. A great proportion of students are underperforming in basic subjects such as reading and math. It is likely that the average ICT capacity of teachers is low (Warschauer, 2016). Therefore, to put a massive amount of resources into equipping ICT-related devices (e.g., desktops, screens, and projectors) may result in the misallocation of educational resources, because the cost of ICT is drained from other parts of the budget that are vital to run the school (Natriello, 2001).

The second explanation highlights how the cultural and institutional context of schools influences the attitudes and behavior of individuals, even if variations in school resources have been controlled. This generates cultural distinctions along the line of social class. Motivated by social reproduction theory, this research examines how teachers treat working-class students differently from other middle-class peers (Bowles and Gintis, 2011). In schools with a great majority of poor and racial minority kids, teachers are more likely to undervalue students' competencies and have lower educational expectations for them. In contrast, teachers in elite and high-SES schools are more likely to help students to learn in an interactive and creative way and encourage them to engage in self-learning in classrooms (Jack, 2016). This may influence how students value the role of ICT in learning. In his recent qualitative work of American high-schools, Rafalow (2018) suggested that teachers in resource-rich and elite schools have greater ICT competence. More importantly, teachers perceive e-learning to be a valuable part of education and encourage students to “pursue their interest-driven digital play during class” (p. 1446). This is quite different from other schools with a concentration of poor and minority students, where teachers see digital play to be irrelevant to learning or a threat to their authority. Taken together, the socioeconomic composition at the school-level influences the opportunities for digital learning at school (Ma, 2021). In line with this view, Leu et al. (2015) suggested that when schools are located in affluent neighborhoods, the average of students' online research and comprehension skill is at least 1 year ahead of other students living in mid- or low-income neighborhoods.

Third, it is not enough to merely consider the binary division between digital haves and have-nots. Rather, Halford and Savage (2010) argued that we should focus on how digital technologies “are associated with the crystallization of social relations of different kinds” (p. 950), thereby creating social-technical networks that are durable, enduring, and consisted of both human and non-human actors. According to the actor network theory (ANT), our living social world is inseparable from the material world (Latour, 1990). Law and Singleton (2000, p. 774) contended that “technologies, knowledges and working may be understood as the effects of materially, socially, and conceptually hybrid performances. In these performances different elements assemble together

and act in certain ways to produce specific consequences.” Using the notion of “digital pedagogics,” Alirezabeigi et al. (2020) explained that how schools are operated and classes are arranged (for instance, existing school hierarchies, school policies, and the adoption of materials in classrooms) have been entirely rearranged and reconstructed due to the emergence of digital pedagogics. That is, the integration of ICT in education may reshape “all aspects of school and not only moments when actors are engaged with learning” (Alirezabeigi et al., 2020, p. 203). It also involves “a complex configuration of clouds, software and interfaces, algorithms and patterns, standards, protocols and negotiations” (p. 193), and creating networks between human actors (e.g., school staff, IT service providers, school principals, teachers, and students) and non-human actors. To better understand how this new form of digital pedagogics (or e-learning in school settings) is used—which becomes opportunities to some but obstacles to others—Fluckiger et al. (2017) argued for the need to adopt a “subjectivist” approach that can better account for teachers’ experiences, strategies, attitudes, and skills pertaining to their adoption of ICT technologies in classrooms, such as interactive whiteboards.

Taken together, the aforementioned accounts have clearly pointed out that the mission to bridge the digital learning divide in schools can be a complicated task, which is much more than just improving the digital infrastructure or computer/internet access in schools. Past efforts that simply focus on “bring your own device” (BYOD; Alirezabeigi et al., 2020) or “one laptop per child” (OLPC; Ames, 2019) is likely to result in a failure to bridge the digital divide.

The role of education in bridging the digital divide

New technology is changing the way in which students live. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also changing how students are educated when they are asked to navigate online educational material, discuss homework with others on social media sites, search for information, consult professionals, and interact with teachers throughout the internet. This raises several questions: Can school play a crucial role in the promotion of e-learning opportunities? What is the role of education in bridging the digital learning gap?

Despite this ubiquity of ICT in students’ everyday lives, there seems to be a missing link between sociological research on stratification and inequality and research on the digital divide; that is, to date we still know little about how individuals’ technical capacities, affordances, and their experiences with the use of ICT have profound impact on their current and future life outcomes (Halford and Savage, 2010).

As noted earlier, in developed countries, students may learn more digital skills at home compared to what they learn from schools (van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014a; Robinson, 2014). But this does not mean that schools should not take precedence over other places in the provision of ICT training and e-learning opportunities. Van Deursen and van Dijk (2014a) contended that formal education remains necessary for learning appropriate ICT-related skills. First, the digital divide between students with different socioeconomic backgrounds remains significant. This shows that lower-income and minority students have fewer digital learning resources/opportunities outside of schools; compared to others, they also receive fewer benefits from the use of ICT at home. Therefore, schools may become the only place for them to gain basic ICT competence. Second, some types of ICT skills (e.g., operational skill and formal skill) are basic and can be learned from home by trial and error or practicing. But other forms of ICT skills (e.g., online information skill and strategic online skill) are not suitable to learn from home, because they are more complicated, require a number of steps, and need a considerable amount of time to learn. Without a clear guidance and help from teachers, students may easily feel frustrated and distressed when they are engaged in difficult tasks on the internet.

Noteworthy, findings based on Eurostat’s Community survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals suggest that formal education provides insufficient support as a means of learning and acquiring ICT-related skills. In 2011, less than one-third of young people and adults learned ICT-related skills via formal education. Instead, most of them relied on self-studying or sought assistance from proximate people like friends and family members (van Deursen and van Dijk, 2014a). Aside from Europe, it would be reasonable to argue that this finding can be applied to other parts of the world. This clearly indicates that most schools nowadays have not put enough effort in the investment of digital technology as well as the promotion of e-learning opportunities in classrooms.

Even before the onset of COVID-19, digital access had already become a critical issue for the global south as well as the developing world (Henwood and Wyatt, 2019). In Paraguay, for example, teachers were more likely to face a great deal of technical difficulties that were associated with ICT use in classrooms, such as compute breakage, missing software, operating difficulties, limited teacher agency, and student disinterest (Ames, 2019). Because digital inequality is more severe in poor and developing countries (Ma et al., 2019), there is an urgent need to provide appropriate ICT learning opportunities in schools and to incorporate e-learning into the curriculum. But in the former section, I have suggested that how to better address the problem of (or bridge) the digital divide in school environment seems to be more complicated than what people used to think (see **Problems associated with ICT use at school** section). Last but not least, we should not overlook the gender digital divide, to the extent that gender oppressions and inequalities are reproduced or even become exacerbated in digital spaces, even when men and women have equal access to digital technologies (Henwood and Wyatt, 2019).

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Global education reform movement revisited

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Road to the global education race	165
Tentative typology of 20th century whole system school reforms	166
The arrival of the GERM as an alternative typology	168
Increasing competition between schools over enrollments	169
Standardization of teaching and learning in schools	169
Increasing priority to basic literacy and numeracy	169
Test-based accountability	170
Privatization of public education	170
Antidotes to GERM and conclusion	171
References	172

Road to the global education race

If this chapter was written 20 years ago, it would have a totally different tone. Not only because of the ongoing global pandemic that has changed so many things in education, but also because of the much better understanding today of key education policy drivers for whole system success. Earlier education policies relied mostly on indicators describing what education systems do, or inputs into education systems. Today we know much more about how education systems work, how different parts of the system interact, how important some key educational outcomes are and how this all varies over time. This chapter looks back at some earlier efforts to conceptualize large-scale education reforms and then explains how the global education reform movement as a second-generation typology has evolved over the past decade from the earlier typologies. The aim of this chapter is to contribute to the ongoing debate about wrong versus right drivers for education system improvement.

Expectations for global education development were set high in the early 1990s. There was a strong common understanding among the coalition of rich countries and intergovernmental organizations, including the World Bank, OECD, and UNESCO, that fixing the world's educational challenges was primarily about finding enough money to do so rather than knowing how to do it. Consequently, increasing international development aid through "Education for All," "Millennium Development Goals," and other global campaigns promised to provide high quality and equitable education for more children around the world. Most wealthy countries saw their education budgets grow while middle-income countries were borrowing money from international banks to upgrade their education systems, and more students than ever before continued their learning in secondary and higher education. The emerging new millennium was expected to be an era of digital technologies and innovation that would transform pedagogy in schools and unleash professional potential in education systems. The future of education looked optimistic.

What was missing, however, was a good understanding of how to change whole education systems. By the year 2000, research on school effectiveness and school improvement that was essential for whole-system reforms had established a knowledge base that made turning individual ineffective schools into better performing schools. But to change all the schools in an education system was much more difficult. One challenge was that large-scale education reforms that aim to transform whole education systems are complicated and expensive to research. Another challenge was the absence of more advanced metrics that would provide comparable and comprehensive information about an education system's performance. Systematic data from genuine whole-system reforms were also rare. Examples of large-scale education reforms that have been studied as natural systemic experiments include: the school choice and voucher reforms in Chile in the 1980s and in Sweden in the 1990s (Adamson et al., 2016), the Education Reform Act 1988 in England (Ball, 2008), and the introduction of standards-based education in many parts of the United States in the 1990s and in Australia in the 2000s. These education reforms share a common assumption that if education could only just act more like a marketplace, excellence will prevail. These system-wide reforms have been extensively reviewed in education policy and research literature and they were influential in many national education reforms around the world in the 1990s.

A significant milestone in the history of international whole system education reforms was the launch of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) new standardized student assessment in 2000 called PISA, or the Program for International Student Assessment. This triennial international large-scale assessment (ILSA) is coordinated and administrated by the OECD and repeated in all its member states as well as a large number of other countries every three years testing 15-year-olds' ability to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges (OECD, 2001). At the time of launching PISA, radically new whole-system education reforms in Chile, Sweden, England, and in many states of the US, for example, had created high expectations among policymakers and the education expert community about whole system success in these countries. In this light the significance of PISA was three-fold.

First, the OECD required that all its member countries and new candidate countries participated in PISA in each three-year cycle. This made PISA a common mechanism in the OECD's regular economic cooperation meetings and thereby elevated the importance

of PISA in regard to national economic and social policies and strategies. Other international large-scale assessments that were coordinated by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) in four-year cycles were primarily used for researchers to analyze national education systems, having less influence in policy formation or national education reforms (Fischman et al., 2019). Since the beginning, the OECD has played an active role in national level policy advice and inter-governmental policy transfer using data from PISA.

Second, PISA was the first time that the entire OECD member community (in year 2000 it had 28 member states, including then 15 European Union member states) would employ the same learning metric to test the performance of their school systems. In other words, PISA was also the first standardized test to justify the impact of whole-system education reforms mentioned earlier. It also put education systems with very different structures and policies, like those in Germany, France and in the Nordic countries, to the test that would allow more detailed comparative analysis of the success or failure of different models of school education.

Third, PISA collected a broader range of background information about schools, their teachers and students that allowed better analysis of relationships between educational performance, students' family backgrounds and other social outcomes in participating countries. These new data broadened the scope of "education performance" when comparing different education systems to include different aspects like educational equality, inclusion, and fairness, in other words equity of education.

The first results of PISA in 2000 were a litmus test for the previous large-scale education reforms. In the absence of more systematic data about education systems' performance, there were education system leaders who believed they had found the key to success in transforming whole systems. Then there were those who thought that their education systems were world-class without needing any radical reforms. As the OECD's Andreas Schleicher, who has worked on PISA since the beginning recalled from a mid-1990s meeting in Paris where all OECD member-government representatives had gathered to discuss this proposed new learning metric (2018, 18): "some of them were boasting that they had the world's best school system – perhaps because it was the one they knew best." Although no one expected PISA to be the ultimate yardstick for education systems excellence, many expected that it would prove that the education policies and reform designs adopted earlier in their own countries were keeping their promise. The results of the first PISA study in 2000 launched new era in international comparative education. Sam Sellar and colleagues (2017) argue that PISA also created a new global education race and paved the way to the Global Education Reform Movement.

Tentative typology of 20th century whole system school reforms

There are various ways to conceptualize the evolution of systemwide education reforms that date back to the mid-20th century. Some scholars see the 1990s an era of comprehensive systemic education reforms around the world that happened for different reasons but with similar aims to change whole school education systems (Fullan, 2011; Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009; Hopkins et al., 2014). The collapse of socialist governments in Eastern Europe and economic globalization in the rest of world offered fresh opportunities to test and export new education policy ideas in the countries that needed rapid transformation of their outdated education systems. South Africa, the Middle East and Latin America had similar needs to modernize their education systems. Modernization often meant updating curricula and qualifications, raising the quality of student learning outcomes, narrowing the achievement gap between different social groups, integrating new digital media and technologies to serve both teaching and learning in schools, and improving efficiency of education systems as they grew bigger and became more expensive (Zajda and Rust, 2021). Many government authorities and educational reform architects were looking for places where systemwide educational change experiments were underway hoping to find inspiration to fix their own system challenges.

It was well-known during that time that education reforms rarely succeed even when significant resources were invested in implementing them. In his 1990 book "The Predictable Failure of Educational Reform" Seymour Sarason (1990) describes how educational reforms, one after another, turn into failures primarily because policymakers and system leaders are unable to learn from the past change efforts. In the 1990s many scholars shared Sarason's skepticism and concluded that the more we try to change schools, the more they seem to remain the same. School effectiveness research that was born in the 1970s in North America, Europe, and Australia improved understanding of the key characteristics of successful schools (Hopkins et al., 2014). At the same time, school improvement research began to show how to make low-performing schools more effective (Joyce & Showers, 1995). However, how to change whole education system remained an unanswered question.

One of the most influential large-scale education reforms was started by the issuance of the Education Reform Act (ERA) in 1988 in England. This new legislation set the direction for education in England for the next decades and influenced governments around the world to follow that reform model so much so that Levin and Fullan (2008) call it "a watershed event in the international educational reform movement." Neoliberal public sector policies that formed an ideological foundation for the New Public Sector Management constituted a particular approach to educational reform inspired by education as a marketplace. Free market principles had been experimented with in the education sector before (e.g., Chile), but England soon became a laboratory that caught wide international attention due to its systemwide nature (Carnoy, 1999; Levin and Fullan, 2008; Adamson et al., 2016). The Education Reform Act 1988 and the policies and practices it launched in the UK happened at the right time politically and economically in an environment that was fertile for scaling up bold new ideas to reform the entire education system.

The theory of change that was built in the ERA was simple and easy to understand by politicians and other non-educators. As a neoliberal design it surprisingly survived a decade of Tony Blair's Labor Government rule from 1997 to 2007. The following four key principles were the foundation of ERA's modus operandi (Levin and Fullan, 2008):

- The more schools compete against other schools for student enrollment, the more aligned to student needs they will have to be, thereby improving student outcomes for all as well as overall quality of education in general.
- For proper competition schools need administrative and pedagogical autonomy to operate, and parents need freedom to choose a school that they think fits best for their child.
- A common national curriculum is needed to set the same educational performance standards for all schools.
- Publicly available comparable data for parents and the public about student outcomes and performance of schools should form the basis of school accountability.

These operational premises that resonate closely with marketplace logic promised efficiency gains in many education systems just like competition does in the world of commerce. International development organizations, global consulting firms, many philanthropic organizations and education think tanks around the world adopted the ERA's reform logic as part of the evolving New Public Management paradigm (Hood and Jackson, 1991). Education reforms in many parts of the Anglo-Saxon world followed this reform often adding their own peculiarities in implementation. School competition and parental choice, aligning teaching and learning to common standards, standardized tests in literacy and numeracy, holding schools accountable for these test results to authorities, and new forms of public-private partnerships soon spread around the world, including countries in developing parts of the world. This new way of improving education systems' performance that was included in policy recommendations and education reform designs around the world soon became a "gold standard" model for national education reforms and laid a foundation for educational change in the 21st century.

In the 1990s the most influential actors in the global education arena included United States, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the Nordic countries as bilateral donors, and the World Bank (WB), the OECD, the European Union (EU), and the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Their influence in national education policymaking and reform designs varied from soft advice and coordination (EU and UNESCO) to government-level policy recommendation (OECD) and conditional funding of reform programmes (WB) that required governments to enact new legislation and related reform policies. A common theory of change was to identify international best practices from more successful education systems and include them in national education policies. Some education systems in Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East shifted focus from static knowledge to flexible skills including technological literacy and on new labor market needs whereas many other education systems were looking for more efficient ways of system management, alternative ways of financing education, and new information management systems. Although the overall goal in most education reforms was similar, how they were implemented varied greatly from one system to another.

The challenge for both borrowers of education reform ideas and lenders of solutions to improve education systems at that time was an absence of a commonly accepted framework to judge how effective different reforms have been. Instead, education reforms were categorized by looking at their aims, purposes, and orientations (Carnoy, 1999; Fullan, 2011; Hopkins et al., 2014; Sahlberg, 2004). The four commonly identified education reform categories in the 1990s were those that focused on a system's restructuring, economic efficiency, standardization of education, and enhancing equity. These are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Tentative typology of system-wide education reforms in the end of the 20th century.

<i>Restructuring education systems</i>	<i>Enhancing economic efficiency</i>	<i>Standardization of education process</i>	<i>Strengthening equity in education</i>
The key assumption was that high performing education systems share similar structures, purposes, and operational principles, and that global "best practices" should guide education reforms in all other countries. The key indicators of education systems productivity included pupil-teacher ratios, class-sizes, school-sizes, time-allocation per subject in different levels of schooling, education expenditure per capita, participation and completion rates, and grade repetition.	The main aim was to reduce the cost of education to taxpayers by encouraging new forms of between school competition and introducing user-fees to pay for education. These reforms became prevalent during austerity actions in early 1990s and again following the global financial downturn after 2008 fiscal crisis. Since education is a significant proportion of public sector spending, reducing public spending inevitably means also shrinking education budgets financed from public taxes. This, in turn, forces governments to seek new funding sources or to reduce the unit costs within education sector.	The starting point was a belief that an effective way to improve the quality of education is to set higher standards for teaching and learning in all schools. This was particularly relevant at the time of decentralized governance and increasing school autonomy. The most common reform strategy includes (1) a closely scripted curriculum with predetermined learning standards; (2) aligned standardized tests that measure how these standards have been achieved; (3) tougher accountability to control teachers' and schools' performance vis-à-vis the set standards; and (4) performance-related incentives and sanctions to teachers and schools.	The dual intention of was to promote social equity and increase economic opportunity simultaneously. Education is seen as an important means in closing the gap between the socio-economic groups in society. These reforms emphasize strengthening the political role of education in building democracy, social mobility and equal opportunities for all citizens. In general, these reforms focused on: shifting public spending from higher to lower levels of education, addressing special needs education, gender issues, schooling of minorities, and broadening moving toward a more integrated curriculum and inclusive organization of schooling.

National education system improvement efforts often included aspects of several of the types of reforms described in [Table 1](#). The first three types of education reforms (restructuring, economic efficiency, and standardization) were common templates in advice and technical assistance offered by international development organizations and many bilateral donors in the 1990s. Equity-oriented education policies and reforms that were common in the Nordic countries remained less popular often due to a prejudice that equity and equality of opportunity, by default, jeopardizes the system-wide efforts to produce excellent learning outcomes. Indeed, many education pundits and private school advocates pointed to the Nordic countries as valid proof that being more educationally equal happens at the expense of educational excellence.

Optimism regarding large-scale educational reforms' power to change education systems was high in the end of the 1990s as part of the Third Way political and economic movement that tried to close the gap between old divisions political left and right. Anthony Giddens who is often recognized as the father of the Third Way idea argued that governments, especially those in the UK, the US, and Germany should not rely on reform programmes that represent the interests of any one political block, but that political parties should build consensual support from the middle – the Third Way – particularly in advocating a synthesis of center-right economic reforms combined with center-left social policies. As the Third Way promised to strengthen public services, it strived to do that with a spirit of free market logic. Within this logic education is seen as a marketplace where parents have the freedom to choose their children's education. This required more competition between schools so that they better serve families' increasingly diverse expectations and needs. In practice this gave a boost to new types of schools governed in partnership between public authorities and private operators. Charter schools in the US, Academies in England, and Free Schools in Sweden are examples of new forms of publicly funded "private" schools.

Andy Hargreaves and Dennis Shirley have argued that the Third Way of educational change is pursuit by focusing performance through partnerships ([Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009](#), p. 44) that "Third Way advocates sought to address the dawning realization that education in the 21st century must move beyond the control of self-serving professionals under free-wheeling progressivism and beyond the dark thicket of prescription and standardization that limits capacity and stifles initiative." The Third Way was a form of governance built on a synchrony to serve private economic interests and enhance public good. The Third Way directions in education reforms around the world have served as birthplace for what we now know as the Global Education Reform Movement.

The arrival of the GERM as an alternative typology

It is often claimed that the launch of the OECD's PISA in 2000 is the most significant single event in global education. PISA shifted focus from assessing what students have been taught in school more toward what they can do with knowledge and skills they have learned in school. At the dawn of the 21st century, OECD countries, in general, were increasingly interested to see how their education systems met the needs of the knowledge economy, innovation and the unknown future. PISA was expected to shed more light on how successful different education systems could raise the quality of education so that it includes all children. Indeed, PISA data also allowed a new way of comparing education systems in terms of their fairness and inclusiveness to provide equal education opportunities to different students across a wide range of social groups.

After the first three PISA cycles, it had become clear that the market-based education policies adopted by many education systems as key drivers of improvement had turned out to be disappointments. What accumulative triennial data that was available by then revealed was that the market-based reform models, i.e., competition between schools, frequent standardized student assessments, tougher accountability with associated rewards and sanctions, and a growing range of public-private partnerships to govern schools were not associated with higher education system performance ([Fullan, 2011](#); [Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009](#); [OECD, 2007](#); [2021](#); [Sahlberg, 2016](#)). Researchers and analysts around the world were especially interested in using the OECD's comparable data to test how some of the whole system education reforms of the 1990s were, however, keeping their promises of whole system success.

Analysis and early research became extremely important in answering two essential questions: One, what are the common features of those education systems that were systematically high performing in the early PISA cycles in the 2000s? Two, what are common characteristics in education reforms associated with lower-than-expected educational performance? One of the big disappointments was Sweden, a country that introduced a radical voucher reform to bring more competition, choice, and innovation in its traditional public education system in 1992. By 2006 Sweden became the lowest performing Nordic country in PISA ([OECD, 2007](#)). The conclusion was, by and large, that the neoliberal education reforms of the 1990s were a wrong way for Sweden ([Dahlstedt and Fejes, 2019](#); [Adamson et al., 2016](#); [Wiborg, 2015](#)). Another failing neoliberal education reform was the ERA in 1988 in England. Again, England's educational performance in the 2000s was disappointing to many of those who had believed in competition, school choice, standardization and student testing as key drivers of educational success. The ERA, which is one of the most researched and investigated national education reforms, has largely been judged as a failure although like in Sweden some positive gains have also been accomplished ([Strain, 2009](#); [Levin and Fullan, 2008](#); [Ball, 2018](#)). A similar verdict has been made after two decades of No Child Left Behind reforms in the US ([Ravitch, 2013](#); [Berliner, 2011](#); [Abrams, 2016](#)). Research from other countries that had adopted similar neoliberal education reforms, including Australia, New Zealand, The Netherlands, and Denmark have added to that growing evidence-base of unsuccessful education reforms for whole system improvement. In brief, the assumption that market-like competition between schools would be the driver for improving quality and equity of education was not vindicated by the evidence. This gave rise to describing such ill reforms as germs, or what is known as Global Education Reform Movement (GERM).

It is worth noting that the Global Education Reform Movement is not any official policy or program but rather informs a “new educational orthodoxy”, as Andy Hargreaves has named it. GERM was born out of the realization that there seemed to be a set of “wrong drivers” in national education reforms that have evolved over time from the growing exchange of education policies and “best practices” globally. GERM is an organic, evolving construction that relies on a particular set of assumptions, some of them mentioned above, to improve education systems (Adamson et al., 2016; Fullan, 2011, 2020; Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009; Sahlberg, 2021). In international educational change literature GERM first appeared in 2006 (Sahlberg, 2006) but Andy Hargreaves had earlier used term Global Education Reform Agenda (Hargreaves et al., 2001) that is a narrower and less detailed notion of the same thing. Other scholars like Michael Fullan wrote about “Wrong Drivers” and “The Right Drivers” of whole system reform” (Fullan, 2011, 2021), and others labeled these “Neoliberal Education Reforms” (Teng et al., 2020; Apple, 2006; Ross and Gibson, 2007) that resonates closely to the key assumptions of GERM.

Five distinct features have been dominant in the global education reform movement as it is defined in this chapter.

Increasing competition between schools over enrollments

Perhaps the most fundamental feature is increased parental choice that is associated with growing *competition* between schools for student enrollment. Most education systems have introduced alternative forms of establishing and running school to offer parents with more *choice* of schools for their children (Abrams, 2016; Heyneman, 2009; OECD 2018). But there are significant differences in the way school choice is enacted in practice. The voucher system in Chile in the 1980s, free schools in Sweden in the 1990s, charter schools in the United States in the 2000s, and secondary academies in England in the 2010s are examples of faith in pure competition as a main engine of educational progress. Consequently, the proportion of more advantaged students studying in private schools or independent schools has grown. In Australia, for example, where the federal government gives attractive financial incentives for non-government schools, more than every third primary and secondary school student studies in non-governmental schools. In Canada, for comparison, where the federal government has no role in provincial and territorial education (except education for First Nations children), most provinces and territories have had strong policies to protect and advance public education as the main form of schooling in the country (one of every fifteen students attend private school). In many of the countries where schools compete over students, school rankings based on their performance in national standardized assessments are annually published in media that further increases between-school competition. Recent data shows that, according to school principals across all OECD countries more than three-quarters of the students attend schools that compete with at least one other school for enrollment (OECD, 2019a, b). Finally, students, especially in many Asian countries, experience stronger pressure to perform better against their peers due to the tough race to be accepted to the best high schools and universities.

Standardization of teaching and learning in schools

Shifting the focus from education inputs to outcomes in the 1990s had raised the popularity of standards-based education policies, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world. Standardization-oriented education reforms initially aimed to have a stronger emphasis on learning outcomes and schools’ educational performance rather than just syllabi, curriculum, instruction time, and various structures of schooling. Presence of externally set high expectations or standards for schools, teachers, and students has been a commonly accepted precondition to improved learning and overall higher performance of schools. Standardization draws from an assumption that all students should be educated to the same (externally) agreed learning targets. In practice, this has led to a prevalence of government prescribed curricula and even homogenization of curriculum policies worldwide in the quest of universal education standards.

It goes without saying that some standardization is necessary in education, including in curriculum, teaching, and learning. But what necessity is in different contexts is where the problems start to emerge. Too restrictive externally mandated standardization can have inconvenient side effects to the teaching profession. First, it narrows the professional autonomy and flexibility in schools and classrooms that may be harmful to creative teaching and personalized learning. Second, it prevents teachers from exploration and experimentation, reduces the use of alternative pedagogical approaches, limits risk-taking in schools and thereby reduces chances of innovation. Research on educational systems that have adopted policies emphasizing steering education through externally mandated and controlled standards on core subjects, suggests that teaching and learning are narrower, and teachers focus on “proven methods” and “guaranteed content” to best prepare their students for the high-stakes tests (Abu-Alhija, 2007; Berliner, 2011; Emler et al., 2019). The consequence is that the more schools are expected to conform to predetermined teaching and learning standards in schools, the lower the degree of freedom and risk-taking in classroom teaching and learning there will be. When teachers and students start to avoid taking risks, they stop trying new ideas in school that, in turn, will limit creativity and innovation.

Increasing priority to basic literacy and numeracy

Learning to read, write and do mathematics well at school is important, but so are many other things in today’s schooling. Those who have championed “back to basics” in school education often do that at the expense of social studies, arts, music, physical education, and play. The dominance of literacy and numeracy means that they also become the prime criteria of improvement in national education reforms. According to the OECD’s own conclusion (Schleicher, 2018) and comparative education research

(Ball, 2012; Sellar et al., 2017; Fischman et al., 2019) on national education policies in several countries, national education policies are increasingly influenced by international student assessments, especially PISA. Since PISA primarily measures literacy and numeracy in schools, those subjects have had growing attentions in many countries during the past two decades.

Literacy and numeracy strategies that increased instructional time for the core subjects in England, Ireland, and Ontario (Canada), for example, are concrete consequences of the global educational reform movement in the teaching profession. *No Child Left Behind* legislation in the United States has led most school districts in the country to shift teaching time from other subjects, especially from social studies, arts and music, to teaching reading, mathematics and science so that schools are better prepared for tests that measure student performance and hold schools accountable in these subjects (Jennings and Stark Rentner, 2006). Australia imported its National Assessment Program – Numeracy and Literacy (NAPLAN) that started to measure literacy and numeracy annually in school years 3, 5, 7 and 9 from the US as a response to the nation’s less-than-satisfactory performance in global education rankings. Moreover, poorer than expected performance in the OECD’s PISA has led Sweden, Norway, and Denmark to revise their curricula and related school policies to give more attention to the basic academic domains and standardized measurements of student achievement in these domains. Worryingly, strategic privilege given to literacy and numeracy comes at the cost of eliminating recess and free playtime at school. When literacy and numeracy time is prioritized above all else, other necessary aspects of school and child development are easily ignored.

Test-based accountability

Increased school autonomy and flexibility in teaching normally mean that accountability begins to play a clearer role in administration and management. Accountability is a term that has become fashionable in education, illustrating education’s closer partnership with the business world. In education systems that have adopted corporate management models, teachers and schools are held accountable for students’ achievement using data from standardized assessments and opinion surveys. School performance—especially raising students’ achievement in academic subjects—is intimately tied to the processes of assessing, inspecting, appraising, and rewarding or punishing schools and teachers. Performance-based pay, data management systems, and school rankings are some examples of new accountability mechanisms. Growing infatuation with the performance-based pay scale and test-based accountability relies upon two erroneous ideals. First, teachers will work harder for extra pay. Second, test scores are the largest factor in determining effective teachers. Using this logic, if a teacher is boasting stellar student test scores, she must be working diligently, teaching successfully, and worthy of higher pay. It is this thinking that contributes to the undermining of the teaching profession in certain countries across the globe.

The problem with test-based accountability is not that students, teachers, and schools are held accountable per se, but rather the way accountability mechanisms are designed and how they affect teachers’ work and students’ studying in school. A solid empirical finding for 50 years (e.g., Alexander and Morgan, 2016; Haertel, 2013) is that students’ family background is more powerful factor associated to academic achievement in school than people think. If most of the variation in students’ test scores in school is associated to factors outside the school gate, schools cannot be held entirely accountable for these test scores. Moreover, recent research on the social side of education reform has revealed that social capital, in other words teacher collaboration and teamwork in teaching have positive effect on student learning (Quintero, 2017). This means that measured student achievement is not always a result of any one single teacher but rather a collective outcome of the school. A conclusion that the OECD (2021) made in its cross-country analysis is that test-based accountability is not linked to academic achievement, nor has a notable impact on educational inequity. More specifically, the OECD (2021, 25) concluded that “the intensive competition across schools that test-based accountability promotes could be disruptive in some educational contexts, producing unintended consequences in school communities.” This raises important questions about correctness of these policies as they often do more harm than make education better.

Privatization of public education

Parental choice that is the key to expanding private education emerged from Milton Friedman’s economic theories in the 1950s. Friedman maintained that parents must be given the freedom to choose their children’s education and thereby encouraged healthy competition among schools so that they could better serve families’ diverse individual needs. This spirit of school choice led to charter schools and free schools in the US and Sweden in early 1990s, Secondary Academies in England, and expanding independent school sectors and private actors in education in Australia, Denmark, and New Zealand. Typically, school choice manifests itself through the emergence of private schools where parents pay part or all of the tuition for their children’s education. Today, there are scores of various types of alternative schools other than fee-based private schools to expand choice in education markets. Privately funded schooling ideology maintains that parents should have a right to use the public funds set aside for their children’s education to choose the schools—public or private—that work best for them. Privatization of public education also includes other forms of private actors engaged in the education sector (Adamson et al., 2016). This may have other consequences in regard to the ways education systems are able to serve their purpose for the common good. Thurpp et al. (2020) conclude that “in many ways the New Zealand case illustrates how a public education system can lose capacity and become dependent on private actors.”

The five features of the global education reform movement are not the complete list of failed efforts to enhance education system performance, especially equity and excellence. There are some other common but less consistent aspects of educational change that have emerged through borrowing “best practices” rather than deeper policy learning. Whole system reforms by technology (digital devices to all students), de-professionalization of the teaching profession (fast-track pathways to teaching and leadership), and

complex information management systems (multiple levels of data from schools) are examples of other efforts that have been launched with high hopes but ended up less than expected outcomes.

Antidotes to GERM and conclusion

If GERM is not the right way to improve quality and equity of an education system, what is the alternative? Critiques of GERM should not state that all earlier mentioned features of education reform are wrong and should be avoided. What is important to understand is that those features are wrong priorities for system wide education reform, as Michael Fullan (2011, 2021) says, but they may have a role in some well-thought ways serving other policy drivers. The answer to the question of what the alternative directions to reform education systems could be, or an antidote to GERM if you wish, requires finding out the key policy drivers in more successful education systems. This is where comparable data from the OECD member states' education systems is useful.

Comparative analysis of OECD's data since 2000 revealed a surprising finding: successful education systems in terms of quality and equity of outcomes, participation and completion rates, and systems efficiency were quite different than what most expected. Finland, Canada, The Netherlands, South Korea, and Japan were among the highest performing education systems at the end of 2000s (OECD, 2007; Sahlberg, 2010). These are very different education systems in many ways but, interestingly, they have more things in common as far as the key drivers of educational system improvement are concerned. Table 2 illustrates some of the main features in high performing education systems compared to the GERM.

It is difficult to prove the success or failure of any education reform. Education systems are complex social systems and causal associations between events or elements are difficult, if not impossible to identify reliably. When education leaders make decisions regarding their policies and reforms, they can rely on (1) available evidence about reported possible success factors of high performing education systems in Table 2; and (2) current research and analysis of those large-scale reforms that were based on one or more policy drivers in Table 1. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to make a comprehensive review of research evidence regarding either of these options. Instead, it is worthwhile to mention some of the most significant conclusions made by the OECD to inform policy-makers about wrong and right drivers for whole system success.

In 2012 the OECD (2012) published its first comprehensive analysis of quality and equity in education. The review included PISA data since 2000 from all OECD countries and provided a detailed comparison of different education policy contexts from the point of view of quality and equity of educational outcomes. The OECD argued that greater equity in education can contribute to economic competitiveness and social cohesion. Another finding was that fairer and more inclusive education can serve as a lever out of financial crisis that most OECD countries found themselves in at the time of this analysis. The overall evidence was conclusive

Table 2 Key education policy and reform features in high performing education systems.

<i>Global education reform movement</i>	<i>High performing education systems</i>
Increasing competition between schools over enrollments	Collaboration and networking The basic assumption is that education is fundamentally a collaborative process and therefore cooperation, networking, and sharing ideas among schools benefits everyone in raising the quality of education. Collaboration is encouraged in education policies and school leadership focuses on schools and teachers helping one another.
Standardization of teaching and learning in schools	Creative customization of curriculum Schools have a key role in designing the best possible teaching and learning for all students guided by flexible national framework or curriculum. Schools are supported to come up with new ideas to curriculum and to experiment different methods of teaching. Individual learning plans are commonly used to accommodate needs of different learners.
Increasing priority to basic literacy and numeracy	Whole-child approach Teaching and learning focus on deep, meaningful learning, giving equal value to all aspects of the growth of an individual's personality, moral character, creativity, knowledge, ethics, and skills. Student wellbeing is closely integrated in the process of schooling.
Test-based accountability	Trust-based professionalism Teachers and schools as communities of professionals are trusted to do what is best for students. Accountability is viewed as reciprocal professional link between school and authorities. Student assessments are primarily designed on sample-based testing methods and high-quality research is used to inform both schools and policymaking about improvement.
Privatization of public education	Social equity and adequacy in education Basic premise is that all children should have equal prospects for educational success in school and public education is the best way to guarantee that right to everyone. Because school learning is strongly influenced by children's family background and associated factors, social equity and adequacy in education outcomes are the basic policy and reform principles. School choice is made possible within public education system as much as possible.

- investing in educational equity pays off. The OECD (2012, p. 14) made a bold conclusion: “The highest performing education systems across OECD countries are those that combine high quality and equity.” Six years later the OECD released its second analysis about the central role that equity in education plays in economic and social development. It stated that “Disparities in performance related to socio-economic status develop early and widen throughout students’ lives” (OECD, 2018, p. 30), and in most OECD countries the association between socio-economic status and academic performance did not change over the past decade leaving inequity in education one of the key challenges in most countries. These findings conflict with earlier beliefs that educational excellence comes with a cost of inequity. Studies by Parker and colleagues and Pfeffer (Parker et al., 2018; Pfeffer, 2015) that used OECD data to test this assumption confirmed that “a negative relationship exists between average academic excellence and inequality” (Parker et al., 2018, p. 855). In other words, education system can have high education outcomes and be equitable regarding these outcomes simultaneously.

The OECD has not found support to the claim that between-school competition is associated with improved student learning outcomes (OECD, 2019c). Empirical evidence on whether student achievement is higher when there is greater competition between schools is mixed. Instead, the OECD (2012, p. 64) warns that

School choice advocates often argue that the introduction of market mechanisms in education allows equal access to high quality schooling for all. Expanding school choice opportunities, it is said, would allow all students – including disadvantaged ones and the ones attending low performing schools – to opt for higher quality schools, as the introduction of choice in education can foster efficiency, spur innovation and raise quality overall. However, evidence does not support these perceptions, as choice and associated market mechanisms can enhance segregation.

Rather than encouraging governments to have more parental choice and school-to-school competition, the OECD (2019, p. 12) advises them to “provide the checks and balances that prevent choice from leading to more segregation”, and “ensure that all parents can exercise their right to choose the school of their preference.”

Further antidote against GERM can be found in the OECD’s assessment of whether and which accountability practices affect equity and education performance in student academic achievement in school. By using data available from consecutive PISA cycles (2006–2015) the OECD analyzed how accountability practices affect equity and quality of education outcomes in different countries. The conclusion was that there is no conclusive evidence of accountability positively affecting education systems performance (OECD, 2021).

The *Educational Review* journal dedicated an entire special issue in 2019 to the analysis of GERM and its manifestations in international education. In the editorial Kay Fuller and Howard Stevenson (2019) summarize the problematic consequences of GERM in different countries (e.g., Chile, England, and China). Articles in that special issue describe awareness of GERM has provided students and educators with a new vocabulary to resist wrong-headed reforms and speak about education systems that are visibly “cracked”.

The OECD has had dual influence on the emergence of the global education reform movement (Heyneman and Lee, 2014; Lingard and Sellar, 2016; Sellar and Lingard, 2013). On one hand it has promoted many aspects of GERM, especially standardization and homogenization of education by promoting standardized assessments in measuring education systems’ success. OECD’s active role in facilitating international policy dialogs has often led to simplistic transfer of “best practices” and even adopting education policies from other countries. On the other hand, it has been instrumental in producing more data and analyzing some of the most controversial topics in education – school choice, accountability, and equity in education. Conclusions that more competition and choice or tougher accountability don’t guarantee sustainable educational improvements, and that investing teacher professionalism and equity in education are smarter policies have been fundamental reasons why GERM was realized two decades ago. By acting this dual role the OECD has created antidotes to the infections that it has been spreading globally.

Despite frequent school reforms around the world, educational performance overall has not improved during the past decade. Indeed, it has been in decline compared benchmark levels of academic results around 2010. The global statistics reveal system-wide inequities that are boosted by the present global pandemic. As this chapter makes it clear, the inspiration for systemwide education reforms have often been imported from the US and England. Yet, the evidence to support many of these large-scale policy changes is weak or non-existent. For instance, research also referenced in this chapter has shown that school choice, test-based accountability, or privatisation are wrong drivers for whole-system educational success. So, what to do instead? Success in fighting the global pandemic is a result of relying on best available science and expert knowledge to maximise the effectiveness of treatments while minimising their side effects. We should follow that same principle that have led success in public health in many parts of the world in education, too. Herein lies silver lining amid global disaster. No doubt there will be new variants of GERM that will affect education systems in the future. If we have learnt anything since 2020, it is that we need to act in protecting and improving education more like we act in defending public health systems in keeping each of us safe.

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The privatization of education. Drivers, social effects and regulatory challenges of private sector participation in schooling

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Definition and scope	174
Conceptual demarcation and relevant distinctions	174
World trends	175
Main drivers	175
Privatization by design versus <i>de facto</i> privatization	177
Beyond the neoliberal creed: privatization as a globalizing policy	177
The effects of privatization: emerging consensus and persisting discrepancies	178
Regulation and governance of private provision	179
The regulation of PPPs in education	179
Regulating independent schools: the case of LFPS	180
To conclude	180
References	181

The privatization of education is a global phenomenon taking place at all educational levels and growing worldwide. In this entry we define educational privatization and examine its growth in different regions, discussing why it emerged, and how it has developed. We also reflect on the main effects of education privatization policies, with an emphasis on the challenges these policies pose for educational equity and the public regulation of education. We focus on basic education, including primary and secondary education.

Definition and scope

Conceptual demarcation and relevant distinctions

Privatization is a process through which the private sector increasingly participates in economic and social activities that, in most countries, used to be the remit of the State. In the last decades, privatization has crystallized in public services that were previously de-commodified and in relation to which the State has had an important historical presence over the 20th century, as tends to be the case of education. Nonetheless, privatization processes can occur in various guises and to different degrees. To start with, we can distinguish between drastic and gradual modes of privatization. Drastic privatization implies that both service ownership and management responsibilities are transferred from public to private hands at a large scale. Although this form of privatization has been more common in gas, water or telecommunications sectors, the expansion of fully private schools, which are exclusively funded by families' fees and/or philanthropic resources, would be also considered as part of a drastic privatization trend. In contrast, gradual privatization entails a progressive or partial transfer of service ownership and/or management and delivery responsibilities from the public to the private sector, with the State retaining full or an important part of the ownership. In most contexts, the privatization of education has tended to follow a gradual privatization path rather than a drastic one. In fact, the privatization of education tends to crystallize at the level of provision (via the outsourcing of service provision to private management organizations) and/or funding (via co-payment policies). Conversely, it rarely entails changes at the ownership level- with the rapid *academization* of schools in England being more an exception than the rule (Verger, 2020).

The concept of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) has been broadly used in educational literature to capture the predominantly gradual character of privatization processes in education, as well as the hybrid nature that educational provision is acquiring in numerous school systems. PPPs in education encompass a broad range of policies and programs that entail a contract between the State and the private sector in which public sources fund an education service, and a private actor takes responsibility for its delivery. In the context of PPPs, both sectors, the private and the public, are expected to share risks, ideas, and other resources in delivering services (Hodge et al., 2010). In education, it is possible to distinguish at least three main policy categories that fall under the PPP umbrella (Zancajo et al., 2021a):

1. **Charter schools.** Schools are owned by the State but managed by private entities. Frequently, these schools enjoy higher levels of autonomy than regular public schools.
2. **Vouchers.** Private schools receive public funding depending on the number of students enrolled. In some cases, private schools can combine voucher and self-funding students.
3. **Contracted schools.** Private schools that the government directly contracts to provide the educational service in exchange for public funding covering part or all the costs they require to operate. Under this scheme, and in contrast with vouchers, schools are not necessarily publicly funded on a per-capita basis.

Another relevant distinction is that advanced by Ball and Youdell (2007), who have famously distinguished between exogenous and endogenous forms of educational privatization. Exogenous privatization involves the opening up of public services to private sector participation, whereas endogenous privatization involves the importing of ideas and management techniques from the private to the public sector. Endogenous privatization can occur independently from exogenous privatization, in the sense that it does not necessarily imply the privatization of service provision, ownership, or financing—but the adoption of a private management styles and techniques within public sector, including outcomes-based management, competition between providers, job flexibility, performance-based incentive schemes, etc.

In Table 1, we show the educational policies associated with each type of privatization. The table makes it clear that certain policies can promote both exogenous and endogenous privatization. Nonetheless, the privatization concept is far more frequently used to refer to exogenous than endogenous privatization.

It should finally be noted that, while privatization and marketization are not synonymous terms, they tend to be inextricably linked. Most privatization processes, both exogenous and endogenous, lead to the generation of market dynamics in educational systems (including the promotion of school choice and school competition to attract users). By default, a greater presence of private providers in a given system creates an environment that is conducive to market logics and competitive practices. In the same way that privatization processes tend to progress in parallel with marketization processes, privatization tends to correlate to liberalization, with the latter understood as the loosening and/or dismantlement of government regulations to favor private sector participation. Nonetheless, the relationship between privatization, liberalization and deregulation is not always linear. As we show in this article, the privatization of education has generated numerous social and political challenges, and many governments around the world are responding to these challenges with additional layers of public regulation. Thus, although education privatization processes eventually require of some form of deregulation, over time, these processes tend to generate more regulatory than deregulatory dynamics.

World trends

The privatization of education can be considered a global phenomenon, but it has intensified further in some regions and countries than in others. Fig. 1 shows that Latin America is the region with the highest percentage of countries with a substantive proportion of private provision in their educational systems, followed by Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The figure also shows that, in Latin America, the percentage of countries with more than 20% of private enrollments in primary education expanded the fastest, whereas in Europe and Central Asia the growth concentrated among countries with 10%–20% of private enrollment.

The pace and historical evolution of such developments also vary across regions. In the Middle East and North Africa, the expansion of private enrollment has gradually increased since 1995. Conversely, in South Asia, private enrollment expanded rapidly during the 2000s after a period of relative stability and predominance of public provision. Finally, the figure also indicates that world regions are also becoming internally more diverse, in the sense that the share of private enrollment varies greatly across the countries constituting each region.

Main drivers

Not only are countries becoming more diverse in how much space private provision is acquiring in educational systems, but the reasons and causes driving the rise of private schooling are also multiple and subject to change. It is possible to discern at least six different paths that lead toward the privatization of education. In Table 2, we describe each of these paths and identify the country cases that better correspond to each of them. These paths differ not only in the policy outputs into which privatization

Table 1 Types of educational privatization and main policy programs.

<i>Type of privatization</i>		<i>Aim</i>		<i>Education policies</i>	
Exogenous	Promoting the emergence and expansion of private providers in the education sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberalization of the education sector • Tax incentives to private schools and/or private schooling consumption • Public subsidies to private schools • Contracting out private providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vouchers and similar competitive formula in which financing follows the demand • Charter schools' programs aiming to expand school choice options • Other freedom of school choice policies (such as the elimination or enlargement of catchment areas) 		
Endogenous	Introducing management norms, rules and logics of the private sector within public education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance-related pay for schools and/or teachers • Disaggregation of units in the educational system; school-based management • Standardized evaluation and school rankings 			

Authors based on Ball and Youdell (2007).

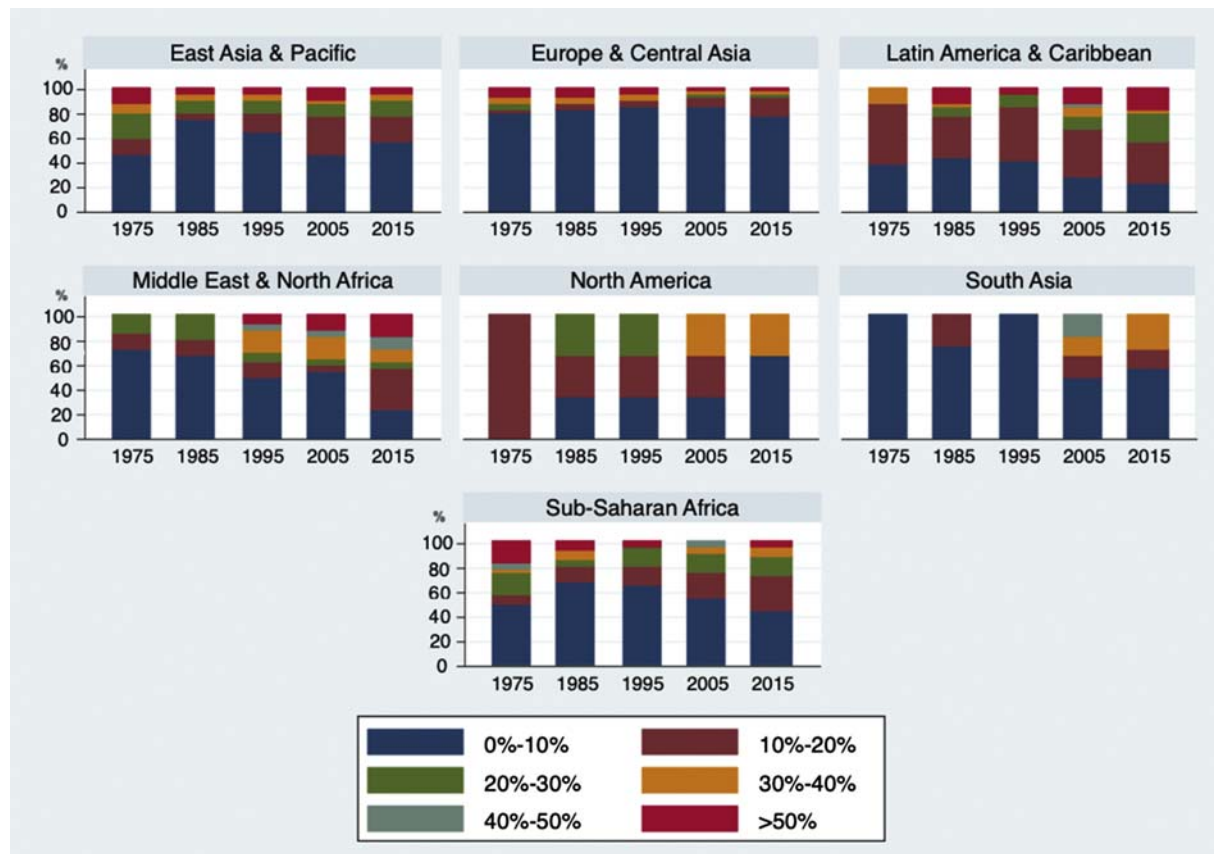


Fig. 1 Percentage of countries by their share of private enrollment in primary education, 1975–2015. Authors with data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics and World Bank Data Bank.

Table 2 Paths toward privatization.

Path	Privatization process	Paradigmatic cases
Reshaping the role of the State in education	Drastic advancement as part of a structural State reform adopted by neoliberal governments and consolidated by succeeding center-left administrations. Resulting in a quasi-market system where the State focuses on regulation and monitoring.	Chile, United Kingdom, New Zealand
Education privatization in social-democratic welfare states	Pro-market reforms framed as part of a necessary modernization of the welfare state in a globalized context. Proactive leading or collaboration of social-democratic forces, usually less inclined to promote competition but to respond to middle-class demand for diversification.	Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland
Scaling-up privatization	Uneven but progressive alteration of the system through the authorization and encouragement of new forms of private provision and management. School choice as the guiding principle and with the key contribution of non-state actors forming advocacy coalitions.	United States of America, Canada, Colombia, Brazil
De facto privatization in low-income countries	Expansion of a low-fee private school sector, originally set by local <i>edupreneurs</i> responding to a growing education demand. Increasingly promoted by the international development community and supported by national governments as part of PPP schemes.	Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Dominican Republic, Jamaica
Historical PPPs	Historical role and importance of private faith-based schools, incorporated in the State network during the expansion of basic in the 20th century. Process mainly oriented to achieve a State-Church compromise rather than on ideological grounds.	The Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Argentina
Privatization by way of catastrophes	Advancement catalyzed by natural disasters or violent conflicts, which are framed by privatization advocates as an opportunity to reconstruct the education system. Developed in contexts where the democratic deliberative process is undermined because of the sense of urgency.	New Orleans, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Haiti, Guatemala, Honduras, Iraq

Source: Adapted from Verger et al. (2016) and Verger et al. (2018).

crystallizes (e.g., vouchers, charter schools, etc.) but also in the drivers that explain the nature and intensity of these transformations—that is, in the causes, rationales and contextual factors triggering and mediating in educational privatization trends.

Privatization by design versus *de facto* privatization

Privatization can happen by design or *de facto*, depending on the role of national governments in the expansion of private provision. Privatization by design implies public authorities proactively promoting pro-private sector policy measures – often motivated by ideological reasons. In the late 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, for instance, the first wave of neoliberal governments, among which the Chilean and UK governments stand out, privatized public assets to generate state revenue and encourage market competition. These reforms were strongly inspired by public choice theory and the then popular economic ideas of the Chicago School. Therefore, the education privatization measures adopted in these contexts frequently combined free choice and competitive funding formulas aimed at empowering families and making educational providers more responsive to clients' demands. The privatization agenda that emerged in the 1980s was strongly grounded in the belief that the government's role in all economic and social domains had to be curtailed, or otherwise, the public sector would lack the necessary incentives to provide services efficiently and responsively. According to neoliberal advocates, the public sector is easily captured by vested interests such as self-serving bureaucracies and labor unions, which is why they conceive the privatization agenda as an opportunity to undermine the power and density of trade unions in the public sector.

Nonetheless, privatization policies have not necessarily followed such an ideological logic in all contexts. In countries such as the Netherlands, Argentina or Belgium, for example, the State has contracted out the provision of education to private – usually religious – schools, due to the historical role of these institutions in the educational system, the political and social significance of faith-based organizations and the centrality of freedom of education values. In fact, the historical establishment of PPPs between the State and the private sector adopted in these countries significantly precedes in time the emergence of neoliberalism.

De facto privatization, in contrast to privatization by design, advances for reasons that are apparently unrelated to public action and policy intentions. *De facto* privatization often unfolds in contexts where the State does not react to citizens' demands for new educational services and these citizens turn to private provision to satisfy their needs. Lack of state administrative capacity for education planning, insufficient resources to invest in public education and the massification of classrooms in government schools are some of the reasons why the phenomenon of Low-Fee Private Schools (LFPSS) has boomed in many low-income countries (Härmä, 2021).

Beyond the neoliberal creed: privatization as a globalizing policy

In the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the privatization agenda penetrated different regions of the world. During this period, international financial institutions started to give economic support to transitioning economies and low- and middle-income countries, generally under the form of aid programs conditional on substantive budget cuts in public services that led to pro-private sector reforms. These structural adjustments particularly affected Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa regions, as well as Eastern Europe, where many countries experienced economic crises in this period and public debt had reached high levels.

In Europe, the Maastricht Treaty, signed in 1992, also created a fertile ground for privatization due to the fiscal austerity it imposed on European Union members. This restriction on public expenditure created an appetite for the private provision of public services which translated into greater reliance on private entities as providers of public services. In continental Europe, privatization was more pragmatic and moderate than in Anglo-Saxon countries, and did not penetrate into public services such as education so substantially. This is because of the strong welfare state tradition and a culture of social dialog between government, unions and civil society that prevails in most European countries held back more drastic or structural reforms (Vere, 2007).

It was also during the 1990s that social democratic governments started to experiment with the engagement of private entities in the delivery of public services. This represented a turning point since, historically, left-leaning parties have been reluctant to adopt education privatization measures. However, with the advent of the Third Way in the 1990s, fully public and homogenous services were no longer perceived as a possible or a desirable horizon among social democratic forces. This led to the neoliberal discourse about the “inherent superiority of the private sector” being replaced with the belief that certain pro-market measures could help modernize public education and promote greater innovation and diversification. In the 1990s, for instance, the Labor Party in the UK, the Social Democratic Party in Sweden and the Democrats in the US were swept up by this change, which translated into a rapid increase in private education provision. It should be noted that, as Hicks (2015) points out, left-wing or social-democratic parties tend to be more open to favoring markets and the private sector in education systems when social inequality is low, as they tend to be aware that, in contexts of high socio-economic inequality, education markets contribute to amplifying social and educational inequalities.

While political variables (and the government ideology in particular) appear to be poor predictors of privatization reforms, economic drivers are more influential in understanding privatization trends in different sectors. A more liberalized global economy motivates governments to outsource all types of public services, including education, particularly during periods of economic recession (Obinger et al., 2016). Economic factors also predispose families to invest privately in educational services to position their children more favorably in increasingly competitive and polarized labor markets.

The effects of privatization: emerging consensus and persisting discrepancies

In academic and policy circles alike, advocates of education privatization have long emphasized the potential of the private sector to improve educational provision. In industrialized countries, privatization policies have been promoted as a strategy to enhance education quality, equity and effectiveness, as well as to incentivize pedagogical innovation and the diversification of school supply. This line of reasoning is informed by the work of a number of influential pro-market scholars such as [Chubb and Moe \(1990\)](#), [Friedman \(1994\)](#) or [Peterson \(1990\)](#). Within development circles, in turn, the popularity of private education delivery owes much to the assumption that such schooling modality will widen access to education while leading to a better distribution of educational opportunities. This expectation is informed by the empirical and advocacy work of a group of experts and practitioners operating at the interstices of academia and international agencies (see for instance, [Patrinos et al., 2009](#); [Tooley, 1996](#); or [LaRocque and Lee, 2011](#)).

However, while privatization proponents have relied heavily on studies emphasizing the benefits of private provision, the broader academic conversation appears to be much more complex and nuanced, with the bulk of investigations bringing mixed or inconclusive results ([Verger et al., 2019](#)). Indeed, the growing volume of research published on the topic reaches disparate and even conflicting conclusions regarding the impact of private education delivery. Reviews of evidence published over the last decade have concluded that research on the impact of private education provision is insufficient and often yields contradictory results – see for instance the work of [Waslander et al. \(2010\)](#), [Day Ashley et al. \(2014\)](#); [Aslam et al. \(2017\)](#); [Verger et al. \(2020\)](#); or [Gruijters et al. \(2021\)](#). Remarkably, this applies to research examining the effects of publicly subsidized private education under the form of PPPs, but also to research focusing on LFPSs which are not necessarily benefitting from government subsidies or other forms of support.

These studies find that evidence on PPP's potential to improve the quality, effectiveness and diversity of education systems is mixed at best. Hence, whereas some widely-circulated studies identify a positive effect in the improvement of learning outcomes (e.g., [Hoxby, 2003](#) or [Woessmann, 2005](#)), others find that PPP's impact in this area is virtually nil (see [Musset, 2012](#); [Belfield and Levin, 2002](#), or [Rouse and Barrow, 2009](#)). In the case of developing countries, a systematic literature review conducted by [Aslam et al. \(2017\)](#) observed that evidence on the aggregate impact of these interventions on learning outcomes is still scarce and often inconclusive; whereas the review conducted by [Day Ashley et al. \(2014\)](#) concluded similarly that the size of LFPS's academic advantage was small. The same is true for OECD countries, as suggested by the review conducted by [Waslander, Pater, and van der Weide \(2010\)](#). The authors conclude that available evidence on the impact of market mechanisms is limited and frequently undermined by methodological limitations – and that, even when positive effects are found, they are generally modest.

Likewise, evidence on the cost-efficiency advantages associated with private education provision is relatively scarce and frequently contested – with some authors drawing attention to the fact that any gains in this area are likely to be neutralized by transaction costs and the administrative burden associated with the supervision of PPPs. This is the case of the literature review conducted by [Languille \(2017\)](#), who argues that available evidence demonstrates that in the case of education (but also health) PPPs, the monitoring and management costs assumed by the governments challenge the alleged superiority of these programs in terms of cost-efficiency. While research on such questions is relatively scarce in the area of education, Languille's findings are consistent with the argument advanced by [Bartlett and Le Grand \(1993\)](#) in relation to the provision of welfare and social services, according to which high transaction costs are likely to reduce the efficiency of quasi-markets compared to social services allocated through bureaucratic, State-led mechanisms.

Claims on the superiority of private provision as an innovation and diversification strategy also remain an open question. As argued extensively by [Lubienski \(2003, 2006, 2009\)](#), there is evidence that privatization arrangements do not necessarily promote pedagogical innovation, and that market pressures are likely to operate as standardizing forces. This would be a consequence of the fact that, in certain contexts, competitive dynamics lead schools to adopt teacher-centered pedagogies and back-to-basics curricula as a way to raise or preserve their reputation and respond to parental preferences for traditional instruction practices ([Glatter et al., 1997](#); [Hastings 2005](#)). Experimentation is thus confined to management practices or marketing strategies ([Lubienski, 2006](#); [Lake, 2008](#)).

The impact of PPPs in relation to educational equity appears one of the areas in which existing evidence is more consistent in its conclusions. A wide range of studies conducted in different contexts show that education systems where private provision and market mechanisms (i.e., school choice and competition) play a relevant role tend to exhibit higher levels of inequality (see for instance, [Alegre and Ferrer, 2010](#); [Elacqua, 2012](#), [OECD, 2012](#), or [Dumay and Dupriez, 2014](#)). According to these studies, this occurs since the engagement of private providers tends to exacerbate dynamics of school segregation and social stratification among schools, and frequently leads to a rise in student performance inequalities. The high levels of school segregation and social stratification associated with education privatization are, in turn, explained by the fact that market pressures incentivize schools to develop practices of school selection, facilitate the exodus of better-off families from local schools, and are conducive to greater levels of social closure ([Zancajo and Bonal, 2021](#)). In addition, market mechanisms tend to translate into an unequal distribution of economic and human resources across schools, which also contributes to amplify social and educational inequalities ([Zancajo et al., 2021a](#)).

Once again, the negative impact of private education provision in terms of equity appears to apply to different contexts and privatization modalities. Although private provision has contributed to the expansion of primary and secondary education in some low-income countries ([Pedró et al., 2015](#)), evidence shows that this has been at the cost of increasing educational inequalities. From a comparative perspective, a study analyzing the effect of educational PPPs on equity in countries of the Global North and

South found that PPP schools reinforce social disparities in all types of contexts (Baum, 2018). Also, a recent comparative study focusing on European countries concludes that educational systems with a large share of privately managed schools tend to have higher levels of academic segregation – an effect that intensifies in systems with low public investment in education (Eurydice, 2020). In relation to LFPS in developing countries, different researchers have found that the emergence of these schools is likely to reinforce and deepen school segregation (see Macpherson (2014) for an overview of these debates).

Regulation and governance of private provision

The increasing evidence about the negative impact of privatization on educational equity has fostered numerous debates. The most relevant international organizations in the education policy field have actively engaged in such debates, and most of them increasingly problematize the relationship between pro-privatization policies and educational inequalities. UNESCO has warned on different occasions about the risks that privatization and marketization represent for equity.

The reproduction and possible exacerbation of inequalities of learning opportunities resulting from privatization in all its forms raises important questions about the notion of education as a public good and about the role of the State in ensuring the right to education. (UNESCO, 2015, p. 75; see also UNESCO, 2017 or Moummé and Saudemont, 2015).

The OECD has also produced extensive evidence on the relationship between private provision, pro-market policies (e.g., school choice or competition between schools) and educational inequalities (OECD, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2019). Even the World Bank, one of the most active international promoters of education privatization, has recently recognized that the rapid increase of private provision, can have unintended negative consequences in terms of equity, particularly in the Global South (World Bank, 2018). This does not necessarily mean that these organizations advocate for reversing privatization and marketization policies, but to rethink them in order to make their supposed benefits (such as greater diversification and more freedom of school choice) compatible with certain equity standards. International organizations, but also civil society initiatives such as the Abidjan Principles, have pointed out the need to adopt effective regulations to address the equity challenges possessed by privatization and market mechanisms in education. It is expected that improving the regulatory frameworks of private provision and school choice will allow reconciling the presence of private school offer with education systems' equity objectives (OECD, 2017).

Despite this being a relatively emerging debate, it is possible to identify two main positions regarding the need to regulate the participation of non-state actors in the provision of basic education. On the one hand, a regulation strategy in which the State plays a central role in setting standards, enforcing them and sanctioning those providers that do not meet these requirements. This is, for instance, the position of the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, UNESCO or the Abidjan Principles (United Nations, 2015; Moummé and Saudemont, 2015; The Abidjan Principles, 2019). To these organizations, states should assume a more active role in ensuring that private providers comply with a series of regulatory standards, including equity standards, and respond to policy frameworks defined at the national level. On the other hand, the World Bank or the OECD are more aligned with market-based or post-bureaucratic regulatory strategies, in which the State is supposed to be mainly responsible for establishing learning goals and accountability policies, while school autonomy and information systems should be reinforced to ensure that private providers face the necessary incentives to provide quality education in an equitable way (Lewis and Patrinos, 2011; Baum et al., 2014; OECD, 2017).

Nonetheless, pro-equity policy recommendations and regulatory reforms differ importantly according to the policy framework in which private providers operate. Here, we distinguish between policy initiatives that focus on the regulation of PPPs (i.e., vouchers, charter schools, contracted schools) and those that focus on the regulation of private independent schools (including LFPS).

The regulation of PPPs in education

In the case of PPPs, regulatory debates and initiatives have focused on three main dimensions: 1) authorization of private providers, 2) funding, and 3) school choice and admissions.

The regulation of the *authorization of new providers* is expected to provide the State with more control over the quality and the quantity of the private education supply. This type of control can minimize situations of oversupply, the unequal geographic distribution of publicly funded private providers, or the over-representation of private schools with certain religious, linguistic or philosophical orientations (Zancajo et al., 2021a). Whilst in most PPPs social demand has been traditionally the main criterion to authorize a new private provider for receiving public funding, the role of educational planning is becoming increasingly relevant. In countries such as Sweden, Chile or Belgium, recent reforms have given priority to educational planning criteria in the authorization of new private subsidized providers (Zancajo et al., 2021b). Similarly, different Southern countries such as Liberia, Colombia or Pakistan have established bidding processes and eligibility criteria to manage the access of private providers to PPP schemes (Cameron, 2020; Edwards et al., 2017; LaRocque and Sipahimalani-Rao, 2019; Bano, 2008).

The *funding of private providers* has also emerged as one of PPPs' core regulatory dimensions to address education inequalities (Elacqua et al., 2018; Levin, 2002; OECD, 2019). The calibration of public funding of private providers in PPP frameworks can contribute to better distributing educational opportunities across the education system, and disincentivize selective and

discriminatory practices among private schools. There is an international regulatory trend toward increasing the resources available by those schools that enroll higher levels of low SES students or that stop charging add-on tuition fees to families. Chile, Sweden or Uganda are examples of countries that have prohibited private subsidized schools from charging add-on tuition fees in exchange for additional public funding (Lachance, 2020; Treviño, 2018; Baum 2018). Whereas education systems such as the Flemish and the French-speaking communities of Belgium, England or Chile have adopted formula funding mechanisms or targeted funding schemes that provide higher levels of public funding to schools depending on the number of disadvantaged students they enroll (De Witte et al., 2019; Friant, 2016; Foster and Long, 2020; Elacqua and Santos, 2013).

School choice and admissions is the third core regulatory dimension within the debate about educational PPPs. Several international organizations have pointed out that the regulation of school choice is essential to guarantee that policies that provide families with the possibility to choose school do not harm equity, particularly in contexts that combine public and private subsidized provision (OECD, 2019; Eurydice, 2020). The rationale here is to ensure that school choice systems are equivalent for private and public schools, as well as to establish common priority criteria of admissions. In the past few years, the French-speaking community of Belgium or Chile have adopted controlled school choice systems (Cantillon, 2013; Muñoz and Weinstein, 2019), England has regulated the admission criteria for public and private subsidized schools (West et al. 2011) and the Flemish community of Belgium, India or Colombia have established admissions criteria that give priority to socially disadvantaged students (Cantillon, 2011; Morgan, 2017; Edwards et al., 2017).

To date, the evidence on the impact of PPPs' regulatory reforms is relatively scarce. Nonetheless, in general terms, it seems that these reforms have had little or no effect in improving equity. Available evidence shows that regulatory reforms focusing on more equitable school choice or funding have not significantly reduced the segregation and stratification dynamics that characterize most educational PPPs. Most impact evaluations of these reforms show for instance, that school segregation has remained stable or has only decreased slightly after the adoption of these reforms. However, as Boeskens (2016) and Verger et al. (2020) noted, PPP arrangements not allowing schools to turn a profit, select students or charge tuition add-ons to families tend to be less harmful in terms of equity. So, future pro-equity regulatory changes may be more effective if they pay attention to these aspects, and adopt a more systemic and multi-dimensional approach to the problem of educational inequality within PPPs.

Regulating independent schools: the case of LFPS

The important expansion of private independent schools in some low- and middle-income countries has also fostered the debate about the need to regulate this sector to avoid potential negative effects on equity. In the particular case of LFPSs, one of the main challenges for national governments is to guarantee that these schools are registered and certificated (Härma, 2021), assuming that this is a first and necessary step that will allow governments to control the growth of private provision and to guarantee that this sector contributes to providing equitable access to education to all students (Baum et al., 2018). However, available evidence shows that the efforts made by some governments to regulate LFPSs have not necessarily achieved the pursued objectives. For instance, Day Ashley et al. (2014) observe that, in many cases, governments fail to enforce regulations because of technical or resource constraints. The lack of effectiveness of LFPSs regulation is also explained by the fact that strict regulatory frameworks tend to incentivize LFPSs to remain — or even go — unregistered (Härmä and Adefisayo, 2013; Baum et al., 2018; Härma, 2021). Finally, corruption has been also reported as a factor that affects the capacity of governments to regulate LFPSs. In some contexts, LFPSs can easily overcome regulatory requirements by bribing government officials (Härma, 2019, 2021). As in the case of PPPs, the evidence available shows that despite the fact that some international donors pushed for higher integration of LFPSs in national education systems and national governments have made an effort to regulate the private sector in developing countries, strict regulations have not necessarily improved equity (Härma, 2019).

To conclude

Education privatization is a global phenomenon that manifests in multiple and changing forms. Understanding why and how education privatization happens, and how it evolves, requires acknowledging the simultaneously global and idiosyncratic character of privatization – avoiding sweeping generalizations, while transcending the mere sum of particularized accounts. It also requires expanding research efforts beyond the few country cases in which empirical investigation has tended to focus. Scholarship on the topic of privatization has privileged a relatively small number of country settings – with many countries and even entire regions remaining largely overlooked. This is all the more relevant considering that in some of these under-researched areas, such as the Middle East and North Africa or Eastern Europe, private enrollment has soared over the last years.

Education privatization features as one of the most contentious and polarizing issues in education research. The available evidence on the impact of privatization on learning outcomes yields mixed and inconclusive results, and is subject to multiple interpretations. However, there is growing consensus that market policies and the engagement of private providers in public education systems affect equity negatively. As it has been reported repeatedly, privatization tends to exacerbate school segregation, social stratification among schools and the marginalization of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Private schooling presents thus a major challenge for policymakers and education planners across the globe. Gaining a richer understanding of these trends is particularly important given their social implications.

There is a growing global awareness about the need of addressing the challenges that privatization possesses on equity. A number of national governments are engaging in reform processes that aim to strengthen the regulation and oversight of private provision within their educational systems. Nonetheless, while public regulation and oversight are being portrayed as solutions to long-standing inequalities within educational systems with high percentages of private provision, such efforts might not work in all circumstances. Regulatory initiatives need to be multi-dimensional, tailored to the context and to advance together with the strengthening and dignification of the public sector, especially in low- and middle-income country settings, if they are to be effective and sustainable over time.

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Making the public private: the privatization of public education

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Charter schools, vouchers, and the privatization of education	183
The rise of testing and the demise of the social good	184
From privatization of education to privatization in education	187
Parents opting children out of the tests; teachers going on strike	188
Develop a strong base using social media	189
The rise of the unthinkable: teacher strikes	190
Concluding ideas	190
References	191

Across the globe, K-12 schools are increasingly privatized as for and non-profit corporations play a larger role in teaching and assessing, or take over whole schools (Williams and Hogan, 2021; Verger et al., 2016). Here, we describe some of the central means through which privatization is occurring. We focus more on the US than on other countries because the US has been at the forefront in implementing neoliberal reforms and a leader in what Finish educator Pasi Sahlberg (2016) labels the Global Education Reform Movement or GERM.

In researching education privatization, we examine two distinct aspects of public schooling. First, some privatizers are interested in exogenous privatization, which “promotes the emergence and expansion of private providers in the education sector” (Verger et al., 2016, p. 9). The two major examples of this are, first, the privatization of whole schools—such as through charter schools—and the privatization of whole school districts—such as the dissolution of most of the New Orleans school district after Hurricane Katrina (Buras, 2014). The second form of privatization is endogenous, or the privatization of what occurs inside schools, including standards, curriculum, and assessments (Verger et al., 2016) as exemplified by the Pearson corporation’s efforts to integrate teacher education, teaching, assessment, and professional development into one seamless experience throughout educators’ careers and marginalizing teachers, parents, students, and community members.

Because privatization occurs in a myriad of ways, we will begin by examining one of the two dominant ways in which privatization occurs across the globe: the privatization of whole schools or school districts—whether they are called charter schools in the US, academies in England Eyles et al. (2017), or low-fee schools in developing countries.

However, because there is disagreement over what counts as a public or private school and why we conclude that charter schools are private, even though some charter schools identify themselves as a “public charter schools,” we begin by providing our criteria for what counts as public. Then, we will place the current debates within the context of the history of education in the US. In particular, we suggest that beginning in the late 1800s, two major conflicting education paradigms emerged. Historian Herb Kliebard (2004) described one paradigm as building on “scientific efficiency,” which were modeled after the factory assembly lines that were central to the new industrial age. Scientific efficiency emphasized the quantification of everything, uniformity, and competition. Those promoting a scientific or social efficiency approach to education incorporated standards as determined by “experts” (Snedden, 1924), intelligence testing, and student tracking (Yerkes, 1919).

The second paradigm, which Kliebard described as “social reconstructionist” and for which John Dewey was the most well-known proponent, valued democracy over efficiency. Rather than asking corporations what they want students to learn, schools should aim to develop democratic citizens and require corporations to adapt to citizens’ demands for a critical education (1915). The goal of democratic schooling requires focusing on the whole child and creating interdisciplinary curriculum and authentic assessments.

We will then turn to our two examples of exogenous privatization. The first example examines exogenous privatization with the corporate takeover of whole schools or school districts and the second exogenous privatization with the corporate takeover of curriculum, teaching and assessment.

Charter schools, vouchers, and the privatization of education

Here we need to be clear regarding what makes a school public versus what makes a school private. This is a distinction often debated when discussing charter schools, which are schools chartered by the state, often administered by private corporations, and primarily funded by local, state, and federal governments along with philanthropies supportive of charter schools, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Walton Family Foundations. Charter school proponents often argue that they are public schools because they are primarily government funded.

However, unlike public schools, which are governed by an elected school board, charter schools are typically governed by an appointed board. Further, some charter schools do not welcome visitors in the schools. Moreover, but it is not an issue we can

go into depth here, the lack of transparency may contribute to the high percentage of instances of charter schools that have had funding or staffing irregularities (Lecker, 2013).

Forty-five states and the District of Columbia have laws permitting charter schools. However, states may be promoting charter schools not because they are pedagogically sound but because in these financially challenging times, Race to the Top (RTTT) legislation offers additional federal funding to states that legislate the creation of charter school.

Many charter school proponents claim that charter schools are more effective than traditional public schools, but that evidence is questionable. First, the most reliable and probably most often cited studies, conducted by the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO), states that based on scores on standardized tests about three-fourths of charter schools are the same or worse than public schools. Second, we should not only consider student achievement, but also the negative effect charter schools have on efforts to desegregate schools. Because charter schools are not required to enroll all applicants, including students with disabilities, English language learners, and students with behavioral problems, they tend to enroll fewer students with learning disabilities and students living in poverty than in the typical school in the school district in which the charter school is located. Consequently, given that test scores are closely related to family income, those that score better on the standardized exams are more likely to congregate in a few schools.

Given the information questioning the effectiveness of charter school and that it exacerbates racial and class segregation, one might wonder why the number of charter schools and students enrolled continues to increase. However, charter school parents may not be aware of the many ways that test scores are misleading (Hursh, 2015) and how charter schools exacerbate segregation. Rather, they are in search of that one good classroom seat for their child.

Voucher programs are similar to charter schools in that both receive most of their funding directly from the government based on their enrollment. Voucher programs differ from charter schools in that families are provided with a voucher that can be used to pay for some or all the tuition to a private or parochial school. Consequently, depending on a family's wealth, the cost of tuition, and the value of the voucher, voucher programs may benefit from a few to most of the students enrolled in the private school. In the US, charter schools continue to increase in number while voucher programs remain limited. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures fourteen states and the District of Columbia have passed school voucher laws and none of them are open to all students. Four of them are only up to students with a disability, two states only provide vouchers to students from low-income families, and two states restrict eligibility to students who live in either the Cleveland or Milwaukee metropolitan areas (Pedroni, 2007).

Some countries have the equivalent of charter schools (UK academies). Others, particularly in developing countries Williams and Hogan (2021), have low-fee private schools, which are attractive to entrepreneurs because of the possibility of making a profit.

A second form of privatization—endogenous—is the privatization of what occurs inside of schools. This kind of privatization is facilitated by the increasing use of technology in schools—whether the use of mass administered tests beginning with Robert Yerkes' 1919 World War IQ tests and quickly picked up by educators and continuing up to the present with efforts, such as the Common Core standards and exams to digitize and place on computers not only the standards, curriculum, and assessments, but also surveil everything that teachers and students do. Therefore, it is useful to provide a quick summary of how the increasing use of classroom technology is enabling corporations to take over all aspects of teaching and learning.

In this article, we examine the increasing privatization of education and suggest that it is part of the long struggle between two conceptions of education: education for the advancement of the economically productive individual or for the whole child within the common good.

By turning those processes over to private interests, it shifts control over what occurs in schools away from teachers, students, parents, and the local community and toward corporations, and for-profit and nonprofit organizations. Teachers would increasingly be forfeiting control over what occurs in schools to the corporate employees developing the standards, curriculum and assessments.

Bill Gates and the Pearson Corporation both supported the Common Core standards, curriculum, and assessments with the hope that states would adopt the Common Core curriculum and assessments. This would facilitate the corporate takeover of what occurs in schools (Schneider, 2015; Strauss, 2014a,b). Stephen Ball, 2012, in *Global Education Inc.: New Policy Network and the Neoliberal Imaginary* briefly describes the conflict over which societal vision would become the dominant social imaginary (Rizvi and Lingard, 2009) in each era: social efficiency in the period after World War I, social democracy from the 1930 to 1970, or neoliberalism from the 1970s to the present. Then, we will describe how some teachers, students, and parents are resisting the neoliberal agenda in education of privatizing by resisting the increased standardization of schools through high-stake testing and funding chart schools.

The rise of testing and the demise of the social good

The current agenda for privatizing teaching and learning within schools complements the agenda promoting social efficiency (Kliebard, 2004). Social efficiency in education arose as a movement in the early 1900s as proponents sought to make economic efficiency central to in determining the goals and process of education. Schools were modeled after the new more efficient factory assembly lines to “eliminate waste” in education (Bobbitt, 1912; Snedden, 1924). Standardized tests would inform teachers whether and what students were learning. Therefore, in the next section we return to the conflict described between the two opposing education paradigms of efficiency and social reconstruction, to suggest that the current emphasis on privatization supports the agenda to privatized education.

Many of the characteristics of social efficiency were adopted by schools and continue today—frequent measurement and quantitative data, sorting students into different vocational tracks (manual, skilled, and professional) like on factory assembly lines and “working children up as raw material” to a finished product (Bobbitt, 1912, p. 269).

Some of the teachers and students who opposed the social efficiency approach explicitly built on John Dewey’s ideas (1938/1997) were not interested in educating children to meet the needs of industry but rather to prepare students to be critical democratic citizens. Industry should adjust to the democratic needs of students rather than have students adjust to industry. Dewey wrote that the primary purpose of all social institutions, including workplaces, is to facilitate personal growth. Dewey disagreed with the idea that students were to meet the needs of businesses and stated that he was not interested in adapting students to the “existing industrial regime,” but, instead, wanted the existing industrial regime to adapt to democratic citizens, including students (Dewey, 1915, p. 42).

Although Dewey’s ideas regarding pedagogy seem more honored in their breach than in their practice, the idea that public schools should serve all children and educate the whole child persists and forms the basis for many of the progressive policies of the 20th century.

Progressives like John Dewey or social democrats like Franklin Delano Roosevelt supported expanding public education and other public programs, such as unemployment insurance, social security, health care, and higher education. To distinguish this view as opposed to less progressive members of the Democratic party, we refer to the former as social democrats and the latter as Democrats. However, while social democrats favored expanding social welfare programs, neoliberals—an opposing group of social theorists—began to push back, arguing that rather than expanding government, everyone would benefit from downsizing, if not eliminating, government. Rather than having the government make policy decisions, neoliberals argued that all decisions should be based on individual market choices which would be more “objective.”

Beginning in the 1930s and 40s, neoliberals established several organizations to investigate and promote their ideas, including The Center for Public Choice at the University of Virginia, the Mont Pelerin Society in Vienna, and the economics department at the University of Chicago. Since then, as in much of the world, neoliberalism has become the accepted and dominant way to conceptualize society, so much so, that most people do not even recognize that it has become the default social theory guiding societal decisions. Many people have come to agree with the former UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1979–1990) that There Is No Alternative (TINA) to neoliberalism (Leitner et al., 2007). Neoliberalism has come to dominate both society as a whole and education in particular, which Finnish educator Pasi Sahlberg has labeled the Global Education Reform Movement or GERM (year).

The current move toward privatizing public schools as a whole or in part comes after a long struggle over the aims and organization of schools which social democrats and other progressives seemed to be winning until the 1970s. Until then, public schools, in the United States, were becoming more inclusive as many schools and school districts were becoming (albeit, with some resistance) more integrated and educating students with a wider range of abilities. Similarly, our understanding of how children learn was giving more significance to students’ interests and abilities. Critical educators, such as Apple (1982), Freire (1970) began to challenge the dominant textbook-based curriculum as inadequate, and looked to Gilborn (2008), and others began to argue for developing curricula that responded to the needs and interests of adults and children at their specific time and place. In addition, the science of teaching and learning, reflected in the National Research Council’s *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school* (2001), criticized traditional scientific efficiency approaches to teaching and learning and replaced them with more Deweyan approaches.

Similarly, in the two decades after World War II, social democrats, such as presidents Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Johnson, successfully expanded the government’s role to include providing social services such as social security, health care, and education from preschool through university. Consequently, by the mid 1960s, it was becoming accepted that all children, regardless of race, (*Brown vs. Board of Education*) deserved a quality education.

During this time period, many of the social democrats built on John Dewey’s notion that schools should be democratic institutions composed of communities of learners preparing students to live in a democratic society for the benefit of the common good. For example, in New York State, in the late 1980s, some two dozen public schools came together to form the Performance Assessment Consortium Schools where graduation from secondary school required not passing standardized tests but demonstrating proficiency in 13 areas. The state department of education granted the consortium schools waivers so that their students did not have to take the statewide Regents exams, giving the schools flexibility in how they would achieve the standards.

However, just as proponents of social democratic policies and practices gained dominance in the middle of the 20th century, neoliberals who opposed social democratic policies began to replace social democratic policies with neoliberal policies. In the United States, Milton Friedman, an economics professor at the University of Chicago, did the most to spread neoliberal ideas not only in the academy but also in the popular media, such as his best-selling book *Free to Choose: A Personal Statement* (1980) where he called for the end of public or “government schools,” and privatizing public services so that they would have to compete for clients (or in the case of schools: students), and providing “objective assessments” either in monetary terms, ratings, or, in education, test scores.

Globally, neoliberal education policies have focused on privatizing public schools as charter schools, funding private schools through governmental vouchers, developing education standards and assessing students, teachers, and schools through standardized tests, and handing over to private corporations much of the decision making regarding what is to be taught and how (Verger et al., 2016).

Friedman was able to put his ideas into practice when in Chile, in 1973, General Pinochet led a military coup overthrowing the democratically elected President Salvador Allende. Pinochet enthusiastically adopted neoliberal policies not only in education but throughout society, such as in transportation and healthcare. With the guidance of Friedman and his students at the University of Chicago (dubbed the “Chicago boys”) Pinochet drastically reduced public funding for education at all levels. Funding to schools was cut so much that some teachers (who came to be known as “taxi teachers”) had to teach up to fifteen classes a day in three different schools.

Collins and Lear (1995) write regarding Chile that “per-pupil school vouchers, the encouragement of for-profit schools ... all decreed in the name of choice—have greatly magnified the differences in educational opportunities and results” (pp. 8–9).

Later, Ronald Reagan, as president of the United States (1981–1989), and Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister in the United Kingdom (1979–1990), allied with one another with the goal of shrinking government and cutting its funding so that it would have a diminished role in society. They both worked to reduce the power of unions and to privatize whatever could be privatized. Thatcher’s anti-government views were reflected in her 1987 statement that “there is no such thing as society, only people and their families” (Thatcher, 1995, pp. 626–627), while Reagan (1986) opined that “the most terrifying words in the English language are ‘I’m from the government and I’m here to help.’”

Over the last four decades neoliberalism has become in the United States and in many other countries the predominant view of how society works, what Rizvi and Lingard (2009) refer to as the “social imaginary.” Neoliberalism has become so dominant that neoliberals need not refer to themselves as neoliberals, preferring instead to describe themselves as free market advocates who insist that there is no alternative to the neoliberalism of education.

The basic tenets of neoliberalism are reflected in the quotes above from Thatcher and Reagan: they argued that neoliberal policy makers could make society more efficient by reducing the size or eliminating through privatization social services such as education, social security, transportation, and health care. As private organizations, social services, such as schools, should compete with one another for clients. Individuals would be responsible only for themselves or their families and be held accountable through objective criteria.

These tenets form the rationale for the last almost four decades of education policies, whether from Republicans or Democrats, beginning with *A Nation at Risk* 1993, and continued with *RttT* (2015). *RttT* required states to amend their constitutions to allow for charter schools. These acts blamed public education for the failures caused by economic inequality and instituted regulations that favor privatization.

These acts demonstrate the ways local, state and federal governments contribute to the disasters by placing private above public interests. For example, because inadequate funding of the infrastructure contributed to the temporary closure of most of the public schools in New Orleans, the state government, demonstrating how capitalism often uses so called “natural disasters,” to privatize the public, dissolved all the public schools in New Orleans, fired all the teachers, and replaced the public schools with charter schools (Buras, 2014).

Charter schools were originally proposed by Albert Shanker, long-time (1974–1997) president of the American Federation of Teachers, one of the two teachers’ unions in the United States and the union more likely to represent teachers in urban school districts (Kahlenberg and Potter, 2015). Shanker’s original proposal was for teacher-led semi-autonomous schools composed of six or more teachers, which would need to be approved by panels “run jointly by districts and the local teacher union affiliates” (Ravitch, 2020, p. 131). These schools would serve as a source of innovation that would improve all the schools, much like New York’s “performance assessment schools” (<http://www.performanceassessment.org>) that formed in 1998 as teacher-run small schools.

The first charter school in the United States opened 1992 in Minneapolis, Minnesota but differed from what had been originally proposed. Rather than encouraging small groups of teachers to propose small teacher-run schools, the new regulations encouraged entrepreneurs to start charter schools, approved by the state, not local communities, and that the rules favored the involvement of private companies rather than community organizations. Consequently, in the end, charter schools are more like private than public schools.

The number of charter schools in the United States has been increasing, although at a lower rate than five years ago (Ravitch, 2020). Charter schools, vouchers, standards, standardized testing, and top-down often computer-generated curriculum are central features of neoliberal policies. A major reason for the formation and increasing number of these neoliberal policies is the state and federal support for them as reflected in *No Child Left Behind*, *Success for All*, among others. *Success for All* requires states, if they want to be eligible for federal funding, to adopt laws promoting the establishment of charter schools (Ravitch, 2020). Currently, all but four states have laws authorizing charter schools and charter schools enroll about five percent of the 50.7 million students in K-12 education (Ravitch, 2021).

Under Arne Duncan, Obama’s Secretary of education, the federal government aimed to incorporate neoliberal principles into the governance of education by incorporating neoliberal education reformers into education policy making.

One came directly from the Gates Foundation, and several came from the Gates funded New School Venture Fund, including the Under Secretary of Education, Ted Mitchell (Schneider, 2014). Besides privatizing schools through charter schools and vouchers (exogenously), Obama appointees aimed to take control of assessments and curriculum (endogenously). Arne Duncan’s chief of staff, Joanne Weiss, clearly laid out the neoliberal strategy here:

The development of common standards and shared assessments radically alters the market for innovation in curriculum development, professional development, and formative assessments. Previously, the markets operated on a state-by-state basis, and often on a district-by-district basis. But the adoption of common standards and shared assessments means that education entrepreneurs will enjoy national markets where the best products can be taken to scale.

Weiss (2011), cited in Ravitch (2020, p. 24).

Both exogenous and endogenous reforms are being resisted, as parents, students, educators and community members have pushed back against neoliberal reforms.

While the number of charter schools continues to rise, beginning in 2015–16, the rate of increase began slowing (Ravitch, 2020), for which there may be several explanations, including a decline in the reputation of charter schools (Miron et al., 2021). Charter schools initially claimed that their students outperformed students in the public schools. But, numerous studies have shown that the difference can be attributed to differences in student enrollment. Charter schools enroll a much smaller percentage of students with learning disabilities (Stern et al., 2015) or who are English Language Learners (Finnigan et al., 2004). Further, while the public schools must enroll all the students who show up at the schoolhouse door, charter schools can be selective in who they admit (California Teachers Association, 2019) and can expel those whom they deem no longer fit (Frankenberg et al., 2010). In fact, when demographics are held constant, charter schools perform the same or worse than comparable public schools (Chen, 2020) and this doesn't recognize that charter schools typically receive more funding per student than the public schools in the district where the charter school is located, nor that charter schools often receive additional funding from conservative organizations such as the Walton Family Fund, which between 2016 and December 2019, channeled more than \$185 million to over 100 charter schools to improve the charter schools' real estate holdings effort (Harden, 2020).

In addition, a high percentage of charter schools are plagued by scandals including the manipulation of test scores (Hursh, 2015) and misuse of funds. Finally, parents and the public are becoming aware that charter schools contribute to growing inequality, either by contributing to segregation (Wells, 2019) or by taking funds originally intended for public schools (Ravitch, 2020).

Not only do charter schools perform on average worse than public schools, they are increasingly privatized as charter schools are either begun by or taken over by private education management organizations (EMOs). This shift undermines the claims of charter school proponents "that charter schools would be locally run, innovative, autonomous, and highly accountable" (Miron et al., 2021, p. 1). Profiles of EMOs reveal that more than half of the nation's charter school students are now enrolled in privately operated charter schools (Miron et al., 2021).

From privatization of education to privatization in education

While states and municipalities vary in whether they permit charter schools or vouchers, and if they do, the percentage of students enrolled in either program, almost all the states and their educators and students are affected by the privatization of what occurs in schools or *endogenously*, such as private corporations taking over the creation of standards, standardized tests, and the curriculum. Private corporations have played a major role in this development, with companies like Pearson taking control of developing standards, assessment, and curriculum. Williams and Hogan (2021) write:

What we have observed is a huge effort to create multisector coalitions of public-private partnerships and networks in which commercial actors play a key part, and we have seen the multilateral policy influencers, wealthy tech philanthropies and government departments to global technology corporations, edu-business, venture capital investors, and public institutions (p. 66).

The most recent wave of neoliberal reforms been typically justified as the best way to improve student learning in schools and to close the "so-called" achievement gap (Ladson-Billings, 2006). In the United States, beginning with A Nation at Risk in 1983, neoliberal reformers have argued that schools and students have failed because schools, teachers, and students have not been held accountable and that teachers have failed to hold students to high standards. Consequently, argue the authors of A Nation at Risk, we need standards and standardized tests so that we have "objective" measures of student learning with serious consequences for failing to achieve them.

With the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, real consequences were added to the testing requirements. Students, teachers, and schools were evaluated based partially on their students' aggregated test scores and these scores would be made public. Schools would have to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which would be a rising minimum aggregated passing rate for students on a standardized exam in math and English/language arts. Every state determined their own passing rate, but they all had to achieve a 100% passing rate by 2014, which was patently impossible. Schools failing to achieve AYP could be forced to reorganize, close, or privatize as charter schools (Ravitch, 2013).

Given that the NCLB Act was signed by President George W. Bush, in 2001, he knew that by 2014 he would be out of office and, therefore could not be blamed for the inevitable high but misleading "failure" rate of schools. Instead, Obama was president and not wanting to preside over and be blamed for a massive "failure" of the schools, he made it possible for states to receive waivers

from the passing requirements if they would institute further “reforms,” which included more privatization, and the Common Core curriculum and standardized tests.

However, there is no evidence that the neoliberal reforms were achieving their goals; instead, the evidence strongly suggests that the reforms not only did not improve teaching and learning but damaged it (Ravitch, 2013; Winerip, 2003, 2011). Consequently, they, like many educators, parents, and students, began to call for limits on the number of charter schools, the end of voucher programs, and asserted that teachers should be treated as professionals. Here we will focus on New York State, where the state and the federal government together have required increased testing tied to standards and curriculum developed initially by Pearson, but subsequently by other corporations.

The first increase in the testing requirements occurred in the late 1990s when the state imposed the new graduation requirement of passing five Regents exams: one each in math, science, and English, and two in history. Because Commissioner Mills wanted to appear to have high standards, but also not significantly harm the graduation rate, tests and test scores were manipulated to achieve the right balance—not resulting in so many students failing that it would look like the schools were getting worse—not so few that it looked like the reforms were not rigorous. As reported elsewhere—Winerip (2003) and Ravitch (2013)—this resulted in the commissioner setting the cut score low in the introductory high-school courses (remember, students needed to only pass ONE exam in each subject, so the ninth grade tests could be scored easier).

At the federal level, the first test results of the Common Core tests came in 2013. Proponents of standardized testing hoped to develop unified Common Core standards, curriculum, and tests delivered to classrooms via Microsoft technology. Ideally, for Gates, was the possibility of creating national standards for math and language arts. Gates funded over 180 organizations to develop the Common Core standards. The New York State Commissioner of Education, John King, stated that because of where they placed the cut score—the score needed to pass—only about 5% of the students in the Rochester City School District and only 30% statewide “achieved proficiency” or passed the standardized tests (Cody, 2014; Strauss, 2014a,b). Not surprisingly, since King set the cut score that students needed to reach to achieve proficiency, that percentage achieving proficiency was what the Commissioner desired. When asked what was the value of the test when the Commissioner pre-determined the percentage passing, King responded that at least now they knew which districts needed intervention, as if they did not know that before the tests were given (Hursh, 2015).

Given that King and others gained power during the Obama administration, it may not be surprising that King is one of two central advisors to President Biden who recently pushed the president to renege on his campaign promise not to require states to give high-stakes tests in the middle of a pandemic. Again, when asked what was the value of standardized testing in the middle of a pandemic when simply opening the schools was a challenge, King claimed we would at least know where the learning gaps were.

Parents opting children out of the tests; teachers going on strike

Over the past few years, educators, parents, students, and community members have become more active in pushing back against the neoliberal reforms and working for the common good. As we will describe, both groups have had success and can serve as models for others. We will begin by identifying some of the ways they are similar and then turn to describing both in more detail. We will end? By pulling together the different arguments and the challenge of promoting the public good over the private gain. In describing the opt-out movement, we will focus on the movement in New York. While there have been parallel movements in 12 other states, New York’s opt out movement has been the most successful (Hursh et al., 2021). In describing teacher strikes, we will describe the rise of teacher resistance in West Virginia, Arizona, and Los Angeles.

Our research shows that the neoliberal reforms have been resisted by parent-led movements such as New York State Allies for Public Education (NYSAPE) and Long Island Opt Out (LIOO) and by teacher organizations, only some of which are unions. Both movements are similar in that they were willing, as Lisa Rudley, the head of NYSAPE stated, to “throw a wrench in the system” (interview by Hursh) by withholding their children from the test, and in the case of the teacher strikes, teachers withholding their labor.

Both movements have similar goals emphasizing fighting for the common good rather than just looking out for their own interests. Even though, over the last decade teachers’ salaries have barely increased, teachers have a broader set of demands, including better working conditions not just for themselves but for other employees, such as school bus drivers, teachers’ aides, and cafeteria workers (Blanc, 2019a,b). They are also demanding smaller class sizes, more school nurses, and more resources. Likewise, while parents are understandably looking out first for their own children, they are demanding not only the elimination of high-stakes testing but also promoting the welfare of the whole child through interdisciplinary teaching, providing meals for students, and recreation facilities.

The two movements also share strategies and tactics in that they are organizing both horizontally and vertically to develop widespread support so that they can influence the powerful. In the case of the opt-out movement, they have organized horizontally building coalitions that include over fifty local organizations initially asserting their political power at the local level by supporting candidates running for local school boards. In the case of teacher unions or organizations they worked to develop complementary relationships with parents and community members.

The opt-out movement and teachers’ unions have both used similar strategies using inexpensive or free social media to build a strong base. Central to their efforts are websites and Facebook pages. They also work at keeping the media informed of the issues. Having strengthened their base they can then work to elect people to higher positions in the state legislature, and the governorship.

We will expand on this later when we examine how teachers, often along with other employees—such as bus drivers and cafeteria workers—went on strike demanding not only higher salaries but also more classroom resources, better facilities and, in some cities and states, contesting the neoliberal education reforms have been contested by educators, political activists, parents, and students. Here, we offer the United States and New York, in particular, as sites where the resistance has been most successful. We begin by describing recent efforts by parents to opt their children out of the Common Core math and literacy exams in grades three through eight. The New York State education department made the exams high stakes by using them to evaluate teachers, students, schools, and school districts and to determine the amount of funding the schools would receive from the state. While some parents would be happy to only reduce the amount of time devoted to testing, many desire to completely eliminate the tests.

Initially, efforts to eliminate the Common Core consisted of parents, educators, students, and community members holding literally hundreds of hearings across the state, usually with the Commissioner or Chancellor as a participant, with the hope that those in power might be persuaded to reduce the amount of testing by revealing that the tests did not lead to the positive results they claimed. However, those in power typically feigned paying attention to parents and teachers, ultimately ignoring their pleas and continuing on the same path.

After several years of not being heard, parents began to conclude that they needed to force the issue by withholding their child from the exams. After all, proponents reasoned, even if only 10% of students failed to take the exams, and if the percentage varied between classrooms and schools, the exams would be invalidated and could not be a significant part of the metric for evaluating teachers, students, or schools, or so they reasoned. The pandemic has led to the tests being canceled, or being administered but with promises that the scores would not be used, which raised questions of why administer them?

While some parents were optimistic about achieving a high opt-out rate, doing so would be difficult. Some school administrators refused to inform parents that they could opt their children out. Other administrators let students opt out but instituted a “sit and stare policy” requiring students sit quietly at their desks while the tests were administered for several—up to 6 hours a day over several days and do nothing other than meditate. Furthermore, the federal department of education threatened school districts that if more than five percent of their students failed to take the exams, their federal funding would be withheld. This was particularly pernicious for urban high-poverty schools in the United States because their lack of resources often made it difficult for these students to get to school and because urban schools are more likely to receive most of their funding from the federal government, while typically wealthier suburban districts receive most of their funding from local property taxes. Consequently, the opt-out rate for New York’s big cities were lower than other parts of the state. But this did not necessarily mean that they were less interested in opting out. In many communities, parents and their children would have to remind teachers and administrators that they have the right to opt their children out.

Develop a strong base using social media

However, the opt-out rate exceeded most people’s expectations. In the three most recent years (2016–2019), around 20% of the students statewide did not participate in the tests, with much higher opt-out rates in the suburbs (NYSAPE website). For example, the two counties east of New York City on Long Island have had an opt-out rate of 50.7% on the English/language arts exam over the last three years. Each year the opt-out rates for schools and school districts were reported and debated, which focused attention on the tests and the resistance.

In addition, LIOO and NYSAPE dropped the strategy of reducing or eliminating testing by appealing to those in power, focusing, instead, on removing those in power. They began by a strategy of first developing a strong base of local supporters—working horizontally—who could then organize to work vertically to influence those in power (McAlevy, 2016). They began by developing liaisons to local districts who would work with teachers, administrators and school board members to replace high-stakes testing with more whole-child approaches to teaching and learning. Then, as they gained allies at the local level, they worked vertically to elect state legislators who would, in turn, support progressive education policies and name progressive educators to the Board of Regents, which is responsible for all aspects of education, including schooling from infancy through graduate school, and from museums to libraries. It is also the Regents who choose one member to chair the board as chancellor. They also appoint the commissioner of education, who implements the policies by directing the department of education. At this moment in time the strategy has resulted in replacing the chancellor, commissioner, and regents with representatives who are more likely to endorse progressive policies. However, it is the federal government where the Biden (Ujifusa, 2021) administration continues the Obama administration’s policy of high-stakes testing (Ravitch, 2013).

At the same time that the parent-led opt-out movement was achieving impressive results, including defeating the Bill Gates’ led effort to install in schools the student data gathering technology InBloom (Bulger et al., 2017), teachers were beginning to also push back against many of the same things as the opt out movement. Both are pushing back against high-stakes standardized testing for the way in which they shift control over education away from teachers and students to corporate employees and private foundations. Indeed, under the false claim that sitting children in front of a personal computer enabled students to experience “personalized learning,” (Boninger et al., 2019; Hursh et al., 2021) what students were increasingly receiving was curriculum delivered based on computer algorithms.

The rise of the unthinkable: teacher strikes

In the same way that it took withholding children from school to force those in power to acknowledge the concerns of parents, students, teachers, and others, teachers have learned that they can withhold their contribution to the educational enterprise by striking. Here we will show that teachers, students, and parents were unable to affect educational policy through the usual means of lobbying and demanding hearings. Instead, in parallel to parents withholding children from the standardized exams, teachers began to withhold not their children from the exams, but their labor. They began to go on strike (Blanc, 2019a,b).

Blanc, whose book *Red State Revolt: The Teachers' Strike Wave and Working-Class Politics* (2019), is the most extensive study of the teachers' strikes in West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Arizona. He reports that while in most states teachers' pay was already low and falling even further behind other professions, teachers were more likely to leave the profession not over pay but because of decreasing autonomy as standards and curriculum were being developed by other than classroom teachers.

Until the recent wave of strikes, teachers rarely went on strike, partly because in many states it was illegal to strike. But, a combination of low pay and the fear of increasing privatization of education through charter schools and corporatization of testing and curriculum led desperate teachers to risk jail or other punishments by striking. In addition, teachers formed alliances with other school employees and parents. By allying with teacher aides, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and others, and by arguing for more classroom resources, they revealed how dire the situation was for all and how they were stronger together.

Once teachers observed other teachers successfully striking, such as in West Virginia, where the teachers dared the state to arrest them for striking, knowing that the public was likely to be disturbed by seeing teachers jailed, teachers in other states began to do the same. As each strike resulted in improved working conditions for all, the teachers and other employees began to realize that there is power in numbers. As they gained power, they realized they had the support of the community and the ability to demand changes.

By devoting years to organizing and then calling for strikes, they demonstrated that "ordinary people have two major forms of power—our numbers—there are more of us than them—and our ability to withhold our participation in a system that denies us fairness, dignity and health" (Schirmer, 2021, p. 250). Where teachers have been successful, writes Schirmer (2021), they emphasized organizing, which went beyond advocacy and mobilizing by recruiting leaders out of the rank and file and involving large numbers of people. Jane McAlevey (2020), a labor organizer who was central to the success of the Los Angeles teachers' 2019 strike, wrote that organizing, especially organizing with an eye toward building strikes, activates both forms of power. Successful labor and social movements often use a combination of advocacy, mobilizing and organizing.

At the same time that the parent led Opt-Out Movement in New York was growing and achieving previously unthinkable results, teachers were starting to push back against many of the same things as the opt out movement. Both were pushing back against high-stakes standardized testing for the way in which they shifted control over education away from teachers and students in the classroom toward corporate employees and private foundations. Indeed, under the false claims of "personalized learning," what is taught and how is increasingly determined neither by the teacher nor the student but by nameless computer programmers (Hursh et al., 2021, p. 75).

Lastly, as states have been paying for unknown others to construct and grade the tests, most public schools, as a result of both fiscal cutbacks over the last two decades, are receiving less funding per pupil than in the past. Consequently, teachers' salaries have not kept pace with other professions.

In the same way that it took withholding children from school to force those in power to acknowledge the concerns of parents, students, teachers, and others, teachers have learned that they can withhold their contribution to the educational enterprise by striking. Teachers, students, and parents were less likely to affect educational policy through the usual means of lobbying and holding forums. Instead, it took teachers going on strike and withholding their labor to reassert their interests.

Until the recent wave of strikes, teachers rarely went on strike. But once teachers observed other teachers successfully striking first in West Virginia, they began to do the same. As each strike resulted in improved working conditions for all, teachers began to realize that as they had the support of the community, they had the power to demand changes. As community organizer Eleni Schirmer writes, "Ordinary people have two major forms of power—our numbers—there are more of us than them—and our ability to withhold our participation in a system that denies us fairness, dignity and health" (Schirmer, 2021, p. 250).

Where teachers have been successful, writes Schirmer (2021), they have gone beyond advocacy and mobilizing to organizing. Organizing is crucial because, as opposed to advocacy and mobilizing, it aims to organize power structures to favor constituents and diminish the power of their opposition, and recruit and develop leaders from the rank and file.

Concluding ideas

Here we have focused on some of the principal ways education is being privatized. For-profit corporations are increasingly taking over public education by privatizing schools as charter schools or using vouchers to provide public funding to private secular and religious schools. Further, corporations are privatizing what occurs inside schools by taking over the process of setting standards, creating curriculum, and administering assessments.

But over the last few years the public—parents, students, educators, and others—have been pushing back and reasserting the public in public education. Indeed, we have shown how as much as corporate neoliberal reformers have the monetary and often the legal advantages over the general population, those arguing for schools that support the common good continue the fight.

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Shifting priorities of foreign aid to Pacific Island Countries: some considerations of new imperialism and geopolitics

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Introduction	193
Foreign development aid and Pacific education systems	194
Framing foreign aid to Pacific Islands' development and education	195
A conceptual framing of new imperialisms—architecture of foreign aid	196
Globalization	197
New imperialism	197
The global/local nexus—geopolitics and hegemonic power	198
Global imperatives, new forms of foreign aid and local agendas	199
Global connections and new forms of foreign aid	199
Opportunity, threat or special responsibility: Pacific step-up	200
Politics of education reform—global imperatives national implementation	201
Summary and implications for education	202
References	203
Websites	204

Introduction

Research exploring foreign aid provision concludes that aid is motivated more by the economic priorities of donor governments and multilateral agencies than the economic needs of developing countries. Foreign aid had historically been negotiated through bilateral agreements in which donors worked collaboratively with developing countries to address agreed challenges (Fagerlind and Saha, 1989). In contrast, over the last three decades, foreign aid has a more explicit political agenda because it is unashamedly motivated to fulfill regional political agendas than addressing local needs of recipient countries (Coxon and Munce, 2008; Luteru and Teasedale, 1993; Richards, 1977). Recent experiences of aid agreements in the Pacific suggest a complex relationship driven by economic priorities, national security agenda and global events, inviting scholars to examine how new imperialisms (Tikly, 2004; Richards, 1977) underpin foreign aid in postcolonial contexts.

This paper examines the impact of globalization and shifting geopolitics on foreign aid for development and education by focusing on some experiences of Pacific Island Countries. Drawing from recent experiences of aid projects, this paper argues that the language of foreign financial arrangements remains confined to colonial and deficit discourses of developed and underdevelopment and does not take into account an intensified transnational order that directs foreign policies and educational agenda. An eclectic conceptual framework consisting of postcolonial reconsideration of neo-colonialism and dependency, globalization and new imperialisms in the context of geopolitics is proposed to allow for a deeper examination of contemporary architecture of foreign aid. Despite economic fatigue, foreign aid is channeled and powered on through new forms of imperialism, an understanding of which is imperative for educational development research.

Australia's role as the major aid donor for Pacific Island Countries is the focus of this discussion. Some examples of global imperatives through which new forms of aid are expended are also discussed, including the manifestations of tensions between superpowers as Pacific Island Countries embark on participating in regional economic dialog. The second narrative draws on Australia's perspective of its neighbors, considering how it sees the Pacific as an opportunity, threat or special responsibility (Hawksley, 2009) while national security remains as the key platform. Given the intensified geopolitical movements in the region, a new approach is being adopted through the Pacific Step-Up initiative, with the Australian government investing in corporate capital and expertise to counteract hostile powers (Kehoe, 2021). I conclude by returning our focus to the implications for education, specifically on the politics of education reform. This brings forward an examination of multi-lateral organizations, such as the United Nations and global goals for educational development. This final narrative confirms that educational priorities set by external agencies are noble (Tikly, 2004) and attract foreign financial assistance for implementation. However, local conditions and resourcing risk appropriate implementation and sustainability of these projects. An appreciation of the Pacific Island Countries' context is useful for this analysis.

Foreign development aid and Pacific education systems

In the context of geopolitics and foreign aid, the Pacific Island Countries in Oceania are particularly dependent, vulnerable and implicated (Dorman and Pryke, 2017; Funaki, 2016; Gani, 2008; Hughes, 2003). Vulnerability and high dependency on foreign aid, to a large extent, is caused by their geographical features and demography, particularly with small populations and remote locations within the vast Pacific Ocean (Pavlov and Sugden, 2006). A contextual discussion of the Pacific Islands is necessary, providing a background to foreign aid imperatives and its significance to the region. While Australian aid to the countries of the Pacific will be the focus of this examination, major aid donors and lenders include Governments of New Zealand, Japan, China, the European Union, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

The Pacific region incorporates the Earth's largest ocean, comprising 35% of its surface (Morgan, 2020; Thomas, 1993) and includes both sovereign nations and colonial territories, in free association with colonial powers. The term "Pacific Island Countries" (PICs) specifically refers to fourteen nation states consisting of the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Other island countries including New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Federated States of Micronesia are French and United States territories respectively. These island countries are collectively grouped into three regional groups consisting of Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.

The Pacific, although home to approximately twelve million people (Pacific Community, 2020), is extremely culturally and linguistically diverse, thus collectively, the region holds the world record for the largest number of languages spoken in one region, with the larger Melanesian countries of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Fiji containing the densest populations. As a consequence of colonial history, either English or French are often the languages used for government and business communication. Likewise, these are the languages of instruction in schools, although creole languages for example, *Tok Pisin* in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, and *Bislama* in Vanuatu, are widely spoken in informal contexts. Fisheries, agriculture, and mining, particularly in the larger islands, are the primary economic resources. Growing service industries, such as tourism are emerging which provide employment to citizens, most of which were severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic from 2019. Importantly, issues concerning sustainability of resources (land and sea), land denigration, and rising sea levels caused by global warming make Pacific countries vulnerable to climate change and especially dependent on foreign aid (Dorman and Pryke, 2017; Johansson-Fua, 2016; Funaki, 2016; Morgan, 2020).

While PICs contribute the least to greenhouse gas emissions, they experience the negative impacts of climate change due to frequent king tides caused by raising sea levels and extreme weather patterns. These often culminate in heat waves, droughts, landslides, and floods which can have an impact on livelihoods and development progress. For Pacific Island communities, livelihoods and wellbeing depend on geography and natural resources including the ocean being a major source of sustainable access for healthy living and economic growth. There is a growing dissenting voice by Pacific peoples on the impact of global warming and consequent rising sea levels on low-laying atolls as seen at the recent United Nations Climate Change Summit in Glasgow in 2021. However, these voices are often drowned out by developed nations and agencies who contribute most to global warming via greenhouse gas emissions. Ultimately, developed countries with financial power and investments in developing alternative and environmentally friendly energy sources determine the nature and delivery of solutions. Contextual solutions drawn from indigenous ontologies and realities are silenced, begging for strategies that could inspire local innovation for sustainability through education.

As such, any critique of foreign aid to education invites an appreciation of its historical foundations, while particularly important, recognizing the important role education can play in shifting colonial discourses embedded within foreign aid relationships. Formal education in the Pacific is attributed to the Christian missionaries, during the so-called Pacification Era as the precursor for European colonial annexation of Pacific Islands. Colonial educationalists ignored traditional ways of knowing, value systems and vernaculars, and to various extents, suppressed indigenous languages and banned cultural practices. These were replaced with a variant of European education delivered through English or French, with the Bible often used as a foundational text. Such education aimed to "civilize", enlighten and eventually train a colonized population to support the work of the colonial administration. Thomas (1993) asserts that formal colonial education was alien to indigenous educational structures, methods, personnel and content, legacies of which are carried over in post-colonial times. As Thaman (2013) argues, no one asked how Pacific people conceptualized wisdom, knowledge, learning and teaching, or values that informed and sustained these communities (McLaughlin, 2018).

Education systems in these developing countries remain largely a colonial inheritance, evident in learning structures, educational policies and institutional architecture. Implicated in the colonial inheritance are the roles of donor agencies, nature and aims of technical assistance on the one hand and local political and educational priorities on the other, pointing to an ambivalence of post-colonial conditions characterized by simultaneous reluctant resistance to and compliance with new forms of power embedded in geopolitical agendas.

Decades after declaration of political independence, Pacific Island Countries continue to emulate systems of education inherited from the colonial past (McLaughlin and Hickling-Hudson, 2005; Nabobo-Baba, 2013; Sanga, 2006; Thaman, 2005, 2013). These colonial legacies include a stratified system of schooling, culturally inappropriate syllabuses, high stakes examinations which generate large numbers of relatively illiterate "drop-outs" and culturally alienated youth. This is compounded by insufficient employment opportunities, a scenario that is experienced in Papua New Guinea with high numbers of unemployed educated university graduates in 2022. Ironically, the end of classic colonialism witnessed the emergence of new forms of hegemonic powers that continue to control educational structures and processes. Importantly, reliance on foreign aid for educational change and

innovation is complicated by respective PICs and donor political agendas rather than the real needs of the Pacific communities (Coxon and Munce, 2008; Sanga, 2016). For example, a recent announcement in December 2021 of A\$35 million from the Australian sector budget to support Papua New Guinea tuition-free primary education in 2022 exemplifies new forms of financial support, in addition to A\$340 million in COVID-19 related assistance to assist the country's response to the pandemic (The National PNG, December 14, 2021).

A growing social divide between nation's elite and those of lower socio-economic status in rural, remote and urban poor exists in developing countries, and the PICs are of no exception. Tackling contemporary educational and consequent social divide involves reconciliation of modern forms of socialization with the traditional indigenous ways of knowing and value systems. The challenge of leading contemporary educational change then demands new ways of interrogating perennial questions (see Thomas, 1993, p. 240) such as the purpose of formal education, ownership and decision making, teacher education and certification, curriculum, and pedagogical models. In recent decades, the generation of possible responses to these challenges has been exacerbated by global imperatives and provisions of foreign aid for educational development.

Apart from colonial legacies, the postcolonial education systems are influenced by global agendas. Over the last three decades, Pacific Island Countries have been signatories to global imperatives, such as the United Nations (UN) Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in the 1990s, the Millennium Development Goals and the UN Sustainable Development Goals set for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Government (UNESCO, 2021). These global declarations are honorable, containing appropriate goals targeting serious concerns such as poverty alleviation, increasing access to education, gender equality and women's empowerment, and environmental sustainability. However, given the scale of these educational imperatives, often beyond national education budgets, implementation of global educational reforms depends on foreign governments, donors, and lenders such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and multiple non-government organizations.

While it is argued that the Pacific Island Countries are small, isolated and vulnerable to aid dependency (Dorman and Pryke, 2017; Gani, 2008; Pavlov and Sugden, 2006), their vast marine and natural resources attract competition from foreign governments and global conglomerates. In addition, the geographical location triggers competition between superpowers bordering the Pacific Ocean, specifically between the United States of America and China, making the Pacific Island Countries a pawn in their geostrategic power rivalry (see Hawksley, 2009). Accordingly, this geo-political rivalry implicates all countries in the region, including Australia and New Zealand, who maintain "special relationships" with Pacific Island Countries.

Given this scenario, foreign aid to the Pacific Island Countries and specifically educational development proceeds beyond bilateral agreements based on former colonial relationships but are increasingly linked to geopolitics by allies to superpowers in the region. A discussion of development aid through an eclectic conceptual framework for examining aid to education in the Pacific Islands is essential.

Framing foreign aid to Pacific Islands' development and education

There has been much controversy over foreign aid in both the recipient and donor countries over the last three decades. Hawksley (2009) contends that the Pacific region is characterized by asymmetries of power involving both former and current colonial powers, and between independent Island states themselves (p. 115). Although global comparisons would categorize Australia as middle power, it is considered a superpower within the Pacific as it is the largest and wealthiest state in the region. Australia and New Zealand are the two major donors of foreign aid to the Pacific Islands (Hawksley, 2009), and continue to instantly respond to natural disasters and emergencies such as those caused by cyclones, volcanic eruptions and consequent tsunami, landslides and long periods of drought. Instant responses by both countries to the volcanic eruption in Tonga in January 2022 illustrates their humanitarian and special responsibilities to their Pacific neighbors. In cases of civil unrests and constitutional crisis, both countries led regional security forces to attend to threats to national stability for example the Bougainville conflict (Dorney, 1998), the Fiji military coup in 2006 (Schultz, 2014) and the civil unrests in the Solomon Islands in 2010 and 2021. Both Australia and New Zealand responded to the COVID-19 pandemic providing much needed vaccinations to Pacific countries. Such attention demonstrates an illusion of neighborly connectedness and responsibility, with readily available financial assistance budgeted through their foreign aid allocations.

Apart from bilateral agreements, both Australia and New Zealand financially support regional agencies, such as the Pacific Islands Forum which was established as a key site for Pacific diplomacy and as a means of gaining control of regional diplomatic agenda (Morgan, 2020). The Pacific Islands Forum succeeded the South Pacific Commission (SPC), established as a regional institution after the second world war to promote corporation among colonial powers. SPC was limited in its remit as it constrained discussions around decolonization and nuclear weapons testing, thus impeding Pacific leaders' voices and decision-making powers. The Pacific Islands Forum is a key site for Pacific diplomacy (Morgan, 2020) and acts as a regional power block for the interest of Pacific Islanders.

Schultz (2014), in his detailed analysis of theorizing Australia-Pacific Island relations, contended Australia's relationship with its Pacific Island neighbors was characterized by incoherency and inconsistency of policy making set to achieve its commercial, strategic and humanitarian goals. He argues Australia engages in generous development and humanitarian assistance which coexists within policies indifferent to Pacific Island interests and particularities, thus attracting negative feedback of the "overbearing and bullying Australia" (p. 549). Underpinning Australia's objectives with its Island neighbors are three distinct ideas that inform its relationships, based on the perception of the Pacific "as a threat, an opportunity and a special responsibility" (Schultz, 2014, p. 549). A

key element here is evident in the way Pacific Islands can be thought of as a steppingstone for hostile powers to reach Australia. Thus, soft power through foreign aid as a special responsibility can maintain friendly ties to ensure rival powers are excluded from setting up strongholds in the neighboring Island countries. The recognition of wealth to be extracted in the region, with current extraction of natural resources including commercial operations, mining including under the sea, forestry, trading and service industries are significant in respect to Australia's neoliberal economy. Thus, tying foreign aid to the purchase of Australian equipment, expertise, contractors, and agencies to negotiate agreements with Pacific Islands that may be seen as mutually beneficial for both donor and recipient countries.

Australian foreign aid policies have shifted from its original responsibility to former colonial territories. [Hawksley \(2009\)](#) postulates this difference in policies are more in style rather than substance of Australia's aid relationship. Comparing Prime Minister Rudd's new direction in 2007 with the Howard Government's position was a change of the former government's pushy and bullying Australia, and despite rhetoric of greater engagement with the Pacific Islands, the emphasis remained on economics of foreign aid ([Hawksley, 2009](#)). It can be argued that neo-liberalism continues to inform foreign aid policy and relationships with PICs. Australia's own colonial history of dispossession of Aboriginal lands, racialized ideologies and policies, and contemporary relationship with its First Nations people is postcolonizing ([Moreton-Robinson, 2003](#)) rather than decolonizing its policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In the absence of theorization of Australia's aid relationships ([Schultz, 2014](#)), the provision of foreign aid has been founded on theories of development and modernization and definitions of under-development. Economic models have been adopted to project aid provisions, such as the Migration, Remittance, Aid and Bureaucracy (MIRAB) model ([Dorman and Pryke, 2017](#)). Thus, such platforms for development aid to education suggest this practice is instituted on human capital theories, modernization discourses and colonial binaries view of the world ([McLaughlin, 2002](#)). [Luteru and Teasedale \(1993\)](#) highlight the mismatch between donor and recipient development priorities, and while control is in the hands of donors, exacerbates suggestions of neo-colonial dependency and un-equal power relationship. [Adams and Solomons \(1991\)](#) foretold that foreign aid may be inherently debilitating rather than strengthening to the recipient countries, an argument that remains relevant in the 21st century. In a postcolonial analysis of the Australian sponsored Papua New Guinea Secondary School Students' Project from 1988 to 2001, [McLaughlin and Hickling-Hudson \(2005\)](#) argued for theorization beyond dependency theories. A complex conceptual framework is therefore required to critique the intricate interfaces of foreign aid.

A conceptual framing of new imperialisms—architecture of foreign aid

The end of classic colonization and the post-colonial era sparked anti-colonial movements toward achieving self-determination by formal colonized countries and territories. Liberation from western colonial power sparked anti-colonial movements toward decolonizing institutional power structures. However, the colonial architecture of power remains deeply embedded within the post-colonial context, translating through capitalism, patriarchy and racism, a few lingering examples of oppression and legacies of colonialism. As [Yamahata \(2015\)](#) argues, the unequal colonial power relations are translational and intersectional, which perpetuates inequalities in division of labor, marginalization of women and reinforces patriarchal systems in contemporary society. As [Satre \(2001\)](#) reminds us, colonization is a system, its legacies implanted in modern institutions and forms of socialization. Consequently, education systems around the world which have their origins from the colonial experience, as [Tikly \(2009\)](#) contends, are artifacts of this legacy.

Decolonization is both a political process and as well as an epistemic project ([Yamahata, 2015](#)). Thus, any authentic analysis of former colonized states requires analysis of their contextual social, political, ideological, and cultural environments. Postcolonial theory offers a theoretical lens which incorporates a sophisticated critique of how colonial influences and values are embedded in the bureaucracy and education systems of independent nations ([Crossley and Tikly, 2004](#); [Hickling-Hudson, 2009](#)). Postcolonial theory extends a critical lens for understanding colonial legacies, and how colonial ideologies continue to influence political, economic, social, and cultural practices. Moreover, postcolonial theory provides a framework for analysis which explores and reveals systems of domination and hegemonic power relationships, ambiguity and contradictions in educational policy formation and practice. Implicated in postcolonial educational analysis is the provision of foreign aid projects for educational development, and their imposition of foreign education practices that filter into the systems of the post-colonial contexts.

Current systems of education are often perceived as elitist, lacking relevance to local realities, and at variance with indigenous cultures, values and belief systems ([Crossley and Tikly, 2004](#), p. 149; [Tikly and Bond, 2013](#)). Postcolonial perspectives are useful to critique colonial discourses ambiguities, contradictions, and ambivalences of educational policies, strategies and the everyday pedagogical relationships. Indeed, postcolonial theory offers a strategy to explore power structures and knowledge systems ([Fox, 2016](#)) as well as a catalyst that forces a deeper consciousness in generating an intellectual energy to combat injustice in the form of neo-colonialism and imperialism ([McLaughlin, 2018](#)).

In consideration of remarkable global change since the establishment of foreign aid after the Second World War, postcolonial analysis is appropriate for examining new forms of international relationships and agents involved in its operations. Interrogating power relationships between and within national borders, as those offered by colonizer—colonized relationships, as well as internal power structures, require critique beyond classic and new forms of colonization. Indeed, colonization has not ended at the point of political independence for former colonized countries, current global movements represent salient configurations of power,

transforming global economic transactions, cultural and social institutions. A discussion of globalization and its impact on educational processes and foreign aid provisions is therefore necessary.

Globalization

The last four decades have witnessed the onslaught of global economic, political and cultural transformation through globalization, and has thus inspired a plethora of literature on globalization and education (see for example, Henry, 1999; Hickling-Hudson, 1999; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Scholte, 2000; Spring, 1998; Taylor et al., 1997; Zadja, 2015). Scholte (2000) postulates that globalization is a transformation of social geography shaped by the growth of supraterritorial spaces, thus, both territoriality and supraterritoriality coexist in complex interrelations (p. 8).

Globalization involves supra-national ideas and process which are borderless, over and beyond the nation state (Hickling-Hudson, 1999, p. 82), resulting in an intensified global distribution of a particular economic system based on capital, prompted by rationalism, capitalism, technological innovation, and regulation (Scholte, 2000). The rise of supraterritoriality was a result of the combination of the emergence global consciousness as a product of rationalist knowledge, development trends of capitalism, innovative communication and data processing technologies, and the construction of regulatory frameworks through states and suprastate institutions (Scholte, 2000, p. 3). Founded on the basis of a bias regulated global economy, Brecher and Costello (1994) warn of the competitiveness associated with countries' propositions to attract corporate investments that would result in a reduction of labor, social and environmental costs. Impacts of globalization are realized as nation states relinquish control of resources to multinational conglomerates, who control the operations and benefit most from profits of their investments. Although the West stood to benefit most from capital investments, globalization facilitated the growth of the markets in other regions, witnessing the growth of the Asian Tigers. Neoliberal policies, on the other hand, prompted many negative consequences which transpired and led to increased ecological degradation, persistent poverty, deteriorated employment conditions, cultural violence, widening inequalities and deepened democratic deficits (Scholte, 2000, p. 9). As Rizvi (2009b) argues, neoliberal states celebrated the emergence of global markets and "free trade" in the production and consumption driven by the view of "globalization from above", yet little attention was paid to the realities, "globalization from below" (p. 287). The notion of the equal economic opportunities offered through globalization remains a myth, as it was never an equal playing field in the first place.

Moreover, globalization facilitated an unprecedented flow of capital and opportunities to participate in the global economy, it also created an unprecedented flow of ideas, migration, refugees, travelers and cultural movements (Hickling-Hudson, 1999). Rizvi (2009b) details the complexities, multi-dimensional and nuanced triggers of international mobility that has transformed global spaces, drawing our attention to how people movements consequently have constructed transnational identities and forms of socialization. Human security (and in-security) and identities are then transnational with cross border connections and interconnections. These have implications for educational research as a geographically bounded field of study is no longer sustained, instead there is a need to pay attention to new non-linear, complex and evolving relationalities (Rizvi, 2009a,b, p. 287).

As globalization facilitated new forms of communication, economic and cultural opportunities, it created winners and losers, and can be argued that it represents manifestations of nineteenth century colonialism (see Rizvi, 2007; Tikly, 2004; Tikly and Bond, 2013). Powered by information and communication technologies, globalization massively impacted education policies, institutional architecture, curricula, assessment, and pedagogies. Globalization involves the diffusion of uniform education goals and systems, complicating the processing of educational planning and provision. Rizvi (2007) argues for educational research to acknowledge, understand and respond to powerful forces impacting educational processes beyond the jurisdiction of nation states.

The reality of globalization means that decisions made in Europe, the United States and Australia influence how Pacific Island Countries communicate, conduct business, use technology and educate their citizens. It is also important to recognize the role of international organizations such as the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Rizvi, 2009a,b), as these multilateral development agencies provide the language, set the goals and underlying rationale for educational policy and practice (Tikly, 2004, p. 174). Some clarification and definitions of new forms of power, specifically, new imperialism is required.

New imperialism

Imperialism is commonly accepted "as the practice, theory and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling in a distant territory" (Said, 1993, p. 8), with early definitions framed according to the imperial relations between the ruling nations and their colonies (Sen and Marcuzzo, 2018, p. 1). Imperialism differs from colonialism in terms of implementing settlements on foreign lands, however, colonialism facilitated the foundations on which imperial interest can transpire (Tikly, 2004; also see Ferguson, 2003; Ferro, 1997). According to Tikly (2009), new imperialism differs from neo-colonial critique in two ways. First, when Kwame Nkrumah (1965) coined the term neo-colonial, new imperialism was not fully conceptualized particularly with the changing context of Western dominance (p. 26). The second difference is the way new imperialism is understood and analyzed, as it coincides with poststructuralist and culturalist thought in the social sciences. Notably, when colonialism was legitimated on race and biological racism which originated in the eighteenth-century eugenics movement, complex cultural differences (a by-product of colonization) has emerged as an element of conflict in western countries (Tikly, 2004). Cultural diversity and social change have indeed impacted on colonial binaries and definitions.

Marcuzzo and Sunanda, 2018 contends that imperialism was an arrangement of exploitation and expropriation, sustained over time and space, through various forms to achieve its set aims and depending on a network of power structure. It can be argued that imperialism prevails from its early domination through the colonies—that maintains empire power relationships to contemporary capitalism, based on neoliberalism, globalization and free market ideology (Sen and Marcuzzo, 2018). On the other hand, the decolonization era triggered new configurations of empire—colony relationships, which then necessitated a re-working of overseas development assistance, tying aid to priorities of powerful nations. Trade becomes the new mantra, unfortunately exacerbating the gap between the rich and economically poor nations, thus witnessing imperialism in its new incarnation (Sen and Marcuzzo, 2018, p. 2). Consequently, dominating agendas and interests are driven by economic, political, and military concerns which legitimate powerful nations imposing their democratic ideologies on the economically poor countries around the globe.

Apart from the economic aspects of imperialism (Marcuzzo and Sunanda, 2018), the discursive nature of imperialism remains an important angle for analysis. Tikly (2009) is concerned with the impacts and implications of globalization and cultural change and how these have been experienced through social transformative agents, including feminist groups, indigenous groups and social movements. Foucault's (1991) work is useful with this analysis in ways that comprise people as subjects, thus manifested through authority and exclusion, surveillance and governmentality (Tikly, 2009; O'Farrell, 2005). New imperialism as transpired through foreign aid and loans to lower income countries illustrates the exercise of power, surveillance and the governing architecture, providing a shrewd critique to new forms of domination and hegemony.

The impact of new imperialism on education has been meticulously delineated by Tikly (2004, 2009) who contends that education is a central feature of new imperialism, used by the multilateral agencies and the World Bank as they envision the nature of education as an aspect of Western discourse around development. For example, most United Nations agencies operate under the belief that public intervention is necessary to ensure basic needs and human rights, a platform that is necessary and resonates with development priorities of partner countries. On the contrary, low-income countries are trapped between policy imperatives set by global organizations in contradictory ways (Tikly, 2009, p. 26), particularly when projects designed to respond to human rights and basic human needs are directed and controlled by donors and funding agencies, often without much consideration of local contexts. It is, therefore, crucial that Pacific Island Countries understand the genesis and processes of new imperialism in a way that allows society, through education, to counteract ongoing imperial politics and mechanisms of domination and hegemonic control.

The global/local nexus—geopolitics and hegemonic power

The examination of key theoretical positions offered through an analysis of discourses of development and foreign aid, postcolonialism, globalization and new imperialism allows the interrogation of contemporary architecture of foreign aid policies and global interactions. New forms of foreign aid are considered as humanitarian, poverty alleviation, and development imperatives of foreign aid arrangements shift focus to global security and geopolitics. The Pacific region provides some manifestations of this.

It is not possible to offer a single definition of geopolitics in the context of how we understand, critique and analyze world politics, however, geopolitics is briefly described as "the struggles over the control of spaces and places and focus of how power operates across scales" (Nyuyen, 2020, p. 1). The complexity around defining geopolitics is simply because, as Flint (2006) postulates, the word invokes images and ideas of war, empire and diplomacy therefore, propping up the perspectives of geopolitics as the practice of states controlling and competing for territories (p. 13). In this sense, we also consider how countries are competing for not simply territories, but also for the extraction of resources contained therein. "Power" is classified by sizes of countries, the racial character of its population, its military and economic capacity, and more recently, on capabilities of industrial strength, educational levels and military might (Flint, 2006, p. 28). At a theoretical level, geopolitics creates images by providing language, practice and classifications of territories and masses of people, consequently, geopolitics becomes a way of seeing the world (Flint, 2006, p. 13). Further, geopolitics is not simply understood as an exercise of territorial competition, and/or that geopolitics is the preservation of states, but invokes "situated knowledge" that may include racial conflicts, women's movements, diplomacy over greenhouse gas emissions. Geopolitics involves multiple practices and representations by various agents and territories and presents a new form of imperialism.

Countering dominant ways of thinking about world affairs, critical geopolitics encourages agents, including groups of citizens, feminist groups, individuals, indigenous peoples and marginalized others to resist hegemonic control imposed by states and powerful institutions. Feminist critique of geopolitics considers how patriarchy (male-dominated elite) define and exercise power relations through what is perceived as common sense and normal. Adopting Antonio Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemonic power, the use of exert force for compliance is not required. On the contrary, the lower class or minority groups follow willingly the ideology that is presumed natural and unpolitical, which remains to serve and benefit the interest of the powerful (Flint, 2006). For instance, policies for economic development designed by the rich powerful nations are adopted willingly by poor nations under the disguise of "progress and development". Representation of geopolitics as a manifestation of power (O'Tuathail, 1996), necessitates critical understanding of how such ideas and practices are justified as normal while belittling alternative forms of knowing and being (Flint, 2006, p. 28). Although nation states are key geopolitical agents, seen through the policies and practices of both domestic and international competition, we consider the roles of non-state organizations and multi-state organizations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations connections to the geopolitical structure, forming a dynamic and hierarchical architecture of power relations. Thus, critical understandings of the connections between geopolitical agents can allow space for other groups and alternative ways of viewing the world.

Global imperatives, new forms of foreign aid and local agendas

A conceptual framework consisting of neo-colonialism, globalization, new imperialism and geopolitics provide powerful perspectives in the examination of foreign aid to education globally and specifically to Pacific Island Countries. Indeed, global imperatives for education are noble and address the essence of humanity, incorporating human rights, poverty alleviation, gender relations, and sustainable development and environmental protection. With foreign governments and donor agencies primarily financing global educational agendas, it has generated contestations around local implementation, issues of sustainable outcomes and the capacity of lower income countries to maintain momentum once projects are completed. This next section of the chapter illustrates some of the experiences of foreign funding projects driven by development ideologies and practices beginning with the enticement to participate in globalization processes.

Global connections and new forms of foreign aid

The Papua New Guinea experience provides a case in point for critique of foreign aid to education and national development. Papua New Guinea gained its political independence in 1975, after Australia coached the territories of Papua and New Guinea toward a sovereign nation and relinquished its colonial administrative regime. Over the last 47 years, PNG remained a major beneficiary of Australia's overseas aid program, organized mostly via bilateral agreements and remains strategically important to Australia's national security. Apart from Papua New Guinea's membership of and leadership within the Pacific Islands Forum as an important agency for regional solidarity, it became a formal member of the Asia—Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1993, allowing it to participate in the processes of globalization, making Papua New Guinea the only Pacific Island Country to enter this cooperation. APEC is an economic cooperation forum in the Asia—Pacific region, incorporating Asian countries, Australia and New Zealand, and countries bordering the Pacific Ocean, including Canada, Japan, Russia, United States of America, Mexico, Peru and Chile, with a membership of twenty-one countries in total. As Plummer (1997) predicted, Papua New Guinea stood out to economically gain from this membership, but also cautioned that it needs to avoid seeing APEC as another vehicle for special and differential treatment for foreign aid. Instead, Plummer (1997) called for Papua New Guinea to reform its economic policies and programs consistent with World Trade Organizations (WTO) obligations and align with important trading partners in APEC.

In 2018, Papua New Guinea hosted the 26th APEC Summit in Port Moresby, with the host government aiming to promote its economic development prospects, establish trading links with member states and increase foreign investments. Papua New Guinea invited Pacific leaders to a special meeting, the *APEC Leaders' Dialogue with Pacific Island Leaders*. With APEC's position as a powerful economic group, the 2018 Summit had global media coverage through the Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), the British Broadcasting Commission (BBC), The Guardian, Reuters and the Washington Post, among others (Huang, 2020).

Conversely, Papua New Guinea is the least economically developed among the APEC member countries (ABC, 2018), so hosting the Summit was a gamble, with its 2018 national budget projecting to record a deficit of two billion PNG Kina (\$800 million). Hosting the APEC Summit was a major financial commitment for the country which prompted outrage at a time when many citizens were living below the poverty line as stated by the United Nations Development Program (ABC, 2018; The Guardian, 2018). With six million citizens living outside urban centers with health and educational services severely exhausted and poor infrastructure, Papua New Guinea welcomed superpowers into Port Moresby. With the cost of hosting the Summit projected to over one billion dollars (including the purchase of luxury Maseratis and Bentley Spurs), the Papua New Guinea Government sought financial assistance from other donors and lenders resulting in China financing the building of the APEC House (International Conventional Center) and other infrastructure projects. Papua New Guinea had signed up to China's One Belt One Road initiative (ABC, 2018; Morgan, 2020), consisting of billions of dollars for infrastructure investment primarily to expand the land and sea links between Asia, Africa and Europe (Wen et al., 2018). Consequently, a showcase of Chinese aid and investment was on display with the Chinese President Xi Jinping opening a Beijing funded boulevard in Port Moresby and met with Pacific leaders to promote the Road and Belt initiative, in addition to discussions on respective bilateral financial agreements particularly with fragile and distressed economies, agitating concerns around increasing Chinese global influence particularly in the Pacific region (Hayward-Jones, 2013).

Clear tensions between China and the United States of America prevented a Summit consensus. The United States Vice President Mike Pence stated that the underlying issues preceded economic concerns to freedom of navigation and human rights, and cautioned Pacific Island leaders to avoid accepting debt that compromises their sovereignty. Competition between the two world superpowers over the Pacific region swiftly became the focus, with the United States and its allies including Australia, New Zealand and Japan counteracting by committing to deliver reliable electricity and high-speed internet connection to Papua New Guinea (Wen et al., 2018).

The APEC Summit Chairman's Final Report contained reference to education, framed along "skilled human resources", with the purpose of education firmly aligned with on human capital theories (APEC Ministerial Report, 2018). In true Papua New Guinea's political style, a change of government eventuated in 2019, with the resignation of the then Prime Minister. The receipt of anticipated billions of dollars of foreign investment as a consequence of the 2018 APEC Summit was uncertain. Papua New Guinea's APEC experience, however, illustrates the imbalance and inequality of participation in international economics as facilitated by globalization processes, the geopolitical competition by superpowers, and the unequal and hegemonic relationships between powerful nations and emerging economies. The APEC discussions herein are useful for a renewed focus of aid relationship between Australia and the Pacific Islands. As Hayward-Jones (2013, p. 1) states, the "center of global economic gravity has shifted to the Asia-Pacific region".

Opportunity, threat or special responsibility: Pacific step-up

For almost half of a century, Australia enjoyed an exclusive superpower status in the region and recognized as such by its Pacific Island neighbors. The last two decades, however, saw Australia's relationship with the Pacific Island Countries defined by its own national security, manifested by the introduction of the Pacific Solution formally launched in 2001 (see Fox, 2015; Fraenkel, 2016; Grewcock, 2018; Larcertosa, 2014; Taylor, 2005). The Pacific Solution was established when Australia's government reformed aspects of its immigration system which involved a third country immigration processing scheme, "wherein asylum seekers who arrived in Australian territory by boats are detained by authorities and shipped to Pacific Island nations to have their refugee claims processed and reviewed under the receiving nations' laws" (Larcertosa, 2014, p. 322). Although it can be argued that "sovereign borders" policy directives are principled in combating and stopping people smuggling schemes and saving lives from drowning in oceans, the Pacific Solution demonstrates how national security and domestic politics can influence Australia's relationship with neighboring countries in the region. In negotiation with the Pacific Island governments, detention or refugee processing centers were established on Nauru and Manus Island, Papua New Guinea. International refugee and asylum seeker rights under International Conventions aside, the Australian government negotiated and re-negotiated the two-phases of the Pacific Solutions (Phase 1 2001–2008; Phase 2 2012–2006), agreed through Memorandum of Understandings with the two countries. As Nauru's Phase 1 negotiations illustrate, Australia pledged ongoing financial assistance in the form of tied aid in exchange for continued operations of the detention center (Grewcock, 2018, p. 363) which was estimated at the cost of AU\$1 billion, while Phase 2 including both operational expenditures on Nauru and Manus Island blew out to AU\$3.9 billion between 2012 and 2016 (Fraenkel, 2016, p. 282). In 2016, however, the supreme court found that the Manus Island detention center violated Papua New Guinea's constitution and ruled its immediate closure. The benefit and impact of the Pacific Solution on Manus Island and Nauru may require further analysis from the perspectives of the islanders themselves. This experience, however, illustrates geopolitical arrangement and requires critical understandings of how foreign aid can be used as an "unmitigated bribe" (Grewcock, 2018, p. 363). Similarly, avoiding a "debt trap diplomacy" is crucial to Pacific Island Countries (Wall, 2020).

The recent "Pacific Step-Up" initiative has renewed Australia's focus and relationship building through engagement with the Pacific Islands while strategically targeting a secure and economically stable region. Launched in 2016, the Pacific Step-Up captures Australia's intent for renewed partnership that draws on historical, cultural and personal ties with its Pacific neighbors. Economic prosperity, regional security, people to people connections, gender equality, strengthening resilience to climate change and disaster, and supporting regional organizations are key priorities in this initiative. Commitment to fisheries industry is also a highlight of the Pacific Step-Up, a recognition of ocean as a resource in terms of food security for Island communities' and global sustainability. Similarly, these priorities are translated in the *Aid Investment Plan Pacific Regional 2015 – 2016 to 2017 – 2018* (Government of Australia, 2018) which compliments separate bilateral agreements. Papua New Guinea, for example, continues to be the major recipient of Australia's ODA program with a total of AU\$607.5 million in 2020 (Australian Government, 2020). The *Papua New Guinea-Australia Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership* is defined by six pillars, including strong democracies for stable future, close friends/enduring ties, economic partnership for prosperity, strategic cooperation for security and stability, social and human development, and neighbors, and global partners (Australian Government, 2020).

A number of key developments have been completed since the 2018 APEC Summit by the Australian government through its Development Assistance Program. Among these was the completion and operation of the Coral Sea Cable System, a fiber optic submarine cable that links Port Moresby and Honiara (Solomon Islands), providing both countries with reliable and affordable telecommunications access and next generation capabilities. Further, Australia provided a short-term loan of US\$300 million to meet a financial shortfall to support economic reform as requested by the Papua New Guinean government (Australian Government, 2020, p. 2). In 2021, Telstra (a telecommunication network in Australia) partnered with the Australian government to acquire Digicel Pacific which is the biggest mobile operator in the South Pacific region, including Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea and Fiji. At the cost of US\$1.33 billion, the Australian government committed to the financial package through the Export Finance Australia to support Telstra's acquisition, reflecting the Pacific Step-Up initiative. Conversely, observers and media reporters concur that this deal is an effort to counter China's influence in the region (Faa et al., 2021; Baird and Kehoe, 2021; Probyn, 2021). As Kehoe (2021) bluntly argues, injecting AU\$1.8 billion of taxpayers' money to "help Telstra buy Digicel Pacific is a totemic shift for a Western government to weaponize corporate power and fight back against the creeping influence of China's Belt and Road Initiative". This deal combines foreign aid, strategic and national security objectives to counter, after years of observing, Chinese state-owned enterprises buy and build strategic infrastructures such as telecommunication systems and ports in the region to boost its strategic influence through soft power diplomacy and espionage powers (Kehoe, 2021).

These recent developments of Australia's engagement with Pacific Island neighbors reflects its foreign objectives through regional and bilateral agreements and initiatives. However, given the intensified geopolitical movements in the region, foreign aid can be used as a strategy to maximize economic opportunities, maintain special relationships with its neighbors as well as response to threats by perceived hostile powers. Conversely, national security emerges as a powerful feature in the provision of foreign aid. The Pacific, a region that has been relatively neglected and economically improvised is attracting attention of superpowers in the region (Hayward-Jones, 2013). It is therefore, necessary to understand the way new forms of imperialism as manifested through globalization and geopolitics impacts on aid to education and how education can cultivate critical understandings to respond to global challenges.

Politics of education reform—global imperatives national implementation

The preceding discussions illustrated how new imperialisms exemplified through globalization and geopolitics impact on development aid. Education systems in postcolonial contexts have grappled with developing contextually and culturally appropriate systems of schooling comparable to global standards of quality. Indeed, global goals for education are noble, designed to address real issues of poverty alleviation and liberation, however the contextual complexities that impede successful translation of global imperatives are deeply entrenched with ongoing uncritical acceptance of educational priorities and models, dependency on foreign finance and conceptualization of educational change. Such practice illustrates neo-colonial practice and imperialism, social and ongoing cultural politics involved in desiring quality education capable of ensuring participation in the competitive global marketplace while simultaneously cultivating a national identity embracing ethnic cultures and wisdom. Again, the Papua New Guinea narrative illustrates the gamut of global imperatives for education in postcolonial contexts, as it demonstrates the complex dialectics of implementing global agendas into educational settings.

From the early 1990s, Papua New Guinea's National Department of Education executed extensive nationwide educational reform. This reform was largely inspired by global developments in education; in particular, the Declaration for Education for All (EFA) movement as a global commitment to provide basic education for children, young people and adults in 1990 and affirmed in 2000 (Cassidy, 2008, 2010). An Education Sector Review was commissioned in 1991, tasked to identify and develop strategies to rectify endemic problems in the education system. This review confirmed high attrition rates at the primary level, low transition rates following grades 6 and 10, an irrelevant curriculum, and weak management and administration. It also identified declining resources allocation, high unit costs, and a severe imbalance in the allocation of funding to higher education. A significant change was recommended which led to the national structural education reform in 1993, tasked to respond to poverty alleviation and to increase access to formal education. The main targets included access to nine years of relevant basic education; formal school learning at age six in students' first language; strengthening all curriculum areas targeting improvements in standards and relevance, increased emphasis on relevant practical skills for life, and expanded access to secondary and vocational education (NDOE, 2000; PASTEP, 2002).

Central to this reform were the development of elementary education, the promotion of bilingual education, restructuring of primary and secondary schooling and curriculum, and the development of elementary teacher education programs. This translated in an intensive curriculum reform adopting the Outcomes Based Education (OBE) model as the curricula and pedagogical framework, and elementary education with vernacular as language of instruction, in a country of approximately 860 languages. The Papua New Guinean education landscape was ablaze with reform activities, attracting funding from international donor agencies, including the Australian, New Zealand, Chinese, and Japanese governments, European Union, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank (McLaughlin, 2011). After two decades of implementation, the OBE model was replaced by standards-based curriculum.

Given the global imperatives on educational reform, elementary education with the vernacular as the language of instruction attracted international aid donors. AusAID provided technical and funding assistance toward elementary teacher education program through the Elementary Teacher Education Support Project (ETESP). An apprenticeship model was adopted by training elementary teacher trainers at the Education Institute in Port Moresby while self-instructional learning packages were designed as home study, supported by trainer-directed training in residential workshops, and supervised teaching in schools (Hahambu, 2011, p. 9). This model commissioned sixteen thousand teachers under 10 years (NDOE, 2008). Notwithstanding, Papua New Guinea's social and cultural contexts are diverse, complex, dynamically changing, and demand qualified teachers with knowledge of the local context, subject disciplines and wider global community. If teacher education and preparation programs are important factors in quality teaching and learning, the process of elementary teacher education in Papua New Guinea remained an incomplete project (McLaughlin, 2018).

The absence of appropriate teacher education in early childhood development and bilingual education resulted in incompetent teaching, misappropriation of cultural and nationally prescribed knowledge content, and whole scale missed opportunities to reform a relevant and appropriate education system. Consequently, the misconception of bilingual education processes, and low academic performance generated tension between elementary and primary teachers, primary and secondary teachers, communities, and the National Department of Education (Hahambu, 2011, p. 9). Further tensions emerged as secondary teachers and community members accused the use of vernacular in elementary schools for students' lower academic performance and raised implications for inequity and quality education (Kombra, 2012; Kombra et al., 2011).

Consequently, the Ministry of Education, issued a policy directive to phase out vernacular as the language of instruction in all elementary schools and instead reinstate English as the medium of instruction in elementary and primary schools (PNG Ministerial Policy Statement, 2013). In 2021, the Minister of Education called for the phasing out of elementary schools and integrating early childhood classes into the primary schools (Patjole, 2018). Such policy reversals raise questions around the mismatched education reform policies between local and global priorities, ownership of educational reforms, maintenance of indigenous languages as an artifact of systems of knowing and being. Serious questions remain around the conceptualization of quality teacher education with the goal of graduating teachers capable of cultivating young minds to negotiate traditional wisdom of their people and navigate challenges of global economics, geopolitical powers and forms of socialization.

In the meantime, Pacific Island Countries signed up to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) containing eight universal aims to reduce extreme poverty, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and women empowerment, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environment

sustainability and global partnerships for development by 2015. Again, Pacific Countries are signatories to the 2016 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with seventeen ambitious targets to eliminate social ills including eradication of poverty and hunger, fight inequality, promote good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality and tackle climate change by 2030. Conceding that not all MDGs were met globally depending on regions and state of country's development, the SDGs seventeen goals have extended the MDGs, however, a concentrated focus on environment sustainability and climate change is notable. For those Pacific Island Countries whose key interests remain on protection of their islands, land and sea resources, these SDGs including climate change, life below water, life on land, responsible consumption and production, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities and communities are noteworthy. Targets including partnerships for the SDGs; peace, justice and strong institutions; decent work and economic growth; industry, innovation and infrastructure are particularly useful and invite critical understandings within the context of globalization and geopolitics. However, with SDGs described as "our shared vision of humanity and a social contract between world's leaders and the people", remind us of the authority of superpowers who decide the way these targets are designed and can be accomplished through the provision of foreign finance. It is, therefore, critical that we engage with understandings of how new imperialisms are manifested by global power structures and monitor how these can impact the outcomes of the SDGs by 2030.

Summary and implications for education

This paper mapped out some recent key features that impact on the conceptualization and delivery of foreign aid for development since its inception. With a focus on the Pacific, a region that is vulnerable to global warming and is aid dependent, the narratives herein illustrate a postcolonial perspective illustrating global shifts in the purpose and understandings of the provision and implementation of foreign aid initiatives. These shifts are exemplified through global capitalism and regional events instigated by powers external to the Pacific Island Countries, and as [Hayward-Jones \(2013\)](#) maintains, the center of global economic gravity has indeed shifted to the Asia—Pacific region, thus consequently providing a platform for aid. Nevertheless, in contrast to the post-colonial era, time immediately after political independence, sovereign nations are also implicated in the negotiation and implementation of foreign aid with donor governments, financially powerful corporations and multi-lateral agencies. National and local priorities are often overlooked by the enticement of quick and unsustainable solutions. The implications for educational development and as a process for cultivating mindsets capable to critically engage with geopolitical tensions and new imperialism demands further investigation. New theoretical perspectives beyond neo-colonial and dependency theories are crucial as these are insufficient to illuminate contemporary global complex dynamics.

Within the current geopolitical climate, the Pacific region remains an opportunity and a threat to global superpowers, including Australia ([Schultz, 2014](#)). The extraction of natural resources, with revenues in billions of dollars generated through harvesting resources, including oil, metals and minerals, seafood, and wood products while causing environmental devastation by poisoning of rivers and forests and degradation of food security, create serious challenges for sustainable livelihoods and economic development for Pacific Islanders ([The Guardian, 2021](#)). Combined with the exploitation of resources, Pacific governments and land-owners, given that land remains largely under customary ownership, are short-changed with billions of dollars returning to foreign hands. Communities are left to suffer the consequences of environment degradation and at the frontline of global warming through raising sea levels. Global warming and the threats around submerging of low-laying atolls and communities, the loss of their lands and cultural heritage is the substantial concern of Pacific peoples and needs to be prioritized in negotiations with foreign governments, donors and corporations. Pacific perspectives on climate change are deeply cultural, entrenched in identity, belonging to place (islands) and value systems. The strengthening of regional voices through established regional institutions may provide a stronger bargaining power from collective ontologies of Pacific peoples ([Morgan, 2020](#)).

The role of education in cultivating critical understandings of the processes of and engagement with globalization and new imperialism in this geopolitical climate is imperative. For this, two possible propositions are made. First, these developments on foreign aid relationships pose implications for educational research. Sophisticated conceptual frameworks are required which can illuminate new non-linear, complex and evolving relationalities and between jurisdictions of nation states ([Rizvi, 2009a,b](#)). Second, the shift around aid development discourses directs us to how aid recipients can maintain the longevity of educational project objectives. The Rethinking Pacific Education by Pacific Peoples project (RPEPP), sponsored by New Zealand aid, celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2021 ([Nabobo-Baba, 2013](#); [Sanga, 2006, 2011](#); [Thaman, 2013](#)). This initiative draws on Pacific systems of knowing and being, centering indigenous pedagogies and value systems based on relationality and reciprocity, and nurtures educational leaders and researchers ([Toumua et al., 2021](#); [McLaughlin, 2018](#)).

Contrary to suggestions of "aid fatigue", I argue that aid will continue in the foreseeable future, in formats different from budget support and humanitarian objective. The Pacific region remains resource rich offering future economic opportunities while threats to donor governments' national security will direct aid flows. It is, however, that way global systems and agendas driving foreign financial assistance are understood, negotiated, and articulated, that presents a new challenge for Pacific Island Countries in the 21st century.

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Six decades of development: the impact of structural adjustment programs on education in developing countries

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Introduction	205
The first two development decades 1960–79: the introduction of structural adjustment	206
The third development decade 1980–1989: rethinking structural adjustment loans	207
Mexico	208
Chile	208
Ghana	208
Zambia	209
A broad overview	209
The fourth decade: structural loans and programs during the 1990s	210
Latin America	210
Tanzania	210
Former Soviet republics	210
Summary	210
2000—development decades five and six: structural adjustment in new clothes?	211
Partnerships	211
Poverty reduction strategy papers	212
The knowledge society	212
Results-based lending	213
Summary: twenty-first century observations on structural adjustment in education	214
References	214

Introduction

National education systems originated in the pursuit of a common language and culture, thought to be essential for the political and economic growth of a nation-state. To reach a large portion of their population, governments designed schools like the factories just beginning to appear in European economies. Mass production of loyal citizens could be achieved by imposing a common curriculum, training of teachers, schedules and supervision (McGinn, 1987). Thus, even though each new nation-state had its own culture, their national educational systems shared some elements of structure and practice. Trade, emigration and tourism provided opportunities to learn about other practices. These similarities found across national systems were the result of relatively balanced processes of lending and borrowing (Cowen, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004, 2012).

In many other countries, however, school systems were developed as the result of an imposition by their colonial masters. In these cases, schooling originally was designed to acculturate only a small portion of the population, in values and skills that would serve the colonial masters. Colonial schools educated only those few chosen to represent the empire's interests.¹

Over time, the variety of forms of educational systems was reduced, both by lending and borrowing and by colonization. One result has by change in the original objectives of schooling. Some systems now focus more on teaching of work-related knowledge and skills and give little importance to citizen formation and cultural traditions. One analyst has proposed that today there are six major types of national systems, those of Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, and Russia (Cummings, 1999, 2003). Each of these types of education systems has shaped the systems of other countries. As they themselves have borrowed from others, their variety is more like the broad spectrum of a rainbow rather than few distinct colors.

In recent years, some have come to believe that education systems should (and are) converging toward a common mission and structure. This conviction is fostered by observations of the apparent growing similarity of economic, political, and social institutions and practices. The ideational forces that led to the formation of the United Nations, emphasizing common goals and universal rights, are one reflection of the pursuit (by some) of a generic definition of progress or development. Some believe that human progress can best be achieved by following a unilinear path toward the ideal society. Movement along this path would have five stages,

¹In 1835, Lord Macaulay, advising the Corporation ruling India for the English Crown, proposed that the Indian education system be designed to produce: "a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect".

the highest of which would be high mass consumption (Rostow, 1960).² To measure progress along the path, a variety of indicators have been developed (United Nations, 1971) some aggregated to a single expression, such as Gross National Product (GNP).

As levels of educational attainment are higher in wealthier countries than in poor, education was considered essential for development (Harbison and Myers, 1964). The results of education were defined as a form of capital, which (capitalist) economic theory posited as the dominant factor in production and economic growth. Education is the major producer of human capital; countries seeking to develop should therefore invest in education (Schultz, 1961; Becker, 1962).

The identification of relationships between social and economic characteristics of a country and its level of development encouraged the elaboration of a theory that argued that with increased contact the economies (nations, societies, cultures) of the world were becoming or would over time become more alike. This progress was driven by the assimilation of the values, practices, skills of the more modern, developed nations (Inkeles, 1966; Kahl, 1968; Boli et al., 1985; Reich, 1992; Meyer et al., 1997).

Convergence in educational policies and practices, it was argued, would accelerate a country's progress along that path. Modernization required replacing the institutional structures found in less developed countries with those found in the more advanced countries. As one enthusiast put it:

Clearly educational systems must adjust to the new global environment ... the appropriate response is a restructuring of the policy changes [that had been] dictated by local needs and responses ... policies and practices formed around a logic of local schooling for local needs are no longer viable. Neither is a system of centrally controlled national schooling. What is needed is a system of schools which serve specific populations with specific resources and students. Their future workplace is the global market place (Ilon, 1994, pp. 100 and 104).

The horrors of World War II and the formation of the United Nations prepared the ground for a more concerted effort to build a world culture. "Modernization" of education and other social institutions moves countries along that path. To that end, the Western allies in the UN agreed to provide the financial resources necessary to assist developing countries. The administration of funds subscribed by the participating countries was to be mainly the responsibility of two organizations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.³ In addition to other activities, these two organizations made interest-bearing loans to developing countries. The Bank also provided technical assistance, often in the form of expatriate resident advisors paid through the loan.

At the same time, a number of countries created their own development agencies. These provided grants, rather than loans to developing countries. These included USAID, DFID of the United Kingdom, IDRC of Canada, SIDA of Sweden, JICA of Japan and others. Their policies and practices were not necessarily aligned to those of the IMF and the World Bank or those of other countries.

The next sections of this article describe the origin, intent, content and implementation of structural adjustment programs affecting loans for education. The UN's six Development Decades frame the changes that occurred in IMF and WB loans to national education systems. Not all developing countries received IMF and WB loans, and relatively few reports of their outcomes have been published. Where available, country-level detail is provided.

The first two development decades 1960–79: the introduction of structural adjustment

The UN's First Development Decade began in 1960. The UN agencies placed major emphasis on achieving economic growth in poorer nations, to be stimulated by transfers of capital. Increased national revenues in recipient countries, it was believed, would prompt increased public spending on education and health. The lenders (IMF and World Bank) anticipated that significant advances would be achieved by the end of the decade. And in fact, many of the low-income countries had by 1970 achieved economic growth rates of 5%. Excited by what seemed to have been the first step toward a Golden Age, the United Nations General Assembly, announced a Second Development Decade.⁴

For various reasons, the Second Decade was less successful. Inflation in the United States associated with the costs of the war in Vietnam and pursuit of the Great Society, led to US withdrawal from the Bretton Woods Agreement that had controlled currency exchange rates (Bordo, 2017). This contributed to price instabilities around the world. Between 1973 and 1975 the economies of Western Europe and the United States slowed significantly. The developed countries reduced their assistance to developing countries. Economic growth in newly industrializing countries created instabilities in the economies of the more developed nations. Oil producing countries reduced their production quotas resulting in a rapid rise in gasoline prices. Economists opposed to the use of economic planning (by the state) called for a market system (Toye, 1987). Confidence in state-level economic planning declined; economic growth was characterized principally by expansion of the private sector and the development of a market economy with competition and competitive pricing. International trade increased, as did cooperation between countries. National government planning and economic control diminished (Cable, 1995).

²It may be remembered that one of the popular indicators of a country's level of development was its consumption of coal and oil.

³The regional development banks (Inter American Development Bank, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank), which followed, were included in this coordination. For a description of their linkages see Group of Twenty (2017). The OECD, originally called the Organization for European Economic Cooperation, was created by the United States and the European nations to implement the 1948 Marshall Plan.

⁴Dramatic changes in education, health and general prosperity, however, were not yet visible by 1970 (Koehler, 2015).

In order to continue their efforts to expand their economies, more developing countries then turned to the International Monetary Fund for loans.⁵ The collapse of the Bretton Woods agreement on exchange rates required the IMF to monitor its loan agreements more carefully. The creditor countries that supplied the majority of the funds to the IMF found it in their interest to cooperate with this surveillance. Borrower countries were obliged to acquiesce. Beginning in 1979 some developing country governments changed financial policies in order to receive IMF loans (Boughton, 2000).

The World Bank, also a creature of the United Nations, works closely with the IMF (Driscoll, 1995). While the IMF was assigned responsibility for the international monetary system, the World Bank's mission was "to reduce poverty and improve living standards by promoting sustainable growth and investment in people" (World Bank, 1998). The Bank's principal tool for the realization of its mission was loans to the poorer countries. During its early years, Bank loans had been limited primarily to basic infrastructure such as roads, dams, irrigation systems, electricity production. By 1970, its attention had expanded to include poverty reduction, education, and health.

In 1968, a World Bank Discussion Paper argued that as the world economy was becoming more knowledge-intensive, all countries had to modernize their education systems. To do this,

Low-income countries ... need to develop the scientific personnel who will understand fully the latest technological advances coming out of the industrialized countries and be able to adapt and apply them for local production of goods and services.

(Haddad et al., 1990, p. 72).

In exchange for financial aid, governments were required to accept the Bank's economic development strategies; these emphasized greater participation in the global economy. In the Philippines, for example, the government was required to abandon its emphasis on import substitution in order to redistribute income, in favor of an export promotion strategy that would increase economic growth (Ascher, 2009).

Most of the economic growth of the 1970s was financed by loans and credits. The amount of debt which poor countries carried sometimes exceeded their GNP. The 1979 regime change in Iran, which interrupted the global flow of oil, led to a sharp increase in world prices and increased inflation. Developing countries that had funded economic growth with loans faced increased interest rates. This reduced government spending.

In Latin America, non-democratic governments were more likely to reduce government spending on social services and especially education. Democratically-elected governments most often reduced other forms of spending and sometimes increased spending on education (Reimers, 1990).

Some countries were no longer able to meet scheduled repayments of loans from commercial banks located in the more developed nations. They turned to the IMF for assistance. In 1982 the Mexican government announced its inability to repay its international debts, exacerbating the world economic situation (FDIC, 1997).

Especially after 1979, the IMF and the World Bank began to insist on Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) as the basis for loans made to countries. The SAPs specified the conditions that countries must meet prior to receiving funds from the loan. The principles were laid out in what came to be known as the Washington Consensus. That label was eventually applied to a set of 10 policy actions described as reflecting what many economists in the IMF and the World Bank thought were necessary for modernization (Espinoza, 2002; Williamson, 2004).

Although conceived with Latin America in mind, the underlying principles of the Consensus were considered relevant for all countries. The recommended policies included avoidance of budget deficits, more public spending on sectors with high economic yields, lower taxes, privatization of public enterprises and secure property rights. They represented a turn away from import substitution and a dynamic public sector, toward liberalization, a market system and a smaller state apparatus. They came to define neo-liberal economics.

Given the evident success of the industrialized capitalist nations, neo-liberal economists presumed that convergence toward free markets would result in maximum efficiency in the use of resources. A free market in education requires, it was believed, less direct government control and involvement, and support of a private market by direct grants or vouchers to consumers. Holding educational workers "accountable" for student learning would insure higher productivity.

The third development decade 1980–1989: rethinking structural adjustment loans

National governments reacted in different ways to the imposition of conditions on structural adjustment loans. Several examples illustrate the variety of reactions of recipient countries and the extent to which outcomes matched the expectations of the Washington Consensus. Our focus is on the effect of structural adjustment loans and programs on economic growth, education and social equality.

⁵The IMF at the time had about 40 member countries; the republics of the Soviet Union remained outside.

Mexico

The first Structural Adjustment Program was proposed by the IMF in 1983. Overwhelmed with debt, in 1982 Mexico had threatened to stop payment on its loans. In response, the IMF insisted that Mexico take four major actions: decrease spending by the government; devalue the national currency; promote exports rather than substitution; and encourage or at least permit foreign investment in Mexican enterprises (Hellman, 1997).

Implementation of the SAP had unexpected results. Real wages dropped to levels of 20 years earlier (Latapí Escobar and González de la Rocha, 1995). Foreign-owned factories introduced automatized production technologies, lowering the demand for more highly educated labor (Alarcón-González and McKinley, 1999). The Mexican government reduced its budget by spending less money on health and on secondary and higher education. Looking back, one analyst likened the experience to a “perfect storm” in which a series of unexpected events combined producing an undesired outcome (Kafferstan, 2017).

Chile

The military junta that seized power in Chile in 1973 implemented economic and social policies consistent with the logic of the IMF and World Bank’s structural adjustment loans (Espinoza, 2008).⁶ They included reduction of government spending, openness to trade, privatization of public enterprises and free markets. In higher education, the government sought to have students or their families share in the costs of teaching, and established a competitive market among universities. Costs of higher education soared. In 1981 the Ministry of Education initiated a policy of vouchers for both public and private schools based on attendance. The voucher amount was fixed, independent of family income. Private school enrollment in primary and secondary schools increased dramatically, public school enrollment increased only in higher income neighborhoods. Faced by rapidly mounting inflation, the government imposed a fixed exchange rate for the national currency. This worsened the balance of payments with other countries, increasing inflation. Government spending on education declined by 20%. By 1983 Chile was in a recession (Ritter, 1990).

In 1985, with a new Minister of Finance and structural adjustment loans from the IMF and the World Bank, Chile implemented a new set of macroeconomic policies consistent with the principles of the Washington Consensus. Economic growth and employment generation followed (Ritter, 1990). By 1990 the budget was in balance, inflation was declining, and recently de-nationalized industries were expanding their production.

The effects on education were mixed: enrollment at all levels increased in number but disproportionately across income groups. Private school enrollment (which was primarily drawn from upper income groups) continued to increase as a proportion of total enrollment. As the government reduced its subsidies to public universities, the universities introduced special fees and became increasingly selective in admissions. Students unable to afford four years of university enrolled in 1- or 2-year technical training centers. Less selective (and even more expensive) private universities increased their enrollments. Many lower-income students financed their university studies with loans from commercial banks (Espinoza, 2008). Structural reform in Chile had enabled the country to move from a system of “elite” higher education to one of “mass” higher education (Trow, 1973), but the mass system dominated by private universities reinforced its elite character. By 1990, 72% of students in private universities were from families in the top 20% income bracket, compared to 4.2% whose families were in the lower 40% of the household income distribution (Larrañaga, 1992).

In 1989, after a national plebiscite, the military government was replaced by a coalition of left and center parties. Macroeconomic policies were left intact with only minor changes, but new social policies reversed the earlier orientation toward reduced government involvement in education and health.

Ghana

A SAP in Ghana in 1984 enabled the country to recover from a recession that had persisted from 1977. The inflation rate dropped from over 100% in 1983 to below 40% in 1984 and continued to decline. Economic growth, which had been negative, averaged over 5.6% for the next 6 years. The success of Ghana was such that it was considered a model country. USAID, the World Bank and the IMF named Ghana as one of its outstanding successes.

Ranked on the basis of growth, savings, exports and investments, the five most successful adjusting countries were, in order: South Korea, Mauritius (dubbed the Korea of Africa), Morocco, Ghana and Thailand.

(World Bank 1991, p. 3).

Economic stabilization had been made possible by establishment of a powerful state apparatus willing to use violence to insure compliance with its policies (Kraus, 1991). The military leader seizing power in Ghana in 1981 tolerated no criticism of the policies of economic recovery recommended by the IMF and World Bank. His refusal to re-negotiate or to soften the recommended policies provoked considerable resentment among the people of Ghana. For example,

⁶The military’s advisors were economists trained at the University of Chicago influenced by Milton Friedman, whose ideas also were absorbed by others espousing the premise of a global economy.

The Trade Union Congress (TUC) ... vigorously protested SAP policies, students the rising school fees and university costs, peasants new borehole and well fees, and consumers the end of subsidized goods and rising prices. Businessmen ... protested restraints on credit and 30% interest rates, industrial managers the liberalization of trade which undercuts the sale of Ghanaian goods, and some state corporations their sale to private interests or liquidation. Intellectuals, with little access to the public, ...criticized SAP policies by pointing out their inadequacies, inequities, and social costs. (Kraus, 1991, pp. 19–20).

The government survived continuous opposition during the 1980s, in part because of the political actions taken to contain protest, and in part because of cultural values of the Ghanaian people and perhaps sub-Saharan Africans in general (Haynes, 1991). In distinction with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, or the rights listed in the constitutions of Europe or the United States, Africans may give more importance to social harmony rather than to individual freedom. The “people” are entitled to be treated with the same dignity as the “person”.⁷ A comparative review of theories of human rights noted that from this perspective, collective rights should be honored first, then economic and social rights. Only then are political and civil rights respected (Vincent, 1981).

During the 1980s public spending on education in Ghana was lower than it had been during the 1970s. The government instituted fees for books and residence in secondary and higher education institutions. Schools were left lacking fundamental services. Only beginning in 1989 did the Ghanaian government began to restore drastic cuts made in health services and education (Kraus, 1991). By then the government had organized supporters into “community watch” groups that helped control unrest. The government’s success and that of Ghana could be attributed to factors not anticipated by the IMF or the World Bank.

Zambia

The implementation of structural adjustments during the last years of Zambia’s Second Republic were marked by high levels of public opposition. The program begun in 1983 called for a currency devaluation, a cap on wage increases, a reduction in government employment, and a currency exchange auction system which benefitted foreign commercial firms and contributed to increased prices of commodities. At the same time public expenditure on education was reduced, affecting the purchasing power of teachers and access to schooling. Education’s share of the national budget was between 1984 and 1988 reduced by 8%, and spending per student fell by 60%. The secondary school gross enrollment ratio dropped from 30 to 20% of the age group (Simutanyi, 1996).

As in Ghana, Zambia was governed by one party. And, as in Ghana, there was considerable opposition to the effects of the structural reform agreements, from the business sector as well as from the labor movement. Also as in Ghana, policies were imposed by the president without agreement from those outside his party. Unlike Ghana, the opposition in Zambia was able to generate enough resistance to frustrate the government’s efforts (Simutanyi, 1996).

The effects of structural adjustment in Zambia can be attributed to a different set of contingencies than those that operated in Ghana. As one analyst has written, in order to succeed a government must be determined to impose its will but also know how to insulate itself from pressures by those in opposition (Simutanyi, 1996). Zambia had prior experience with structural adjustment loans, but the one-party government then in power (1973–91) had not been able to carry through policies promoted by the World Bank and IMF. The movement to restore democracy was motivated (in part) by opposition to structural reforms. Although they had competing objectives, organized labor cooperated with business interests to force out the government. They then negotiated a series of compromises that led to significant reform.

A broad overview

The effect of SALs and SAPs between 1980 and 1989 has been analyzed by comparing government spending on education during 1980–1989 in the countries receiving loans with that in 50 other countries not receiving loans listed in the (World Bank’s, 1992) report on lending (Reimers, 1994). During the period the Bank initiated structural adjustment loans or programs in 57 countries around the world (World Bank, 1992). Some 27 countries experiencing economic difficulties received two loans during that period, another 30 received at least one loan by 1990.

Using World Bank data, Reimers (1994, 1997) first examined whether government expenditures on education changed (in proportion to GNP) between 1980 and 1990. He assumed that a reduction in expenditures would indicate that the government considered other sectors to be of more importance than education. In general, countries receiving loans reduced their spending on education in proportion to GNP. This response was more marked among the sub-Saharan African countries, but also true in Latin America. Overall, Asian countries receiving loans increased their spending on education in relation to their GNP. Within each category of countries (e.g., region, number of loans) there is considerable variation in GNP. There is no association between 1980 level of GNP and amount of change between 1980 and 1990.

The next comparison was with respect to changes in government expenditures on education. The effect of the austerity induced by the loan conditions was an overall reduction of government spending. On average, although total budget expenditure was reduced, the proportion allocated to education increased. This was true for the Latin American and African recipients, but not

⁷Paraphrasing the Banjul Charter on Human and People’s Rights, passed unanimously in June 1981 at the 18th assembly of heads of state and government of the Organization of African Unity (Vincent, 1981, p 39).

for the Asian countries, who reduced their (already higher than in the other regions) spending on education (but increasing in relation to GNP).

The increase in expenditures in Africa and Latin America more heavily favored higher education although those regions had lower gross enrollment ratios in primary and secondary education than did Asia. Overall, by 1990 African countries that had received two loans were spending 77 times as much per higher education students compared to primary students, compared to a ratio of 38 to 1 in countries not receiving loans. The ratio had been 70 to 1 in 1980. In Latin America and Asia higher level education students cost only 7 times as much as primary students. The analysis concluded that:

The politics of adjustment favoured the groups with greater lobbying power, namely urban dwellers and those from higher income groups. This explains why the disparities in allocation between education levels remained, or in some cases worsened, in spite of adjustment.

(Reimers, 1997, p. 16).

The fourth decade: structural loans and programs during the 1990s

Latin America

Additional structural adjustment loans and programs were made during the 1990s. Some were seen as highly successful, others the target of strong criticisms. The policy actions of SAPs were judged as inequitable, as they affected some groups in society more than others. For example, a reduced federal budget in Mexico lowered food subsidies, on which many unemployed single mothers depended. In six Latin American countries, the effect of World Bank policies between 1990 and 1999 was reduced economic growth and great income inequality (Espinoza, 2002, 2008; Bonal, 2004).

Tanzania

Noting that “inter/national structural adjustment policies rarely attend to local settings”, an ethnographer described their impact on women and children in a rural village in Tanzania (Vavrus, 2005). Under the SAP, the government agreed to commercialize agriculture, and removed subsidies for fertilizer. At the same time, it reduced duties on food imports which resulted in competition with products from other countries. While food prices dropped so did sales of local production. Foreign investors introduced new technologies and workers from other countries created high unemployment. The GDP increased but so too did foreign debt and government spending on education. Youth unemployment increased, affecting women more than men (Buchmann, 1996).

Former Soviet republics

After the end of the Soviet Union in 1989, the IMF and World Bank offered structural adjustment loans and advice to former Soviet republics. All three of the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania had, with the collapse of the Soviet economy, suffered a severe economic shock, the worst in their recorded history. While in the Soviet Union they had enjoyed a relatively high standard of living, with high levels of employment, free education and access to health services. By 1992 unemployment had increased to 17%, and the life span of men reduced by 3 years. Once Lithuania joined the European Union, many young people migrated to the United Kingdom seeking to learn English. One commentator noted that “The more severe damage seems to have been inflicted on people’s sense of security” (Harris, 1995).

Reports of the withdrawal of government funding from social services in recipient countries was, in 1997, lamented by the Director of the IMF and again in 2001 (reported in executive board minutes 95/55 and 00/121). But structural adjustment in the former Soviet nations had far less effect on education than in it did in Africa and Latin America. Under Soviet rule education had received given high priority; governments spent proportionately more on public education than any except those of the most advanced capitalist nations. Given their well-educated populations the former Soviet nations recovered from their economic shocks much more quickly than elsewhere.

Summary

Structural adjustment in the 1980s and 1990s worked well in some countries but had little effect in others. Reduced spending on education had disastrous effects in some countries. Reviewing 20 years of experience with structural adjustment in Africa, analysts concluded that by not paying attention to the effects of reduced government spending on the most vulnerable members of society it had been “an inadvertent enemy of human development” (Geo-Jaja and Mangum, 2001). Another suggested that repeated loans to some countries (30 in Argentina, 20 to Cote d’Ivoire and Ghana between 1980 and 1999) indicated the ineffectiveness of structural adjustment conditions (Easterly, 2005). A review of loans to 100 countries in the period 1970–2005 concluded that enrollments in primary education are increased by higher per capita aid. Level of government spending *per se* does not relate to expanded enrollments. Nor do estimates of institutional quality (Dreher et al., 2008). A review of IMF and World Bank loans in all sectors concluded that aid does work, sometimes, but that it often fails to work. The reviewer noted that:

... For the IMF and ... World Bank, ownership is understood as the process whereby recipient countries come round to accepting ... [how they should change] the respective institution’s programmes, policies, and approaches to development and poverty reduction.

(Riddell, 2008, pp. 240–241).

Critics of structural adjustment (and the World Bank's interventions) focused on the Bank's failure to involve national and local actors in decisions about education. Several critiques noted the disjunction between those making decisions and those responsible for carrying them out. They complained that while the Bank acknowledges that conditions vary across countries and should be taken into account and calls for participatory planning, it then prescribes policies conceived in Washington that emphasize compliance with standards and the importance of surveillance. The Bank makes evidence-based decisions, but its data are its own or commissioned by it. The decisions made by Bank economists are different, in their assumptions and their data, than those of educators, especially educators in other cultures (Lauglo, 1996).

Although highly supportive of the IMF's support of developing country economies and a firm believer in the "colossal productive forces of capitalism", the then Deputy Secretary of Treasury of the United States recommended against transferring lessons learned in one country to another. Referring to the failures of structural adjustment, he noted

... These are failures of extrapolation ... if most now agree that macroeconomic reforms took precedence over microeconomic in the earlier steps of reform, and reducing the size of government took precedence over improving its quality, then it is fair to say that education and other basic social services were especially ill-served by these biases.

(Summers, 1998, p. 3).

In 1998 the World Bank published its analysis of 220 programs involving adjustment loans (Dollar and Svensson, 1998). The conclusion reached by the Bank was that in 75% of all cases success or failure could have been predicted using a few political economy variables. The critical factors controlled by the Bank, including conditions, had no relationship with the outcome. What mattered was whether the country, its leaders and people, were committed to the reform. To improve its "success with adjustment lending, the World Bank must become more selective and do a better job of understanding which environments are promising for reform and which are not". The most promising environments were those that demonstrated a strong commitment to reform (Dollar and Svensson, 1998).

A former Bank staff member later wrote that the Bank had tended to be captured by single methodologies and an insistence on use of Bank-directed research to justify policy decisions. Policy decisions often were made before doing on-site research. "Global" solutions were applied until they were proven to work only in some settings. The former staff member concluded that more attention should be paid to local priorities (Heyneman, 2003). Another analyst concluded that the IMF should not impose conditions with its loans. Not only was imposition of conditions not included in the IMF statement of mission, but also it was counterproductive (Dreher, 2009).

2000—development decades five and six: structural adjustment in new clothes?

During this period SAPs were replaced with new procedures. Critics observed similarities between the arguments supporting the old and the new. This section discusses several of the new forms of intervention by the World Bank and the IMF, accompanied by the OECD.

Partnerships

In 1996 the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) had proposed that aid should be limited to poverty reduction and human development objectives. Their call for a partnership of donors and countries was seconded by several countries and eventually led to the formulation of the UN's Millennium Development Goals (Kayizzi-Mugerwa, 1998). The short-term effect was a reduction in aid from OECD countries. The amounts of grants from donor countries declined from 5.5 billion dollars in 1990 to 1.8 billion in 1997 (Banya and Elu, 2001). This increased developing country dependence on the IMF and the Bank.

Anticipating the new millennium, the IMF and Bank began to describe themselves not as single actors but as partners with other international agencies committed to assisting the nations of the world. In 2002 the Bank became a member of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), a non-governmental organization to carry out the United Nations' Education for All Fast Action strategy (<https://www.globalpartnership.org/>). By explicitly committing to the self-government (sovereignty) of states receiving aid, the Bank could, it was argued, increase its influence not by domination or imposition, but by encouraging participants to accept self-discipline (Abrahamsen, 2004). The Bank eventually provided about 75% of the funds distributed through the GPE. Technical assistance and grants were made to needy countries on the basis of recommendations by external consultants who did Education Sector Plan appraisals. The IMF also joined, asserting that its lending to a country encouraged donors to increase their support for social spending in that country (Clements et al., 2013).

The recommendations made to recipient countries were similar to those that appeared in structural adjustment programs. The construct of partnership was not well-defined, prompting several questions. The proposal called for contracts between (lending and receiving) partners: critics asked whether contractual agreements were not the same as conditions (Maxwell and Riddell, 1998). After all, countries might define their own priorities but they had to be acceptable to the lending partners. What would be the effect of unequal relationships of power among partners (Bailey and Dolan, 2011)? Other critics observed that the World Bank would control the dominant portion of all resources in the partnerships proposed (Menashy, 2018; Menashy and Shields, 2017).

The formation of the GPE had little effect on relationships with recipient countries. One commentator observed that the World Bank was operating with the same ideology expressed in [Rostow's \(1960\)](#) theory of stages of development. By classifying countries according to their stage of development, the Bank located countries on a common path of progress or modernization. In order to develop, they must follow in the footsteps of the more "advanced" capitalist countries ([Klees, 2002](#)).

Poverty reduction strategy papers

To highlight their focus on poverty reduction, the IMF and World Bank in 1999 initiated a process of preparing Policy Reduction Strategy Papers. The process was meant to engage representatives of the civil society in dialog about policy formulation, in order to "help poor countries and their development partners strengthen the impact of their common efforts on poverty reduction" ([World Bank, 2000](#)). Although this was seen as a radical shift of objectives, it maintained a relationship of imposition of the Bank's conditions ([Pender, 2001](#)). The process to achieve globalization by transforming informal into formal institutions would, it was argued, displace social norms and rules of conduct with legally binding rules ([Craig and Porter, 2002](#)). The IMF and the Bank claimed the poverty reduction approach was new, others saw it as nothing more than window dressing for the same old structural adjustment approach that had pushed so many countries further into poverty ([Joy et al., 2003](#)).

Between 2000 (the first Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) and 2006 the specification of how to achieve development went through four different iterations. Initially, the prescribed actions conformed to the original Washington Consensus which called for deregulation and privatization. A second approach, a post-Washington Consensus, put more emphasis on building quality institutions and safety nets. The New York Consensus emphasized economic growth, aid and governance. The fourth approach, the Social Protection Agenda (SPA), aimed specifically at reduction of poverty and vulnerability. Emphasis on the SPA increased as a result of the 2008 crisis. The Washington Consensus was no longer the Bank's development agenda ([Elkins et al., 2018](#), p. 4).

Viewed almost twenty years later, the emphasis on poverty reduction appeared to have been successful. Using longitudinal data from 123 countries, researchers found a positive rate of economic growth, a significant reduction in poverty and in infant mortality, and positive progress toward realization of universal primary education and gender parity ([Elkins et al., 2018](#)).

The knowledge society

As another shift in emphasis, at the turn of the century in 2002 the World Bank announced its dedication to building "knowledge societies". This would be accomplished by providing increased support for tertiary education, which the Bank identified as a major factor in the production and dissemination of knowledge. Global partnerships would provide access to knowledge about "innovation systems" that would move countries along the path to development ([World Bank, 2002](#)).

The announcement was cheered by many, as a radical shift from earlier policies that had, by emphasizing primary education, wreaked drastic harm on higher education in developing countries ([Obamba, 2013](#)). Between 1960 and 2000 the Bank twice reversed its course. Initially the Bank had espoused human capital theory which assigned more value to higher education. When research showed that economic rates of return to primary schooling were higher than those to higher ([Psacharopoulos, 1973, 1980](#)), support for universities was reduced. Drastic consequences for hapless recipient countries followed from these changes ([Samoff and Carrol, 2004; Obamba, 2013](#)).

By 1998 new "knowledge" prompted another reversal, re-defining universities as critical actors in the economic development process. Following Bank recommendations, higher education spending sub-Saharan Africa was set at 22% of government expenditure on education, even though only 2% of the student population would benefit ([Banya and Elu, 2001](#)). The Bank called for construction of systems of learning, including lifelong learning, with universities as the major source of knowledge ([World Bank, 2002](#)). It announced that only by producing, adopting, adapting, disseminating and commercializing knowledge could a country compete economically and improve the general welfare ([Obamba, 2013](#), p. 97). The university would become the primary means by which Africa (and other regions) could take their place in the global economy. Meanwhile, Africa had not yet achieved universal primary education and less than half its adult population was literate ([Watkins, 2013](#)). Some viewed the premises and promises of higher education development initiatives with suspicion ([Molla and Cuthbert, 2018](#)).

The term "knowledge" was not defined in the Bank's report, nor did the document provide illustrative examples. A distinction was made between technical knowledge and knowledge about attributes, but issues of validity and reliability of knowledge were not discussed. Referring to itself as a "knowledge bank" the Bank's argument drew (principally) on its own research and analysis of "knowledge economies", to highlight how (institutional) science and technology contribute to development ([World Bank, 2002](#)).

By 2015 the Bank was one of the world's leading producers of education research. Most of the research cited to justify Bank proposals and conditions was produced by Bank employees or contractors, or cited other authors linked to the Bank ([Zapp, 2016](#)). The IMF's and Bank's "authority" in negotiations with loan-seeking countries also rested on their command of the technologies used to assemble and present financial and educational data. Both institutions were skilled in use of accounting procedures that encouraged loan recipients to exercise "self-discipline" in conforming to loan conditions ([Neu et al., 2006, 2010](#)).

The report stated that support for tertiary institutions was necessary to assist them to adapt to changes in internal and international market forces. Low rates of economic growth in recipient countries were attributed (in part) to their lack of knowledge.⁸ If a country (re)built its own knowledge-producing institutions, international trade regimes and foreign investments would generate employment (Mehta, 2001).

In this new perspective, universities were seen as key agents in the construction of the knowledge society, and hence drivers in the (global) knowledge economy. Success in the fulfillment of the mission of the university, at one time a disinterested search for truth, would be assessed in terms of its contribution to research and economic productivity, and scores on quality assurance measures. Both universities and the economy would benefit, it was argued, from closer links with industry and commerce (Olssen and Peters, 2005).

Results-based lending

The shift in orientation of the World Bank was accompanied by an increased emphasis on the importance of measurement of the outcomes of national education systems (Baker and LeTendre, 2005; Kamens and McNeely, 2010). Interest in comparing the learning outcomes of different countries may have been a product of the Cold War. The Soviet Union's success with Sputnik had focused the Western Alliance's attention on education and its relationship with innovations in technology. National assessment of education systems quickly followed (Purves, 1987; Tröhler, 2013).

Originally, the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) was a collaborative project to identify common principles that explain the performance of the educational systems in economically advanced countries (Husén and Postlethwaite, 1996). The test they developed measured students' knowledge of the national curriculum.⁹ What started as a scholarly enterprise, however, soon took on a different aspect. National comparisons on academic achievement were associated with measures of economic performance. Politicians and citizens in lower-scoring countries sought to improve their economies by imitating practices in those wealthier countries scoring more highly in academic achievement.

Among the tests that followed was that produced as part of the Program for International Student Achievement (PISA). This test was developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which works closely with the IMF and the World Bank. Originally PISA was offered as a service to OECD member countries seeking to evaluate student achievement. Currently it is used, together with an instrument that assesses the effects of teaching practices (TALIS), to assess teacher and system accountability.

Unlike the tests of the IEA, however, PISA is not a measure of school-based knowledge. Instead, it purports to measure the life skills and knowledge of youth who are 15 and 16 years old. OECD assertions about the validity of the PISA and the TALIS instruments are based on the association between their scores and measures of national development, such as GNP. Neither of the tests meets conventional standards of either construct validity (does the test measure what it claims to measure?) or predictive validity (do scores correlate with some independent event or measure?) (Araujo et al., 2017; Berliner, 2020; Hanberger, 2014; Komatsu and Rappleye, 2017; Pepper, 2020; Zhao, 2020).

By associating PISA scores with levels of "development" and the global economy, OECD presented PISA as capable of valid measurement of the quality of an education system, arguing that by comparison of one country's students' "knowledge and real-world problem-solving skills" it is possible to determine the system's effectiveness in contributing to economic growth. Teaching should be assessed in terms of knowledge (test scores) rather than learning ability or creativity (Smith, 2014).

Critical discourse analysis of published documents demonstrates how OECD uses test-based "knowledge" to shape the education policies of participating countries.

... OECD (a) uses a discourse of fear to market teacher quality in light of global changes, implicitly framing [low-scoring] teachers as "bad teachers"; (b) advocates reliance on the organization as a protector and (c) promises a remedy by regulating teachers in the name of effectiveness and the knowledge economy.

(Berkovich and Benoliel, 2020).

PISA was applied initially in high income countries, but then came to be used by the World Bank to assess loan applications from poor countries. The "effect" of PISA on education in recipient countries has been described as one of "governing by numbers" (Grek, 2009). As more countries were invited to join OECD, PISA has come to be described as a "global governing complex" for education (Ydesen, 2019).

With the competition eliminated, by 2013 the OECD had constructed a system of "global educational governance". PISA was central to imposing an "audit culture" which served to decontextualize schooling, bringing participants into the world culture (Meyer and Benavot, 2013). Although not experimentally verified, OECD recommendations of effective practices based on use of PISA are given high credence.

⁸In part, this "lack" was the result of prior investment in higher education. University graduates in Africa migrated to employment in more advanced economies.

⁹That is, the IEA tests, like those that followed, measured a student's current knowledge, not necessarily learned in school.

Observers see a “Global Education Industry” working in all stages of policymaking, emphasizing the “best global practices”. In effect, the generation of policy options is today frequently outsourced to the private sector (Mohamed and Morris, 2021). In some instances, the policy agenda of OECD supplants national priorities of recipient countries (Auld et al., 2018).

It does seem that PISA has contributed to persuading countries to align their education systems with those of the more prosperous countries. Once a relatively small organization (less than 40 countries), OECD now has 100 members with more asking to join and willing to conform to OECD’s educational policy mandates. Structural adjustment, guided by the IMF, World Bank, OECD and others continues today (Addey and Gorur, 2020; Meyer and Benavot, 2013; Pons, 2017; Ydesen, 2019).

Summary: twenty-first century observations on structural adjustment in education

The concept of a “knowledge economy” appears to have displaced “world culture” as the justificatory framework for “recommendations” to recipient countries by the IMF, World Bank and OECD. Much more emphasis now is placed on research to justify selection among policy choices based on evidence or results. In most instances, however, the evidence provided is not from the country receiving the loan but rather from another in which a given policy has proved to be effective. To the extent that “recommendations” function as conditions, the framework is normative.

The IMF and World Bank, after 50 years of immersion in national economies, believe that its fund of economic knowledge should be applied uniformly to all. The OECD with 100 or more members whose economies account for perhaps 90% of the global GNP (but a smaller proportion of the world’s population), shares this confidence. The poor countries of the world stand outside the board room; inside others plan policies that will involve radical changes in the values and cultures of those left out. Given past experience, the policies proposed by the OECD, World Bank and IMF are likely to fail to reach their objectives.

World culture theory initially acknowledged differences across cultures, but the path taken by globalization is believed by some to have removed those differences as an obstacle. By the late 90s some came to believe that development had reached the peak which is “the end of history” (Fukuyama, 1992). Other claimed that differences between cultures and countries have disappeared to the point that global understanding flows easily across the globe; the world is now “flat” (Friedman, 2006).

Today, however, those pronouncements seem less credible. Our political and economic world appears not flat, but rather “spiky” (Feiock et al., 2008). Whether in consideration of geography, climate, economy, culture, population, language or religion, the regions, countries and communities of the world seek and find much on what to differ. Nations vary in the objectives knowledge, skills, beliefs and values of those who live in them, as well as in the policies that can be implemented, and their beliefs as to which will be effective. Over time they may have become similar in some ways, but at the same time they have developed unique and often contradictory features. The acquisition of knowledge has become a source of continuing change in beliefs, values, skills, actions.

The apparent convergence of national education systems assumes acceptance of uniform global policies, but the reality of countries is highly diverse. As a consequence, one reason for the failure of structural adjustment programs is they are not implemented as intended. In Mongolia, following the Soviet collapse, a structural adjustment loan included a condition of decentralization of education. Over a 10-year period the Ministry of Education shifted back and forth, decentralizing then recentralizing. After close up study researchers concluded that the cultural legacy of socialism collided with the culture of the international lenders (Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe, 2004, 2006). Loan implementation would be more probable if conditions were determined after conducting an analysis of conditions and priorities in the recipient country, rather than relying on normative “best practices” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2016).

Some may attribute non-implementation to incompetence, but more likely failure results from political resistance. A study of SALs and SAPs in 90 countries between 1980 and 2005 concluded that the most common explanation for non-implementation was refusal by democratically elected officials to comply with imposed conditions. Resistance was explained either by their own conclusions about likely results, or because of political opposition (Henisz and Mansfield, 2019).

Lack of attention to the political economy of lending has also threatened the ability of the Global Partners to agree on strategies and specific policies. The effectiveness of the GPE depends in part on its ability to appear before recipient countries as a cohesive, consensual partnership of countries representing diverse positions. Internally, however, the GPE is plagued with disagreements among partners about key principles. The partners themselves hold different political philosophies and cultural values, with the consequence that the GPE itself is “a venue for serious contestation” (Knutsson and Lindberg, 2017, 2019, 2020).

From this perspective, the normative theory of “world culture” and a global economy is destined for failure in its quest to bring all countries to a comparable level of development. Taking the political into account will require a different understanding of what can be achieved through globalization. Rather than thinking of a global society, we should work toward a global system of societies in which the participation of unique participants generates synergy. Cooperating societies, each contributing unique knowledge derived from unique experiences, can develop education systems that not only expand knowledge, but also our awareness of its unlimited possibilities.

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Erasmus(+) student mobility: individual and institutional motivations and effects

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Introduction	218
Literature review	219
Erasmus(+) students: motivations and effects	219
Motivations	219
Impact on students	220
Erasmus(+) and higher education institutions: motivations and effects	221
Motivations	221
Impact	222
Data: the Erasmus+ impact study survey	222
Why do higher education institutions take part in international student mobility? Strategies, motivations and effects	223
Contextualizing international student mobility motivations: ISM and HEIs' internationalization strategies	223
Why is it important? Institutional motivations for international student mobility	224
Institutional effects of Erasmus participation	224
Internationalization of the student population	224
Curriculum and learning outcomes	225
Organization and governance: capacity building	226
Conclusions	227
Acknowledgment	228
References	228

Introduction

The Erasmus program was established in 1987, after almost ten years of development of pilot student exchange schemes, underpinned by the view that “a strong educational dimension” was “absolutely vital to the construction of an open and democratic Europe” (Jones 2016). In its more than three decades of existence, Erasmus has become the largest international student mobility program in the world and is seen by Europeans as one of the most positive results achieved by the European Union (EU) (Kantar, 2018). As noted by de Wit et al. (2013:22) “Much more than in other parts of the world, student mobility has been promoted in Europe as an intrinsically positive and desirable development, and has become at many levels a policy goal in itself”.

The Erasmus program has experienced a number of changes since it was set up. The number of participants has expanded significantly from the original 11 participating countries and 3244 higher education students traveling abroad for their studies in 1987. This expansion has derived from various enlargements of the EU itself and from the progressive opening of the program to participants from the rest of the world (non-EU countries within Europe as well as countries from outside Europe). Changes have also entailed the expansion of the program budget and of the range of activities it supports, to also include traineeships abroad for higher education (HE) students, staff mobility, cooperation projects (focusing mainly on innovation, exchange of good practices, network creation) and support for policy development. Finally, Erasmus has been integrated within increasingly broader “umbrella programs” that encompass a wider range of activities in education, training, youth and sports, beyond higher education. The name and scope of these umbrella programs have changed approximately every 6–7 years since the setting up or the original Erasmus, as “program periods” for EU education programs matured: the Socrates program started in 1994, Socrates II in 2000, Lifelong Learning Program in 2007 and most recently, “Erasmus+”, which has been the label used since 2013 and will continue to be used at least until 2027.

Something that has remained constant since the launch of the original Erasmus is that international mobility continues to be the “flagship activity” in Erasmus+ (European Commission, 2021a:4). For the current programming period (2021–27), the Erasmus+ program will have a budget in excess of 26 billion Euros. 70% of this budget is allocated to supporting international mobility opportunities across the life cycle and types of education: schools, vocational education and training, higher education and adult education (European Commission, 2021a). The mobility of higher education students represents the bulk of all mobility supported by the Erasmus+ program; around half of the mobility during the 2013–20 programming period was undertaken by this group

(European Commission, 2021b). Millions of higher education students have by now participated in Erasmus(+)¹ international student mobility. Erasmus+ projects contracted in 2019 alone funded over 500,000 higher education student and staff mobilities in Europe and the rest of the world (European Commission, 2020a). The large majority of the mobilities funded take place from and to EU countries (European Commission, 2021c).

International student mobility can take many different forms. The program defines international student mobility as an opportunity for learners “to undertake learning and/or professional experience in another country” (European Commission, 2021c:14), which is normally referred to as the “host” country for the mobility -whereas the country where the student normally follows their program of study is referred to as their “home country”. Erasmus+ supports students in any field and cycle of HE (short cycle, bachelor, master and doctoral levels). The mobility abroad is most frequently undertaken at a higher education institution, where the student will typically study for a period between 3 and 12 months following an agreed course of studies. About 70% of all student mobilities for higher education students in the 2018 Erasmus+ call was “study mobility” (European Commission, 2020a:32). Students pay no additional fees at the host university, receive a grant from the EU (sometimes complemented by other national or regional funding schemes) which aims to cover the additional costs generated by international mobility, and the credits and grades obtained at the host university are recognized by the home institution as part of the students’ degree. The remainder mobilities funded by the program were traineeships, which can take place at various types of organizations, such as “an enterprise, a research institute, a laboratory, an organisation or any other relevant workplace abroad” (European Commission, 2021c:41).

In the next section we review the literature on the motivations of students and institutions to take part in the Erasmus(+) program -with a focus on study mobility- and the effects of international student mobility, while also discussing the linkages between Erasmus(+) higher education (HE) and internationalization in higher education more broadly. This review concludes that there is much more information on the motivations and program effects on students than at the institutional level, where information is very scarce and often covers only a small sample of institutions. In order to address this gap, we present results from a large survey of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): the Erasmus+ HE impact study survey. Section three introduces these data and section four presents the survey results on: the role of international student mobility in HEIs international strategies, the motivations of HEIs to take part in international student mobility and the effects of Erasmus(+) participation at the institutional level, in a range of areas. Section five presents our conclusions.

Literature review

Erasmus(+) students: motivations and effects

Motivations

The literature investigating motivations for student mobility has identified a large set of factors that explain students’ motivations to spend part of their studies abroad, as done within Erasmus(+) HE. The large majority of studies refers to four main types of motivation: Academic learning, other skills development, employability enhancement and personal development/life experiences.

Academic learning

Academic learning has been identified as an important motivation to study abroad. Students often wish to gain academic learning experience in another country and to have access to types of learning and knowledge not offered at their home institution (Murphy-Lejeune, 2002). Some students also wish to attend world class institutions that may be perceived to provide high quality learning experiences during their study abroad (Findlay et al., 2010; Rodríguez González et al., 2011).

Other skills development

Other skills development is a further important motivator for students. This is particularly the case of language learning, which is frequently mentioned by a large share of mobile students across different surveys (Rodríguez González et al., 2011; Souto-Otero et al., 2019). Soft-skills development is also an important reason for studying abroad (Lesjak et al., 2015; Teichler, 2004). Students aim to improve soft skills such as adaptability, taking initiative or proactivity (Souto-Otero et al., 2019) as a result of mobility. Moreover, students also often want to increase their cross-culture awareness (Roy et al., 2019).

Employability

Employability improvement is an important motivation to study abroad. Students often see mobility experiences abroad and the knowledge and skills acquisition and personal development facilitated by it, to be associated with the improvement of career chances and employability (Souto-Otero et al., 2019). Students view mobility experiences as a way to improve their professional skills (Lesjak et al., 2015; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002) and their career prospects, by differentiating them from other applicants (Deakin, 2014). Some students expect mobility to be a first step toward specific career pathways, in particular an international career

¹In this chapter we sometimes use “Erasmus(+)” to refer to Erasmus+ and predecessor programs.

(Findlay et al., 2010): in the views of these students international mobility can increase their chances of employment in a multinational company or in a different country thanks to the language, professional and soft-skills developed during their stay abroad (Beadle et al., 2015).

Personal development and life experiences

Personal development and life experiences are central motivations for study abroad: living abroad and meeting new people are among the most frequent reasons for Erasmus+ students to go abroad (Brandenburg et al., 2014; Souto-Otero et al., 2019; Ulicna et al., 2017). This has been the case for decades: Maiworm and Teichler (2002) reported that almost nine in ten Erasmus mobile students were motivated by personal development. Other studies have highlighted the importance of personality maturation (Fom-bona et al., 2013), traveling and adventure/having a break from usual surroundings (Findlay et al., 2010; Rodríguez González et al., 2011), fun and excitement (Stronkhorst, 2005). Simply the wish of spending some time in a different country and experiencing life abroad is one of the strongest reasons for mobility (Keogh and Russel-Roberts, 2009; Lesjak et al., 2015). This motivation was mentioned by 70% of students in the Erasmus+ HE impact study (Souto-Otero et al., 2019). Finally, students are also motivated by the possibilities of expanding their social network (Souto-Otero et al., 2019), meeting new people and making new friends (Brandenburg et al., 2014; Ulicna et al., 2017).

Impact on students

The literature identifies four main types of impact of Erasmus(+) on participants, most of which are related to students' motivations to become mobile. These are: academic learning, other skills development, labor market outcomes and personality and identity. These impacts are likely to be correlated with each other -for example, increased employability is likely to be a result of progress made with regard to the other types of impact. It is also important to bear in mind that while most studies on individual effects are based on empirical analysis, subjective measures of impact (such as perceived improvement on competences, academic development or employability, reported changes in identity) are more often employed than more objective measures (such as salaries, probability of being employed or working abroad, measured changes in identity or behavior). In this sense, the literature has a tendency to explore experienced/perceived effects.

Academic learning

The literature has identified an impact of mobility on academic performance. Teichler (2012) looks at a self-reported measure of academic performance, and found that mobile graduates perceived to have made better academic progress abroad than what they would have made at home during the same time. Other studies use less subjective measures of performance, e.g., graduation marks, time of graduation. d'Hombres and Schnepf (2021), for example, find evidence that mobility leads to increases in the take-up of further studies in the case of Italian mobile bachelor degree holders, who are 8 percentage points more likely to take up further studies -but report no effect for mobile students from the UK. For some students, study abroad may also entail positive "vertical mobility", defined in this context as students moving to institutions or countries with higher academic reputation than the home institution or country.

Other skills development

Study abroad could be expected to have strong effects in terms of language learning. Erasmus alumni surveyed in Teichler and Janson (2007) were found to be three times more confident in foreign language proficiency than their non-mobile peers. Similarly, using a survey of Italian students, Sorrenti (2017) shows how the program improves self reported hard skills such as the command of foreign languages.

The 2014 Erasmus Impact Study (EIS) (Brandenburg et al., 2014) and Erasmus Impact Study+ (EIS+) (Souto-Otero et al., 2019) provide evidence that mobility helps participants build up their soft skills and develop their personality -see also below. In these studies, personality development is measured through the memo© psychometric tool. This tool records personality, attitudes, and behavioral traits that are correlated with career success and employability. Respondents in the EIS+ study were tracked over time and answers from the same individuals were compared before and after their mobility experience. Mobile graduates displayed higher values of memo© scores prior to mobility, which shows that they are a selective group compared to the general student population. However, and despite starting from higher scores, they still recorded remarkable gains in self-confidence compared to students who remained at home -who experienced close to no development over the same time period.

Other effects on personality development concern the ability to interact with foreign cultures and adapt to new situations. According to the EIS+, 9 in 10 mobile graduates perceived an improvement in terms of adaptability, interaction with people from foreign cultures, communication skills and intercultural competences. These findings are confirmed by the literature measuring self-reported competences before and after mobility (Onorati et al., 2017; Stronkhorst, 2005) or interrogating students about the importance of these competences in their jobs (Teichler and Jason, 2007).

Labor market outcomes

Assessing the effects of Erasmus(+) participation in employability and earnings is challenging due to endogeneity problems: participants are a selective group and it is difficult to assess whether differences between participants and non-participants are due to participation in the program or pre-existing differences (for example in terms of entrepreneurship, motivation, etc.) between mobile students and the wider student population. The majority of Erasmus(+) alumni surveyed believe that their time abroad helped

them secure their first jobs and their careers (Souto-Otero et al., 2019; Teichler and Janson, 2007), notably through the emphasis placed in recruitment on academic achievement and personality, and the increasing importance of foreign language skills and international experience. Moreover, they also report higher levels of happiness with their occupation and score higher on job quality measures such as job security and career prospects.

Several econometrics studies find that international mobility increases the probability of being employed (Di Pietro, 2015 for Italy; d’Hombres and Schnepf, 2021 for Italy and the UK; Iriondo, 2020 for Spain) or of working overseas (Parey and Waldinger, 2011 for Germany; Di Pietro, 2012 for Italy; Pinto, 2020 for Spain). The evidence on the impact of Erasmus(+) mobility on earnings is mixed -see Di Pietro (2021) and Netz and Cordua (2021) for recent reviews of the literature on the wage premium of international mobility more generally. Teichler and Janson (2007) report how Erasmus students appear to be skeptical about the impact of stay abroad periods on income. However, some studies that analyze graduates’ salaries at different times after graduation point to positive wage premia for Erasmus(+) alumni. There is no consensus over the exact magnitude of such premium, ranging from 3% (Messer and Wolter, 2007 for Switzerland; Rodrigues, 2016 for EU countries) to about 7%–14% (Jahr and Teichler, 2002 for EU countries; Cammelli et al., 2008 for Italy; Iriondo, 2020 for Spain). A significant share of the wage premium is likely to stem from a better command of foreign language skills and the job opportunities this opens. Sorrenti (2017), for example, suggests that foreign language skills are rewarded in the labor market, with a positive wage premium of 6%.

Some studies investigate the role of “vertical mobility” on labor market outcomes. Iriondo (2020) analyzed the impact of vertical mobility on employment and salaries for Spanish students. His results show significant premia for Spanish Erasmus graduates going to Germany, France, Nordic countries and the UK while failing to find any effect for other host countries such as Italy and Portugal. The importance of vertical mobility is consistent with the results from the EIS+, which found that mobile graduates from low GDP countries, Eastern and Southern Europe enjoyed the largest benefits from mobility in terms of finding their first job. Respondents from Eastern and Southern Europe were more likely to consider their mobility periods beneficial or highly beneficial (74% for Southern Europe and 73% for Eastern Europe) than individuals from Western (67%) and Northern Europe (67%). Van Mol et al. find that, after controlling for selection into ISM, differences in career outcomes between mobile and non mobile students disappear in the Netherlands, which they explain with reference to the characteristics of the Dutch education system and labour market, where restricted possibilities for upward vertical mobility limit returns to ISM in the local labour market.

Personality and identity

The previous discussion on skills development notes a range of personality changes derived from Erasmus(+) mobility. In addition, the EIS+ study found that 95% of the Erasmus+ HE participants surveyed reported having learned how to better get along in different cultures and 93% felt that they had improved their ability to take cultural factors into consideration.

One particular aspect of interest in the Erasmus(+) related literature has been the effect of international mobility on the European identity of participants. Some studies reported little or no effect (see for example Sigalas, 2010), whereas others report a positive effect on the development of EU identity. Evidence in the EIS+ shows that mobile students feel more European than the average student before the Erasmus+ experience, but also that their attachment to the EU grows during their study abroad. Observed changes in European identity are larger among students traveling to non-neighboring countries and can be surmised to having been exposed to greater cultural differences.

Among mobile students, those who identified themselves as Europeans to a lower extent before the Erasmus(+) program experienced the largest development in their European identity. This is confirmed by regression evidence in the EIS+. This result is also in line with earlier findings in Kuhn (2012:999) who, using survey data, claims that the largest gains of mobility are to be expected among those who are less likely to be “the winners of European integration who are already likely to be convinced of its benefits and who are already prone to feeling European”.

Erasmus(+) and higher education institutions: motivations and effects

While an increasing body of research aims to explore the motivations and effects of international student mobility in general and Erasmus(+) students in particular, the institutional level has received much less attention in the literature. In this section, we review extant literature, before we present additional findings on these topics, derived from the HE leadership and HE staff EIS + surveys.

Motivations

The large majority of European higher education institutions participate in the Erasmus+ program. By 2019 over 5700 higher education institutions held the Erasmus University Charter (European Commission, 2020a), which contains the fundamental principles that they need to observe when participating in the program. The large majority of institutions that hold the Charter are active in sending or receiving students and staff (European Commission, 2015). Given widespread participation in the program, institutional participation seems to have become internalized and assumed as “the norm” by researchers and European HE institutions alike. As a result, the motivations for participation in the program is a little researched phenomenon.

There is a dearth of studies on institutional motivations to participate in Erasmus(+) and the importance of international student mobility for the internationalization of HEIs, but it is possible to look at motivations for internationalization to gain an insight into motivations for mobility. The meaning of internationalization in HE is contested, but a popular definition is provided by Knight (2008:6) as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education”. While we still know little about how internationalization takes place in practice (Seeber et al., 2020) it

is clear that at its core is “border-crossing” (Teichler, 2017). Such border crossing could be from home to abroad or from abroad to home: as such, internationalization activities have been noted to have “at home” and “abroad” components (Knight, 2012). Given this, it is not surprising that work on the conceptualization and classification of internationalization (Knight, 2004; Horn et al., 2007) often highlights international student and staff mobility as one of its central components. In the case of international student mobility this entails the hosting of international students (at home dimension) or the sending of students (abroad dimension). In fact, international student mobility became the most prominent theme in internationalization debates in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s, and the absolute number of foreign or international mobile students the most frequently used indicator for internationalization (Teichler, 2017).

When exploring motivations for internationalization it is possible to discern a number of core themes (de Wit, 2001; Altbach and Knight, 2007; Tadaki and Tremewan, 2013):

- Socio-cultural and academic factors (e.g. extension of the academic horizon, profile/status, updating curricula with international content, knowledge acquisition -including foreign language learning- and quality enhancement)
- Economic factors (e.g. economic growth and competitiveness, employability, financial incentives for institutions and governments), and
- Political factors (e.g. foreign policy, security, national and regional identity)

However, some of the motivations outlined above do not apply easily to institutional motivations for mobility. For example, political motivations around foreign policy, security or national/regional identity may not go a long way in explaining institutional appetite for internationalization. By contrast, other motivations not captured in the above list may exist; for example, HEIs may see an intrinsic value in international network development. As such, we propose four sets of motivations for international student mobility, which we employ below in this chapter:

- Academic related (competence development, which students would be unlikely to acquire otherwise),
- Economic (increase the attractiveness of and demand for study programs²),
- Social (increase the diversity of the student population) and
- Profiling (increase in institutional visibility, network development, increase national international prestige/quality assessments/ranking or reputation).

These different motivations are sometimes considered as contrasting or in tension. As Castro et al. (2016:419) put it: “to polarise and simplify the issue two idealised discourses of internationalisation can be identified. On the one hand, there is the neo-liberal instrumental, economic agenda. On the other hand, there is the educational agenda”. But as we will see, these motivations can also co-exist in the rationalization of student mobility practices in HEIs.

Impact

The institutional impact of participation in the Erasmus(+) program identified in the literature (Vossensteyn et al., 2008; Souto-Otero et al., 2019) tends to refer to four main areas: teaching and learning (e.g. improving the quality in teaching and learning, improving the development and recognition of student learning outcomes, internationalizing teaching and learning - e.g. internationalization of the curriculum -, internationalizing the student population), research (e.g. internationalizing research, increasing cooperation with industry), organization and governance (e.g. enhancing institutional governance - establishment or development of internationalization strategies, etc. -, capacity building for information and support services for students -in particular in counseling and in support structures for international student mobility, such as setting up international offices -) and organizational profiling (e.g. increasing institutional visibility, network development, benchmarking, reputation management and learning from quality standards in other institutions).

In general, however, there is scarce research on the extent to which these different effects have been associated and continue to be associated with Erasmus(+) participation. Moreover, not all these types of effects could be expected to result from the international student mobility elements of the Erasmus(+) program, and in equal measure. Those elements more closely related to student mobility are in the areas of teaching and learning (internationalization of the student population; internationalization of the curriculum and development and recognition of learning outcomes achieved abroad) and organization and governance (internationalization strategies that recognize international student mobility, capacity building). These are the areas that we cover in our analysis.

Data: the Erasmus+ impact study survey

The data that we use in this chapter was gathered as part of the “Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact study” (Souto-Otero et al., 2019). The study collected data through surveys of higher education students, graduates, academic and non-academic staff and leadership between the Spring of 2017 and the summer of 2018, making use of a census database of Erasmus+ participants. In total, 76,893 valid responses to the survey were received -making it one of the largest Erasmus(+) surveys to date. In this chapter

²We recognize that at least some HEIs may also want to increase the attractiveness of their programs to be more selective and increase the quality of the student population, rather than increase their recruitment, however we expect that for many institutions economic viability will be the primary concern when thinking about increasing attractiveness.

we make use of the results from the survey of HE leadership and Erasmus(+) mobile staff. 708 responses were obtained in the survey of higher education institutions, which was directed to management in HEIs (Rector, Vice-Rector, International Relations Officer, other members of the management team of the institution) and which gathered information on the internationalization strategy of the institution, student and staff mobility, and their impact on the institution as well as the characteristics of the institution. We also make use of over 3000 responses to a EIS + survey of mobile teaching staff. The survey collected information on their demographic characteristics, motivations for international mobility and the impact of their mobility at the personal and institutional level.

Why do higher education institutions take part in international student mobility? Strategies, motivations and effects

Given the lack of studies on the institutional dimension of international student mobility, compared to the individual dimension, its ramifications are explored in this section making use of data collected through the EIS+ surveys of leadership and HE staff (Souto-Otero et al., 2019). We first contextualize the motivations for international student mobility, then explore those motivations, and conclude exploring its effects at the institutional level. The data used to explore the first two questions goes beyond the Erasmus+ program, to expand to international student mobility in general, although it should be noted that Erasmus+ is the main instrument for international student mobility for European institutions (d’Hombres and Schnepf, 2021) and the data was collected in the context of surveys on Erasmus+. The exploration of effects refers, specifically, to Erasmus(+) HE international student mobility.

Contextualizing international student mobility motivations: ISM and HEIs’ internationalization strategies

Internationalization is high on the agenda of the leadership of HEIs, and student mobility is considered the most important aspect of internationalization. Indeed, almost 9 in 10 institutions responding to the EIS+ leadership survey (87%) reported to have an internationalization strategy. Of these, around 95% of reported “recognition of student mobility as part of study programmes” to be an important or very important element in their strategy -see Fig. 1, making it the most important aspect of international strategies, above internationalization of the curriculum, of research, staff mobility or internationalization of staff. Internationalization of research cooperation was especially important among HEIs in Eastern European countries. The internationalization of the student population, which is related to student mobility, also came high in the responses. This is consistent with suggestions made by previous research, which highlights the importance of international student mobility as part of internationalization strategies, but confirms this finding in a large sample of HE leadership and explicitly comparing its importance with other aspects of HEIs’ internationalization strategies.

This finding is consistent with Seeber et al. (2020), who analyzed survey data on the international activities portfolio of 431 institutions in 33 European countries collected in 2013, and found that mobility opportunities had a privileged place in these portfolios: mobility was the most frequent internationalization activity of HEIs: 96% of HEIs offered outgoing mobility for students (study abroad, international internships, etc.) and 93% for staff.

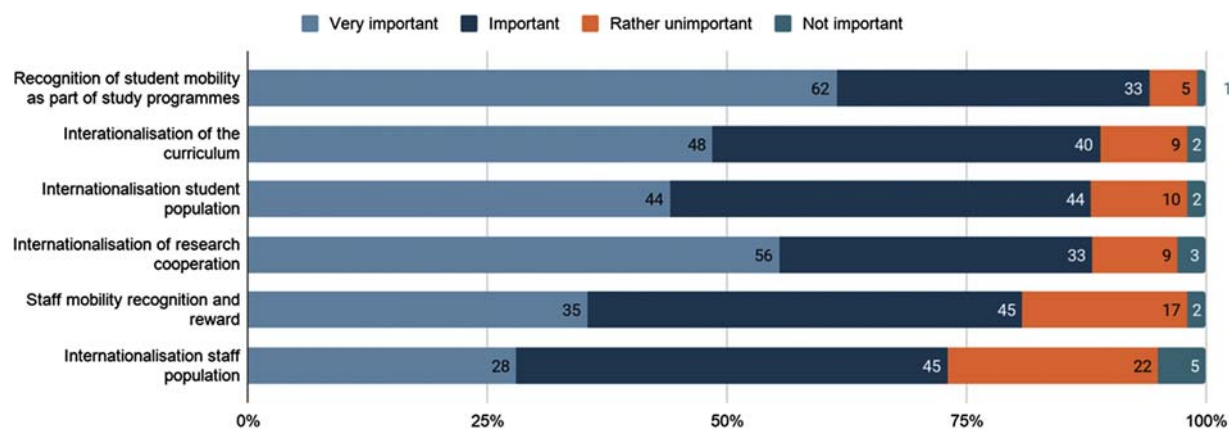


Fig. 1 Importance of selected aspects internationalisation strategy. Source: Erasmus+ impact study (survey of HE leadership) (Souto-Otero et al., 2019). N = 561. “What is the relative importance of the following aspects in the internationalization strategy of your institution?”

Why is it important? Institutional motivations for international student mobility

Why is international student mobility so important for HEIs? We approached this question by asking HE leadership about their institutions' objectives for international student mobility. In the **Motivations** section four types of motivations were identified: academic related, economic, social and profiling. Academic-related considerations were reported as the most important by HE leadership: international mobility provided institutions with the possibility to develop competences in their students that they would otherwise be unlikely to develop. This contrasts with a reportedly popular view of study abroad as tourism and a purely consumerist act. It also contrasts with a focus on international student mobility as a source of income for HEIs competing in global markets for students (Guruz, 2011) and more general views about the economic rationale of internationalization whereby: "Although still present in the rhetoric of international education, traditional values such as cooperation, peace and mutual understanding, human capital development, and solidarity, have been moved to the sidelines as universities strive for competition, revenue, and reputation/branding" (de Wit and Altbach's, 2021:35).

To be sure, economic considerations (program attractiveness) also featured highly, but at a long distance from competence development -see Fig. 2. Some aspects of profiling (network development) also featured highly in the response, but the importance of others (visibility, reputation/ranking) was much more modest, in spite of the purported association between excellence, rankings and mobility (see Souto-Otero and Enders, 2017). This may be explained by the emphasis of Erasmus+ on "horizontal" rather than "vertical" mobility (Van Mol et al., 2020), whereby the value of mobility is based on reciprocity and mutual exchange rather than being motivated by prestige hierarchies. There are, nevertheless, striking differences by region, with HEIs in Partner and Eastern European countries putting greater emphasis on prestige and visibility. In fact, 50% of the HEIs in Eastern European countries wish to increase their visibility abroad through participation in student mobility activities.

Social motivations around diversity featured low, which is surprising given that the diversity brought about by international student mobility is often considered as closely linked to internationalization (Castro et al., 2016:425) -although it should be noted that respondents were asked to choose the three most important objectives of students mobility for their institution only. The objective of increasing diversity of the student population was more frequently mentioned by HEIs in Western and Northern countries.

Institutional effects of Erasmus participation

In this section we report on the views of HE leadership on the effects of participation in the Erasmus(+) in three of the aspects noted in the **Impact** section, which were covered by the EIS+ survey: the internationalization of the student population, the curriculum and recognition of learning outcomes obtained abroad, and organization and governance -where we focus on institutional capacity building for mobility.

Internationalization of the student population

Erasmus(+), like any other mobility programs, aims to internationalize the student population. Fig. 3 shows that almost half of the HE leaders surveyed reported that the program had had a large impact in this respect at their institution. A further 33% reported a moderate impact. Erasmus+ is not the only tool that HEIs have to internationalize their student population. However, it provides a critical mass of mobile students from a wide range of countries (and arguably in a more balanced way than other tools such as full program mobility) and remains a key tool for the internationalization of the student population in European HEIs.

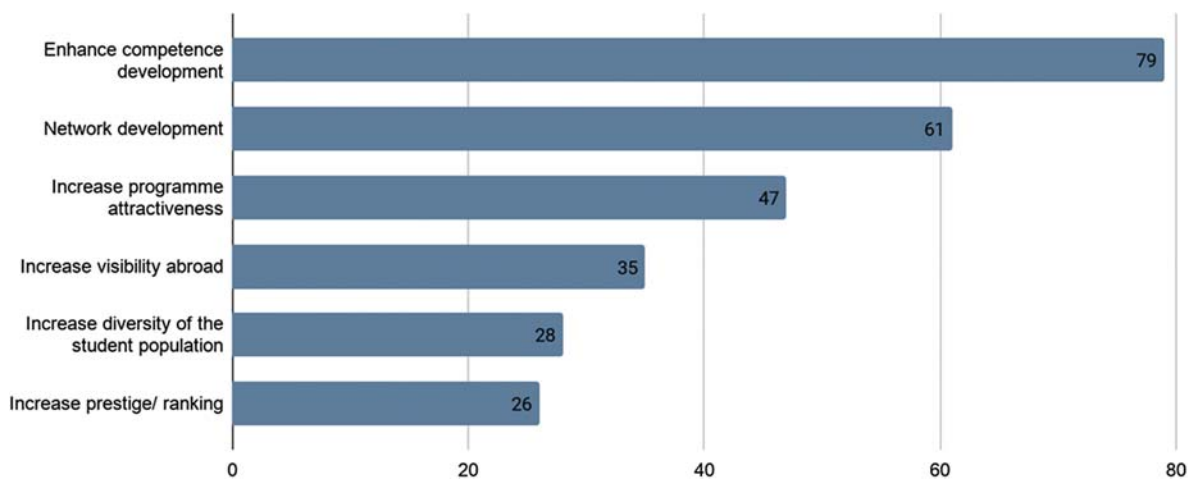


Fig. 2 Institutional objectives for international student mobility. Source: Erasmus+ impact study (survey of HE leadership) (Souto-Otero et al., 2019). N = 619. "What are the main objectives of student mobility for your institution?"

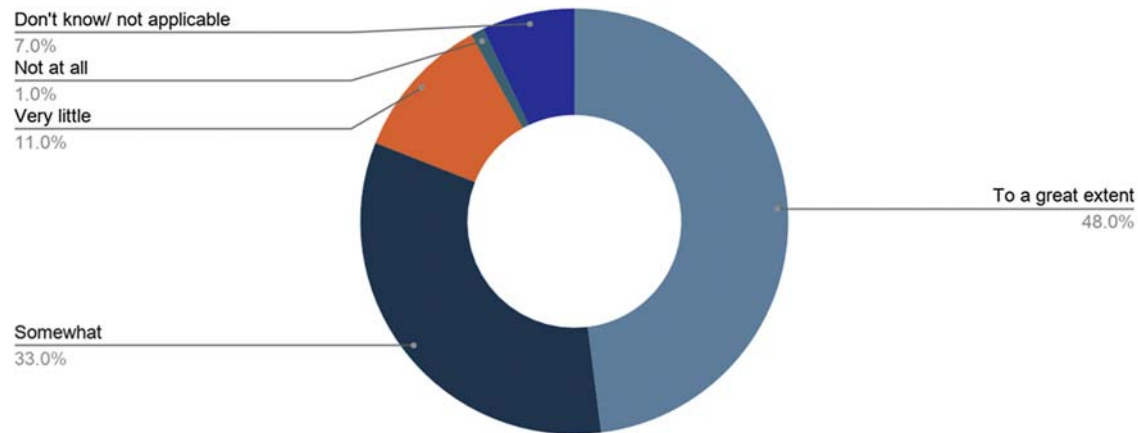


Fig. 3 Impact of Erasmus(+) on the internationalization to the student population over the last decade (2009–18). Source: Erasmus+ impact study (survey of HE leadership) (Souto-Otero et al., 2019). N = 450. “To what extent has participation in Erasmus+ or predecessor programs contributed to the internationalization of the student population in your institution in the past 10 years?”

Curriculum and learning outcomes

Erasmus(+) student mobility has various effects on the curriculum, and on the recognition of learning outcomes. The effects on the curriculum can come from Erasmus(+) cooperation projects too, but international student mobility may also stimulate the systematic integration of mobility into study programs. Fig. 4 shows the impact of participation in Erasmus(+) staff mobility on a range of curricula-related aspects in the home department of mobile teaching staff, as reported by staff. The results suggest that participation in Erasmus(+) has had widespread effects on the curricula, including adding more international perspectives into the curriculum or the modification of the curricula to integrate mobility into study programs, thus facilitating the recognition of learning outcomes acquired through international mobility experiences.

HE leadership were asked the extent to which participation in Erasmus(+) had also facilitated the recognition of mobility outside of those programs where mobility may be mandatory or is explicitly integrated into the curriculum -what we call embedded mobility. Over 40% of HE leaders reported that Erasmus(+) had helped the recognition of mobility outside of embedded mobility in their institution very much, and a further 42% that it had done so to a considerable extent -see Fig. 5. Whereas HEIs from Partner countries reported the highest level of impact in this area - more than 50% selected the highest impact category -, HEIs from Northern European countries reported much lower impact - only around 30% selected that category.

The next section provides information on the impact of Erasmus(+) on capacity building, including information on the impact on the recognition of learning occurred during mobility periods -regardless of whether this took place within or outside the context of embedded mobility.

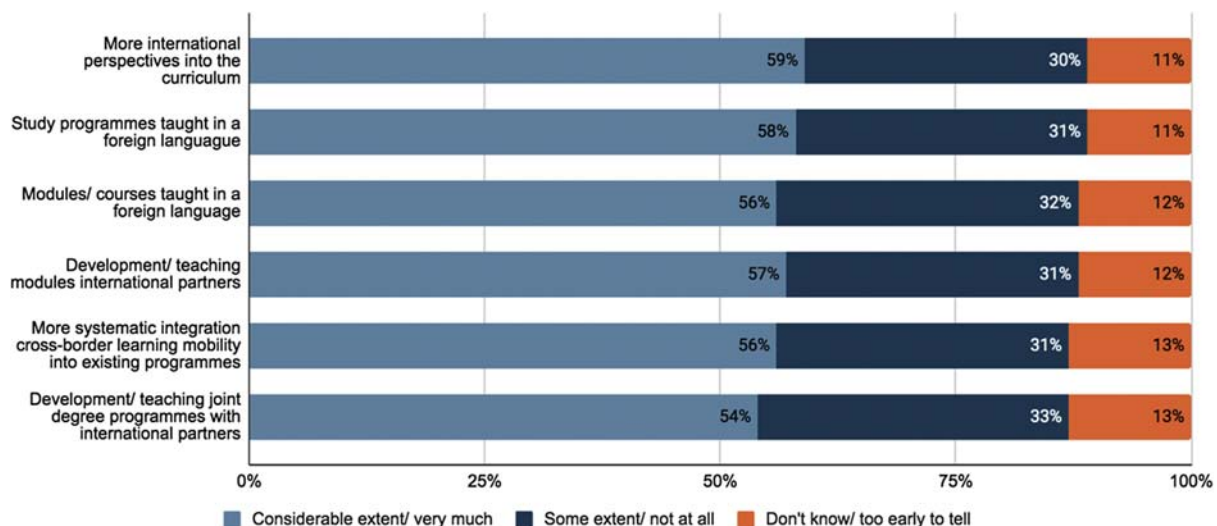


Fig. 4 Impact of Erasmus(+) staff mobility on curricula in the home department. Source: Erasmus+ impact study (survey of mobile staff) (Souto-Otero et al., 2019). N = 2512–3408 depending on the item. “Have the knowledge, competences or contacts acquired by you or other staff during mobility supported by Erasmus+ or predecessor programs led to improvements in the development and implementation of the following activities in your department?”

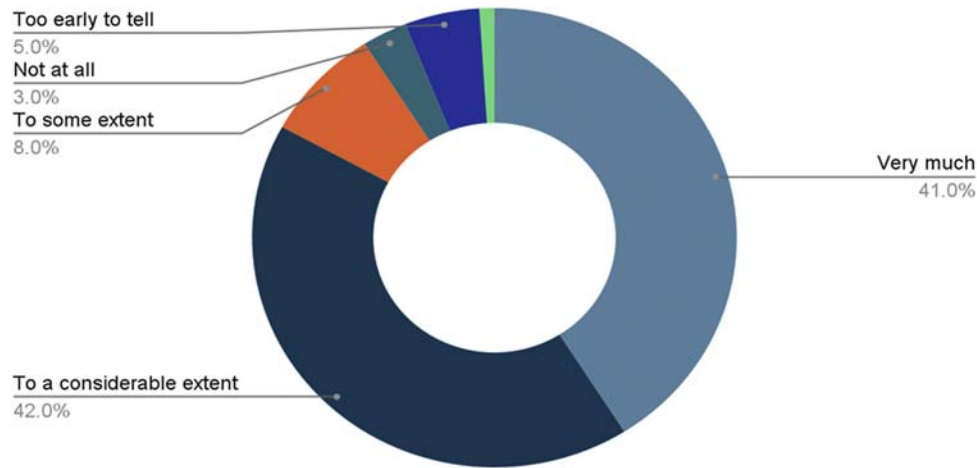


Fig. 5 Impact of Erasmus(+) in the recognition of mobility outside of embedded mobility. Source: Erasmus+ impact study (survey of HE leadership) (Souto-Otero et al., 2019). N = 459. "Has participation in the Erasmus+ and predecessor programs led to improvements in the recognition of mobility (outside of embedded mobility) at your institution?"

Organization and governance: capacity building

Lack of students' (and staff) preparation for mobility is often seen as a challenge (Castro et al., 2016), and there is, no doubt, room for development in these areas. Yet, it is widely acknowledged that Erasmus(+) has also had widespread impact in relation to organizational and capacity building aspects associated with student mobility. The EIS+ survey asked about seven capacity building aspects that support students in their mobility experiences. The impact of Erasmus(+) on these elements varied quite markedly, but was generally high to very high -see Fig. 6. The program impact was reported as particularly high in increasing information about available options for international mobility (in open days, information days, preparatory sessions, etc.) and in improving the management of student mobility more generally. Impact was lower in relation to the identification of additional sources of financing (showing an important degree of reliance in the program as a funding source for mobility) and the organization of language preparation pre-departure, although a still sizable share of institutions reported impact on these areas. The results also show that over 60% of respondents considered Erasmus(+) to have improved the recognition of learning occurred during mobility periods to a considerable or a large extent. HEIs from Eastern and Southern European countries reported higher impact of Erasmus(+) on student mobility and support systems.

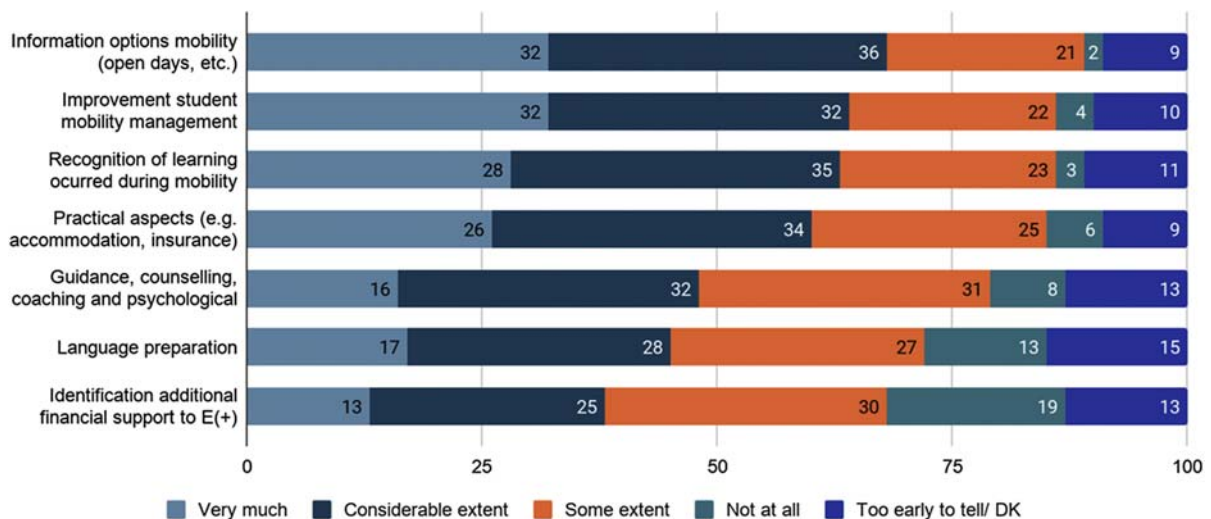


Fig. 6 Impact of Erasmus(+) on student mobility management and support. Source: Erasmus+ impact study (survey of HE leadership) (Souto-Otero et al., 2019). N = 495. "Have the knowledge, competences or contact acquired by staff during participation in Erasmus+ or predecessor programs led to improvements in the following aspects of student support available to students at your institution?"

Conclusions

This chapter has provided an overview of the motivations for and effects of individual and institutional participation in the Erasmus(+), the largest international student mobility program in the world. In this concluding section we offer some reflections on the past, present and future of international student mobility.

The review of the literature on motivations and effects of student mobility at the individual level showed an alignment between the expectations and effects of student mobility through Erasmus(+). The literature identifies four main factors that motivate students to take part in mobility: academic learning, other skills development, employability enhancement and personal development/life experiences. Among them, language learning and life experiences such as traveling and getting to know a new country appeared to be particularly important motivators. The literature has explored the effects of Erasmus(+) in, primarily, four areas, which are closely related to the motivations previously identified: academic learning, other skills development, labor market outcomes and personality and identity. Available evidence points toward the existence of Erasmus(+) effects across these areas, with effects being connected to each other and often mutually supportive, implying that improvement in one area is often connected to advancement in other areas as well.

The review of the literature has also highlighted that the majority of studies that examine the effects on students focus on single countries and use different methodologies, hindering the possibility of drawing international comparisons. Results from cross-country analysis, however, seem to point to heterogeneous effects with stronger impacts for Southern (d'Hombres and Schnepf, 2021) and Eastern European countries (Rodrigues, 2016). There is also some evidence that the country of origin and country of destination can matter, with students moving vertically to countries with more prestigious educational systems and stronger labor markets benefiting more from their mobility (Iriundo, 2020). In the absence of such vertical mobility benefits are more uncertain (Van Mol et al., 2020).

Information on motivations and effects at the institutional level is harder to come by. To address this gap, the chapter used data from two Erasmus(+) impact study surveys, covering over 700 HE leaders and over 3000 mobile teaching staff. The analysis revealed the central role that international student mobility has in the internationalization strategies of HEIs in Europe. The importance of such student mobility for institutions is primarily associated with its role in the improvement of the academic experience, and the development of competences that would otherwise be difficult to develop in students. Economic considerations are also relevant, as institutions are aware of the popularity of study abroad options among prospective students. Mobility also helps institutions to project specific profiles through network development and, somewhat less importantly for leadership, by increasing the visibility and reputation of their institutions. The social elements of international student mobility (increasing the diversity of the student population) seem to be less of a priority for institutional leadership in comparison to internationalization and economic motivations. This may be because HEIs may consider themselves to be already diverse institutions, because they have other ways to increase the diversity of their student population and because Erasmus(+) has traditionally not been particularly designed as a program that aimed to promote diversity in the student population, beyond national diversity. The inclusion theme within mobility itself (making mobility more inclusive along socio-demographic characteristics) has been in the Erasmus(+) agenda for some time (Souto-Otero et al., 2013; Souto-Otero, 2008; Bunescu et al., 2020) and it is being given greater attention in the new 2021–27 Erasmus+ programming period.

In terms of effects, the results show rather widespread and large effects of the program when it comes to the internationalization of the student population and the curriculum, the recognition of learning outcomes obtained abroad, and organization and governance. At this point, the impact on the internationalization of the student population and recognition of learning outcomes abroad seems somewhat higher than the impact on organization and governance. Organization and governance are the aspects where institutions may have at this point already established systems and may rely less on the program. Akin to the case of students, effects on institutions have been also found to vary by region (Souto-Otero et al., 2019).

Where next for mobility? After more than three decades of existence, the program continues to grow, and has ambitious participation targets for the future. Internationalization continues to have a prominent role in the mission of HEIs, which seems to have resisted contrary movements in recent years in politics and other areas of social life in several European countries and in the USA. Physical international student mobility within the program may change in the future: patterns of mobility will be affected by the UK exit from the EU (Brexit) as well as other political moves, for as Teichler (2017:210) noted “international mobility and cooperation is certainly one of the most “political” themes in higher education” -see also (França et al., 2018). de Wit and Altbach (2021) note that it is too early to tell the effects that the rise of nationalist-populist movements, bans on migration and anti-integration trends can have on HE internationalization and student mobility. International student mobility is part of a broader political and economic EU project, and has both pragmatic and ideological rationales. While these are in constant evolution (Dvir and Yemini, 2017; Shields, 2016; Sigalas, 2010), student mobility (like the development of university networks and partnerships) has a dual role as a tool to promote economic competitiveness and in forging support for the European Union project, and is likely to continue to be a central element of European education policy. But mobility is also being affected by other factors. These include public health issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and concerns with HE sustainable practices and “the green university”, which are being scrutinized in more detail than in the past, although existing analyses have given international student mobility a small role in carbon emissions compared to other factors, such as staff mobility (ETH Zurich, 2020).

The types of student mobility supported by the program have evolved taking some of the above considerations in mind. In particular environmental concerns and “virtual mobility” have become more central. Since 2018 Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange enables participants in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to “engage in meaningful intercultural experiences online as

part of their formal or non-formal education" (...) that "can form part of a higher education degree or a youth project" through "online-facilitated activities, Interactive Open Online Courses (IOOCs) and online debates" and has had a significant take-up (European Commission, 2020a:24 and 69–70). Blended mobility, combining physical and virtual mobility has also been on the rise (European Commission, 2020a:56). The Commission communication on Achieving the European Education Area promised an Erasmus+ program that "will be greener and more digital. Virtual and blended mobility could complement physical mobility" (European Commission, 2020b:18).

Some stakeholders, however, have raised concerns with such conceptualizations of international student mobility. The student-led Erasmus Student Network, for example, has been emphatic in its critical assessment of the cited communication and of the idea of virtual mobility, which it contends: "is the wrong approach", "is in our view not a form of mobility, even though the term has unfortunately entered into the public discourse" and "cannot be a substitute for a mobility period abroad (as...) an easy way to reach higher numbers of mobility participants" compromising funding for future physical mobilities (ESN, 2020:6–7). How these debates resolve the definition, shape and size of student mobility within the program, in turn, will affect the motivations of stakeholders to engage in it, and the effects Erasmus+ mobility will continue to produce on students and institutions in the future.

Acknowledgment

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Academic mobility: global trends and future prospects

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Introduction	230
International student mobility	230
Faculty mobility	232
Academic mobility: current issues and future challenges	233
Barriers in policy and practice	233
Brain drain and brain circulation	233
Geopolitical currents	234
Climate change	235
Futures of mobility	235
References	236

Introduction

Mobility of individuals is a key driver of globalization and a hallmark of international education. Globally, the mobility of people across international borders has risen rapidly since the mid-twentieth century. For example, the UN World Tourism Organization recorded 2.28 billion crossings in 2018, which means that 29.4% of the global population crossed a border that year, a significant increase from the 1.03 billion when data was first collected in 1995 (18.0% percent of the global population that year, [World Bank, 2021a](#)). With this rise, mobility has become increasingly complex; long-term migration (including forced migration and refugees) is now an integral aspect of many societies around the world and an underpinning feature of global labor markets.

The rise of international mobility is particularly apparent in higher education, where the movement of faculty, researchers and students across international borders has reshaped universities and systems of higher education. However, universities' commitment to internationalism has a long history and considerable geographic scope, with records of significant mobility of faculty and students in medieval universities in Europe and East Asia ([Kim, 2009](#); [Rizva and Teichler, 2007](#)). Recent changes in higher education have accelerated mobility considerably: neoliberal policies in several countries have created immense pressures for universities to recruit international students in order to compensate for the loss of public funding, while shifts in the academic labor market and increasing international collaboration have spurred faculty mobility ([Shin et al., 1999](#); [Royal Society, 2011](#)).

This chapter discusses the drivers and impacts of academic mobility in international higher education. It considers mobility broadly as an integral part of international education and contemporary higher education, including mobility of students, faculty, and researchers. We argue that although mobility has been a longstanding and rapidly growing dimension of international higher education, a re-thinking of both policies and practices is paramount given the increasing inequalities, changing geopolitics, and growing environmental impact of academic mobility. We begin by discussing international student and faculty mobility, including current trends and drivers. We then turn to recent developments and their potential impacts on academic mobility, including shifting geopolitical powers and relationships, the rise of populism and associated racist and xenophobic movements, and the existential challenges of the climate emergency. We conclude by reflecting on the benefits of physical mobility in a world that is increasingly driven by virtual interactions.

International student mobility

The mobility of students across international borders has a long history. [Rizva and Teichler \(2007\)](#) estimate that 10% of students in medieval universities were international, while [Kim \(2009\)](#) recounts international mobility between Korea and China during the Tang Dynasty (618–907). Academic mobility also fueled European colonial projects, with faculty in Imperial powers undertaking a significant share of mobility to colonized societies as part of a purported “civilizing” mission ([Jöns, 2016](#); [Pietsch, 2010](#)). Following World War II, the geopolitics of the Cold War also provided a strong impetus for mobility, as the First (Western Democratic) and Second (Soviet Communist) Worlds vied for global influence. For example, scholarships to students from non-aligned states (“Third World”) was a powerful form of cultural diplomacy that asserted the intellectual strengths of host countries, which also gained influence when their alumni attained elite positions around the world ([Altbach, 2004](#)).

However, international student mobility has reached unprecedented levels of growth in the 21st century. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, there were 2.1 million students who went abroad to complete a full degree at the turn of the century, and by 2018 this number had grown to 5.7 million ([Fig. 1](#)). Literature commonly differentiates between two common types of international mobility ([de Wit, 2008](#)):

Degree Mobility: Refers to students who cross an international border to undertake a full-degree. They are enrolled in a university outside their country of ordinary residence.

Credit Mobility: Refers to students who cross an international border to undertake credits as part of a degree program, but are not enrolled in a university abroad. This mobility is often informally referred to as “study abroad.”

In addition to these common types of mobility as identified in the literature, other significant modes of international student mobility exist. For example, students may complete an international trip as part of a course in which they are enrolled in their home country (e.g., a field visit or international service learning) or may undertake short-term, non-credit bearing mobility for educational purposes during holiday periods in their studies. Taken together, these various modes of mobility point to the vast scope and range of international student mobility in recent years. For example, in addition to the 5.7 million degree mobile students identified by the [UNESCO Institute for Statistics \(2021\)](#), 505,000 students took part in credit-mobility through the European Commission’s Erasmus+ program (2020), while the [Institute of International Education \(2020\)](#) reported 347,099 students from the US participated in some form of study abroad for credit (including short-term programs).

Much literature understands this explosive growth in the context of the global knowledge economy, referring to the growing demand for highly-skilled labor that often requires advanced levels of education ([Gürüz, 2011](#); [Kaushan and Lanati, 2019](#)). In this framework, international education becomes an investment in human capital (i.e., economically productive skills), which yields a return in the form of higher salaries paid because of the demand for these skills in the labor market ([Kratz and Netz, 2018](#)).

However, many others take a much more expanded view of the drivers and benefits of international study, pointing out that it can be part of longer term migration strategies and access to job markets ([Kahanec and Králiková, 2011](#)), development of intercultural competencies often broadly described as global citizenship ([Tarrant, 2010](#)), or the acquisition of a set of broader cosmopolitan identities and dispositions ([Tran, 2016](#); [Rizvi, 2011](#)). Literature also contains much evidence on the benefits from participation in mobility, including increased employability ([Crossman and Clarke, 2010](#); [Mohajeri Norris and Gillespie, 2009](#)) and confidence and language abilities ([Roy et al., 2019](#)), and engagement in global issues ([Paige et al., 2009](#)).

However, a smaller but growing body of literature takes a more critical approach to the topic, highlighting the role of international mobility options in social class reproduction, through which students access elite institutions to acquire advantages in the labor market that would otherwise not be available to them ([Findlay et al., 2012](#); [Shaw and Thomas, 2006](#)). This critique is supported by the fact that financial barriers and home caring responsibilities are significant barriers to participation in mobility ([Souto-Otero et al., 2013](#)). Other forms of social discrimination also appear to prevent international student mobility. Literature shows that racialized minority groups are less likely to participate in international student mobility ([Stroud, 2010](#)), and students with LGBTQ+ identities may experience hardships due to intolerance in host countries ([Michl et al., 2019](#)). While women tend to be over-represented in study abroad participation in many Western countries ([Böttcher, 2016](#)), this trend is reversed among students from the Middle East and East Asia, which [Findlay \(2011\)](#) attributes to gender discrimination in countries of origin. Thus, in terms of individual participation, international student mobility can reproduce or increase existing inequalities rather than reduce them.

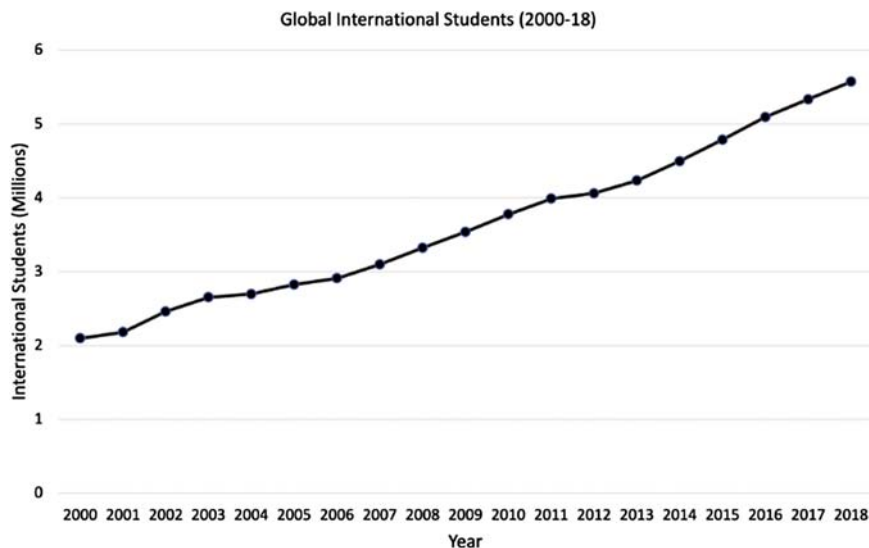


Fig. 1 Global numbers of degree mobile students between 2000 and 2018 ([UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2021](#)).

On the global level, relationships of inequality and groupings are also pertinent to international student mobility. For example, Shields (2013) uses social network analysis to examine global flows of international students and finds that these flows are becoming increasingly polarized and unequal, and that they closely follow other relationships in the global political economy. In particular, English-speaking host countries account for a disproportionately large share of incoming students (Shields and Edwards, 2010). However, other changes may counteract this trend; a growing share of mobility also occurs at the regional level (i.e., between groups of countries in the same global region), supported by initiatives to facilitate mobility through the recognition of credits and qualifications (Chan, 2012; Shields, 2016). For example, mobility within Asia (intra-regional) is rising rapidly as the region's higher education systems and economies develop rapidly (Collins and Ho, 2018; Le Ha and Fry, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted travel on a global scale with serious effects on international student mobility. As national governments implemented new border protections, many students had difficulty returning to their home countries when universities closed halls of residence and moved teaching online in 2020 (Dickerson, 2020). Demonstrating the importance of international student fee income to universities' financial models, several universities commissioned charter flights to relocate students to campuses in 2021, as commercial flights were drastically cut (Tang, 2020). Even so, quarantines and lockdowns meant that international students spent little time in classrooms and were largely confined to halls of residence (Mueller, 2020). It remains to be seen whether this disruption has a long-term influence on either the numbers of international students or the patterns of mobility.

Faculty mobility

While student mobility dominates both the policies and literature of international higher education, the transnational flow of academics reveals many critical junctures in contemporary higher education systems worldwide. The peripatetic life of a scholar is not a new phenomenon. However, globalization has fundamentally changed the nature and scale of mobility among academics. Today faculty mobility ranges from brief sabbaticals and guest lectures to full-time employment and institutional leadership. For example, according to data from the Institute of International Education (2021), the number of mobile scholars migrating to the US rose from 106,000 in 2008 to 136,000 in 2018. The United States and United Kingdom have reaped tremendous benefits over many generations from scholars flocking to their universities (Fleming and Bailyn, 1969; Coser, 1984). This migratory pattern was particularly acute following World War II as scientists fled war-torn Europe. Even if mobility did not lead to outright immigration, foreign scholars have contributed immensely to the growth of American and British higher education through research.

Although the migration from the Global South to the Global North continues to persist and exacerbate epistemic inequality, significant changes in higher education systems worldwide are challenging this historical pattern. Rapidly developing higher education systems and prominent institutions in Asia and the Middle East are increasingly attracting Western academics and members of its diaspora. For example, the King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia has recruited several leading American and European scientists as well as proven university presidents from Asia to provide management expertise. Likewise, Chinese and Singaporean universities actively recruit scientists through the provision of well-equipped laboratories, generous research funding and competitive salaries (Lee, 2014; Han, 2021). Some of these scientists continue to hold appointments and lead research teams at their home institutions in the Global North while commuting regularly to Asia and the Middle East. Among high-profile academics, institutional affiliations among different countries is increasingly the norm. Beyond the institutional level, numerous countries have also launched prominent policy initiatives to attract global talent to their higher education systems. These schemes demand mobility even if the commitment is a short visiting professorship. While some schemes are genuinely open calls for talent, other schemes explicitly target the diaspora. For example, both China and Colombia have a long history in courting their diasporas to return since the 1990s. China's recent Thousand Talents¹ program contains a strong emphasis on the repatriation of Chinese scientists. Migration for Development in Africa, a scheme that serves 11 countries, promotes the repatriation of talented Africans. Brazil's well funded São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) has also attracted numerous diasporic members to return even though its initiative did not explicitly target Brazilians. Some of these recruitment schemes are certainly well intentioned for capacity building and social aspirations; however, the policy discourse sometimes belies an undercurrent of ethnic nationalism. In other words, despite the claims of meritocracy in policy rhetoric to attract global talent, policy implementation favors a dominant ethnic group to entrench or expand power well beyond academia.

Another key driver behind faculty mobility is the shifting landscape of higher education in many countries due to changes in demography and political economy. The declining birth rate in many industrialized societies naturally results in a shrinking cohort of domestic students entering higher education (Grawe, 2018; Lau, 2021). The onslaught of neoliberalism steadily erodes public funding for higher education. Consequently, program closures, budget cuts and institutional insolvency reduce the number of academic posts available. Nevertheless, the doctoral pipeline continues to produce a steady stream of new academics. The oversupply of doctorates in many of these societies persuade a growing number of early career researchers to consider employment overseas especially in countries with thriving higher education systems (Huisman et al., 2002; Chou, 2020). At the other end of the career spectrum, mandatory retirement age in some higher education systems motivates some senior academics to extend their careers or provide consultancy abroad to support new programs and institutions (Czaika and Toma, 2017). These contractions

¹This program was created in 2008 and renamed in 2019 to the "National High-End Foreign Experts Recruitment Plan."

and expansions among higher education systems worldwide mediate individual agency and ultimately affect faculty mobility on a global scale.

Academic mobility: current issues and future challenges

The international mobility of students and faculty share many commonalities: both are generally assumed to be positive and transformative for individuals and institutions (Le Ha and Fry, 2021); both are largely driven by the value of certified knowledge and talent in the contemporary global economy and its labor markets; both are underpinned by the discourses of cosmopolitanism, modernity and diversity as enshrined in the mission statements of many universities. To be sure, there are also notable differences: student mobility is largely driven by individual choice and aspirations (Tran, 2016), often in relation to long-term migration plans (Kahanec and Králiková, 2011). However, faculty mobility is not necessarily due to individual agency when constraining factors such as poor academic job markets, family responsibilities, and expectations of international experience as a rite of passage in academia force scholars to move (Ackers, 2008; Lee and Kuzhabekova, 2018; Sautier, 2021; Luczaj and Holy-Luczaj, 2022).

The parameters of faculty mobility are also frequently uncertain given the nature of career development and family relocations compared to student mobility with reasonably well defined time frames and outcomes. The acceptance of faculty mobility also varies widely among institutions and disciplines unlike the overall positive support for student mobility. Specifically, the rhetoric of “international mobility” as a critical part of contemporary academic work does not reflect actual practices at many higher education institutions when hiring committees view overseas experience with skepticism or lack the contextual knowledge to properly assess performance at a foreign institution. Discriminations against returnees and academics with a very mobile track record raise serious questions about the misalignment between policy and practice (Ackers, 2008). Due to their many similarities, student and faculty mobility share a common set of ongoing trends and future challenges. In this section, we discuss several issues that affect academic mobility: barriers in policy and practice, the debate on brain drain and brain circulation, geopolitical currents, and the existential challenges of climate change. These challenges demand a fundamental re-thinking of mobility as a pillar of internationalization when restricted access and destructive outcomes contravene internationalism.

Barriers in policy and practice

Mobility demands numerous conditions which are often unspoken in the discourse of international higher education. The vast majority of higher education students and faculty worldwide are not mobile despite the tireless efforts among universities and governments in promoting academic mobility. Many individuals cannot access mobility due to structural barriers and constraints. For example, a student who must manage part-time employment to fund his/her studies is not likely to participate in mobility due to financial constraints. An employer may be reluctant to grant the student extended leave from work to study abroad, and the student would also need to find an alternative income while overseas. Astronomical tuition fees for international students also place degree mobility beyond the reach of many students worldwide. Individuals with physical disabilities are largely excluded from academic mobility (Matthews et al., 1998; Johnstone and Edwards, 2020). Other marginalized individuals include those who face social restrictions on mobility: women in Middle Eastern countries who are unable to go abroad without a male guardian (Aldossari, 2015), and LGBTQ+ minorities who may encounter hostile attitudes and violence in foreign countries (Hubain, 2017; Adeyemo, 2020). For faculty mobility, studies show that participants are predominantly male in their early career (Selmer and Luring 2010; Bauder 2012), while female and married academics are far less mobile (Leemann, 2010; Morley et al., 2018). Therefore, without policies to widen access, mobility is an exercise in privilege by a selected few rather than an opportunity that is available to all.

On the policy front, some governments and institutions have also enacted explicit measures to regulate mobility and penalize immobility. It is not uncommon to find scholarships for studying abroad with restrictions on the choice of institutions. For example, both Chile and Kazakhstan generously fund overseas studies on the condition that the host institution must rank in the top 50 and 200, respectively, in the world (Perna et al., 2015). This gate-keeping in effect legitimizes the metrics of global rankings, overlooks disciplinary excellence at lower ranked institutions, and restricts individual agency. Such policies on mobility celebrate the templates of higher education in Anglophone countries and reinforce the inequality of global higher education. Furthermore, virtually all international scholarships require recipients to travel and live abroad because mobility is conceived as the essence of an international education. Online programs and hybrid programs are therefore dismissed as unworthy or assumed to be low quality. These regulatory policies effectively reify mobility as a signifier of excellence in higher education with a disregard for new innovations in higher education delivery in the last few decades.

Brain drain and brain circulation

In the past, academic mobility has followed predominantly South-to-North patterns, with universities in the Global North (high-income, industrialized countries) attracting students and faculty because of perceived opportunities and resources, in many cases coupled with the widespread use of English as a *lingua franca* (Shields, 2013; van der Wende, 2015). These persistent patterns have elicited criticisms about “brain drain,” a term that emerged in the mid-twentieth century to describe a persistent extraction of intellectual resources from institutions and societies in the Global South (Cervantes and Guellec, 2002). As posed in much critical

literature, brain drain creates a vicious cycle in which countries in the Global South must continually replenish their intelligentsia, ultimately leading to a chronic “under development” of education systems and skilled professions (Straubhaar, 2000).

However, recent literature takes a more critical view of “brain drain” as a concept, pointing out that it is underpinned by a narrow and archaic view of mobility and immobility. For example, Rizvi (2005) argues that academic mobility is driven not only by the demand for skilled labor, but also by networks within diasporic communities and by individuals’ own identities and aspirations. Rizvi (2005) also points out how the realities of globalization also mean that social networks and technology are better positioned to enable diasporic communities to make social contributions across borders, including but not limited to their country of origin.

By definition, the concept of brain drain assumes that contributions to a society require in-situ residence. Therefore, the diasporic members living outside the homeland cannot offer any meaningful contributions to national development. This view also represents an antiquated conception of knowledge production by assuming that an academic can only contribute to the development of one country – in other words, a zero-sum accounting of knowledge that refuses to consider concurrent benefits to multiple locales. Critics of brain drain frequently elevate nation-building as a collective moral responsibility among the intelligentsia. This perspective places an additional burden and responsibility on academics from the Global South by chastising those who make mobility decisions based on academic opportunities and personal aspirations (Siekierski, 2018). A more productive approach would be to invest resources in improving work conditions at local universities rather than to censure indigenous talents who are pursuing dreams overseas.

For these reasons, “brain circulation” is now often a preferred concept to describe how patterns of academic mobility affect the capacity and development of institutions and societies (Postiglione, 2013). Unlike “brain drain,” the concept of “brain circulation” recognizes the potential benefits of mobility to *both* the country of origin and destination as well as mobility that may be temporary or that may involve “North to North” or “South to South” migration. Nevertheless, brain circulation can increase inequality between countries, even for those in the Global North, as institutions and governments compete to attract highly-educated workers (van der Wende, 2015). This competition is part of a larger geopolitical context that has become increasingly acerbic and complex.

Geopolitical currents

Academic mobility is deeply implicated in wider geopolitical relationships in the age of globalization. The exchange of ideas and individuals is fraught with political ramifications and instrumental motives. For example, in 1946 the US Fulbright Hays Act was passed, which provided significant support for academic mobility in order to promote American interests and values abroad in the context of the emerging Cold War (Johnson, 2018). The liberal world order that crystalized at the end of the twentieth century offered a context in which academic mobility thrived: growing economic liberalization and integration reduced barriers to international mobility and enabled individuals to seek opportunities abroad. The Fulbright program continues to operate today to generate benefits for the American higher education system by facilitating the bilateral exchange of academics.

However, the early 21st century has witnessed significant cracks appearing in the political norms and geopolitical equilibrium that have provided a stable base for rising levels of academic mobility. For example, the increasing power of populist, nationalist, and xenophobic political movements in Western democracies - most apparent in the election of Donald J. Trump as president and the UK’s vote to leave the European Union in 2016 - signaled an insular turn in countries that had previously been active in international fora. Rising incidents of racism toward international students in the US, UK, and Australia have alarmed prospective students and sending countries (Yao, 2019; Menchin, 2021; Zewelde, 2021). The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has further intensified racism toward international students of Asian descent as scapegoats of a global crisis. For the first time since data were recorded, the number of international students in the United States decreased (Laws and Ammigan, 2020). Altbach and de Wit (2017) argue that this change will lead to a longstanding shift in the ways these countries are perceived by international students, with accompanying shifts in mobility patterns. Statements from host country governments and universities may condemn acts of discrimination and reaffirm cultural openness, but action rather than rhetoric is critical in ensuring that mobility is conducive to meaningful experiences in learning, teaching and research.

Another important geopolitical shift has been the rise of new global powers and their adoption of academic mobility as part of a wider geopolitical strategy. In particular, the higher education systems of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (collectively known as BRICS) are increasingly implicated in national aspirations and ambitious foreign policies. Of all the BRICS countries, China has been the most prominent in leveraging higher education as a part of its foreign policy through its network of Confucius Institutes worldwide, its recruitment of international students, and its revival of the historical Silk Road (Lo and Pan, 2016; Lee et al., 2021). Confucius Institutes are funded by China and established within existing foreign universities to promote the study of Mandarin and Chinese culture. Started in 2004, there were more than 500 Confucius Institutes in 134 countries by the end of 2017 (Ye and Edwards, 2018). Ongoing operation of these institutes entails significant outbound mobility of over 440,000 Chinese teachers to teach abroad (Ye and Edwards, 2018). Students and business professionals worldwide also travel to China after gaining some language and cultural competencies at Confucius Institutes. Due to its close connection to the Chinese state, Confucius Institutes have attracted significant controversy and even the label “Chinese trojan horse” (Paradise, 2009, p. 659). As concerns about academic freedom and intellectual property grow, the US Government moved to restrict federal funds to universities with Confucius Institutes, and many universities closed their Confucius Institutes (Hall-Martin, 2020). However, others have argued that the use of Confucius Institutes as a form of “soft power” in global politics is not different from the ubiquitous presence of the British Council or Alliance Francaise (Yang, 2010; Liu, 2019). In addition to these institutes, China has sponsored scholars from other countries and regions in which it has a strategic interest, most notably sub-Saharan Africa (Mulvey, 2021). While these strategies are not

conceptually different from those taken by other countries in the past, China's determination, coupled with its resources, can dramatically shift the dynamics of international mobility in higher education.

In other ways, geopolitical realities are sparking and restricting academic mobility. In this respect, the growing global population of refugees is a key trend to which higher education institutions must adapt and respond (Arar et al., 2020). The global refugee population is at a historic high and is growing rapidly, rising from 15.9 million in 2007 to 26.3 million in 2020 (World Bank, 2021b). Additionally, many of these individuals experience increasingly long periods of displacement, with the duration of protracted displacement exceeding 21 years on average (Devictor and Do, 2017). This growth means that many international students at universities are also refugees. However, in many policies and practices, the narrow framing of international student mobility as an endeavor couched in individual choice, opportunities, aspirations and returns on investment fails to address the needs of refugee students (Earnest et al., 2010). Organizations such as Scholars At Risk (US) and the Council for At-Risk Academics (UK) have been instrumental in relocating and protecting thousands of students and academics fleeing repressive regimes and conflict areas in the world. On another front, sudden diplomatic crises can also infringe academic mobility and effectively turn international students into pawns in a game of realpolitik. For example, in 2018, the Canadian Government criticized Saudi Arabia's record on gender rights only to face threats by the Saudi Government to recall all its students from Canadian universities (McKie, 2018). For some Canadian institutions that host a large number of Saudi students, this exodus posed a serious financial risk. Similarly, in the same year, confrontations between the right-leaning Hungarian Government and the progressive Central European University resulted in the entire university relocating to Vienna and dramatically upending academic mobility to this regional center of higher education.

Climate change

As described above, levels of academic mobility have accelerated greatly in recent decades: with over 5 million mobile students and significant levels of academic mobility for migration, research collaboration, and international conferences, the number of individuals participating in academic mobility approaches the population of a megacity. However, the air travel required for this mobility has a significant environmental cost, as aviation is one of the most carbon-intensive forms of travel (Rockström et al., 2017), and growing concentrations of carbon-dioxide and other greenhouse gases are responsible for creating disruptive changes in earth's climate that pose serious threats for all of humanity (UN, 2018). To highlight the extent of these costs, Shields (2019) estimates that international student mobility results in the release of 14–34 megatons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, which is equivalent to the entire annual national emissions of a small country such as Jamaica or Croatia.

While the benefits of academic mobility have been the subject of much research, serious consideration of its environmental costs is only just beginning. Such concerns must be raised from two perspectives: first, in terms of the issues of equity and justice involved, and second in terms of the contradictions they present for universities. In relation to equity, pollution from air travel highlights immense inequalities. For instance, Shields (2019) also shows that the carbon emissions from a one-way flight from London to Shanghai are greater than the average annual emissions of an individual in many countries. This disparity raises questions of whether the benefits of mobility, as great as they may be, can be compared with the needs of another individual over an entire year of life. Such concerns also affect faculty mobility, especially given evidence that air travel has little impact on research productivity (Wynes et al., 2019).

Second, a growing number of universities have issued statements about the seriousness of climate change and the need to take urgent action (Latter and Capstick, 2021), yet many also rely on large numbers of international students as a core revenue source in their financial models (Gill, 2020). This places universities in a state of contradiction, in which their own organizational behavior undermines their declarations based on scientific evidence (O'Neill and Sinden, 2021). Both the issue of equity and of contradiction suggest that a fundamental transformation of universities may be required in order for higher education to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development. This sentiment was expressed in the Peoples' Sustainability Treaty on Higher Education (2012) from the Rio+20 conference, which declared

Before higher education can genuinely contribute to sustainable development, it must transform itself. The dominant education paradigm is centered on values and priorities that threaten sustainable development.

By extension, for international mobility to remain a core aspect of higher education in the future, fundamental changes are likely required. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced students and researchers to learn and work together without being able to meet physically, whether they are in the same city or separated by great distances. Large academic conferences have been moved online with seemingly little impact on the quality or volume of research.

Futures of mobility

This chapter has discussed academic mobility as a significant force that shapes contemporary higher education. A dramatic rise of international students and faculty has reshaped universities and systems of higher education to the extent that many could not exist

as we know them today without pursuing high levels of mobility. At the same time, there are increasing questions about whether this unrelenting rise will continue, or even whether current levels of mobility can be sustained. On the one hand, the drivers for both student and faculty mobility continues unabated; the need for skilled labor is high in many fields; opportunities for faculty are opening in rapidly growing higher education systems; universities are providing high levels of support for international students. On the other hand, it is hard to ignore the clouds on the horizon: xenophobic politics, tensions between new global powers, and the existential threats of climate change all pose very serious challenges to mobility as we know it today.

The COVID-19 pandemic is unequivocally a tragedy in terms of loss of life and health, but it also presents an opportunity to rethink academic mobility and international education (Oleksiyenko et al., 2021). As the spread of the pandemic prevented physical mobility, the academic community quickly found new ways to work together online, as large international conferences and university degree programmes moved online (Silova et al., 2020). These adaptations can be seen as part of a more general trend to replace or complement large-scale mobility of individuals by new forms of provision. For example, twinning programs and international branch campuses focus on the mobility of programmes and institutions rather than individuals (Knight, 2016). Online platforms also have many opportunities for sustained intercultural exchanges among students if embedded within courses and program curricula rather than organized as single events.

The direction that academic mobility takes in the future may help us better understand its drivers and underlying causes. If academic mobility is driven by human capital (the demand to acquire economically productive skills and to source skilled labor) then new forms of online learning and collaboration may replace physical movements across borders. In contrast, if a large part of mobility is actually driven by the demand for experience, of realizing new identities and cosmopolitan dispositions, then it will be hard for online engagement to replace physical mobility. Wider cultural assumptions, which tend to view immobility as negative and associate prestige with residence in the Global North, may also be hard to dispel (Chou, 2020). Thus, through the continued study of academic mobility, one gains insights not only into an important aspect of contemporary higher education, but also into larger, underlying changes in societies around the world.

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Internationalization of higher education

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The exceptional term and its undercurrents	239
Definitions and conceptualizations	240
International student mobility	241
Direction of mobility	241
Temporary mobility versus mobility for a complete study program	242
“Vertical” versus “horizontal” mobility and various objectives of mobility	242
Varied functions	242
Statistics and indicators	243
The value of student mobility	243
International mobility and international interaction of academics	244
Academic mobility—a major feature of internationalization	244
Irritating statistics	244
Beyond mobility: international approaches of academic work and international collaboration	245
Varied modes of knowledge transfer	245
Transnational higher education	245
MOOCs	246
Internationalization of the substance of curricula, teaching and learning	246
Future perspectives	247
References	247

The exceptional term and its undercurrents

“Internationalization of higher education” became a widely used term in the public discourse as well as in research on higher education since about the 1980s. It has been even more often on the agenda since the beginning of the 21st century. Obviously, the frequent border-crossing of knowledge and persons in higher education is viewed nowadays as a phenomenon deserving utmost attention.

The term differs from other key terms employed with reference to higher education through the ending “-zation”. In contrast to terms such as governance, teaching and learning or even “knowledge society”, it implies that the subject of analysis inevitably is in a process of growth or at least is always desired or expected to grow. When the trend of growing managerial power in higher education institutions is addressed, nobody sees the need to talk about “managerialization”, but proposals to use other terms in this area, such as “internationality” instead (see Teichler, 2012) did not gain popularity. This, of course, raises the question whether there is a stronger growth trend of border-crossing phenomena than of other key issues of higher education, whether there is a stronger normative consensus that growth should happen in this area, or whether this is just a terminological coincidence without substantial meaning.

“Internationalization”, however, is not the only term employed, when border-crossing features of higher education are reflected. There seem to be more parallel or competing terms than other key topics discussed in the public discourse on higher education.

First, “international higher education”—or occasionally “international education”—is preferred in many instances (see various articles in Deardorff et al., 2012): Either as an umbrella term without reference to specific features of internationalization, or specifically for addressing substantive thrusts and modes in learning or various ways of thinking and value judgments across countries (Marginson, 2014). We have to bear in mind, though, that the term “international higher education” often is used as well much wider: Not limited to border-crossing phenomena, but rather as “higher education in other countries”, i.e. higher education features of any kind outside the observers’ country.

Second, “globalization” has become a popular term since about the beginning of the 21st century. Occasionally, it seems to be understood as synonymous to internationalization. In contrast, specific notions are presented frequently: Either claiming that higher education all over the world is exposed to common powerful political thrusts or societal trends, or assuming that higher education itself converges rapidly all over the world (see for example various notions in OECD, 2010). Very often, we note a less polarized utilization of the two terms: While “internationalization” addresses border-crossing phenomena with the assumption that differences between countries and higher education systems remain salient, “globalization” suggests that frequent border-crossing is accompanied by or even supports the blurring of differences between countries (Teichler, 2004).

Third, in contrast, some terms underscore that cross-border phenomena in higher education are by no means world-wide similar. “Regionalization” and more specifically terms such as “Europeanization of higher education” (see for example Huisman and van der Wende, 2005) signal closer linkages between neighbor countries than between distant countries. Actually, international

cooperation and exchange in higher education is emphasized most strongly in Europe (see for example [Wächter, 2006](#)), but also plays an increasing role in other parts of the world (see for example [Yonezawa et al., 2014](#)). There are other country priorities of border-crossing activities as well, e.g. post-colonial or possibly neo-imperialist ties, targeted development aid policies, ties based on a common languages, etc.

Definitions and conceptualizations

Efforts have been made frequently to define “internationalization” and to explain the respective features of higher education—in publications comprising the views of a broad range of authors (e.g. [OECD, 2010](#); [Gaebel et al., 2011](#); [Deardorff et al., 2012](#); [de Wit et al., 2015](#); [Ogden et al., 2020](#)), in monographs of individual experts ([de Wit, 1997](#); [Knight, 2008](#)), in syntheses of the state of research on internationalization of higher education ([Teichler, 2004, 2019](#); [Kehm and Teichler, 2007](#); [Bedenlier et al., 2018](#)), and in critical accounts of such concepts and their underlying ideologies (e.g. [Buckner and Stein, 2020](#)).

In 1990, the US scholar and university manager Clark Kerr published an article titled “The internationalization of learning and the nationalization of the purposes of higher education: Two ‘Laws in Motion’ in conflict”. He pointed out that notions of universal knowledge, search of new knowledge all over the world, international knowledge and learning, and international physical mobility as widespread means of knowledge transfer are highly appreciated and can look back on long traditions. In contrast, the regulatory systems, the institutional settings, and many organizational features in higher education have been all the time under national regimes—[Kerr \(1990\)](#) even observed “nationalization” in those respects. Even though this article has not been referred so frequently, it might be viewed as a major early voice pointing out that “internationalization” in terms of knowledge is embedded into a logic different from that in terms of organization, cooperation, etc. This raises the question, of course, whether we could observe eventually also an organizational and substantial internationalization of the institutional setting of higher education in recent years.

Most overviews on internationalization of higher education name between half a dozen and a dozen thematic areas. A frequently quoted overview on respective research, for example, named seven major areas: (a) International mobility of students and academic staff, (b) mutual influences of higher education systems on each other, (c) internationalization of the substance of teaching, learning and research, (d) institutional strategies of internationalization, (e) knowledge transfer, (f) cooperation and competition, (g) national and supranational policies regarding the international dimension of higher education ([Kehm and Teichler, 2007](#)).

Based on a review of the state of respective research, six “key meanings” of internationalization of higher education had been presented by the author of this article as “most widely spread”:

- Worldwide/border-crossing knowledge transfer (books, media, etc.),
- Physical mobility across countries (students, academic staff, administrative staff, etc.),
- International cooperation and communication (between countries, institutions of higher education, individual scholars, etc.),
- International education and research (comparative approaches, intercultural learning, socialization for international understanding, etc.),
- International similarity (convergence, globalization, Europeanization, etc.),
- International reputation (“world-class universities”, “international quality”, etc.) ([Teichler, 2017](#)).

This list of “key meanings” does not only refer to border-crossing of knowledge and border-crossing of persons and institutional cooperation, but also to the perceptions of the world scenery of higher education: Do national higher education system remain clearly distinct? Do they become more similar? Does increasing international interaction in higher education call the “nationality” of higher education into question? Or do we even observe a re-nationalization in terms of a fierce competition to put one’s own national system strongly on the international map?

It is not possible to present a list of the major areas of activities in the domain of “internationalization of higher education”, which could be accepted as appropriate by more or less all the key actors and key experts. Rather, we can easily present a multitude of diverse lists.

First, even a minimum consensus is lacking as regards the seemingly most obvious phenomena, as will be discussed below: For example, who is included and what is excluded, when we talk about international student mobility.

Second, internationalization policies and activities traditionally differ between countries and institutions according to a widely assumed pecking order of academic quality and reputation. For example, some academically highly reputed countries try to attract students, doctoral candidates and young scholars to go there and eventually the brightest of them to stay there. What often is called “brain gain” for the hosting countries, obviously is viewed as “brain drain” for the countries of origin, even though the latter countries eventually might also have some benefits in terms of academic cooperation, late returns, etc.—“brain circulation” (see the overview of this discourse in [Wächter, 2006](#)).

Third, we observe dramatic differences of internationalization policies between individual countries and regions of the world, which cannot be explained as consequence of the above named pecking order of quality and reputation. In an analysis of dominant policies in European countries undertaken in the early years of the 20th century, [Huisman and van der Wende \(2004\)](#) noted a spirit of “cooperation” prevailing in some countries, of “competition” dominant in some other countries, and a mixture of both in others.

Fourth, internationalization approaches change over time. Many observers noted a recent increase of economic and utilitarian thrusts of internationalization policies in various countries, for example vividly characterized as “From the pursuit of knowledge to the pursuit of revenue” (Reisberg and Rumbley, 2014): While some actors and experts believe that this growing competitive spirit is beneficial for academia and the knowledge system in many respects, others fear a loss of academic creativity (see the discussion in Krücken et al., 2018). Similarly, some observers note a growing nationalistic undercurrent—one expert even coined such an attitude in the most influential countries of the academic world “hegemonic internationalization” (Scott, 2015): Efforts to shape international cooperation in higher education in such a way that one’s own country gains financially, economically and politically at the expense of other countries. In contrast, “international understanding” and “global citizenship” are high on the agenda in other countries. Finally, some observers argue that there are changes of the political *Zeitgeist* which affect internationalization policies and activities almost everywhere; for example, a mood of “anti-internationalization” (Rhoades, 2017) seemed to spread in the second decade of the 21st century—a mood which on the one hand seems to endanger the growth of international activities and on the other hand to stimulate efforts of strengthening activities aimed at reinforcing “international understanding”.

Fifth, we note quite a dynamic development of actual activities: While most internationally mobile students aimed to spend the whole study program in another country initially, short-term mobility gained popularity after a while. While individual scholars were the obvious key actors of international cooperation for many years, higher education managers increasingly opted for institutional arrangements of cooperation in recent years supported by a growing number of professional staff in international offices, and many universities all over the world turned to explicit formulations of internationalization strategies (Sursock, 2016). While physical mobility—of students and academics—had been in the limelight for a long time, efforts to promote international learning without physical mobility spread in recent years—for example called “transnational higher education”, “MOOCs” and “internationalization at home”.

A close view at the available literature also shows that hundreds of definitions of internationalization of higher education have been put forward over the years. Given the multitude of phenomena under consideration as well as the diversity of policies, strategies and value judgments (see for example Altbach and Knight, 2007; Seeber et al., 2016), it does not come as a surprise to note that not a single definition has been accepted more or less generally and the academics and students have varied notions of the terms frequently employed (Cotton et al., 2019). The authors of a recent overview claim: “The most commonly accepted definition of internationalization is ‘the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education’ (Knight, 2008)” (de Wit et al., 2015, p. 38). Obviously, however, this definition—putting emphasis on the teaching function of higher education—does not cover the actual breadth of notions.

The multitude of policies, strategies and value judgments of the actors involved and the multitude of activities actually undertaken cannot be mirrored completely in an encyclopedia article. Therefore, information will be provided primarily on international student mobility, international mobility and cooperation of academics, and various recent approaches to strengthen international dimensions of the substance of curricula, teaching and learning.

International student mobility

The use of the terms “international mobility in higher education”, obviously addressing all groups of mobile persons, further “international academic mobility”, either referring to the mobility of the academic profession (for example Cavalli and Teichler, 2015) or jointly to mobility of academics, students and administrators (see for example Blumenthal et al., 1996), and finally—most frequently—of “international student mobility” (see for example Byran and Dervin, 2008; van Mol, 2014; Ogden et al., 2020) underscores that border-crossing physical movement—notably of students, doctoral candidates and academic staff—is most frequently addressed in the public discourse about international features of higher education. Impressive figures are named, substantial funds are allocated to it, and institutions of higher education are visibly active to make mobility a success story. Thereby, international student mobility is most often in the limelight of public policies, support schemes, institutional strategies, administrative support as well as of assessment of the respective processes and outcomes—not the least, because statistics report even seven-digit figures.

Based on a superficial first-glance view one might draw the conclusion that international student mobility is a relatively homogeneous feature. For example, many institutions of higher education have a single international office taking care for all strands of student mobility, and international educational statistics present aggregates of all mobile students in higher or in tertiary education. A careful look, however, reveals an enormous diversity of goals, expectations, functions and results.

Direction of mobility

All moves of students from one to another country can be viewed from the side of the country of origin and from the side of the country of destination. Terms are employed such as “outwards” and “inwards” or “outbound” and “inbound” mobility, “outgoing” and “incoming” students, but also “foreign students” and “study abroad”—the latter with reference to the students’ nationality rather than directly to the location of the movement (see the overview in Teichler, 2017).

In some countries, strong efforts are made primarily to attract students from other countries, and a high proportion of foreign or incoming students often is viewed as indicating the academic quality in the hosting country or of the hosting university: Some

“rankings” of “world-class universities” take figures of inward mobile or foreign students as well as of foreign academic staff as indicators of academic excellence (Kehm and Stensaker, 2009). Notably the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand strive for and succeed in hosting more than ten times as many foreign students, who as a rule have to pay enormous tuition fees, as in encouraging students of their own country successfully to opt for study abroad: This is based on the widespread assumption in these countries that knowledge generated and disseminated at home is worth to be exported rather than being internationalized through cooperation and inflow of persons from other societies and cultures (see for example the critique voiced by Scott, 2021, p. 55). Other countries, for example France and Germany, are active in attracting students from many countries, in stimulating reciprocal flows, e.g. “exchange” with partner institutions abroad, for example through regular cooperation with partner institutions in other countries, and in encouraging their own students to collect international experience. Similarly, a reciprocal exchange with neighbor countries was encouraged in most European countries cooperating in the so-called “Bologna Process” (see Diener, 2019). Finally, outwards mobility dominates in many cases: About two-thirds students studying abroad—according to international educational statistics—come from developing countries, where outwards mobility as a rule is much higher than inwards mobility (OECD, 2021). Many observers fascinated by absolute figures instead of paying attention to the proportion among all students, name China and India in these contexts, i.e. the countries with the largest overall population.

In contrast to the attention paid to the frequency of foreign or inwards mobile students, the ministers of the European countries cooperating in the “Bologna Process” even concluded in 2009, as will be discussed below, that increasing the proportion of one’s own student students studying or having other study-related experiences abroad is the single most important measurable target of internationalization policy (see details of this policy in Vögtle, 2019). Accordingly, international knowledge and international understanding on the part of own students became the most important goals to be strived for.

Temporary mobility versus mobility for a complete study program

The majority of international mobile students spend the whole study program up to the degree in the hosting country, for example 3, 4 or more years up to bachelor degree. A substantial proportion, however, studies in another country only for a year, half a year or an even shorter period. The former students are characterized, for example, as “degree mobile” or “diploma mobile” students, the latter as “temporarily mobile”, “short-term mobile” or “credit-mobile” students. Temporary student mobility notably got in the limelight of public discourse, since the European Commission established the ERASMUS program of the European Commission in the late 1980s and eventually provided funds for hundred thousands of students aimed at covering the supplementary costs of studying at a partner institution of another European country for at most 1 year. Research undertaken on student mobility suggests that a large proportion of students mobile for a whole study program often have chosen a university and a country considered to be academically prestigious, and that they aim to adapt more or less completely to the host institution’s and the host country’s environment. In contrast, temporary mobility is often preferred to collect other experience to that at home at an institution of more or less the same quality as at home: Variety of experience and learning from contrast are strived for to widen the horizon.

“Vertical” versus “horizontal” mobility and various objectives of mobility

The option to study in another country, the option to study there for a short period or all the study program as well as the choice of the host country and of the host institution are influenced by varied expectations as regards the conditions, processes and results of learning in a country different from that of origin. The author of this article has argued that two different types of mobility can be established along those lines: On the one hand “vertical mobility”, when students are not primarily interested in acquiring knowledge being distinctive from that at home, but rather in experiencing an academically superior level of teaching and learning to that at home, and on the other hand “horizontal mobility”, when a similar level of academic level is expected to help students to get acquainted with contrasting knowledge and a contrasting academic environment (Teichler, 2004). Enhancing academic quality versus broadening understanding of the variety of academic and cultural ways of thinking are the respective key goals.

Varied functions

A close look reveals that the functions of international student mobility are enormously varied. But it seems to be appropriate to name three major directions. First, students aim to learn differently in another countries in domains, in which they could learn more or less the same at home as well: For example a student of physics—a subject shaped by universal knowledge—is likely to opt for study in another country either for getting specialized in sub-areas not well provided at home or for getting exposed to areas of knowledge also provided at home, but abroad on a higher academic level. Second, students opt for study in another country in order to become specialists on other countries, cultures or languages, e.g. for Chinese studies or American studies, to become interpreters, foreign language teachers, etc., or to become experts of international phenomena, for example of international law. Third, students are internationally mobile, because they want to become versatile in doing comparative analyses as well as understanding different cultures and societies. This “learning from contrast” and this awareness of the diversity of options in most areas of academia and life are not bound necessarily to specific academic disciplines and professions, but often viewed as valuable in many life and work situations.

Statistics and indicators

Statistical figures tend to be presented to underscore the prominent role of international student mobility in the process of internationalization of higher education. We often read that student mobility increased impressively from about 200,000 or 300,000 about five decades ago to more than six millions nowadays (see for example [Cummings, 1991](#); [Banks and Bhandari, 2012](#); [Wächter and Ferencz, 2012](#); [Gérard and Sanna, 2017](#); [OECD, 2021](#)). The growth rate, however, looks quite moderate, if the increase of the overall number of students worldwide is taken into consideration: Accordingly, only about 2% of the students were enrolled in another country over a long period, and this figure has risen to at most 3% in recent years.

As a rule, annual statistics collected and published jointly by UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat (the statistical agency of the European Commission) are referred to. Reports published by the European Parliament ([Lanzendorf and Teichler, 2005](#)) and by the Academic Cooperation Association, the federation of national agencies for the promotion of international mobility in academia in European countries ([Kelo et al., 2006](#); [Teichler et al., 2011](#); [Wächter and Ferencz, 2012](#)), however, showed “deplorable” weaknesses of these statistics. Notably, the statistical agencies of the individual countries were asked by the international agencies to deliver figures of “foreign students”, even though more detailed figures available in some European countries indicated that only about three-quarters of the foreign students in these countries are “foreign mobile”, while about one-quarter are “foreign non-mobile”, i.e. do not change the country for the purpose of studying there, but rather have lived and learned already there prior to embarking on higher education; additionally, possibly about one-tenth of mobile students can be named “non-foreign mobile”: They have lived and learned in a country different from that of their citizenship prior to study and have turned to the country of their citizenship for the purpose of study, or they have lived in another country prior to study and have taken over the citizenship of host country of study while studying there. Moreover, the international agencies ask the national agencies not to include temporarily mobile students into the statistics, defined at times as students studying abroad for less than 1 year and at times as those studying abroad for up to 1 year—i.e. the type of mobile students viewed to be most important one in many countries and possibly comprising about a quarter of all internationally mobile students in the world.

The international agencies responded to this critique recently in encouraging the individual countries to distinguish foreign students, who turned to host country for the purpose of study, and foreign students who lived and/or learned there already prior to study; the former are called “international students” in recent statistical publications. But temporarily mobile students are aimed to be excluded in international statistics up to the present.

As mentioned above, most European countries involved in the Bologna Process have departed in 2009 from the strong emphasis placed on foreign or inwards mobile students. First, they pay primarily attention now and are primarily interested to raise the proportion of outgoing students: How many of our students gain international experience? Second, they suggested to measure international student mobility in a way that “degree-mobile” and temporarily mobile students are taken into consideration alongside; this is achieved by setting target for, what might be called the “event of student mobility in the course of study” ([Teichler, 2013](#)): Actually, the target was set in 2009 that 20% of all students from European countries ought to have acquired international experienced through study or study-related experience—temporarily or for the whole study period—in another country by the year 2020. New means of statistical data collection had to be promoted. Available data suggested at that time that the mean rate across countries was already above 10%; subsequent data collections showed a growth almost in tune with that target ([Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, 2018](#)). One could ask, however, what such a target for a whole continent really might mean, because the rate seems to have differed by country at the time, when the goals was formulated, from less than 5% to more than 20%.

The value of student mobility

An analysis of articles on internationalization of higher education published in reviewed journals ([Kosmützky and Putty, 2016](#)) suggests that “impact” and “outcomes” of student mobility are neglected area of research. In contrast, detailed substantive reviews ([Kehm and Teichler, 2007](#); [de Wit, 2009](#); [Deardorff and van Gaalen, 2012](#); [van Mol, 2014](#); [Egron-Polak et al., 2015](#)), drawing from a broad range of sources, showed a wealth of studies. Actually, most studies addressing the results of student mobility have been undertaken by administrators and practitioners and present information on a single or a few higher education institutions. Large comparative studies such as the “Study Abroad Evaluation Project” in the 1980s ([Opper et al., 1990](#)) and those reviewing the ERASMUS program (notably [Teichler and Maiworm, 1997](#); [Janson et al., 2009](#); [European Commission, 2014](#))—all focusing on temporary mobile students—remained exceptional.

Many analyses address issues of study success. Obviously, many students mobile “vertically” for the whole study program face difficulties in coping with the academic expectations and the social settings abroad: According to some studies, rates of degree-mobile students’ prolongation and drop-out are often more than twice as high as those of host country students. As regards temporary mobility, attention often is was paid to the question, whether students’ study achievements abroad are completely or only selectively recognized upon return. Although the studies undertaken could not clearly determine the extent to which limited recognition was due to lower achievement, to different views about the compatibility of the substance of course abroad and at home, or to unfair procedures and judgments, this reinforced policies in favor of more complete recognition—most prominently the Lisbon Declaration 1997 of various international organizations (see [Teichler, 2003](#)).

Other analyses aim at establishing whether international mobility enhances the students’ international orientation. There are indications that “global awareness”, “international understanding”, etc. grow, but some studies suggest not to overestimate such

impact. For example, the above named comparative study undertaken in the 1980s showed that students opting for temporary mobility were already more internationally oriented prior to the sojourn than non-mobile students and hardly changed their attitude later; also students seem to have mixed experiences during the study period abroad and on average do not have a more positive view of the host country afterward. Further, quite a number of studies looks at the career of formerly mobile graduates; in most cases, slightly higher success as compared to formerly non-mobile graduates is reported, but the strongest impact is not “vertical” (easy transition to employment, higher status and income, etc.), but rather “horizontal”: A more frequent turn to international occupations and work task (temporary work assignments abroad, frequent contact with foreign countries and people, regular use of foreign languages, etc.). Finally, research in this domain suggests that the motives for studying in another country are enormously varied; the majority state later that they appreciate the experience and results, but according to a broader range of criteria than those in the limelight of the dominant internationalization policies and strategies.

International mobility and international interaction of academics

Academic mobility—a major feature of internationalization

International mobility of academic staff is not as frequently referred to in the public discourse as on internationalization as student mobility, but might be viewed as more influential for teaching, learning and research than any other means. A look at the diverse modes and functions of academic mobility supports such a view (see [Teichler, 2015](#)).

A survey undertaken in 2012 in 33 European countries showed that the majority of researchers in Europe had been abroad for some period during their academic career ([IDEA Consult, 2013](#)). Some academics spend a “sabbatical” abroad to refresh their academic horizon; others cooperate with scholars from other countries and visit them for a while. A survey undertaken in 2007–2008 in almost 20 countries worldwide indicated that almost one-fifth had been in another country during the last 3 years for teaching purposes ([Jung et al., 2014](#)). Support schemes have been established in many countries to facilitate short-term mobility of scholars, and some supra-national provisions are worth named as well: ERASMUS also comprised support continuously over the years for short-term teaching mobility; impressive programs of the European Union for short-term junior academic staff mobility were eventually made more visible in the late 1990s through the choice of the name “Marie Curie-Program”.

Available statistics suggests that about one-fifth of persons being awarded a doctoral degree are foreign, i.e. not citizens of the country in which the awarding-institution is located. On average of economically advanced countries, more than one-tenth of academics employed at universities are foreigners—in some countries even more than one-third.

Scholars involved in the above named survey in almost 20 countries developed typologies of academic mobility ([Goastellec and Pekari, 2014](#); [Huang, 2014](#))—without claiming, though, that the typologies cover the variety of moves completely. On the one hand, many scholars professionally active in the country of their citizenships have been internationally mobile in early stages of their career, e.g. “study mobile academics”, “Ph.D. mobile academics”, “early career mobile academics”, etc. On the other hand, many scholars having a citizenship different from that of the country of work or having had a different citizenship but eventually having turned to the citizenship of the country of work differ according to the stage of move to the current country of work: “Early immigrants”—already prior to study, “study mobile immigrants”—formerly mobile students who remained in the host country, “Ph.D. mobile immigrants”, and “professional immigrants”, i.e. those changing the country of employment at later career stages. The terms indicate that the study period, the doctoral phase and the early career are crucial mobility stages of academics.

Irritating statistics

Statistical overviews about the frequency of academics’ mobility are even more irritating than those on student mobility. The educational divisions of the international organizations collecting and publishing education statistics provide information on “teaching staff”, while the research divisions of the same international organizations collect and publish completely different statistics on “scientists”; only few reports draw from both sources. All these statistics inform about the number of foreigners and not about mobility for the purpose of academic work, about foreigners employed and not about those being in the country academically active for short periods without an employment status, and finally about those currently employed in the respective country and not those who had been mobile in earlier stages of live ([Teichler et al., 2011](#)).

Many observers conclude that a high proportion of foreign and other internationally experienced scholars is beneficial for the quality of teaching and research. As already mentioned with respect to student mobility, the rate of foreign academic staff is taken as an indicator in some ranking studies (see the overviews in [Kehm and Stensaker, 2009](#)). In some countries, deliberate efforts are made to enhance the academic capacity through the recruitment of talented foreign scholars. As already discussed above, such “brain gain” policies and the corresponding “brain drain” situation in other countries indicate most directly the often conflicting scene of internationalization of higher education ([Wächter, 2006](#)). Further drawbacks are reported: Substantial costs of mobility and costs of knowledge transfer ([Wagner, 2006](#); [Kwiek, 2018](#)); costs for advanced countries for helping catch-up developments in medium-income and low income countries; last not least problems of foreign and mobile academics to adapt to the administrative and cultural milieu of the host country and the host institution.

Beyond mobility: international approaches of academic work and international collaboration

Altogether, mobility of academics certainly is a key driver to the internationalization of knowledge. But we do not know as a rule, what role factors such as physical mobility actually play. Some surveys at least provide information on international activities of academics and on the role international elements play for their academic work. According to the above named survey undertaken in almost 20 countries, about 60% of academics on average across countries stated that they emphasize international perspectives in their teaching, more than half characterized their research as international in scope or orientation, and about 40% reported that they collaborate with colleagues abroad in research. The figures, however, vary substantially by country, as it might be illustrated for economically advanced countries. An international approach in research was stated by 75% of academics in Italy, 55% in Germany and only 41% in the United States. Collaboration in research with colleagues abroad was reported by more than 60% of academics in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, 50% in Germany, and only 33% in the United States and 24% in Japan (Teichler et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2014; Rostan and Ceravolo, 2015). Internationality is widely spread in some countries across all these various measures. For example, few Japanese scholars are internationally mobile and collaborate with foreign scholars, but many emphasize internationality in the substance of their academic work. Finally, a substantial proportion of scholars in the United States is not international according to the measures named, while internationality of higher education in this country seems to be reinforced notably through the “import” of doctoral candidates and junior academics.

Varied modes of knowledge transfer

Even though physical mobility of students and academics has been an impressively growing component as well as a major target of policies and strategies to internationalize higher education in recent decades, other modes of knowledge transfer across borders never were viewed as marginal and have been more strongly emphasized in recent decades. Notably, the conditions for spreading information across borders improved through ICT, and efforts intensified to internationalize the views and expertise also of the non-mobile students.

Cooperation based on informal links or on formal contracts spread enormously between small units, departments or whole institutions of higher education of two or more countries (see for example Seeber et al., 2016). Many universities have a list of more than a hundred partnerships. Approaches and arrangements of such partnerships are so manifold that hardly any generalizable statement can be made about concepts, operations and impact. Evaluations of internationalization strategies of universities undertaken in many countries, however, show that this is a typical tension: If a department or a university sets a priority of cooperating with certain partners based on certain goals, some internationally active academics of that university and department fear that the broad range of other individual initiatives based on the variety of expertise within this institutional setting might be disadvantaged.

Some moves to shape international cooperation newly became overarching movements. “Transnational higher education”, “MOOCs” as well as various approaches to internationalize the substance of study programs were the most visible ones in the first two decades of the 21st century.

Transnational higher education

In recent decades activities increased to provide students in selected universities or departments the opportunity to benefit from the substance and the mode of teaching and learning prevailing in partner countries without being internationally mobile. For example, Knight (2012) identified a generational shift from “people mobility” to “program and provider mobility” and eventually “educational hubs”. Terms such as “borderless”, “cross-border”, “off-shore” higher education and “foreign-backed” universities spread, but eventually “transnational higher education” became the most widely accepted term (Amaral, 2016; Knight and McNamara, 2017; Cracium and Oroc, 2018; see also Kosmützky and Putty, 2016).

Two types of transnational higher education developed: On the one hand, what also often had been called “off-shore higher education” or also the “satellite model” of transnational higher education (Knight, 2015): Universities with a high academic standard and often with a strong commercial interest—frequently universities in the US, the UK and Australia—established regular study programs in academically less favored countries. A “branch campus” or a regular university might have been founded there—possibly with a substantial proportion of mobile academic staff, whereby the curricula and the degree award are controlled by the mother institution abroad. On the other hand, “cooperative higher education” is preferred by governments and higher education institutions in Germany, France and some other European countries and their partners. Departments or universities of a bi-national character are established—often characterized as “joint” or “bi-national” institutions: The academic thrust of the partner institution abroad shapes the substance of teaching, learning and research to a considerable extent, mobile teacher play a major role at least in the initial years, and degrees of the host partner might be awarded initially, but administrative matters are decided upon jointly from the outset, and the institution is expected to be fully recognized in the country of location and to grow gradually into its national system in administrative terms while keeping key elements of border-crossing substance.

Transnational higher education cannot be arranged easily. Some “branch campuses” operate well, but there have been cases criticized as “degree mills” or “rogue” arrangements; Therefore, international organizations—notably UNESCO and OECD—cooperated in establishing quality criteria (see Rosa et al., 2016). Governments, managers and academics of the two countries involved in each case often turned out to have conflicting views about the extent of influence of the host side and the host academic characteristics versus its adaption to the home country’s thrusts (for example Smith, 2010; Qin, 2021).

MOOCs

Around the turn of the century the idea gained momentum—initially in the United States and subsequently in other countries—to make individual courses or even complete study programs of universities available online all over the world. Various distance universities decided to offer their courses to their students online, and various highly reputed universities decided to make individual courses publicly accessible everywhere. Within a few years, virtual knowledge transfer expanded at an enormous pace. In this framework “Massive Open Online Courses”, abbreviated “MOOCs”, became a popular concept. Some advocates of this movement even believed that most students all over the world eventually would listen to presentations of a few famous scholars and take whole study programs from famous universities far-away, while local academics would shift to the role of tutors. The title of a book, which took stock of this movement, i.e. “From Books to MOOCs?” (de Corte et al., 2016a), underscores the impressive shift as regards the media of knowledge transfer, and the book itself points out as well the possible organizational and financial changes in higher education.

After a few years, the MOOCs movement could be called a “hype” in the public discourse on innovative developments in higher education (see for example Kim, 2014). It advocates argued that MOOCs promote democratization of higher education by providing free open access to knowledge and teaching for everybody everywhere. Moreover, acquiring knowledge online in such a way was expected to be embedded quickly by many didactic innovations, e.g. creative modes of group learning and creative mixes of online-learning and face-to-face teaching and learning arrangements. High hopes, however, soon gave way to criticisms that MOOCs involve the risk of just distributing conventional standardized modes of teaching and curricula, e.g. heavy reliance merely on lectures and multiple choice exams. Practices of offering online courses freely, but charging substantial fees for the assessment of students’ achievements and the certification of courses were viewed as even increasing inequality in higher education. Some research projects came to the conclusion that drop-outs rates in MOOCs arrangements are higher than in traditional provisions (de Corte et al., 2016b). Yet, activities spread to safeguard the quality, and MOOCs and other “open learning” arrangements continue to be expected to expand in the future.

Internationalization of the substance of curricula, teaching and learning

Already at times, when international mobility was paid utmost attention as a means for internationalization of higher education, actors and experts never lost sight of the view that the substance of learning, teaching and research is crucial. While mobility is a means for opening the opportunity of enhancing international knowledge and international values—often in ways of individual “experiential learning”, more direct ways of shaping the acquisition of international knowledge and stimulating shifts of attitudes and values toward increasing international open-mindedness and—more broadly—toward “intercultural competences” (see Gregersen-Hermans, 2015) frequently were strived for—for example with reference to the term “international higher education”.

When efforts to increase international student mobility were high on the agenda in the 1980s and 1990s, awareness grew as well than even the most optimistic targets discussed assumed that only a minority of students will be mobile. Eventually the idea gained popularity since the 1990s that non-mobile students should be prepared similarly to live in and to contributing to an internationalizing world. The concept of “internationalization at home”, first formulated in Europe in the 1990s, gained popularity in the 21st century (see Beelen and Leask, 2011; Robson et al., 2018)—defined as “the purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimension into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments” (Beelen and Jones, 2011, p. 76). Many institutions of higher education actually intensified efforts to offer chances of knowledge acquisition and personality development for non-mobile students similar to those of mobile students.

Further concepts surface to increase internationality of the substance of teaching and learning comprehensively. “Internationalization of the curriculum” was advocated—defined as the “incorporation of international, intercultural and/or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study” (Leask, 2015). Also the term “comprehensive internationalization” is used to describe efforts to integrate strategically international, intercultural and global features into the values, processes and outcomes of higher education (Hudzik, 2015). Some concepts underscore both the importance of formal and informal processes of international learning in general, while others emphasize specific targets of specific activities, for example education students for “global citizenship” (Horey et al., 2018).

Efforts to internationalize the substance have been most frequently voiced with respect to curricula, teaching and learning. It is widely assumed as well that the substance of research becomes more international along the rising opportunities for knowledge transfer and along the increasing international cooperation of academics, as discussed above. Notably, scholars are increasingly expected to reflect the internationality of their knowledge transmission activities and to contribute in a targeted way to their students’ international competences.

Future perspectives

Notions about likely future perspectives often are shaped by the recent past. Most reflections regarding the domain under consideration here still adhere to the ending “-zation” in assuming that cross-border issues of higher education will be addressed increasingly in the future. The range of activities are likely to spread even further, and we might move toward a more “intelligent internationalization” (Goodwin and de Wit, 2020).

Moreover, many experts believe that most innovative movements in higher education will internationalize. For example, more direct ways of shaping society through higher education, as often called “third mission of higher education”, have led to concepts such as “internationalization of higher education for society” (Brandenburg et al., 2020; see also Leask and de Gayardon, 2021). Or growing research priorities, such as those emphasizing “sustainable development”, gradually will become themes in efforts to internationalize the curriculum (Gregersen-Hermanns, 2021).

Some thoughts about possible future development, however, are stimulated by ambivalent or by problematic developments in recent years. For example, experts observing the declining international mobility and the increasing digitalization of international communication in the course of the Corona pandemic (see for example Reimers and Marmolejo, 2021) ponder the relative strengths and weaknesses of future virtual communication versus face-to-face communication in higher education. And many actors and observers fear that moves toward a re-nationalization of politics and toward increasing “international misunderstanding” visible in the second decade of the 21st century might intensify in the future and might undermine the mutual trust required for the continuous internationalization of higher education.

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Global processes: global trade in international education and the international education-migration nexus

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Introduction	250
Forces underpinning global trade in international education	250
Historical and geopolitical processes	251
Economic processes	251
Commercialization of international education in different countries and impacts	252
International education and skilled migration	254
Conclusion and implications for future research	256
References	256

Introduction

International education has been driven by a range of rationales and aspirations, related to human and institutional capacity building, transnational knowledge and cultural exchange, geopolitical and commercial gains. The degree of global trade in international education has been significantly expanded over the last three decades. In major international education providing countries, currently international education is largely shaped by commercial orientations and often measured in economic terms (Rizvi, 2020; Tran, 2020). Global trade in international education is driven by a web of interrelated historical, geopolitical, and economic processes. As the trade orientation in international education heightens, universities have shifted from merely public entities to corporate enterprises that function in business models (Blackmore and Sawers, 2015; Connell, 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility of the transactional higher education model, characterized by increased reliance on revenues from international students to substantially subsidize institutional operations, especially in major receiving countries of international students such as Australia, United States, United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand.

Key education destinations have actively capitalized on international education as a mechanism to support their nation's economy through its connection with the competition over skills or "global race for talent" (Shachar and Hirschl, 2013). The international education and migration nexus is pushed through by the view that the post-study work and migration prospects are both critical to host countries' destination attraction and responsive to their need to tap into a qualified pool of workforce to fill out areas of skills shortages and support economic growth. The importance of post-study work and migration opportunities in international students' decision about study destination is reinforced by the literature which shows that the tightening of immigration policy in the aftermath of events such as September the 11th in the US and the UK's 2012 decision to remove post study work rights (Kaplan, 2019; Johnson, 2018; Ilieva, 2017) resulted in the decline of international students in periods shortly after the above events. However, there has been a mismatch between policy goals and the actual processes and practices associated with the link between international education and migration, leading to a range of consequences. This situation has resulted in the modifications of international education and skilled migration policies across key destination countries, including the introduction of the post-study work visas that allow international students to remain in the host countries to gain work experiences post-graduation. The past decade has seen the evolution of the international education-migration nexus to the international education-work-migration nexus.

This article provides a critical review of the ways in which international education has been shaped and re-shaped as global trade. First, it outlines the complex historical, geopolitical, and economic processes underpinning international education as global trade. Second, it reviews policies and programs driven by the commercialization of international education in different countries and the impacts. Third, it provides insights into the development of the international education and migration link and the emergence of the international education-work-migration nexus. Fourth, it discusses emergent research agendas, including how international education as trade is manifested in traditional sending countries of international students and how international education has been re-shaped in response to COVID-19.

Forces underpinning global trade in international education

While international education is not a new phenomenon, it is only in the last three decades that it has become part of global trade and seen as a tradable commodity or service across borders (Knight, 2004). Global trade in international education is not driven by one solitary rationale but rather, by a set of complex historical, geopolitical, and economic processes.

Historical and geopolitical processes

Rationales for international education have evolved over different historical periods, from the pursuit of academic and cultural exchange, to include development aid, international cooperation, public diplomacy and commercial motivations (de Wit, 2013; Knight, 2015; Tran and Bui, 2021; Tran et al., 2021). As Guruz (2008) and Welch and Denman (1997) stated, traces of international education dated back to medieval times when scholars “wandered” across the world in search of knowledge and to conduct enquiry-based work. During colonial time, cross-border education was fueled by the idea of enlightenment whereby colonizers used education as a tool to equip the local elite of the colonized nations with Western knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet the economic and geopolitical interests of colonial powers (Rizvi, Forthcoming).

In the post-independence period until early 1980s, international education served the developmental and aid purposes as developed countries provided technical support and knowledge transfer to assist with capacity building for newly independent nations (de Wit, 2013; Rizvi, 2011). Geopolitical drivers also underpinned international education program during this period both in the West and among the socialist countries, which could now be seen as a mechanism of soft power development. Examples of education aid include the Colombo Plan by Australia, Fulbright Program by the US and development programs for socialist countries by the Soviet Union. While these programs took the form of developmental undertaking, they were at the same time believed to serve the political purposes of aid-providing countries as international education aid was used as a means of soft power and public diplomacy for aid providers to influence aid recipients. For example, the Australian Colombo Plan and the US Fulbright Plan were designed to keep developing countries from falling into the communist bloc (Rizvi, 2011). Therefore, development needs were taken into account but so were the benefits of serving geopolitical purposes and building relationships between states, many of which were former colonial powers, and elites in postcolonial states. While these international education as aid programs assisted with human capital building for aid-receiving countries and fostered long-lasting people-to-people connections and country-to-country ties, international education during this period was also seen to represent a new form of colonial practice that reinforced power inequalities across the globe (Escobar, 1995). Further to that, the development intent underpinning these forms of education aid was not fully achieved when a proportion of international students from aid-receiving countries decided not to return home, causing brain drain for these countries (Rizvi, 2005). This was accompanied by financial pressures experienced by aid providers who no longer had the capacity to support poorer countries (Rizvi, 2011; Lenn, 2000). Subsequently, by the mid-1980s, the developmentalist ideology of international education lost its grounds, giving way to new rationales of international education. The shift was from aid to academic exchange and curriculum development in continental Europe, as compared to the move from aid to trade in countries such as the UK and Australia (de Wit, 2013) that will be discussed further in later parts of this chapter.

Economic processes

In addition to the historical and geopolitical drivers, the shift of focus to trade in international education has been shaped and strengthened by market forces, liberalization of trade and neoliberal ideologies.

Market forces

International trade in education services is driven by market forces on the demand-supply basis (Ziguras, 2005). With regard to program mobility, institutions in the Global North provide education services and in return gain financial profits and international branding from transnational education. Meanwhile, foreign partners, predominantly from the Global South receive international education, largely to build the capacity of their education systems and national economies (Altbach and Knight, 2007). This reflects the push-pull model borrowed from international trade (Choudaha and de Wit, 2014; Maringe and Carter, 2007). In turn, international student mobility can be seen as an outcome of supply and commercialization orientation from providers in the Global North and a response to students’ demand and growth of middle-class families from the Global South countries (Bamberger et al., 2019; Tran, 2020). That is, students tend to study in countries other than their own where the supply is perceived to be greater and their demand could be met. The key change leading to the commercialization of international education was that students were able to travel more easily, that more elites in postcolonial states could afford to study in high-income countries, and that many developed countries realized this growing demand and decided to capitalize on it by allowing their institutions to recruit massive number of international students and charge fees.

Liberalization of international trade

Commercialization and commodification of international education have been facilitated by liberalization of trade in education services that was primarily catalyzed by free trade agreements. The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization coming into force in 1995 has lowered barriers to movement, enhanced the transparency and measures affecting trade and therefore created global markets for goods and labor (Bamberger et al., 2019; Ziguras, 2005). Accordingly, under GATS, education—traditionally seen as a “public good” and a “social responsibility” (Knight, 2008)—has been identified as an international commodity or service to be traded on commercial basis and governed by international trade rules (Knight, 2015). Through GATS, common educational standards, mutual recognition and liberalization of the processes by which professionals are permitted to practice have been developed. A notable feature of GATS is that this agreement seeks to create more freedom for private and foreign providers and equal treatment between foreign and domestic providers (Knight, 2004, 2015; Ziguras, 2005). That is, once a foreign supplier has been allowed to supply a service, education included, there should be no discrimination in treatment from domestic providers in that country.

GATS has paved the way for other trade agreements at the regional, plurilateral and bilateral levels within and outside the scope of the World Trade Organization. Regional trade agreements include the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) involving 12 countries in the Pacific Region dominated by the US; the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and Europe; the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) involving Europe and the US, and the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) largely between OECD countries. Plurilateral agreements were in force between, for example, ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand. Examples of bilateral free trade agreements are between Singapore and the US, between Europe and South Korea (Robertson, 2017). Australia signed the first bilateral agreements with New Zealand in 1983, and most recently Indonesia in July 2020 (DFAT, 2021). Similar to GATS, these regional, plurilateral and bilateral free trade agreements facilitate international trade in education services, and at the same time expose the education sector to privatization and commercialization, which introduce opportunities and at the same time pressures for both developed and developing countries.

Global, regional and bilateral trade agreements are based on principles of non-discriminatory treatment for service providers. On the one hand, these create new opportunities for cross-border mobility in education and benefits for education institutions, including diversity in sources of funding including cost-sharing with students, and free entry of foreign capital and investment in education (Gupta, 2015). On the other hand, many fear that free trade agreements introduce risks to the idea of education as a public good, the capacity of governments to shape the cultural and social dimensions of education, and the role of public education providers (Ziguras, 2005). Specifically, the concern is that free trade measures will weaken or remove the power of the state as a key provider of public education and its role in determining national education policies. In the same line, functions of education as nation building and civic development might be hindered by free trade. Also, increased reliance on private and foreign providers will threaten the existence of public institutions when they lose local students and staff, creating a two-tier education system in developing countries.

Neoliberal ideologies

More broadly, increased trade in international education is associated with the larger ideological shift to neo-liberalism (Yang, 2006; Rizvi, Forthcoming). As Bamberger et al. (2019) state, cross-border mobility is portrayed by the desire of individuals, institutions, countries to “maximize their gains through employment, global rankings or a global competition” (p. 208). In particular, countries and institutions providing international education view it as a source of revenue generation for national economy and education sector. Within higher education, both government and universities see income from international education as a substitute source of revenue in place of public funding cut. Such economic motivations trigger nations and universities to boost international student recruitment and therefore make efforts to build their international branding and reputation (Lomer et al., 2018). Likewise, faculty mobility is not purely for academic or humanistic purposes but it also aims at seeking international research funding, boosting transnational research partnerships and performance (Woldegiyorgis et al., 2018), and increasing the number of co-authored publications, which are among key indicators in international university rankings (Wan et al., 2017). With these motivations, countries and institutions now take a more competitive approach to international education rather than a cooperative one (de Wit, 2013; Knight, 2015). For individual students, mobility is closely linked to the quest for global skills, competencies, and social networks (Bamberger et al., 2019). These are then transferred into increased economic gains for individuals, for example, in relation to enhanced employability and migration opportunities.

Critics point out a number of tensions and risks facing countries, institutions and students as a result of a neoliberal approach to international education. First, international students are positioned as “cash cows” when too much emphasis is placed on revenue generation from international student recruitment (De Vita and Case, 2003; Lomer, 2014). As such, universities are transformed into international enterprises operating under a transactional model (Sidhu, 2009; Wu and Naidoo, 2016). Second, sending countries of international students face the risk of brain drain when “talented” students choose to stay in host countries instead of returning home after study. Third, there might be an issue with transnational education with regard to the substandard quality of branch campuses and delivery of overseas education (Altbach, 2010; Lieven and Martin, 2006).

Commercialization of international education in different countries and impacts

The volume and value of international trade in education have increased significantly over the recent decades. The top providing countries include the USA, UK and Australia, among which the USA currently ranks first while UK and Australia take the second and third positions respectively. In 2019, in higher education sector alone, there were 851,957 international student enrollments in the US (Open Doors, 2020), as compared to 485,645 international enrollments in the UK (HESA, 2020), and 442,219 international students in Australia (DESE, 2019). In these countries, the traditional form of international education is delivered to onshore international students. Recently, the emerging form of international education is transnational education or also known as offshore education (Ziguras, 2005), in which students are not required to leave their countries. Education providers might also be based in their own countries when delivering education overseas with the assistance of digital technology.

The US is currently the largest provider of international education with respect to the inflow of international students and their offshore activities. Particularly, the US ranks first in terms of receiving international students pursuing a full degree (de Wit, 2013). Over its long history, the US education system was driven and characterized by an inward-looking orientation, leading to isolationism among American institutions. This is because “Americans saw themselves as ‘the best’ and took pride in the belief that everyone else really yearned to follow the American example” (Hudzik, 2011, p. 14). The post-World War II period saw the US move away

from simplistic isolationism as a geopolitical strategy (Hudzik, 2011). However, the US still saw itself as being the best and took comfort in inwardly derived strengths. Therefore, international education in the US is not a two-way exchange insofar as the US would involve itself in teaching, but not so much in learning. The period from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s marked the beginning of large-scale overseas recruitment efforts by many US institutions, and the sector experienced considerable growth in the 1980s and 1990s (Dunnet, 2013). Despite a sharp decrease in international recruitment after the 9/11 event, international enrollments at many institutions have increased substantially until now. As part of the effort to expand international enrollments, there has been an increase in the use of commission-based third-party recruitment agents by US institutions. Dunnet (2013) has pointed out that this has led to issues such as some unethical recruitment practices, incidences of gross misrepresentation of American education overseas, and in some cases violations of US immigration laws.

In the UK, commercialization of international education was marked by the introduction of full fees for international students in 1980 under the Thatcher government (de Wit, 2013; de Wit and Altbach, 2020). From that time onward, international education has been treated as an exporting industry, with the main focus being recruitment of full fee paying international students. Another major feature of education export, which has been expanded rapidly, is transnational education. Both international student recruitment and transnational education have been identified to be the key dimensions of international education export in the UK due to the economic values, as stated in a government policy document in 2013:

Education exports are defined as those activities where money comes to the UK from an overseas source, either for an education-related activity taking place in the UK (e.g. international students studying at a UK HEI) or from an education-related activity occurring overseas (e.g. TNE).

BIS (2013, p. 21)

Worton (2012) even projected that UK transnational education would grow more significantly and rapidly than onshore provision. Accordingly, economic values generated from both forms of education exports include not only tuition fees but also living costs, language costs and related ancillary services.

Following the UK, Australia experienced the transition from “aid” to “trade” in the late 1980s, driven partly by concerns about the effectiveness of the sponsored overseas student program but more particularly due to the recognition of the commercial potential in providing international education (Harman, 2005; Rizvi, 2011). The “trade” phase was characterized by the substantial growth in international students across all sectors following the introduction of the “Overseas Student Policy” in 1985, which introduced the implementation of full-fee programs, allowing Australian universities to charge international students full fees (de Wit and Adams, 2010; Marginson, 1995). This was coupled with the Commonwealth government policy reforms (often referred to as the Dawkins reforms) and the *Higher Education: A Policy Statement 1988*, which marked the decrease in direct government funding from the Commonwealth government for HE (Tran, 2020). These policy changes have paved the way for the business model of Australian universities, driven by market-based rationales (Rizvi, 2020; Tran, 2020).

The current Australian international education is still deeply shaped by a commercial rationale. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, international education was the third largest export sector of the country that contributed nearly AU\$40 billion to the Australian economy in 2019 (ABS, 2020). Major source countries providing international students for Australia prior to COVID-19 include China (accounting for 28% of the total international students), India (15%), followed by Nepal (7%), Brazil (4%), Vietnam (3%), Malaysia (3%), South Korea (3%), Colombia (3%), Indonesia (2%), and Thailand (2%) (IEAA, 2020). Nowadays, Australian universities heavily depend on full-fee-paying international students as a major source of revenue to substantially subsidize research and institutional operations, which has placed the Australian HE sector in a biggest financial crisis during COVID-19 (Blackmore, 2020; Rizvi, 2020).

Over the recent decades, New Zealand and Canada have also moved toward a market approach to international education (de Wit and Altbach, 2020). Likewise, although continental Europe has maintained a cooperative model of international education during the past 25 years, they have switched to commercialization of international student recruitment (de Wit and Altbach, 2020).

The shift to commercial approach of international education in major providing countries indicates their growing dependence of education institutions, particularly universities, on international students as a significant financial source. This has led to the higher level of global competition in the space of branding and marketing in search for international students (Marginson and Rhoades, 2002; Ramírez, 2018). In the context of such heightened competition, universities are no longer considered as merely public entities but multinational corporations that function in business models (Blackmore and Sawers, 2015; Connell, 2019). That is, entrepreneurial goals seem to be prioritized over academic and intellectual foci. Further, this entails risks for the sustainability of the education sector and national economy of the providing countries more broadly. Particularly, COVID-19 has revealed the vulnerability of many major providers of international education, such as the US, UK and Australia when losing a large proportion of international students due to border closing and the fear among students and their families about the uncertainties in host countries. Whereas, supplying countries have identified new opportunities to expand international education at home to cater for the needs of their domestic students (Phan and Phung, 2020).

From humanitarian perspectives, the focus on profit-making over international student fees has contributed to inequality in access to international education. The cut of education aid through scholarship and financial assistance schemes, and high fees applicable to international students mean that international education is more accessible for a small proportion of privileged

students. This has raised ethical concerns about the inclusivity of international education and the increased gap between students who can gain access and those who do not (de Wit, 2016). Further to this, increased trade has reinforced commodification of international education in which education services are framed as products and international students are defined as consumers. As such, international students are valued in economic terms rather than according to their other contributions to host countries' universities, culture and society (Tran, 2020). In this corporate model, academic staff are expected to play a significant role in increasing institutional reputation and ranking, which has put heightened level of pressure on their shoulder (Blackmore and Sawers, 2015).

While Anglophone and European countries are known as main exporters of international education services, middle-income and low-income countries from the developing world are positioned as typical importers (Altbach and Knight, 2007). These countries are major sources of international students, importers of twinning and franchised programs, and also borrowers of the curriculum from more advanced systems to deliver in their at-home internationalized programs. Although these dimensions of international education contribute to enhancing the quality of education in importing countries, concerns are raised in relation to brain drain as a result of outbound student mobility, as well as Westernization and neo-colonialization due to curriculum importation with little adaptation to local contexts (Phan, 2017; Tran and Marginson, 2018; Tran et al., 2018).

International education as global trade is increasingly politicalized. The politicalization of international education over the past decade has been shaped by ideologies and movements such as populism, national protectionism or inward-looking nationalism, *anti-immigration*, *anti-globalization* and *anti-multiculturalism* (Altbach and de Wit, 2017; Hsieh, 2020). Brexit, the Trump isolationism, and the rise of far-right parties in Europe have substantially influenced international education programs and strategies, including inbound and outbound mobilities, international student recruitments, transnational research collaboration and transnational education partnerships and internationalization at home in many countries. International education has also been used as a mechanism to boost soft power influences by a range of countries. China, for example, is very active in increasing its soft power and its position regionally and globally through aggressive strategies to attract international students to China, open up offshore campuses and promote the country as a regional education hub (Cheng, 2009). Lifting China's destination attraction and soft power as part of China's political agenda has been accelerated through the Silk Road Scholarship programs under the Belt and Road Initiative (Flint and Zhu, 2019). In addition to China, for the last decade, many traditional importing countries or regions such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey, and Mexico have emerged as new players in the international education market and become active competitors with Western systems (Dunnet, 2013; Wen and Hu, 2019). These countries have begun to promote themselves as regional and highly affordable hubs for world class education, thereby attracting an increasing population of international students. The development of education hubs by these countries is underpinned by nation states' desire to strengthen leadership position in international education so as to exert their geopolitical influence (Lee, 2015).

International education and skilled migration

Student mobilities as one of the prominent dimensions of international education are often linked to the development of human capital and transnational knowledge, ideas and skills mobilities. The link between international education and skilled migration has been seen as a win-win policy for many host nations to support both the trade orientation of international education and the attraction of a qualified pool of workforce to respond to areas of skills shortages and boost economic growth.

The emergence of the international education and migration nexus

The nexus between international education, skills development and skilled migration is shaped by the desires and goals at individual, institutional and government levels. Research evidence suggests that students' motivations to pursue international education can include securing skilled migration to the host country and developing skills and knowledge that can enhance their employment prospects, future life, and/or personal and intercultural transformation (Tran and Nyland, 2011; Tran, 2016; Tran and Nguyen, 2016; Tran et al., 2022). At the institutional level, student mobilities are situated within the broader internationalization agenda which aims to generate revenues, strengthen international partnerships and internationalize the curriculum, teaching and learning to enrich the student experience and enhance graduate employability. At the government level, many host nations see student mobilities as a source of export income, a vehicle for public diplomacy and a potential supply of future skilled migrants (Tran and Vu, 2018; Ziguras and Law, 2006). Viewed from the lens of many host nations, international students are situated at the intersection of skills production and skills attraction (Mosneaga, 2014). On the one hand, they are seen as students who aspire to accumulate skills, knowledge and experiences through an international education. On the other hand, they are positioned as a potential pool of skilled migrants that host countries are seeking to tap into (Riaño et al., 2018; Tremblay, 2005). The recent message from Canada's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship demonstrates this perspective: "These new policies will help those with a temporary status to plan their future in Canada, play a key role in our economic recovery and help us build back better. Our message to them [international students] is simple: your status may be temporary, but your contributions are lasting—and we want you to stay" (Government of Canada, 2021).

Key destination countries often revise their international education and skilled migration policies. These regular modifications respond to changes in the broader context of international education and the social, economic and geopolitical circumstances of the host countries as well as to the intended and unintended consequences of the international education-migration nexus. Nevertheless, they cause complexities and uncertainties for current and prospective international students. In Australia, the direct link of international education and migration was facilitated through the introduction of the government policy in July 2001 which

encouraged international students with skills in demand who completed their course at an Australian institution, and met general eligibility requirements, to apply for permanent residency on shore (Spinks, 2016). This skilled migration pipeline from international education was supported through the Skilled-Independent category of the General Skilled Migration (GSM) program. In May 2005 the number of trades occupations listed on the Migration Occupations in Demand List (MODL), including cooking and hospitality, was expanded (Spinks, 2016), leading to the increase in international student enrollments in vocational education courses.

However, the direct link between international education and migration caused a range of consequences. Some colleges in the private vocational education and training (VET) in Australia were charged with promoting VET courses to international students as a pathway to permanent residency (PR) rather than an education opportunity and were producing poorly trained graduates (Marginson et al., 2010; Perkins, 2009; Smith, 2010). In response to this situation, the Australian government modified the General Skilled Migration Scheme leading to the restriction in graduates' ability to secure permanent residency and the requirement of independent skills testing of graduates (Tran and Nyland, 2011).

Existing literature suggests that the popular generalization of all international VET students as "PR hunters" who have little or no interest in pursuing a high-quality education have had adverse impacts on both international students and the VET sector (Tran and Nyland, 2011). This popularization of international VET students as those who are only interested in migration largely ignores their aspirations and efforts put in learning, development of skills, knowledge and experiences, and enhancement of cultural, personal and professional attributes. The discourse promoting the "international VET students simply want to migrate" perspective has led to destructive attitudes toward this cohort and negatively impacted their learning, wellbeing and connectedness with institutional community, the workplace and the broader Australian community (Tran and Vu, 2016). The VET sector as a whole has encountered "imposed and/or self-imposed" consequences of this stereotype since "without the protectionism provided by the migration-education link," coupled with the destructive stereotype of international students as mere "PR hunters" and many VET courses as "PR factories", the sector struggles to "market courses that have been devalued and stereotyped as low quality" (Tran and Nyland, 2011, p. 28).

Decoupling the direct international education and migration link and the emergence of the post-study work rights policy

Post-graduate work policy is considered as a strategic mechanism to attract international students in key destination countries, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand and European countries such as Germany, Ireland, Sweden, the Netherlands and the UK. In an effort to decouple the direct international education and migration link while still maintaining Australia's destination attractiveness, the Australian government introduced the revised post-study work rights policy and the Temporary Graduate visa (subclass 485) in 2013. This move followed the recommendations from the 2011 Knight Review which evaluated the quality, integrity and competitiveness of Australia's international student visa program (Tran et al., 2019). The Knight Review highlighted that the introduction of an expanded post-study work visa was crucial to enhance Australia's attractiveness as a study destination. The 485 Temporary Graduate visa comprises two streams: the Graduate Work stream and the Post-Study Work stream. Under the Graduate Work stream, international graduate visa holders are allowed to remain in Australia for 18 months while the Post-Study Work stream allows holders with a Bachelor, Masters or Doctorate degree to live and work in the country between 2 and 4 years, after the completion of their studies. In addition to the difference in terms of the visa duration, applicants for the Graduate Work visas need to nominate an occupation on the Medium and Long-term Strategic Skills List and have their skills assessed by the assessing body while this is not required for international graduates applying for the Post-Study Work stream (Australian Government, 2019a,b). In the UK, the post-study work rights policy was originally introduced in 2004 but removed by then Home Secretary Theresa May in 2012. As a move to regain its destination competitiveness, in October 2019, the UK government announced the re-introduction of a 2-year post-graduation work visa policy (UKCISA, 2019).

Research on the impacts of the post-study work policy in Australia shows that up to 76% of 1150 international graduates in a survey indicated that access to post-study work rights was an important factor influencing their decision to choose Australia as a study destination (Tran et al., 2019). In addition, the top five citizenship countries of temporary graduate visa holders in Australia (India, China, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam) have mirrored the top five source countries (China, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Vietnam) of international enrollments in Masters by coursework programs since 2013 (Tran et al., 2019). However, in reality, there seems to be a mismatch between international students' intent to stay in the host country post-study and the actual uptake (Berquist et al., 2019). While around 60–80% of international students surveyed express their desire to remain in the host country after graduation, statistics show that only around 25% actually stay for a long term in the OECD countries (Berquist et al., 2019; OECD, 2011).

Despite the introduction of the post-study work rights policy being welcome by education providers and its effectiveness in strengthening host countries' attraction as a study destination, the work experiences of international graduates on these temporary graduate visas do not seem satisfactory. A survey with 1156 international graduates on temporary graduate visas in Australia shows that only 36% of current and past holders of the visas who stayed in Australia secured full-time employment in their field of study (Tran et al., 2019). International graduates on the temporary post-study work visas often face significant challenges and structural barriers in gaining a foothold in the host labor market. Employers in Australia (Blackmore et al., 2014; Tran et al., 2020a,b), Canada (Flynn and Arthur, 2013) and the US (Monahan, 2018; Sangganjanavanich et al., 2011) reportedly hesitate to recruit international graduates due to the temporary status of their visas, discrimination and prejudices about their cultural skills and ability to adapt to the workplace, their level of familiarity with the host environment, their English proficiency and their ethnicity. In particular, a significant proportion of international graduates who seek post-study work rights opportunities are on the 2-year visas, which is seen as being too short to provide employers a sense of security and confidence in recruiting this cohort (Tran et al., 2019). The recruitment practice in some host countries is heavily shaped by the "best fit" principle that often disadvantages international

students and graduates as this group are considered as “outsiders” who do not possess the “needed” abilities and qualities to fit in “our” local workplace (Blackmore and Rahimi, 2019; Tran and Bui, 2019). In addition, there is a lack of understanding among employers in Australia about the purpose and nature of the temporary graduate visas (Tran et al., 2020a,b).

While permanent residency is a significant factor enhancing international graduates’ access to the Australian labor market, the temporary graduate visa does not provide them with a substantial competitive advantage. Instead, the temporary graduate visas give them extra time to remain in the host country to develop their social and professional networks, enhance their English language proficiency, gain some work experience and get some return on investment in their international study (Tran et al., 2019, 2020a,b). However as international graduates struggle to get foot in the door, especially in their field of study, they are facing a risk of exploitation, deskilling, precarity, financial stress and vulnerability. Many desperately need work in the host country to pay for living expenses, pay back their loans, achieve their career goals, and acquire permanent residency (Tran et al., 2020a,b).

International graduates who remain in the host country on post-graduation visas are important actors who help further the commercialization of education in the context of global trade but are subject to various injustices. In Australia, while international graduates on temporary post-study work visas constitute around 0.7% of Australia’s labor force and contribute taxes to the Australian economy, they are not entitled to subsidized government services due to their non-citizenship status (Tran and Bui, 2019). In rhetoric, key destination countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the UK position the post-study work rights policy as providing local businesses and industry with an opportunity to access a pool of highly qualified human resource who are educated in the host countries and possess multilingual capabilities, global skills, international experiences and transnational networks (Tran and Bui, 2019). Nevertheless, in reality, international students and graduates are marginalized and disadvantaged in the host labor market due to structural factors including existing prejudices toward these cohorts, the length and conditions of their visas and the lack of understanding of these cohorts as well as the temporality of the visa they are on.

Conclusion and implications for future research

Over the past three decades, international education has been shaped and re-shaped into a form of global trade, driven by historical, economic and geopolitical rationales. This re-positioning of international education as global trade has been pursued through policies and programs across a range of dimensions, including inbound and outbound student mobilities, international student recruitment, internationalization of the curriculum, international research collaborations and transnational education and offshore programs. The commercialization of international education has also been increasingly politicalized and associated with “a scalar geopolitics linking the education of the individual to global political relations” (Brooks, 2015, p. 65).

Research and debates in international education have raised concerns about the international education-migration nexus. Designed as a win-win policy for some key destination countries, this nexus has resulted in some unintended consequences, leading to the introduction of the international education-work-migration nexus. Within this emergent nexus, the post-study work opportunities have been a drawcard for Australian universities to attract international students (Tran et al., 2020a,b). However, there are a range of tensions and paradoxes related to the reality of how international students and graduates are positioned within this nexus. Due to structural barriers, including visa regimes and prejudices in the host labor market, destination countries like Australia have yet to tap on this pool of young and highly qualified workers to deliver benefits to its economy (Chew, 2019; Tran et al., 2019; Tran and Bui, 2019).

While there is considerable research describing the ways in which international education has become commercialized and the international education-migration link, the following topics related to international education in the global trade are less understood:

- Whether and how traditional sending countries have approached international education as trade and how international education as trade is manifested in these countries
- The impacts of global trade in international education on pedagogies and curriculum and student experiences
- How students can be engaged to capitalize on the academic and humanistic values of international education while minimizing the negative impacts of the commercial orientation of international education
- The role of students as partners and consumers in (re)defining international education services
- The nature and characteristics of the international education-work-migration
- The effectiveness of post-study work rights policies across different destination countries
- The ways in which the relationship between geopolitics and international education been re-shaped during and post-COVID-19
- The impacts of escalated geopolitical turbulences during and post COVID-19 on different aspects of international education and the landscape of international education marketplace.

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Teach for all and the visual regime of global teacher education reform

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Introduction	260
Themes in the visual analysis	261
Youth	261
Hands	262
Gaze	264
Permanence/change	265
Infographics	266
On the visual regime	267
Concluding thoughts	269
References	269

Introduction

Institutionalized education has had global entanglements since its modern foundation in the 19th century, with school models and ideas traveling, being adapted, and transformed across national borders. Yet the idea of global education reform is a relatively new phenomenon. Through what Stephen Ball (2012) terms Transnational Advocacy Networks, concerted efforts to bring about specific visions of education across the world –including funding models, public-private partnerships, student assessment metrics and rankings, and as is the case for this article, teacher recruiting and training models–have had a growing influence on the localized thinking and practice of educators and policy-makers. Narratives woven as success stories are packaged and sold (be it for monetary or other kinds of resources), as policy entrepreneurs (Ball, 2012) make the case for their global adoption.

One such narrative is that of Teach For America, the program created by Wendy Kopp in 1990 as a way of addressing what she saw as the main problem in US education: low quality teachers. According to Kopp's vision, if high-achievers chose to go into teaching instead of higher-paying professions, they would bring with them their innate brilliance and values to America's neediest students. Thus, Teach For America was set up as a highly selective and prestigious program that would recruit college graduates with high-GPAs from top-ranked institutions to teach for two years in disadvantaged schools. After participating in a five-week training program, "corps members" would be deployed as full-time teachers to receive "real-life" experience in the classroom, so that they would then return to their careers and professions with an eye to enact education reform.

The program grew rapidly and in 2001, Teach First sought to replicate its "success" in the UK. By the mid-2000s, there was a demand for more programs, and in 2007, at the Clinton Global Initiative's annual meeting, Teach For All was founded with Kopp as its CEO. As of July 2021, "Teach For All is a network of 60 independent, locally led and governed partner organizations and a global organization that works to accelerate the network's progress ... Each network partner recruits and develops promising future leaders to teach in their nations' under-resourced schools and communities and, with this foundation, to work with others, inside and outside of education, to ensure all children are able to fulfill their potential" (<https://teachforall.org/about>).

While there is much still to be written, both about Teach For All as a global network, and about the individual affiliate organizations, in the last decade and a half a growing body of literature has emerged that engages with different aspects of this global reform movement.

Inspired by Ball and others' work on policy networks, Saura (2016); Subramanian (2018); Olmedo et al. (2013), and La Londe et al. (2015) seek to illuminate the ways in which the funding and ideological networks behind these programs carry with them a neoliberal understanding of the role of education in furthering market rationality, privatizing the public sector, and undermining public education. The edited volume by Thomas et al. (2020) combines articles dedicated to a study of the network with close-up analyses of specific cases. Friedrich (2014, 2016); Straubhaar (2020); Caetano and de Oliveira Costa (2018), and Yin et al. (2019) go more in depth into one or two programs in order to gain a better understanding about how global discourses are adapted, changed, and/or resisted in specific contexts. Mirroring the movement of former Teach for America corps members to produce counter-narratives to the organization's view of its own success (see e.g. Schonfeld, 2013), the most recent set of academic literature brings to light reflections on the experiences of individuals recruited by different affiliates from across the globe, as compiled in Brewer et al. (2020).¹

For the purpose of this article, the most relevant writing is that of Adhikary et al. (2018); Ellis et al. (2016); Blumenreich and Gupta (2015), and Ahmann (2015), who center their attention on the global discourses that provide meaning to either the network as a whole or specific programs, tracing their emergence and the ways in which these initiatives are used to frame problems and

¹For a more in-depth literature review on Teach For All, see Crawford-Garrett and Thomas (2018).

solutions in the field of education. Southern (2018) aims her work directly at the media representations of Teach First found in brochures, newspaper articles, and documentaries, with the lens on textual language. More specifically, the analysis that follows is a continuation of the project initiated by Friedrich et al. (2015), which looked at the ways in which data and *dataspeak* are mobilized through social media to produce a common sense about what is wrong with education, and therefore what is to be done, positioning Teach For All as the ultimate pragmatic solution to the issues plaguing schools worldwide.

The present article engages in an analysis of visual advertisements posted by Teach For All programs on their respective Facebook pages from January 2017 through July 2020. The goal is to provide a novel entry point into the conversation about the global production of narratives about education, its problems, and solutions. By comparing the visual language being utilized by these programs to appeal to prospective corps members,² donors, and the general public across the globe, we aim at gaining a better understanding of the different ways in which this specific transnational education reform movement imagines and builds its own community. For this purpose, we collected over 1300 images from 52 Facebook pages. While these pages usually had over 1000 images each, we curated our archive by only capturing images that contained the logo of the program (as opposed to photographs documenting everyday activities or images celebrating national holidays or achievements). In our analysis, we did not pay attention to the words –whether we understood the language or not– instead focusing solely on the visual language the images displayed. In doing so, this work can be seen as part of the “visual turn” (Rose, 2001). When discussing this turn in the history of education, Dussel (2012, p. 223) explains: “The visual is probably the dominant mode of representation in the popular historical imagination nowadays ... Pictures do not circulate in isolation, but are part of visual régimes that organize the way we relate to them (Mirzoeff, 2005; Poole, 1997). Researchers, at the same time spectators and producers of contemporary visualities, are part of that régime. Failing to acknowledge this can result in poor scholarship.” Dussel continues on to argue that in order for the visual turn to not be another attention-seeking fad in the history of education (and we would argue, in curriculum studies and educational studies writ large), images cannot be taken as mere surfaces that depict “reality,” but that we must read them as part of those complex visual regimes. Our analysis, then, seeks to better comprehend the visual regime that makes the global education reform movement Teach For All possible and legible.

The more than 1300 images selected were coded into themes based on their visual language. These themes emerged organically as the authors collected images and were then refined as they returned to the full data set. The two authors worked on coding independently, and then compared their work to fine-tune criteria for the purpose of reliability. Our analysis identified five themes in the advertisements: youth, hands, gaze, permanence/change, and infographics. After a review of these themes, we will piece them together to reveal the visual regime that undergirds Teach for All’s narrative strategy, and will conclude by providing tools to place this visual regime within a wider context of global education reform.

Themes in the visual analysis

Youth

(Fig. 1) Likely the most ubiquitous theme presented by the Teach for All network’s partner organizations is that of youth. This is no surprise among the student populations represented in images, but youthfulness and its associated virtues are central to the idealized version of the teacher presented through a broad array of depictions. It is noteworthy that we did not find a single image, across all programs, showing teachers that appeared older than 40.³ Corps members, however, are not only identified as youthful because they look young in age, but also through their high energy, their physical abilities, the compositional style of images, their attire, and their attractiveness.

In order to understand the primary function of these images of youthfulness, it is important to note that the central narrative disseminated by Teach for All is that the current state of education is a problem, and that it can only be solved through radical innovation and “disruption” (Gautreaux and Delgado, 2016). Through such a lens, images of youthfulness in a variety of forms can be read as evidence of Teach for All’s successful approach to change and reform within what have become stagnant and dysfunctional educational systems that are failing students. Representations of youthfulness thus differentiate Teach for All’s approach and its corps members from the traditional image of the teacher. One type of portrayal that accomplishes this goal is the depiction of corps members in energetic, passionate states that are often reciprocated by students. This conveys a vision of teachers committed to and able to connect with students, ones who are driven by their social conscience and dedication to change. This type of portrayal is exemplified by images from Thailand, Bulgaria, and Nigeria, where teachers are shown smiling or with mouth agape, touching or in close proximity to students who appear equally enthusiastic. Such visual constructions of youthful teachers expressing their dedication, coupled with a strong positive response from students, suggests that the path forward in educational reform is based on the ability of talented and hard-working young people to act as saviors for marginalized children.

These images of enthusiasm and ability to relate to students work closely with depictions of youthful physical ability and action. In some ways these portrayals are more subtle than the previous examples, but they convey something that makes young people the logical and only choice for educational reform. Whether in the case of a teacher actively working with building blocks on the floor of

²We utilize the term “corps members” to refer to program participants following the language used by Teach For America. Each program in the network has its own terminology.

³Taking Sweden as an example, this is striking given that 40.5% of secondary public school teachers are over 50 years old, but only 7.4% are under 30 (<https://data.oecd.org/teachers/teachers-by-age.htm>).

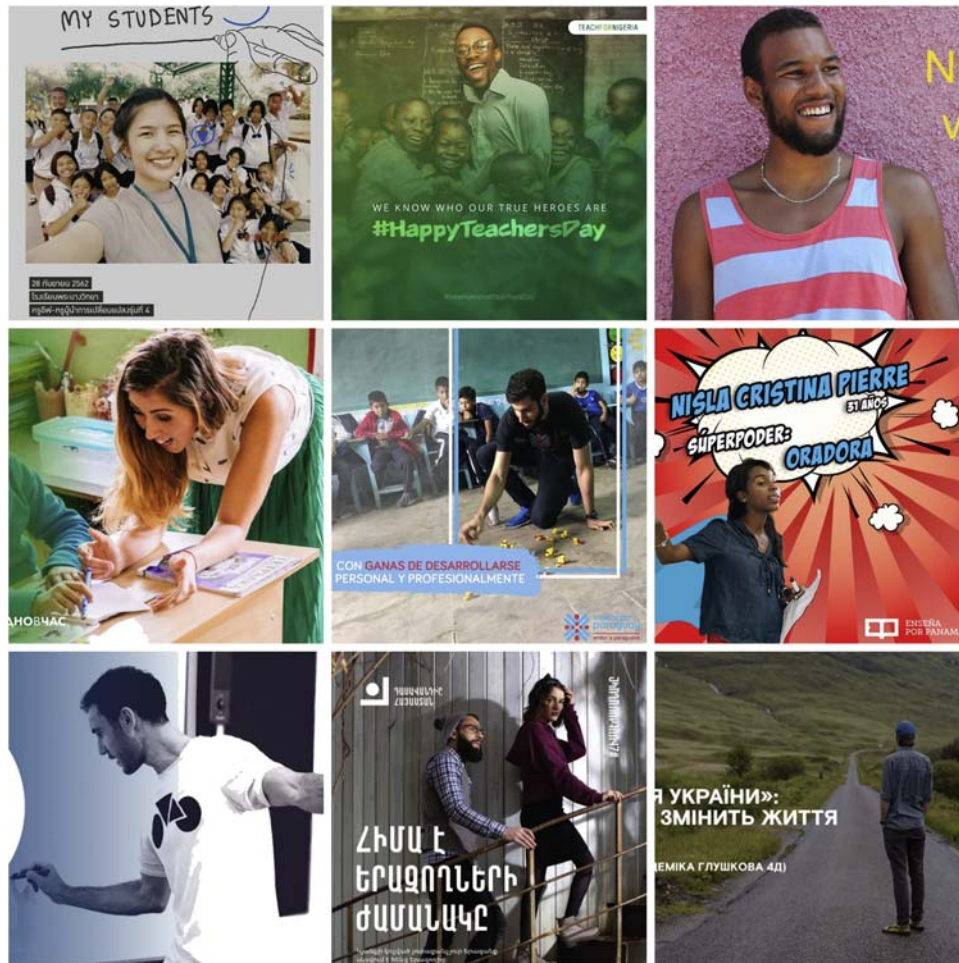


Fig. 1 Images from left to right and top to bottom extracted from programs in: Thailand, Nigeria, Sweden, Bulgaria, Paraguay, Panama, Denmark, Armenia, and Ukraine.

a classroom (Paraguay), a lone individual looking down a long open road in a natural landscape (Ukraine), or a brawny male teacher with an abstracted image of a bicycle on his shirt (Denmark), there is an implication that traditional conceptions of who teachers are and what they are capable of makes them ill-suited to the rigors of the long, metaphorical road to “good” education. Additionally, this sort of image fits neatly within the individualistic, meritocratic narratives that Teach for All relies on more broadly, which focus on the individual’s will to change and innate talent as the keys to reform (Friedrich, 2014).

Many images also gesture toward youthfulness by adopting compositional and stylistic forms that are associated with popular and youth culture. There are various approaches that adopt youthful culture, ranging from the comic book style associated with youth (and superheroes, another instance of individual ability and the savior mentality) seen in materials from Panama, the “selfie” composition equated with young people’s usage of social media seen in an image from Thailand, and even the hip, avante-garde style of the image from Armenia that looks as though it was pulled from the pages of a fashion magazine. These choices again distinguish corps members from the images of teachers that tend to circulate in the collective imaginary, and seek to make teaching within the Teach for All model seem cool.

Each of these three varieties of image perform one component of a recruiting strategy focused on attracting young people to the network. The first and second are appeals to young people’s social consciousness and unique abilities, the third is an alignment with youth culture, and a fourth and final form is aspirational. This last element is less a specific category of image, and more a common quality of many of these depictions; In most cases, corps members are shown wearing fashionable or casual clothing and, overwhelmingly, are physically attractive. This strategy relies on potential applicants’ desires to be like and be associated with the people shown in the images. Could this be a sign of the “instagramification” of teacher recruitment?

Hands

(Fig. 2) Images of children and young people raising their hands appear in 49 out of the 53 programs’ online images. The images call our attention toward engaged students and teachers, to their schooled bodies, and their willingness to succeed. An array of wrist



Fig. 2 Images from left to right and from top to bottom extracted from programs in Italy, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Argentina, Colombia, Germany, Bulgaria, Haiti, and Pakistan.

and hand gestures propping up one, two, or five fingers, denote cultural differences in distinct locations, yet the seemingly universal sign of classroom participation remains easily recognizable. The camera tends to focus either on an individual or a small group of students –capturing their faces either straight ahead or from a slight angle– or on the class as a whole, depicting them from behind with the teacher in the front of the room (yet the figure farthest away from the lens). In the first type of image, the students’ faces are trained beyond the camera, likely at the instructor who commands their attention. This focus indicates that they seek to demonstrate their knowledge and be validated as knowing beings. This specific gesture has historical connections to the idea of altitude, height, and elevation being associated with proximity to the divine (for example, teachers’ desks sitting on an elevated platform) (Álvarez-Uría and Varela, 1991). The raised hand is the attempt to reach higher than the seated body, and thus to be closer to the knowledge of the teachers and their authority. In these images, it is not only the hand that is raised; the whole body seems poised to jump in anticipation of the teacher’s calling, almost unable to be contained under the desk when one is available. This also suggests the unique capacity of the corps member as teacher to inspire students to break the restraints of “bad” education. In a sense it is as though the physical structures of the classroom are not real confinements for students, instead they are held back by the lack of personal will that can only be cultivated by the “good” teacher.

In the second set of images, the focus is divided between the raised arms, heads and necks seen from behind, and the teacher commanding attention at the front of the class. The instructor is the vanishing point of an image that is simultaneously about a group and an individual, with the viewer becoming an observer into a successful pedagogical moment. For those of us who have supervised teachers, these images are the kind that produce nods of acceptance and post-observation compliments: the act of teaching is achieving the goal of engagement.

There is a third, much smaller, subset of images. In these (represented in the collage above by the image from the German program) it is not children or youth raising their hands, but young adults, seemingly corps members. Their faces are blurred, but their gestures are clear. If raising hands in classrooms would appear to be an almost universal symbol of participation, that same participation is what these organizations are seeking from young adults. To be an agent of change requires participating and leading in that change. To take part in the successful reform driven by the Teach For All network, prospective corps members

need to be noticed. They need to channel the energy of their will into becoming a corps member, thus they raise their hands and hope that the organizations will call on them. One can almost imagine the teacher/organization asking: “Who knows what the solution is for educational inequity?” only to be met by students/corps members raising their hands to say: “I do, it is you!”

Gaze

(Fig. 3) Our visual analysis of the ads posted by Teach For All affiliates also reveals the high frequency of images focusing on specific types of gaze. In general terms, the images manifest two forms of gaze: one directed toward the viewer, and one between teachers and students.

Perhaps the most common kind of image in this collection could be characterized as the “team member portrait.” In these photographs, young adult men and women pose looking straight at the camera, with either just their faces or the top half of their bodies visible to the viewer. Open smiles and proud expressions accompany eyes that engage the spectator, inviting them to join in and imagine themselves as the future faces of the organization. As we stated above, there are no images of older people, and the youthful gaze seems to be interested solely in meeting other youthful eyes.

Perhaps the only bodies more youthful than those of the corps members are the ones of students, depicted also in a series of portraits. The gaze plays a different, though connected role here. Both the portraits of young teachers and those of children appeal to a sense of participation in social change on the part of the audience for these ads. However, while the former seeks self-identification and a view of futurity (tomorrow *I could be* such an agent of change), the latter seeks to be an interpellation to the viewer as the reason to enact change. What is at stake in these images of children looking directly at the prospective corps member and/or donor is not his or her future as an individual, but their fate as educated subjects. These images recall campaigns by UNESCO and similar organizations using individual children in close-up to stand for the future not only of children, but of the nation (and the world) as a whole. For the viewer, it becomes difficult to ignore the call of a young pair of eyes directed toward one’s own will to

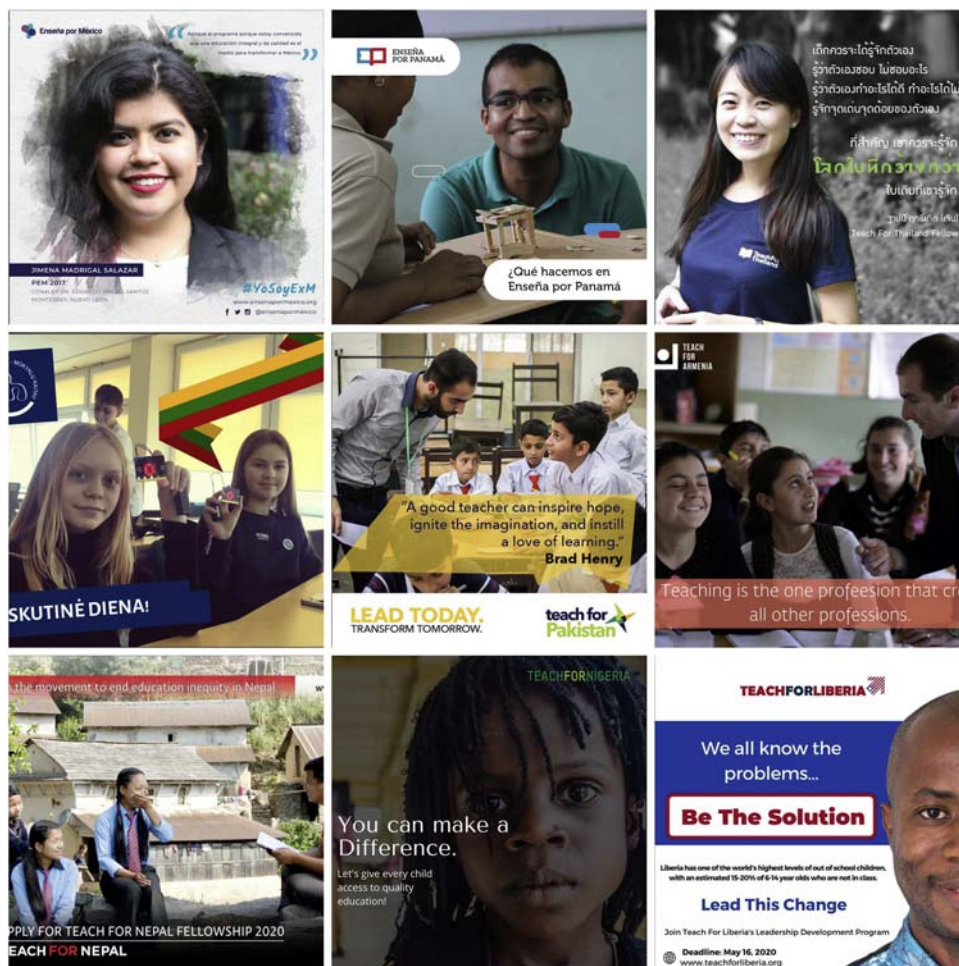


Fig. 3 Images from left to right and from top to bottom extracted from programs in Mexico, Panama, Thailand, Lithuania, Pakistan, Armenia, Nepal, Nigeria, and Liberia.

reform, and when that gaze is accompanied by what appears as a simple solution to a complex problem, the ad fulfills its function of presenting Teach for All's model as the only remedy.

If portraits of corps members are the "who" and portraits of children are the "why," then images of pedagogical interactions (in or out of the classroom), in which there is a clear connection between teacher and student, are the "how." The teachers in these images may or may not be the same ones depicted in the portraits, but they are always young, appear healthy, and look directly at the eyes of a specific student. The student returns the gaze with admiration and awe, as if hungry for someone to *finally* listen and engage. Together with the images of raising hands discussed above, the gaze shared by teacher and student represents the essence of pedagogy and the practical way to effect change in the world. The intimacy of that gaze represents the everyday evidence of the intervention's efficacy, the much-lauded *glimmer in the child's eye*. It also serves as a counter to the enormity of the task. If addressing educational inequity seems like an impossible goal vexed by structural, political, and historical issues, connecting with one child is a much more concrete and achievable way of contributing to social change. It is important to note that in these images the focus is on the two people gazing at each other, while the context is blurred. The spectator cannot see the conditions of the school building; identify the materials present in the classroom; sense how crowded, hot, or cold the rooms are; or experience the smells, sounds, and textures of these educational spaces. What is clearly visible (and therefore the only relevant feature of educational quality) is the satisfaction on the two individuals' faces at a moment of meaningful connection.

Permanence/change

(Fig. 4) It is not enough to read the visual program of Teach for All network partners simply as a critique of stagnant educational systems around the world. Instead, it is essential to understand how Teach for All's problematization of current education and reform is conceptualized as an issue of human capital, one that can be solved effectively by recruiting different (and better) teachers to access classrooms through alternative pathways rather than traditional certification routes (Kopp, 2003). A theme that recurs



Fig. 4 Images from left to right and from top to bottom extracted from programs in Spain, Italy, Uganda, Slovakia, Portugal, Latvia, Japan, Argentina, and India.

through analysis of network partners' social media images is the dichotomy between what is permanent to education, and what change is necessary for successful reform. When looking at images produced in countries across regions, traditions, and societies of all types, it is striking that schools are always recognizable and that certain visual signifiers consistently represent what "has always been" schooling. Yet, this acceptance of permanence in schooling demands that the viewer adopts Teach for All's conception of what is open to reform and what that reform requires.

Chalkboards, neat rows of desks, pencils, paper, and books point to the materiality of permanence in the classroom that seems not to have changed much since the 19th century. Math and literacy appear in white traces on the chalkboard, and the (young) adult stands in front of the class or by the students imparting knowledge. This sense of permanence across time and space is what assures that any viewer will recognize these as images of schooling. However, there are also divergences from what most spectators know schooling to be; something has changed. In these images all children are engaged, working diligently, and show signs of being happy. Teachers are always attentive and invariably exhibit the traits of youthfulness described above; they are energetic, socially conscious, physically able, and have the capacity to connect deeply and directly with children. Schooling in these images seems effective and joyful, in other words, ideal. To most people who have gone through the experience of schooling, this is change; this is not what schools are, but what they should be.

Notably, if the classroom and its material features are accepted as permanent, then the change is in who teaches, how they teach, and the reaction of those who learn, turning those aspects into the target of reform. In other words, the solution to the problem of education is not a rethinking of what schooling looks like and the material conditions that sustain it (or not), but rather, it is a matter of getting smarter, more able, and more committed teachers to do a better job of teaching in order to bring schools closer to their ideal form. This fits neatly within the discourses promoted by Teach for All with its emphasis on the importance of the meritorious individual, unburdened by the inefficiencies of bureaucratic teacher education and certification (Crawford-Garrett and Thomas, 2018), and the idea that what underserved populations need, more than anything, is a different kind of teacher (Friedrich, 2014). It also provides a convenient and cost-effective resolution to the failings of schooling. There is no need to waste resources on laptops, smartboards, other costly technologies, or even infrastructure change in schools. Moreover, these images confirm that the modern schooling conceptualized in the 19th century works (or at least can work) with the right people in charge. All that the students of the world really need are smarter teachers who have survived competitive selection processes and can use their natural capabilities to figure out how to teach better on their own.

Part of what makes Teach for All attractive to a specific segment of the population across the globe is that it appeals to widespread belief in meritocracy and individualism, coupled with a call to be part of significant social change. Teach for All has found purchase in its appeal to young people's sense of social responsibility as well as the future career opportunities its prestige and selectiveness create. For funders, usually those who have reaped the benefits of late capitalism, these narratives often appeal to their views on government (de)regulation and talent. Ultimately, these images, that contrast the permanence of the physical elements of school with a new vision of the teacher, serve as a microcosm of the Teach for All model and its simplicity. If the problem is to be located in bad teachers who do not care enough and have been in the system *forever*, then change is about all students being placed with young teachers who do care.

Infographics

(Fig. 5) The last set of imagery produced by members of the Teach for All partner network that our analysis focuses on is infographics. These representations seek to convey information and data in ways that make them quickly comprehensible in glossy and novel forms. Infographics from partner organizations frequently incorporate easily legible bar and pie charts, maps, or flow charts with illustrations. These graphics are often accompanied by or represented within other highly recognizable symbols that signify something about the data they communicate. These visual choices not only make data the focal point of the stories Teach for All partners tell, but they also convey certain narratives about what is wrong with education and how the particular reform approach of Teach for All is the solution (Friedrich et al., 2015).

As has been established previously, the Teach for All network employs narratives that make the "use of data" (Friedrich et al., 2015) a central technique of problematizing and solving education internationally. Within this context, infographics represent a logical and widely understandable means of disseminating key data to prospective corps members, funders, and the wider public in order to justify Teach for All's approach to educational reform. But it is not only the use of infographics to convey information that is relevant to the Teach for All narrative, it is also the specific symbolism and style that can be read as a strategic program.

One recurring feature is the use of abstracted bodies to represent data. In some cases these bodies are partially filled in, a group of bodies may be colored to indicate quantity or percentage, a number of bodies may expand or decrease over time, and they may be abstracted as male and female symbols. These representations perform two functions: first, they are a reminder that Teach for All's approach seeks to impact people, but, second, the approach does not work on recognizable individuals, rather the program seeks to make change on a scale representable only in numerical data. This variety of infographic, then, is reminiscent of images produced by other large international NGO's that focus on human rights. Additionally, this form of infographic works together with the presentation of youthful bodies visible in some of the images highlighted in previous sections. If images of energetic, able, and desirable bodies are a metaphor for the unique capacity of Teach for All partners and corps member to effect change, then the symbols of these infographics represent the abstracted, but dysfunctional bodies of young people around the world in need of Teach for All's intervention.

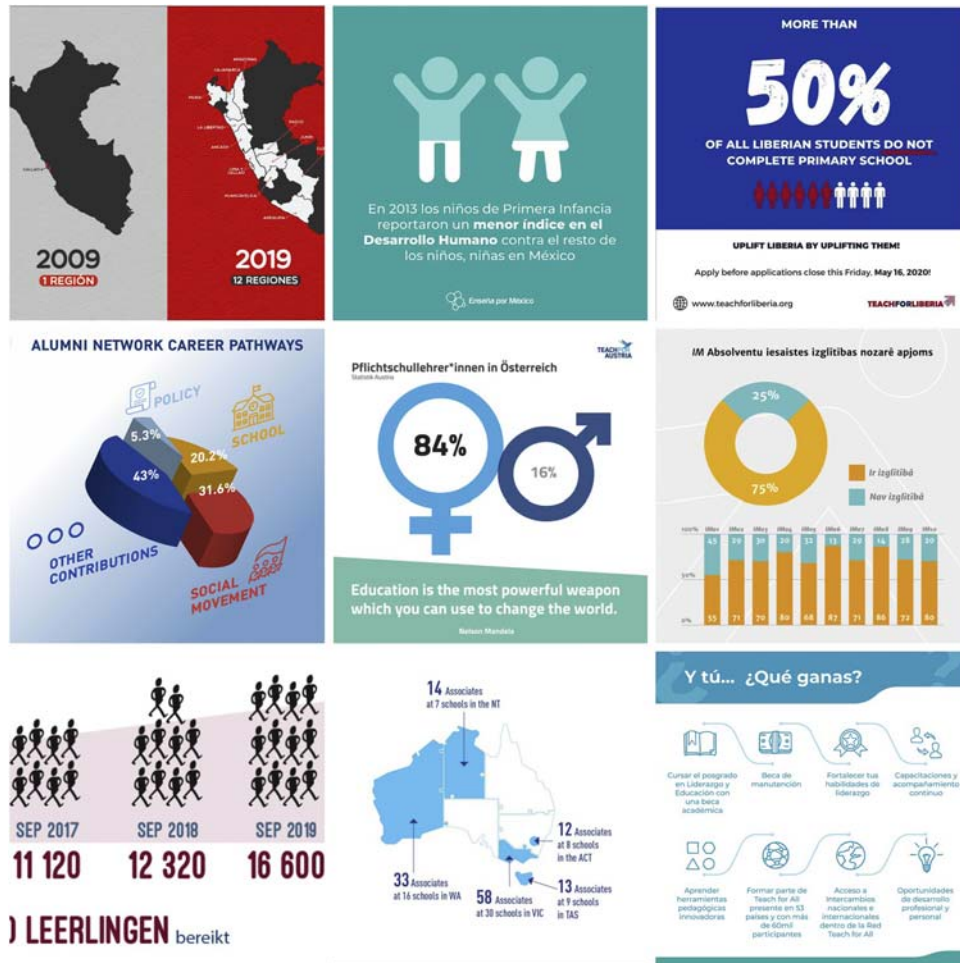


Fig. 5 Images from left to right and from top to bottom extracted from programs in Peru, Mexico, Liberia, Thailand, Austria, Latvia, Belgium, Australia, and Mexico.

A second category of infographic is constructed around maps of countries, usually with state or provincial boundaries included. These variously include color fill or numbers to indicate where the network partner is operating or some other piece of information, usually about the inefficacy of current education in the country represented. The former are more common, and sometimes include multiple maps to indicate change over time, as in the case of Peru above. These images of maps also work in two ways: they both represent the impact that the network organization has on the country and they signal that the network partner is working on behalf of the country. This localizes the Teach for All approach to the national context and demonstrates the success the network partner has already had in reforming nationwide education.

A final category of infographics that recurs across partner organizations is made up of the sort of generic data and flow charts that address the impacts that the Teach for All experience has on its corps members. Here the data being represented do not address problems in education or the effectiveness of Teach for All’s approach, but rather indicate the specific value proposition that joining a network partner offers for corps members. These infographics make use of symbols that indicate particular industries or professions and either the percentage of former corps members now working in those areas, or flow charts that suggest a certain path which prospective applicants can look forward to on their way to a desirable career. In either case, the message is clear: if you give two years of your life to teaching through our program, we will offer you a lifelong career of your choosing. Gone here is the play on the individual sense of social responsibility and activism seen in other images, replaced instead by the promise of a personal reward for doing good, a promise backed up by numerical and visual data.

On the visual regime

Taken together, the five themes –youth, hands, gaze, permanence/change, and infographics– are part of an intricate visual regime that, while not exclusive to Teach For All, allows the organization to enter a visual conversation with specific values and beliefs. The

role of social media as not only the medium, but also an active participant in shaping these images cannot be understated. [Jurgen-son \(2019\)](#) explains:

Traditional analyses of photography fixate on the photo *object*. This is the thingness of the photograph, as a discrete something with borders. This was central to film photography and continues to animate contemporary discussions about digital photography. The thingness of the social media image is undoubtedly still interesting, but its status as an object is not as central; the what and how of a social photo is less important than the why. As van Dijck puts it, young people “take less interest in sharing photographs as *objects* than as sharing them as *experiences*.” There is a fast-evolving literacy in the circulation of images as communication. Images within the social stream evoke more than they explain; they transmit a general alertness to experience rather than facts. This is what happens when photography is oriented more toward the normal than the exceptional and becomes woven through the contours of everyday life ... Every image has a border. It is a singular document, a record, and a piece of information. But as part of a stream, as an everyday lightweight practice, what emerges is a more nuanced visual literacy. As a visual discourse, social photos are a means to express feelings, ideas, and experiences in the moment, a means sometimes more important than the specific ends of a particular image. (pp. 15, 18)

If we consider a visual regime to refer to “what is seen and how it is seen” ([Rose, 2001](#), p. 6), then Teach For All member organizations have provided us in their advertisements with some guidelines as to how that visual conversation is shaped, as well as the feeling, ideas, and experiences it seeks to evoke. What is seen in these images, although they are static, is purposeful action. The action is the consequence of a will to change by young actors, who participate in a social movement, get people (students and other young adults) engaged, connect at the individual level with those in need, replace previous -older- teachers who do not represent that will to change, and rely on data to leverage their power. By looking across programs, there is a sense that while languages might vary, the visual conversation crosses boundaries. Following the work of [Friedrich et al. \(2015\)](#) on the uses of data and data speak on twitter, our analysis reveals that the production of a global language of education, its problems, and its solutions is as much visual as it is numerical. Without knowing where each image comes from it would be almost impossible to point to specificities and local idiosyncrasies. Invariably the visual regime presents attractive young people, teaching younger generations, in settings commonly understood to be schools, doing what traditional teachers seem to be unable to do, backed by numbers representing both the problems at hand and the impact of this particular solution. What is seen, then, is the power of young entrepreneurship.

A focus on how this regime is seen reveals a set of tensions that undergird it. A first tension is that between the individual –and their will and desires– and the larger system. Images of singular young corps members are presented side by side with infographics that point to the failures of the system to provide an equitable education. The gaze that connects a teacher and a student lives online next to an image in which the percentage of children who do not finish primary school takes up the entire screen.

This first tension between the individual and the system interacts with a second tension between the local and the global aspects of education reform. The images depicting students and young adults cannot but bring to the fore idiosyncratic aspects of localized living: hijabs on girls’ heads, specific colors on pupils’ uniforms, logos drawn using national flags as inspiration. The very name of each one of the member organizations includes the country where it is located, and the portraits of corps members gazing at prospective teachers appeals to a sense of commitment to the nation and its future. Yet, the “all” in Teach for All aims higher. Looking across images produced by these programs it becomes clear that the visual language being is essentially universal. A teacher is a teacher is a teacher; a student is a student is a student. Teach For All’s CEO, Wendy Kopp, expressed: “If our problems are the same, then it gives me hope that the solutions must be shareable” (cited in [Murlidhar, 2013](#)), however as [Friedrich et al. \(2015\)](#) make clear, the making of the problems and solutions of education as global phenomena is never smooth or straightforward. If, as some comparative infographics (and the shared aesthetic of the graphs), the involvement of global partners as represented in their logos, and the idea of an “all” that transcends specificities imply, the problems of education are the same and need to be tackled by global policy entrepreneurs ([Ball, 2012](#)), then what is the role of an individual’s commitment to the nation? Where are the boundaries between the generic call for energetic young teachers, and the specificities of the self that heeds that call?

The third tension that inhabits the visual regime that governs and is constituted by these images is that between present and future. The images of children looking directly at the lens work together with the colorful graphs to highlight the present crisis, the catastrophe that needs to be addressed now. They are the clarion call for intervention and reform. The images of students raising their hands, and the portraits of corps members have a more ambiguous temporality. While they do depict a moment in time of successful teaching and people who already chose to be part of the organizations, they also have a foot in the future, presented as what needs to happen (more) in order for the first images to disappear. The images of the possible tomorrow (happy and engaged students, successful teachers) are only legible within a theory of change that relies on individual action, interacting with the first tension described above. Absent here is any consideration of the past, including past efforts at addressing inequities. The present in crisis hints at the inefficacy of past reforms, and the focus on youth places all hopes in the future, yet the specifics of what is different this time, what will make the jump from those so-far-unbridgeable gaps and the bright future of effective and meaningful schooling is left in the empty space between images.

The visual regime we are describing exists, then, supported by these three tensions and their interactions, as thousands of images that serve as advertisements for the Teach For All member organizations work to contribute to a common sense about the global education arena, their actors and structures, and their problems and solutions.

Concluding thoughts

As a Transnational Advocacy Network (Ball, 2012), Teach for All has demonstrated a remarkably stable visual narrative among its 54 network partners. The key themes of the visual regime presented on the Facebook pages of partner organizations (youth, hands, gaze, permanence/change, and infographics) work as a language to support and persuade viewers of the universal efficacy of Teach for All's model, and though specific network partners' visual programs are not intended to be read side by side, the clarity of their messages work in unison. Whether these images are read by potential corps members, funders, or a wider audience, they employ a common discourse that proves attractive both ideologically and aesthetically.

But what this common visual regime seems to obfuscate are the problems of education globally, and in particular, how they vary by locality. For any viewer of these images, it is easy to assume that the similarity of network partners' Facebook pages means that the educational problems and solutions for each of their contexts are the same. However, further reflection challenges the notion that the diverse cultural, political, and economic environments of countries such as Sweden, Nepal, and Nigeria (and the differences within those contexts) could possibly produce the same barriers to educational quality, and thereby be easily solved by the Teach for All approach. As Friedrich (2016) has illustrated previously, even the purchase that Teach for All network partners have gained in different nations varies widely. For example, in the free market-oriented Chilean political context, Enseña Chile has spread quickly through the publicly funded schools system, while in neighboring Argentina, Enseñá por Argentina has been barred from placing its corps members in state schools, remanding them instead to a small number of private, largely Catholic schools. Yet, the uniformity of network partners' visual programs glosses over these not so minor details in presenting one common language for understanding the promise and successes of Teach for All.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that at the center of the visual narrative presented by these images is an absence: the bad teacher. While the theory of change promoted by Teach for All, one focused on replacing bad teachers with new, young, talented ones, is explicit in most other outlets, these images have no way of presenting the problem of bad teachers in a direct way. Though there are a number of infographics that highlight data and statistics about the poor quality of education, overwhelmingly, network partners present common images of what good education looks like. Viewers, then, are left to imagine the bad teacher in the negative space left behind after defining the good teacher as conceived by Teach for All. This seems to be the result of both the challenges of presenting a negative image in advertisements and the potential for misreading what is being shown. For example, while Teach for All would like to convey that older teachers are the problem, were they included in these representations, some viewers may associate their age with experience, which seems like an asset. As such, it makes sense then that the images we do see on these Facebook pages are oriented in the way they are, with a fixation on youth, physical and cognitive ability, the capacity to engage and inspire, and the willingness to base decisions on rational data.

Teach for All has made it clear that if the solution to the problems of education is fundamentally a human capital one, and that the central mechanism for enacting change is recruiting talented young individuals and getting them into a classroom as quickly as possible, it follows that answer is to elevate the ideals of social consciousness and entrepreneurship. As globalizing narratives about the value of competition and market forces grow ever stronger, Teach for All continues to lean into the universality of its approach and the visual regime of its partner networks' Facebook pages play a central role in its public messaging.

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Policy isomorphism: a lens for understanding the influence of globalization on national education policymaking

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Introduction	271
Conceptualization of policy isomorphism	271
Policy isomorphism as one of the perspectives for understanding national education policymaking in the context of globalization	273
Policy isomorphism in a broad context of social sciences	273
Boundary conditions for applying the analytical framework of policy isomorphism	274
Isomorphic mechanisms in education policymaking in a global education system	274
Controversial views concerning policy isomorphism	275
Confirmative views	275
Criticisms	275
Alternative approaches	276
Conclusions	277
References	277

Introduction

It has been argued that “the globalization of economy is accompanied by the globalization of policy making” (Moutsios, 2009, p. 467). As education is increasingly embedded in the process of globalization, national education development and policymaking are unavoidably subject to global pressures (Carney et al., 2012; Schofer and Meyer, 2005; Rizvi and Lingard, 2009; Yang, 2003). The influence of globalization on national policymaking can be understood through the lens of “policy isomorphism.” In the literature on public policy, the term “policy isomorphism” generally refers to the phenomenon of similar policies across nations (Villadsen, 2011) or “the convergence and similarities in structures or policy outputs of different governing bodies, including localities and nations” (Zhu and Meng, 2018, p. 1). The theoretical root of policy isomorphisms is based on DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) notion of institutional isomorphism, which best captures the process of the homogenization of organizations in an institutional environment. Policy isomorphism concerns the application of institutional isomorphism in policy analysis, specifically concerning the process of policymaking.

Education studies applying institutional isomorphism have been used mainly for organizational analysis, whereas those dealing with policy issues mostly address national contexts (Cai and Mehari, 2015; Baker and Wiseman, 2006). Nevertheless, issues related to policy isomorphism in a global context are not rare in the literature on education research. However, these studies often use the concepts of policy convergence, policy diffusion, policy borrowing, policy learning, and policy transfer (Verger et al., 2012; Green, 1999) and apply approaches such as “globalizing education policy analysis” (Rizvi and Lingard, 2009) and “mechanisms of external effects on national policies” (Dale, 1999). Policy isomorphism, grounded in institutional isomorphism, could offer an effective lens via which to analyze the phenomenon of policy convergence, especially concerning the influence of globalization on national education policymaking. Policy isomorphism also has the potential to help enhance and build synergies among existing approaches to policy convergence in the context of globalization. However, there is a lack of systematic elaboration of the concept of policy isomorphism, as well as the use of the concept in education policy studies when globalization is concerned.

This article elaborates on the concept of policy isomorphism as a lens for analyzing national education policymaking in the context of globalization by integrating the insights of institutional theory, public policy studies, and education research on policymaking in a global context. It highlights the mechanisms of policy isomorphism but also reminds the reader of the theoretical limits of policy isomorphism. The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. First, it begins with conceptualizing policy isomorphism and introducing its underlying mechanisms based on the theory of institutional isomorphism. Then, it discusses how policy isomorphism can be used as an analytical framework to understand the processes of national education policymaking in the context of globalization, in comparison with some alternative approaches. This is followed by a discussion of controversial views regarding policy isomorphisms reflected in the literature. This paper concludes with suggestions for future research on applying policy isomorphism in education policy research.

Conceptualization of policy isomorphism

The conceptualization of policy isomorphism cannot be done without understanding the notion of isomorphism and, more specifically, institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). Drawing on Hawley (1968), DiMaggio and Powell (1983) define

isomorphism as “a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions” (p. 149). While [Hawley \(1968\)](#) refers to the social, economic, political, and biophysical aspects of the environment in his conceptualization of isomorphism, [DiMaggio and Powell \(1983\)](#) distinguish between the technical and institutional environments because the mechanisms of isomorphism in these two contexts are different.

Demands driven by technical/market environments include changes in consumers’ preferences, competitive conditions, and other characteristics of the task environment; the institutional environment refers to the rules, norms, understandings, beliefs, and taken-for-granted assumptions regarding what constitute appropriate or acceptable organizational forms and behaviors ([Meyer and Scott, 1983](#)). In the technical environment (e.g., a marketplace), competitive isomorphism is used to understand the phenomenon of homogeneity, in which increasing similarities between organizations are caused by competitive pressures ([Hannan and Freeman, 1977](#)). The notion of institutional isomorphism stresses the importance of legitimacy and the logic of appropriateness for processes of homogenization ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983](#)).

[DiMaggio and Powell \(1983\)](#) identify three processes of institutional isomorphism, namely coercive, mimetic, and normative. Coercive isomorphism stems from political influence and the need for legitimacy. In other words, coercive pressures are derived from other organizations in that an organization is dependent on the expectations of the social surroundings in which that organization is embedded. The chief coercive forces include political power, the legal environment, and governmental mandates. The extent of the structural impact on organizations depends on the resources received from powerful central institutions. Such a logic is not far from the resource dependency theory ([Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978](#)), which predicts that a more plural resource base should lead to higher organizational autonomy and, hence, potentially greater organizational diversity. However, institutional theory and resource dependency theory focus on the institutional environment and technical environment, respectively.

Mimetic isomorphism occurs when actors face uncertainty and attempt to emulate successful organizations as a solution. Mimetic isomorphism is based on imitation, which is characterized by copying structural elements of organizational patterns that are believed to be successful and legitimate. Normally, an organization tends to imitate well-established organizations when it faces uncertainty. Uncertainty refers to “the degree to which future states of the world cannot be anticipated and accurately predicted” ([Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978](#), p. 67). According to [DiMaggio and Powell \(1983\)](#), the extent of mimetic isomorphic effects on an organization depends on the degree of uncertainty and the ambiguity of goals.

Normative isomorphism arises primarily from professionalization, which refers to “the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work” ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983](#), p. 152). Professionalization involves two aspects: one is the homogenizing influence of established norms, and the other is the growth and elaboration of professional networks ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983](#)). As explained by [Levy \(2006](#), p. 145), “Mimetic isomorphism occurs when actors are otherwise unclear on what to do and therefore copy successful organizations, whereas normative isomorphism arises where professions or others feel capable of mapping their own policy but do so based on their socialization of dominant norms.” According to [DiMaggio and Powell \(1983\)](#), the greater the reliance on using professional credentials to choose staff, the greater similar to other organizations will be. Also, the greater the participation of members in professional organizations, the more alike organizations will be.

Associated with the notion of institutional isomorphism is the concept of organizational field, which is defined by [DiMaggio and Powell \(1983](#), p. 148) as “those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products.” They also note, “Organizational fields provide a context in which individual efforts to deal rationally with uncertainty and constraint often lead, in the aggregate, to homogeneity in structure, culture, and output” ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983](#), p. 147). The notions of organizational field and institutional isomorphism largely enhance neo-institutional theory, which was originated in [Meyer and Rowan \(1977\)](#) and [Meyer \(1977\)](#).

When conducting empirical research on institutional isomorphism, two components are essential: organization and organizational field—the environment in which isomorphism takes place ([DiMaggio and Powell, 1983](#)). It should be noted that [DiMaggio and Powell \(1983\)](#) mainly used the mechanisms of isomorphism to explain “what makes organizations so similar” (p. 147), not specifically for analyzing policy similarities across nations. When analyzing policy isomorphism in a global context, the environment is the world or global system of education, and organizations are national governments and other actors involved in national policymaking ([Cai, 2010](#); [Drori, 2008](#)). Then, the three mechanisms of institutional isomorphisms can be used to analyze policy isomorphism.

While the mechanisms of institutional isomorphism provide a theoretical account of how organizations are subject to institutional pressures in the process of homogenization, [Villadsen \(2011\)](#) contends that the mechanisms are not sufficient in explaining “how institutional pressures are conveyed and under which circumstances they are translated into decisions and action in organizations” (p. 574). Thus, he proposes integrating a social network perspective into institutional isomorphism analysis. This is, indeed, in line with the fundamental theoretical assumption of institutional theory, which primarily deals with a “network of organizations” ([Greenwood and Hinings, 1996](#), p. 1026). [Owen-Smith and Powell \(2008\)](#) assert that networks are “the channels through which institutional effects flow” and “networks of like-minded individuals are central reference groups that promote widely emulated practices” (p. 599).

[Villadsen \(2011\)](#) particularly suggests that institutional expectations/pressures, together with the associated information, are conveyed through the social networks of political executives (i.e., mayors in their research setting). Therefore, public organizations with their executives centrally positioned in networks (or organizational fields) are likely to be the agents of policy isomorphism. The social network of policymakers across nations is an important source of policy isomorphism in a global context because

conveying norms, information, knowledge, and expectations relies heavily on international networks, sometimes through their connections to international organizations (Cai, 2010). Not only policymakers but also participants in education policy processes, such as teachers, can also be agents of isomorphism through their international mobility (Brown and Stevick, 2014).

In short, the conceptualization of policy isomorphism can be summarized as follows. First, from the perspective of institutional isomorphisms, policy isomorphism can be defined as a constraining process that forces policymakers, in the form of the governing bodies of regions and nations, in a global environment to resemble one another in terms of policymaking, especially when addressing similar policy problems. Second, the core elements of policy isomorphism analysis are national governments (as organizations) and the world system, e.g., the global system of education (as the organizational field or institutional environment). Third, there are three types of mechanisms of policy isomorphism, namely coercive, mimetic, and normative mechanisms.

Policy isomorphism as one of the perspectives for understanding national education policymaking in the context of globalization

While the concept of policy isomorphism is to be further elaborated on here to build an analytical framework with which to understand national policymaking in a global educational system, it should be noted that the applicability of the policy isomorphism perspective depends on certain conditions. The power and limits of policy isomorphism as an analytical tool are also related to theoretical assumptions about human behaviors.

Policy isomorphism in a broad context of social sciences

Although the power of institutional isomorphism in national education policymaking has been widely acknowledged in the literature (e.g., Jarvis, 2014; Joo and Halx, 2012; Cai, 2010; Rakic, 2001), this same literature has warned that not all policymaking processes, especially those perceived as institutional change, can be explained by institutional isomorphism (Joo and Halx, 2012; Levy, 2006; Beckett, 2010). To understand the limits of institutional isomorphism, one must also understand two competing views in the social sciences on understanding the behavior of individuals. These are the cultural anthropology and rational choice theory, which are located at the two extremes of a spectrum.

Anthropologists believe that human behavior is governed by culturally transmitted norms, and that such norms contain accumulated wisdom, which allows people to behave sensibly even though they do not understand what they do and why they do. Rational choice [on the contrary] consider that people make behavioral choices [based] on their rational calculations, in which the central element involves a cost benefit analysis.

Cai and Yan (2011, p. 56).

Institutional isomorphism, as a core aspect of new institutional theory, is largely shared with anthropologists' thinking. It has become popular in policy analysis because of the increasingly strong "world culture" (Schofer and Meyer, 2005) that affects national education policies (Kim and Boyle, 2012; Carney et al., 2012). Meanwhile, sovereign states are supposed to design and implement their policies independently (Joo and Halx, 2012). This can be explained by the rational theory of decision making, according to which policymakers' choices are influenced by their preferences and projections of maximized policy outcomes (Howlett et al., 2009).

Recent developments in institutional theory have integrated the word-culture perspective and the role of human agency (Cai and Mehari, 2015). Within such a perspective, individuals' behaviors and choices are directly driven by their interests and preferences, but the ways in which they pursue their interests are bound by institutional rules, especially in legitimated institutional settings (Ingram and Clay, 2000; Scharpf, 1997). Because national policymakers are embedded in intricate global networks, their interests and preferences are shaped by global institutional constraints (Cai, 2010).

In addition, policymakers are also influenced by rules and routines from the past—as explained by the path-dependency theory (Greener, 2002). Path dependency is tightly associated with historical institutionalism (Suddaby et al., 2013), as well as other schools of neo-institutionalism. As noted by Raadschelders (1998), "path dependency not only connects the past to the present but highlights the fact that the past limits the range of choices in the present" (p. 570). Kay (2005, p. 562) further articulates, "It occurs only once in a certain context and at a certain time," and the condition of path dependency is "based on the fact that events in nature are repeatable and recurrent," often in a national context. However, we are now in the age of innovation, in which the world is changing quickly and increasingly uncertain thanks to the rapid advancement of globalization and technology. Nations are not simply embedded in their own institutional environments rooted in the past but in a complex global system.

When the global system can be treated as an organizational field, institutional isomorphism can be a more suitable analytical framework than the path-dependency theory for understanding national policymaking processes. However, if the global system consists of multiple or even competing institutional elements, the explanatory power of institutional isomorphism (and neo-institutionalism in general) may be constrained. In this regard, the institutional logics perspective has its advantages. The concept of institutional logics was introduced by Alford and Friedland (1985) when describing how contradictory practices and beliefs inherent in modern Western societies shape individuals' actions in the political arena. One central pervasive argument of the institutional logics perspective is that multiple and contending logics provide the dynamic for potential change in both organizations

and societies (Thornton et al., 2012). It has been shown that there are multiple and conflicting institutional logics in the global system of education, particularly higher education (Cai and Mountford, 2021).

Thus, policy isomorphism is only one of the perspectives for understanding national education policymaking in a global context. When isomorphism is applied to policy analysis in a specific research setting, one must be aware of its theoretical limits and alternative perspectives.

Boundary conditions for applying the analytical framework of policy isomorphism

When using policy isomorphisms as an analytical tool to explain the influence of globalization on national education policymaking, three conditions must be met. First, policy problems are concerned with institutional pressures. Policy problems exist in social contexts, including both technical and institutional dimensions (Meyer and Scott, 1983). While in a technical environment, “organizations compete ... for resources and customers,” in an institutional environment, organizations compete “for political power and institutional legitimacy, for social as well as economic fitness” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, p. 150). Thus, policy isomorphism has its most explanatory power when the dynamic of policymaking is primarily concerned with the institutional environment.

Second, in a policy isomorphism analysis, the global environment in which public organizations and policymakers are embedded can largely be seen as an organizational field, instead of an institutional system. Cai and Liu (2020) identify three differences between an organizational field and an institutional system, both of which are used to understand the organizational environment. First, an institutional system may cut across several organizational fields (Thornton et al., 2012). Second, an organizational field is characterized by a structuration that results in less diversity (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983), while an institutional system is comprised of mingling and conflicting institutional logics (Thornton et al., 2012). Third, the concept of an institutional system emphasizes the active roles of both organizations and individuals for institutional changes (Thornton et al., 2012), while the organizational field mainly deals with relationships in which similar types of organizations share (or are constrained by) similar norms.

The third condition is that the policymakers are embedded in international social networks concerning education development. Typical examples of national policymakers involving the networks occur through joining intergovernmental organizations or being members of international nongovernmental organizations. The global networks are key carriers of “world culture” (Schofer and Meyer, 2005), which explains global isomorphism in education—a phenomenon first noted by John Meyer in his observation of the global expansion of mass schooling (Meyer, 1971, 1977). The global norms, expectations, and knowledge conveyed by international networks influence national policymaking through the transferring the global ideologies, as a source of legitimacy, into local contexts. This corroborates the central theoretical claim of world culture (Carney et al., 2012): educational policies are not particularly responsive to the political, economic, and social characteristics of individual nation-states but often result from the “characteristics of the contemporary world system” (Meyer et al., 1977, p. 242).

It should be acknowledged that any national policymaking is influenced by multiple factors, from both technical and institutional environments, as well as global and local pressures. Policy isomorphism can be used as a useful lens in policy analysis when national policymaking is primarily affected by institutional factors and global networks or the research focus is on that.

Isomorphic mechanisms in education policymaking in a global education system

Policy isomorphism is represented by the three mechanisms of institutional isomorphisms. Drawing on Chen (2008), Cai (2010) labels the mechanisms of isomorphisms in education policymaking as (1) mechanisms of international regulation, (2) mechanisms of mimetic learning, and (3) mechanisms of consultancy involvement when analyzing the influences of global pressures on national higher education policymaking.

Under the mechanism of international regulation, nations develop similar policy agendas due to the requirements of/suggestions from international organizations or intergovernmental organizations. The most influential international organizations in education policy are, for example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); World Bank; World Trade Organization (WTO); International Monetary Fund (IMF); and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (Beech, 2009; Moutsios, 2009). Moutsios (2009) claims that these organizations’ decisions “are decisively shaping current directions and developments in national education systems” (p. 467). This reflects the coercive mechanism. In Moutsios’s (2009) words, “the mode of decision making characterizing transnational political structures is network-like or ‘network-like’, rather than democratic” (p. 469). For instance, national policymakers’ decisions, influenced by “human capital and neoliberal ideologies,” are made “through largely asymmetric, non-democratic and opaque procedures” (Moutsios, 2009, p. 476).

Under the mechanism of mimetic learning, nations attempt to imitate successful nations when they face uncertainties concerning future development or ambiguous development goals. If there is one word that could capture contemporary societal development, including the domain of education, it is uncertainty (Altbach and Reisberg, 2018). The uncertainties in education have been widely reported in the literature in terms of their various aspects, such as learning (e.g., Susnea et al., 2014), education-to-work transition (e.g., Lechner et al., 2016), educational leadership (e.g., Jameson, 2012), the financing of education (e.g., Maman and Rosenhek, 2020), and education policy (Sirat, 2010). Following DiMaggio and Powell (1983), uncertainty invites processes of imitation and copying—the search for apparently legitimate and successful solutions elsewhere. For instance, many aspects of higher education policy development in Central and Eastern Europe (Dobbins and Knill, 2009), Russia (Gounko and Smale, 2007), and China (Yang, 2019; Cai, 2012) have, to a large extent, been driven by memetic learning. It should be noted that “policy

mimesis" is "the imitation or reproduction of a policy in another context, rather than a simple transposition across geographical and political boundaries" (Massey, 2009, p. 383).

Under the mechanism of consultancy involvement, nations formulate similar policies when the policymakers and/or their consultants are influenced by globally shared norms within a profession. This can be understood as the normative pressures induced by professionalization. In the process of education policymaking, not only do politicians make decisions but other professions are also involved as policy consultants, including international organizations, e.g., the World Bank, think tanks operating on a global scale (Spring, 2005), as well as individual educational professionals (Gunter and Mills, 2017a) and researchers (Gunter and Mills, 2017b; Ion et al., 2019). All these policy consultants may convey global norms to national contexts but in different ways. While the role of international consultancies' influences on the national policy agenda is apparent, educational researchers and professionals bring global ideas to local contexts due to their international experience and mobility (Brown and Stevick, 2014). When think tanks are engaged with policymaking in different countries, they help transfer experiences and best practices among these countries.

The three isomorphic mechanisms take place simultaneously and reinforce one another (Tuttle and Dillard, 2007). Although, in some cases, one mechanism may more strongly influence the homogenization process than others (Boxenbaum and Jonsson, 2017), the three mechanisms are often intricately interlinked in both the practice of policymaking and empirical analysis (Hallonsten and Hugander, 2014).

Controversial views concerning policy isomorphism

After conceptualizing policy isomorphism from a theoretical perspective, this section examines how policy isomorphism is reflected in empirical research concerning the influence of globalization on national education policies. Based on reviewing the relevant literature, three controversial views on policy isomorphism are identified: (1) those confirming the explanatory power of policy isomorphism, (2) those criticizing policy isomorphism, and (3) those proposing alternative approaches to the phenomenon of policy convergence. These controversial views are further explained as follows.

Confirmative views

Most studies about the influence of globalization on national education policymaking confirm the trends of policy isomorphism. The empirical cases in this camp lie between two extremes. On the one end are European countries. The European Union intends to streamline higher education policies among European member states, and thus, policy isomorphism is expected (Dobbins and Knill, 2009; Rakic, 2001). The cases on the other end are concerned with statist countries, such as China. There is a perception that the Chinese government makes its own decisions in formulating national education reform policies, while global ideologies play a minor role (Cai, 2010). In between the two extreme ends, there are countries in diverse contexts, such as Korea (Joo and Hax, 2012) and Australia (Croucher and Woelert, 2016). Policy isomorphism is mainly reflected in aspects such as the governance of higher education (Cai, 2010), quality assurance systems (Seyfried et al., 2019), and research funding structure (Hallonsten and Hugander, 2014).

While a large amount of literature finds policy convergence, sometimes, in the same report, both convergence and diversity are observed in terms of different aspects of education policy. For instance, Rakic (2001) found, in his analysis of the Netherlands, Belgium/Flanders, and Germany, that "a number of important indications of convergence are present in national policy arrangements in the field of higher education (in particular student mobility and quality assurance), but less in the structure of higher education systems" (p. 225). Although not directly discussing policymaking in a global context, Cai and Yan (2011) explain why the convergence and diversity of education development may co-exist. They argue that there is no simple tendency toward the convergence or divergence of policy design in an organizational field; what aspects are isomorphic or divergent depends on whether decision-makers want to pursue legitimacy in a (global) institutional environment or economic fit in a local technical environment.

Criticisms

While current education research shows that policy isomorphism is becoming prevalent in the global education field, some education researchers are very concerned about its negative effects. As LeTendre et al. (2001) put it, "it is dangerous to imply that a global dynamic culture pushes everything everywhere to be the same at all times. Empirically this is not true and conceptually it leads to a theoretical dead end where unique national and local change is impossible" (p. 13). Certainly, there are other factors besides world culture at work. Brint et al. (2009) point out that decision-makers often face the need to balance pressures from multiple interest groups instead of simply gaining legitimacy by conforming to "rationalized myths" (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) in society. In the same vein, Wiseman et al. (2014) criticize two misconceptions of isomorphisms or neo-institutionalism: "(1) the belief that the 'world culture' strand is the only version of neo-institutional theory applicable to comparative education research; and (2) the assumption that the global homogenization of society, culture and schooling is a goal of researchers applying neo-institutional theory to comparative education phenomena" (p. 687).

Indeed, policy isomorphism, or institutional isomorphism, has its theoretical limits. It focuses too heavily on structuration in an institutional environment while ignoring the technical (or task) environment, as well as institutional complexity. In their literature analysis of the use of institutional theory in higher education research, Cai and Mehari (2015) remind us that the new

institutionalism, in which institutional isomorphism is rooted, “mainly provides a good account of the similarity or stability of organizational arrangements in a given organizational field” but is inefficient in explaining institutional changes due to its ignorance of “power, self-interest, efficiency and human agency” (p. 11). According to Boxenbaum and Jonsson (2017), current research applying institutional isomorphism has not even utilized the full power of neo-institutionalism. For instance, “decoupling,” another core concept of neo-institutionalism, is often absent in studies analyzing institutional isomorphism. As “organizations decouple their formal structure from their production activities when institutional and task environments are in conflict, or when there are conflicting institutional pressures” (Boxenbaum and Jonsson, 2017, p. 78), bringing both concepts of institutional isomorphism and decoupling into the analysis may provide more comprehensive views of the dynamics involved in organizational changes and policymaking.

The criticism to institutional isomorphism is associated with the “paradox of embedded agency” (Seo and Creed, 2002): if the actions of organizational actors are constrained by taken-for-granted institutions, how and why can the actors induce institutional changes (Horton and Wanderley, 2018)? Institutional theory has been further developed, largely for a better understanding of the paradox of embedded agency. For instance, the concepts of both institutional entrepreneurship (DiMaggio, 1988; Battilana et al., 2009) and institutional work (Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006) attempt to address the purposive and proactive action of individuals and organizations to create, maintain and disrupt institutions. The institutional logics perspective further explains how institutions both enable and constrain actions in a multi-institutional environment (Thornton et al., 2012).

Alternative approaches

As a response to the theoretical limits of policy isomorphism, some alternative approaches to analyzing education policymaking in the context of globalization have been proposed. One commonly used strategy is to integrate institutional isomorphism theory with other supplementary theoretical perspectives. For instance, in a literature analysis, Cai and Mehari (2015) identify several weaknesses of neo-institutionalism and list a number of other theories applied to supplement neo-institutionalism in empirical higher education studies (Table 1).

Without moving outside the framework of institutional theory, the combination of both institutional isomorphism and the institutional logics perspective may offer the most promising approach to gain a comprehensive and deep understanding of the dynamics of education policymaking in the processes of globalization. This is because the insights of institutional logics have the advantage in terms of explaining how an environment with multiple and conflicting institutional pressures enables and constrains action via the macro-structure, local culture, and human agency (Thornton et al., 2012). This makes up for the weakness

Table 1 Supplementary theories to neo-institutionalism.

<i>Weaknesses of neo-institutionalism</i>	<i>Supplementary theories</i>
Lack of attention to the technical environment	Resource dependency theory Population ecology theory Cultural and socioeconomic factors Globalization perspective (highlighting the economic and technical impacts of globalization) Customer choice theory World system theory and dependency theory Administrative lattice Monopsony
Little attention paid to the role of human agency in institutional changes	Sensemaking Rational system theory Principal-agency model Actor's perspective Negotiated order theory Bourdieu's theory of practice Organizational change theory Political, teleological, and cultural models Professional theory Self-referential theory Transformative approach Social theories Dialectical theory Instrumental perspective
Less sensitive to geographical distance	Network theory
Over-emphasis on one organizational field	Allomorphism (organizations are embedded in multiple organizational fields)

Adapted from Cai and Mehari (2015).

of institutional isomorphism. Such a combination has proven useful in an analysis of the evolution of university strategies in the organizational field of Swedish higher education institutions (Holmberg and Hallonsten, 2015). Such a combined approach is likely to be relevant for studies of education policies in a global context.

There are also efforts to transform the analytical framework of policy isomorphism. Zapp and Ramirez (2019) suggest using the concept of a global higher education regime to understand the processes of global higher educational integration with regard to the “global education system” (Meyer, 2006). The regime concept focuses on the integrative mechanisms underlying the interactions of diverse actors across nations that are involved in the construction of a global higher education regime, “instead of conceptualizing integration as a process leading to a single ‘system’ or ‘society’ of higher education systems” (p. 474), as the emphasis of institutional isomorphism. Zapp and Ramirez (2019) theorize the global higher education regime concept by specifying three mechanisms of regime construction, namely discursive, normative, and regulative mechanisms, which, in combination, “transcend local-global and inter-state distinctions, thus facilitating integrated ‘oneness’ beyond growing inter-national ‘similarity’” (p. 474).

Conclusions

As a global education system is becoming more evident, policy isomorphism may serve as a useful lens with which to analyze national education policymaking in such a context. It is especially effective in explaining why education policies across countries tend to become similar. However, when applying policy isomorphism in empirical analysis, one must be aware of its theoretical limits. For instance, the theory of isomorphism, as part of neo-institutionalism, is not designed to analyze institutional change, conflicting institutional elements, and the role of human agency. The analytical framework of policy isomorphism is suitable for analyzing the influence of globalization on national education policy when three conditions are met: (1) the policy problem is primarily concerned with institutional pressures, (2) the global environment of policymaking is largely dominated by a single set of norms, and (3) policymakers/consultants are involved in global networks. However, both the global and national systems of education are becoming increasingly complicated. Instead of one set of predominating norms, there are multiple or even conflicting institutional logics in these systems (Lepori, 2016; Cai and Mountford, 2021). Also, education policymaking processes are not merely influenced by internationally shared norms but also by national interests, as well as local economic conditions (Kogan, 2018).

This does not mean that policy isomorphism, as an analytical lens, is out of date. Regardless of changes and complexities in society, there are always forces driving policies and organizations to become similar. My suggestion is that, when applying policy isomorphism in policy analysis, researchers should keep broader institutionalist perspectives in consideration and particularly bear in mind the following issues. First, the policy strategies and actual processes of implementation can be loosely coupled or decoupling, which is another core concept of neo-institutionalism. Second, the recent development of institutional theory has offered many useful insights to supplement neo-institutionalism. In a policymaking context in which there are mingling institutional logics and actors’ roles are crucial, researchers should consider alternative institutional theory approaches (e.g., institutional logics and institutional entrepreneurship) or integrate these theoretical insights with policy isomorphisms. Third, the lens of policy isomorphism helps to not only explain the convergence of education policies across nations but also observe those aspects that are not isomorphic. Eventually, in the practices of education policymaking, we must “work with and against the pressures of globalization in education” (Henry et al., 1999, p. 85).

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Knowledge economy meets development imaginaries

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The “rational” knowledge economy	281
The bubbling knowledge economy	282
Missing links of knowledge-based development (KBD)	283
The labyrinths of educational digital inclusion in the Global South	284
The translating power of “Creative Britain”	286
Conclusions	286
Uncited references	287
References	287

The term “Knowledge Economy” (KE) holds relevance in current discussions about human and economic development. Since 1996, when the OECD introduced it, it has acted as an umbrella concept that triggered various lines of public policy at the global and regional levels (Godin, 2006).

The concept emerged as an explanatory device for processes of structural change from industrial economies to those based on the use, creation and distribution of knowledge; and was intended to explain and justify a variety of public policies, ranging from economic to educational reforms.

Alongside public policies, forms of collective action have emerged based on the appropriation of such explanatory device. Social actors from civil society, industry, and academia have built a public-private agenda that supports their interests around projects for educational change based on the concept of knowledge economy.

The initial debates around the notion of KE assumed that the transition to KE was to be completed in advanced countries; and only then other countries could consider it as a reachable destination in their pursuit for development. Moreover, its outcome -the “knowledge society”—was considered an “objective” and “universal” fact—only a set of rational steps to be decoded by less advanced countries to initiate the needed transition.

Although the idea of KE suffered significant setbacks, such as the dotcom bubble in 2000–2002 or the subprime mortgage crisis in 2007–2008, escalations in structural changes did not always follow a market logic, as evidenced in the free software or open science movements. Moreover, the belief in the assumed benefits of a transition to KE maintained a steady presence in the policy agenda of a variety of countries around the world, showing that the concept still holds relevance.

Due to the persistent resilience of the concept, it is necessary to further develop non-linear explanations of the post-industrial transition to KE. The relative absence of alternative critical approaches to the notion of KE and its implications in economic and educational terms, even in advanced countries, contributes to the reproduction of unequal conditions of access to knowledge and its application to individual and collective life projects.

One of the biggest challenges in apprehending the idea of a KE is that the concept has become a moving target. Meanings shift as sociotechnical transitions become more complex, both when digital infrastructure becomes a private-public endeavor and when globalization blurs the national state as a valid unit of analysis of the symbolic sphere of the development process (Bhatt and Mackenzie, 2019).

In this essay, we will examine the goal of constructing a KE as a national endeavor that comprises symbolic and socio-material dimensions, analyzing discontinuities in specific structural and sociotechnical transitions. We propose the hypothesis that there is no single, universal KE as a desirable development destination per se. We assume, after the observation of case studies, that each nation-state puts its stamp or name on the construction site of its KE.

In their eagerness to promote public development policies, international organizations have oversimplified complex and unstable processes and made development imaginaries invisible. It is necessary to open the black box of KE to link it to symbolic work, so that each country can find its development path, avoiding the manifest dangers that platforms and algorithms present to the political and economic institutions necessary for sustainability. Society has reached a point where the technologies that build the KE also give body to the same sociotechnical material that lays the foundations of ignorance as a social practice (Latour, 2018).

I attempt a critical approach to KE that incorporates the multidirectionality of the transition to KE and the interrelation between economic-based infrastructural changes and socio-cultural appropriation strategies at the nation-state level. The individuation process during the late capitalism has modified the premises of development theories but not the diverse identity that supports them (Hui, 2020).

In the first section, we will examine the concept of KE in the context of its emergence in the second half of the 20th century, both in applied research by International Organizations such as the OECD and in their theoretical foundations.

In the second section, I will trace UNESCO’s humanistic response, contrasting it with the perspectives of the OECD’s monodisciplinary approach. The shift to the idea of a Knowledge Society (KS) in the first decade of the 21st century promoted an expansion

of the conceptual space of KE to establish frameworks that integrate economic and human development. UNESCO developed an interactive perspective of the economy-society relationship rather than the unidirectional one proposed by economic theory.

In the last two sections, from a critical perspective of linear approaches to the transition to KE, I develop the analytical framework on the missing cultural link between economics and education. I apply the concept of Sociotechnical Imaginaries to the interpretation of the Finnish and South Korean cases in the third section. In the final section, I evaluate educational reforms in various countries and analyze how they related with institutional development.

The “rational” knowledge economy

The notion of the knowledge economy, introduced by OECD (1996) as knowledge-based economies (KBE), has tried to describe economies whose core activities to develop and sustain long-term growth are characterized by knowledge. Research pursued by the organization to coin the term drew data from the most advanced economies and the transition processes of certain “exemplar” countries that have caught up, including Finland (Dahlman et al., 2006) and South Korea (Bank et al., 2001; Marginson, 2010). It tried to make sense of transformations in economic structure and innovation processes due to technological change triggered by the diffusion of microelectronics and the personal computer 20 years earlier.

KBE was defined as “economies which are directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information. This is reflected in the trend in OECD economies toward growth in high-technology investments, high-technology industries, more highly-skilled labor and associated productivity gains (...). In this view, investments in research and development, education and training and new managerial work structures are key” (OECD, 1996, p. 7). By focusing on the KBE, the OECD established a new growth strategy characterized by the use, creation and distribution of knowledge. The introduction of the concept also meant a significant shift in the epistemic communities of development politics, both in cases’ interpretation and policy recommendations. The core of advanced economies was no longer to be based on processing physical or material inputs dependent exclusively on traditional resources such as natural resources (e.g., land), labor, or capital (Haas, 1992).

Peter Drucker, management consultant and founder of the management field, served as a source of inspiration for OECD. In 1959 he coined the term “knowledge worker” to distinguish a new type of labor productivity. A new management, a new economy, and therefore a new society, the knowledge society, would emerge (Drucker, 1959). Although the influential thinking of Drucker was decisive in crafting the narrative of KE in the public sphere, his texts were based on primitive forms of KE prior to the micro-computing revolution and the spread of the internet. Thus, he did not go beyond prospective arguments.

Among the foundations of the OECD, we can also find Machlup’s estimates on the growth of knowledge industries, Gibbons et al.’s proposal on the new mode of knowledge production (Gibbons, 1997), the theory of National Innovation Systems (Freeman et al., 1987), Lundvall’s *Learning Economy* (2010), and Romer’s endogenous growth theory (Romer, 1994). The first theorists of KE such as Mashlup or Bell turned their attention to information processing, knowledge production, and the creation of intangible assets. Nevertheless, intangible assets such as patents and other products of scientific and technological research and development in the form of explicit knowledge, do not account for tacit knowledge accumulated in knowledge-based organizations and communities of practice.

Still, early stages in the process of building the concept of the KE also enhanced human talent through the massive training of highly specialized manpower at informal education systems and in continuous training circuits where the knowledge of the workforce is updated. Furthermore, International organizations stimulated and followed the study of the evolution of National Innovation Systems (NIS) proposed by Christopher Freeman and Bengt-Åke Lundvall. They described the innovation process as an interactive relationship between private and public organizations and actors that evolved in time to a dense network of institutions “located within or rooted inside the borders of a nation state” (OECD, 1997; Lundvall, 2010).

Focused on the diffusion and modification of new technologies, the production of applied knowledge combined with theoretical and empirical production in the early 1990s formed a variety of epistemic cultures in IOs (Haas, 1992; Kallo, 2021). Nevertheless, these failed to factor into the equation what we know today as the creative industries or creative economy. Such a new line of inquiry opened from 2002 with the works of Hesmondhalgh and Florida (Florida, 2003; Hesmondhalgh, 2002). Indeed, the 1990s OECD’s “rational” approach to the knowledge economy encountered a blind spot in creative activities and startups when identifying how knowledge is distributed and circulated, only considering technology drivers.

Furthermore, networked information technologies combined with knowledge management and new economic theories triggered a “rational and control” mindset about development. Knowledge was now to be seen as input, output, and capital, even if imperfectly accounted for or understood. Public agencies were convinced that knowledge could be managed in sophisticated, rational ways, where diffusion of information technology was essential. Sociotechnical transition, in particular the organizational transformation after the first wave of internet use in the production system, operated as (partial) evidence of structural change. Ideas about Knowledge Management as a new and powerful lever for development gave, beyond the hype, a tinge of rationality and control to development policies.

The framework was completed at the macrosocial level with the role of the “information society” in distributing knowledge through computer and communication networks. Daniel Bell had observed in the late 1960s through the theory of the Postindustrial Society that the axis of advanced societies was shifting toward service activities (Bell, 1976). Bell claimed information rather than energy was the transforming resource. Nevertheless, Bell did not visualize the interactive relationships between economy and culture. Rather than considering the emergence of new economic actors such as startups, entrepreneurs, and creative industries,

Bell's theory turned out to be a dead-end theory of problems and contradictions of post-industrial capitalism. Still, and in the context of conceptualizing KEs, Bell's writings reinforced the assumption that endogenous abstract knowledge growth processes could determine KEs.

The bubbling knowledge economy

The idea of a KE model gained recognition as the momentum of the growth of IT companies as expressed in the value of their shares. Between 1995 and its peak in March 2000, the Nasdaq Composite stock market index grew by 400%.

The early stages of the popularization of Internet use fueled unrealistic expectations around explosive economic growth. The launch of Mosaic in 1993, the first web browser, and the spread of its successor web browsers during the following years gave computer users access to the World Wide Web, the first version of a service-based digital economy.

Momentum met its end, or a long pause, with the dotcom bubble, a stock market bubble caused by excessive speculation of Internet-related companies. Between March 2000 and October 2002, Nasdaq fell 78%, giving up all its gains during the bubble, and causing a drastic change in the optimistic expectations about the KE.

Drastic change in expectations raised critical voices that pointed to the importance of integrated more fully the economy-society relationship from approaches to technological change that account for the political, cultural, and social aspects that affect these seemingly exclusively economic development processes (Florida, 2003; Peters, 2003; Godin, 2004, 2006; Beech, 2005a,b; Dale, 2005; Olszen and Peters, 2005; Kenway et al., 2006; Sörlin and Vessuri, 2007).

The topic's relevance stimulated a "second wave of knowledge economy studies." Theoretical and empirical research production in different fields of the social sciences overflowed the boundaries and reformulated the strictly economic approaches of early applied research (Choong and Leung, 2021, p. 18).

In this new context, UNESCO (2005) published its strategy to transition to Knowledge Societies by placing the Knowledge Economy in a macro-social framework. UNESCO narrative introduced a sociological twist in the references to the Knowledge Society theories of Nico Stehr (Stehr, 1994), Manuel Castells' Informational Capitalism (1996), and Amartya Sen's capability theory approach to development (2000).

The UNESCO document attempts an interdisciplinary and integrative approach to human and institutional development aspects. Identifying a plural destiny for "Knowledge Societies," the document mentions that the knowledge existing in all societies may or may not be mobilized for application by the knowledge economy model. It asks, what are the limits to the commodification of knowledge?

UNESCO (2005) stated that societies must be based on four pillars: freedom of expression, universal access to information and knowledge, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity, and quality education for all. It is the first significant report by an international body to define the digital divide as a form of multidimensional inequality on the global public agenda.

The document incorporates the idea developed by Warschauer (2003) that there is not one digital divide but several: material, geographical, age, gender, linguistic, educational-cultural, accessibility. The UNESCO proposal set out an agenda that has become even more urgent in times of the Covid 19 pandemic (Van Dijk, 2020).

Inequality in knowledge societies is not exclusively technological in origin, but the material basis of digital disconnection is combined with cognitive and socio-cultural aspects of digital inequality. This cognitive divide includes the capacity to interpret information on the internet, what we today call applied computational thinking, and educational and communicational aspects of inequality, such as the availability of digital content in the local language appropriate to the cultural context (Denning, 2017).

Influenced by the trilogy *The Information Age* published in 1996 by Manuel Castells, UNESCO cited the notion of Network Society to serve as a theoretical anchor for the applied narrative of the transition from the Information Society to Knowledge Societies. Castells goes a step further in explaining the triangular interdependence between economy-technology-culture.

For UNESCO, unlike the OECD, the new social infrastructure of the KE is the techno-social networks and not only the circulation of information. The KE is contained in the Network Society. The production of goods and services in the KE requires information and knowledge to be processed by the body of the workforce connected by the internet and, nowadays, by platforms (UNESCO, 2005, p. 49).

What characterizes the sociotechnical nature of the KE is "the application of such knowledge and information to knowledge generation and information processing/communication devices, in a cumulative feedback loop between innovation and the uses of innovation" (Castells, 1996, p. 31). Therefore diffusion of technology amplifies their power as it becomes appropriated and redefined by its users. Computers, information networks and algorithms are not simply tools to be handled, but digital infrastructure to be developed. Creating and manipulating symbols (culture) are strongly related to the capacity to produce and distribute goods and services (economy).

Castells based his theory of knowledge accumulation on Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) work on knowledge management, that introduced the analysis of the circulation of tacit dimension in the production of knowledge through the creation of new products and services. Nonaka and Takeuchi described how new innovative products were conceived in an iterative process of researching tacit knowledge as a primary source of value. They emphasized the growing importance of personalization and socialization of knowledge, to the detriment of knowledge codified in objects, text, or patents (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995).

Knowledge accumulation in KE occurs primarily through knowledge embodied in practices, capabilities, and skills. Disciplinary or scientific knowledge, while an input, is just the codified part of the source of value. The primary source of value is the tacit

knowledge embodied in intellectual practices applied to the production and distribution of goods and services assisted by online information.

Although Information and communication technologies (ICTs) act as a driver of change since they provide the material basis for human activities, KE involves an economy based on the manipulation of signs. That is why the main factor to be considered is the human intellectual activity around manipulating signs that require a reconfiguration of labor under a new technical division of creative activities. Thus informational capitalism relies as much on ICTs as on human creativity, tacit knowledge, and creative talent (Castells, 1996, p. 93; Lash and Urry, 1998; Lash, 2002).

Castells (1996) developed a model to interpret the transition from an industrial to informational capitalism, which identified common patterns of change observable in different types of societies, both central and peripheral. Informationalization describes a common process of structural change that, regardless of the level of development of each country, occurs and is expressed in each national cultural sphere according to its identities and trajectories.

Informationalism according to Castells “cannot be equated to the emergence of the service economy” (Castells, 1996, p. 100). For the author, the socio-technical transition between the industrial economy and the knowledge economy crosses sectoral activities of intellectual work, management and design, supported by the power of information technologies, resulting in informational agriculture, informational manufacturing, and informational services.

By connecting economics and culture, the Theory of Informational Capitalism brings into focus a third element of development: institutions. In addition to economic and human development, the construction of each state is based on institutional development. In the next section, we try to address the missing cultural link between economics and education institutions by applying the concept of Sociotechnical Imaginaries to selected cases.

Missing links of knowledge-based development (KBD)

Despite UNESCO’s efforts to reconcile economic development with human development, the third wall of development, the institutional one, persists in an unbridgeable divide. How to address the institutional dimension of development divides?

Knowledge discourses in policy documents of advanced countries such as Canada, the UK, and Australia have suggested that Institutions must promote generic skills acquisition in an individualist and universalist model of education. Universities were under increasing pressure from companies to respond to training and professional updating demands. The vision shared by IOs and companies is that the ideal type of a knowledge worker is a “technopreneur” that grasps innovation discovery (Al-Fehaid and Shaili, 2021; Fenwick, 2010).

KBD strategies for reassuring the development of developed countries rely on techno-determinism derived from a Schumpeterian approach to innovation as preceding and “driving” the economy—a hard agenda on institution building where educational goals are vaguely directed at upskilling, emphasizing control and measurement (Powell and Snellman, 2004).

By placing the techno-entrepreneur at the center as the determining factor of the KE the narrative of KBD underestimate or fail to consider dense aspects of innovation culture, such as the maker movement and open source communities of practice, where knowledge assets are collectively owned and driven by the individual will. The institutionalist agenda of development policies overlooked the interactive relationship between economy and culture (Stiglitz, 1999; Peters, 2003).

Ironically, large technology companies such as IBM or Microsoft understood sooner or later that they had to integrate such communities of technological practice and their cultures into their business strategies. This led to the development of management research on open innovation (Chesbrough, 2007).

In order to explain cultural preconditions for the development of economies based on knowledge, Peters presented the concept of Knowledge Cultures as the hubs of meaning that bind collective action in the transitions to KE, “shared practices of epistemic communities” that embody culturally preferred ways of doing things at a supranational level (Peters, 2003, p. 375).

Knowledge production requires a grounded set of shared ideas that depend upon certain cultural conditions, including trust, reciprocal rights, and responsibilities between different knowledge partners, institutional regimes, and strategies. However, it is unclear at what social levels communities of practice share knowledge and create their “ways of doing things.” While Knowledge Cultures assume supranational spaces, Innovation Systems, on the other hand, assume national or even regional spaces.

In that sense, the revision of the theory of National Innovation Systems adds to the interactive institutional processes the learning capacities to connect diversity. KE depends on a delicate balance of trust, social distance, and feelings. Attempts to reduce this complex interaction to “exchange of information” do not capture the most critical dimensions (...) lead to normative conclusions and recommended arrangements that differ from those reached on the basis of standard economics analysis” (Lundvall, 2010, p. 20).

The case of Finland’s transition to KE was often taken to illustrate a virtuous process. The case’s attraction came from a leapfrog from an industrial economy with little or no competitiveness to a KE. Nevertheless, while the IOs present the case as exemplary, other less linear analyses show dynamic and interactive aspects and even shadowed areas of development “models” (Himanen and Castells, 2004; Dahlman et al., 2006; Schienstock, 2007).

Himanen and Castells distinguished between egalitarian national strategies to KE (informationalism) and individualistic and exclusionary forms. In the egalitarian strategy, the Finish welfare state built-up public goods leading to accelerated material wealth creation while integrating and equalizing opportunities for its population.

The second form (USA) maintained its informational leadership without human development, leading to the decline of its middle class, as can be observable in the “Rust Belt,” and a scarce presence of public goods that can integrate poor immigrant workers, often also illegal (Himanen and Castells, 2004; Schienstock, 2007; Saxenian, 2014).

A comparison between Finland and the United States reveals the shape of the ideal transition but also hides the more viscous side of transitions. When comparing Finland with other paralleled, less extreme cases, such as South Korea, we can observe a pattern describing the construction of a national institutional superstructure based on a sociotechnical imaginary.

Sociotechnical Imaginaries, according to Jasanoff and Kim (2013) are “collectively imagined forms of social life and social order reflected in the design and fulfillment of nation-specific scientific and/or technological projects” (Jasanoff and Kim, 2013, p. 120). While research has largely applied this theoretical framework to energy policy formulation processes, we have found cases of policy formulation processes to promote the knowledge economy. These cases are examined in the following paragraphs.

The national narrative of Finland’s development project was based on the “information society” as a national destination. A hacker vision of building an egalitarian post-Soviet “open” society. Himanen (2014), one of the curators of this narrative, turned it into theory in a well-known essay “The Hacker Ethic, and the Spirit of the Information Age,” in which he attempts to re-seed the Weberian formula for the 21st century. A narrative rooted in material and real achievements such as the Linux Operating System financed by university scholarships put the country at the center of an epistemic community that became a game-changer for the global IT industry (Castells and Himanen, 2002).

Himanen’s efforts as a curator of the national narrative later evolved into an attempt to construct a global proposal based on globalist readings of the hacker spirit and the free software movement. This proposition was shared by Peters (2003) when he pointed to the free software movement as one of the components neglected by the KE formulators. Proposals that ignored the national roots of the construction of socio-technical imaginaries (Himanen and Committee for the Future in Parliament of Finland, 2004; Peters, 2009; Sahlberg, 2011).

South Korea, on the other hand, presented dissociation and discontinuities. It developed its economy in two distinct stages: advanced industrial capitalism through a long path of improving industrial labor productivity concentrated in its industrial conglomerates (Chaebols), mainly under a dictatorial regime (1953–1979). A second stage after the 1997 crisis described a transition to a KE promoted by the state under the imaginary of the “Smart Nation.”

South Korea’s “last mile” knowledge economy development strategy consisted of reforms to institutional incentives for creativity-oriented smart education investment and cultural openness, with enhanced knowledge exchanges between universities, firms, local governments, and research institutes. Between 2008 and 2013, following president Lee Myung-bak’s cabinet reorganization, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Energy was named the Ministry of Knowledge Economy (Biggart and Guillén, 1999; Bank et al., 2001; Marginson, 2010; OECD, 2015).

Finland and South Korea, despite their differences, are cases of sustained economic growth and an accelerated transition to KE that transformed their innovation and educational systems based on a common national narrative. Sociotechnical imaginaries supported both political consensus and a set of national symbolic elements that built a cohesive identity that contributed to the wide appropriation of social change. While both are KE, each has its way of building its own culture of knowledge.

The cases of Finland and South Korea describe streamlined narratives with the power to produce development. But what happens when sociotechnical imaginaries do not achieve the expected socio-economic outcomes? What can we find in failed educational reforms about the missing cultural link between economics and education?

The labyrinths of educational digital inclusion in the Global South

During the wave of neoliberal education reforms in the 1990s, when decentralization and choice through privatization were promoted, linear approaches of the transition to KE promoted economic policies without considering appropriation processes in Brazil and Argentina. Centralized bureaucracies were dismantled from educational organizations without ensuring capacities for autonomy and flexibility (Beech, 2011).

The education reforms implemented in several Latin American countries in the 1990s were based on the idea that education systems had to adapt to the “knowledge society”. Under the influence of views mainly imported through international agencies, national institutions suffered an increasing division of labor in the top-down implementation process. While experts defined policy goals and curriculum guidelines, teachers were downgraded to mere technicians, and local and national educational institutions were reduced to plain transmission chains (Beech, 2005a,b).

Paradoxically in the quest to produce the transition to KE, the IOs tailored policy implementation in such a way, that the result was a weakening of existing institutions by reducing the autonomy and flexibility of teachers, principals, and education officials. Thus, they reduced the capacity to manage the diversity of the institutions that were supposed to expand them. In the absence of teachers’ and principals’ autonomy, with narratives that empower their agency, the transition to national education systems ready for KE could result in an Orwellian nightmare (Wilson and Segal, 2005; Zuboff, 2019).

Cases such as Brazil and Argentina in the 1990s offered evidence of dangerous outcomes of structural change when nation-states choose symbolic passivity. Because passivity did not lead to a narrative vacuum but to the almost mechanical reproduction of the imaginaries that gave rise to the notion of KE. This is the enthronement of the figure of the techno-entrepreneur together with the promotion of the “innovative culture” whose main reference is located in the Silicon Valley.

As was required of the rest of society, teachers also had to become entrepreneurs, to be innovative. They failed to achieve appropriation of economic or educational reforms, but they opened the door to tearing apart the previous institutions that sustained the social relations of knowledge.

A decade later, weak capacities eroded new digital inclusion plans when countries such as Argentina, Peru, and Nigeria, tried to bridge the digital divide and modernize their educational systems by deploying 1:1 programs. The exception was the case of Plan Ceibal in Uruguay, probably the most successful implementation of Negroponte's OLPC project (One Laptop per Child) (OECD, 2010; Rivoir, 2012; Warschauer et al., 2014; Artopoulos, 2020).

The OLPC Project, born in 2005, promoted the idea of one-to-one computing in education institutions in developing countries. The independent attempt triggered the quest for a stabilized classroom device that finished with Chromebook teachers' acceptance in 2015 in leading OCDE countries, adding a computational layer to school sociomateriality for good (Ames, 2019).

One-to-one computing in education (sometimes abbreviated as "1:1") allowed new teaching practices (ex. Flipped Teaching) based on student's activities on a computational device both in class and out promoting more autonomous learning based in teaching platforms before the COVID Pandemic (Artopoulos et al., 2020).

Although Latin American countries such as Chile, Uruguay, and Costa Rica reached considerable leaps in public goods, educational reforms did not achieve enough sustainability and/or quality standards. Informationization of the region advanced in the primary sectors (mining, agriculture, construction) without producing significant changes in the labor force or national innovation systems (Castells, 2003; Calderón, 2015; Artopoulos, 2020).

Decentralization of state apparatuses facilitated conditions for private investments in education. The absence of a soft institutional agenda and adequate regulations caused a legitimacy crisis in the expansion of education systems, as was the case of Chile with the so-called "Penguin Revolution." The social movement gave rise to a new political coalition that changed the structure of the Chilean political system. The social conflicts of the knowledge society seem to provoke strong political earthquakes (Calderon and Castells, 2014).

Civil society mobilization around the big tech industry was the other side of "laissez-faire" approaches to education reform based on the techno-entrepreneur imaginary. NGOs tried to set up an agenda of educational reform that fits Big-Tech industry interests in alliance with certain parts of academia. Two relevant cases describe how currents of opinion born in the USA become social movements of an international scale that seek reforms in basic education in consecutive moments of technological change. They are still relevant today because they significantly impacted dominant narratives of educational change.

The first wave of "digital culture" and 1 to 1 model between 2002 and 2013 was encouraged by the educational use of new web services such as Wikipedia and participatory digital culture through blogs. At the beginning of the "convergence culture" in 2002, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) was founded, advocating for integrating generic skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication into teaching core academic subjects. It represented a mixture of creative industries, media, and information technology multinational companies such as AOL Time Warner, Apple Computer, Cisco Systems, Dell Computer Corporation, Microsoft Corporation, and SAP (Jenkins, 2006).

The second wave, "1 h of code," promoted coding for all and introduced computational thinking as fundamental knowledge in the curriculum. Ten years later, in 2013, Code.org and "Hour of Code Challenge" platformed the social media scene and heated the debate around coding at the basic education level. Non-profit organizations started their activity by promoting learning computer science through a website with free coding lessons and tutorials. It also has targeted schools to encourage them to include more computer science classes in the curriculum. In contrast, the code.org initiative seemed to be more grassrooted but with a more tech-driven agenda and less sensitive to curriculum and pedagogical issues.

As the new century progressed, other attempts to transition to KE offered slightly more sophisticated cases of failure. In "Imagining a Modern Rwanda: Sociotechnological Imaginaries, Information Technology, and the Postgenocide State," Bowman (2015) illustrated how a Rwanda government in need of KE models found a mirror to look at with images that sound attainable.

Rwanda was a case of importing KE models without an IOs intervention or abstract models. Relying on the term "sociotechnical imaginaries," Bowman explained how the new democratic government of Rwanda announced its ambition to be an "African Singapore." Rwanda's government unsuccessfully tried to build a KE by borrowing the socio-technological Imaginary of an autocratic Asian nation. The KE Singaporean narrative of the "smart nation" was abandoned without solid local roots (Jasanoff and Kim, 2015).

When addressing digital inclusion It is necessary to consider the historicity of KE in terms of changes in the socio-materiality of digital learning environments and work, commerce, or entertainment. Since the OECD defined it in 1996, techno material foundations of education have evolved dramatically. In 2005 1.02 billion people were connected to the internet, only 15.76%. In 2021, 16 years later, those connected amounted to 4.9 billion, exceeding 62.5% of the world's population (ITU, 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many education systems have been able to continue providing lessons and teachers assistance to students, not only because schools and educators have shown remarkable resilience in trying to compensate for the crisis, but also because techno material conditions of learning had changed over the years (Vincent-Lancrin et al., 2022).

The Pandemic Crisis showed the value of smartphones, introduced in 2006 when the iPhone was launched, maintaining student-teacher contact even in precarious conditions. Paradoxically at the same time, it revealed new layers of digital divides that were not contemplated 16 years earlier in UNESCO's proposal (Warschauer, 2003; Toyama, 2015; van Dijk, 2020).

Algorithms and intelligent technologies turn literacy into multiliteracies and the meaning of digital progress. Platforms are increasing uncertainty and risk instead of providing rationality and control. We need to address how new attempts to build more egalitarian KE are translated into policies (Beck, 1998; OECD, 2016, 2021; Smicek, 2017, 2021).

The translating power of “Creative Britain”

Advanced countries with a degree of bureaucratic capacities, such as Canada, Australia, or the United Kingdom, transition to KE allowed renewed airs of change in education systems. In the presence of adequate autonomous capacities, both teachers and management teams could trigger virtuous processes of bottom-up school quality improvement from communities of practice (Fullan, 2002; Hargreaves, 2003).

As we will see in the present section, in these softer processes of transition toward KE, the construction of the institutional superstructure played a fundamental role in the convergence of change in innovation systems and education systems. Nevertheless, KS could become less egalitarian when top-down reform without the same capacities disregarded such institutional arrangements.

Each culture has its manner of understanding knowledge and learning. It is impossible to bridge the divide between the economic and the educational sides of the knowledge society by bypassing the cultural nature of the connection. In 2022 the concept of KE is still meaningful. Sustaining semantic weight is less a result of a consensus on an abstract model of KE than instead supported by the evidence of the above-mentioned national experiences such as South Korea, Finland, Canada, or Australia.

Perhaps the case of Creative Education under the “Creative Britain” policy sharply illustrates how complex forms of educational policies merge into development policies. How they intertwine and hybridize transversally with economic and cultural policies through national strategies of constructing their own “sociotechnical imaginaries” of KE.

Throughout the New Labor administration, between 1997 and 2007, Chris Smith, Secretary of State, promoted the KE in the form of creative industries and economic contribution of culture. Creativity was one of the *leitmotiv*s of the political agenda of prime minister Tony Blair (Smith, 1998; Hewison, 2011; Mangabeira Unger et al., 2019).

Smith, head of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, in 1998 set up Nesta, a decentralized innovation agency’s national endowment for science, technology, and the arts. Nesta was originally funded by a £250 million endowment from the UK National Lottery. New Labor’s institutional reform led to a substantial investment in the cultural infrastructure. The visual and performing arts, museums, and galleries were persistently promoted as a stimulus to national economic revival.

In this context, a national education commission chaired by Ken Robinson, then professor of arts education at the University of Warwick, issued the “All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education” Report that called to create a national strategy focusing on creative and cultural education. It argued that the national debate on education in Britain had been expressed as a series of failed dichotomies—“as a choice between the arts or the sciences; the core curriculum or the broad curriculum; between academic standards or creativity; freedom or authority in teaching methods” (1999).

“Creative Education Trust” was an example of the implementation of transversal creative education/economy policies based on a national sociotechnical imaginary (“Creative Britain”) NESTA introduced a new model of organizations in charge of policy implementations. The trust worked in England’s post-industrial cities and coastal towns: areas of economic disadvantage and with a history of academic underachievement. Its methodology involved integrating a knowledge-rich curriculum with skills and creativity (CET, 2020).

There were also international effects of these creative education policies. Sir Ken Robinson, also known for having one of the most viewed TEDTalks, “Do schools kill creativity?” With 72 million views, became one of the first educational ‘influencers’ of a global epistemic community. A new figure converged with other educational change thinkers such as Nicholas Negroponte or Michel Fullan in the international arena.

Later, others followed Robinson, such as Salman Khan, Jeanette Wing, and Sugata Mitra. Another interesting case was Manuel Castells appointment as Minister of Universities of the Kingdom of Spain, which began a reform of upper education in 2020 that is still in progress.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have examined KE building first as a narrative that justified the policies proposals of IO’s both of OECD and UNESCO, and then as a national endeavor that comprises symbolic and socio-material dimensions.

We proposed the hypothesis that there is no single, universal KE as a desirable development destination per se. Although much more empirical research is needed after examining case studies, it is plausible to assert that attempts at symbolic construction of each KE can be found in both paradigmatic and regular cases. We can even find them in the transition to KE of central advanced countries.

We found that exemplary types of development such as Finland and South Korea did not respond to the KE narrative of the OECD’s monodisciplinary approach. Instead we observed that the construction of a national institutional superstructure based on a sociotechnical imaginary requires a state leadership effort.

When public-private leadership deserts the crafting of a socio-technical imaginary of development, the vacant voids are filled by global narratives such as the techno-entrepreneur figure and the culture of innovation. Countless countries have tried to build their own Silicon Valley by turning their backs on their educational institutional contexts. They have failed by enmeshing social actors who could have been recruited into cohesive national enterprises.

In their eagerness to promote public development policies, international organizations have oversimplified complex and unstable processes making the symbolic construction of sociotechnical imaginaries invisible or at least irrelevant. When no symbolic work was pursued, and only mimicked operating models of other “successful” countries, institutions built in the previous industrial period ceased to be effective in their functions.

Although the KE narrative has managed to survive setbacks and transformations, it is doubtful that its power of persuasion can continue to inspire sustainable development processes without reflection on its blind spots. Cases such as “Theranos” and the trial of its founder Elizabeth Holmes or the bankruptcy of “WeWork” point out the crescent exhaustion of the production of meaning of the generic KE narratives.

One blind spot was the idea that entrepreneurs are in charge of producing new knowledge when they only take the last link in a chain of public goods investments. Another blind spot was the overestimation of knowledge as a marketable good. The circulation of knowledge is highly dependent on the tacit knowledge circulating in communities of practice around and within educational institutions.

If we have learned anything about KE definitions, it is that they are all transitory. Due to current sociotechnical infrastructure conditions, the Knowledge Society is a moving target, a black box that is constantly resetting itself. It is advisable to constantly exercise systematic reflexivity in the social sciences dealing with the development of KE. Perhaps the closest we came to a definition of KE was with an economy based on the manipulation of signs that requires human creative activity exercised in a given institutional space and cultural (national) context through platform technologies.

Twenty-six years after the arrival of the term “Knowledge Economy,” the public agenda today is not very different from early linear, globalist ideas based on reliance on entrepreneurial individualism, even though they have been modified by the evolution of the experience of sociotechnical change.

The humanist reaction to KE did not question the very concept in their attempt to bring KE into dialog with social and cultural diversity and address inequalities in access to up-to-date education and the tools of thought. UNESCO’s attempts to put KE in the context of human development while putting the digital divide and cultural diversities on the agenda met with stiff resistance. But it attempted to do so from a weak globalist and identity-defensive position that dismissed the importance of the symbolic national construction of the KE.

The case with the 1:1 (OLPC) model of educational digital inclusion was an example of the fragility of attempts at well-intentioned globalist interventions. Since the free or open knowledge movements flourished in the Global North civil society, weaknesses of the nation-state in developing countries have not been able to take advantage of their projects. Then the 1:1 proposals that were born open source became a battering ram of the more closed platform.

The sustained demand for digital talent in the new millennium, combined with the reliance on Edtech technology solutions, has pressured education systems with experiments such as MOOCs and Microdegrees. Without conclusive results, secondary and higher education moves post-pandemic toward hybrid or online scenarios. The Negroponte dichotomy between atoms and bits is diluted in post-digital hybrid fluids.

Among the difficulties in thinking about the interactive relationship between economy and society in the datification era, the most difficult challenge is to overcome a narrative of the single abstract model of KE. Educational reforms of the future need inspiration within the framework of development policies around a national-specific endeavor that comprise symbolic and sociomaterial dimensions, capable of justified new endeavors of digital educational infrastructures.

Few efforts have been made to build an enriched body of theory that integrates educational, institutional, and cultural change around the uniqueness of each nation-state. It is necessary to encourage a multi-scalar explanatory framework that aims to connect micro, meso, and macro levels of educational change concerning Sociotechnical Imaginaries.

There is no longer an automatic translation between the digitization of the world and the advancement of KE. Digital transformation can also lead to the permanence of collective ignorance. Advanced digital technologies are no longer necessarily synonymous with development based on the personal dignity of dignified life projects.

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Redefining educational transfer and borrowing in the pluriverse

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Introduction	290
Educational transfer in the western transcendental worldview	291
The logic of universality	292
“Best practice” as the ideal norm	292
Theory over context	293
Imagining educational transfer beyond western transcendence: toward pluriversality	294
No comparison option: interrupting education transfer	294
Post-colonial option: counter-balancing the inequity and injustice in comparative education research	295
Decolonial option: changing reference points and terms of knowledge production and transfer	295
Spiritual/ontological option: rebuilding the pluriverse through education comparison and transfer	296
Implications for future research	297
References	299

Introduction

The study of educational transfer has become increasingly prominent in the context of globalization, signaling a rapidly intensifying circulation of education policies and practices worldwide. Similarly to mainstream research on globalization, western scholars have generally approached the study of educational transfer as a rational, linear, and predictable process, seeking a *universal* logic behind the global phenomenon. While some research on educational transfer has focused on knowledge exchange across western or northern countries, most research has examined a unidirectional knowledge transfer from West to East, from North to South, or from global to local—but rarely in reverse or multiple directions—overlooking the problems of uneven and unequal knowledge exchange. Furthermore, many international agencies (e.g., Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, the World Bank, United Nations, etc.) have used educational transfer as a central mechanism to maintain the geopolitical and economic status quo, assuming a universal trajectory toward “progress” through a trickle-down effects of mass schooling and infinite economic growth. Based on the assumption that “best” practices can be “lent” and “borrowed,” much research and practice of educational transfer has been historically approached from the perspective of “global linear thinking” as a deliberate convergence toward Westernization (Mignolo, 2021). With some exceptions, such research has actively tapped into and relied on the hierarchical global diffusion networks of educational knowledge sustained since the colonial period (for critique see Carney et al., 2012).

While there has been a growing critique of mainstream approaches to research and practice of educational transfer, such critique is too often based within the dominant western modern(ist) paradigm (Phillips and Ochs, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Phillips, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi and Waldow, 2012; Anderson-Levitt, 2003). In particular, it assumes that educational transfer can help—if properly implemented through the right mix of policies and practices or careful attention to contextual details—to make progress toward a “better” world for all. Even when research is not driven by ameliorative motives, it tends to use the “global” as a taken-for-granted starting point, focusing on the diffusion of dominant education paradigms and tracing the political, economic, or cultural dynamics associated with their adoption in local contexts. Fixated on using the “global” as the main reference point and drawing on universality as its epistemological framework, such research produces “theoretical effects of closure,” making it impossible to imagine what does not fit its hegemonic definition and what may thus lie “outside of the global” (Staheli, 2003, p. 2).

The challenge is how to redefine the notion of educational transfer in ways that would bring into focus—and into policy conversation—multiple education knowledge traditions, including those that have been systematically ignored, outcast, and sometimes even erased by the dominant frameworks that insist on *universality* as an epistemological foundation and starting point. Such redefinition entails moving beyond “changes in the content” by simply adding “missing” knowledge traditions into the framework of universality to instead changing “the terms of the conversation” itself by grounding it within the logic of *pluriversality* (Mignolo, 2021). Taking pluriverse (rather than universe) as a starting point means acknowledging that reality is constituted not only by many worlds but “by many kinds of worlds, many ontologies, many ways of being in the world, many ways of knowing reality” (Querejazu, 2016, p. 3). The pluriverse thus implies a nonhierarchical coexistence of and exchange between different knowledge traditions, including a multiplicity of Indigenous cosmologies and non-western knowledge traditions, as well as a wide array of western ontologies and epistemologies. From this perspective, the pluriverse acts as “a strategic response to the violence of universalism,” advocating for pluriversal ethics, cosmopolitics, and world-making practices (Mercier, 2019, p. 1). It constitutes “the re-existence of ways and modes of knowing and living” that disobey the hegemonic and homogenizing expectations of western and North Atlantic scholarship (Mignolo, 2021, p. 721).

In this chapter, we engage in the process of changing the terms of the conversation by writing from “the receiving end of the epistemic colonial difference”—i.e., ontological and epistemic differences produced as a consequence of colonial and imperial designs—in order to bring into focus “ways of knowing and knowledge that do not bend to western European and North Atlantic epistemic regulations” (Mignolo, 2021, p. 721). In particular, we aim to lay the foundation for redefining the concept of educational transfer in ways that would enable multidirectional and non-hierarchical knowledge exchange in a pluriverse. We will start by critically reviewing the colonial and imperial western-centric frameworks of the existing educational transfer research paradigms grounded in the western transcendental worldview, particularly focusing on the “theoretical effects of closure” that stem from the blind faith in universality, the belief in “best practice” as an ideal education norm, and prioritization of theory over context. We will then draw on non-western perspectives to articulate alternative theoretical frameworks beyond the western transcendental view, opening the space to approach educational transfer as a non-hierarchical interaction between and among multiple knowledge systems, perspectives, and ideas.

Educational transfer in the western transcendental worldview

Educational transfer has been one of the key instruments of the modernity project in the West, deeply rooted in the western notion of transcendence that has positioned western thought (the so-called scientific knowledge) not only as unique and univocal, but also as universal.

To avoid arbitrarily using the concept of transcendence in understanding other alternative frameworks, Hall and Ames (1998) explain that in western philosophy, transcendence indicates “an asymmetrical relationship” between the two categories, where A is independent from B and affects B, while A will not be affected by B in turn, reflecting the predominant discursive power and control in two-dimensional, linear interactions (p. 191).¹ That is to say, the transcendent category is independent from or outside of the ordered system, serving as a prominent model to be imitated by others, such as the God to the created world in the theological tradition (p. 191) or the western “expert” or “best practice” to the so-called “developing world.” Furthermore, such “strict transcendence” of the one over the other precludes any substantive interaction between the two, while reinforcing binary logic that divides mind and body, individual self and society, knowledge and practice, or theory and context.

According to Hall and Ames (1998), the appeal to “strict” transcendence in western societies seems to have been grounded in attempts “to meet the challenge of the pluralism of beliefs and practices by recourse to objective, unassailable norms” through transcendence toward universality (p. 189). In this context, universalist discourses of transcendence assume that the world is one, that it is knowable across different contexts within single modes of thought, and is thus manageable and governable in those terms (Conway and Singh, 2011, p. 701). This logic of transcendence is clearly reflected in the mainstream frameworks of educational transfer research and practice, as illustrated in Fig. 1 below. In particular, the majority of the existing theories exploring educational transfer are generally based on the transcendental assumption that universal knowledge exists at the “global” level and diffuses across the “local” and non-western contexts with less or more variation of its original form. Assuming a linear, unidirectional

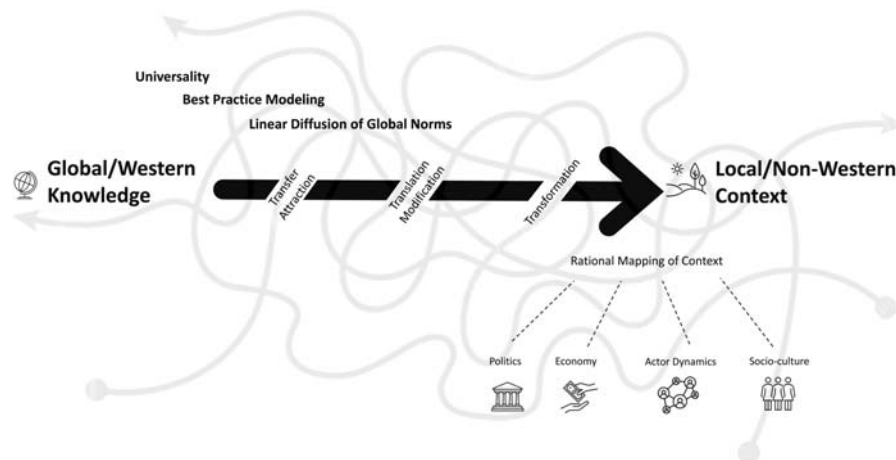


Fig. 1 A visual summary of the dominant approaches to the study of education transfer. *Note:* The Fig. 1 visually summarizes dominant approaches to the study of education transfer, drawing on Dolowitz (2000), Phillips and Ochs (2004), and Rogers (2003). The dark arrow represents the process of education transfer as envisioned by the (western) transcendental worldview. The light gray (thin) lines show the multiple and multidirectional knowledge flows in the pluriverse.

¹In *Thinking from the Han*, Hall and Ames (1998) define the Western notion of transcendence as “A is transcendent with respect to B if the existence, meaning, or import of B cannot be fully accounted for without recourse to A, but the reverse is not true” (p. 190).

flow of knowledge transfer, such approaches define specific stages or temporal phases of the transfer process, which may include (1) policy attraction, (2) interpretation or translation, (3) modification, adaptation, or reception, and (4) internalization or indigenization, among others (e.g., see Dolowitz, 2000; Rogers, 2003; Phillips and Ochs, 2004). Importantly, any existing deviations from the universal logic of educational transfer are usually explained by elaborating on the hidden politics, complex dynamics, multiple actors, and intricate processes. Not surprisingly, such conceptualization of education transfer has resulted in research that is grounded in the logic of universality, the belief in “best practice” as an ideal or universal education norm, as well as prioritization of theory over context, thus introducing—and reproducing—asymmetrical relationships in educational transfer research.

The logic of universality

The idea of universality has been deeply embedded in the foundations of the western modern(ist) thought. From western bureaucrats in colonial administrations to like-minded academics and international development practitioners, the belief in universality has set policymakers on the quest for efficient education policy solutions to “move” countries toward a future imagined in the image of the West. This policymaking logic has intensified after the end of the Cold War in 1989, reaching a point where education policy studies came to be almost entirely focused on identifying and offering “solutions” to any problems or obstacles hindering the promise of “Progress” (Silova et al., 2020). The most obvious examples today are found within OECD and World Bank led projects seeking to gather immense amounts of data and apply the most advanced statistical techniques in analysis to identify “what works” in raising students’ achievement and then translate these findings into “best practices” to be shared globally (Auld and Morris, 2016). International initiatives such as Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MGDs), and more recently the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reveal a similar logic of universality.

In comparative education research, the logic of universality is reflected most clearly in the world culture theory research, which aims to depict the typical and prevalent (universal) images, ideas, and messages “irrespective of history, identity, or national context” (Carney et al., 2012, p. 372). In other words, instead of describing diverse kinds and forms of world cultures and theories, world culture theorists “have been increasingly involved in selectively identifying and advocating for the global diffusion of particular education models which reflect particular western and, especially, North American ideals” as a global common good (p. 368). While critics have challenged these assumptions by focusing on local manifestations of world-level tendencies (e.g., researching location adaptations of global reforms), their critique has been comfortably accommodated within world culture theory. In fact, some critique may have inadvertently contributed to the expansion of the logic and hierarchies of western universal (and universalizing) tendencies by taking for granted the global (heavenly) core as a starting point and adding more comparative cases of global diffusion across the world—offering thick descriptions of education policy and practice variations in different local contexts—without critically questioning its underlying logic.

Relying on the logic of universality inevitably incapacitates any attempts to account for contextual diversity, difference, and distinctiveness, which become instead subsumed into universal—and universalizing—frameworks. In the context of global economic competitiveness driven by international student achievement tests, standardized evaluations, and metrics, the West (along with the policies emanating from there) appears as a model of “progress” for others to follow. In this process, binary categories are used to set apart the West from the “rest”, the so-called “developed” countries from the “developing”, or the high-ranking countries or students from the low-ranking ones. The differences are often explained in terms of “lagging temporality,” a notion which not only redeploys the teleological construction of progress from East to West (or South to North), but also embeds the teleology itself, focusing attention once again on the future and the West (Hörschelmann and Stenning, 2008, pp. 320–321). As a result, the diversity, depth and scale of the world’s particular histories, cultures, and geographies are erased as they become (just like) the West (Hörschelmann and Stenning, 2008, p. 321).

More problematic, however, is that the logic of universality continues to be taken for granted as “real” and inevitable in much of education scholarship, inadvertently solidifying and promoting the *assumption* of global “sameness” by suppressing non-western realities as sites or phenomena to be discovered and explained, while failing to recognize them as self-sufficient in their own right. In this process, it blocks from our view “a much richer picture of *varied* motivations and levels of explanatory power for a *combination* of theoretical perspectives—functionalism, micro-realism, cultural/historical institutionalism, world systems theory, feminism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism and others” (Silova and Rapple, 2015, p. 2). This points out two problems with the logic of universality in comparative education research. First, the concept of universality assumes that the “correct” answers and “best” solutions do indeed exist, with countless studies being produced to illustrate this assumption empirically. Second, the research cases are often presented as effective manifestations of “best” practice, offering concrete examples for others to follow in order to become “successful” and “advanced” if those examples are followed step by step. In other words, universality appears to provide both the diagnosis of particular problems and ready-made answers to these problems by offering the methods and procedures of achieving the predetermined goals.

“Best practice” as the ideal norm

Historically, educational borrowing has been conceptualized as one of the key tools or mechanisms of pursuing “progress” and development. Whether speaking from the contexts of the 19th or 21st centuries, scholars and policymakers have frequently approached educational borrowing from a very pragmatic perspective, seeking to employ ideas taken from the experience of one educational system or context to another for the purposes of improving society or the individual. In the post-World War II context,

educational borrowing became perceived as a tool for achieving broader ends, directly “relating education to economic growth, social amelioration, and political development” (Noah and Eckstein, 1969, p. 116). What educational borrowing offered comparative and international education was an “instrumental value” for correcting the course of history:

No longer were the horizons for comparative education limited to simple cross-national borrowing ... by understanding forces and factors that molded education and society, men might be able to chart the course they were taking, and, if they did not like either direction or speed, conceivably they could hope to modify them.

Noah and Eckstein (1969, p. 41).

We see here the idea of “the ideal norm,” which first appeared in Jullien’s work in the early 19th century (Jullien, 1817; also see Beech and Rizvi, 2017) beginning to gain dominance. This policy-oriented approach to educational borrowing intensified during the period of the Cold War. Following the launch of Sputnik by the Soviet government in 1957, the study of educational borrowing re-positioned comparative education in the United States at the frontlines of the Cold War in order to “keep the United States ahead of the Soviet Union through education” (Noah, 2006, p. 10). With the funding available from the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) and Ford Foundation, comparative educators in the United States eagerly engaged in the study of “best practices” to ensure the educational competitiveness of the US globally, while at the same time pursuing other strategic interests of national importance—frequently expressed in the “concern for the plight of less fortunate people” (Noah and Eckstein, 1969, p. 38)—in non-aligned countries. Finally, international development opened worldwide opportunities for comparative educators to engage in technical assistance, marking the “development turn” in comparative education (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006) and thus further codifying the connection between normative educational borrowing and the ideal of “progress.”

Common to such policy-oriented approaches to the study of educational borrowing is the belief that education is future-directed with the purpose of improving the world, society, and the individual. Beech (2006) observed that this trajectory generally includes three stages, including (1) identification of a local problem, (2) identification of solutions in foreign educational systems, and (3) finally an adaptation of these “solutions” to the local contexts (p. 2). By infusing scholarship with western democratic ideals and liberal-humanist values about the nation-state and the individual—“liberty, equality, and fraternity”—it reflects “an abiding faith in the idea of progress through education” (Kazamias, 2009, pp. 41–42). The expectation is that “lessons drawn from comparative study could be used to aid in the development of the new nations” (Noah and Eckstein, 1969, p. 117). In more recent and increasingly complex iterations, a diverse range of international organizations, think tanks, and policy entrepreneurs have used cross-national achievement tests, such as the OECD’s Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), to construct and promote knowledge of transferrable “best practices,” while putting pressure on national governments to realign their education goals and curriculum according to “global” standards (Auld and Morris, 2016). In this context, “best practice” functions as one of the central tools of constructing and moving toward the ideal norm based on the model of western “progress.”

Theory over context

The binary and dualistic assumption of the transcendental worldview in western philosophy has caused a divide between theory and context. The transcendental worldview weighs more on “what” (in relation to theory), than “how,” i.e., the pragmatic concern to approach the context with the so-called “what-priority attitude” that places greater value on the truth of knowledge rather than the knowledge of how (Hall and Ames, 1998, p. 104). From this perspective, context is viewed as a barrier to actualize or prove theory, because it is creating variation, uncertainty, and mutation. The variant context is seen as threatening to destabilize knowledge of truth, while theory is assumed to be based on consistent, complete, and discoverable conditions that can produce an overarching truth claim. Such strict assumptions on truth tend to separate theory from its “sphere of praxis” (Hall and Ames, 1998, p. 128). As Takayama (2011) points out, such theory over context attitude is deeply rooted in the western transcendence worldview, creating a division of the comparative education research into western theory and non-western context. It is often assumed that theory is produced by western “experts,” while it is tested and applied by local education practitioners (for critique see Silova et al., 2017). In a similar manner, the context has been often approached as a puzzle or a black box full of complexity and uncertainty, while most comparative research has continued to focus on the easily identifiable and transferable “global” knowledge (Rapple, 2006). Even when recognizing the importance of context, many studies have focused on producing detailed descriptions, elaborations, and lists of actors, mechanisms, and processes in relation to the dominant trajectory of traveling “global” policies and practices in various contexts, as if nothing else exists outside of its scope.

Further reinforcing the dominance of theory over context is the increasing popularity of numbers in comparative research, as evidenced by the rise of international large scale assessments such as OECD’s PISA or IEA’s TIMSS studies as tools to facilitate comparisons and educational transfer across diverse contexts. As Piattoeva (2021) points out, “numbers work by stripping away the contexts of their production and the granular and ambiguous detail of the phenomena they claim to represent” (p. 511). In particular, both producers and users of numbers—whether large-scale student learning assessments or administrative statistical data—tend to articulate measuring or being measured in a decontextualized manner to claim legitimacy of numbers as objective

representations of reality or impartial tools of governance and decision-making (Piattoeva, 2021). In addition to “standardizing the context” by “translating diverse contexts into a single commensurate space,” numbers are also used to establish and maintain the standardized frameworks, benchmarks, and processes required for these large scale education comparisons (Gorur et al., 2019, p. 302). From this perspective, numbers effectively serve to legitimize the universality of theory (and western knowledge) over context, while simultaneously attempting to subsume multiple and diverse contexts into universalizing frameworks.

Departing from this dominant approach are various alternatives within both western and non-western scholarship. For example, comparative education scholars working in the area of Science and Technology Studies (STS) see context as “relationally emergent,” arguing that any standardization of context simultaneously entails the contextualization of global standards, i.e., “standards have to be adapted and made more flexible to accommodate new contexts” (Gorur et al., 2019, p. 304). Similarly, researchers may think about context with the sensibilities of Actor-Network Theory toward the relationality and flatness of actor-networks, suggesting that researchers themselves participate in context-making and thus act upon the world through research and policy practices (Piattoeva et al., 2018). Such perspectives contribute to destabilizing the notion of contexts as “neatly packaged matter-of-fact cubes,” gesturing toward imagining contexts as a temporarily realized “confluence of practices and objects coming together and never permanently stabilizing” (see Sobe and Kowalczyk, 2013). In non-western scholarship, the Chinese intellectual tradition refers to the so-called “art of contextualization,” i.e., an approach that places less emphasis on theory building or a single coherent notion of truth, instead drawing on the analogical reflection to suggest how the seemingly fixed notion of truth can permanently change across different contexts. In the Eastern philosophy more broadly, knowledge (Zhi) is not separable from context, i.e., “the realizer is not independent of the realized circumstances, but rather is a constituent element in the creative enterprise of making a world” (Hall and Ames, 1998, p. 30). By avoiding metaphysical questions such as what is truth, what is eternal, what is essence, the Chinese thinkers have been creating “site specific” and “provincial” knowledge that allows for a myriad of unique details and values to coexist.

Imagining educational transfer beyond western transcendence: toward pluriversity

Writing against the dominant understanding of educational transfer in the framework of universality, this chapter attempts to move beyond the limitations of the western-centric worldview and instead establish a set of theoretical frames acknowledging the multiple facets of the phenomenon as well as the multi-directional and always relational knowledge flows. Building on recent research inspired by the decolonial thought (see Silova et al., 2020a,b; Takayama et al., 2017a; Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2012, etc.), we will explore alternative ways of understanding educational knowledge production and circulation with a commitment to pluriversity (rather than universality) as guiding principles, while expanding an education space where various views and worldviews can coexist on a non-hierarchical basis, without undermining each other’s ontological and epistemological grounds. Once we make a commitment to moving beyond the idea of universality as a single vision of comparative research on educational transfer, what are our options? Of multiple alternatives, we will briefly highlight only some options that align with the principle of pluriversity, acknowledging that many other options coexist along these ones. Keeping in mind that these options are not fully divergent and may overlap in various ways, we will briefly discuss each option separately with a focus on educational policy transfer research, including (1) no comparison and/or transfer option, (2) the post-colonial option, (3) the decolonial option, and (4) the spiritual/ontological option.

No comparison option: interrupting education transfer

The “no comparison” option is the most radical approach against the business-as-usual in education comparison and transfer research, as it means a complete withdrawal from any comparative practice whatsoever. This withdrawal implies a refusal to contribute to and perpetuate the hierarchical knowledge production system of international and comparative education research and practice. The open letter debate among Andreas Schleicher, a director of the OECD, and a group of critical academics surrounding the devastating effects of PISA is one such example (Andrews et al., 2014). Signed by nearly 100 academics from various academic institutions worldwide, the letter expresses deep concern that “measuring a great diversity of educational traditions and cultures using a single, narrow, biased yardstick could, in the end, do irreparable harm to our schools and our students” (Andrews et al., 2014). While the letter calls OECD to “slow down the testing juggernaut” in order to make room for the full range of relevant constituents and to incorporate collective learning (rather than a top-down and unidirectional approach), some governments have either withdrawn or refused to participate in the PISA or other international large-scale assessment tests all together.² For these governments, a refusal to participate in international large-scale assessment tests may have signified an attempt to recover a sense of existence without the dominance of one education vision over another or the “arrogance of centrism” in a world of global economic competition (Radhakrishnan, 2009, p. 461).

A withdrawal from the comparison can be a first step to bring into focus and re-assert previously subjugated, dismissed, and even erased voices in the educational policy-making processes that tend to prioritize the pursuit of global competitiveness or modernization of education at the expense of other education goals. It is related to abandoning top-down policy processes that impose

²For example, India participated in the 2009 cycle of PISA, with low results, and withdrew from PISA 2012, only to re-join again in 2019. Kyrgyz Republic also opted to withdraw from PISA 2012 after its low performance in the 2006 and 2009 cycles, but recently announced to rejoin the study in 2024. For a discussion of different motivations behind India’s decision to withdraw and then re-enter PISA, please see Gorur et al. (forthcoming).

foreign education models through externalization and transfer. Many PISA-related education reforms have been introduced without considering national priorities, paralyzing local level policy-decision making processes. Furthermore, a refusal to participate in PISA may signal an attempt to reinvigorate various national efforts of education innovation against the preconceived notions that local (or non-western) educators are incapable of producing credible knowledge or articulate meaningful education priorities. The “no comparison” approach seems radical, but it makes sense considering that the western countries rarely learn from the non-western countries to reflect on and reform their own education policies and practices. Reversely, what is problematic is that innovation in the west is seen as a self-invention claiming originality, while innovation in the non-west is perceived as a reinvention of the borrowed features from elsewhere (i.e., usually from the west). Hence, sometimes the withdrawal from education comparison and transfer can cultivate diversity and reinvigorate comparative education research in the long term by rebalancing global power structures and dynamics, while returning centrality to diverse cultures in the non-west.

Post-colonial option: counter-balancing the inequity and injustice in comparative education research

Another alternative is the so-called post-colonial option that may extend more broadly in the area of critical education studies. This approach defines educational transfer itself as problematic because of the unidirectionality of transfer and diffusion. Most studies in comparative education examine the educational transfer from North to South, from West to non-West, or from South to South at best. The educational transfer in other directions—from South to North or from non-West to West—is rarely an object of research or source of knowledge. It is not easy to find such transfer cases in the real world. From the perspective of world culture theory and best practice modeling, the educational transfer is for a survival of the fittest, supposedly a value-neutral selection process to sort out the best in quality that is scientifically proven. In contrast, post-colonial perspective considers the transfer as a value-laden political process.

The post-colonial option entails a systematic effort to provincialize the West/North as the core of global knowledge production and counterbalance the inequity inherent in comparative education studies. For example, a growing number of scholars have challenged the “new” policy regime—driven by “numbers” and advanced by OECD and other international development agencies—for imposing western-centric lens to understand education across different contexts and converting complexity into (western) “best practices” (Auld and Morris, 2016; Beech, 2011; Dale and Robertson, 2012; Grek, 2012; Takayama, 2011, 2015; You, 2020a), for introducing market principles into public education settings (Verger and Moschetti, 2017; Verger, 2012; Robertson et al., 2012; Brehm, 2021), for deepening socioeconomic and gender inequities (Stromquist, 2016a,b; Unterhalter, 2017), or for overlooking other policy alternatives (Edwards and Loucel, 2016; Silova, 2010; Silova et al., 2020). For example, You (2020a) problematizes the process of educational transfer in the context of the recent “rise” of East Asia in the international PISA rankings, arguing that England—and more broadly Anglo-American societies—has represented high-performing East Asian societies as both an inspiration for education reforms and a threat to the domestic economy. Taking the OECD and McKinsey as two illustrative examples, she convincingly concludes that “the dominant ways of perceiving, representing and referencing East Asian education and the embedded East–West power relation are largely framed in a manner that continues the legacy of Orientalism” (You, 2020a, p. 742). Many others join forces in order to draw urgent attention to the problematic geopolitics of knowledge production that enables persisting racism and ethnocentrism in comparative education research, including studies on educational transfer (for critique, see a special issue of *Comparative Education Review* edited by Takayama et al., 2017a; Tikly, 1999, 2004).

In addition to provincializing the dominant (western/northern) paradigms and problematizing the knowledge hierarchy in comparative education research, the post-colonial option opens an opportunity to bring into focus and dialog knowledge(s) that have been previously disregarded or dismissed, including knowledge(s) seeking alternatives to a single vision of neoliberal education futures. In the comparative study of education policy transfer, some research has focused on the benefits of South-South cooperation and grassroots mobilization as possible ways to build more symmetrical relationships between the lenders and borrowers of education policies and practices (see Chisholm and Steiner-Khamsi, 2008; Jules and Sá e Silva, 2008; Sá e Silva, 2009). In particular, scholars have approached the study of the South-South transfer from multiple perspectives, ranging from regional cooperation initiatives e.g., Hickling-Hudson’s (2004) research on Cuba’s international educational assistance to schools in Jamaica) to community-driven forms of political mobilization e.g., Luschei’s (2004) study on Escuela Nueva in Colombia, Tarlau (2012) and McCowan’s (2003) work on the Landless Workers’ Movement in Brazil) to transnational social movements (e.g., Mundy and Murphy (2001) on Education International and other organizations). Ultimately, these studies gesture toward the multiplicity and multidirectionality of educational transfer phenomena by offering numerous cases of alternative educational transfer practices, while simultaneously deconstructing western dominance and counter-balancing systemic inequity in the global knowledge production and diffusion system.

Decolonial option: changing reference points and terms of knowledge production and transfer

The decolonial option represents a distinct break with the abstract (western) idea of universality, refusing to accept a single vision of what constitutes a “good” life or “best” practice. One example of an epistemological delinking from universality is Kuan-Hsing Chen’s *Asia as Method* (2010), which offers a decolonial, de-imperial, and de-Cold War analytical framework that moves research beyond western-centric interpretations of history and enables scholars to imagine historical experiences in Asia as “an alternative horizon, perspective, and method for posing a different set of questions about world history” (p. xv). Chen (2010) has analytically approached “Asia” as both a geographic region and a constructed cultural-political space with complex and contested—yet deeply

interconnected—historical relations within the region and with the “West.” By reorienting the conventional reference points away from the “West” and instead focusing on knowledge “inter-referencing” within the Asian region, [Chen \(2010\)](#) has re-centered Asia “as the source of a multiplicity of new [knowledge] flows” (p. 8), thus effectively interrupting the hegemony of western knowledge and offering a new view on global history, as well as global knowledge production. By de-centering the west as a single reference point for all comparisons and instead focusing on “inter-referencing” within Asia, the “Asia as method” approach opens ways to bring to the foreground multiple histories, while revealing the relationality and interdependence of different global spaces.

In comparative and international education, [Zhang et al. \(2015\)](#) elaborated on [Chen’s \(2010\)](#) ideas in an edited book *Asia as Method in Education Studies*, offering examples of what it means to rethink and reexamine education in Asia beyond both the western imperialist eye and the post-colonial “politics of resentment.” In response to [Chen’s \(2010\)](#) challenge, the authors engage in constructing new research imaginations for a more meaningful East-West dialog and knowledge *co-creation*. Similar attempts to re-define education knowledge production and transfer have also been proposed by other scholars, including [Takayama \(2016\)](#) and [Yonezawa et al. \(2018\)](#) reflecting on Japanese education research communities, [Lee \(2019\)](#) on South Korean education, [Kuswando et al. \(2015\)](#) on Indonesian education, [Park \(2016\)](#) on education in Hong Kong and the broader Asian region, and others. Furthermore, multiple articulations of the “Asia as method” approach in education suggest that this decolonial project goes beyond a question of geographic focus and also entails a change of analytical approach in education research (see, for example, [Burman’s \(2019\)](#) discussion of “child as method” as a resource for interrogating models of development in childhood and education).

In addition to research inspired by “Asia as method,” important decolonial options have been developed by scholars working with Southern Theory ([Connell, 2007](#); [Takayama et al., 2017a,b](#)), epistemologies of the South ([Santos, 2007, 2018](#); [Esteve and Babones, 2013](#)), postsocialist/decolonial studies ([Silova et al., 2017, 2018](#); [Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2012](#)), indigenous decolonial practice ([Tuck and Yang, 2012](#); [Smith et al., 2018](#)), pluriversal rights education ([Williams and Bermeo, 2020](#)), among many others. While diverse in their approaches and foci, these various projects have some things in common. First and foremost, they neither claim universality nor attempt to replace one epistemology with another or others. Rather, these decolonial projects strive to contribute to creating a space where many different worlds and worldviews could coexist on a non-hierarchical basis ([Tlostanova, 2012](#); [Tlostanova et al., 2016](#); [Silova et al., 2020a,b](#)). Furthermore, these decolonial projects demonstrate that decoloniality of knowledge production requires scholars to also engage in decolonizing (and rebuilding) their subjectivity, which entails reclaiming their positions as epistemic subjects who have both the legitimacy and the capacity to interpret the world from their own origins and lived realities, while simultaneously looking outwards “to alternative and multiple forms of identification through the practice of ‘becoming others’” ([Zhang et al., 2015](#), p. 26). Collectively, they contribute to the new geopolitics of knowledge and being, unsettling modernity’s logic of universality and embracing a global viewpoint that reflects pluriversality.

Spiritual/ontological option: rebuilding the pluriverse through education comparison and transfer

The spiritual/ontological option signals a move beyond materialism, gesturing toward the importance of ontological concern in comparative education research. This is an elaboration of [Mignolo’s \(2011\)](#) brief description of the “spiritual option,” which challenges two assumptions of western science and capitalism: first, that a material world of ontologically discrete objects can be known “objectively,” and second, that it is a derivative of a particular religious worldview (Christianity). As [Silova et al. \(2020\)](#) have elaborated previously, the spiritual/ontological option opens up “new ontological possibilities, or if some prefer, metaphysical universes, ones that refuse a secular, materialist worldview as a starting and end point of research” (p. 18). It partially overlaps with the decolonial option discussed above and recent engagement with the post-secular turn ([Wu and Wenning, 2016](#)), the post-foundational, post-humanist, and new materialism turns ([Zhao, 2019a, 2020](#); [Murriss, 2021](#); [Bozalek, 2021](#); [Corson and Riss, 2021](#); [Petersen, 2018](#); [Epstein, 2019](#); [Carney and Madsen, 2021](#)), the ontological turn ([Jensen, 2017](#); [Holbraad and Pederson, 2017](#)), and bears close connections to work re-centering spirituality in the academy ([Shahjahan, 2004, 2005](#); [Edwards, 2016, 2020](#)).

To further illustrate how the spiritual/ontological option is being articulated in comparative education research, we offer three examples that challenge some of the foundational assumptions of dominant (western) approaches to education transfer studies and offer new alternatives that are built on non-hierarchical and non-binary relationality and deep interdependence. Comparing western understandings of the knowledge of truth to the Confucian one, [Hall and Ames \(1995, 1998\)](#) explain that in Confucianism, how individuals are defined, evaluated, and described depends on their relational networks (not confined to human beings relations), such as the relationships with individual self, parents, elders, friends, fellows, and objects. Hence, it is difficult to strictly divide the individual from the surroundings and tell relative superiority or inferiority of one over another through comparison. Similarly, the knowledge of truth is not static, abstract, or separate; rather, it is constructed as a contextually dynamic, concrete, and participatory ([Hall and Ames, 1995](#), p. 104). Challenging the transcendental status of “the only one truth and knowledge,” such an approach redefines the relationship between knowledge and human beings, as well as knowledge and reality, i.e., knowledge and truth are not single, sacred, and inviolable above individuals, and knowledge is not simply mirroring the reality. Instead, they are conditional, questionable, and variable because they grow out of daily interactions which are relational, dynamic, complex, and diverse. Drawing on this perspective, we can begin redefining modern and linear approaches to comparison and the education transfer. For example, [Tan \(2019\)](#) uses a Confucian conception of competence to critically reexamine a response to the competencies agenda that underpins international large-scale assessments such as PISA. Challenging the global competencies agenda based on the principles of technical rationality, discrete skills, and instrumental worth, she draws upon a relational model of competence that views competence as essentially communal, situated within social practices, and manifested through tacit achievement (e.g.,

a Confucian notion of competence premised on the virtue of *ren* or humanity as well as the social, cultural, and ethical dimensions of competence).

Similarly, the notion of *tianrenheyi* in Daoism suggests a trajectory against and beyond the notion of (western) transcendence in terms of reexamining the binary of fixed relationships of human/*tian*, human/environment, and differentiations/hierarchies (Zhao, 2019a). In particular, Daoism assumes that humans are a part of nature and the universe, as Zhuang Tzu famously said: “There is a man, there is Tian” and “all things and me are one.” To explore this traditional Chinese concept further in academic research, Zhao (2019a) illustrates the concept of *tianrenheyi* by explaining a Confucian person-making education and a “correlative cosmology” (p. 6) in terms of conceptualizing human as being relational, thus convincingly challenges the anthropocentric logic. By introducing ancient Chinese cosmology of *qi*, Zhao argues that the correlative cosmology and *tianrenheyi* transforms individual persons into relational roles within their situations, and posits individuals in their communities temporally as well as spatially necessary to achieve the ecological consonant state of co-creating and co-existing among beings, natural and social worlds (p. 6). This correlative cosmology echoes what Hall and Ames (1995) refer to as “Chinese acosmotic thinkers” (p. 183), meaning that “they do not depend on the majority of their speculations upon either the notion that the totality of things has a radical beginning, or that these things constitute a single-ordered world” (pp. 183–184). *Tianrenheyi* and the correlative cosmology thus extend the notion of comparison to a new level: recognizing *tian* and other surroundings beyond human beings and learning from and with them. This correlative and acosmotic education bridges the divergences between human and non-human beings, thus opening up to multiple cosmos. It further challenges the prevailing ideas of “best” practices and universality, thus broadening the approaches and possibilities for comparison and educational transfer beyond the one world/one worldview framework (see also You (2020b) for a discussion of learning/pedagogy from a Confucian and Daoist perspective).

Finally, alternative articulations of comparison and knowledge transfer have also been proposed within western scholarship aiming to challenge the principles of universality. For example, Donna Haraway’s (2016) idea of sympoiesis as a practice of “making-with” resonates deeply with some of the non-western thought, referring to the complexity and diversity of many co-existing worlds both from the ontological and epistemological perspective. In addition to acknowledging the presence of all other beings, there is a recognition of deep interconnectedness between all beings in the process of becoming-with each other and (re) making worlds together. Haraway (2016) explains that sympoiesis is a simple word that means “making-with:” “Nothing makes itself; nothing is really autopoietic or self-organizing ... earthlings are never alone Sympoiesis is a word proper to complex, dynamic, responsive, situated, historical systems. It is a word for worlding-with ...” (p. 58). Introducing the principles of sympoiesis in comparative and international education means resituating and reconnecting human (and more-than-human) beings within this inclusive and relational space which accepts those alternatives that have been marginalized in the hierarchical and modernized comparative education system. However, sympoiesis implies neither a neglect of difference (which may result in reverting back to the principle of universality in policy transfer) nor elevation of particularity to a transcendental space and knowledge (which may render comparison intangible and non-transferrable in a global context). As Stengers (2012) explains, the idea is not to transcend the particularity but “to think with this particularity, to induce the capacity to imagine the possibility that it can be regenerated” without being universalized:

It means thinking with its own specific, dangerous and never innocent ways of weaving relations. It means thinking with the resources—imaginative, scientific and political—that it may be able to activate in order to enable us, perhaps, to think with other peoples and natures. (p. 156)

In the field of education, the Common Worlds Research Collective (2020) has been translating many of these ideas into “common world” pedagogies and research, calling for a complete paradigm shift—“from learning about the world in order to act upon it, to learning to become *with* the world around us” (p. 2, emphasis added). In comparative and international education, collective efforts of reimagining knowledge production and transfer in more relational, more-than-human ways include research that draws on African cosmology of Ubuntu (e.g., Assié-Lumumba, 2017; LeGrange, 2018; Cossa, 2020), contemplative research and practice (e.g., Lin et al., 2019), negative education or unlearning (e.g., Takayama, 2020; Nishihira and Rapple, 2021; Zhao, 2019b), and more. What is common to these different approaches is that they engage with questions of knowledge production and transfer in relational ways, while refusing to see individuals, beings, objects, and institutions in isolation. From this perspective, comparison and educational transfer cannot be unidirectional or hierarchical; rather, they enable us to see and engage with similarities and differences in all layers of complexity. Furthermore, relationality in the knowledge of truth accepts neither the assumption of universality nor the belief in “best” practices, instead taking difference and diversity as a starting point and encouraging the mobility of truth and multiplicity in ways of knowing. Because the knowledge of truth is concrete, participatory, and about “know-how” in each unique context, the act of comparison and policy transfer cannot be generalizable and copyable regardless of different contexts, thus making the assumption of universality irrelevant and the mechanism of learning from (western) “best” practice obsolete.

Implications for future research

Given the centrality of educational transfer research in transforming education policy and practice worldwide, it is important to critically reexamine the underlying assumptions of the dominant research paradigm, as well as its implications for education

futures. In this chapter, we have highlighted how the existing research on educational policy transfer is generally rooted in the logic of modernity/coloniality, reflecting the established hierarchies in the global education knowledge production system and thus perpetuating colonial relationships. Despite a growing criticism of the logic of coloniality in comparative education research, a review of existing literature indicates that policy transfer research continues to reflect the western transcendental worldview, including its blind faith in universality, the belief in “best practice” as an ideal education norm, and prioritization of theory over context. While producing “unalienable gains” (e.g., human rights, liberty, democracy) and bringing attention to the global diffusion of dominant education norms (always based on a unidirectional knowledge flow from North to South or from West to East), such an approach has created theoretical, methodological, and existential effects of closure. In addition to standardizing comparative education theory and practice through scientific modeling and “best practice” approaches, it has contributed to displacing, marginalizing, and sometimes completely erasing education knowledge(s) and experiences that cannot be readily subsumed into the dominant globalization frameworks. It has also contributed to reproducing hierarchy and rank across distinctive educational systems and cultures, resulting in “unacceptable losses” and leading to the oppression, domination, marginalization, and even elimination of the Other and their ways of knowing and being (Zhao, 2009, p. 391; see also Wagner, 2002).

Moving beyond the western transcendental view, we aim to open the space for articulating research on education transfer as a non-hierarchical interaction between and among multiple knowledge systems, perspectives, and ideas. This requires changing the terms of the conversation rather than its content only, thus redefining the concept of educational transfer in ways that enable multidirectional and non-hierarchical knowledge production and exchange. This process is about taking the pluriverse (rather than universe) as an ontological starting point, thus acknowledging a nonhierarchical coexistence of different worlds and worldviews, where everyone and everything—both human and more-than-human—are interconnected. Pluriverse makes possible—and desirable—the co-existence of more than two options, of spaces in-between, and of more than one ontological reality (Silova et al., 2020). It enables us to move beyond the critiques of colonialism and imperialism in order to fundamentally rethink the adequacy of our vocabularies, theories, methods, practices, movements, and ways of knowing and being in order to articulate alternatives.

Then, what are the specific ways to set pluriverse as a foundation for future education transfer research? First and foremost, we can redefine educational transfer beyond the western transcendental worldview by bringing into focus different concepts of relationality, i.e., those that do not presume superiority of (western) modern worldmaking over alternatives in the pluriverse. For example, the notions of relationality in Confucianism, Daoism, or Ubuntu, along with many other examples from Indigenous and ecofeminist thought, all gesture toward breaking the consistent hierarchy of knowledge and being in comparative and international education by offering alternatives that are built on the principles of deep interconnectedness of all forms of life—human and more-than-human. These forms of relationality offer an alternative to modern epistemology and its many dichotomies, including those that divide science/nature, self/other, human/non-human, and more. Instead of relying on dichotomies, the pluriversity asks us to engage with difference and diversity by weaving mutual relationships. These non-western philosophies can be our reference point to building up a new intellectual foundation for educational transfer studies in the future.

Second, research approaches highlighting context (over theory) can contribute to a paradigm shift in educational transfer studies, opening up pathways toward the pluriverse. Unlike the transcendental worldview that aims to isolate “truth” from its surrounding contexts, many other thought traditions—from Confucianism and Daoism to ecofeminism and Indigenous knowledges—approach context as central to understanding, interpreting, and engaging with the world. For example, Haraway’s (1988) concept of “situated knowledges” reminds that knowledge production is always particular, partial, and historically contingent, that is, all knowledge claims are inevitably “views from *somewhere*” as opposed “universal truths” generated by disembodied and disembedded scientists who claim to observe “everything from nowhere”—a so-called “god-trick” (p. 590). In Confucianism, it is widely understood that pure “truth” without context is impossible, which explains the emphasis on the situatedness of all beings and knowledge (Hall and Ames, 1998). In particular, Hall and Ames (1998) call attention to “the art of contextualization,” which enables individuals to ally themselves with different contexts that they constitute and that in turn constitute them (p. 40). In a similar vein, educational transfer studies need to pay more attention to the context. We can regain a sense of context not by considering it as a final missing piece to complete a preconceived theory, but by bringing it to the fore from the very conception of research and practice. It may require more time and patience as we engage with the unequivocal concepts and unclear notions.

Third, embracing a pluriversal worldview fundamentally changes the notion of comparison itself. As Stengers (2011) explains, comparison is only meaningful if all those engaged in a comparison have the opportunity to present their own version of what the comparison is about, while avoiding the imposition of irrelevant criteria and categories on others. By redefining the principle of comparison in a non-hierarchical way, we can ensure that education transfer research does not contribute to differentiating, ranking, or homogenizing, but instead serves as a “connective tissue” that brings different worlds and worldviews into copresence with each other (Silova, 2020). It thus offers a powerful alternative to the currently dominant processes of globalization and international development as a single vision of our global futures.

Finally, we cannot underestimate the role of language itself in perpetuating hierarchical knowledge structure. Daoism considers that language both fragments and fixes the reality which is fluid (Hall and Ames, 1998). The adverse effect of language intensifies even further when ideas in one language are translated into another. Translation has been always an issue for comparativists because untranslated notions have been considered non-existing—thus, untranslatability often means uncertainty, invisibility, and untruth. The translation defines the boundary of modernity, setting borders between visibility and erasure (Vázquez, 2011). Translation is often seen as an essential step to minimize difference, while maximizing sameness and enabling comparison, classification, and exclusion. It can thus serve as an “imposition of an economy of truth” (Vázquez, 2011). Therefore, establishing new translation and communication practices and norms in academic work seems critical in order to make our world more pluriversal. We need

more research that can loosen the existing standards and norms so that untranslatable things (and phenomena) can find space in our work. We need to learn more about how to “stay with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016)—the uncertainty, untranslatability, spontaneity, and imprecise concepts. In such a context, comparative research is no longer about ranking, bordering, and classifying, but rather about “mirroring self and world, [recognizing] both the uniqueness of each perspective and parity among them” (Hall and Ames, 1998, p. 80). Such an approach to comparative research has the potential to redefine unidirectional, linear concepts of education transfer rooted in (western) universality, while opening up spaces for rebuilding the pluriverse.

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Global mobility and middle class families—parenting and education

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Living mobility	303
A sense of belonging	304
Strategies for social reproduction	304
Conclusions	305
References	306

Migration is a phenomenon with a very long history and it figures centrally as a key social, economic and political question in today's world (Burrell, 2010; De Haas, 2010; Kunz, 2016). Research into the experiences of migrant families has focused on a range of themes—the reasons for migration (McGhee et al., 2017); parental strategies around engaging with and attempting to benefit from the host education systems (Antony-Newman, 2020; Byrne and De Tona, 2012; Lopez Rodriguez, 2010); the ways in which specific migrant groups are “managed” by governments, integrated into new education systems (Faas, 2016) and how various groups of migrants understand their autonomy in relation to the services they encounter (Kunz, 2020). One further domain of research examines the perceptions of migrant families in relation to their homeland (Faas, 2016). This line of study tends to deal with identity formation and its negotiation between where people have come from, their journeys to their current location, and experiences in their new homes. Their relationships with and within their new places of residence are drawn on to develop self-definitions and articulate self-distinctions (Ryan, 2011). Traditionally, research on migration has focused on immigrants from less developed countries who moved to Western Europe and North America (Massey et al., 1993; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006). More recently, researchers have also begun to explore the mobility practices of other groups, including various economic elites, but also highly-skilled professionals who are very mobile due to their professional responsibilities and aspirations (e.g., Koh and Wissink, 2018; Kunz, 2016; Scott, 2006).

With the “deterritorialization of capital” (Embong, 2000: 991), it has been argued, comes the emergence of a transnational capitalist class (TCC) (Sklair, 2002) and an accompanying global middle class (GMC) (Ball, 2010). It is claimed that the GMC are constituted as a group of globally mobile professionals who have become essential in facilitating the exponential growth of multinational corporations. These professionals, do not own the capital and therefore are not understood as an elite, but are defined as providing the expert knowledge and skills needed for the operation of such business entities by facilitating the companies' global networks of production, consumption, and bureaucracy. Other terms sometimes deployed to describe them are expatriates or, more recently, “international talent”. They are highly skilled workers of diverse national origins who circulate the globe—mostly between key global cities such as New York, London, Sydney, San Francisco, and Hong Kong—and serve as high-tech, financial, and legal specialists; middle managers; engineers; and other professions (Ball, 2010; Beaverstock, 2005; Embong, 2000; Sassen, 1999, 2000; Sklair, 2001; Yeoh and Willis, 2005). This new group of globally mobile professionals are crucial for the transfer of specialized knowledge internationally and the consolidation of global networks. They are conceptualized as a service class to the transnational capitalist class, and as such understood to be a social class of their own, different from elites but also distinct from non-mobile middle classes in their home nations. Thus, as a group that are untethered from the nation state and always on the move, their social position is not, theoretically, determined by a national field of social relations. In earlier writings on modern societies and the cosmopolitanization of space (Beck, 2012), this group are presented as essentially nomads roaming a transnational space. It is this nation-less existence that is argued to bind them as a group—“the global middle class”.

This is a fundamental empirical and theoretical question for sociology today—is this collection of globally mobile professionals, who are differentiated from others by their expected and relatively frequent mobility for work, a new fraction of the middle classes? Do their orientations to the self, others around them, questions of belonging, capital resources that are valorized, and their desired imagined futures bind them as a “well-formed class with its own distinct social identity” (Lockwood, 1995: 3)? Before we seek to explore what we know about this group of globally mobile professionals in terms of their social class description, it is important to highlight that there are various definitions of the “global middle class”. The first is the one we offer above—professionals, who are highly educated, who are mobile for work and take up positions that facilitate the work of multinational organizations and corporations (Ball, 2010). Originally, they were largely from the Global North, and often known as expatriates. Increasingly now though, these professionals come from all over the world and mobility trajectories are not limited to the large cities of the Global North, but also to metropolises across the Global South (Friedberg, 2007). This makes the study of these globally mobile professionals even more interesting in terms of seeking to define them and ascertain whether that are norms and practices that bind them, but also more challenging as their heterogeneity increases.

However, the term “global middle class” has also been used to describe the significant growth of middle class segments within countries across the Global South. Researchers have been tracking the distribution of populations by income, and noting significant growth, at least in certain regions, of people who can now be considered ‘middle class’ (Kochhar, 2020). This definition of the global

middle class understands them as members of this particular group on purely economic terms (Das, 2009), so for instance in this report: “as all those living in households with daily per capita incomes of between USD10 and USD100 in PPP terms” (Kharas, 2010: 6). Thurow (1987) argued that all people with an income in the interval from 75% to 125% of median income of a particular nation should be considered part of the global middle class. Koo (2016), meanwhile, offers a third definition for the global middle class, which seeks to integrate a focus on class-making practices: “the affluent and globally oriented segments of the middle classes in developing countries” (Koo, 2016: 440; see also Derné, 2005). Koo’s focus on Korea allows him to illustrate how these more globally-oriented members of a society leads to internal divisions within the Korean middle classes, as practices of distinction in relation to education and mobility come into play. Koo (2016) argues that the global middle class he studied were a: “globally oriented, globally connected, and globally mobile segment of the middle class” (p. 449). We found similar distinctions in orientations in our mobile and “immobile” Israeli middle class participants (Yemini et al., 2019), but argue here that regular global mobility for work is an important distinction between those members of a middle class who are globally oriented and perhaps mobile for education, work trips and leisure travel but remain reasonably strongly embedded within their “home” nation, and those who become more transnational as a regular feature of their lives. Koo (2016) also points to this differentiation, but it is here that the scholarly work is not developed enough—is there is social class fraction distinction between a more “locally-moored” middle class and one that is transnational, and what degree of transnationality is needed to push a person into this second grouping?

To ensure we are consistent in our definition of the global middle class—we focus here on globally mobile professionals—who are relatively and continuously mobile for work—that is to say—they have moved for work purposes more than twice and continue to be open to the prospect of future mobility. In what follows we offer a summary of the relevant research done to date on globally mobile professionals and their family lives—with a particular emphasis on education and other parenting strategies. In this way we are able to highlight what appears to connect this group of people, in terms of family practices, future aspirations and how children’s needs intersect with professional desires and demands to drive this group of individuals’ practices; while also seeking to illuminate where and why they might diverge. Our overview is organized into three sections: (1) what it means to lead lives that are mobile; (2) their sense of national belonging; (3) and their strategies for social reproduction, when detached from a nation state.

Living mobility

One of the most distinguishing features of this group of global professionals is their pervasive mobility. Mobility means moving to live in one or more places outside their “home” country, having to travel regularly for work and liaise with professionals based around the world, while also, necessarily, maintaining social and family networks virtually and through travel. As Favell (2008) found in his study of young professionals moving across Europe for work, mobility was articulated as “liberating” them from some of the national—social and cultural—structures they perceived as oppressive back “home.” Yet, many of his participants also anticipated returning “home” when they planned on starting a family. What about those professionals and their families who keep moving? Questions around what motivates this engagement with mobility, how it shapes family practices and educational strategies, whether it constructs a particular orientation to the world, how transnational ties are maintained and the ways they affect the societies they enter are all pertinent. Examining these issues also allows us to identify ways these globally mobile professionals are similar or different from others who also migrate (but come from differently resourced backgrounds), middle class peers from the societies they come from and those they enter, and how their relative social class position is affected by the hierarchical constitution of the countries and cities they relocate to.

One of the most fundamental questions research should engage with is how being constantly mobile is conceptualized by those who make a choice to relocate themselves and their families for work. What anticipated benefits and challenges do they see, and how do they work to smooth the transition from place to place? For some, relocation is necessitated/required of them by employers, for others it is an active choice—to leave behind a social and political system they have become disengaged from (Yemini and Maxwell, 2018; Adams and Agbenyega, 2019), or it might be a desire to facilitate aspirations for their children’s futures to be located anywhere in the world (Yemini et al., 2019), as they seek for their children to become “the best of the best” and open new possibilities and horizons for them.

But mobility is unsettling—as breaks with “home” and “what we know” occur, and they are uncertainties about how to thrive in new fields of social relations and education systems. In our work we have drawn on the concept of boundary objects (Akkerman and Bakker, 2011) to help theorize how families work to maintain some familiarity during a relocation with “what they know”, while simultaneously drawing on already-acquired resources (such as language or cosmopolitan orientations to difference) to facilitate the movement into a new geographical and social space (Yemini et al., 2020). But, as the practice of relocation becomes more habitual, the motivations for mobility and the ways it is managed will necessarily change (as demonstrated in Beech et al., 2021, where school choice strategies were found to change over time and number of relocations). Another facet of living mobility is the work needed to maintain an ever disparate social network of family and friends, located all around the world, alongside the continued cultivation of a sense of belonging and identity (see the next sub-section).

As mobility becomes more or less habitual, tracing how people variously draw on their resources to secure their positions in a new space is an important focus for research. In particular, focusing on how globally mobile professional parents seek to secure their children’s future advantages will facilitate an examination of what might constitute middle class practices in transnational space—a hitherto unresolved theoretical quandary. From the scarce research that exists, it can be suggested that practicing mobility does distinguish the kinds of values and family practices identified within global professional families, when compared with

migrant (i.e., mobile once) and non-mobile families who are similarly well-educated and have professional jobs (Yemini et al., 2019). However, a much larger empirical base is needed to study this question.

Some scholars have drawn on Bourdieu to examine whether capitals from one social field can be transferred to another—whether their value is recognized and can be exchanged (Soong et al., 2018; Waddling et al., 2019). This approach could be employed to examine whether particular middle class capitals can be transnational (perhaps a university degree from an internationally-renowned university); and/or to examine how different (nationally-located) social fields differ from one another; and how middle class people moving into a new space can compete with those emplaced social groups who have been struggling over the articulation of specific capital resources. Previous research has argued that the “geopolitical relations” (Lillie, 2021a: 91) or positionings of a person’s “home” country will affect how transferable privilege from one setting to another is (see also Lillie, 2021b; Soong et al., 2018).

A sense of belonging

If a feature of being globally mobile is being untethered from the nation state, how do globally mobile professionals and their families articulate a sense of identity, as this is so often linked to “the nation”—either as “being from somewhere” or as now belonging “somewhere new”. Meanwhile, a sense of identity and/or belonging may be more connected to ethnicity and/or religion, and so does not necessarily need the nation state as an object for recognition. But work on globally mobile professionals opens up a new line of enquiry—does a sense of belonging emerge that connects these diverse individuals (diverse in terms of their citizenship, ethnicity, religion etc) because of their mobility or “being global”? Here the concept of “frames of reference” (Savage et al., 2005) might help in examining this further. Do globally mobile professionals draw on local, national or global frames of reference that are in some way connected to geographical space? Or perhaps they engage with a differently constituted idea of spatial relations which connects them to others “like me”.

A paper on the school choices made by globally mobile families, for instance, demonstrates that Chinese ethnicity (Chinese–Malaysian, Chinese–Singaporean etc) is critical to the anchoring work (Grzymala-Kazłowska, 2018) these families do in creating a sense of identity (Beech et al., 2021). Or, as Agbaria (2019) argues, religious-belonging might be a central connecting feature that overrides ethnicity or nation. Meanwhile, for other globally mobile families, maybe the “global” becomes their frame of reference as any other spatial configurations are too disparate to embed themselves in. A global frame of reference invites the suggestion of a cosmopolitan or global citizenship orientation (Goren and Yemini, 2016, 2017); namely, of acceptance, interest, and comfort in engaging with the “Other” but also potentially about being the “Other” in a particular context. While some of the limited research on this group identifies a commitment to cosmopolitanism in these families’ practices (Maxwell and Yemini, 2019), other more concrete forms of elective belonging (Savage et al., 2005) also emerge (Yemini et al., 2020). This might be connected to the psychic need to have belonging tethered to something much more secure, or may be a practice of distinction that is seen to complement the families’ cosmopolitan status (Howard and Maxwell, 2021).

A second articulation of “belonging” or “identity”, might be understood as the relations of sociability globally mobile professional families forge in their new countries of residence. Favell’s (2008) research on the “Eurostars”, found that his participants tended to congregate with “people like us” when they moved to live in new countries. Meanwhile, Andreotti et al. (2015) found that those mobile professionals in the European cities they studied, still retained strong links to family “back home” and engaged only in a “selective rootedness” (p. 180) when they moved somewhere new. Whether families “integrate” in their new communities, often depends on the school choices they make for their children, which residential areas they move to, what friends and family they may already know who are also located there, the leisure activities they take up, and how critical knowing the country’s main language is for forming friendships (Yemini and Maxwell, 2018). If globally mobile professionals congregate in real or imagined gated communities and attend a school that follows their home country curriculum—ties to the home nation stay firmly intact (Toh, 2020).

A third concept, taking from migration research, which could be insightful is that of “incorporation” (Beaverstock, 2002; Dubucs et al., 2017; Jaskulowski, 2018; Plög and Becker, 2015; Scott, 2006). The focus of “incorporation” can be within the companies that employ these globally mobile professionals, but also within the local communities they join (residential areas, shared communities such as those that form around a school, shared interests, nationality, ethnicity and/or religion).

Strategies for social reproduction

There is a relatively large body of scholarly work highlighting the “concerted cultivation” strategies that middle-class parents worldwide engage in Irwin and Elley (2011), Lareau (2003), Nogueira (2010), Van Zanten (2009), Vincent et al. (2012). Whether directly drawing on a Bourdieusian framework or not, middle-class parents are argued to be ambitious in seeking to secure and extend their children’s advantages, expose their sons and daughters to a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities, help them to identify their talents, but also develop them as a whole rounded person (Stefansen and Aarseth, 2011). Such practices are argued to maintain current relations of inequality, where the middle classes continue to secure and extend their advantages over their working class peers (Weis et al., 2014). As Van Zanten (2015) argues, middle-class parents can draw on their own knowledge and personal experiences but also on professional experience of how to maneuver through national systems of education to their children’s

advantage—conceptualized as a form of cultural capital. Critically, it is also the economic resources that are available to middle-class families that facilitate strategies of concerted cultivation—paid extra-curricular activities, private academic tutoring, (usually) mothers able to work part-time or become a full-time stay-at-home-parent, trips abroad for leisure but also language tuition, and so forth (Van Zanten, 2015). What is usually highlighted in social reproduction strategies practiced by the middle classes is their dependence on an understanding of, and familiarity with, the state's structures and institutions, so that the capitals they have acquired over time have value in that particular field, and can therefore be activated to secure advantage and therefore social reproduction.

Globally mobile professional families are also “middle class” in terms of their education, income and professional status. But a central question for this field of study is how being constantly globally mobile affects parenting and education strategies. As Breidenstein et al. (2018) demonstrated in their study of globally mobile professionals interacting on a website discussion forum about school choices in Berlin, some parents want to replicate what they know in a new space, while others seek to embrace the new opportunities that mobility affords them and their children. Another study of globally mobile middle-class families in London (Yemini and Maxwell, 2018) found that while parental aspirations are being negotiated within a global frame of reference in terms of future employment and anticipated mobility of their children, significant resources are also invested in order to secure the best opportunities for their children in their current locations (via the area of residence chosen, the school attended, the friendship networks promoted, extra-curricular activities engaged in, how family and other developments “back home” are kept abreast of etc.). Knowledge of the local system they have entered is accumulated through networks and connections. This raises the critical issue, highlighted by Lareau et al. (2016), that in order to make “choices” or draw on the necessary capitals to shape practices to their advantage, parents must understand “the rules of the game,” as Bourdieu (1984) would argue. While Lareau et al. (2016)'s study is focused on a non-mobile population in one part of the US seeking to gain access to specific early-childhood institutions, their argument is even more critical for mobile families as they settle into a new and usually unfamiliar cultural and organizational spaces (Waddling et al., 2019). Thus, research is needed to understand how GMC families decide upon entering a new education system how best to successfully maneuver their way through. One paper tackles this question directly (Beech et al., 2021), arguing that as the number of moves increases among globally mobile professional families, their school choice strategies change too, as mobility becomes more habitual and more deeply engrained in their values and anticipated futures.

Conclusions

We know too little about this growing group to make many definitive statements about them. As their number and diversity grow (diversity in terms of where they “come from” and where they are moving to), the research that is being done is not keeping pace. However, the theoretical contributions studies to date have offered (see a summary in Maxwell et al., 2019) give us some tools with which to think further about how global mobility is affecting both the lives of globally mobile professional families, but also the host societies they leave and enter. This latter potential effect is not insignificant we would argue, just as other migrant communities alter the composition of cities and neighborhoods, globally mobile professionals have the resources to demand more and change local understandings of what is desirable in terms of education offers, travel expectations and future aspirations (see also Higginson et al., 2019; Yemini and Maxwell, 2021, with an important challenge to this argument by Windle and Maire, 2019).

Despite the lack of comprehensive data sets to examine the question—are globally mobile professionals a “well-formed class with its own distinct social identity” (Lockwood, 1995: 3)—we would suggest there are likely different fractions that make up a loosely-formed group bound in some way by actual or anticipated frequent mobility. The range of professional backgrounds (working for the private or public sector, working across different industries, in a range of professions—Scott, 2006) suggests that other distinctions within the middle classes—cultural and economic fractions (Ball et al., 2004; Aarseth, 2018)—will also shape the family practices of those professionals who are globally mobile. This differentiation (e.g., among corporate professionals, UN civil servants and diplomats, university academics) has not yet been comparatively studied. Furthermore, Urry's (1999) emphasis on the range of mobilities is also important to consider further—differences between families that relocate frequently, those who move back and forth between “home” and a posting by their employer, those that do not necessarily relocate for work continuously, but have a “mobile” orientation in terms of travel, social networks, anticipated futures.

The two arguments we make above—about globally mobile professionals having a broader impact on societies, and that important differentiations are likely to exist within this group, fits well with Kaufmann et al. (2004) understanding of mobility as a form of capital. They argue mobility is not just about spatial movement, but rather about how such spatial movement is made possible or is perceived as being possible through social position. Thus, according to Kaufmann et al. (2004), physical mobility not only affects an individual's or group's positioning within the social structure, but will also itself affect social structures more broadly. Kaufmann et al. (2004) therefore re-conceptualize mobility as “motility” in order to emphasize its association with a form of capital, and define motility as examining “how entities access and appropriate the capacity for socio-spatial mobility” (Kaufmann et al., 2004: 750). Critically, Kaufmann et al. focus on both the potential and actual capacity for mobility—alerting us to the importance of aspirations in shoring up practices (Kaufmann et al., 2018).

This article has sought to discuss how we might conceptualize and understand a middle class group of professionals who, with their families, regularly relocate for work. Drawing on recent empirical studies, we have been able to summarize some ways in which this group is distinctive, and also how in other ways there are important differences to be found within. Whether or not there are enough similarities that bind them for them to be constituted as a “global middle class”, it is too early to say. However, the ways mobility shapes understandings of self, the future, and family practices, means these middle class families are continuously

negotiating local, national and transnational spaces of capital accumulation and activation, as well as a sense of belonging that straddles the glocal (Marginson and Rhoades, 2002). In this way, we argue they are an important, growing social grouping who affect societies they leave and those they relocate to. The research we have summarized focuses on educational and parenting strategies, and highlights that despite the uncertainty mobility can engender, these families are imagining futures on a global scale, seeking to create cosmopolitan subjects that nonetheless have roots in various communities of belonging.

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Transnational academic collaboration: a critical analysis of the global and national contexts and constraints of co-authorship

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Introduction	308
The macro context: politics of scientometrics and the datafication process	309
Micro context: organisational culture and social psychology of transnational academic collaboration	311
Ethical implications for transnational academic collaboration in co-authorship	312
Discussion and conclusion	314
References	315

Introduction

Academic collaboration is a common, integral feature of academic life - understood as academics working jointly especially in an intellectual endeavor. It takes on many forms and many levels of relationships in both formal and informal contexts. This article considers transnational academic research collaboration in the form of co-authorship in the humanities and social sciences (HSS).

Nurturing academic collaboration has been high on research policy agendas not just at national levels but also at transnational levels (Hoekman et al., 2009; Yegros-Yegros et al., 2021) such as the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programmes and the European Research Council's Synergy Grant schemes. The HSS field is no exception - e.g. Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) - a partnership between 26 Humanities Research Councils across Europe and the European Commission - committed to strengthening the European platform for the humanities research. HERA (<https://heranet.info/about-us/governance-and-structure/network-of-members/>)'s Joint Research Program (JRP) aims to enable large transnational Collaborative Research Projects (CRPs) in the Humanities.

However, the policy emphasis on academic research collaboration reflects the trend of promoting a certain type of research designed for measurable socio-economic impacts that match the interests of both funders and disciplinary gatekeepers. For instance, Wellcome Trust also funds research in HSS "to form the bedrock of more focused and instrumental research projects that lead to improvements in health". It supports "collaborations between UK research networks and international partners to maximize the impact of their work" (<https://wellcome.org/what-we-do/our-work/research-humanities-and-social-sciences>).

Such funding schemes indicate that productivity in academic research is correlating with the high level of collaboration. According to the [jobs.ac.uk survey \(2012\)](https://www.jobs.ac.uk/media/pdf/careers/resources/making-academic-collaboration-work.pdf) (<https://www.jobs.ac.uk/media/pdf/careers/resources/making-academic-collaboration-work.pdf>), 91% of researchers agreed that collaboration increases research impact; 84% of researchers think that building personal, on-the-ground relationships (informal collaborations) are as important to research excellence as strategic initiatives (formal collaborations) in their institution; and 79% of researchers said that collaboration makes them more productive.

Given these known benefits of academic collaboration, there is also an increasing emphasis on funding collaboration. Many supranational and national funders seek to stimulate transnational academic research collaboration through a mix of grant schemes and grant criteria (e.g. the European Science Foundation (ESF) programmes, DAAD, NordForsk, JSPS, ESRC, AHRC, etc.). The recent UKRI call for applications: "Addressing COVID-19 challenges with Japanese researchers" is exclusively open to the HSS fields jointly funded by the ESRC and AHRC in the UK and the JSPS in Japan: (<https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/addressing-covid-19-challenges-with-japanese-researchers/>). Such measures are designed to fund collaborative research based on particular models of collaboration; yet, much of the disciplinary heterogeneity in research practices reside in the differing patterns of collaboration, including forms of publication authorship (Lewis et al., 2012).

This paper considers both the macro and micro contexts of transnational academic research collaboration and co-authorship in HSS. It is argued that academic collaboration in the form of "co-authorship" in the fields of HSS may be intrinsically an oxymoron given the nature of knowledge creation in HSS. Nevertheless, transnational academic collaboration in co-authorship is increasingly promoted in HSS as well, valorized and rewarded in the contemporary rules of the game in academia. International scholarly impacts are measured in various academic research evaluation schemes in many countries. In other words, the rapid surge of transnational academic collaboration is not only driven by the type of funded academic research *per se* but also closely entwined with the university performativity, participating in the neoliberal rent-seeking economy.

Accordingly, the paper analyses both the structural and agentic attributes to transnational academic collaboration and the embedded power relationships within. The paper examines, first of all, the macro-context, politics of scientometrics and the datafication process and its implications for transnational academic collaboration; secondly, the micro-context, organisational culture and social psychology of transnational academic collaboration; and thirdly, ethical implications of transnational

academic collaboration in co-authorship. The conclusion of the paper returns to its argument about the oxymoronic nature of transnational academic collaboration in co-authorship in the fields of HSS and discusses the structural dissonance in the paradoxical processes of knowledge creation and production in HSS. The paper ends with a macro level consideration of contemporary geopolitics, its perils and impacts on transnational academic collaboration in the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic as an aperçu.

The macro context: politics of scientometrics and the datafication process

The number of internationally co-authored papers has continued to increase exponentially over the last two decades. According to [Marginson \(2021a; 2021b\)](#), the growth in total bibliometric output loosely correlates to the expanded national system capacity, as shown in government funding of research in universities and public institutes, and the researcher workforce, from which we can apprehend the contemporary globalization of transnational academic collaboration.

At the same time, we can also surmise that this trend indicates the intensification of international comparisons and competitions driven by the datafication process. Datafication is the transformation of social action into online quantified data, thus allowing for real-time tracking and predictive analysis; it is about taking previously invisible process/activity and turning it into data, which then can be monitored, tracked, analyzed and optimized ([Mayer-Schoenberger and Cukier, 2013](#)). [Sadowski \(2019\)](#) illustrates the perpetual cycle of data accumulation that corresponds to flows of power and profit relying upon a world in which everything is made of data: “the alchemy of datafication promises to produce infinite reserves of both. At the same time, the rhetoric of universality reframes everything as within the domain of surveillance/platform/digital capitalism.” (p. 3) Datafication is also integrated into the university systems of academic evaluation in many countries around the world.

Networked global science has been expanding at such speed in the last two decades that global research collaboration has been considered an imperative of knowledge innovation. [Kwiek \(2020\)](#)'s research on international research collaboration (IRC) in Europe during the period 2009–18 in terms of co-authorship and citation distribution of globally indexed publications reveals that the growth of European science has been driven solely by internationally co-authored papers. Ironically, however, the existing metrics of global science is still focusing on inter-national comparisons and competitions. The value of academic research outputs is measured to rank one country against another, pointing to the “arms race in innovation” ([Marginson, 2020](#)) and the “sportification of science” ([Kaldewey, 2018](#)).

For instance, between 2010 and 2019, China has seen 62.5% increase of internationally co-authored publications, which accounted for 14.4% of its total publications in 2010 and 23.4% in 2019. Since 2018, China's research output has grown by 13.2%, overtaking the US as the top country by publication output in the world ([Universities UK, 2020](#)). China has the world's largest market for academic publishing, partly because many professions require publishing research papers as a job performance indicator ([Lew, 2021](#)). Fang Shimin, a US-based scholar and commentator who has been exposing pseudoscience and fraud for 20 years, confirms that there has been no fundamental change in China regarding research ethics. In 2020, Dutch microbiologist and science integrity advocate Elisabeth Bik and other experts found more than 400 published scientific papers with potentially fabricated images that were suspected to have been produced by one paper mill in China ([Lew, 2021](#)).

In terms of the proportion of co-authored publications in the overall research outputs, France (58%) was leading, followed by Australia (57.5%) and the UK (57.2%) in 2019 ([Universities UK, 2020](#), p. 24). The UK saw the increase of international collaboration compared from 25.7% in 1999 to 57.2% of the overall research outputs in 2019 to rank the third largest producer of internationally co-authored publications in the world after China and the United States. However, given the size of its population, the UK's internationally co-authored research publications ratio per academic is the highest in the world. Furthermore, the UK's field-weighted citation impact has ranked first every year since 2007 – which is a testament to the global impact of its research output ([Universities UK, 2020](#), p. 23).

Scientometricians have devised a multitude of metrics to help in these rankings. Such inter-national comparisons and competitions have a trickle-down effect on the intra-national systems of academic evaluation in many countries, to allocate public funds between universities or measure individual academics' research outputs.

In the rise of scientometrics (as integral part of datafication in the emerging digital capitalism), there is increasing interdependency between the higher education sector and the academic journal publishing industry, whose oligopolistic system has been increasingly criticized. Although non-profit publishing houses once dominated the academic publishing industry, now about 50% of global academic journals are part of commercial for-profit publishing houses ([Gaille, 2018](#)). [Larivière et al. \(2015\)](#) looked at all scientific articles published in the Web of Science database between 1973 and 2013, and found that five companies have published more than half of them since 2006: Reed-Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, Wiley-Blackwell, Springer and Sage. Almost 70% of journal articles published in psychology and social sciences are owned by these big publishers.

Academic publishing is an extremely lucrative business with total global revenues of more than £19bn despite the narrow audience ([Buranyi, 2017](#)). In 2010 Elsevier scientific publications had 36% profit margins – higher than Apple, Google, or Amazon posted that year. The profit margin has been increasing each year and by 2017 it was 40% ([Buranyi, 2017](#)).

Publishers get copyrights of the work produced by academics for free. They do not even pay for quality control as it is done by academics themselves for free in the form of peer review. Once the academic papers are published, publishers sell them back to the academic communities at a monopolistic price set by the publishers, with subscription contracts, to be read by academics who, in a collective sense, created the product in the first place.

For instance, Harvard is currently paying \$3.75 million each year to maintain their current journal subscriptions. This cost represents 10% of the total cost of everything that the library acquires. Some journals cost the university up to \$40,000 every year, with the two top publishers increasing the price of content 145% over the last six years (Gaille, 2018). A memo from Harvard's Faculty Advisory Council to its Library in 2012 states that it "reached this conclusion: major periodical subscriptions, especially to electronic journals published by historically key providers, cannot be sustained: continuing these subscriptions on their current footing is financially untenable" (Wagstaff, 2012).

Publishers also control bibliometrics that are used to evaluate research impacts which affect academic career advancement. This oligopolistic system is prevalent worldwide, with which all research institutions are compliant. A logical question raised then out of this situation is: why and what exactly are we paying these big publishers for?

The exploitations of academic work – not only knowledge production *per se* but quality control by the collaborative work of editorial board and peer reviews for free – have become a universal system applied worldwide. Peer reviews play an essential role in ensuring the quality and validity of academic papers. Publishing papers in academic journals is a main way of achieving professional recognition, although scholars in the fields of HSS would consider publishing their most significant work in book form rather than in journal articles. Nevertheless, journals still play an important role for HSS as a lot of articles are developed in the context of a book in progress; thus, peer reviewers for HSS journals play an important role in moving a potential book to eventual publication.

Publications in top-tier journals are often more valued than publications in lower ranked ones. Given the convention of traditional journal publishing, switching to a different model may be considered difficult. It is expected that a major publisher acquiring a journal will have the effect of increasing the journal's visibility and impacts. However, as Larivière et al. (2015)'s research indicates, there has been no clear increase in terms of citations after a journal ownership changes from a small company to a larger major publisher. As Harzing and Mijnhardt (2014) suggest, citation-based performance metrics can be more democratic as their "verdict" is based on the reception of the paper by the academic community as a whole and self-promotion of individual academics, whereas acceptance in a high-impact journal is dependent on only a handful of "gatekeepers" (i.e. the editor and reviewers).

There have been academic protests to recover the control and ownership of academic research outputs in order to make them available and useable to anyone and to any institution for free for the sake of the advancement of knowledge. For instance, "The Cost of Knowledge" (<http://thecostofknowledge.com>) protest initiated by a group of prominent academics points out that the cost of journal publishing has gone down because the cost of typesetting has been shifted from publishers to authors and the cost of publishing and distribution is significantly lower than it used to be. Then why do academics contribute all this volunteer labor, and their employers pay all this money, for a service whose value no longer justifies its cost?

Multiple groups of academics and organisations (as listed in http://openscience.ens.fr/ABOUT_OPEN_ACCESS/ARTICLES/) have insisted for more than a decade on developing and promoting new open access publishing platforms, called "intellectual commons", publicly owned and freely used by academics, companies and citizens (Eisen, 2003; Farge, 2017). They argue that academic papers should be available for free in open access platforms and their content should be useable to anyone and to any institution. Ideas are not of the same nature as material objects. When ideas are shared, they are not lost. Ideas are only fruitful if they are communicated for discussion, verification, improvement, and education. Ideas are not merchandise but intellectual commons. Accordingly, they suggest that journals should be owned by their editorial board while editors and referees continue to work for free; and the publishing companies could continue their business only "as service providers" to the publishing platforms (Farge, 2014, 2017).

Such open access publishing platforms in fact already exist, albeit not in the main stream yet – e.g. "scielo.org" in Brazil, "revue-s.org" in France, and "PLOS ONE" in the United States – a peer-reviewed open access scientific journal published by the Public Library of Science (PLOS) under Creative Commons licenses (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>) since 2006. More recently, in Germany, the so-called "Alliance Initiative" (a task force of all German research institutions) has been assigned with negotiating collective, nationwide open access agreements with the three largest commercial publishers of scholarly journals, namely Elsevier, Springer Nature, and Wiley, on behalf of all German academic institutions, including universities, research institutes, and their libraries (Haucap et al., 2021).

In the field of scientometrics, there are also crucial contested issues about co-authorship and types of contribution (theoretical, empirical, methodological) and the context of the citation (praising or criticizing, central or peripheral) matters (Nosek, 2012). For instance, h-index (an author-level metric that measures both the productivity and citation impact of the publications of a scientist or scholar) cannot be used to compare academics that work in different disciplines or are at different career stages. Harzing et al. (2014) devised the hI_{annual} (or hI_a for short) that represents the average annual increase in the individual h-index, and showed that the hI_a index attenuates h-index differences that are purely attributable to (disciplinary) co-authorship practices and career lengths.

Overall, knowledge is the *raison d'être* and *sine quo non* of academic work. However, as illustrated above, there is an increasing separation of knowledge production value (academic capital) from the producer (academics) in the rent-seeking economy of academia, concomitantly subsumed in the datafication process by the oligopolistic academic publishing industry.

The notion of academic alienation is far more than the issue of copyright ownership. Academic alienation is a structural problem caused by the current academic system, which exacerbates the paradox embedded in academic collaboration in HSS. I argued that the very notion of academic collaboration in the form of co-authorship in HSS may be an oxymoron in nature; hence it requires a closer investigation in line with a better understanding of the micro contexts of knowledge production and innovation.

Micro context: organisational culture and social psychology of transnational academic collaboration

The contemporary academic management structure is heavily reliant on the quantification and datafication of academic work (especially research, publication, and impact). The research evaluation systems established in many countries (e.g. Australia, Belgium, France, Italy, Korea, New Zealand, the UK, etc.) are purported to increase academic performance and productivity and efficiency – according to the principles of New Public Management (NPM), with its performance contracts and performance-based institutional funding (Sandström and Besselaar, 2018).

However, there is an acknowledged decline in the conditions of academic work, and enterprising academic subjects live an existence of calculation for performativity (Ball, 2012; Winn, 2015). Ball (2012:17) narrates his own lived experience of changes in his academic subjectivity, having succumbed to the contemporary “market-framed university” imperative (Cowen, 2000) to make himself “calculable rather than memorable”.

Overall, the university is organized around the neoliberal market principles (both real and imagined) that are rationalized and enter into the deep structure (*doxa*) – the agreement between all participants in the field (Bourdieu, 1984; Kim, 2017: 995) – to achieve “the universalization of market-based social relations, with the corresponding penetration in almost every single aspect of our lives” (Shamir, 2008: 3; Ball, 2012: 18). Performative accountability regimes have had impact at the macro-level on policies and systems, and at the meso- and micro-levels of basic units and individuals (Scott, 2006; Xu et al., 2021). This speaks to the condition of “governmentality” in Foucault’s term, the way that individuals come to govern themselves (McKinlay et al., 2012), and academic work is routinely monitored and evaluated accordingly. As Cowen (2000) forewarned more than two decades ago, smaller and smaller pieces of information are being collected, more and more surveillance are being devised to intensify the “factorization of performance”, by which academic research outputs are evaluated on a piece-rate basis (Cowen, 2000: 102).

Overall, the highly skewed processes of academic knowledge production and extremely competitive up-or-out nature of academic career have become more tied to neoliberal performativity regimes as *doxa*, which discourage long-term research without funding, while encouraging more tactics and short-term strategies to perform and play by the rules of the game to increase research outputs and impacts. The current sociology of academic performativity mandate speaks to micromanaging organization, measuring everything for quantification and datafication.

The contemporary notion of metric fixation is entwined with the mercantilisation of knowledge. Lyotard (1979/1984) forewarned four decades ago that knowledge ceases to be an end in itself and the goal of knowledge production is to be “exchange”. However, the more exchange value the academic creates, the more her/his own value decreases as the “self-exploiting entrepreneur” who is forced to sell herself ‘piecemeal’ in order to remain employable (Hall, 2018: 2).

Rent-seeking activities in neoliberal academia are differentiated from “value-producing” labor or “profit-making” entrepreneurialism (Reitz, 2017; Welsh, 2020). Rent-seeking activities in universities are directly related to performativity, which operates by system optimization, i.e. playing the calculation of input and outputs by the rules of the game – e.g. the Research Excellence Framework (REF), research grants and various league tables with strings attached. In some countries (e.g. China, South Africa, South Korea), there are direct incentives for international publications (Cowen, 2020; MacFarlane, 2017; Xu et al., 2021). The publication incentive mechanism in China, for instance, is symptomatic of performativity regimes, in which Chinese academics in HSS proactively align their academic pursuits with national interests (Zha and Shen, 2018), which are underpinned by publishing incentives (Xu et al., 2021: 5).

For Lyotard (1979/1984), “performativity” is defined by what constitutes knowledge, what knowledge is of worth, and whose knowledge has legitimacy (Clapham, 2013), which is increasingly conditioned by scientometrics – an integral part of the datafication process in the “computerization of society” (Lyotard, 1984: 7). Overall, the proliferation of rent-seeking behaviors in academic life indicates the systemic change of organizational culture inside academia that is compliant with the national regulatory regimes as well as the transnational tacit rules of competition, which altogether reflect the transformed grounds for the legitimacy of knowledge.

Against the backdrop, transnational academic collaboration in the form of co-authorship has become an important currency of academia, vital for career progression, funding, and success in research assessments. Many academics go into transnational academic collaboration for co-authorship with a mixture of ambition and opportunism for an “international reputation” with reference to the ranking system used in the research assessments. Collaboration in the form of co-authorship is regarded as a solution for getting more papers published, more quickly. This trend is particularly strong for “early-career researchers” trying to launch their academic careers (Taylor and Francis, 2017).

According to Taylor and Francis (2017: 6)’s white paper, “Co-authorship in the Humanities and Social Sciences: A Global View”, a typical paper published in HSS is now more likely than not to have multiple authors: two or three authors per paper in HSS (61%); single author (27%); four or five (11%); more than six (1%). The survey also confirms that the notable growth in co-authorship in HSS contemporaneously is attributed to increasing competition and the performance-based pressures in academic life. The next most highly scoring motivation was the growth of opportunities to collaborate internationally and the growth of multi-disciplinary work. Scholars are benefitting from research networks sharing multi-disciplinary perspectives and funding to support collaboration (Taylor and Francis, 2017: 6–8).

Overall, the trend of co-authorship in academic publications has led to a sharp decrease in the proportion of single authored publications in HSS. According to Ossenblok et al. (2014)’s data analysis using the bibliographic information between 2000 and 2010, in social sciences, majority of publications (four-fifth of all publications) were co-authored, whereas in the humanities, more than one-third were co-authored publications.

As research collaborations proliferate, authorship credit has increasingly become a complicated and often contested issue in conflict. The contemporary obsession with measuring everything (including “impacts”) to quantify knowledge and the influence it has on us (datafication) itself have further complicated the terms and conditions of transnational academic collaboration. Especially the issues around co-authorship are the most common concerns in publishing ethics under scrutiny (MacFarlane, 2017).

Ethical implications for transnational academic collaboration in co-authorship

The commonly occurring problems in academic co-authorship are related to authorship credit – i.e. if the order of named author reflects the level of contribution fairly. In what order should the authors’ names appear on a published paper? According to Taylor and Francis (2017), HSS researchers do not have a settled view on how to come to an agreement, and yet the majority of HSS researchers have not received enough guidance on how to do collaborative writing.

There is a general assumption or conventional belief that senior academics are often over-credited. Taylor and Francis (2017) reports that a researcher in HSS complained about “supervisors insisting their name goes on as a co-author when they have basically done their job, nothing more” (Taylor and Francis, 2017: 12). However, there exist the opposite cases that junior researchers are over-credited in comparison to the other authors (Taylor and Francis, 2017); and yet such cases are often less scrutinized or even tend to be condoned.

For example, a senior academic in HSS has encountered a calculous behavior of an early-career researcher in the process of co-authoring a paper. Her episode is narrated here, with her permission, as a case study:

A senior academic (S) invited a doctoral student (J) who is close to the completion of her Ph.D. based in another country to write a joint paper for a Special Issue. The joint paper was built on S’s ideas and theoretical framework. S already shared her 2500-word draft conceptualization and outline of the paper when inviting J to collaborate. However, even before making any contribution, more or less immediately after agreeing to join the writing project, J insisted that she needs to be the first author. Her given reason is that in her country, only the first author counts; hence she wants to be the first author for the sake of her career progression. Further to that, J also assured S that her contribution to the joint paper would be equal. S then hesitantly agreed, under the condition that J would make substantial contribution in writing the joint paper. However, J’s contribution turned out to be a minimum.

To produce the joint paper, S did the vast majority of the conceptualization, research and writing. Eventually when S suggested changing the authorship credits to reflect this, J accused S of abusing her power. From the perspective of those not well informed, the situation may be easily portrayed in the public domain as a senior academic exercising her power over a junior researcher. However, S’s experience was that J took advantage, using her position of structural vulnerability (as an early-career researcher) to her advantage in the authorship dispute – instead of delivering her expected contribution to the joint paper professionally.

In the authorship dispute, the senior academic (S) explains the situation:

“In my view, authorship should be determined by the level of contribution as simple as that. It is not about seniority but intellectual honesty ... J keeps saying she wrote the ‘theoretical’ part. But it was not. She wrote just one section in the literature review within the conceptual framework that I had outlined in the paper. Furthermore, J’s draft literature review section didn’t meet the publishable standards as it was mostly descriptive, and thus I had to rewrite it. Her allegation that I merely paraphrased what she drafted is totally untrue. I rewrote the section substantially, drawing on more relevant literature from my own fresh research as well as from my book in line with my argument and conceptual framework that I sketched in the Introduction. ...

... All in all, I have never experienced this level of aggression and grotesque ambition from any of my colleagues – let alone any of early-career researchers – in my academic career so far over the last few decades. I have helped J whenever I could on various occasions whenever she requested – e.g. reading and providing feedback on her other draft papers and her research proposal. I also agreed to be one of her referees in her research grant application when she requested ...

... However, when it comes to intellectual and academic work to produce a joint paper for publication, it is important to be honest and transparent to acknowledge the level of contributions made by each of us correctly, regardless of the ranks and seniority of the contributors.”

According to the Research Integrity policy and guidelines from UCL (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/research/integrity/policies-and-guidelines/publication-and-authorship>):

- Assigning appropriate authorship is fundamental to guarantee professional conducts and ethical practices when publishing academic and research papers.
- Major contributors sign first.
- Alphabetical order is applied only when authors have contributed equally.
- It is also worth noting that the balance of contribution can alter over time, and so if this occurs researchers may find it beneficial to revisit authorship prior to publication.

- Given the variances and the importance of accuracy not only for the publication but in recognizing contributions, it is a matter that should be openly addressed.
- Incorrect authorship goes beyond raising disputes amongst research teams to matters of research integrity and good research conduct.

The RCUK Policy and Guidelines on the Governance of Good Research Conduct (<https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/research-integrity/>) states that unacceptable research conduct includes ‘Misrepresentation of involvement, such as inappropriate claims to authorship and/or attribution of work where there has been no significant contribution, or the denial of authorship where an author has made a significant contribution’.”

Following the authorship dispute, however, J took advantage of her invited position as one of the guest editors of a Special Issue (SI) which involves S and two other senior academics. Whilst not making proper contribution to the joint paper led by S, J was writing a solo paper without telling them. Once she finished drafting her paper, she asked the other guest SI editors (including S) to provide feedback on it. Once the paper was revised for submission, J insisted that her single-authored paper should be published by the same journal first ahead of the SI and that the authors of SI papers should cite her paper. J made that happen.

Her solo paper was published extremely fast within less than three months of submission. Without consulting the other guest editors of the SI, J succeeded in getting some of the authors of the SI papers cite her forthcoming paper through placing this a condition of revision requirements for publication in the SI. In that way J could achieve her ambition to increase citations of her new publication instantly.

When two or more academics from very different national cultural backgrounds (including race/ethnicity, language, and religion) decide to collaborate, they are likely to rely on some common grounds and networks that help their collaboration – e.g. having doctorates from the same university and/or working in the same field of studies, which speaks to the first episode about the co-authorship. It is, therefore, important to understand how the co-authorship in dispute was intersected (and compounded) by the heterogeneous personal attributes and behaviors of S and J, and how structural forces (the rules of the game) within academic publishing and promotion toxify the collaboration.

Another possible scenario is presented here: when academics in two or more countries decide to work in collaboration on a research/writing project, they may actually come from the same country of origin and the same ethnic cultural backgrounds especially if their academic collaboration is derived from their ethnonational diasporic networks and the research project relies on their social and cultural capital – e.g. overseas Chinese academics collaborating with Chinese academics in mainland China to write a joint English paper on China-related topics for international publication. Such a case is narrated in the second episode:

For instance, when a UK-based East Asian academic (C) joined her alumni network-based group research project, she realized that the research collaboration was far from intellectual endeavors. The research group consists of 10 female academics who graduated from the same university in East Asia. The project leader, a US-based alumna (Y) determined the nature of collaboration in the group research project. Y is senior as eight years older than C, but in terms of academic rank, Y is Associate Professor and C is full Professor. C was surprised to find that Y imposed a hierarchical order in research collaboration. The group communication was almost like militaristic top-down order rather than open and equal among co-investigators, even though the project team was made up of female alumni and the research was on gender issues, concerning women with doctorates and their professional career progression reflecting the specific East Asian cultural contexts.

C expected multidisciplinary approaches for intellectual discussions and wanted to bring interdisciplinary interpretations and comparative perspectives in the process of collaborative research. However, none of C’s comments and suggestions were welcomed, nor accepted by Y in drafting a joint research paper.

C was equally shocked by the attitudes and roles of the other co-investigators who are based in their native country in East Asia. Regardless of their advanced academic career and research experience, they all seem to be familiar with and complacent about Y’s top-down order in research collaboration, limiting their roles as mere functionary in the process of data collection and coding. The deference to authority by doing what they are told to do in the hierarchical structure seems to be what these East Asian academics based in their East Asian home country consider as good ‘collaboration’.

The project leader’s dictatorial leadership did not end there. Y decided the name order of co-authors without communicating with the project team members. When the co-authors’ bio notes were collated and shared among the project team members to get ready for submission, C discovered her author bio note was drastically shortened, even though her original bio note was written within the word limit. Y (the project leader and the first author) edited it, without consulting C, to omit the information about key achievements from C’s bio note.

Since only C and Y were the overseas based academics in the project team, C felt Y’s sense of competition and insecurity in relation to her age/academic rank, and more importantly, the quality of research paper led by Y’s autocratic leadership was nowhere near the international standards of excellence. In the end, Y also admitted that the paper was not good enough to be submitted to a high ranked SSCI journal - despite the original plan. Publication in high-ranked SSCI journals was, in fact, the main goal and the main reason of this transnational diasporic academic collaboration (especially for those based in the East Asia country) as there are strong incentives for international publications in their academic evaluation system. Such a trend is longstanding and intensifying. Even 25 years ago when C was offered a university faculty position in her home country in East Asia, a condition of the job offer (albeit informally suggested) was to write joint papers with a male colleague in the Department on his subject area (Philosophy) in English as he needed international publications.

All in all, these episodes narrated so far as case studies speak to the fact that relationships between and among academics in transnational collaboration are shaped by different assumptions they bring in, which segue into the nature of collaboration. Such assumptions are both directly and indirectly influenced by embodied knowledge (not only epistemic, disciplinary knowledge capital but also social, cultural, symbolic and identity capital) in the increasingly stratified academic systems in both global and national contexts (Kim, 2017).

Discussion and conclusion

This paper has illustrated that transnational academic collaboration in the form of co-authorship in HSS is shaped in perverse ways by the existing structures of the fields to highlight the oxymoronic nature of collaboration and the paradoxical processes of knowledge creation and production in HSS. The process of knowledge creation in HSS is more often than not based on a heroic model of producing narrative knowledge with explanatory power (internalities), while the funds of knowledge is dedicated to optimization of performativity (externalities). As warned by Latour and Callon (1997), “externalities would constantly perturbate, put at risk, internalities. Calculation would then become infinite; private appropriation would turn out to be impossible; profit would always be the object of endless disputes.” (Latour and Callon, 1997: 7). It is important to recognize a radical differentiation (incommensurability) between narrative knowledge in HSS produced for our understanding (*Verstehen*) and its storage and capitalization for scientification (*Verwissenschaftlichung*) and datafication. Such dissonance between ‘use-value’ and ‘exchange-value’ of knowledge has become more pronounced than ever in the current system of data-manufacturing, digital capitalism (Sadowski, 2019), which exposes the omnipresence of calculation underlying the exponential increase of transnational academic collaboration in the form of co-authorship.

As forewarned by Lyotard (1979; 1984) more than four decades ago,

Knowledge is and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valorised in a new production: in both cases, the goal is “exchange”. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself, it loses its “use-value”. (Lyotard, 1984: 4–5).

In fact, however, not just in HSS but also in many other areas of scientific research, ideas are the currency for innovation. Popper (1934) empathized the importance of ideas in the process of inventing a theory (the context of “discovery”), which is not logical but creative – e.g. Freud’s theory of the Ego, the Super-ego, and the Id, taken as an example by Popper, originated from Greek myths for which no substantially stronger claim to scientific status can be made than for Homer’s collected stories from Olympus. However, Popper illuminates,

Historically speaking almost all scientific theories originate from myths ... a myth may contain important anticipations of scientific theories ... If a theory is non-scientific or metaphysical, it is not thereby found to be unimportant or nonsensical ... Newton’s theory of gravity, and especially the lunar theory of the tides, was historically speaking an offspring of astrological lore ... But to get feedback from Nature, the metaphysical frameworks must ultimately provide scientific – falsifiable – theories (Popper, 1963: 50).

As one of the interviewees in my research on the process of new knowledge creation in HSS expressed, “I am an artist. Creativity is needed – not only in terms of the original idea but also in the implementation of the solution – to see the whole picture in writing.” Latour and Callon (1997) assert that the categorical imperative “you should not calculate!” is applicable to all forms of mobilization of ideas, goods and people, no matter how paradoxical this might seem at first. I endorse their views, believing that innovation, especially in the fields of HSS, stem from individual artistic dispositions enabling creative imagination communicated in writing. Accordingly, when it comes to the business of co-authorship, I argue, it is difficult to claim true collaboration in absolute terms.

However, to understand the infrastructure and process of scientification and datafication of knowledge and its impacts on transnational academic collaboration, it is useful to comprehend Latour (1987)’s Actor-Network Theory (ANT), which suggests scientific knowledge production is built upon a “cycle of accumulation” of resources - through a systematic mobilization and circulatory movements of human and nonhuman resources to and between different “centers of calculation” (Jöns, 2011). For Latour, network can be understood as a distributed sociocultural cognitive system (a mind machine), and application of science to the world is a matter of extending the network from the centers to the peripheries. One of the ways of extending networks is through “metrology” – the creation of standards.

From this notion of “metrology”, the current system of scientometrics is inferred as a gigantic enterprise that helps to extend metrological chains globally. Once “a cycle of accumulation” of “immutable mobiles” (such as writings, inscriptions, documents and illustrations) is established, cascading of resources accumulated in the “centers of calculation” starts, which makes dominance at a distance feasible and generates new cognitive power and the production of new scientific knowledge. For Latour, “theory” refers to the order of inscriptions that allow the “centers of calculation” to mobilize, manipulate, combine, rewrite and tie together all the traces obtained through the ever-extending networks (Latour, 1987: 241–242). The higher order translates the lower order, and in that way, it increases the mobility of the lower order inscriptions across a wider terrain, across multiple domains. Overall, ANT

analyses the infrastructure of actor-network, albeit without attending to power imbalances within the actor-network. Latour (1999)'s ANT concentrates attention on a movement – a *circulating* entity: one of the very phenomena of the social order not being made of agency and structure.

In the ongoing global pandemic, the infiltration of geopolitics in transnational academic collaboration has been exposed. Most recently, at the US GOP Medical Witnesses: COVID-19 meeting, held on June 20, 2021, Richard Muller, Professor Emeritus of physics at the University of California, Berkeley, who has worked on scientific efforts that have won Nobel Prizes, testified that virus, which came out of China, carried with it genetic information about its origins. Muller also shared an anecdote that occurred with a colleague of his — a story he says is “as horrifying and more frightening than almost anything else in my life.” In the early days of the pandemic, he called on an expert virologist friend to help him review literature suggesting there may have been a lab leak. The friend said no, so he asked if someone in his laboratory could do it. But the answer was no again. Muller pressed him on the refusal, to which he responded:

If anyone in my laboratory is discovered to be working on a laboratory leak hypothesis, China will label us enemies of China and the laboratory will be blacklisted and we will no longer be able to collaborate. We collaborate all the time with China. Nobody will take that risk.

The idea that China has managed to interfere, to break United States' freedom of expression, freedom of investigation, freedom of thought through this collaboration is really scary. Mercola (2021).

Overall, academic knowledge production is an integral part of diffused network-based career building process – both epistemic and institutional networks, in which scholarship is increasingly a means for business in the rent-seeking economy rather than a vocation (invoking Weber). In that regard, love of knowledge, passion for pursuing truth and courage to speak truth to power would no longer be a priori reasons in pursuit of scholarship. As evidenced in the testimony quoted above, transnational academic collaboration in times of crises has many implications – both geopolitical and epistemic – for the *longue durée* as witnessed in history. The fields of humanities and social sciences will have to bear witness continually.

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South-South Cooperation in Education

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Introduction	317
Toward a Definition of South-South Cooperation	318
Historizing the Origins of South-South Cooperation	319
The Three Historical Phases in the Development of SSC	320
The First Phase	320
The Second Phase	321
The Third Phase	321
South-South Cooperation and Education Policy	322
South-South Cooperation, Transfer, and the Sustainable Development Goals	323
Conclusions and Further Research	325
References	325

Introduction

Since the end of the Cold War, the concept of a Global North and Global South has arisen in the attempt to abandon former pejorative conceptualizations, such as First, Second, and Third Worlds and developed/underdeveloped countries (Altinbas, 2013; Shneider, 2017). In the Three-Worlds conceptualization, the First World referred to those countries with liberal, democratic, and capitalist governments and a high level of industrialization, the Second World was often used to represent communist countries with ties to the former Soviet Union and Russia, and the Third World was viewed as being composed of developing or underdeveloped states that are not aligned with the first or second worlds (Altinbas, 2013). This categorization fitted nicely into the era of the Cold War, as the primary antagonistic blocs of the West or First World and the East or Second World vied for hegemonic power, control, and influence over the non-organized Third World. This conceptualization lost relevance after the Cold War ended.

The global development architecture has metamorphosed, and today, the division of North/South is preferred terminology because it is less polemical, focusing on economic development levels rather than political ideology. While development aid flows have shifted and Southern countries are engendering novel cooperation and collaboration models, this newest categorization is far from flawless. As Jules and Morais de Sá e Silva (2008) point out, the terms North and South are themselves Western constructs. Shneider (2017) argues that the concept of Global South still has similar problems as earlier terms such as of Third World or underdeveloped countries, the main problem being a persistent geographical understanding of the term and the oversimplification that comes from trying to fit the whole world in two categories. Through similar arguments, Chisholm and Steiner-Khamsi (2009) offer two clarifications to explain what it means to belong to the Global South. The first one is that belonging to the Global South does not necessarily imply being located in the South hemisphere. The second clarification is that the South is a relational concept used in opposition to the North. The term refers to a relationship of inequality, and “the notions of North and South have become a proxy or metaphor for rich and poor, developed and underdeveloped, First and Third World, givers and recipients of aid” (Chisholm and Steiner-Khamsi, 2009, p. 3). They further argue that the problem with this definition is its generality and oversimplification of how relationships between and within countries work. In Morais de Sa e Silva’s (2009) words, “the problem is not so much with the terminology (South, developing countries, periphery), but rather with the assumption that the label implies homogeneity” (p. 54). To summarize, these conceptual difficulties mirror a more profound problem of power relationships between the Global North and the Global South, including their geopolitical and economic boundaries. These difficulties have led to South-South cooperation (SSC), a newer form of collaboration among developing countries that is based on equality, solidarity, respect, and complementarity. In this paper, we use SSC and South-South transfer interchangeably.

In what follows, we first discuss the difficulty in defining SSC. We show that SSC can be compared to triangular cooperation or North-South-South cooperation. Next, we review the literature that discusses the emergence of SSC and its three modalities, or phases, as described by Morais de Sá e Silva (2009) (“self-reliance and political strengthening,” “demobilization,” and “best-practice transfer”). Third, we examine the role of SSC in education policy by looking specifically at how triangular cooperation has affected education systems in the Global South. With this objective in mind, we present a summary of the role of SSC in education policy across the Global South and discuss the role of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically Goal 4: on quality of education, in informing and facilitating educational transfer across Southern nations. While UNESCO and the SDGs are not direct tools of SSC, the alignment of goals that they provide as benchmarks promote and often facilitate educational transfer across the Global South. UNESCO encourages intervention in educational policy across borders in this way. This chapter, especially the third section, aims to present how SSC has impacted education in the Global South.

Toward a Definition of South-South Cooperation

The emergence of the Global South concept was in response to the steady rise of economies in the so-called Third World countries that began in the 1970s (Shneider, 2017). This rise meant that the previous categorization that placed Southern countries under the subordination of Northern countries was no longer useful. However, this concept of subordination has come under scrutiny in recent years as

developing countries and civil society have repeatedly criticized the way aid is often used as a neo-colonial tool by developed countries—imposing policy conditionalities on developing countries and trying to aid commercial, political and military interests of donors.

Reality of Aid Management Committee (2010, p. 2)

Given this, the concept of the Third World was not adequate to represent the new joint efforts of previously colonized nations to lift themselves up and stand against Western hegemony.

It has been and continues to be incredibly hard for developing countries to lift themselves from poverty and colonial dependence. This incapacity has been explained through a number of related theories, including Dependency Theory, World-System Analysis (WSA), and the Theory of Unequal Exchange. Immanuel Wallerstein (1930–2019) has been a critical figure in the development of WSA, a more comprehensive theory that is based on Dependency Theory. In Griffiths' (2021) words,

like dependency theory, WSA argues that the economic structures of so-called underdeveloped countries should not be understood as being in the early stages of a linear and universal transition to industrialization and development, but rather as “the result of being involved in the world-economy as peripheral, raw material producing area.” (p. 91)

Similarly, regarding the Theory of Unequal Exchange, Dargin (2014) states that “unequal exchange occurs when developing countries trade low-priced products (e.g., bananas, cocoa, and oil) for expensive manufactured goods (e.g., cars and computers)” (p. xxi). This theory upholds that the global market is, in reality, an exploitive trade system, as all exchanges between the peripheral and core countries in this market result in wealth transfer from the periphery to the core (where the peripheral countries are seen as the developing and under-developed countries, and the core the developed countries). In other words, “the proponents of the Theory of Unequal Exchange concluded that, in the face of uneven economic development, and for a variety of other reasons, free trade, or even trade per se, is inherently iniquitous” (Dargin, 2013, p. xxii). In the twentieth-century, two Argentinian economists, Raúl Prebisch (1901–1986) and Hans Signer (1910–2006), broadened this theory and suggested that primary-product-producing countries were going to decay more and more because primary products were condemned to a long-term and non-stop price degradation (Dargin, 2013).

This realization and the subsequent efforts of the Global South to revert their unprivileged standing in global trading did not by itself lead to the “Rise of the Rest.” The actions of the Global North were equally significant in this process. The USA, for instance, believed that enhancing the economic development of its allies was important, especially as a way to prevent communist ideologies from expanding. American policies also boosted the expansion of China; in their intent to fight the Soviet Union, “the highest levels of US policy making decided to open up China in order to contain the Soviet Union” (Dargin, 2013, p. xxiii). A third example is the movement of manufacturing centers from the USA to Southern countries, which occurred because of the increase of work stoppages in American factories. In order to make more profits in relation to production costs, big corporations decided to move their production to countries with cheaper labor (Dargin, 2013). In this context SSC, and particularly triangular cooperation which involves three actors—two from the South and one from the North or an international organization—became the main instrument for the Global South's economic and political flourishing. After the concept of the Third World was phased out by the term South or Global South, every sort of collaboration among countries in the South began to be called SSC (Jules and Morais de Sá e Silva, 2008).

SSC is “any cooperative initiative between two or more developing countries; it may be carried out by governmental institutions, non-governmental organizations, universities, independent professionals, scholars and researchers” (Morais de Silva, 2009, p. 2). UNESCO (2019) defines SSC as an “exchange of knowledge and resources between governments, organizations and individuals in developing countries, or those from what is known as the Global South” (para. 1). Triangular cooperation or North-South-South cooperation is a form of collaboration within SSC. Abdenur (2009) defines triangular cooperation as

the initiative of one or more southern countries that wish to cooperate with one another. In order to maximize their financial, logistic and technical resources, such countries can ask for the support of a Northern donor as a third partner. Alternatively, a donor can partner with a developing country willing to provide technical cooperation to other Southern partners and whose initiative will make triangular cooperation the Northern donor's priorities and interests. The Northern donor would then offer to support South-South cooperation through a triangular approach by providing financial and/or technical support. (pp. 158–159)

Other forms of cooperation include bilateral SSC (which is government-to-government cooperation between developing countries), triangular SSC (where the financial supporter, the donor, and the recipient are developing countries), triangular multilateral SSC (where a multilateral organization works as the financial supporter for two developing countries), and regional SSC (which is the cooperation between two regional organizations formed by developing countries) (SEGIB, 2008, 2009, 2010). In this chapter, however, we treat SSC and triangular cooperation as one, given that donors from Northern countries, including developed countries themselves, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and individual philanthropists, play an essential role in enhancing and functioning cooperation among and within developing countries, especially in education matters. In fact, many collaborations and policy transfers among countries in the Global South stem from international agreements and are regulated by the donors' benchmarks. Steiner-Khamsi (2009) argues that "South-South transfer is currently central to the operations of international donors" (p. 256). A clear example is the Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI), launched in 2002 as a partnership between the donor and developing countries, connecting donors with low-income countries (named "partner countries") to help them achieve the education goals established in the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) agenda. Through the EFA-FTI, donors and the World Bank gave financial support to those low-income countries for whom donors' help was not enough to achieve the needed improvements. To become a partner country and matching with a donor, countries were required to have a poverty reduction strategy and a sound education sector plan that included borrowing educational practices from comparable educational systems.

SSC has received a lot more attention in the past decades since some developing countries became crucial actors in the world economy. In 2010, for instance, "the so-called BRICs economies—Brazil, Russia, India, and China—with 40% of the world's population spread out over three continents, already account for 25% of the global gross domestic product (GDP)" (The Reality of Aid Management Committee, 2010, p. 1). However, as Bilal (2012) explains, the rise of the Global South did not happen evenly across Southern countries. Most of the growth of GDP in the Global South is due to the development of the BRICs countries, especially Asian countries. Asian developing countries represented around 10% of the world economy in 1990, and in 2016 they reached approximately 30%. In contrast, Latin America and the Caribbean decreased their GDP representation from 9.5% in 1990 to 8.5% in 2012 (Bilal, 2012). Additionally, there are also significant disparities within countries in each continent. As Bilal (2012) points out, "optimism about the South, its economic development and the growing importance of South-South relations should not blind us to this strongly uneven process between and within countries, and the serious poverty challenges that the South is still confronted with" (p. 11).

Nevertheless, economic development is not the only goal of cooperation and partnership among the Global South. Political strategies are as important as economic growth. The multidimensional character of SSC, which includes economic, political, and social aspects in its cooperation agreements, is a crucial attribute of this type of relationship between countries. As Bilal (2012) states, "the focus on mutual learning and exchanges on good practices, without promoting a certain model of development and imposing a set of policy recommendations, has been particularly appreciated by developing countries" (p. 22). This is the reason why SSC has become a fundamental feature in the rise of the Global South. As Gray and Gills (2016) explain,

development is a concept that attempts to encompass a vast complexity of processes of social transformation. It conveys meanings of great promise and hope to billions of human beings concerning human betterment, and refers to a long-term historical project of the liberation of peoples and nations from the vestiges of colonialism, poverty, oppression and underdevelopment. South-South cooperation (SSC) has been a key organizing concept and a set of practices in pursuit of these historical changes through the vision of mutual benefit and solidarity among the disadvantaged of the world system. It conveys the hope that development may be achieved by the poor themselves through their mutual assistance to one another. (p. 557)

Jules and Morais de Sá e Silva (2008) also highlight the importance of SSC in postcolonial studies, arguing that SSC and transfer are an essential part of the decolonization process helping "developing countries decolonize their educational systems and break their dependency from educators, researchers and scientists from the North" (p. 57).

Historizing the Origins of South-South Cooperation

Given the status of SSC as a consequence of the Cold War, its origins are generally thought of in that era. While SSC existed before the 1950s in more informal and non-institutionalized ways, it was the 1955 Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, that is undoubtedly considered a landmark in SSC development and its transformation into a global political movement (Gray and Gills, 2016). Caruso (2009) offers an example of SSC as far back as the end of the 1800s, when different Spanish colonies across Latin America started to transfer the Bell-Lancaster-System educational model that emerged in Cadiz, Spain. Steiner-Khamsi (2009) also believes SSC dates back to the colonial period. Despite this, Morais de Sá e Silva (2009) places the emergence of SSC around the 1950s, during the Cold War period, and differentiates three historical phases in the development of SSC, discussed in depth below.

As an institutional entity, SSC is realized through principles of cooperation and interconnectedness. Bilal (2012) states that SSC is guided by certain principles that all countries in the Global South share

South-South cooperation, its agenda, and development objectives should be set by countries of the South. It should not be driven by charity and power/dependency relationships. On the contrary, it claims to be based on the principles of equality, solidarity, the respect of national independence and ownership, mutual benefits (promoting win-win outcomes) and complementarity. The principle of non-interference in domestic affairs is key. (p. 22)

Non-interference as a principle is one of the cornerstones of SSC, as “South-South cooperation on development aims to observe the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, equality among developing partners and respect for their independence, national sovereignty, cultural diversity and identity and local content” (The Reality of Aid Management Committee, 2010, p. 2). Though this description of SSC, as one of mutual cooperation and respect, seems appealing, the reality is more complex, and there are also multiple disadvantages. For example, the Bretton Woods institutions (specifically, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank) launched Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in the 1980s with global prescriptions aimed at improving international competitiveness, adjusting countries’ economic structures, and restoring their balance of payments. These measures would push developing countries toward exploring deeper forms of Southern cooperation. Countries failing to enact SAPs, whose terms and financial institutions determined conditions, faced fiscal discipline. This would lead to the erosion of national control of the economy and open it up to interference from foreign markets. For instance, in 1988, the World Bank noted that its SAPs placed nations at “risk of ‘ceding national sovereignty’ to transnational firms whose main interests are the perpetuation of unequal distribution of value added from the fruits of export manufacturing” (Mills, 1989, p. 28). Therefore, despite a lack of direct interference, inequality was nevertheless further perpetuated. This is because “SSC as an organizational medium rest on two pillars: political and economic. Any conceptual separation of these pillars is difficult because the two separate arenas are actually interconnected” (Altinbas, 2013, p. 34). With this understanding, “non-interference” during SSC is a paradox; there will always be an imbalance.

The Three Historical Phases in the Development of SSC

The First Phase

In the aftermath of the Cold War, countries in the Global South were predisposed to avoid conflict by any means; they likely understood they could not withstand the same economic devastation that had befallen Europe. Many were also newly decolonized and looking to attain financial independence as well. Much of SSC begins with the anti-colonial movement, “fueled by strong political motivations and practiced by autonomous militants or officially provided by socialist countries” (Morais de Silva, 2009, p. 2). The first phase of South-South transfer began with the solidifying of the concept of “underdevelopment” by the American President Harry Truman in a 1949 speech, wherein he introduced the Four Point Plan, “a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas” (Truman, 1949). Truman’s Four-Point Plan would solidify the concept of “underdeveloped countries” as a homogenous group and create an identity that promoted SSC, given that “the creation of a Third World identity and the image of an in-between block created the conditions for the establishment of an alliance between countries that were—and still are—quite heterogeneous” (Morais De Silva, 2009, p. 8).

While SSC has been practiced informally for centuries, the defining entry point to institutionalized SSC is the 1955 Bandung Conference, which “brought together 29 countries from Asia and Africa to promote economic and cultural cooperation in the Asian-African region ‘on the basis of mutual interest and respect for national sovereignty’” (The Reality of Aid Management Committee, 2010, p. 2). After the Bandung conference, “developing countries proposed to build a new international partnership for development on the basis of respect for national sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit” (Cui, 2016, p. 2). This led to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1961, the United Nations Development Program in 1965, the Group of 77 in 1967, and the 1978 conference of the Global South held in Buenos Aires, which resulted in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action. The Buenos Aires Plan of Action saw delegates from 138 states adopting the Plan of Action for promoting and implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC), which was seen as a blueprint for major changes in approaches to development assistance and called on parties to establish a new international economic order based on the pooling of knowledge.

From the outset, SSC was self-deterministic and anti-interventionist. As Gray and Gills (2016) point out, “the ‘Bandung Spirit’ came to encapsulate policies of non-interference and non-alignment, with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) further developing this solidarity to challenge the deepening global inequality while lessening the Third World’s economic and political dependence on the Global North” (p. 558). The “Bandung Spirit” was “an ideology that tried to merge Asian and African nationalism, religion, and humanity” (Widyatmadja, 2005). Realizing their strength in numbers in voting blocs, countries started to consolidate for multilateral negotiations, with leaders such as India’s Jawaharlal Nehru, Tanzania’s Julius Kambarage Nyerere, and China’s Mao Zedong jockeying for leadership roles within these collectives; for example, Mao tried to unite this “Trade Union of the Poor” under his “Three World Theory ... [with] China in the center of the South from where the anti-imperialist struggles against the richer nations were to be orchestrated” (Morais De Silva, 2009, p. 10). Even though little was achieved in terms of creating the desired New International Economic Order, economic integration, military cooperation, humanitarian aid, and technical assistance soared during this time, and since then, “South-South cooperation has been practiced in numerous ways ranging from economic integration,

the formation of negotiating blocs within multilateral institutions, military alliances, [to] cultural exchanges ... these efforts have made important contributions to strengthening the conditions for social and economic development" (*The Reality of Aid Management Committee, 2010, p. 2*). In short, the 1960s and 1970s saw leaders in developing countries looking for alternatives to the existing economic and political order of a bipolar Cold War era. As such, they embarked upon technical cooperation among themselves.

The Second Phase

From 1980 to 1998, there was a demobilization period due to debt crises and SAPs. While Global South countries had benefited from Bretton Woods loans, soaring interest rates during Reaganomics created an economic crisis in Latin American countries, with high recession and inflation leading to the 'lost decade.' Given this situation, "the idea of different states engaging in the generation of a New International Economic Order made no sense vis-à-vis the preached argument that the market was the one to tell what kind of economic order was to prevail" (*Morais De Silva, 2009, p. 38*) and as states focused inwardly on domestic affairs, "with the outbreak of the debt crisis, the poverty related aid gradually reduced and more and more assistance began to be used for privatization and structural adjustment" (*Cui, 2016, p. 2*).

Much of the demobilization was in response to the rise of the ten market prescriptions of the Washington Consensus, which obligated neoliberal reforms as part of the SAPs. Intergovernmental organizations "no longer counted on the political mobilization of governments of the South, nor on the advocacy of specialists who defended the view that South-South trade was the way forward" (*Morais De Silva, 2009, p. 16*) since individual states were now focusing on integrating into the global economy rather than attracting regional South-South investment. This led to the renewed influence of the "First World" countries; for example, the World Bank noted during this time that "African policymakers perceive the staff of international organizations as promoting the view that right-minded policy is a matter of 'macho-political will'" (*Mills, 1989, p. 2*). The Washington Consensus had indirectly opened up labor markets in Southern countries thanks to the removal of trade barriers, and it was soon noted that "there is a need to analyze the advantages and the disadvantages of structural adjustment policies from the point of view of gainers and losers ... the Bank has a tendency ... to see more clearly the positive (economic) aspects of reform and to minimize the social and political risks" (*Mills, 1989, p. 12*).

The Third Phase

With the creation of a public international organization—the Global Development Network (GDN), which was created in 1999² and aims at using research to promote better lives in developing and transitioning countries—SSC has entered a new phase characterized by a reversal in the trade liberalization of the previous decades. Between 2006 and 2016, GDN's focus was on enhancing cooperation with regional networks globally. From 2017 to 2022, its current strategy highlights three areas: (i) strengthening research in low-capacity environments; (ii) joining hands for global excellence; and (iii) putting development research to better use as part of its focus. In the modern era, SSC is shifting in how it is approached, as the appeal is no longer limited to developing countries but also to international entities such as knowledge banks who seek the promotion of "best practices;" hence, this can be referred to as the "Best Practices phase." This concept is the cornerstone of the GDN, which was created to foster the transfer of "best practices" between underdeveloped countries. As it became clear that SAPs were only leading to rising costs and high unemployment, Global South countries mobilized economically, first through the World Trade Organization (WTO) and later at the G8³/G20⁴/GX⁵ conferences. This has led to "a rapidly expanding South-South trade, investment, and cooperation in a growing variety of fields—including regional economic integration, national security, health and the environment—rest primarily on the increasing competitiveness of Southern countries in world production" (*Arrighi and Zhang, 2011, p. 33*).

The new century led to an increase in up-and-coming economies that were relying on promoting SSC and which would encompass new features, including "a number of new development finance institutions led by developing countries" (*Cui, 2016, p. 2*). This is a significant reversal from the era of the SAPs, and now the "Washington Consensus ... has backfired, creating conditions of a reversal of power relations between the global North and South that may well be reshaping world politics as well as the theory and practice of national development" (*Arrighi and Zhang, 2011, p. 1*). In a way, it has come full circle to the antagonism of the first phase, as leftist governments (especially in Latin America) returned to people-centric policies.

²The agreement was signed by Colombia, Egypt, India, Italy, Senegal, and Sri Lanka.

³Group of Eight (G8) refers to the group of eight highly industrialized nations—France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan, the United States, Canada, and Russia—who meet yearly at an intergovernmental forum from 1997 until 2014 to discuss international issues. Today it is the G7 as Russia was suspended. At times we speak of the G8+5 where the five leading emerging markets—Brazil, China, India, Mexico, and South Africa—are invited to participate in G7 meetings.

⁴Built as the premier forum for international cooperation, since 1999, the G20 brings together the world's major economies whose members account for more than 80% of world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 75% of global trade, and 60% of the world's population. Its participants are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, India, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the European Union. Spain is invited as a permanent guest.

⁵The Group X (or 10), not to be confused with the Groups of 7, 8, 20, or 24, consists of a group of 11 countries with similar economic interests who consult each other and cooperate on international financial matters. They are Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, with Switzerland playing a minor role.

the Southern countries' hostility is not against globalization or capitalism, because they use each of these processes and systems to their own advantages. Their reaction is against a capitalist system that somehow designates them as perennial losers and against global trade policies that deprive them of influence. Their goal is not to change the system completely but to make the system more inclusive.

Altinbas (2013, p. 59).

International agencies now act as conduits for the transfer of South-South practices, since "the real significance of South-South development cooperation (SSDC) lies not so much in the magnitude of official development assistance (ODA) or financial resources flowing between developing countries but rather in the character of the relationship expressed by these exchanges" (The Reality of Aid Management Committee, 2010, p. 1).

South-South Cooperation and Education Policy

SSC is about technical cooperation, knowledge and resources transfer, and innovative knowledge exchange between developing countries in areas to share knowledge. When development became more than just economic growth and started to encompass other aspects such as freedom, empowerment, and citizens' well-being, education became a key area of development strategies. Therefore, education became central in any SSC initiative (Morais de Sá e Silva, 2009). SSC in education has not always involved the mediation of third parties, such as international organizations or Northern countries. This means triangular cooperation was not, and it is not the only form of SSC in education. The forms of cooperation that do not include mediators that serve as financial supporters are bilateral South-South, triangular south-south-south, and regional South-South cooperation (SEGIB, 2008, 2009, 2010). An example of a non-mediated SSC in education is the case of the *¡Yo, Sí Puedo!* (*Yes, I can*) literacy method further explained below. This educational initiative emerged from the South (Cuba) and was transferred to numerous other Southern countries as a successful way to fight analphabetism.

However, since the 1990 Jomtien Education for All (EFA) conference, SSC in education has become more and more mediated by international organizations and powerful "donor" states. In this conference, countries worldwide agreed that education is critical for development and poverty reduction (Samoff, 2009). However, education also started to be seen as a unique area for foreign aid as it enables donors' control over knowledge. Samoff (2009) defines foreign aid as a "tool" or "set of tools," as "managing transfers and exchanges means not only supporting schools and learning but also managing the flow of ideas and the accepted procedures for validating knowledge" (p. 125). He continues by saying that "understood in this way, the aid relationship clearly has the potential to extend rather than eliminate poverty and to entrench and institutionalize rather than reduce global inequalities" (Samoff, 2009, p. 125).

The EFA strategy designed in the Jomtien conference significantly exposes the huge expectations in the role of SSC or triangular cooperation in helping reach educational benchmarks across the Global South. Morais de Sá e Silva (2009) explains how SSC for EFA promotion has been specially designed and executed by the Group of E-9 countries,⁶ which represents some of the largest education systems in the world and over half of the world's population:

E-9 countries have not only been recognized as crucial places for the promotion of universal quality education; they have also demonstrated internal capacity to design efficient EFA programs. They are, therefore, seen as important "reference societies" for other developing countries and, by means of South-South cooperation, their nationally engineered programs can be spread to other places counting on UNESCO's facilitation. (pp. 51–52)

As suggested here, the concept of SSC in education today mainly entails policy transfer of international "best practices" that can lead to educational development as defined by the Global North. This intention behind SSC has changed the nature of collaboration across the Global South. For example, during the first phase of SSC, the foremost advocates of cooperation among the South were the same Southern countries. Today, in contrast, "South-South cooperation has, to some extent, escaped the 'hands of the South'" (Morais de Sá e Silva, 2009, p. 53), meaning that it is in the interest of Northern governments and international organizations, especially international knowledge banks. Another critical change is the motivations. Even though the original aims of the Global South to gain autonomy and international power are still important, SSC has been focusing much of its energy on expanding "best practices" and meeting global development benchmarks. A last change to highlight is how increasingly blurry the concepts of North and South have become, given the growing inequalities and differentiation among countries in the so-called Global South (Morais de Sá e Silva, 2009).

In some of these "best policy" transfers, the principles of SSC mentioned above can be seen as being facilitated by international knowledge banks. UNESCO has aligned many of its policy goals with the principles of SSC. For example, its Malala Fund for Girls' Right to Education has the core goals of "expand[ing] access to education for girls and women, especially those hardest to reach and affected by conflict and disaster" (UNESCO, 2020, para 1), which aligns with the principles of equality and solidarity, while implementing programs that train teachers directly, without attempting to sway internal policy. In terms of non-interference, the

⁶E9 countries are Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan.

motivation of SSC to expand best practices across the Global South has darkened this principle, as benchmarking is creating indirect governance by Northern countries, international institutions, and international knowledge banks.

Considering that donors from the North and international knowledge banks regulate SSC in education development, several scholars wonder whether SSC is really “a way out from the dependency track in educational development” (Steiner-Khamsi, 2009, p. 257). This begs the question, are there any educational policies really emerging from the Global South and regulated by it? Or is SSC in education just a way to hinder the persistence of Western hegemony over educational practices worldwide? As Steiner-Khamsi (2009) states, “South-South cooperation can be seen as a vehicle to accelerate the accomplishment of development targets established by the North” (p. 257).

In addition, countries in the North have become involved in triangular cooperation to play a role in international development cooperation or official development assistance (ODA). They participate actively in this role, as appearing as a great global donor increases countries’ legitimacy as powerful and influential. Mochizuki (2009) presents the case of Japan, which became one of the largest donor countries, aiding developing nations in both Asia and Africa as “a new aid scheme that would allow it to achieve its broader goals in foreign relations, including attaining the UN Security Council permanent membership” (p. 81). Getting involved in SSC or, more specifically, triangular cooperation, became a strategy used by Japan to “establish itself as a ‘first class’ developed country in the international community” (Mochizuki, 2009, p. 81).

South-South Cooperation, Transfer, and the Sustainable Development Goals

This section looks at educational SSC in the context of the SDGs, which provides an external series of benchmarks that helps align SSC. With its use of political dialogue and financial cooperation, SSC has contributed significantly to shaping the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Education plays an essential role in achieving many SDGs, and SDG 4 aims to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all while ensuring inclusive and equitable, quality education. Global education is the pivot point for it. SDG 4 is comprehensive; it expands from early childhood education through basic education to vocational and secondary education and lifelong learning. The idea of “lifelong learning for all” is a crucial element of SDG 4. SDG 4 has 10 targets⁷ which are measured by 11 indicators. These 10 targets are considered the backbone of Global Campaign for Education (GCE)’s policy and advocacy work since 2015.

UNESCO has a crucial role in promoting triangular cooperation in educational matters by strengthening cooperation between developing countries and attracting donors (developed countries or NGOs) who affect SSC. As part of its mission statement, UNESCO (n.d.) calls for “cooperat[ion] with Member states, civil society, and the academic world [to] promotes public-private partnership in education” (para. 4). Some examples of educational projects run by UNESCO that promote SSC are: (i) the Capacity Development for Education Program (CapED) created in 2003 and modified in 2016, and is aligned with the SDG 4—Education 2030 agenda to offer quality education opportunities for all (ii) the Enhancing Teacher Education for Bridging the Education Quality Gap in Africa project, which is funded by the Chinese government and uses information communication technologies to enhance teacher training; (iii) UNESCO’s Malala Fund for Girls’ Right to Education, which was established in 2012 to increase girls’ access to quality and gender-responsive education and ensure safe learning environments; (iv) Youth Employment in the Mediterranean Project (YEM), which is funded by the European Union and implemented between 2018 and 2020 and addressed issues of youth employment; (v) Best Practices in Mobile Learning, launched in 2016, as a 5-year program, with support from the Fazheng Group, seeks to create equitable learning environments through school-wide planning and use of mobile learning. There are many more programs that UNESCO runs under the banners of capacity development, teacher education, girls and women’s education, technical and vocational education and training, and ICT in education.

Although all 10 SDG targets are important to consider when talking about education in relation to SSC, four targets are more relatable in this context:

Goal 4.3: By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.

Goal 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills.

Goal 4.5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

Goal 4.6: By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

⁷These 10 targets are broken down into seven outcome targets and three means of implementation. The seven outcome targets are (i) universal primary and secondary education; (ii) early childhood development and universal pre-primary education; (iii) equal success to technical/vocational and higher education; (iv) relevant skills for decent work; (v) gender equality and inclusion; (vi) universal youth literacy; and (vii) education for sustainable development and global citizenship. The three means of implementation are: (i) effective learning environments; (iii) scholarships, and (iii) teachers and educators.

According to Groenez et al. (2007) and Blossfeld et al. (2014), a correlation exists between education participation rates and governmental investment in industries, innovation, and infrastructures. This justifies the idea of education being used as a powerful “tool” to develop a more inclusive and equal society.

With the introduction of the SDGs, we can see SSC educational transfer aligning with the SDGs; in particular, Goal 4. Goal 4 of the SDGs integrates within UNESCO’s earlier EFA project, which had six specific goals, including “achieve[ing] a 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults” (World Bank, 2014, para 5) which matches Goal 4.6, and “eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieve gender equality in education” (World Bank, 2014, para 6) which matches Goal 4.5. With overlaps such as these occurring in congruent SSC education goals, a stronger picture emerges of the direction between triangular cooperation donor countries want to align their efforts.

We can see various SSC initiatives aligning with SDG 4, both directly and indirectly. China has committed to aligning its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which focuses on infrastructure development predominantly in the Global South, with the SDGs, including Goal 4. For instance, the “BRI conceptualizes an education community as a multicultural group that transcends geographical, cultural and linguistic boundaries, while considering common interests and common responsibilities as the core foundation on which equality and respect are built” (Peters et al., 2020, pp. 1044–1045) and “both are committed to promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and social development; the BRI’s vision to realize diversified, independent, balanced, and sustainable development in the countries along the BRI echoes the sustainable development goals set out in the 2030 Agenda” (Yin, 2019, p. 8). While not referencing this SDG specifically, the United Arab Emirates has also been aligning its SSC funding toward cohesion with the SDGs; for example “in 2016, 76% of the UAE foreign assistance supported the eight SDGs highlighted in the UAE Foreign Assistance Policy” (Khalid, 2018, p. 456), while benchmark 4.4 neatly matches the UAE’s goal to “create and strengthen existing technological capacities ... in order to improve the effectiveness with which such capacities are used and to improve the capacity of developing countries to absorb and adapt technology and skills to meet their specific developmental needs” (Khalid, 2018, p. 454) in their development aid. Meanwhile, in Japan, education funding matches 4.3 when “the 1999 Medium-Term Policy on ODA also stated that Japan would focus on the ‘quality,’ rather than quantity, of aid activities in the promotion of its ODA” (Mochizuki, 2009, p. 10) to developing countries, as well as the promotion of basic literacy

a dramatic shift of focus from higher education and technical and vocational education in Asia to basic education in Africa was an integral part of Japan’s new ODA strategies aimed at enabling Japan to play a more central role in international development cooperation.

Mochizuki (2009, p. 11).

It is clear that in broad terms, at least, SDG 4 is guiding SSC development.

Through its own donor-funded arms, the UN coordinates much of the alignment of SSC with its own SDGs. For example, in 2015, it is the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, which “brought together over 1.5 trillion for education and skills development infrastructure by consolidating funds from AIIB, the Global Infrastructure Hub, the BRICS NDB, the Asia Pacific Project Preparation Facility, the World Bank Group’s Global Infrastructure Facility” (UNOSSC, n.d., p. 139). The UN’s Science, Technology, and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) “have already decided to support capacity-building efforts in education and research across Africa through the creation of scientific centers and networks of excellence and the upgrading of both research and teaching at universities” (UNDP, p. 18). Moreover, in Bangladesh, “BRAC recruited a village woman with eight or more years of education to serve as para-professional teachers for 3–4 h per day for a small stipend” while “a School Management Committee (SMC) selected the times and days the school would meet according to the needs of the parents” (Chabbott, 2009, p. 3). By using its donor apparatuses to engage in triangular cooperation, the UN is positioning the SDGs as a driving force across SSC development.

The case of the ¡Yo, Sí Puedo! ([YSP] *Yes, I can*) literacy method, designed by ALBA-TCP (Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America—Peoples’ Trade Treaty), is an example of where we can see SDG 4 in a specific SSC initiative. The ¡Yo, Sí Puedo! program was designed in the 2000s by the Cuban educator Leonela Relys Diaz, to expand basic literacy among people of all ages. From 2001 onwards, YSP started to be employed in numerous countries in the Global South, gaining a honorable mention in UNESCO’s international Literacy Prize (Boughton and Durnan, 2014; Muhr, 2015). Boughton and Durnan (2014) define YSP as “a model for mounting low-cost mass adult literacy campaign across regions and countries, involving extensive coordination and mobilization of all the relevant government and non-government agencies and actors and the population as a whole” (p. 327). The objectives of this program, therefore, are very much in line with the goals of the SDG 4, quality of education, in that it has enhanced literacy among millions of adults (in line with goal 4.6), promoting long-life learning opportunities (one of the critical components of goal 4). Especially the ¡Yo, Sí Puedo Seguir! (*Sure, I can continue*) focuses on ensuring literacy for all throughout life. As Muhr (2015) explains

by late 2014, 3,815,092 people of all ages (meaning that no particular group age is targeted) are officially stated to have acquired basic literacy through ¡Yo, Sí Puedo! associated literacy campaigns in the alba-tcp member territories, and 1,174,312 have completed post-literacy non-formal elementary education ... by late 2014, 8,203,324 people had acquired literacy through ¡Yo, Sí Puedo! worldwide, and over one million have benefited from ¡Yo, Sí Puedo Seguir! (p. 128)

In the last 15 years, the program has reached 29 countries, and it has made basic literacy accessible to more than six million people, mainly in the Global South. However, as [Muhr \(2015\)](#) and [Boughton and Durnan \(2014\)](#) highlight, the program has not been significantly noticed and studied in the Global North. In addition, it works by bringing together multiple actors in collaboration. In fact, this literacy campaign that emerged in the Global South was only able to function thanks to the joint efforts of two of ALBA-TCP's founding members, Cuba, and Venezuela, guided by the SSC principles of complementarity, solidarity, and cooperation.

[Muhr \(2015\)](#) argues that “the case of ¡Yo, Sí Puedo! should not be regarded as ‘best practice transfer’ among developing countries, but as integral to South-South cooperation as a collective counter-hegemonic process of Third World liberation and emancipation for structural transformation toward a socially just and democratic world order” (p. 126). Counter-hegemony is part of SSC's motivations and ideas, representing the aims of the Global South to gain economic independence from the Global North and overcome their “under-development.” The counter-hegemonic process emerged at the same time as SSC, in the 1955 Bandung conference, and acquire strength with the foundation of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM), the foundation of the G-77 Group (now composed by 134 developing countries), and the 1978 Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA), signed by 138 UN members. The BAPA is unique in that it was the first framework to incorporate this type of cooperation and called for respect for sovereignty, non-interference in internal affairs, and equality of rights, among others. The YSP literacy method promoted by ALBA-TCP, which became global, is critical because it represents the counter-hegemonic efforts that started to emerge from the SSC and the role of education in this process. In [Muhr's \(2015\)](#) words, YSP

does not limit itself to learning to read and to write only. It goes much further. It pursues a conscientising and transformatory literacy, besides schooling ... It has as its fundamental objective the active insertion of the participants in the social, economic and political activities of the community and the countries in which they live. (p. 130)

In this way, YSP contests the “new global governance of education” ([Muhr, 2015](#), p. 132), as it does not focus on transferring “best practices” nor involves any type of conditionalities or coercion from tertiary parties. It is a program based on voluntary participation and, therefore, a real example of pure SSC that is engendered within and strengthens the Global South.

Conclusions and Further Research

This chapter has presented SSC in the arena of education. After providing the theoretical lens of SSC, it has charted the history of SSC, from its decolonial origins through its three phases of development since the Cold War. It then provided examples of how SSC, through the guidance of the UN, aligned with SDG 4. Finally, it presented a practical model of educational SSC transfer that is likely informed by SDG 4. While North-South cooperation is the orthodoxy, SSC is used among countries that share similar historical realities and similar challenges. SSC has contributed to many knowledge exchanges through programs, projects, and initiatives that have helped solve challenges faced by Southern countries.

While SSC can spur educational development in countries, the educational arena it operates in is still highly postcolonial and Western-oriented. SSC is affecting the hegemony of developed countries in the educational policy arena by realigning policies with Western notions of “development.” While “on the one hand, SSC is a multiregional initiative designed to reduce the South countries' economic dependency on markets in the North, ... on the other hand, SSC must necessarily involve changes in political dependencies” ([Altınbas, 2013](#), p. 58). As long as the UN is a significant donor arm in SSC coordination, there will be a political dependency on Western nations. While “SSC's ultimate goal is to close the socio-economic gap between the developed and developing countries, in any logic scheme, SSC should reduce the South's vulnerability to arbitrary or unilateral pressures from industrialized nations” ([Altınbas, 2013](#), p. 34). While SSC emphasizes equality and basic functional skills in the education arena, it is the international donors who define and delineate these concepts.

Future research can be informed by locating what is needed to revise the agenda that was set when EFA was introduced. We have moved into a post-knowledge economy where the agenda should focus on lifelong learning. It is time for the international community to convene again around the topic of SDG 4 and try to build consensus around what the next policy agenda framework would look like. Before the SDGs can become gospel, “triangular cooperation must overcome the challenges of high transaction costs, limited funds for projects, lack of trust between OECD DAC countries and their counterparts among emerging economies, and the possibility of adding to the already strained bureaucracies in the Global South” ([UNOSSC, n.d.](#), p. 136). The control of infrastructure development will set the stage for the next decade of educational reform in the Global South.

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Global testing regimes: accountability, standardization, racial inequality and the rise of audit culture

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Introduction	327
International organizations and comparative data	327
OECD's PISA, high performing and high equity	328
Neoliberalism, racialized students, testing and accountability	329
Mediatization and standardized testing	332
Conclusion	333
Acknowledgment	334
References	334

Introduction

While testing and using data to monitor student performance is not a new phenomenon, its current manifestation emanating from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and various national education systems corresponds with changes in the global education policy discourse that have placed greater emphasis on numbers, metrics and the promotion of an audit culture (Lewis, 2020; Lingard et al., 2016; Lingard, 2011; Rizvi and Lingard, 2010; Moreno-Salto and Robertson, 2021). To draw on the work of Shore and Wright (2015a,b), we are increasingly governed by numbers, indicators, and audits, and “to be audited and inspected is now regarded as an axiomatic part of personhood” (p. 23). This article foregrounds this policy shift in the significance of data and standardization and argues that this shift does not impact all students equally but has serious consequences for racialized students and students from low-income families. Moreover, it leads to further segregation of racialized students and, coupled with the mediatization of test data and ranking of schools based on test scores, testing has resulted in stigmatization, lower enrollment rates and closure of low-performing schools in certain racialized and poor neighborhoods.

This paper begins with an overview of the global context of testing and a discussion of the role international organizations such as the OECD play in steering education policy globally and nationally. This paper then proceeds to discuss the impact of neoliberal governance in driving national education systems toward datafication, accountability and comparisons with consequences for racialized students and students from low-income families.

International organizations and comparative data

Since the 1990s, international organizations such as the OECD have been important players in the development of educational indicators (Henry et al., 2001). The connection between comparative international performance data and global economic competition has resulted in the OECD taking on an increasingly significant role as an education policy actor on the global stage, performing an important task by globalizing educational accountabilities across nations (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010). In fact, Leuze et al. (2007) attribute educational changes around the globe to two main trends: (1) the increasing involvement of international organizations and, (2) the growing marketization of education. According to the authors, these two changes not only resulted in international organizations such as the OECD becoming more involved in policymaking, but education has turned into a tradable commodity, subsequently creating competition among countries and between students. Current research regarding the role of the OECD in education positions it as a significant “institutional network that evolved into a ‘global political superstructure’” (Sorensen et al., 2021, p. 101).

Grek (2013) suggests that the rise of international comparative assessment began in the early 1990s with the comparative assessment of international adult literacy in several countries. This, Grek argues, has offered the OECD visibility and exposure which resulted in placing international tests in a comparative dimension. Discussing the historical trajectory of the OECD in education, Grek (2013, p. 706) argues that the “OECD’s capacity has not only been its ability to ‘move’ experts around the world and bring them around the same table, but also to then effectively steer and direct toward its own prespecified agenda.” In his analysis of the role of international organizations in education such as the OECD, Ball (2003, p. 216) discusses “new” policy technologies and how the metamorphosing of these international organizations is creating greater emphasis in “monitoring systems and the production of information.” Ball (2003, p. 216) suggests that “Performativity is a technology, a culture and mode of regulation that employs judgments, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic).” As Jakobi and Martens (2010, p. 176) argue, “The OECD today not only define the problem but offers the solution With the new generation of indicators, the Organization has therefore gained an important status in several stages

of national policy-making from agenda setting to policy formulation and implementation.” In other words, the OECD, as a major international organization, has garnered the capacity to become a key policymaker and policy player, shifting educational policy discourses and driving global educational competition.

OECD's PISA, high performing and high equity

In promoting the important role of the OECD in the collection of comparative data, the OECD refers to the significant role of political leaders and politicians and the values they place on education, which results in achieving equitable outcomes regardless of cultural and economic diversity:

Starting from very different levels, a number of countries and regions have succeeded over the last few years in raising their students' performance substantially. They display some important common features. Their politicians and social leaders share with parents, teachers and students a strong belief in the value of education ... The best systems deliver strong and equitable learning outcomes across widely varying cultural and economic contexts.

OECD (2010) cited in Lingard et al. (2016, p. 95).

Following this connection between equity and achievement, the OECD (2010), through the Program for the International Student Assessment (PISA), an international assessment that measures the performance of reading, mathematics and science among 15-year-old students, identified Canada as a country whose students are high achieving. Using the high-performance rates of select immigrant populations on PISA, this was taken as indication for Canada's apparently highly equitable education system. However, the implications of this data is that it fails to account for the reality of Canadian-born racialized students—students who have low educational success rates and are much more likely to drop-out of school. According to a 2006 report by the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), the largest board of education in Canada with a high percentage of racialized students, of the 25% of students who do not graduate secondary schools, most of them are from Indigenous, Black, Hispanic and Middle Eastern backgrounds. The TDSB (2006) also mentions that these students have among the lowest rates of attendance and highest rates of suspension. They also have the lowest test score rates on standardized tests, such as the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), which tests the reading, writing, and math skills of all students across the province of Ontario in Grades 3, 6, 9, and 10.

Interestingly, this distinction between immigrants and non-immigrant racialized Canadians is ignored and overlooked in the OECD's report of Canada's performance on PISA, which has implications for racialized students; an important issue that we will delve into later in this paper. But for now, it is important to note that Canada's immigrants are admitted through the Point System and are thus likely to be highly educated. Using the OECD's data, Beach et al. (2006, p. 3) suggest that under the Point System, immigration has shifted from family reunification toward a class of economically privileged, skilled workers and a greater emphasis on accepting immigrants who are educated, young, and have capital. Indeed, the influx of more financially privileged, young, educated immigrants directly correlates with the success of immigrant students in Canadian schools which the OECD celebrates. It is ironic, then, that the OECD's (2006) earlier statement on immigrant success contradicts their own data that “on average, first generation Canadian students had parents with as many or more years of education as native-born parents” (OECD, 2006 cited in Mehta and Schwartz, 2011, p. 150).

Martino and Rezai-Rashti (2013, p. 607) research on equity, the OECD's PISA and the gender achievement gap provides a cautionary note for education policymakers to “not rely too heavily on PISA measures as basis for decision-making regarding questions pertaining to equity.” The authors also critique the OECD's PISA in their use of comparative data that often endorses school-based interventions while giving less attention to significant structural dimensions of inequality regarding race and social class—two significant factors that shape educational outcomes. Despite this, however, there is an undeniable role that international organizations such as the OECD play in not only producing new knowledge, but steering education policy and disseminating performance data globally, which has implications for education and educational equity that we should not take lightly. As stated by Grek (2013, p. 697), “international comparative testing appears then as much more than simply a statistical project; it has become part of a consistent effort to restore legitimacy and trust between populations and their governments.” This political use of PISA is also discussed by Moreno-Salto and Robertson (2021) in their research on the role of OECD's PISA in Mexico. They show how politicians have used PISA's comparative performance data to justify their own political objectives and how policymakers “draw upon much earlier renditions of PISA so that it now enters into Mexican education policymaking and shapes practice through a metaphoric back door” (Moreno-Salto and Robertson, 2021, p. 213).

It is also important to recognize that the significant role of international organizations does not reduce the position of nation-states in steering policies relevant to their own contextual factors (politics, culture, and history) while also considering the influence of global educational accountability policies. Novoa and Yariv-Marshall (2003), for example, have written about the “global eye” and the “national eye” and how they govern together through complementary international and national testing. However, it needs to be acknowledged that the OECD plays a significant role in driving education policies in order to facilitate an exercise of global governance which has broader implications for education policy and practice (Sharman, 2012).

Neoliberalism, racialized students, testing and accountability

Recent focus on the use of quantitative data and performance-based assessment have been critiqued by critical policy scholars as a technology of neoliberal governance in the education field (Ball, 2003; Grek, 2013; Hursh, 2013; Lipman, 2013; Lingard et al., 2013; Ozga, 2009). It is argued that the focus on comparative performance data of various countries with distinct political, economic, racial and cultural structures makes it quite problematic and “results in a ‘governance by comparison’ approach that generates truth claims and a particular way of seeing the world in which the material effects of race and poverty remain unmarked and are expunged from political and policy consciousness” (Lingard et al., 2016, p. 92).

Nichols et al. (2006), in their study of the relationship between pressures for high-stakes testing and student achievement, suggest that although the US has had a long history of standardized testing, its current emphasis on high-stakes testing could be traced to the 1983 publication, “A Nation at Risk”. According to the authors, “it was believed that if the public education system did not receive an overhaul, our economic security would be severely compromised” (Nichols et al., 2006, p. 3). The authors believe that this view of education and economic competitiveness was internalized in American culture. Through this logic, the neoliberal point of view considers students as human capital and future workers who “must be given the requisite skills and dispositions to compete efficiently and effectively” (Apple, 2005, p. 214). But as will be discussed in this section, we need to think about which students are benefiting from high-stakes and standardized testing and which students are not, and what purposes testing, under the guise of objectivity, meritocracy and self-responsibility, serves in sustaining a racist, capitalist system in the age of neoliberalism.

One of the most significant criticisms of testing has been its connection to datafication and a neoliberal mode of governance in which metrics, data and accountability play an important role in the production and enactment of policies that justifies and individualizes the performance of students regardless of structural and institutional challenges. Hursh (2013) situates high-stakes testing to the rise of neoliberalism in the US and its particular ideology of reducing the size of government while establishing the market as the model for all economic and social activities, including creating self-responsibilizing individuals who need to rely on themselves. This market model of efficiency has focused on standardized and high-stakes testing as an objective assessment tool to make teachers and students accountable. As Hursh (2013) contends, current reform measures have been justified and rationalized by creating more efficiency, accountability, equity and objective assessment of student performance and competition in the global job market. In this context, individual ability and performance is highlighted while underlying systemic and structural inequalities remain invisible. For example, in relation to race and racial inequality, it has been argued that the move toward comparative performance data and neoliberal governance in education in countries such as Canada and the United States has legitimized racial inequality by using the discourse of meritocracy. Goldberg (2009, p. 339), focusing on race and neoliberal modes of governance, demonstrates how the shift from a welfare/pastoral state to a neoliberal one has resulted in the acceptance of the ideology of self-responsibilizing individuals and “individualized merit and ability.” According to Goldberg (2009, p. 339), such ideologies have contributed to the discourse of racelessness under neoliberalism:

In diluting, if not erasing, race in all public affairs of the state, neoliberal proponents nevertheless seek to privatize racisms alongside most everything else Categories of race disappear as much from keeping account of discrimination itself, thus leaving the condition it is supposed to articulate, to mark and express as well as identify and assess, as untouchable as it tends now to be untouched.

In the US, there has been increasing critical investigation into the role of accountability and standardization in sustaining racial and class inequities, an argument rooted in the historical trajectories of standardized testing. A legacy mired in racism and the notion of White intellectual superiority, justified and institutionalized through the eugenics and IQ testing movements (Au, 2009, 2013), Au (2016) contends that testing began as a “racial project”. Eventually working its way into education, testing was instituted as an objective, fair, value-laden instrument to measure student performance and competence. The implications of this, however, was that such “scientific” testing ultimately declared the poor, racialized, women and immigrants, as intellectually subordinate while serving White supremacy (Au, 2013). As Knoester and Au (2017, p. 7) write:

Standardized tests, in conjunction with the ideology of meritocracy, thus have operated as a tool of White supremacy because they make racist outcomes of the tests appear as a by-product of the way the world works objectively and naturally- they “scientifically” justify the existing racial order, and they do so within a false promise of measuring everyone equally, accurately, and fairly.

The presumed objectivity of standardized tests has left no room for structural considerations of racism and class privilege; negating and denying how race, socioeconomics and other social locations may differentially impact students and their performance on tests. But existing scholarship on this proves otherwise. For example, in their study of standardized testing in the state of Virginia, Brunn-Bevel and Byrd (2015) draw on the historical and structural dimensions of education, detailing how historically, Black and White students were segregated by race, which relegated Black students to schools which were poorly resourced while White students received an education which matched their economic, social and material privileges. This history continues to inform the educational and social outcomes of students in the US, including the persistence of segregated schools, which provides important context to understanding the outcomes of Black and White students on tests. According to the authors, structural

disparities help to explain why, in almost every subject, Black students in their study were more likely to fail standardized tests in comparison to their White counterparts. Utilizing data to ascertain school district size, the ratio of students to teachers, school funding, school segregation and income levels to investigate testing results, [Brunn-Bevel and Byrd \(2015, p. 444\)](#) note that discrepancies in education are “exasperated by accountability systems based on standardized testing that discount the reality of segregated and resource-depleted school environments” that Black students are more likely to encounter than White students. Indeed, structural circumstances cannot be disregarded in conversations about testing, given that, as [Marmol \(2016, p. 8\)](#) writes:

[s]tudents cannot be expected to achieve comparable results if presented with vastly unequal material resources and social conditions, which are then compounded when their histories, cultures and ways of learning are devalued and deemed superfluous. Poverty, unequal funding of schools and distribution of resources need to be remedied and a newfound respect for cultural diversity and equality, or indeed equity, need to be emphasized.

The presumption that standardized tests are neutral, objective and unbiased is ultimately a fallacy when varying lived experiences and access to opportunity, funding and resources are absent from the discussion. Such an absence fails to recognize how testing has ultimately contributed to worsening racial, class and educational inequities ([Marmol, 2016](#)). As [Thompson and Allen \(2012\)](#) study of the disastrous impact of the Bush administration’s education policy “No Child Left Behind” demonstrates, the over-emphasis on high-stakes testing in the US has worked at the expense of Black American students who have become largely apathetic and disengaged as teachers have lost autonomy over what and how they teach due to increasing pressures on teachers to ensure that students perform well on tests. Creative, culturally relevant lessons are increasingly being replaced with more rigid and structured curricula as a “narcissistic education system” ([Thompson and Allen, 2012, p. 218](#)), where administrators and school boards are overly preoccupied with achieving an image of success based purely on test scores alone, becomes the norm.

The fears and concerns of racialized and low-income students who are subject to standardized testing has also been the focus of scholarly attention. In [Kearns \(2016\)](#) study of students who failed the high-stakes Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) (a test that all students must pass to obtain their high school diplomas), the author shows that standardized testing works in favor of sorting and ranking students while constructing those who do not pass as “deficient” and illiterate. In the urban setting in which this study was conducted, many of those who did not pass the test were racialized, low-income and did not have English as their first language. Already marginalized based on their varying social identities, failing the OSSLT worked to further highlight their presumed difference; [Kearns \(2016, p. 135\)](#) writing that “the marginalized are confronted with their ‘otherness’ through the literacy test.” The findings of [Spencer’s \(2012, p. 132\)](#) research also suggests that in schools with high numbers of students who are visible minorities or English language learners, “the effects of standardized testing include a range of practices that reinforce inequity and increase social disparity.” These practices include narrowed expectations and intensive curricula that privilege dominant linguistic and cultural norms.

In a separate study, [Kearns \(2011\)](#) found that students who attended school in a community where the poverty rate was nearly 50% and the population consisted largely of first-generation Canadians, experienced shame, humiliation and stress for having failed the test. The youth in this study perceived the OSSLT as inequitable and counterproductive to their learning and well-being, finding the test to be less useful than their high school English classrooms. Indeed, an implication of standardized testing as found in [Kearns \(2011, 2016\)](#) studies is that such tests “alter youths’ perceptions of themselves: they question themselves, their abilities, experience themselves as inferior to others, or consciously oppose an inferior label given to them by a large testing agency” ([Kearns, 2011, p. 123](#)).

Such feelings attributed to fears of failing tests, such as stress and angst experienced by [Kearns’](#) high school participants, begins at a much younger age. [Eizadirad \(2020\)](#) found that among racialized children in Grade 3 who had to take the EQAO standardized test preparation in Ontario, the test produced extreme anxiety among young children who feared failure and being considered “dumb” as a result. Examining the harmful impact of testing on racialized and low-income students, [Eizadirad \(2020, p. 288\)](#) argues that “externally administered standardized tests such as the EQAO function as a tool for stereotyping racialized identities” and outlined how stereotyping in this context functions on three levels: (a) constructing racialized students as low-achievers early in childhood contributes to deficit thinking among children and teachers; (b) perpetuating the stereotype that racialized students have poor intellectual abilities and placing them in separate behavioral and special education classes at an early age; and (c) challenging the stereotype that racialized students are low-achievers “by producing positive achievement results” ([Eizadirad, 2020, p. 290](#)). Regarding the latter, [Eizadirad \(2020, p. 290\)](#) explains that:

Although this might seem positive at the surface, the constant effort of having to defend one’s intellectual abilities while navigating predominately White elite spaces embedded with hierarchal power relations saturated with stereotypical assumptions about one’s race, culture, ethnicity, and/or socio-economic status is exhausting and socio-emotionally draining leading to subsequent poor performance, feelings of exclusion and not belonging, and/or triggering identity issues and crisis that can contribute to dropping out of school.

Such fears rooted in the stereotype threat that often accompanies academic failure thus works to harm racialized and low-income students early in their educational lives, “marginalizing and oppressing racialized identities via the interpretations and socially constructed labels created from standardized test results” ([Eizadirad, 2020, p. 292](#)). Likewise, in [Wasserberg \(2017\)](#) study of the

stereotype threat among high-achieving African American students, students expressed an active need to not confirm fixed preconceptions that considered Black students as failures; a stereotype that was applied to students given their school's low test scores.

In her ethnographic study of accountability driven reform in Chicago, [Lipman \(2011\)](#) provides significant evidence of the devastating impact of such reforms for African American and Latinx students in urban schools, which has resulted in the closing of schools, displacement and disenfranchisement. [McNeil et al. \(2008\)](#), in their research on a test-based accountability policy in Texas, expose drastic consequences of high dropout rates among students who are poor, English language learners, and come from African American and Latinx backgrounds. Similarly, [Fontaine \(2016, p. 8\)](#) discusses fundamental problems with the narrow framework of accountability and datafication, arguing that the:

Education marketplace disproportionately advantages those with the time, social capital, and institutional knowledge to navigate the system. They benefit the relatively privileged within all racial and social class groups and function to keep middle and upper class families invested in public schools in gentrified areas (Ball et al., 1995). As a result, accountability programs may backfire and have the unintended consequences of reinforcing school segregation as parents eschew neighborhood schools in favor of higher performing schools elsewhere.

As addressed, the implications of standardized testing for racialized and low-income students has been subject to much scholarly critique in Canada while a growing body of literature is also exposing the negative impact of testing and accountability regimes on students' experiences of schooling and teachers' pedagogical practices ([Kearns, 2011, 2016](#); [Lubiensky and Yoon, 2017](#); [Rezai-Rashti and Lingard, 2020](#); [Spencer, 2012](#)). [Lubiensky and Yoon \(2017, p. 6\)](#), researching test-based accountability policies in two Canadian provinces (Ontario and British Columbia), conclude that "school choice has become a middle-class privilege, or is practiced largely by parents who place high value on education as means to further advantage their children" (p. 6). [Rezai-Rashti and Lingard \(2020\)](#), drawing on the perspectives of racialized students in their comparative study of test-based accountability in Canada and Australia, challenged the notion that test-based accountability benefits all students equally. The authors further conclude that test-driven accountability has resulted in further segregation of racialized and poor students in both countries while benefitting those families with social and cultural capital who are able to access the choices offered in the education marketplace.

Analyzing the impact of neoliberal reforms on teachers in Ontario's secondary schools, [Rezai-Rashti \(2009\)](#) found that standardization resulted in a prescriptive curriculum and reduction in teacher autonomy as a result of mandated appraisals of teacher performance. Increasing standardization in Ontario's education system manifested itself through a "results-based curriculum focusing on what students are able to do at the end of the program; and standard discipline oriented (subject) curriculum based on measurable items" ([Majhanovich, 2002, p. 165](#)). Furthermore, [Majhanovich \(2002\)](#) argues that although educational reform, hallmarked by standardized curriculum and high-stakes testing, has been promoted under the banner of excellence and quality enhancement, it has had dire consequences on the de-skilling of teachers, leaving little room for creativity, innovation or autonomy. Similarly, speaking of the use of large-scale assessments, [Duncan \(2011\)](#) detailed the unintended consequences of this for teachers, including constraints on instructional time, higher order thinking skills, ability to cover the curriculum and teacher professionalism. It is not uncommon to hear teachers lament that "more time is spent preparing for tests or testing than is actually spent teaching and that seems counter intuitive" ([Duncan, 2011, p. 83](#)).

In the context of school leadership, [Spencer \(2012, p. 132\)](#) investigated how the provincially mandated system of accountability has "constructed social practices and relations, and how it constituted agents in schools as the subjects of reform." Using governmentality as her approach to empirical data, [Spencer \(2012\)](#) found that high-stakes tests and accountability policies have resulted in significant changes in the practices of school administrators, writing that "administrators have moved into new management roles as, increasingly, there time is devoted to tasks for monitoring, accounting for, and reporting on the administration of policies concerned with performance and outcomes, such as standardized testing" ([Spencer, 2012, p. 132](#)). [Rezai-Rashti and Segeren \(2020\)](#) also argued that the pressure for test-based accountability has resulted in urban school leaders working to game the system and engage in strategies of manipulating data to show school improvement. Their research on the experiences of urban secondary school leaders with the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) (a test that all students must pass to obtain their high school diplomas) revealed how they articulated the use of various methods or tactics for manipulating or fabricating test result data to artificially raise a school's reported performance in an effort to be seen as complying with accountability expectations. Participants revealed that it was not an uncommon practice to ask certain students to stay home on the day of the test so that only those students who were likely to pass the test would write it. A literacy coordinator in their research study, who worked directly with schools to improve test results, explained that there are two methods for reporting the results of standardized tests. Method one reports on the results of all eligible students and how many passed. So, if a student was absent or was deferred, this would be reported as a failure, impacting the school's overall score. Method two only reports on students who wrote the test. The school leader further explains that:

there are schools in the city that defer all of the applied level students and so 90 something percent are passing, but that gap between the two scores is large. So, method 2 looks good on paper. So, newspapers report on method 2. Schools report on method 2 because the scores are higher in comparison to method 1 that included all eligible students.

This is similar to the findings of [Ball et al. \(2012\)](#) research which showed a clear distinction between policy implementation and enactment. The authors suggest that it is important to focus attention on how schools deal with “contradictory policy demands, and the diverse ways that they creatively work to fabricate and forge practices out of policy texts and policy ideas in the light of their situational realities” ([Ball et al., 2012](#), p. 142).

As will be detailed further in the next section, the effects of public perception in an age of data-driven decision-making and engineered crises of failing schools and failing students is that the general public is being conditioned to believe that “the implementation of standards-based programs signals students, parents, and society at large that teachers are not to be trusted or respected and that technical/managerial control is what is needed to fix the problems that teachers helped create” ([Duncan, 2011](#), p. 84). But as the existing literature reveals, the overemphasis on accountability through testing has concerning outcomes for racialized and poor students and teacher efforts to effectively reach the educational needs of such students. The implications of this for educational equity must be seriously acknowledged.

Mediatization and standardized testing

One of the most significant but perhaps unintended consequence of standardized testing has been the mediatization of test results and the ranking of schools. Addressing the mediatization of educational performance and the way in which various forms of media play an important role in shaping public perceptions, [Rawolle and Lingard \(2011\)](#) detail the impact that journalism and journalists have in placing issues on the education agenda. Indeed, journalists identify problems and pose solutions, which serve to deeply shape and inform public perceptions of the education system. This was well documented in [Parker \(2017\)](#) historical critical policy analysis, where she investigates how neoliberal education policies were “sold” to the public. Through educational reforms, intended to resolve the educational crisis that Ontario students were falling behind their international counterparts, Parker demonstrates how the news media highlighted the need for educational policy changes that favored neoliberal reforms. Documenting the publicization of EQAO test results, [Parker \(2017, p. 53\)](#) found that the “news media saturate discussions of whether education policy needs an overhaul based on the latest test scores.”

Research conducted by [Rezai-Rashti and Segeren \(2020\)](#) shows how urban school leaders in Ontario and British Columbia understand and critique the role of the media in reporting and ranking schools, which often results in stigmatization of racialized and low-income students, their schools, as well as their communities. For example, one of the school principals in their research implicated the Fraser Institute, a conservative think tank that reports on the performance of all schools across four provinces in Canada. The principle noted the impact of the institute’s annual report on test scores, stating: “when these Fraser reports and media reports come out and bash certain schools, it does stigmatize places. And the reputation of buildings become affected. Those stigmatizing reports don’t take the pulse of the whole school.”

Indeed, this public shaming has contributed to stigmatizing schools in low-income, racially diverse neighborhoods where test results are often lower. [Rezai-Rashti and Segeren \(2020\)](#) suggest that the publication of comparative performance data has enabled middle-class families with above-average levels of capital to opt out of their local, under-subscribed schools and choose higher performing ones instead, a trend identified in two provincial contexts. Another school principal in British Columbia explained that media reports have impacted the reputation of his school, noting that it is a contributing factor to low enrollment rates and the flight of middle-class families to other schools in the area. [Martino and Rezai-Rashti \(2013\)](#), in their analysis of the media and the discourse of the gender achievement gap and failing boys, which were based on PISA test scores, provide important insight into the significant role of the media within the network of policymaking and practice. The authors write that the media “constitute a particular policy habitus, particularly in relation to the endorsement of a gender achievement gap and the mobilization of discourses about failing boys in the Canadian context” ([Martino and Rezai-Rashti, 2013](#), p. 604).

The publication of student performance data and public shaming of low performing schools has unintended consequences for schools that are spending increasing amounts of time and effort engaged in entrepreneur-like activities. Reflecting trends noted in the literature associated with the new public management of schools, principals and guidance counselors reported trying to “sell” or “market” their schools to attract students and families. This trend is especially evident in urban schools or low performing schools at risk of closure, and school leaders are the ones tasked with recruiting new students, as [Rezai-Rashti and Segeren \(2020\)](#) found. Interestingly, school leaders are now submerged in business related activities, such as marketing their school by “selling” special “features” of their schools through extra-curricular activities or specialized academic programming. As the head of the guidance department in an urban school explained: “I feel a lot of pressure to go out to the feeder schools and to market our school and to promote our school, because we’re all competing for the same students downtown”. Part of her marketing campaign involved crafting a more robust portrait of her school to bolster its public reputation:

I’m always on Twitter and Facebook reposting positive news stories and posting pictures of all the great things happening here. There is pressure to be in control of your own story as a school, because parents and the community are using technology. We’re trying to update our website all the time, make it more student friendly with lots of photos and things like that, just to be relevant and recent.

[Rezai-Rashti and Segeren \(2020\)](#).

While school choice appears to be desirable and increasingly available, research shows that those exercising this choice are predominantly middle-class parents. School choice, however, works to the disadvantage of students and families from racialized and low-income backgrounds who lack the social and cultural capital of their middle-class counterparts to take advantage of a wide array of schooling options (Rezai-Rashti and Lingard, 2020; Yoon et al., 2017).

It is important to mention that the negative role of the media has been acknowledged by academics and more recently by national and provincial governments. For example, in 2017, the Ontario Ministry of Education appointed two advisors to guide and transform assessment and reporting practices by acknowledging the significance of equity and Indigenous education. The report predominantly focused on misuse of performance data and ranking of schools. Their report listed 18 recommendations to transform the culture of assessment in Ontario in order to achieve the goal of equity, well-being and enhancement of public confidence in Ontario's publicly funded education. Together, these recommendations sought to connect assessment to curriculum, identify and respond to inappropriate misuse of provincial large-scale assessment data (EQAQ) and oppose the public ranking of schools. The advisory committee raised concerns over the current nature of provincial assessments in the context of Ontario's commitment to equity and cultural diversity, especially the Grade 10 Literacy Test (OSSLT), which the committee agreed should not be linked to the high school graduation requirement. The recommendations of the advisory group included reducing the number of tests by eliminating standardized tests in several grades as well as creating a mechanism to prevent "inappropriate use and misuse of provincial large-scale assessment data by other organizations/individuals, including opposing public ranking of schools" (Campbell et al., 2018, p. 70).

The literature on high-stakes testing and accountability in several other countries such as the UK and Australia also shows the impact of national testing and its consequences for the promotion of comparison data and an audit culture. Lingard and Sellar (2013, p. 652) discuss how collecting performance data and reporting through the "My School" Website is causing reputational damage to schools, arguing that the reporting of Australia's National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN):

has become high stakes for systems through reputational damage caused by perception of poor performance ... the pressure and nervousness felt by policy makers and politicians in response to NAPLAN outcomes are more immediately motivated by concerns to improve or maintain the reputation of schools and systems and to secure funding.

Gillborn (2008, p. 65) work on the "gap talk" in the UK also addresses how the government is using performance data as justification for educational improvements, suggesting that "closing and/or 'narrowing' gaps operates as a discursive strategy whereby statistical data deployed to construct the view that things are improving, and the system is moving in the right direction."

In contrast to many of the countries discussed in this review, Finland has an exceptional trajectory of not engaging with neoliberal accountability while being one of the top performers in the international PISA test. Writing about Finnish distinctiveness, Simola et al. (2013, p. 623) discuss the rise of Finland as an exemplary model through incremental policy rather than through neoliberal declaration, writing that "Finland did not follow the Anglo-Saxon accountability movement in education" as teachers and schools are the ones who are tasked with evaluating students. In Finland, with a long history of no national testing (with the exception of a high school matriculation examination), politicians and educational officials have been consistently rejecting the notion of school ranking based on performance indicators. In 2005, the Finish Education Evaluation Council formally stated their opposition to ranking and mediatization of individual school results:

In publicising evaluation results schools will not be ranked, nor will schools or teachers will be labeled as of high or low standard on the basis of one-sided evidence. When reporting upon an analysis based on a nationwide sample, no data identifying individual schools will be given
cited in Simola et al. (2013, p. 623).

In nations where neoliberalism is increasingly shaping the push toward the marketization of education, it remains to be seen to what extent the mediatization of test scores and rankings will shift, and perhaps even undermine, the democratic foundations of public education. As trends mentioned in this section reveal, the implications for educational equity are vast.

Conclusion

The role of performance-based accountability cannot be understood without carefully investigating national testing regimes, key actors, power dynamics, as well as the inflecting role of international organizations such as the OECD in global governance. In this paper, we emphasized the influence of international organizations in the collection of comparative data and their significant role in steering education policy around the globe. We believe such comparative performance data is decontextualized with limited focus on local and national contexts of schooling.

We also focused on a select number of studies which have explored the impact of test-based accountability on racialized students and students from low-income families. Our main objectives have been to show how change to test-based accountability nationally and globally have had serious consequences for racialized and poor students. Situated within the context of neoliberal rationality

and relying on discourses of meritocracy and self-responsibilizing individuals, we believe that performance-based accountability has resulted in focusing too much on individual students and teachers while leaving broader and more significant structural and institutional inequities invisible. Our research raises important questions regarding the winners and losers of neoliberal educational reforms and whether these forms of top-down accountability measures and assessments are the right approach in the first place. We believe, as argued by Shore and Wright (2015a, p. 27), that “the construction of easy-to-read, decontextualized numbers, however faulty, also makes them popular and a useful tool of management and governance.” However, these rankings and numbers do not impact all individuals equally and “audit culture is based on a zero-sum game: to succeed in this game, someone has to lose. This is the basis of the most corrosive effects of this form of governance” (Shore and Wright, 2015b, p. 432).

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International schools: shifting sands and winds of change

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Introduction	336
Early days	336
International education	337
International curriculum	338
International schools: developments and contemporary issues	338
Terminology and definitions	340
Nature of education	340
Going forward	341
References	342

Introduction

It is undoubtedly the case that education in its many forms has undergone notable change since the first edition of this encyclopedia was published in the 1980s. There can have been few changes more marked, however, than those experienced within the group of schools known as 'international schools'. In this chapter, we begin by setting the scene with a short overview of the development of this area from its earliest days, before showing how an initially steady increase in numbers was superseded by a massive unprecedented growth in the closing years of the 20th century. The remainder of the chapter will focus on a number of issues and challenges arising in what will be described as the international school sector, as it has not only grown substantially in size but has also markedly changed in nature as the environment in which it is located, and the expectations made of it, have themselves undergone major changes.

Early days

One feature bedevilling international schools (a term used here to encompass all schools worldwide that might self-identify or be considered as such) and challenging those who write about, study, work in, or research them is the lack of a clear and agreed lexicon. Frustratingly, as the sector has grown and broadened in scope, the terminology has if anything become more rather than less complicated, as new developments have introduced new terminology – in some cases to describe concepts very similar to those that already exist, though with different labels for what are essentially variants on an underlying theme. Discussion about such variations has been described by Marshall as 'the big terminology debate' (2007: 38), and since Marshall's observation there has been no reduction in the complexity or lack of clarity which, if anything, has continued to increase.

In the absence of a universally accepted definition of the term 'international school', it could be argued that the origins of the concept of schooling outwith national borders can be traced back to the nineteenth century. Maseru English Medium Primary School in the then British Crown colony of Basutoland (since 1966 the Kingdom of Lesotho), for instance, was established in 1890 to cater for the children of English-speaking missionaries, traders and officials of the British administration (MEMPS, 1990), while the International College at Spring Grove, West London, UK, was founded in 1866 by such luminaries as Thomas Huxley, Richard Cobden, John Tyndall and the novelist Charles Dickens – all advocates of free trade, whose vision of a number of international schools in Europe was based on students from different countries being educated 'among school fellows of all nations ... the method of study being precisely the same in each international school' (Dickens, 1864 in Sylvester, 2002: 8), with the students thus becoming 'international ambassadors' (Stewart, 1972: 5). Sylvester (2002) provides a more detailed analysis of developments leading to the establishment of this, arguably, 'first' international school. Twin rationales for what might be thought of as international schools were therefore evident from the earliest days: the *pragmatic* (offering education to children displaced from their home education system due to a parent's global mobility) and the more *ideological* (intentionally bringing together students from different national/cultural contexts with a view to them learning within a broader context than the national borders within which education would more usually be prescribed).

More commonly described as the earliest international schools are the International School of Geneva, Switzerland and Yokohama International School, Japan, both established in 1924 and with the former indeed claiming to be the 'first international school' (Walker, 1996). Though with different provenances from MEMPS or the International College at Spring Grove, clear in both schools is a pragmatic rationale for their establishment: to cater for the children of globally mobile or otherwise temporarily displaced professional parents who wished their children to accompany them rather than to 'board' in the home country, and for whom other schooling available locally was deemed inappropriate – while overlapping with a post-Great War ideological vision of

encouraging the broadening of horizons, development of intercultural understanding and preparation of adults equipped for effective and peaceful interaction with those from other backgrounds than themselves (see Knight, 1999; Stanworth, 1998). With increasing global mobility emerged growing numbers of international schools worldwide, often established by parents themselves: as, for instance, in the case of The Alice Smith School in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia which began in 1946 as the eponymous Alice Smith taught her own young daughter, and subsequently growing numbers of children of friends and colleagues (Alice Smith School, 1996). Based on a different rationale, post-World War 2 concerns that such horrors should never be experienced again were central to the establishment, inspired by the visionary Kurt Hahn, of Atlantic College in south Wales (Peterson, 1987), founded in 1962 with the express purpose of bringing together students of 16–18 years of age from around the world, on a scholarship basis, to study and live together. Having something in common then with Spring Grove in being founded expressly with an ideological purpose, Atlantic College was the progenitor of the worldwide United World College (UWC) movement which, at the time of writing, has 18 member schools and colleges worldwide, all espousing the philosophy that ‘UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future’ (UWC, 2021) and embodying a response to the question asked in his 1957 Nobel Prize acceptance speech by Lester B Pearson, then Prime Minister of Canada, and after whom the UWC in Vancouver is named: ‘How can there be peace without people understanding each other, and how can this be if they don’t know each other?’ (Lester B Pearson College of the Pacific, 1982: 9).

Together with a growth in numbers of United World Colleges in the following half century, until relatively late in the twentieth century a steady increase was seen in numbers of individually established international schools established principally to cater for growing numbers of globally mobile professionals in a particular location. Though in the absence of a universal definition of the term, exact numbers of international schools cannot be cited, growth has nevertheless been evident over a number of years. (See, for instance, Hayden, 2011). While having an essentially pragmatic *raison d’être*, such schools would also very often promote a more ideological form of education in preparing the adults of tomorrow for an increasingly globalised world. In arguably the first piece of research-based academic writing with a focus on international schools, in 1995 Hayden and Thompson observed that, at that point, the international school sector could be characterised as a ‘conglomeration of individual institutions which may or may not share an underlying educational philosophy’ (1995). Reflecting later on what they described as the ‘globalist’ and ‘internationalist’ approaches to education, where the former relates to serving a market that requires the global certification of educational qualifications with portability between schools and transferability between systems, while the latter is underpinned by an existential, experiential philosophy of education that values the moral development of the individual and the development of a sense of responsible citizenship, Cambridge and Thompson (2004) point out that the form of education practised in international schools is (or was at that time) the ‘reconciliation of these contrasting approaches’, with each reconciliation being unique to the individual institution. We shall return to more recent developments in the sector after exploring first a number of related concepts.

International education

If the terminology surrounding international schools is unclear, that relating to the concept of international education is no clearer. In the first edition of this encyclopedia, Husén suggested that international education can be considered as including ‘all educative efforts that aim at fostering an international orientation in knowledge and attitudes’ (1985: 2660). In the same year, the Harvard Educational Review’s Special Issue on international education argued in its editorial preface that ‘International, global, cross-cultural and comparative education are different terms used to describe education which attempts ... to come to terms with the increasing interdependence that we face and to consider its relationship to learning’ (Fasheh, 1985). More recently, as interest has grown in education across national borders, the term ‘international education’ has come to be used in a range of contexts. It may be encountered, for instance, in debate relating to the higher education (university level) sector, where the internationalisation of higher education is the focus of increasing research interest as, in some if not all parts of the world, universities accept increasing proportions of ‘international’ or ‘overseas’ students, appoint growing numbers of academic staff from around the world, engage in research across national boundaries and establish ‘outposts’ in other parts of the world than their home country. The research base for this form of international education, or ‘transnational education’, is steadily broadening (see, for instance, Clifford and Montgomery, 2017).

At school level, in addition to the international schools on which this chapter largely focuses, a recent phenomenon in some countries has been increasing interest in internationalisation of the school experience. In some contexts this may take the form of children from one country attending a school in the national system of another country (in residential/boarding schools in England, for instance). In other contexts, it may arise from growing recognition that education for any child, whatever their background, needs to prepare them for a future that will not be entirely nationally-focused. Whether or not a child growing up in, say, the UK aspires to adulthood as a diplomat, or a career with a multinational company, it is likely that their future life – even if they never travel beyond their home borders – will be heavily influenced by events beyond those borders. While much of the food they eat, goods they purchase and entertainment in which they engage is likely to emanate from other parts of the world, it is also the case that global events and geopolitics will undoubtedly impact in some way upon their future lives. Recognition of the importance of preparing them, as far as possible, for that future has led to initiatives including, in England for instance, schools supplementing the statutory national curriculum with Oxfam materials (2015) that provide a guide for teachers on global citizenship, and projects including the UK’s Global Learning Programme (2021).

The area of education where, perhaps, the most widely recognised work has been done on internationalising the educational experience at school level is that relating to the formal curriculum, where major strides have been made in the past half century that are of direct relevance to international schools.

International curriculum

As the international school sector has experienced rapid growth and become increasingly recognised in recent years, so too has the concept of a formal curriculum that goes beyond curricula offered in national contexts that essentially prepare young people (notwithstanding more recent developments such as those described above) for a future in that national context. The first curriculum developed specifically to cater for the needs of international schools is generally accepted to be the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, first examined in 1970 and developed by a small number of schools with input from the International Schools Association and from experts in national contexts including the USA, UK and France following developments spearheaded in the first instance by the International School of Geneva (Peterson, 1987). Prompted by the pragmatic need of schools preparing 16–19 year old students who aspired to university entrance in a range of different national systems for a curriculum that could be studied by all and would be recognised worldwide, the IB Diploma has since been joined by its sibling Primary Years Programme (PYP), Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Career-related Programme (CP) (IB, 2021a), thus offering a suite of programmes for which schools can apply for authorisation. Though IB programmes may also be offered within national systems of education, they are found in many international schools worldwide, facilitating as they do the transition of globally mobile students between international schools and countries, while at the same time offering a recognised form of education that not only satisfies pragmatic needs but also supports an ideological approach to education in encouraging students to develop international mindedness (Barratt Hacking et al., 2018) as well as a number of attributes including being open-minded, principled and caring, as summarised in the IB Learner Profile (IB, 2021b).

Not all international schools, however, offer all or any of the IB programmes. While the IB is undoubtedly a major actor in the international school sector, so too is the widely recognised Cambridge Assessment International Education. Cambridge's International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), for instance, is offered in large numbers of international schools worldwide, with other programmes also offered across the age-range (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2021). More recently joining the international school scene are programmes developed by Fieldwork Education, whose International Primary Curriculum (IPC) was launched in 2000 and has since been joined by the International Middle Years Curriculum (IMYC) and International Early Years Curriculum (IEYC) (Fieldwork Education, 2021). It should be noted, however, that not all international schools elect to offer what might be described as an international curriculum. Depending on the nature of the international school (about which more below), it may choose rather to offer the curriculum of a 'home country' or, indeed, its own school-based curriculum. It is not uncommon, for instance, for British-type international schools to offer the national curriculum of England, across part or all of the age range, in conjunction at pre-university level with either A levels from England or, in some cases, the IB Diploma. International schools with other national affiliations may similarly offer curricula from the home country, possibly in combination with an international curriculum for part of the age range.

Thompson's (1998) categorisation of international curricula offered in international schools proposed four categories which continue to be helpful today, as follows:

- Exportation: the marketing abroad of existing national curricula and examinations, with little if any adjustment to take account of the different context and a value system 'unapologetically that of the country from which it is exported'
- Adaptation: where existing national curricula and examinations are adapted for the national context, with the 'inherent value system' not likely to change at all and the risk of, as Thompson puts it, an 'unwitting process of educational imperialism'
- Integration: where 'best practices' from a range of 'successful' curricula are brought together into one curriculum for operation across a number of systems or countries (with attendant challenges potentially to be faced from the different values and ideological positions in question)
- Creation: the development of a programme 'from first principles'

Issues relating to curriculum in the international school context will be returned to later.

International schools: developments and contemporary issues

In the quarter century and more since Hayden and Thompson described international schools as a 'conglomeration of individual institutions which may or may not share an underlying educational philosophy' (1995), much has changed. Massive geopolitical changes in the global environment and increasing forces of globalisation manifested in a 'growing magnitude or intensity of global flows such that states and societies become increasingly enmeshed in worldwide systems and networks of interaction' (Held et al., 2000:3), have been majorly affected by, and have influenced, international schools. Coulby and Zambeta argue that 'Educational institutions themselves are part of the process of globalisation because of their central role in the development of the knowledge economy' (2005: 1), and there can be little doubt that this assertion applies to international schools to at least the same extent as it does to other educational institutions. From their earliest days as largely pragmatic responses to a practical need in specific locations

where globally mobile expatriate families were found, which indeed describes the context in 1995 as noted by Hayden and Thompson, international school numbers have massively increased and, with that growth, has grown the diversity that characterises the sector today. A quarter of a century ago, few children attending international schools were not globally mobile expatriates. Indeed it was not uncommon at that time for ‘host country national’ students to be prohibited by law from attending such schools, as was the case in, for instance, China, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. Since that time, the perceived pragmatic benefits of an international school education – offering a curriculum and end-of-school qualification recognised by universities worldwide, and taught through the medium of English, to fluency in which many non-first language English speakers aspire for their children – have persuaded affluent and aspiring middle class parents in some countries of the competitive edge that such an education will provide for their children. Some, though not all, countries where host country nationals were previously forbidden from attending such schools have since deregulated. Thailand is a case in point where, following relaxation of the law prohibiting Thai students from attending international schools, numbers of international schools saw a steady growth with many new schools catering for the ‘home’ rather than expatriate market (MacDonald, 2006).

Of particular interest in this respect, given the implications for growth, is the case of China, which has retained its earlier prohibition of Chinese nationals (other than those of dual or multiple nationality) attending previously existing international schools (or ‘schools for the children of foreign workers’), and has more recently begun the development of a new type of international school intended for Chinese nationals rather than expatriates, which show every sign of experiencing large growth in the coming years: what Poole (2021) describes as ‘Chinese internationalised schools’. In addition to growth across Asia (Machin, 2017), other areas of notable growth include the United Arab Emirates (see, for instance, Azzam, 2021) – again, where international schools are catering not only for the globally mobile but also for the local population. As just some examples of growth in the international school sector, it is clear that, while the numbers of what might be described as ‘traditional’ international schools, catering for globally mobile expatriates, may have seen some growth, the more marked growth has been in those schools established principally to cater for the ‘host country’ national families who aspire to their children attending university, and possibly developing a career, in another (often western, anglophone) country. Indeed such has been the shift in the balance of these two types of school in the international school sector over recent years that it has been estimated that, between 1983 and 2013, the ratio of 80% expatriate: 20% host country national students attending international schools worldwide completely reversed to 20%: 80%.

Issues of terminology continue to complicate the international school debate, with no one body having the authority to determine whether a school may or may not be described as an international school. It is thus, in the absence of a universally-accepted definition, impossible to chart definitive growth of international schools over the decades. In approximate terms, however, it has been estimated that there were around 50 international schools worldwide in 1964 (Bereday and Lauwerys, 1964) and 1000 by 1989 (Matthews, 1989). More recently, ISC Research – which curates a global database that monitors activity in the international school sector and uses a very specific definition of international schools, for their own market intelligence purposes, of schools delivering a curriculum at any age range wholly or partly in English outside an English-speaking country, or that offer an English-medium curriculum other than the country’s national curriculum and are international in their orientation, if based in a country where English is one of the official languages (ISC Research, 2021a) – record 12,373 international schools as at July 2021, from a total of 7655 in July 2011 (ISC Research, 2021b).

Many attempts have been made over the years to bring order to the large number of international schools in terms of types and categories, by authors including, *inter alia*, Matthews (1989) and Sylvester (1998), all of them developed before the more recent shift toward international schools catering for host country nationals, and many of them challenged by the fact that their proposals began to date rapidly almost as soon as they were disseminated. (See Hayden, 2006 for details of other categorisations). Our own more recent categorisation (Hayden and Thompson, 2013) proposed that the rapidly-changing sector could be thought of as including three main ‘types’ of international school, described as follows:

- ‘Type A’ ‘traditional’ international schools: established principally to cater for globally mobile expatriate families for whom the local education system is not considered appropriate
- ‘Type B’ ‘ideological’ international schools: established principally on an ideological basis, bringing together young people from different parts of the world to be educated together with a view to promoting global peace and understanding
- ‘Type C’ ‘non-traditional’ international schools: established principally to cater for ‘host country nationals’: the socio-economically advantaged elite of the host country who seek for their children a form of education different from, and perceived to be of higher quality than, that available in the national education system

It has, however, been clear for some time that this typology – relatively recent though it is – is in need of updating. While Types A and B may still reasonably represent schools today, Type C has – since the term was coined – become more complex as the part of the international school sector catering principally for host country national students has grown and diversified. Recent marked growth in this area, for instance, includes what may be considered exports of elite private schools from England including, among others, Dulwich, Harrow and Shrewsbury (see Bunnell, 2008) together with the Chinese ‘internationalised’ schools referred to above. Unlike the not-for-profit nature of many Type A schools, where surplus income is ploughed back into developing the school rather than into profits for owners, shareholders and/or investors, notable among the characteristics of many, though not all, schools that could be included in ‘Type C’ is that they are for-profit and have been established on a more commercial basis than traditionally has been the case for international schools. Notable too as a major change in the international school sector in the last quarter century has been the shift from the ‘conglomeration of individual institutions’, observed by Hayden and Thompson (1995: 332) as noted above, to the creation of *groups* of international schools established on a for-profit basis. Previously unusual,

other than in the case of a small number of groupings such as the European Schools (Gray, 2003) or Shell Schools (see Hayden, 2006), groups of international schools may now be found, often catering essentially for the local market, within national contexts including China and Vietnam, but also cutting across national borders. Some well-established, though still relatively recent, groupings of international schools worldwide that may cater for both local students and the more globally mobile include, *inter alia*, the GEMS group, Nord Anglia and Cognita. And while there may be a lack of clarity with respect to the meaning of the term 'international school', means of judging the 'quality' of particular international schools have grown up in the form of accrediting agencies, including among others the Council of International Schools (CIS), which accredits schools where evidence is found of achievement of pre-specified standards, thus providing quality assurance in the sector.

In the context of the current growth in the international school sector, and the likelihood of that growth continuing, a number of issues and challenges arise, as discussed in the following sections.

Terminology and definitions

If terminology in this context was bedevilled by lack of clarity when Marshall highlighted the issue in 2007, how much more is that now the case as the sector grows and diversifies, with schools having different reasons for including 'international' in their name. Undoubtedly in some cases a marketing strategy, in other cases what might to a casual observer appear to be an international school may choose not to be described as such. Others make clear their affiliation with a particular national context through a title such as 'British International School of X' or 'American School of Y', while others eschew any national affiliation and offer an international curriculum throughout the school, to students of many different nationalities, and cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Whether a lack of consistency or clarity in terminology is a cause for concern may be debatable. Some would argue that it is (see Azzam, 2021); we share a concern that, at the very least, the lack of consistency should be recognised and acknowledged.

Nature of education

In the earliest days of educating away from their home country young people who were expected to return in adulthood to that context, the form of education offered might not have necessitated much in the way of debate. If the purpose of education was to prepare young people for adult life in their 'home' context, whether their childhood was spent there or elsewhere, then the traditional concept of curriculum – as exemplified for instance in Lawton's concept of curriculum as a selection from the culture of a society (1989) – would apply equally to those temporarily displaced from that society. American expatriate students for instance could follow a US-style curriculum in a school outside the US, in preparation for their return. Complexity emerged with the growth of international schools catering for students from multiple national and cultural backgrounds, whose teachers were faced with preparing students at the pre-university level for return to a 'home' university and for the qualifications which would demonstrate their preparedness to embark upon university education in that context. Challenges presented by teaching the subject of history, as one notable example, to a class of students needing to prepare for national qualifications with different curricula and examinations were, as noted earlier and discussed in more detail elsewhere (see, eg. Peterson, 1987) instrumental in leading to the creation and development of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma as a curriculum that could be studied by all students regardless of destination, in the anticipation of acceptance as a university entrance qualification worldwide.

As the demand for international programmes is growing, however, so too are questions as to what it means for a form of education to claim to be 'international'. Is it sufficient that a curriculum is effectively a form of educational 'home away from home'? And how should the 'ideological' theme running through many such programmes (claiming to develop in young people attributes such as international mindedness, global competence, and respect for others different from themselves) relate to the more 'pragmatic' theme of preparing young people for life in an increasingly globalised world, where attributes and skills including multilingualism and intercultural literacy (Heyward, 2002) will be at a premium in the global knowledge economy (Lauder et al., 2012) of the 21st century?

As noted earlier, many different programmes are now offered in international schools worldwide. And as Thompson has highlighted, they may have been designed intentionally to be international, or be exported or adapted from a national context while, as Thompson puts it, risking an 'unwitting process of educational imperialism' (1998). Those that claim explicitly to be 'international' rather than arising from the context of any one national education system have in so doing laid themselves open to challenge. For some time there have been claims that the IB programmes, for instance, are 'Eurocentric' (not least because of the Diploma's three main working languages of English, French and Spanish). More recently, questions have been raised about the meaning of 'international' in this context, with suggestions that such programmes (others that claim to be 'international', as well as those of the IB) might in fact be more accurately described as western or western-liberal in values and focus, as discussed by, *inter alia*, Drake (2004), Van Oord (2007) and indeed by Walker (2010), a previous Director General of the IB. Such questions seem likely to persist, with proposals that international programmes should acknowledge other cultural perspectives than simply that of a western liberal value system arguably being in tension with the fact that the recent rapid growth in international schools is highlighting the latent demand from growing middle classes in non-western contexts for the form of international (western) education expected to provide their children with a competitive edge through the acquisition of English-medium internationally recognised qualifications that offer access to prestigious western universities, and thus to the western privileged lifestyle to which many such families aspire.

Debate will no doubt continue as to what it means, or should mean, to offer an international form of education. Having emerged as a concept through the IB Diploma Programme, principally as a pragmatic means of catering for globally mobile (largely

western) expatriates, and at a time (1960s) when the term 'globalisation' was only just beginning to emerge (Held and McGrew, 2000: 1), expectations have been raised in the intervening years about what might be expected of a form of education with such aspirations. Thompson's question about the risk of an 'unwitting process of educational imperialism' is echoed in more general questions of 'post-colonialism' raised by Andreotti, for instance (2011). Perceived exclusivity of programmes such as the IB Diploma Programme that are relatively expensive to offer compared with their nationally-based counterparts and thus beyond the reach of students attending most non-fee-paying schools is no less an issue, though with some exceptions in a small number of national contexts including, for instance, Ecuador where 72% of its 254 IB schools are state-funded (Hill, 2022). Recent analysis by Tate (2022) of the place of international schools in current debate arising from Goodhart's identification of 'Anywheres' ('a large minority group of the highly educated and mobile') and 'Somewheres' ('a larger and less influential group ... who are more rooted and less well educated') (2017: vi) raises related questions as to the potential of international schools, however ideologically-focused, to exacerbate differences in our rapidly changing world.

Going forward

This chapter has so far provided an overview of the international school sector from its earliest days, and in doing so has highlighted a number of challenges facing the sector as its *raison d'être* has changed in response to the changing global environment. From individual schools established principally to meet local needs of globally mobile expatriate families, an international school 'sector' has developed of some 12,300 schools (as at July 2021: ISCR, 2021b) which either claim to be international or might be considered as such on the basis of their characteristics, while acknowledging that the number could be somewhat larger if similar schools are included that do not meet ISCR's English-medium criterion. While to what extent international schools do actually form a 'sector' is debatable, given the diversity of the institutions and the absence of any overarching body with authority to determine whether a particular school may describe itself as such, major differences evident between the present day and the earliest years include the emergence of *groups* of international schools such as elite schools from a national context (for instance the UK's Dulwich and Harrow) and other groups including Nord Anglia and GEMS. And while the vast majority of international schools are fee-paying (with some notable exceptions such as the Netherlands-based Dutch International Primary Schools and Dutch International Secondary Schools, and those already noted as offering the IB Diploma in Ecuador), and 'not-for-profits' feed back surplus funds into development of the school (the basis of many of the earlier international schools), those for which surplus funds are channelled as profit to owners, shareholders and investors have become a clear trend in very recent years, with the majority of new international schools established on a commercial basis. The changes in nature of international school student populations is clearly an associated phenomenon, with the vast majority of international school students no longer the globally mobile expatriates for whom such a school facilitated relocation with a parent's professional mobility, but rather the elite and aspirational middle classes in developing countries for whom an international school education and internationally recognised pre-university qualification provide a stepping stone to membership of what has been described as the 'transnational capitalist class' (Sklair, 2001).

The rapid changes in even very recent years, with notable growth in particular contexts including but not limited to China, suggests that the international school 'sector' is likely to continue to change and develop in coming years. As the 'sector', and associated curriculum organisations, grows, its interest as a focus for academic research will undoubtedly also grow. A focus on international schools has already been noted as one of the main areas of research in international education (Dolby and Rahman, 2008) and seems set to be the basis of increasing scrutiny and critique by those with interests both in this specific context and in related areas. Questions increasingly being raised in the growing international school research base include, *inter alia*, those related to the nature of international schools (see, for instance, Bunnell et al., 2017), leadership of international schools (Keller, 2015) and teachers in international schools (Bailey, 2015).

Likely also to be of increasing interest in the international school context are areas that, while not unique to this context, may have particular relevance where mission statements and ideologies claim the development of attributes in students including respect for others, international mindedness and global citizenship. So, for instance, the Black Lives Matter movement's highlighting of issues relating to equality and diversity, and the focus on decolonisation of the curriculum in many contexts (see, for instance, Aman, 2017) will almost certainly be increasingly prevalent in the coming years – as will the expectation of a proactive role from international schools in ensuring that global topics including the Climate Emergency will continue to have high visibility in the curriculum.

Anticipated growth in use of technology in education, though again not unique to the international school context, may be expected to be associated with notable changes in the teaching and learning process. The global pandemic's impact on schooling has opened the eyes of many educators and students to the benefits of technology, with earlier speculation about a possible model for the future of international schools being one that relies less on buildings and more on remote interaction (Hayden and Thompson, 2013) becoming, as a result of COVID-19, a reality far more quickly than could ever have been anticipated. And not only increased use of technology, but also advances already being made in Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality are clearly likely to influence developments in the coming years (see, eg, MacDonald, 2022). Though not discussed here in any detail, two other issues may be expected to be the focus of continuing debate. One very pragmatic question relates to those who teach in international schools. In earlier days, almost exclusively expatriate and largely from a limited number of western, English-speaking countries (except for specialist teachers of local language and culture), as the numbers of schools have grown so has the diversity of teachers – though many schools still struggle with pressure from parents to appoint only first language English speakers and,

some would argue, underlying discrimination may be found in at least some contexts in favor of white, western, western-educated applicants. Already a hot topic too in relation to teachers in international schools is the question of just how the rapidly-growing number of schools will find the increasing numbers of teachers needed to sustain them. And if these growing numbers of teachers are to be recruited not only from the Global North, challenging issues arise about the ethics of relatively wealthy schools attracting from the home context in which they were educated teachers who leave behind shortages in a local, less well-resourced, education system. While, for many expatriate teachers, a short time spent teaching in international schools, or even a career developing from an initial foray into the international school world can be rewarding, exciting and stimulating, the precarity of the context (Bunnell, 2015), with short term contracts and little of the security that might be expected by teachers in national contexts, needs also to be acknowledged.

There can be few forms of education that have followed quite such a rapidly changing trajectory in the past half century as have international schools. From the origins of individual institutions established to cater for a local need, they are emerging as major influencers in an increasingly globalised world, arguably contributing to growing societal divides and facilitating the growing gap between 'Somewheres' and 'Anywheres' (Goodhart, 2017; Tate, 2022). Although the phrase 'international school sector' is widely used, there has arguably never been a 'sector' as such; nor does it seem that the existence of such a thing is closer now than it ever was. It may well be time for the concept of an international school *sector* to be abandoned, given the impossibility of making meaningful generalisations that apply equally to schools catering for expatriates relocating temporarily abroad, as to schools established principally to cater for aspirational local families in developing countries. Indeed, as noted by MacDonald (2022: 222), 'International schools catering primarily to host country nationals are often filling a void in the local independent school market ... [and] ... have become *de facto* independent school networks', citing the United Arab Emirates and Thailand as two examples. Though times have changed since Hayden and Thompson's (1995) description of international schools as a 'conglomeration of individual institutions', it is still the case that it would be misleading to assume that international schools in general share specific characteristics common to all.

Some would argue that the earlier forms of international schools are closer to the concept of a 'true' international school than those that have developed more recently. We would argue, however, that it does not need to be the case that one type of school can be assumed to be superior to another. Particularly given the lack of clarity with respect to terminology, and that programmes such as those of the IB, Cambridge and Fieldwork are offered across different types of schools, it cannot be assumed, for instance, that a for-profit school is by its nature somehow deficient in the international nature of the education offered compared with that of a longer-standing more traditional not-for-profit institution. Were it the case that a global organisation had the power to determine whether a particular school could be described as an international school, this is clearly a time when directives as to terminology would be beneficial to all concerned. In the absence of such authority, a lack of clarity is likely to continue. This does not, however, prevent international schools from being an increasingly high profile and influential contributor to education worldwide, and an important focus for research by those with interests in international education and its associated areas.

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International Baccalaureate: meanings, uses and tensions in a globalizing world

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Introduction	344
The phenomenon of IB	345
Research on IB	346
IB and the shifting geopolitics of education under globalization	347
IB as a window on (Anglo-Western) international education	347
IB as a window on school internationalization	351
Conclusion	352
References	353
Relevant website	354

Introduction

Much could be written about the multiple dimensions of the current phenomenon of the *International Baccalaureate* (IB)—its presence, growth and impact in the world, as well as its uptake in the academic literature. Therefore, I want to make explicit my approach to constructing this entry. First, to fully appreciate what IB represents today, it is vital to consider its history. And it is critical to understand not only how IB emerged in the field of a small set of multilateral international schools in the 1960s (Peterson, 1972; Mayer, 1968), but to differentiate the conditions of this past historical moment to those of today (Scott, 2004; Tarc, 2009, 2011). There are instances when policy expressions from the period of IB's creation have been read through the filter of the (21st-century) present, misconstruing what was meant by those expressions and, by consequence, misrepresenting the past's mark on the present.

Moreover, with the current mainstreaming of terms like “global citizenship” sloganized across multiple organizations, it is easy to forget that it is only relatively recently that nation-states have been more sympathetic to such terms as “global citizenship education” and to forms of internationalizing education, given the traditionally tight grip “sovereign” nations have held upon their (idealizations of) state schooling (Heater, 1980; Tarc, 2009). Indeed this shift, beginning in the early 1990s, represents a core feature of the “shifting geopolitics of education” under globalization. Accordingly, to understand the character and development of IB requires an examination of the larger conditions that have shaped its concrete manifestations and evolving policy rhetoric on its purposes, achievements, modifications and plans. On the current (2020) “about-the-ib” webpage, viewers confront IB's long-standing aspirational vision, “Now in our 52nd year, we're more dedicated than ever to developing international education that creates a better world” (ibo.org). This aspirational goal, of making a better world through a progressive education for “international understanding,” has endured since IB's inception. However, how these aspirational visions are expressed and manifested in practice are enabled and constrained by institutional and regional pressures/agendas and larger temporal conditions (Tarc, 2009).

Second, the official stories that IB leadership tells of IB represent only one part of the reality of IB. The other part is what happens on the ground, why and how schools, universities, governments and families open to and (potentially) adopt or use IB. These parts reflexively inform one another, but they also produce discord, contradictions and tensions. IB, then, is constituted by both top-down governance and policy as well as bottom-up engagements, above and below the IB organization's core function of providing its four educational programs in schools. For this reason, I employ in my title the more performative terms, “meanings and uses” of IB, consistent with a pragmatist lens (Rizvi, 2014). From this perspective, IB is not some essential “thing,” but has flexible meanings and tangible uses and intended and unintended effects across the diverse contexts in which it is adopted and engaged. These meanings and uses (and tensions) are mediated by a confluence of factors, such as the following: larger conditions of neoliberalization (exogenous and endogenous to nation-states), IB's policy rhetoric and governing practices, state and university admissions policies, school/curricular practices and the (cosmopolitan) perspectives and (global) class-making strategies of IB users' families.

Finally, the section on the historical development and evolving tensions of IB, that situates international education under the globalization processes of recent decades, is mainly derived from a periodization of IB presented in my book, *Global Dreams, Enduring Tensions: International Baccalaureate in a Changing World* (2009). For greater explication on the historical development of IB and how the three structuring tensions (citizenship, curricular aims and operational function) find altered dynamics across time, readers can turn to this 2009 publication. Given the date of this publication, I have particularly considered the literature on IB published in the last decade; further, I have reviewed more recent IB policy statements to extend the analytic trajectory of the *Global Dreams* text. For additional historical analyses of IB, see Bagnall (1994), Bunnell (2008), Fox (1985), Hahn (2003), Hill (2002a,b) and Peterson (1972, 1987).

The phenomenon of IB

As of July 2020, the IB Organization reports that there are 7002 IB programs offered in 5284 schools in 158 countries; about 52% of these schools are state-funded schools (ibo.org/programmes/find-an-ib-school/, accessed, Nov 25, 2020). From 2015 to 2019, the numbers of IB programs adopted increased by a significant 37.9%. Adoption of the IB programs by schools is geographically uneven particularly with IB schools in public sectors. Just over half of the IB schools are in “The Americas” (predominantly in the US and Canada). “Africa, Europe and the Middle East” have about 21% of the schools (despite recent growth, Africa accounts for only 2.3% worldwide). And the “Asia-Pacific” region accounts for about 27% (ibo.org/programmes/find-an-ib-school/, accessed, Nov 25, 2020). 2018 statistics analyzed by Bunnell (2020) are illuminative:

Put simply, in 2018 there were at least 53 nations where there existed authorized “IB World Schools” yet zero public schooling activity, whilst four nations (Australia, Canada, Ecuador, and the United States) accounted for 81% ... of the IB’s overall body of public schools.... In most parts of the world, the IB (still) operates out of a traditional, private and relatively elite schooling mode of activity. (p 60)

Thus, apart from a handful of unique arrangements with governments and IB (such as in the cases of Ecuador and Sweden), the majority of IB publicly funded schools are located in the Anglo-West; while, in “developing country” contexts, most IB schools are private institutions, primarily serving mobile and national elites.

The IB is run by a non-profit foundation registered in Switzerland. In the most recently published Annual Review (2018–2019), the Director General, Siva Kumari reiterates IB’s “three business areas:”

Working closely with our passionate community of educators (over 5000 schools in more than 150 countries), our mission inspires us to continual improvement in all aspects of our work in our three business areas: curriculum development, working with schools, and assessment. (ibo.org/about-the-ib/facts-and-figures/ib-annual-review/year-in-review-2018-2019/a-message-from-dr-siva-kumari-to-the-ib-community/, accessed on November 25, 2020).

Centering IB’s “work” is the provision of four preK-12 educational programs; the 5000 plus *IB World Schools* offer at least one of these programs to their students. The *IB Diploma Program* (IBDP), the longest-standing and most popular program (offered by more than 3500 schools), is provided for students aged 16–19 years; it officially began in 1968. The *Middle Years Program* (MYP) for ages 11–16 began in 1994. The *Primary Years Program* (PYP) started in 1997 and is for children aged 3–11 years. More recently, in 2012, IB launched the *Career-related Program* (CP) for 16-19-year-olds that leads to “further/higher education apprenticeships or employment” (ibo.org/programmes). Currently there are 274 schools offering this new program. The IB’s website (ibo.org) is a well-updated site hosting materials and comprehensive details on its mission, philosophy, governance structure, finances, operations, history, curricular programs, geographic spread and growth, annual review statements, research summaries on IB, IB events and initiatives (some showcased in the “IB World” magazine), etc. This entry will not provide a description of the various elements of IB; the website is a good source for accessing these details.

Beyond the increasing numbers of authorized IB World schools and users of IB programs and IB courses in the K-12 private and state-funded sectors, IB has found notoriety in additional arenas. On the one hand, IB has a growing presence in national and transnational educational policy spheres (Tarc, 2009; Tarc and Beatty, 2012); on the other hand, the IB has entered new domains to spread its influence (Tarc, 2009). For example, across the last two decades, IB has partnered with multilateral policy actors and philanthropic foundations on non-IB educational projects. More recently, the IB has partnered with a select number of universities’ faculties of Education. In concert with the IB organization, these faculties now offer *International Baccalaureate Education Certificates* (IBEC) in or alongside their preservice teacher education or graduate education programming (see ibo.org/contentassets/f23b082dbc184e379a5bec2d42009e73/ibec-2020-university-directory.pdf). Additionally, the 2018–19 *Annual Review* highlights new partnerships and projects with the governments of United Arab Emirates, Japan and South Korea, and the launching of a Master of Education program with the University of the People to offer “a tuition-free online university degree to benefit teachers worldwide” (ibo.org/about-the-ib/facts-and-figures/ib-annual-review/year-in-review-2018-2019/impact/ accessed on July 22, 2020). Such examples illustrate the IB Organization’s commitments to “service” and having “impact” beyond its core mandate of providing its four educational programs.

Anecdotally, a good number of colleagues and acquaintances over the years have incidentally mentioned IB; I am always intrigued to know what they mean by it. As suggested above, the IB has multiple meanings and uses; and, as I have argued (2009), this flexibility of IB has been instrumental to its widespread adoption and financial sustainability. Is IB a cosmopolitan social movement (as implied in DG Siva’s invocation of a “passionate community” above and as showcased/advanced in the IB World magazine and various IB networks, blogs and groups)? An education for global citizenship (Dvir et al., 2018) or international mindedness (Hacking et al., 2018)? A private school education (within a publicly funded school) for only the price of examination fees (Tarc, 2007)? An inquiry-based pedagogical model (Twigg, 2010)? A “gold standard” (of quality) for well-established international schools (Lauder, 2007) and/or for the fast growing, for-profit sector of Anglo-Western-inspired international schools (Waterson, 2016)? A liberal—but not political—model of international education (Tarc, 2011) acceptable to more authoritarian nation-states? An UN-inspired infringement on state schooling in the US (Bunnell, 2012)? A model of gifted education (Kyburg

et al., 2007; Poelzer and Feldhusen, 1997)? An “international passport” to elite universities in the West (Lee and Wright, 2016)? An academically challenging program for US Tier One/low SES schools (Mayer, 2008)? Or a school choice option for (upper-) middle class families (Doherty, 2009)?

As reported in the literature, IB is understood and used in each of these ways depending on the context and stakeholders involved. This malleability has proven useful for the IB’s viability across contexts and across time, but it also has produced concerns and tensions that require labor by the IB organization to assert and re-assert its authorship over the IB brand/ideals. I will continue to address this malleable feature of IB as it (in)forms the research literature and the terrain upon which IB policy is (re)formulated and the ongoing cultural production of the IB brand.

Research on IB

As a “learning organization” (Tarc, 2009), the IB is invested in research in terms of better understanding and improving upon its programs and operation, as well as to leverage findings to build its reputation and deepen and broaden the IBDP’s acceptability to university admissions offices (and state educational ministries) globally. As Resnik (2019) asserts: “IB research is one of the main nonhuman actors that encourages DP recognition ...” by universities (p. 347). Thus, the research IB does on IBDP students’ readiness for, or success in, university programs becomes part of the way that IB inserts itself into the national; positive research findings thus act as a “non-human actor” in a larger “assemblage” of actors influencing university admission policies on the IBDP. Such evidenced-based research also allows IB to more legitimately participate in the performative cultures of transnational policy making spheres alongside more prominent agents as OECD or UNESCO.

IB has also increasingly come on the radar of academic researchers, including graduate students. The malleability and multidimensionality of the IB is well reflected in the growing number of research studies engaging IB. Research on IB crosses a broad spectrum from more insider or practice-based studies, conducted or commissioned by the IBO, that investigate (some dimension) of IB with a focus on evaluation or improvement, to more outsider or academic research that takes IB as an exemplar of a particular form, or proxy, of education (such as gifted education) or as a window onto a larger phenomenon (as school choice for class making). In these latter approaches to research, the aim is to illuminate the form of education or the larger phenomenon more than features intrinsic to IB. However, there are also insider studies that engage larger questions of educational aims or methods and use IB as the example, and academic research that does more intrinsically study the IB. The IBO hosts a research page (ibo.org/research/) which profiles IB in-house and IB commissioned research categorized as either “outcomes research,” “curriculum research” or “policy research.” They also have commissioned and posted annual annotated bibliographies inclusive of academic research conducted on IB for the period 2010–19. These bibliographies, conducted by university academics, cite and provide abstracts of academic journal articles, theses and dissertations, book articles, reports and conferences (see ibo.org/research/research-resources/).

A review of these sources as well as cited sources found through educational database searches surface common strands of research on the IB. A number of studies take the IB programs as a prominent exemplar of international education (for example, Hill, 2007, 2012); some studies more particularly engage the tension between the idealist and instrumental agendas or visions of international education in a context of globalization (Cambridge and Thompson, 2004; Gardner-McTaggart, 2016; Hill, 2006); relatedly some studies engage the (philosophical) mission or cultural affinities/translations of IB (Drake, 2004; Hayden and Wong, 1997; Lineham, 2013; Rizvi et al., 2020; van Oord, 2007; Wells, 2011). A number of studies examine the trends and prospects of/for IB in specific geographic areas, such as Australia (Kidson et al., 2019) and China (Wright and Lee, 2014). One of the more developed strands of research employs sociological analysis to illuminate IB’s use as a choice option with neoliberal school reform and how IB offers advantage or distinction for (global) class making (Doherty, 2009, 2012, 2013; Doherty et al., 2009) along the schooling to university trajectory (Wright and Lee, 2019). These strands make evident the multidimensionality of IB and the roles that IB plays in education and in educational markets worldwide, as well as the ongoing salience of IB as an object of scholarly research.

Most compelling, perhaps, is the IB organization’s enduring viability and strong reputation as a non-state provider of progressive curricular programs for “international mindedness” and its attendant teacher professional development and examination/oversight regimes operating for more than half a century (Tarc, 2021). Also striking is the character of IB’s global geographic dispersion and significant entry into, and ability to work within or alongside, state-funded systems. How has the IB navigated such a complicated terrain, and for so long? How (well) does it hold to its “global dreams” (Tarc, 2009) of making a better world through education? How does it respond to the dynamic tensions that arise as the “dream” enters the practical realities across different geopolitical and cultural contexts? As IB expands, how does it ensure quality of its programs (Charleson, 2010) as well as remain distinctive, and thereby desirable, in light of competition (Doherty, 2013)? What are the current trends and prospects for IB (both functionally and aspirationally) in a still hyper-connected, uneven world, now in further global crises? (How) will/might IB (continue to) be a global agent, as well as a reflection, of educational reforms in the shifting geopolitics of education? These questions are very salient for current and future scholarly research on IB. Some of the historical and analytic material to support these prospective inquiries is offered in this entry.

The following subsections focus more specifically on two research strands most relevant to this volume’s focus on the shifting geopolitics of education. The first strand takes IB as an exemplar of international education under globalization and the second strand takes IB as constitutive of internationalization processes of K-12 schooling. My approach is to draw a distinction between international education and its variants as a long-standing set of educational ideals, practices and initiatives (Elvin, 1960; Good,

2020; Heater, 1980; Méras, 1932) and the internationalization of education as a more recent trend emerging from the 1990s under processes of neoliberalization (Tarc, 2019; Tarc et al., 2012). This distinction is useful to differentiate older and newer modalities of international education with their potentially different objectives or animating visions. It also parallels the distinction between the *literal* definition of international education as educational activities crossing or connecting across political borders and the *ideal* of an outward looking education for international understanding (Tarc, 2019). Internationalization of education as a recent trend entails both the literal and aspirational definitions of international education, but the larger neoliberalizing conditions that drive internationalization agendas from above, favor the literal and “instrumental” definitions over the “ideological” or “educational” (Stier, 2004). Consequently, IB’s adoption may have more to do with “international education” than “internationalization” or vice versa; but the point here is that these empirical and normative differences matter. Considering IB as an exemplar of international education (as in educating for international understanding) leads to a different set of questions (and critiques) than considering it as an exemplar of the internationalization of K-12 schooling (as supra-national presencing in state schooling). Of course, linkages need to be made as part of the analytic, but under-thought conflation risks clouding research aims and findings.

IB and the shifting geopolitics of education under globalization

This section presents two specific analytic strands most relevant to this volume’s theme of “globalization and the shifting geopolitics of education.” The first strand considers IB as an exemplar of international education and the trends and prospects for the 20th century dream of international education under the unfolding 21st century conditions. The second strand centers on the internationalization of K-12 schooling, where “IB is [taken as] an emblematic case of educational globalization” in terms of “de-nationalizing” state schooling (Resnik, 2012, p. 249) or “school internationalization” (Engel et al., 2019). For this second strand, I read Resnik (2012) article, *The denationalization of education and the expansion of the International Baccalaureate*, with and against Bunnell (2020) recent article, *The “internationalization of public schooling” in practice: A “skeptical reality” approach*.

IB as a window on (Anglo-Western) international education

While the idea of an international baccalaureate was not new in the 1960s when IB came to life (Hill, 2002b), there was, at this time, sufficient practical demand for an internationally-recognized secondary school leaving diploma, to facilitate expatriate families’ access to home-country universities in the West (Peterson, 1972). The practical necessity and logistics of developing an internationally recognized diploma for multilateral international schools was foundational to the development of the IBDP. However, equally foundational, were the “global dreams” of IB (Tarc, 2019)—the progressive educational and cosmopolitan visions of the creators and supporters of IB to develop an innovative educational program for international understanding. For most of the 20th century “international understanding” was the dominant signifier of the pedagogical goal of international education (Heater, 1980; Tarc, 2009). More than representatives of their own national systems, founding Director General (DG) Alec Peterson and his collaborators were largely educational reformers, critical of encyclopedic (and nationalist) approaches to schooling (Mayer, 1968). They envisioned an education for international understanding as a humanist “education of the whole person” (Peterson, 1972; Renaud, 1974), where students would study across the humanities, arts and sciences, engage a second language and experience social service and aesthetic activities. IB had a lineage to the Kurt Hahn-inspired service/outdoors movement, as well as to the relatively independent English private schools’ movement. While a regime of centralized examinations would be IB’s method for ensuring a level of standards for university acceptability, the program was aimed at deepening students’ understanding of the world through disciplinary and interdisciplinary study which included the cultivation of the moral and the aesthetic (Peterson, 1972). In the founding period of IB, a classical progressive education in the internationalist milieu of multilateral international schools and their communities was the means to international understanding (Tarc, 2019). For this non-state actor, a multimodal examination regime would allow for the steering of a curricula for international understanding and be the accountability mechanism needed to gain acceptability from university admission offices (Tarc, 2009).

The following six books are particularly illuminative of the *time-space milieu* of IB’s creation and experiment in the mid-1960s to early 1970s: Leach (1969) *International Schools and their Role in the Field of International Education*, Mayer (1968) *Diploma: International Schools and University Entrance*, Malinowski and Zorn (1973) *The United Nations International School: Its History and Development*, Renaud’s (1974) *Experimental Period of the International Baccalaureate: Objectives and Results*, Peterson (1972) *The International Baccalaureate: An Experiment in International Education*, and Peterson (1987) *Schools Across Frontiers: The Story of the International Baccalaureate and the United World Colleges*. These books provide a glimpse of the ethos, motivating ideals, practical realities and concrete problems and logistics that represent the contextual features of the community of IB creators and supporters (many of whom were teachers) that brought the IB to life in a historical moment that is quite distinct from our current one.

The confluence of the idealist educational/cosmopolitan visions and the practical demands and logistics produced a set of tensions that have endured from the period of IB’s creation and experiment (1962–73) to the present day (Tarc, 2009). In the historical moment when IB emerges, three core tensions constitute the “international” of IB:

The structuring tensions of IB emerge from the interplay of the dream of international understanding and the functional operation of an international diploma at work in the world. The term “international understanding,” on its own, is under tension as an educational aim in a historical period when a dominant purpose of schooling was to produce loyal national subjects. The educational ideal of IB as a progressive education of “the whole person” is in tension with the need for IB to have internationally acceptable standards for university entry. And the ideal of IB representing a modern, forward-looking model of schooling, oriented to making a more peaceful and humane world in a historical period of democratization movements, becomes strained where IB was effectively used by a social elite. These three examples signal the core tensions of the “international” of IB in the founding moment.

Tarc (2009, p. 23).

The first tension of “citizenship,” thus, centers on the IB’s mission of developing international understanding when schooling is to foster national understanding and loyalties. Although international understanding was not contentious within the communities of the participating multilateral international schools, the IBO had to temper its internationalist sentiments in seeking recognition and funding from national governments and institutions. In its policy statements, IBO’s predominant focus is on the forms and aims of the IBDP education and assessment (Tarc, 2009). Where international understanding is discussed explicitly, the IBO emphasizes that students first must identify with their national identity and later develop an openness to other nations and cultures (Peterson, 1972). Additionally, the IBDP is consistently described as a “complement to,” or as a potential “laboratory” for, national schooling (Peterson, 1972).

The second and more consequential “curricular tension” is explicitly stated by Peterson (1987):

One of the problems which from the start face the IBO in developing an international curriculum was the tension between the academic requirements of university entrance procedures and these personal requirements of the whole human being growing up in an interdependent world. (p. 199)

Thus, as with progressive education more generally, the innovatory and progressive elements are constrained by demands for standards and accountabilities. In the case of the IBDP, deputy DG Gerard Renaud admitted that some university stakeholders working with the IBO had “dictated the content of some programs ... and sometimes imposed a greater degree of conservatism than the promoters of the experiment desired” (IBO, 1972, p. 27).

Still, in these early years, the IBDP curricular structure and assessment regime were innovatory and potentially enabling of more progressive and internationalist pedagogies. In the first place, with the IBDP, senior secondary students in international schools were no longer required to be split up to study for national entrance examinations (Leach, 1969). Second, the examination system was nuanced and multimodal to mitigate the back-wash effect of teaching to the test and the use of rote learning approaches (Peterson, 1972). Moreover, the curricular design of the IBDP compelled students to study a range of subjects and take an innovatory “core” that included the Theory of Knowledge course, a student-initiated “extended essay” and the “creative, aesthetic and social service experience” (CASS). Additionally, there was room for individual schools to create a school-based syllabus (SBS) to address local interests. One of the core international schools participating in the creation of IB, Atlantic College, designed and offered a *Peace and Conflict Studies* course, which represents an example of the (still under-used) innovatory possibilities of the IBDP (Tarc, 2009).

The third “operational” tension refers to the disconnect between the larger internationalist-egalitarian vision of IB (emerging in a time of political decolonization and the democratizing and massifying of secondary and postsecondary schooling) and the not-so international character of the organization and program and with the elite social class backgrounds of the users of the IBDP. While the idea that international education could be massified beyond elites and that IBDP should be open for the “academically-able,” the schools that offered the IBDP in the experimental period served socially elite families (Tarc, 2009). Limited access to the IBDP thus represented one pillar of the operational tension.

In terms of its inter-national make-up or representativeness, the IBO and the IBDP curricula reflected specifically the position-alities and perspectives of individuals from a small set of wealthy Western nations. These were the voices of consequence in terms of university partners and of the development of the program, curricula and assessment operation. On the one hand, the internationalism of IB signals the inclusion of perspectives from a multiplicity of nations; but, on the other hand, the international refers to a “chain of equivalencies: West = democratically advanced = modern = international” (Tarc, 2009, p. 42). “Representation” thus represents the second pillar of the operational tension:

For the IBO, the structuring tension of representation in the founding period is produced out of the desire to include national perspectives and voices within a hierarchy of [assumed] relevance and expertise. University entrance requirements in England, Switzerland, Germany and France, needs of Anglo-American international schools for the mobile elite and recommendations of funders and other liberal-minded enthusiasts magnify the influence of particular perspectives and voices over others. (p. 42–43)

Given the enormity of the task to secure funding and support to create and pilot the IBDP, the IBO seemed positioned to be able to respond to these tensions only with aspirational commitments to enlarge access and internationalize representativeness over time.

Analysts of IB in contemporary times will recognize that these tensions have endured, sometimes presented as critiques of IB. For example, lack of access to the IB programs continues to be a point of critique (Dickson et al., 2017). In response, the IB organization, continues to be actively and strategically engaged in broadening access to the IB, as I will detail below. Nevertheless, as the IB has moved through its phases of “creation and experiment” to “growth and sustainability” to “diffusion and diversification” to “branding and impact” over the last fifty years, dynamics of these tensions have altered (Tarc, 2009). Most obvious is that, for the most part, international understanding as an aim of education is no longer contentious; indeed, many governments advocate for it as a component of human capital development in a globalizing world (Green, 1997). For a more detailed analysis of the shifting dynamics of the tensions and how the IBO navigates them in a changing world, refer to the Global Dreams text (Tarc, 2009). In the remaining part of this **Introduction** section, I will outline the most significant continuities and discontinuities of these tensions precipitated by larger 21st century transformations and the attendant responses of the IB Organization.

First, amidst the ascendancy of neoliberal economic globalization in the 1990s with the breakup of the Soviet Union, international education begins to move from a potentially politically contentious and marginal activity to an expedient (Tarc, 2009, 2013). For example, governments want globally savvy/mobile citizens who can contribute to the national economy, universities seek out international students as a new generation stream under declining public funding, businesses want interculturally competent employees who can exploit niche markets globally and students want to build their resumes with international certificates and experience (Tarc, 2013). Often entangled with these pragmatic agendas of this neoliberal internationalization movement come the more idealist/aspirational agendas privileging the potential educational, cosmopolitan and ethical potentialities of international education (Tarc, 2019). In this sense the “citizenship tension” of IB has largely abated. For only a fringe right, admittedly energized under the recent rise in strongman populism (Geiselberger, 2017), does international education remain contentious (for the US context, see Bunnell, 2012). In terms of IB’s diffusion and acceptance into state-funded schooling, IB’s mission of developing international mindedness or global citizenship is either inconsequential or seen as an asset by schools and ministries of education also open to the internationalization trend. What this change means is that rather than trying to minimize its internationalist vocabulary, IB’s international, becomes a “value added,” a marker of distinction (Tarc, 2009); for upwardly mobile middle-class parents, cosmopolitan capital is increasingly recognized and pursued as a form of cultural capital (Forsey, 2017; Weenink, 2008).

Today, neither the vocabulary nor the liberal-humanist pedagogy of international education is contentious. However, the larger political tension of international education’s aims and uses remains. The expediency of international education is tied into nationalist agendas and strategic capital accumulation of mobile elites (Ong, 1999; Tarc, 2013). Nationalist internationalisms have long been critiqued (Leach, 1969) and remain dramatically present and problematically at odds with the ideals of equity, reciprocity and dialog founding ethical internationalist engagements. In this sense, the citizenship tension has merged with the operational tension (access and representativeness). For example, where IB is used to further social advantage by elites or where IB curricula remain Eurocentric and complicit with hierarchizing societal and human value, the aspirational (world) citizenship goal of (massifying) international understanding remains stunted.

The curricular tension has endured but with changing dynamics. First, the centrally examined IBDP remains a college preparatory degree and thus the tension remains between the development of the whole person through a general education and the standards or accountability mechanisms¹ necessary to facilitate access to top universities. However, through the development of the younger-years programs (MYP, PYP), IB has moved forward in realizing its progressive educational visions. These programs are less academically content-rigid and therefore tend to better support the kinds of inquiry-based, thematic, interdisciplinary, progressive and innovative approaches to which the IB brand aspires. Given that IB still must ensure quality standards over the younger years program, there still exist constraints on innovation. However, it remains arguable whether the IB programs or the (national) school and community contexts in which IB is enacted represent the “bottle neck” to realizing more progressive, internationally minded or innovatory pedagogies.

As for the curricular tension within the IBDP, some studies have shown that many IBDP students find the IBDP program to be a very intensive and stressful experience (Hertberg-Davis and Callahan, 2008); my colleague and I (Tarc and Beatty, 2012) found in one IB World school in Ontario, that some IBDP students had to limit or eliminate their extra-curricular activities in sports, arts and service in the school and community, to fulfill the academic requirements of the IBDP. Obviously, this sole focus on academics contradicts the goal of developing the whole person through a general education.

IB leadership is aware of this curricular tension in the IBDP and periodically have discussed alternatives to its high stakes culminating examination regime, but the role of the examination regime in assuring IB’s “high quality” standards has much inertia (Tarc, 2009). Most recently, the IBDP’s 2020 Spring examinations were canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In a recent interview, DG Kumari discussed the need to learn from the pandemic and IB’s responses to it and specifically of “plans to shift focus away from end-of-program exams.” She is reported stating:

Before Covid, we were already designing our strategy for the next 10 years and as part of that we have been having these conversations about the end program ... where this heavy-duty summative experience does not reflect the real world anymore. (<https://www.tes.com/news/international-baccalaureate-siva-kumari-exams-future-education-coronavirus>, accessed December 8, 2020)

¹Albeit, as one anonymous reviewer noted, IBDP’s examinations maybe less “high stakes” than the local jurisdiction such as with many Australian systems that use “norm-based” external assessment and moderate internal assessment with the external scores. In contrast IB employs “criterion-based” assessment and does not adjust internal grade components.

It is possible that the pandemic pushes “these conversations” forward and catalyzes a change in the status quo. Perhaps the IB brand has a solid enough reputation to maintain its high regard with respect to the quality and oversight of the programs without the IBDP high stakes testing regime. Time will tell.

Another key shift over time has been the development of IB’s focus on internationalizing IB curricula—supporting schools to be “internationally minded,” beyond providing international schools with an internationally-recognized diploma. Initially the IBDP enabled national groups to study together on a single less nationalistic curriculum. International understanding was implicit to the milieu of multilateral international schools. In the mid-1980s as IB found financial sustainability via the diffusion of the IBDP into state schools in the United States in Canada, IBO realized that an international student body could no longer be assumed (IBO, 1988). From the early 1990s the IB took a more conscious focus on the goal of international understanding (and later international mindedness) and its integration into its curricula. In its current “branding and impact” phase in the 21st century, fostering international mindedness is an overarching goal. Although still tied to a set of progressive learner dispositions of “open mindedness” and “inquiry”² the IB organization has become more explicit about its aim of fostering international mindedness and what that entails (IBO, 2017). In this important mission document with just over 6 pages of content, a full page is afforded to international mindedness. Significant also are recently conducted IB-sponsored studies, specifically focused on educating for international mindedness (Hacking et al., 2018; Singh and Qi, 2013; Sriprakash et al., 2014). Thus, IB now projects a more “positive” definition of international education (Tarc, 2009), that *any* school can work at.

The operational tension also remains significantly on the radar in IB’s rhetoric and reform policy (Tarc, 2009). As would be expected national/cultural diversity has expanded greatly in the make-up of IB policy actors and employees. New working languages have been added to the original languages of English and French. Curricular modifications have incrementally opened-up the Euro-centric beginnings of IB programs; for example, in 2015 Indigenous ways of knowing was formally added to the “knowledge areas” in the IBDP Theory of Knowledge course. Also, of note, is a recent push from IB commissioned research toward “intellectual equality” and “multilingualism” (Sriprakash et al., 2014) to inform IB’s conception of international mindedness, as its overarching pedagogical ideal. The Western-centeredness of IB, which can be attributed to its foundations and from the still hegemonic global status of Anglo-Western education, must be assumed. However, my speculation, to repeat, is that the IB curricula itself (especially the more open PYP and MYP) is probably more open to epistemic diversity than are the (national) contexts of IB school classrooms and teachers. Thus, we might say that the tension of the inter-national representativeness of IBO and of IB curricula have at least diminished somewhat.

In terms of broadening access, the IB has expanded beyond the more elite private international schools of its foundational period and entered state schools in the West; it has developed more accessible younger years programs, entered inner-city schools in the United States and the United Kingdom and entered partnerships with state schools in the global South (Ecuador). The more recent provision of the “Career-related Program” also represents an important access-broadening initiative. Still, criticisms remain of IB as elitist, as inaccessible, and as (unintentionally) furthering educational inequality given its use as a choice option within neoliberal school reform. For its part, the IBO began to prioritize its commitments to broadening access to IB programs in its 21st century policy discourse (IBO, 2006; Tarc, 2009). Given the 21st century zeitgeist of inclusivity and equity and given IB’s mission to massify international education, concerns around access and equity remain key pressure points for the IBO today (see the “E2” initiative, IBO, 2018).

As they made explicit in their Growth to Access document: “Today, over 1/2 million students from all continents have graduated from our Diploma Program but it is obvious that our goal requires millions of people worldwide to benefit from an international education (IBO, 2006, p. 2). In this key policy document, IBO makes it clear that despite a variety of their broadening access initiatives over the years, there remains very uneven access to IB, both geographically and in terms of social class. The policy document also includes a set of strategies and plans to mitigate this uneven access; while the past decade has seen incremental and singular instances of broadened access, in the larger picture, limited and uneven access remains a core challenge for IB. For example, in Dickson et al. (2017) recent examination of the Australian context, they find that “whether private or public, IB schools in Australia are overwhelmingly located in higher-SES areas and enroll students from higher-SES backgrounds” (p. 75).

In his DG report of 1972, Alec Peterson directly responded to IBDP student charges that IB is elitist, Alec Peterson suggested that IB could foster “intellectual elitism” over “social elitism” (IBO, p. 17). Here he was signaling how one’s education and academic performance might overtake social status and familial wealth in a meritocratic society. Perhaps, at that historical moment, the feasibility of dis-entangling educational elitism from social elitism seemed more credible. Despite schooling reforms for equality, catalyzed by the “new sociology of education” of the 1970s, social class and educational attainment have remained tightly correlated; we now witness countless ways in which familial cultural capital and resources are applied to facilitate academic success for middle and upper class families. As an education for distinction (particularly the IBDP) built on a “user-pays” model (Tarc, 2009), IB can little extract itself from these larger conditions of schooling and social class stratification. Consequently, the very neoliberalizing conditions allowing new models, as IB programs, into state educational systems, also steer the uses of IB education (as cultural capital) for social class advantage; and, given IB’s user-/institution-pays model that produces uneven access to its product, it is thus difficult to imagine how the operational tensions can be resolved.

²The “IB Learner Profile” sets out the following 10 “attributes” that “IB learners ... strive to be,” as follows: inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk takers, balanced and reflective (IBO, 2017, p. vii). The profile, originally developed in the context of the PYP, is a key instrument of IB’s branding.

Historicizing the structuring tensions of IB, as outlined above, illustrates how IB articulates within and alongside state educational systems and private independent schools embedded in national settings. It also shows how the IB has been somewhat proactive in the internationalization of education as well as reactive to its flows and pressures. These tensions of IB, invoked by the encounter of its aspirational dreams with practical realities (structured by larger forces) are also resonant with internationalizing schools and universities, navigating the limits and possibilities for (citizenship) education in an interdependent and asymmetric world. The next section turns to IB's relations to K-12 school internationalization.

IB as a window on school internationalization

IB's diffusion in state educational systems can also be studied as an instance of the internationalization of K-12 schooling. In her 2012 article, scholar Julia Resnik offers a most explicit analysis of how the IB's insertion and expansion in state schools can be interpreted as a process of de-nationalizing education. From its foundation, the IB was designed and adapted to articulate with state systems for educational and qualificatory alignments and recognition. For example, as the IBDP expanded in monolingual areas of North America, a beginning-level language course was added to its previously more demanding second language course requirement (Tarc, 2009). However, state educational systems have also been changing under globalization and not only as passive victims to exogenous global forces. Drawing on Sassen's scholarship (2000, 2003) uncovering how globalization is advanced within national spaces and by state actors, Resnik asserts that "the theoretical significance of IB schools ... is that they embody the denationalization of educational systems" (p. 249). Consequently, "certain national contexts and educational traditions encourage IB schools, while others hinder their propagation" (p. 249). I would add that since these contexts and traditions are also in flux, IB's propagation and prospective sustainability (see Beech and Guevara, 2020) within countries or educational jurisdictions also shift across time.

The "global" forces or actors interact with national systems, institutions and processes in what Sassen (2000) calls "frontier zones" as distinct "spatialities" embedded in the national (Resnik, 2012, p. 251). Resnik offers a kind of spatial typology that is useful in breaking apart the different levels of global-local interactions that can be considered part of k-12 school internationalization. She lists them, in ascending order of *thickness of the global*: (1) the IB international brand, (2) the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), (3) IB regional offices, (4) international schools for mobile families, (5) private schools that recruit local children, and (6) public schools that recruit local children. (my emphasis, p. 251)

IB as brand is the most global, symbolic and least tethered to a national physical space, materialized with the IB logo stamped on all things IB. The IBO is a transnational entity, made up of individuals of different nations and working with multiple states; yet, it has a central headquarters in geographical space. The least global is the state school serving "local" children of which the "global" of IB has very little presence in relation to the totality of the school operations and processes. In terms of focusing on school internationalization within state systems over the "global" of IB, it is helpful to invert Resnik's ordering. Under this inversion the thickest form of school internationalization is represented by the presence of IB programs in the "local" public school, where students' learning and subject formation is (at least subtly) being shaped by a supranational entity. And the thinnest and most symbolic manifestation, but much more widespread, is the IB brand recognized by wider national publics without tangible experience with the IB programs per se. The recent instituting of IBEC partnerships with state teacher education programs, mentioned above, also represents a new and somewhat thick form of school internationalization in the de-nationalized frontier zone of the global (IB) embedded in the national (here, teacher education). Thus, internationalization of K-12 schooling, as de-nationalization, is thickest where students receive a compulsory, state-funded education in the local school provided by a supranational entity. However, given the very small percentage of IB schools and IB students (and educators) within state educational systems, the breadth of this thickest level of de-nationalizing seems extremely narrow. On the other end, the thinner forms reach a wider audience and influence/represent internationalization (as de-nationalization) in more symbolic ways that are admittedly playing a role but also more difficult to trace.

A recent article by Tristan Bunnell takes a more "skeptical" view of IB's role and influence in "the internationalization of public schooling in practice" (p. 56), emphasizing just how narrow this thickest form may be. In his article, he "seek[s] to show that in practice the extent of contact between the IB and public schooling is relatively scarce, small scale and minimally funded and prioritized" (p. 57). First, Bunnell emphasizes the uneven distribution, where public schooling activity is predominantly located in a minority of countries and in clusters of only "urban settings" within these countries; the government-funded growth in Ecuador is a case in point (p. 60–61). Further, while there are private international schools where a majority of students take the IBDP, in many publicly funded schools in the other top three countries with public IB schools (United States, Canada and Australia), a minority of students are enrolled in the IBDP; for example, sometimes there exists a small cohort of 20–25 students taking the IBDP within a school of one thousand students (Tarc, 2009). In the case of Ecuador, its 270 IBDP public schools had an average of 22 examination candidates per school (Bunnell, p. 62). Thus, the IB brand(ing), with its "5000+ IB World schools in more than 150 countries," belies the relatively small number of IB students and teachers in public schools and the very small numbers of IB schools in many of these 150 countries.

Bunnell concludes his skeptical framing by considering state funding and IB's reliance on "political champions." There are a few countries, as Ecuador, Japan and the United States "led by an IB-government assemblage" (p. 63), indicative of a distinctive specialization of de-nationalization (Resnik, 2012). However, Bunnell (2020) continues, "very few governments directly support the IB, and it tends to involve relatively small grants of money" (p. 63). In the countries of the UK and the US, which have supported the adoption of IB programs through government funding, "funding is usually merely to cover the basic costs of applying for the

accreditation process, i.e., there is no long term funding available" (p. 63). Finally, IB's diffusion has continued to rely on individual influential contacts (Tarc, 2009) including, more recently, political champions (UK, City of Chicago, Ecuador). Where support is contingent on individuals and political outcomes, such support may not be sustainable.

Thus, Resnik (2012) illustrates dynamics of the denationalization of education via the propagation of IB in state schooling, across its thinner and thicker types; whereas, Bunnell (2020) provides cautionary statistics on the actual depth, scope and accessibility of the thickest type. Taken together we can see that the IB is indeed emblematic of transnationalizing processes, but the depth of these processes is questionable. My sense is that it is useful to examine all the types/levels in Resnik's typology and particularly their complex interactions, as they work together to produce denationalizing zones that constitute school internationalization. The IB branding works dynamically with the IBO's regional offices and the concrete manifestations of IB programs, to heighten the prominence and effect of IB. And while actual numbers of IBDP exam candidates, IB students and IB teachers remain low in relation to the "buzz" of IB, these actors have relations across multiple domains. For example, anecdotally, IB teachers talk about how teaching IB has positively affected their teaching in non-IB classes.

Both Resnik (2012) and Bunnell (2020) articulate such positive potential secondary effects. Resnik discusses "percolation" as the influence of aspects of the DP program ... on curricula and programs that are not related to the "IB" (p. 263). She provides examples from two state-sponsored schools in London, England that adapt the IBDP's innovatory core elements to provide critical thinking courses, extended inquiry projects and volunteering to the larger majority of non-IB students in the schools. These percolatory effects are particularly significant given IB's "horizontal networks of governance," where "teachers are trained by other teachers ... and a range of mechanisms for promoting the exchange of know-how and experiences among practitioners have been fostered" (Beech and Guevara, 2020, p. 104). This horizontality of governance and teachers' professional development explains why pockets of IB schools within certain geographies can be found, as in the country of Ecuador and in the city of Chicago, and why the IBO seeks to develop these close clusters of schools. It also explains how *private* IB schools are actors in the assemblage of school internationalization in the *public* sector. Additionally, within the public sector, this horizontality and teacher collaboration may percolate into non-IB schools under board level initiatives, including non-IB professional development and educator networks.

Bunnell also elaborates on this "ripple" effect by discussing research on IB public schools in Spain, Ecuador and Japan. In summary these (potential) effects included: energizing learning and extra-curricular activities and positive school culture for non-IB students, showcasing high academic approaches, model pedagogies and internationally minded educational approaches for other programs, schools and system-wide reforms (p. 64–65). However, not all ripple or secondary effects are positive. Researchers have also raised concerns of the negative secondary effects of bringing IB into state educational systems. These potential negative effects, which connect to the stratifying uses of IB under neoliberal privatizing reform already discussed, include: the potential negative effects of "IB-choosing" students exiting from local schools (Lauder, 2007); the funneling of resources to the already privileged mobile (Doherty, 2013; Tarc, 2009) and urban (Bunnell, 2020) middle classes; and the siloing of IB and non-IB student groupings (Culross and Tarver, 2007).

On the one hand, from a state schooling perspective, IB is implicated in the de-nationalizing of education that, in recent decades, have been challenging idealizations and practices of schooling as a territorially bounded activity of the sovereign nation-state. At the very least, the propagation and growth of IB into state educational systems represents a window on these de-nationalizing processes constituted by the mix of transnational (educational) policy forces and flows, national/ministerial sovereignties and (flexible) citizenships inside, and stretching across, borders. In some respects, IB is itself a transnational force in school internationalization, albeit with its program provision having limited scope, depth and accessibility (Bunnell, 2020).

From a more multilateral perspective, on the other hand, the IB is a salient exemplar of international education and, analytically, offers a window on how ideals and manifestations of an education for international understanding (toward a more peaceful, egalitarian world) have evolved across the last fifty years. Such analysis provides insights into the trends and prospects for international education and its variants under contemporary conditions. Both perspectives reveal how IB as implicated in the globalizing geopolitics of education.

Conclusion

To conclude, "IB" is a longstanding, multi-faceted and study-worthy phenomenon as a particular manifestation of international/progressive education, as a window on the shifting meanings and uses of (international) education in global times and as an enabler and manifestation of school internationalization. IB is a compelling exemplar of the heightened expediency of international education in the 21st century (Tarc, 2009, 2019). For many students and families, IB has proven to be an enriched and value-added educational program (Tarc et al., 2019). The IB organization has navigated relatively successfully across decades of global transformations, beyond its own making, to govern its core mandate of providing an IB diploma on a school-by-school basis. It has also expanded its activities to include younger-years and career-related programs and to seek out other initiatives and partnerships to "create a better world" through education. How IB has navigated, points to the larger conditions of globalization that have also animated the trend of internationalization of K-12 schooling. Concurrently, IB is also an agent in school internationalization across its different levels of embeddedness in national schooling.

IB's continued success raises several new and old questions that will require re-thinking and negotiation as societies and institutions respond to the regressive and potentially progressive forces catalyzed by the Covid-19 pandemic and its still uncertain aftermath. On the one hand, there will be pressures for IB to "up" its (discursive) commitments to social justice/anti-oppressive and

environmentalist pedagogy in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement and given global ecological crises. A turn to anti-racist pedagogies, for example, would represent a shift given IB's emergence from, and niche uses in, the traditionally "color-blind" elite international schools culture (for example, David, 2020). On the other hand, the threat to liberal internationalism by the rise of populist nationalisms, border closings and trade-wars might mean that IB's viability finds more traction in the accrual of academic distinction and capital, over its promise of a humanist international mindedness or even the facilitation of global mobility. As with other educational providers, IB will have to respond to a confluence of social justice desires, the pedagogical needs of the learner (21st century learning) and the continued dominance of neoliberal performativity (Tarc, 2015). My sense is that, programmatically, it will continue to stick with its core foundation as a provider of a learner-centered liberal-humanist education, while, adapting rhetorically, to the wider conditions and cultural politics in a globalizing (and de-globalizing) world.

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Relevant website

ibo.org.

Low-fee private schools

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Introduction	355
Definitions and the complexity of reality	355
The development of low-fee private schools	356
Factors leading to low-fee private schools	358
Over-supply of teachers	358
Overall poor performance of the public sector	358
Hidden costs and private tuition costs	360
Language of instruction	360
Access and affordability	360
Low-cost private school chains and international investment	361
Conclusion	363
Acknowledgments	363
References	363

Introduction

The private sector of schooling has always been highly diverse. While much of the academic research and public discussion about private schools has long been linked to issues related to privilege and elitism (Green and Kynaston 2019; Peel, 2015; Walford, 1990), in practice, this focus has always been misleading. In most countries the private sector is very varied - while the best known schools may well be highly selective, expensive, and likely to lead to high-status universities, there have always been many other private schools that are far more modest.

It is worth remembering that historically all schools were originally private schools. Schools owned, funded, managed, and regulated by the state are relative newcomers in most countries. Generally, just two centuries ago it would have seemed a needlessly expensive and potentially dangerous activity to provide schooling for the poor, but now free universal basic education is perceived as a human right (Aubry and Dorsi, 2016).

Over the last few decades diversity within the private sector has been growing, and there has been an unexpected increase in private schooling in developing countries. Countries as varied as China, Mongolia, India, Nigeria, Uganda, and Vietnam have all seen a dramatic growth in the private sector of schooling - particularly at the primary level, but also at secondary. The schools themselves are very wide-ranging in nature. Some are very expensive and elitist schools for the wealthy or for ex-patriots living within these countries, but a major part of the growth of private schools has been those designed for local, often poor, families. The schools with the lowest fees may charge only a few US dollars per month, and have come to be known as “low-fee” or “low-cost” private schools. These schools are aimed at a target market of some of the poorest families in each of the countries, providing schooling for children whose families may be earning a few dollars per day. Where there has been a demand for private schooling a range of individuals, small groups, charities, and non-governmental organizations have stepped in to provide schooling for those who cannot afford the high fees of the elite schools, but are able and prepared to spend a significant proportion of their income on lower-fee private schools.

Definitions and the complexity of reality

There is no internationally accepted definition for “low-fee private schools.” This is not unexpected as there are no internationally accepted definitions for any of the four words that make up that phrase. Although many, even within the worlds of academia and of international development, use these terms as if they are internationally agreed, all four words represent simplifications of the reality that is to be found in the complex and ever changing world in which we live.

The concept of a “school” usually goes without question, but various countries have different ideas about what is to count as a school. There are obvious questions about how many children are involved, how old, for how long, for what proportion of the day or year, what subjects are taught, who does the teaching, and so on. Now that learning from the internet is ubiquitous, the idea that students need be gathered together in a physical space called a “school” comes under examination, and homeschooling has become a reality for many. When does private tutoring become a school? In terms of recognition and regulation, different countries, and sometimes regions within countries, have made different decisions about what should count as a school - which are totally ignored in most studies in comparative education.

But the problems of definition become far more complex when considering the term “private.” Private might refer to ownership, funding, management, or regulation of the schools. Religious organizations have been centrally involved in private provision in many countries for centuries. In many more-economically-developed countries they were the backbone on which schooling developed, and have become so much a part of the educational landscape that they receive substantial financial support from the state. In the UK, for example, the buildings of many religious schools remain in ownership of religious organizations, but most religious schools receive full per-pupil funding from the government, and are highly regulated by the state. In the Netherlands the majority of schools are officially private, but they receive full funding and even their buildings are provided by the state. This means that the distinction between private and state schools is often blurred, and whether a school is defined as being “private” or “government” depends on the history and politics of each country.

Similar problems can be seen in the words “low” and “fee.” What may be considered low in terms of international comparisons, may not be considered low by the families of the children attending these schools where they represent a considerable proportion of their income. For them, the fees are all they can or wish to afford. “Low” is operationalized differently in various academic research reports. Thus, for example, [Srivastava \(2006: 498\)](#) defined it as a fee “not exceeding about one day’s earnings of a daily wage laborer at the primary and junior levels, and two days’ earnings at the high school and intermediate levels”. Other studies have defined “low” in relation to state-enforced minimum wages, or a “poverty line” of US\$1.25 or US\$2.00 per person per day ([Tooley and Longfield, 2016](#)), or as a proportion of the country’s per-capita income, or per-pupil expenditure in government schools ([Kingdon, 2020: 13](#)). Any definition is ultimately arbitrary, for the schools are simply at the lower end of the fee scales for private schools in any particular country. Government statistics rarely take account of any such definitions and there is no evidence that parents, teachers, or owners of schools do so either.

What is to be included in the term “fee” is also contentious and some writers have used the term low-cost rather than low-fee to try to deal with this. Some use the word “cost” to indicate that families have to pay more than just the stated school’s fee for their children to attend (e.g. [Tooley and Longfield, 2016](#)). They may have to pay for books, school uniforms, examination entrance fees, transport, and other extras. For older children there may also be the additional cost of forgone earnings, as children often make major contributions to family’s income. The use of the term “cost” also allows metaphorical costs, such as the safety costs of lengthy travel, to be more easily included. For this type of low-cost, the schools are usually geographically near to the home, so may be considered to be safer for children (especially for girls) than a school at a greater distance. Other academics (for example, [Lewin, 2017: 82](#)) use the term “cost” to indicate a totally different consideration, where the cost is the per-pupil cost of providing schooling by the owner rather than the larger fee (or price) paid by the parents. Thus the profit made by the owner is emphasized, along with the reasons why schools are able to charge low fees.

In his edited study of India, Nigeria and Uganda for the Commonwealth Secretariat, [Phillipson \(2008: 1\)](#) adopts a very narrow definition of low-fee private schools that is described by what he does not consider to be encompassed by the category as much as what is to be included. He states:

It is not a school run by a non-governmental organization for charitable or developmental purposes. It is not a school run by a religious organization for the furtherance of a particular set of moral values and beliefs. It is not a school offering an educational advantage to its pupils and charging a high price for the privilege of gaining access to it. Finally, it is not a school set up by the local community until the government agrees to take over ownership. In contrast to these distinctions, the low cost private school is a school that has been set up and is owned by an individual or individuals for the purpose of making a profit.

This narrow definition is unhelpful, and it is not even consistently applied within the book itself. Not only are these distinctions not clear, in that there may well be multiple reasons for starting and continuing to run a school for the poor, the exclusion of non-governmental organizations (especially small, local NGOs), religious organizations, and those who might eventually wish to obtain some state funding, omits from consideration a huge part of the growth in low-fee private schooling. It also restricts our understanding of why such schools might be started and how the schools themselves, and the motivations for their continued existence, may change in nature over a period of time. Even the idea that they must “make a profit” collapses within the complexity of individuals and groups paying themselves salaries, or establishing schools so that they might gain employment. The vast majority of these new private schools were not (at least initially) the result of shareholders investing money in schools because they saw them as the way to obtain the highest financial return. The reasons for starting and continuing with the schools are much more complex, and there is thus the need to consider the whole range of non-government sector schools with low fees that are designed to serve some of the poorest families in each society.

Any generalizations about low-fee private schools, even within a single country, should thus be treated with great caution (including within this article). Readers of research on low-fee private schools need to carefully check the definitions being used and the sources of information cited. There are many cases in the literature where researchers do not adhere to their own definitions, and where the data sources are inadequate to support the claims made.

The development of low-fee private schools

Within the vast majority of countries there has been a range of private schools with fees from very expensive to relatively low fees for many centuries. A good number of major private schools in England were originally established in the 15th and 16th centuries as

schools for “poor scholars” in the local area. While there is some doubt about who was defined as a “poor scholar” (Orme, 2008), these schools certainly provided some students with free schooling. Meanwhile most children from poorer families had to make do with dame schools and other local fee-paying provision. Many children had little schooling, but church and other private organizations provided a basic level of schooling to many others. It was only as late as 1870 that the British government began to build a national system of schools and, even then, its initial purpose was to fill the gaps in private and charitable provision rather than to provide schools for all.

Tooley (2009: 212–234) argues that in the early nineteenth century India had a somewhat similar system of local private village schools which it was estimated in 1826 provided for about 25% of boys. With the addition of home schooling, about a third of boys were being schooled and, most interestingly, many of these boys were from lower caste families paying very low fees. These schools were later replaced by European-style schools which, in 1931, Mahatma Ghandi argued were too expensive for the poor, leading to the result that “today India is more illiterate than it was fifty or a hundred years ago” (quoted by Tooley, 2009: 212). Ghandi called for a revival of this type of low-fee private school in India, and Tooley and others found what might be seen as their reincarnation in the low-fee private schools in both rural and urban areas in India and in other countries in the late 1990s and 2000s.

Although the growth in low-fee private schools probably started in the 1980s, it was in the late 1990s and early 2010s that academics and others gradually became aware of the rapid increase in school designed to provide places for poor students in the less-economically-developed world. A range of reports, papers, and books such as those by Majumdar and Vaidyanathan (1995), Kitaev (1999), The PROBE Team (1999), and Tooley (2001), and those involved with international development policy used a variety of terms to describe these schools such as “budget schools” (Tooley and Dixon, 2005), “schools for the poor,” “new private schools,” and so on. The term “low-fee private schools” was first used to describe these schools by Srivastava (2006). The phrase has been widely used since but, as discussed above, has not gone unchallenged. As the role of these schools in educational provision for the poor is highly contested (discussed below) the terminology used by the various stakeholders varies so as to emphasize particular aspects of the nature of the schools.

It is important to recognize that the growth of low-fee private schools took place in parallel with the development and some progress toward the Millennium Development Goals for education where free basic education for all children was seen as a Human Right. Their growth might be seen as a reaction to the failure of various countries to provide schooling of an appropriate quality and effectiveness, and various authors saw them as vital part of reaching Millennium Goals. Now the focus is on Sustainable Development Goals and the extent to which low-fee schools might be promoted and supported by international aid, other funders, and by the governments of these less economically developed countries to achieve those Goals. This is a highly politically contentious area, and most researchers in the field are probably either advocates or critics of the involvement of non-state actors in education, especially if those actors wish to make a profit.

The study of such schools became particularly important when it was argued that low-fee private schools were playing an important part in achieving *Education for All* targets and the Millennium Development Goals. For example, Tooley and Dixon (2007), Tooley et al. (2007) suggested that the many low-fee private schools that were practically unknown to the governments of, for example, Ghana, India, Nigeria, and Pakistan, were making a substantial contribution toward meeting those targets. In contrast, others such as Lewin (2007), argued that the contribution that private schools made to the achievement of *Education for All* was small. But the work of such critics often relied on government statistics and interviews with high ranking administrators neither of which, as Tooley (2009) and others described, usually knew very much about the existence or nature of low-fee private schools in their own countries. One of the themes throughout Tooley’s book is the way that government officials, university academics, development advisors, and educationalists continually denied the existence of such schools in their countries in the early 2000s yet, by going into the slums and poor districts of so many developing countries, researchers were able to locate very many such schools. Many parents had rejected the schools provided by the government (where they were provided) and decided to devote a large proportion of their incomes (but a small actual sum) to the fees for local private schools. Most of these schools were entrepreneurial schools in the sense that they had to make enough money for the owner (who who might also be the Principal) to survive, yet there was usually more to the establishment of such schools than simple profit-making or earning a living. Tooley (2009) gives many examples where wishing to help the local community was as much a part of the motivation for starting a school as increasing personal income, and this is shown by the free or subsidized places that are sometimes given to orphans or families without any means to pay. He also describes the way that an initial plan to run a kindergarten gradually expands into a full primary school as parents encourage the owner to extend the age coverage year by year as their children get older. Owners respond not only because they see the chance to increase their income, but because they see a need in their local community that they feel they can meet. This same sort of mixture of motives was found by Srivastava (2007a, 2008a) in her study of low-fee private schools in Uttar Pradesh. The role of local philanthropy should not be excluded.

There has now been considerable research on low-fee private schools in the developing world, and the existence of these schools has become more recognized. However, even recent studies have shown that there is a need to systematically search the streets in some areas to locate schools: the administrative authorities simply do not have any records (e.g. Härmä (2016b) in rural Nigeria). There has been a particular concentration of research on India where many separate studies have been conducted. This includes work by Chudgar and Creed (2016), Härmä (2009, 2011), Kingdon (2007, 2008, 2020), Muralidharan and Kremer (2009), Shukla and Joshi (2008), Srivastava (2007 a,b), Tooley and Dixon (2006), Tooley (2007), and Tooley et al. (2007). But there has also been much work conducted in other developing countries such as Argentina (Moschetti and Snaider, 2019), Colombia (AlWindi (2015), Ghana (Akyeampong, 2009), Kenya (Edwards et al., 2017), Liberia (Dixon and Humble, 2019), Nepal (Bhatta, 2014), Nigeria (Umar, 2008; Rose and Adelabu, 2007), Malawi (Chimombo, 2009), Mozambique (Härmä, 2016a), Uganda (Kisira, 2008),

Pakistan (Fennell, 2013), and Peru (Balarin et al., 2019). Obviously, the details of low-fee private schooling differ according to the local context, but what is clear from all of these studies is the recent expansion of low-fee private schools and their growing importance to education, even in war-torn countries such as Liberia.

Factors leading to low-fee private schools

In 2008 Phillipson identified some of the most important factors leading to the expansion of low-fee private schools as: an over-supply of teachers, poor performance of the public sector, high hidden costs of government schooling and private tuition costs, and language of instruction. These factors still appear to be central. While each may not apply in all cases, most can be seen to be present in developing countries where an expansion of low-fee private schools is occurring.

Over-supply of teachers

Initially, it might seem strange that various developing countries have an over-supply of teachers. Yet, in countries such as India, teaching is seen as a well-paid and secure job which is also one that is “respectable” for women. Indeed, Kingdon (2020:16–18) shows in India government elementary schools teachers earn, on average, around 8 times the country’s per capita income. This ratio is very much higher than for teachers “in China, Pakistan, Indonesia, Bangladesh etc. where the ratio is typically between 1 and 2” (pp. 16–17). Over-supply is also a matter of definition, for in many countries private school teachers do not have to be qualified by the state. In many parts of India, the over-supply is not in terms of trained teachers, but of graduates who are deemed to be suitable to teach simply because they have a degree. In low-fee schools many teachers do not even have a degree or sometimes even any schooling after primary. In other parts, and in some other countries, there are many more trained teachers than places available due to poor planning and the desire of many to teach.

The oversupply of people qualified, or believing themselves qualified, to teach leads directly to new entrepreneurial schools being opened. It also means that new and existing low-fee private schools are able to employ teachers at very low cost, often at a fraction of the salaries that trained teachers can obtain in the government schools. Data on private school salaries is difficult to research for negotiations are often conducted at an individual level, and vary considerably by District and State. Kingdon (2020: 18) shows that the ratio of average private school compared to government school salaries seems to have declined over the last 20 years, partly due to the overnight almost doubling of state salaries in 2009, such that the worst ratio was found in the early 2010s in two districts of the Punjab where private school teachers were earning only 3% of that of Government teachers. Perhaps one-tenth is a reasonable guess overall – a figure which is still roughly equivalent to per capita income. Those teachers who are trained are prepared to tolerate these low salaries for a short period while adding to their experience of teaching and waiting for a job in a government school. Muralidharan and Kremer (2009), for example, estimate that (before the hike in government salaries) teachers in rural low-fee private schools in India earned at most one-fifth of the salaries of government school teachers. They were on average 10 years younger and twice as likely to come from the same village where the school is situated. They explained that, not only does this poorly paid teaching give them further teaching experience, it also gives them time for further study via distance education or local colleges so that they became better placed in the labor market for a future job in teaching or elsewhere.

Low salaries for teachers is the central reason why low-fee private schools are able to operate with low-fees. Härmä (2015) found that in Lagos the mean private school salary was only 60% of the legal minimum wage and only 42% of the starting salary for teachers in government schools. Even where extra funding is obtained from religious or philanthropic organizations, low-salaries are usually crucial in balancing the budget.

Overall poor performance of the public sector

The failure of the government sector can be simply that schools are not available for all children, or not within what the parents regard as a reasonable distance from their homes. This is the case in many rural parts of India, Nigeria, Uganda, and so on. It can also be that the schools available do not offer the type of schooling that parents desire, in particular with regard to religion or nature of the curriculum. Interestingly, this can apply as much in developed countries as in developing ones where schools for religious minorities such as Muslims or evangelical Christians are often not available and these groups feel forced to provide their own (often low-fee) private schools (Walford, 1991).

But the most significant way in which government schools are thought to have failed is in terms of academic success and factors linked to this. The reduced salaries paid to teachers in low-fee private schools allow them to employ proportionally more teachers than in government schools. In Muralidharan and Kremer’s (2009) study, for example, they found that the pupil-teacher ratio for the private schools of 19.2 was less than half the ratio of 43.4 in government schools. But, perhaps most importantly, teachers in private schools are often perceived as having a greater commitment to the school and to the pupils than teachers in government schools. This is seen in terms of the number of absences by teachers (which many studies have shown is often far lower in low-fee private schools, e.g. Härmä, 2015: 184), the amount of time spent teaching by teachers when they are present, and by the fact that teachers in low-fee are more likely to be local to the school and thus “understand” the children better, speak the local language, and be more accountable to parents. Private schools, of course, have a greater ability

to sack teachers who do not meet expectations than do far more bureaucratic, and unionized, government schools. In contrast, as we have seen, teachers in low-fee schools are less likely to be trained teachers and to have a lower level of education than those in government schools.

It has long been known that there are problems with many schooling systems in the developing world. For example, an important *Public Report on Basic Education* (The PROBE Team, 1999) in four northern Indian States, showed many problems associated with the quality of schooling. When researchers called unannounced on a large random sample of government schools only half were engaged in any teaching activity. In a third, the Principal was absent. Examples were given of teachers being drunk, sleeping on the job, getting children to do their domestic chores for them, and teachers keeping schools closed for weeks at a time. The report concluded that, generally, teaching activity in these government schools had been reduced to a minimum, in terms of both time and effort. More importantly, they claimed that “this pattern is not confined to a minority of irresponsible teachers – it has become a way of life in the profession.” Similar conclusions have been drawn by many research studies.

There is something of an irony in that, while there are such clear problems in the government sector, for many educationists it is the quality of the schooling provided in the private sector that is a key concern. But these are reasonable concerns given that the fees of such schools are low mainly because the teachers are not paid salaries anywhere near those of government school teachers, and teachers in these low-fee schools are often not trained or qualified teachers. It is important that parents are not being exploited and part of their very limited incomes being wasted. Yet, Tooley et al. (2007) found, in an extensive census and survey of private and government schools in the notified slums of Hyderabad, that on a variety of measures (including pupil-teacher ratio, teaching activity, teacher absenteeism, and classroom facilities) private unaided schools (including the unrecognized ones) were actually superior to the comparable government schools. In a later studies of academic performance in India, Nigeria and Ghana, Tooley and his colleagues (Tooley, 2009, ch 9) gave standardized tests to thousands of children and showed that the children in private schools in general scored higher on these tests in key curriculum areas than children in government schools. This was true even when the results were controlled for several background variables to try to account for the differences between the children’s backgrounds. Such studies are always open to criticism for not controlling for sufficient variables.

In the mid 2010s there were two major reviews of published studies on low-fee schools conducted by Day Ashley et al. (2014) and Wales et al. (2015). These reports drew together a great deal of data and are a useful guide to relevant publications, but are less useful for their overall findings. The basic problem is that any review, by its very nature, cannot take into consideration the social and historical contexts in which schools and education are embedded. Countries vary greatly in the regulatory and financial context in which both state and non-state schools function. To try to make generalizations about the nature and impact of non-state schools is fraught with problems – a fuller understanding can only be achieved a country at a time and, even then, there is considerable variation in the quality, nature, and effectiveness of individual low-fee private schools.

However, it is worth briefly examining some of the findings of these reports on academic advantage. Where there are nearby government schools, one of the most important questions that researchers have attempted to answer is whether low-fee private schools actually offer any academic advantage to children over that available in government schools. Day Ashley et al. (2014) examined research published in the previous five years focusing on 11 countries that had been prioritized by the UK Department for International Development – Bangladesh, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Africa, and Tanzania. This review considered private schools that were dependent on fees for all or part of their of their operational and development costs, and were owned and/or founded independently of the state. It did not include schools run by NGOs, charities, or religious organizations. Fifty-nine studies were judged to be of appropriate quality and included in the review. As such review studies are unable to take account of each country’s differing histories and contexts, while not including elite private schools, some of the research considered may include moderate-rather than low-fee schools. Overall, there was only one finding where they were able to present strong evidence – that teaching is better in private schools than in state schools as measured by levels of teacher presence and teaching activity as well as teaching approaches that are more likely to lead to improved learning outcomes. Simply stated, the teachers are more likely to turn up and teach their classes. The report found moderate evidence that parents perceived that private schools were of better quality than government schools in terms of teaching, teacher attendance, school performance, small class size and discipline. The study found moderate evidence that private school students actually achieved better learning outcomes, but found ambiguity about the size of the school effect and they noted that “many children may not be achieving basic competences even in private schools” (Day Ashley et al., 2014: 1). The report was heavily criticized by Tooley and Longfield (2014) and an active blog ran on the UKFIET website for a while (2015), with some of the criticism being accepted by the original authors of the report.

A more recent review by Akmal et al. (2019) examined 33 empirical papers published between 2014 and 2019 specifically looking at the relative academic success of children in government and low-fee private schools. Of 13 papers judged of appropriate quality, they found eight showing a positive effect on learning outcomes for private schools (including Rolleston and Moore (2018) on Andhra Pradesh and Alcott and Rose (2016) on Kenya and Uganda) and five studies showing no or very little difference between government and low-fee private schools (including Dixon et al. (2019) on Delhi, Zuilkowski et al. (2020) on Kenya). Akmal et al. (2019) found that the evidence had not changed since the original DFID Report, and gave only weak support for private schools advantage. A study by Gruijters, Adcott, and Rose (2020) of schools in India, Kenya, Pakistan and Uganda found that once they had controlled for family background, there were (at most) small private school learning advantages in all cases – ranging from 0.06 to 0.25 standard deviations. This is non-negligible, but it is from a very low baseline. One thing that is clear is that if low-fee private schools do give better outcomes than government schools, in practically all cases in the developing world the differences are small and the average level of achievement attained is low.

The second major review linked to that of (Day Ashley et al., 2014) but covering philanthropic and religiously-based schools (Wales et al., 2015) has had less impact, despite of the fact that this type of school plays a large part in provision in certain countries. BRAC, for example, has 32,000 schools mainly in Bangladesh, while madrasa schools play a large part in Pakistan and Bangladesh. In the Democratic Republic of Congo Catholic schools dominate this form of provision. A major problem is that there is limited high quality research on whether children are more academically successful in these schools than in government schools, but the review found moderate evidence that some philanthropic schools gave an academic advantage while limited evidence suggest that religious schools were similar to government schools.

In summary, while parents clearly believe that low-fee private schools are likely to produce academic results that are better than the corresponding local government schools, there are mixed research results on this. In some areas of some countries there is fairly strong overall positive support, but the differences are small, and the overall level of performance is low. In other areas of the same or different countries there is little or no evidence for their success. In the end, as in the wider private sector it depends on the quality of each individual private school and the quality of the competing government school. Härmä (2019) has shown in her case studies of Abuja, Accra and Kampala that regulation is weak for both types of school. In such a situation variation in the quality of individual schools will be high, such that broad generalizations and averages are only partially informative.

Hidden costs and private tuition costs

Even in most developing countries, at least primary schooling is nominally free. In practice, there are still costs to be met for school uniforms, books, stationary, “voluntary” gifts to teachers, and to the school for specific activities. But if government schools are not performing effectively, many parents also pay for supplementary private tutoring – sometimes given by the very same teachers who should have been teaching their children during the school day. The decision that parents make is not one of free schooling for their children versus paying fees for private schools, but one of how much more a low-fee school would cost.

Private supplementary tutoring has boomed during recent decades (Aslam and Atherton, 2014; Brehm and Silova, 2014; Bray et al., 2018). Mark Bray (2006, 2009) has documented some of this growth in a wide range of countries from Canada and France, to Cambodia, Bangladesh, Kenya and Egypt. Gathering together results from several surveys he shows, for example, that about two-thirds of Kenyan Grade 6 pupils, about a third of students from Bangladesh and Namibia receive supplementary tutoring. Many of these families using private tuition will be more affluent than those using the low-fee private schools but, if the child is attending a “free” government school, it might be cheaper to move the child to a private school that actually teaches well instead. Low-fee private schools can be seen to be partly in competition with what parents can obtain by employing private tutors. Indeed, as in some countries children in low-fee private schools are sometimes enrolled in government schools in addition to the low-fee school (to obtain free lunches or books, or to ensure that they can enter national examinations), the low-fee schools might be seen as a developed version of supplementary tuition.

Language of instruction

The last of Phillipson’s (2008) four factors that are liable to lead to a growth in low-fee private schools is the common demand among the world’s poor for a particular language of instruction. Sometimes it is minorities who wish their children to be taught in the language of the home rather than an official language but, in contrast, it may be that parents believe their child will have an advantage in life English is learned from a young age. English is seen as an international language that will provide access to future jobs. In Nepal, for example, many low-fee private schools advertise themselves as “English Boarding” or “EB” schools. In this case the word “boarding” has been transformed into a signifier of prestige, linguistically associating the schools with the major private boarding schools of Britain. The word “English” reinforces this high status and also indicates that the language of instruction is supposedly English for the main subjects. Whether or not this is correct is a matter of individual investigation. It is also highly debatable whether using English as the language of instruction at an early age actually helps children learn either English or the other subjects.

Access and affordability

An important area for research and debate has been whether low-fee schools are accessible and affordable for very poor families. There are many local studies particularly in rural areas which find that low-fee schools are both inaccessible and unaffordable (e.g. Härmä and Rose, 2012; Härmä, 2016a,b; Riep, 2014). The review by Day Ashley et al. (2014) found weak and inconclusive evidence about the accessibility of private schools for poor children. There were differences between urban and rural areas in the provision of private schools, and the spread varied in different countries with generally there being greater access in urban areas. There was inconsistent evidence about whether more boys than girls were attending private schools, with this being more common in India and Pakistan. In contrast, Wales et al. (2015) found strong evidence that philanthropic and NGO schools often purposefully located themselves to reach the poor and marginalized in rural areas and urban slums. They also often targeted girls.

The DFID Report (Day Ashley et al., 2014) also found moderate evidence on whether the poor are able to pay for private schools. Most was neutral, some negative and the report found no positive evidence that any but a few children from lower economic quintiles are able to pay the necessary fees. This was one of the areas strongly challenged by Tooley and Longfield (2014). The report by

Wales et al. (2015) identified questions of affordability as one of the significant gaps in research, yet many philanthropic and religious schools are targeted at the poor.

One of the problems with surveys of research relating to a wide range of different countries and circumstances is that they are likely to give weak evidence overall. One has to examine access and affordability of low-fee schools at a local level and within the historic, economic and social context of these low-fee schools within the spectrum of private schools and government schools available. It is obvious, for example, that urban areas are likely to have greater choice between private schools and that rural areas may only have one or no private schools that is possible for them to use. There is a spread of private schools in terms of geographical availability as well fee level.

Kingdon (2020) has used a variety of government data to examine the extent of private schooling in India, focusing on recognized and unrecognized unaided schools, while knowing that this may under-represent the number of unrecognized schools. First she charts the rapid increase in private schools and the corresponding decrease in government schools, which she describes as a “parental abandonment of government schools.” Next she uses data from a national household survey to find how much families pay in school fees. She presents both mean and median fees for States for both urban and rural families. She benchmarks these fees against various criteria and finds that, for example, median fees compared to annual minimum earnings of a daily-wage worker can be in one state as low as 4% and are about 10% overall. She also finds that, on average, about 26% of rural private pupils’ monthly fees are below their State’s daily minimum wage. She argues that in many States more than one-third of private schools are serving poor families. In other words, using these definitions, a good proportion of private schools are accessible to the poor.

This finding from Kingdon is in contrast to much of the literature, but an important paper by Tooley and Longfield (2016) examines the seeming conundrum that there is good evidenced that some of the very poorest in various nations are using low-fee schools yet various studies indicate that they are unaffordable to the poor. The problem is the very simple one that most researchers use average fees in their calculations and fail to consider that this means that very many schools charge less than the average. They are actually asking a question of “Can the poorest families afford the average fees that are paid by families who send their children to private schools?” But the appropriate question is whether there are schools available that the poorest can afford. Just as with the rest of the private sector, there is a range of prices even for those schools specifically aimed at the poor. Further, the additional costs such as for food, stationary, uniform, and transport are often treated as if they are fixed, yet the poorest will spend less than the average poor in each of these areas.

Even the stated fee in low-fee schools is more flexible than it may seem. Schools may advertise that there are reductions for second and subsequent children, but may also be prepared to offer lower fees in particular circumstances. In a similar way to major private schools around the world, some offer scholarships to able children because these children are likely to be successful in external examinations and become good advertisements for the school. Other schools may be genuinely philanthropic and allow lower fees to orphans or where families are having unexpected financial difficulties. While some schools may have owners who can choose to be personally philanthropic, other schools may be forced into philanthropy by the need to maintain student numbers. The incomes of many of the parents of children in low-fee schools are often erratic and unpredictable, which leads to similar problems for the schools (Rolleston and Adefeso-Olateju, 2014; Edwards et al., 2017). Srivastava (2008b: 454) reports “fee-bargaining” and “fee-jumping” as parents either bargain to reduce their payments or simply change schools leaving a debt. A child paying a smaller fee for tuition is better than a vacant place, so in some circumstances parents have negotiating power. We do not know the extent of such flexibility in fees actually collected but, even without any flexibility, in any discussion of affordability it needs to be remembered that a median has half below and half above that average value, and the very poorest will try to find a school in the bottom half.

This question of affordability is key to for those who believe that low-fee private schools have an important role in providing schooling for the poor (e.g. Dixon, 2013; Tooley, 2009), but the fact that there may always be some very poor families that cannot afford even the lowest fees does not mean that low-fee private schools cannot play a part in schooling the poor. Those low-fee private schools that are religious or philanthropic are usually designed to reach the poor.

Low-cost private school chains and international investment

While many of the early low-fee schools were provided by individual entrepreneurs who either wished simply to be employed or to make a profit, low-fee private schools soon became the target of investment. Between the first and second editions of James Tooley’s book on *The Global Education Industry* (1999, 2001: 13–14) a new introduction was written in which rather scathing comments on schools “charging very low fees, and offering education of variable quality” and “basic education with no frills” in the first edition had been regretted and new information added on the ubiquity of such schools in India with positive comments made about the schools and the “Federation of Private Schools’ Management” in Hyderabad. It is noteworthy that both books were so early, and that Tooley was beginning to think about brands of schools with might improve quality and management. By 2007 Tooley was suggesting that investors might help local entrepreneurs through loans to expand their schools into branded chains which would help parents make choices about the quality of schools. Alternatively, investors might establish joint ventures with local entrepreneurs to form their own school chains. Tooley (2007: 41) envisaged initial research and development involving technology, curriculum, pedagogy and teacher-training to generate a replicable model for education for the poor within a franchise model.

Since that time, and in part due to Tooley’s own involvement, in addition to being a way of enhancing Education for All and Global Development Goals, low-cost private schools (in his terminology) have become investment opportunities for some very

big players in the “education industry.” Ball (2012, ch. 3, 4) has traced Tooley’s involvement in various policy networks and his role as a policy entrepreneur at an international level urging investment in for-profit low-cost schools. In April 2007 he joined Orient Global, a Singaporean private investment company, as President of its newly created US\$100 million Education Fund. That fund has since given grants to several groups with which he previously conducted research: the Kenya Independent Schools Association, working in the slums of Nairobi, The Association of Formidable Schools in Nigeria, and Joy’s Schools in Zimbabwe. Organizations and chains of low-cost schools have many advantages over individual and isolated entrepreneurial schools. They enable the sharing of good management techniques and the development of curriculum ideas. They act as a brand name or assumed badge of quality. Franchised chains of schools go further and allow a centralized curriculum to be developed such that undereducated teachers can be trained to present standard lessons of a consistent quality. In Tooley’s (and other advocates’) view, low-cost schools provided through profit-making chains of schools can extend the reach and quality of basic education for the world’s poor.

Omega School Franchise is one such chain which was co-founded in 2008 by James Tooley and Ken Donkoh, a Ghanaian entrepreneur who had previously worked for Oxfam and USAID. The model is that of a “school in a box” which usually involves the construction of a 12-classroom building and all the initial materials and resources needed for 500 students. Each school is said to be immediately self-sustainable as parents pay on a “pay-as-you-learn” daily fee system. The Omega Schools Franchise was studied by Riep (2014) who, in 2013, was able to visit six Omega Schools and conduct interviews, observations and a survey of students. At that time the chain had grown to 20 schools with about 11,000 students and had more than 38 schools after four years. The initial growth was helped by an investment in the chain by Pearson Affordable Learning Fund established in 2012 by Pearson Education – the world’s largest multinational education corporation – with Michael Barber as its first Chairman. Growth seems to have slowed after this period and the chain was sold to the Rising Academy Network in 2020.

Riep’s (2014) interviews with Donkoh indicated that Pearson saw their involvement in low-cost schools as an extension of their global focus on education. There was huge wealth at the “bottom of the pyramid” (Pralhad, 2005) from which profit eventually could be made. Riep (2014: 266–271) describes the franchise in terms of the McDonaldization of education, where the emphasis is on efficiency, standardization of product, brand reliability, and consumerist pay-as-you-learn. He does not mean this to be a compliment, but as if the schools could actually offer these, it would be better than many other schools in most developing countries. The problem is price. While the price is low because the schools employ mainly untrained people to teach and then train them to follow set lesson plans and curriculum, it is not low enough for the very poor. Riep (2014: 272) shows that the lowest 7% of Ghana’s Central region would have to pay, on average, 43% of their family income to pay for one child, and even someone earning the average income for Ghana would have to pay 40% of income. While these are low-fee schools in comparison with other local private schools, they are not low for many families. Further, he found that in a survey of 437 students in four schools only one had not been in another school before, including other private schools, thus the schools are not providing new places.

It is worth noting that the idea of low-fee private schools employing non-trained people as teachers and then teaching them to follow a pre-set curriculum is far from new. Accelerated Christian Education (a US profit-making corporation) designed such a curriculum and teaching program in the 1970s, and there were some 5000 US ACE schools in the 1980s (Rose, 1988; Walford, 1991; Scaramanga and Reiss, 2017), with a further 800 elsewhere including the UK. In 2020 there were around 7000 ACE schools worldwide including schools in USA, England, Rumania, and Ethiopia. In 2020 fees at the Vine Christian School, Reading, UK were under £2000 per year for senior students. This is low compared with the vast majority of private schools in the UK, including the roughly £3000 charged at the Independent Grammar School, Durham, UK, which advertises as “Independent, affordable education” and of which James Tooley is Chair of the School Board and a primary investor (but which does not use a pre-packaged curriculum). This school is intended to be the first of a chain of “affordable” schools in the UK. However, with median earnings for full-time employees in the UK being just over £30,000 per year in 2019, the question of affordability for which groups is once again raised. Even Tooley (2018: 15) himself admits that families in the lowest quartile will not be able to afford the school, and to pay for two children will mean the family has to be in the middle quartile for discretionary income. Forgetting his warning about using averages (discussed above), he claims that this compares well with the average private school where only the top quartile can afford to send even one child. His use of the term “low-cost” has become very flexible.

The last decade has seen a remarkable growth in chains of private schools supported by business as an investment, by philanthropy, and through various Public-Private Partnerships. From being an educational sideline, low-fee private schools and private schools in general have moved center-stage in ideas about the provision of school places in the less developed world. The World Bank, various governments’ aid agencies, policy agencies, investment organizations, and others now see supporting private schools as a positive activity (Verger et al., 2018). Such chains as Bridge International Academies were first funded by Deutsche Bank America’s Foundation, Gray Ghost Ventures, and the Kellogg Foundation through the Clinton Global Initiative, then had further investment from the Omidyar Network (Santori et al., 2006). Low-fee private schools have become seen as a strategy for achieving Sustainable Development Goals in education by governments, the aid industry, and big business as they are seen as offering more efficient access to education with less government spending. What used to be the UK’s Department for International Development DFID was one of the most active in promoting the expansion of low-fee private schools in countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and Pakistan and have been widely criticized for such support (Junemann et al., 2016; Verger et al., 2018). One interesting aspect of this is the blurring of the boundaries between low-fee and other private schools. The International Finance Corporation, the International and Private Education Forum, the Qatar Foundation’s World Innovation Summit for Education, and others organizes regular international conferences on private education where investors, consultants, aid agencies, and education entrepreneurs are brought together, and low-fee private schools are simply seen as part of the continuum of schools in which investment might be made.

Srivastava (2016) sees this as the Second-Wave of low-fee private schools and as a part of a broader trend of privatization in education, and is cautious about the extent of activity reported and whether the chains are actually affordable by the poor. She also questions the involvement of governments with PPP schemes which have caused considerable costs even in developed countries. Indeed, low-fee private schools now seem to be being treated as an extension to the existing spectrum of private schools rather than something distinctly different. For example, in a very unusual and government legislated PPP, the 1999 Right to Education Act for India demanded that all private schools – from the most elite private schools to the poorest of the low-fee - offer 25% of their places free to children of specific poor groups with only minimum funding from the state. Theoretically the Act also introduced tougher criteria for the recognition of all private schools so that minimum standards were achieved, but what is unusual is the incorporation of the entire private sector within this policy.

Conclusion

We have seen that there is no clear definition of low-fee private schools, and no clear dividing line between these so-called low-fee schools and other private schools in each country. While there are cases in academic discussion where the research questions make it helpful to draw an arbitrary line between these schools and other slightly more expensive private schools, families are unlikely to be doing so. They will be looking for a school that they can afford and seems to meet their needs. These schools are best understood and analyzed as a part of the spectrum of private schools within each country providing for a range of incomes. As with other private schools, generalizations across countries and even within countries are often misleading. Again parents will not be concerned with averages, but with comparisons between their local government and private schools bearing in mind how much they are willing and able to pay and what each school offers.

The belief that there was huge wealth at the “bottom of the pyramid” (Prahalad, 2005) from which profit eventually could be made has driven some of the boom in private schools. However, it is often forgotten that Prahalad did not include education in his study and, even though the sub-heading of his book is “Eradicating poverty through profits” the two of twelve extended examples that are nearest to education are on eye care and prosthetic feet for the poor. Both of these examples are actually non-profit organizations, and several of the other examples rely on some elements of philanthropic activity. In fact most of the examples could equally be non-profit and do not depend on the profit motive, just cheaper and more efficient ways of doing things, which could be run by non-profit just as well as for-profit organizations.

There is a variety of reasons why low-fee private schools have been established in developing countries, but the main reason is failure of the government to provide enough schools or schools of an acceptable quality or nature. Emphasizing the profit-making of entrepreneurs as a solution to the problem of inadequate schools leads to particular proposals, such as aiming to support and extend such provision. Brands of low-fee schools may provide schools of a more consistent quality, but we have seen that such chains of schools do not necessarily serve the poorest, and within the private sector as a whole there has been a tendency to try to move up the income and fee scales, thus gradually excluding the poorest families. This is less true with religious and philanthropic schools which have a clear mission.

The fundamental problem of private schooling applies to low-fee private schools as much as to any other private schools (Walford, 1990). Those parents who are able and willing to afford a private school, because they believe it will give advantages to their children, are taken out of the government educational system. These are the very parents who are most likely to be able and willing to challenge politicians to improve the government system. Politically this can be disastrous for the needs of the poor and voiceless as governments respond to pressure.

Treating the phenomenon of low-fee private schools as separate from the rest of the private sector, and from the government sector, limits our understanding of how these schools have been established and how they fit within their local educational systems. There is now a globalized desire among poor parents to have their children attend school (Walford, 2015). Families have put their faith and dreams in schools as a way out of poverty for their children. There is a great deal of evidence that parents would prefer the government to provide such schools free at the point of delivery, thus sharing the costs of educating all young people between the whole population – few would pay fees if good schools were provided.

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False and distracting promises: early childhood education and care in low income countries

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Introduction	366
Early child development	366
Early education	368
Conclusion	369
References	369

Introduction

Economic inequality between high-income and low-income countries is so pronounced that one estimate suggests that for every \$1 given in aid, \$24 is extracted in terms of resources, patents, trade deals and money manipulations (Kar and Schjelderup, 2016). Within countries too, inequalities between rich and poor, dominate daily life. Inequality, driven by the movement of global capital (but not the movement of peoples), distorts life and expectations for billions of people (Deaton, 2013; Milanovic, 2016; Piketty, 2020; Stiglitz, 2011; Hickel 2020; Woodhead et al., 2009; and many others). At a time when millions are dying of Covid, very wealthy billionaires, like Jeff Bezos, Richard Branson and Elon Musk, oblivious to the needs of their fellow citizens, are spending billions on personal space travel (Nolan, 2021). Social mobility for most people is a fantasy, such are the structural inequalities that shape lives.

Yet the myth of social mobility continues to be powerful, and is embedded in the rhetoric of education. It may be true that for a very few, educational opportunities are fruitful and offer a route out of poverty, but very generally education systems tend to perpetuate inequality and confirm poor children in their poverty and in their position at the bottom of a hierarchy rather than offering them a way out. Literacy and numeracy are highly valued in modern societies, and it is undoubtedly better for survival to have some schooling rather than none, but state education systems are rarely redistributive. The elite almost always choose private, segregated education if it is available to them (Reay, 2017).

Early child development

Nowhere is this myth of social mobility more pervasive than in the education of very young children. This is partly due to the work of James Heckman, who won a Nobel prize for his work on econometrics, and his exploration of the predictive power of statistics to inform social policies. Heckman argued that early intervention programs provide higher rates of return compared to remediation programs targeted at older children and young adults. It is more economically efficient to provide early education and care to young children than for any other age group, in terms of long-term outcomes—higher wage earners, less call on social services and support. It is cheaper in the long term to provide education/stimulation for young children than to deal with results of no or poor education.

This conclusion about the relevance of early intervention has been reinforced expanded by various international bodies, who have linked it to work on neuroscience. The argument put forward is that the brain grows most rapidly in the first three years; neurones expand and form dense networks, but in order to do this, the brain needs both adequate mental stimulation and adequate nutrition. The relationship between neurone growth and “stimulation” is tenuous (Penn, 2019a,b). The evidence on the importance of nutrients for growth, including brain growth, is stronger, but the World Food Program estimates that billions of children are hungry. Food poverty is very widespread, and getting worse. Programmes which dish out nutritional supplements to very young children do so in a context where elder children and adults often go hungry, and the nutrients may have to be distributed in such a way that no other family members can access them! Whatever the practical and cultural drawbacks in running programmes for very young children, they are seen to offer a magic solution to global problems.

What is one of the best ways a country can boost shared prosperity, promote inclusive economic growth, expand equitable opportunity, and end extreme poverty? The answer is simple: Invest in early childhood development. Investing in early childhood development is good for everyone – governments, businesses, communities, parents and caregivers, and most of all, babies and young children. It is also the right thing to do, helping every child realize the right to survive and thrive. And investing in ECD is cost effective: For every \$1 spent on early childhood development interventions, the return on investment can be as high as \$13. Early childhood development is also key to upholding the right of every child to survive and thrive.

(WHO's Nurturing Care foreword 2017).

Healthy development in the early years (particularly birth to three) provides the building blocks for educational achievement, economic productivity, responsible citizenship, lifelong health, strong communities, and successful parenting of the next generation. What can we do during this incredibly important period to ensure that children have a strong foundation for future development?

(Harvard Center for the Developing Child, 2020).

International aid programmes, especially those, like the Children's Investment Foundation Fund (one of the biggest donors-who also benefit from tax breaks through charitable giving) have latched onto it as an opportunity to entrepreneurially engage in an area previously neglected in international aid portfolios, and which appears to promise good investment returns. The approach to early childhood generated by Heckman is referenced by almost every international organization – including major bi-lateral agencies like the World Bank, UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO— as well as by almost all leading child charities and think tanks. It has become an international development commonplace. Many policy documents, as evidenced above, argue that early interventions in childhood, through providing high quality early education for targeted populations, can be an effective strategy to reduce the prevalence of later adult 'problems' such as poverty, unemployment, criminal offending and intergenerational disadvantage.

WHO in particular has promoted an early intervention approach which targets parents (inevitably mothers) by using home visiting programmes. Using tenuous arguments about brain development to bolster their interpretation of the Heckman data (Penn, 2019a,b) they argue that the first 1000 days are the most important for laying down the foundations of later life. WHO claims that interventions which enable parents and children to learn more about optimal child development strategies, will improve children's brains and thereby their life-chances in an economically efficient way and save money on subsequent remedial services, as Heckman predicted. There are many claims for these home visiting programmes. One of the most cited is a Jamaican program which claims that long-term home-visiting interventions produce higher income earners over a lifespan (World Bank, 2021). The program, targeted at 170 children in a total population of 2.3 million inhabitants has in no way impacted on Jamaica's considerable wealth inequalities, nor has it altered its wealth as a nation vis a vis other countries. Yet these programmes are touted as a long-term opportunity to substantially improve children's future, and in doing so, make countries more prosperous and better able to compete in the world market. This is such a staggering and preposterous claim for so small an impact, that one wonders what is at stake.

Heckman's work draws on an underlying theory of skills formation. Key to this theory is an assumption that directly rejects the impact of structural inequality:

disadvantaged families do not invest sufficiently in their children because of information problems rather than limited economic resources or capital constraints.

(Heckman et al., 2013).

This approach focuses on individual success in world of inequalities. It focuses on what contributes to individual success and takes the unevenness of the world, and the reluctance to pay for state services other than for a needy minority, for granted. It seeks only to justify small interventions which may make some children able to cope better than they would otherwise have done, at a relatively small cost.

This research is invariably couched in hyper-rigorous statistical terms, which excludes any wider conceptual discussion outside of the statistical formulas employed. Its frame of reference is explicitly narrow and it deliberately does not take structural inequality into account. This is increasingly problematic, since Heckman's original data, on which he constructed his predictive statistical curve, was drawn from a small pool of USA studies which only use randomized controlled trials, some of which were initiated over 50 years ago and date back to the 1960's and 1970's. The initial assumptions and procedures of those studies, especially those concerning race, do not bear re-examination. Although Heckman has since been involved in longitudinal studies in a number of countries, including Jamaica and Italy, the highly contextual nature of the assumptions, and the limitations on its generalization to other countries, is rarely conceded (Rea and Burton, 2020)

One of the underlying assumptions in the WHO approach is that child development tenets, like medical knowledge, are scientifically based and universal (Phillips et al., 2017). Just as poor nutrition in early childhood leads to stunted bodies, poor stimulation in early childhood leads to stunted brains. Leaving aside the strength or otherwise of the neuroscientific and brain growth arguments, what is "poor stimulation"? Robert Serpell, who has long convened a group of African psychologists, argues that ideas about child development are predominantly and explicitly Westernized and Americanized, heavily emphasizing individualism, cognitive and linguistic precocity and personal striving at the expense of – for example in Africa - of co-operation and deferential helpfulness. Many other psychologists and anthropologists have commented on the cultural biases of typical child development texts from the global North (Burman, 2018; LeVine and New, 2008; Gottlieb, 2004). Tobin et al. (2011) gives a bleak description of the "shopping mall" mentality encouraged by American caregivers of young children, continually urging them to "choose" between a limitless range of commercial goods, and enabling them to vigorously defend and argue for their choices even when they inconvenience others. Perhaps the most trenchant comment is that of Jerome Brunauer. *"Perhaps even more than with most cultural matters, childrearing practices and beliefs reflect local conceptions of how the world is and how the child should be readied for living it."*

Many of those concerned with promoting "child development" are often singularly uninterested in how parents view the world, and what, as parents, they consider children should be learning. The statistical methods used in randomized controlled trials deliberately exclude qualitative data, and there is no account in any of the Jamaican material for example, of how mothers view the

program. Their views are an irrelevance in calculating efficacy. The home visiting programmes also assumes the availability of mothers, and ignore any paid work in which they may be engaged, an assumption which UN women (2017), for example, has severely criticized.

It is partly that -relatively speaking - early child interventions are such a cheap option for improving the world, and do not disturb the status quo, that makes it such a popular idea among international policy makers. Teaching mothers to look after their children better, is a typical Westernized welfare solution that neatly puts the burden and the blame for poverty on mothers themselves, or at the very least, refuses to take other explanations into account. The poor can be taught how to do their job of child-rearing better. From a historical perspective, it is what the blinkered rich have been saying to poor mothers for centuries, it's your fault, not ours, that you are poor, and you should improve yourself and do more for your children and feed them properly (Cunningham, 2020). As in earlier times, there is a high moral tone to the advice. A series of articles in the Lancet on the topic of *Nurturing Care- Promoting Early Child Development*, suggests the lives of millions of children could be saved. *New estimates, based on proxy measures of stunting and poverty, indicate that 250 million children (43%) younger than 5 years in low-income and middle-income countries are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential. There is therefore an urgent need to increase multisectoral coverage of quality programming that incorporates health, nutrition, security and safety, responsive caregiving, and early learning. Equitable early childhood policies and programmes are crucial for meeting Sustainable Development Goals, and for children to develop the intellectual skills, creativity, and well-being required to become healthy and productive adults* (Black et al., 2017).

Reducing human suffering is a wholly admirable goal, but home-visiting programmes for children under two, driven by a statistically sound but extraordinarily narrow econometric theory, is likely to be no more than a distraction and an excuse for wider inaction, given the geo-politics of inequality. The logical conclusion of this reasoning is that if an estimated 43% of a population has stunted bodies and stunted brains, their contribution to international debate cannot be taken too seriously, and those from high-income countries who are seeking to redress the situation are the best informed to know what to do, and likely to remain so.

Early education

Another variant of early intervention is that promoted by UNICEF and other agencies, and incorporated into the Sustainable Development Goals. Target 4.2 is by 2030 ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education. Drawing on the same Heckman data, but applying it in a different context, the assumption is that pre-school experiences will enable better performance at school, although very often the caveat "high-quality" is attached. But more often than not, pre-school, even less than mainstream school, is not of high quality, but provided by a plethora of private operators, many of them of poor quality. Pre-school programmes have been monitored for "learning outcomes" and there are various, mainly North American schedules to monitor the quality of these interventions. But often the same problems arise, the lack of competent, trained caregivers in the private sector - even in countries like the UK (Christie and Co, 2019). Ex-communist countries, which have a history of early childhood education and care tend to have more rigid provision, but the standards also tend to be higher in terms of infrastructure and training (Penn, 2019a,b).

As well as incorporating very particular, Westernized, views of child development, and about what constitutes a high quality early education, many of the lobbyists for early intervention also hold traditional views about the organization of family life. Mamdani (2017), in a famous study, used court records, to show how patriarchal colonial assumptions in Kenya have shaped the law, so that ownership of land was invariably registered with male heads of households, rather than as traditional dual or female ownership. This colonial process of diminishing the rights of women and transfer of ownership of rural land has in the long-term had disastrous consequences for women, and contributed to the migration of women from rural to urban or peri-urban areas. Razavi (2011) has shown that the phenomenon of female single-headed households in poor urban areas has become a norm, throughout the world, exacerbated by both the legacy of patriarchal colonial policies and by current fiscal policies. Women in these urban and peri-urban circumstances mostly work in the informal sector, as market traders, domestic servants, or in the sex industry. Poor women tend to work for long hours in precarious and largely undocumented jobs. As a result, there is a major childcare problem. Millions of very young children are often left unattended or in the care of barely older siblings (Sammans et al., 2016). In the cities of subSaharan Africa, unlicensed private entrepreneurs have profited from childcare enterprises, cramming very young children into unsuitable premises with minimum supervision, while their mothers are at work (Hughes et al., 2021).

This contradiction, between a prosperous, idealized family life, and everyday reality in low-income countries, is at last beginning to percolate through to international agencies. The World Bank, following on from a recent report by UN Women, has now emphasized the importance of gender issues, and suggests childcare, rather than other forms of early childhood interventions, should be a public priority for all countries. This has long been a position held by the OECD, whose documents on the issue date back to 1972. In 2006 OECD published a landmark document, *Starting Strong II* in 2006 and continues to follow this up with annual figures on its Family database, and updated versions of Starting Strong. Similarly, the EU has made childcare and education an integral plank in its education services, publishing a series of reports and analyses in its Eurydice program (Eurydice 2019). OECD/EU recognize that to provide comprehensive ECEC services requires substantial investment and competent governance rather than fragmented private initiatives, and also publish figures on the level of this investment and its administration across member states.

The World Bank *Better Jobs and Brighter Futures* document on childcare (Dervicelli and Beaton-Day 2020) is rather late on the scene, and still very much USA focused in its examples. It outlines some of the key regulatory areas for childcare, according to criteria enumerated by (mainly) American psychologists and educationalists, as noted above. The quality of a childcare or ECE program

depends on several different elements, which are usually categorized as either “structural” or “process”. Structural quality, typically the easiest aspect of quality to be defined, measured, and regulated, includes staff/child ratio, group size, and physical infrastructure. Process quality includes the program or curriculum; the workforce; the interactions that take place between adults and children; and the wider system which ensures these aspects of quality are in place. All five categories should be considered as part of an integrated approach, with each category supporting the others. However, the document is much vaguer as regards financing these initiatives. Educating and caring for young children is labor intensive, and requires a relatively safe and an environment which protects against hazards. The 2006 OECD document suggests 1% GDP as a target for funding an integrated childcare and early education system, and some few countries have achieved this target. But currently, in the World Bank literature, the assumption is that funding services can be achieved by a mixture of private enterprise, workplace nurseries (surely a fantasy in an informal economy), co-operatives, donations, and a very little state aid in the form of training and regulatory activities. The usual way of describing this unsatisfactory and tenuous mixture of financial incentives in which no organization carries ultimate responsibility is “a partnership”.

So although there is more recent recognition of the needs of women and children for childcare alongside education in low-income countries and elsewhere, the question of what it might cost and how it might be delivered, and to whom, is left largely unaddressed and undocumented.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the efforts of international agencies to improve the educational chances of young children in low-income countries. There are of course dialogs within countries and among groups within countries about education and what sustains it, which may or may not correspond to Western ideas. But many international agencies, heavily, if not totally influenced by Western ideas, argue that investment in early childhood education and care can bring about transformational change, in the lives of young children and in the prospects for the countries they live in. This article has argued that poverty and inequality are so entrenched and ignored, and the actions of international agencies, although indubitably well-meaning, are so clouded by a Westernized interpretation of childhood, that attempts to improve the situation are unlikely to succeed. It is unlikely that the education of millions of young children will be improved by current efforts of international agencies. But the illusion of success deters any substantial effort to get to grips with the problems that really exist.

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English as a medium of instruction and research in education: an international and comparative analysis

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Introduction	371
The LOITASA project	372
The introduction of private primary schools	373
Strengthening of a government primary school	373
The rhetoric of English and development	373
The situation in India	374
From one colonial language to the other in Rwanda	375
The situation in the Nordic countries	375
Academic publishing—in whose language?	376
Higher rewards for academic publications in English	376
The 2008 White paper on Norwegian language policy	376
Norwegian researchers defending our language as a language of research	377
Where there is a political will—an example from Tanzania	377
Prestige Planning	377
References	378

Introduction

In the years 1987–1992 I was a professor at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. The meeting with students and colleagues there developed my interest in the language issue in Africa, which later became the main focus of my research (Brock-Utne, 2000, 2012, 2014, 2021; Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009). When I first came to Tanzania I knew little about the country. I got hold of some books about Tanzania. I read in several of them that there were 120 languages spoken in the country. I asked people in the NORAD office in Dar es Salaam if they had learnt to speak the national language, Kiswahili. They answered that they had learnt some greetings. That was really all that was needed because the people they had meetings with and negotiated with all spoke English well. “And you will be teaching in English and all of the meetings you attend will be in English”, they said to me. “And besides” they said, “your colleagues will come from all over the country and will speak very different languages. It is only a waste of time to try to become a fluent Kiswahili speaker, but knowing some greetings may be useful.”

The first day I came to the Department of Education, there was a tea—break and all my prospective colleagues sat in chairs in a quadrangle, sipping very sweet tea. They greeted me in English but very quickly switched to speaking Kiswahili with each other. I said: “I had heard that you would be speaking different Tanzanian languages. Don’t you all come from different parts of the country?”. They answered that they did. They could speak many different local languages, but they all also could speak Kiswahili as a lingua franca, a language that united them. I decided already then that I would learn the language, so that the people sitting next to me in the tea break would not need to switch into English. When I started working full-time at the university and met my master students, I noticed that they all came into the class-room talking with each other in Kiswahili.

Teaching undergraduate classes with several hundred students was a great challenge. To make the classes a bit more interactive, I just lectured for about a quarter of an hour and then wrote some questions on the blackboard, which I asked the students to discuss in small groups for about a quarter of an hour. I had written the questions in English. Already the first time I did this, I started wandering in the auditorium, listening to the group discussions. I soon noticed that the students had quickly translated the questions. They all discussed them in Kiswahili. The discussions were lively (Brock-Utne, 2000/2008).

I shared office with my only female colleague at the time. We both had students coming to us for tutorials. I noticed that she gave several of her tutorials in Kiswahili or she code-switched from English to Kiswahili and back. I discussed this practice with her. She said that she was not supposed to give tutorials in Kiswahili, but she communicated much better with the students in that language than in English, a foreign language to them all. I told her that I was now bent on learning Kiswahili and she volunteered to help me. She taught me several proverbs and we built an ever-lasting friendship, doing research together and living together in the same room while conducting our research. As part of my duties as a professor of education at the UDSM I was also required to participate for 6 weeks each year in teacher practice supervision. This meant listening to our education students teach in secondary school, evaluate them and help them improve their teaching practice. I very quickly discovered the great difference in activity level among the

secondary school students depending on the language of instruction used. I noticed the lively atmosphere in the classes taught in Kiswahili (at that time not only the subject Kiswahili but also the subject *siasa*¹ was taught in Kiswahili) and the passivity of the students and aggressiveness of the teachers when the teaching was conducted in English.

The LOITASA project

The abbreviation LOITASA stands for Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa. This was a research project which started in 2001 and lasted officially for ten years but in reality at least five more years. The last student who took her doctorate under the project did so in 2016 (Bakahwemama, 2016). In my years at the UDSM I had, through my yearly teaching practice supervision, experienced the problems students in secondary education had mastering the foreign language, English, when it was used as a language of instruction. I liked initiating discussions on the language of instruction issue with my colleagues. These discussions could become quite heated. Many colleagues thought, like I did, that it would be best for Tanzanian secondary school students to switch to Kiswahili as the language of Instruction (LOI). This was the language they normally communicated in, and were familiar with. It was the language of instruction for all of the seven years of primary school. Others claimed that this was impossible to do because English was such an important language; it was the language of science and technology. It was an international language.

One of my colleagues, Dr. Sulema Sumra, and I discussed the need for a research project on the language of instruction in Tanzania. I promised to look for funding for such a project.

There was at the time a board between universities in Norway, NUFU,² that could, on application, give money to Norwegian universities that would cooperate with and build capacity at universities in the South. NUFU preferred South-South-North cooperation. The Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Cape at the time, Prof. Harold Herman (2008:10) writes:

In 1999, Prof. Birgit Brock-Utne and I met during a Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conference in the USA to consider the possibility of a North-South cooperation on language of instruction policies in Africa. In our ensuing years of dialogue and presentations at international conferences it was clear to me that Birgit, although Norwegian, was an *African scholar at heart*, a person with a flair and commitment to confront the multiple dilemmas facing the African continent. She had discussed the possibility of launching a research project on the language of instruction in Tanzania with colleagues at the University of Dar es Salaam. Together, Birgit and I, conceptualized a language in education project between the University-of-Dar-es-Salaam, the University of Oslo and the University of the Western Cape.

Later in the same year, I, gave a key-note address at the Oxford Conference (Brock-Utne, 2001a). It was called "Education for All - in whose language?" There I met Zubeida Desai from the language department at the University of Western Cape, who also presented a paper on the language issue in Africa - exemplified by the situation in the Western Cape. The two of us continued the discussion that had started between Harold Herman and me about a research cooperation around the Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa. Zubeida and I decided that I should apply to NUFU for seed money to plan a project with partners from UDSM and UWC as part of a research project. The research project involved both a policy analysis and an experimental phase in both countries. In Tanzania, where the language of instruction shifts to English in Form I in secondary school, we decided that we would let some classes in Form I be taught science and geography in Kiswahili (we translated both the learning material and the tests into Kiswahili) for some months and compare the students with students taught in English only. In South Africa we looked into the situation for black isiXhosa speaking children living in a non-formal settlement near the airport of Cape Town. Both the teachers, the parents and the children spoke isiXhosa. That was the language of instruction only for the first three years. Then the language of instruction was supposed to switch into English, a language foreign to them all, a language they never communicated in outside of school. Here our intervention happened in grade 4 and 5. We translated learning material into isiXhosa. In both countries we found that children learnt much better when they were taught in a familiar language. Both in South Africa (Holmarsdottir, 2005; Nomlomo, 2007) and in Tanzania (Mwingsheikhe, 2007; Vuzo, 2007) the students said they learnt better and they also got better grades when concepts were explained to them in Kiswahili in Tanzania, and in isiXhosa in the informal settlement in the Western Cape in South Africa, languages they were familiar with.

Two of my Ph.D. students (Mwingsheikhe, 2007; Vuzo, 2007) and I (Brock-Utne, 2007) noticed that when the teachers were teaching in English, they frequently punished the students, mostly by having them stand all through the lesson. They never punished the students when the teaching was in Kiswahili. The teachers themselves were not aware of this fact, before we pointed it out for them.

¹«siasa» - a social science subject closely connected to the ideology of CCM—Nyerere's party—was taught in Kiswahili all through the secondary school from 1969 to 1992 when the subject—under the influence of the reintroduction of a multiparty system—was renamed "civics" for the first 4 years and "general studies" for the next 2 years and taught in English (Mkwizu, 2002).

²In Norwegian: Norsk utvalg for Utviklingsrelatert Forskning og Utvikling (NUFU). Though it was started in 1991, it really took off only from 1996. The Fund, which originally came from NORAD, was administered by academics interested in developing countries from all of the universities in Norway (see Brock-Utne, 2019). It was located at the University of Bergen.

The introduction of private primary schools

It was important for the educator and President of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, to create a good primary school for all children. In the policy directive, called “Education for Self-Reliance” Nyerere (1967) notes that for the education which independent Tanzania wants to build, “the purpose is not to provide an inferior education to that given at present. The purpose is to provide a different education” (p. 63). He wanted the educational system of Tanzania to emphasize co-operative endeavor, not individual advancement, and to stress concepts of equality and responsibility (p. 52).

In my book “Whose Education for All? The Recolonization of the African Mind” (Brock-Utne, 2000/2008) I show how imported assessment systems from the West along with the destruction of indigenous publishing and curriculum development have strengthened the neo-liberal policies outlined by the World Bank and have undermined the policies professed by a newly independent Tanzania. Nyerere saw it as important to have Kiswahili be the language of instruction all through the seven years of schooling. He was much against opening up for private schooling. He saw such a strategy as one which would undermine the equal society he wanted to create.

In an analysis of the formulation of educational policies in Tanzania in the nineties, the Danish researcher Buchert (1997a) found that the Tanzania Social Sector Review was worked out by the Bank (World Bank, 1995). When it comes to the “Education and Training Policy” (URT, 1995) paper, Buchert (1997a:52) reports that many of the government officials as well as bilateral aid agencies and people from the academic environment saw “a determined World Bank hand behind it.” One of Buchert’s interviewees said: “It has been stuffed down the throat of the Government by the IMF and the World Bank” (Buchert, 1997a: 52). Buchert mentions that during 1994 and 1995 the World Bank held a number of education seminars in Washington DC on Educational Policies in Africa and the Coordination of Aid. The seminars were held for key Tanzanian educators and had both a direct and an indirect impact on government thinking on education.

Work on the Education and Training Policy started in February 1993. According to Buchert (1997b) it was initiated due both to an internally felt need for an official policy that reflected the state of the art of education in the 1990s and to agency pressure for a policy framework to guide education assistance. The point of departure for the policy paper was the task force report The Tanzania Education System for the 21st Century—completed in 1992 and published in 1993 (URT, 1993). The Report analyzes educational needs in light of a future Tanzanian society able to cope in an increasingly globalized world. The Education and Training Policy (URT, 1995) opened up for private primary schooling. The language of instruction in these private primary schools is English. The private schools have mushroomed since the government opened up for them. Parents pay part of the costs of these schools. In the best schools parents have to pay very high school-fees, in the not so good schools parents pay less. The language of instruction also in these low-paying schools is still English or rather, bad and broken English. Parents send their children to private schools not so much because the language of instruction is English, but more often because these schools are better resourced. The pupils there have textbooks, there are fewer pupils in class, the teachers get their skills up-dated through in-service courses, are better paid and are not so often absent.

Strengthening of a government primary school

In the second phase—the last 5 years—of the LOITASA project the Tanzanian group decided to strengthen a government Kiswahili speaking primary school with textbooks for all the pupils in grade 6 and 7 and give the teachers in-service teacher training through two up-dating seminars. We gave this government school the fictitious name “Mweshipandeka”. These two small interventions were enough to make the pupils in Mweshipandeka get better grades and be happier at school than the pupils in the English speaking private primary school with the highest school fees in the district. The teachers at Mweshipandeka were convinced that the better scores their pupils got had to do not only with the fact that they were provided with textbooks but also with the fact that they understood what the teacher was saying. They were taught in a familiar language (Bakahwemama, 2009, 2010).

But in the village where the experiment took place we heard several people say to each other, “Have you heard that Mweshipandeka” has become English medium?” The school had continued teaching in Kiswahili, but the village people thought that the fact that the school did so well, even better than the fee-paying private schools, meant that the school had switched to using English as the language of instruction. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The rhetoric of English and development

The growing craze for English all over the world is associated with the rhetoric of English and development, permeating into popular perception of the significance of English, often without any critical scrutiny. Broadly, English is projected as a global language (Graddol, 2000) or a language needed for maintaining a competitive edge in a globalized world. Yet, as Coleman (2011:104) notes:

Globalisation and competitiveness are associated with a need for English and then with a need to use English as a medium of instruction, although the logical relationships between these concepts remain unclear.

There is actually no logical relationship. The best way for a pupil living in a non-English speaking country to learn English is not have it as a language of instruction, but rather learn it as a subject, as a foreign language from teachers who are good at teaching foreign languages. Many parents are not aware of this fact.

The situation in India

Mohanty (2017) drawing on his work in respect of English in Indian society and education, discusses the processes through which English in India gets situated in a position of dominance, disadvantaging the other language communities. He analyses the role of English in Indian education in perpetuating social discrimination. He shows that while some groups benefit from English, most do not (Mohanty, 2017:266).

The first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, was very concerned about the language question in India. He saw that the choice of English as the language of instruction created a class society. As leader of the socialist part of the Indian Congress party he had fought against the caste system of India. He saw that a new caste was being developed: an English speaking caste, separated from the rest of the people. Only 5% of the Indian population are fluent in oral and written English.

Mohanty (2017:275) notes that even though Prime Minister Nehru feared a development of an “English knowing caste” in India, he was not able to stop this development. In the struggle for Indian independence Mahatma Gandhi warned that English represented cultural alienation. Prime Minister Nehru (educated at Cambridge University and imprisoned by the British before independence) expressed in a letter that he was “convinced that real progress in India can only be made through our own languages and not through a foreign language. I am anxious to prevent a new caste system being perpetuated in India—an English knowing caste separated from the mass of our public” (cited in Gopal, 1980:25). Philipson (2003:6) comments:

In fact, an English-using caste has emerged, because the management of multilingualism in India has largely been left to market forces. These strengthen the position of users of English, here as elsewhere. Roughly 30 million Indians are fluent users of English, but they account for under 5 per cent of the population.

Philipson (2003) mentions that there are elites in Africa and India who speak exclusively English to their children. Mazrui (1978) called them the Afro-Saxons. It is not uncommon for Indian grandparents, who do not speak English, to have no language in common with their grandchildren. Philipson (2003:75) further laments: “The young upwardly mobile, internationally oriented generation of Indians and Africans have more in common with ‘global’ culture than with the mass of inhabitants of India and Africa.”

Mohanty writes that there are now English knowing sub-castes in India, differentiated on the basis of the level of competence in English. Some pupils have superb English and have been schooled in very expensive private schools with excellent teachers. Another sub-caste of pupils have only average English, even though they too have gone to English-medium private schools, but less expensive ones. The lowest sub-caste of pupils are those with poor English from the low-cost private English medium schools. He questions the practice of low-fee private schools, which claim to be providing English-medium education, but which in reality fail to teach English and fail to teach the subjects which are supposedly being delivered through English. Mohanty (2017:275) describing the English knowing sub-castes asks: “Whose development does English promote?” As my example from Tanzania shows, the same question could be asked there as well as in the other so-called “anglophone” countries in Africa, where only about five percent of the population are fluent speakers of English.

Referring to the role of “the superimposed international languages” in the African context, Heugh (1999, 306) points out that “these languages serve only the interests of the elites”. Thus, any claim of a positive role of English in development cannot be taken to be a universal phenomenon. English is not a culturally neutral medium that puts everyone on the same footing; it empowers some and disempowers many.

In their chapter on Language Policy and Education in the Indian Subcontinent Mohanty and Panda (2017) write about the “double divide”—the hierarchical relationship between English and the major national/regional languages and the other divide between the major languages and the Indigenous tribal minority ones (ITM). On the Indian subcontinent English is promoted along with the major national regional languages, while the ITM languages are grossly neglected. Languages in education reflect the linguistic double divide; private schools use English as the medium of teaching-learning whereas public schools are in the medium of the dominant regional languages. The affluent send their children to the English medium private schools. This situation is rather similar to the one we find on the African continent, where there is a double divide between the former colonial languages English, French and Portuguese and the larger regional languages like Kiswahili, Hausa, Oromo, Amharic on the one hand and the regional languages and community languages on the other. In Tanzania Kiswahili is the language of instruction for all children in government primary school. Though the language is a national language, most newspapers printed in it and is frequently used on television, there are rural areas where the language is not so frequently spoken. Children in these areas start school in a language they do not speak (Brock-Utne and Qorro, 2015). They normally become quite fluent in Kiswahili through primary school. But in secondary school they have to cope with another language as the language of instruction. And this

language is a foreign language with no similarity to Bantu languages. English becomes the language of instruction in secondary school. At this stage a third of the students drop out of school, most likely because they do not understand what the teacher is saying.

From one colonial language to the other in Rwanda

The new language policy of Rwanda is likely to have disastrous effects on the learning of school subjects for thousands of children. Since independence from Belgium, Rwanda had retained French as the official language and so was termed a “Francophone” country, although the whole population, Hutus and Tutsis alike, speak Kinyarwanda and many of them also speak Kiswahili. In Parliament, in administration at the national level and in the Supreme Court, Kinyarwanda is the language predominantly used. Before the genocide Kinyarwanda was used as the language of instruction in the first three grades, then a switch to French occurred. [Schweisfurth \(2006\)](#) mentions that the Government of Rwanda after the genocide insisted on a trilingual education policy (Kinyarwanda, French and English) to secure greater equity between groups who favored one or the other language. A trilingual policy might have been good for Rwanda, provided that Kinyarwanda—a language that is spoken by 99.4% of the population, according to the Government—had been the language of instruction with French and English learnt as foreign languages (as subjects). In 2008, the international “development” partners and the new elite in Rwanda decided to do away with French and to introduce English from the first grade of schooling. English is the language of Rwanda’s new elite—especially the Rwandan Patriotic Front under the leadership of Paul Kagame and other Tutsi returnees from so-called Anglophone countries. This did not work and in 2011 Kinyarwanda was reintroduced as the language of instruction, but only for the three first grades and then a switch to English as the language of instruction occurs. In many schools, especially in the capital Kigali, English is the language of instruction from the very first grade of primary school. This policy was implemented in violation of recommendations by UNESCO and the African Union ([Brock-Utne, 2017](#)).

The situation in the Nordic countries

The intention of the European Union with its Bologna Declaration³ was to streamline educational standards in Europe. The streamlining also had the consequence of strengthening English as the language of instruction. According to Luc Soete, the Rector of Maastricht University: “National languages were perceived as a hindrance for student mobility akin to customs barriers, so the creation of an open market in English is another way for them to sell their educational products” (referred to by [Thomas and Breidlid, 2015: 350–351](#)). Some years back I was involved in organizing a European master degree program involving three universities, one in Belgium (Leuven, where the languages of instruction are Flemish and French), one in Finland (Oulu, where the language of instruction is Finnish) and one at the University of Oslo (where the language of instruction is Norwegian). The language of instruction of the whole master program was to be English, whatever university the students visited.

When I taught at the University of Dar es Salaam (1988–1992) many of my students said they wanted to come to Norway and continue their Ph.D. studies at my university. I had to tell them that if they wanted to do so, they had to learn Norwegian. At that time we did not have any Ph.D. courses in English. Neither did we have any master courses. But this has changed as witnessed in the table below:

Studies in English at Norwegian universities and colleges

Year	2007	2012	2016
Number of studies in English, all places of study	2379	4543	5798
Percentage of all studies offered in English, all places of study	8.9	15.7	19.6

Source: [Schwach and Elken \(2018:61\)](#).

In 1997 I took the initiative of organizing a master of Comparative and International Education at the Institute for Educational Research at the University of Oslo. The master started in 1998 and I was the leader of it most of the years until 2008. It was a study mostly for our students from Africa, Asia and Latin-America but some few Norwegian students also enrolled. I noticed that the Norwegian students actually commanded the written English language better than e.g., the Tanzanian students. For the Norwegian students it was the first time they were exposed to the use of English as the language of instruction while the Tanzanian students had used that language for at least nine years. The Norwegian students had had Norwegian as the language of instruction but learnt English well as a foreign language, taught by teachers who were experts in teaching English as a foreign language.

³The Bologna declaration (in full, Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education convened in Bologna on 19 June 1999) is the main guiding document of the Bologna process.

Academic publishing—in whose language?

The Swedish language activist Lindblom (2009) notes that during the period 1960 to 1979 90% of Ph.D. theses delivered at the University of Copenhagen were written in Danish and 10% in English. From 2000 to 2004 100% were written in English! (Lindblom, 2009). Schwach and Elken (2018:51) note that in 2017 90.8% of the Ph.D. thesis examined at Norwegian universities were written in English. Only 8.5% were written in Norwegian. Of these 7.9% were written in the urban variety of Norwegian⁴ and only 0.6 in the more rural variety of Norwegian.⁵

At the level of master theses there has been a clear increase in the number of theses delivered in English over the last 20 years.

Higher rewards for academic publications in English

In 1991 Norwegian state institutions were given the possibility of introducing “performance salary” as a part of local salary negotiations. Before that all associate professors had the same salary and so did all professors. The whole reward system fits well with the commercialization of higher education, which has also hit European universities (Brock-Utne, 2002).

In 2004 the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions published a dossier called: *Vekt på forskning*⁶ (UHR, 2004). This publication institutionalized a reward system dividing journals and publishing companies into three levels, level zero (no reward given to the institution or researcher—most publishing companies in developing countries belong to this category—even if they publish in English), level 1 (reward given), level 2 (higher reward given—normally three times higher as level 1).

On the internet one can find a list of 486 ranked publishing companies. Of these 55 companies are ranked at level 2, while 431 companies are ranked at level 1. No Norwegian publishing company is ranked at level 2, not even the University Publishing Company. More than 80% of the publishing companies ranked at level 2 are based in the US.⁷

When it comes to academic journals, a list of 1758 ranked journals are given, among which a 10th are ranked at level two and the rest at level one. Only two of the many peer-reviewed academic journals published in Norwegian have been ranked at level two. Within the field of Educational Research no academic journal, where any of the articles is written in another language than English, has been ranked at level two (Brock-Utne, 2001b, 2009).

The engagement of many Norwegian academics in the defense of Norwegian as an academic language can be contrasted with the attitude of many Dutch academics. In 1989 Prof. Ritzen was appointed the Minister of Education in Holland. Minister Ritzen, who has a doctoral degree both in economics and physics, and had studied in the United States, had as a professor of economics in Holland felt frustrated because of the use of Dutch in the academia. As a Minister he now proposed that English should be the sole medium of instruction in all Dutch universities. His proposal met with overwhelming support from the academia. His proposal met, however, with harsh critique when it was presented in Parliament. Parliament insisted on regulating the language issue because it neither trusted the Minister,⁸ nor the academics. Therefore Parliament passed an amendment to the university law now saying that no courses can be offered in another language if it is not offered in Dutch. This was actually seen as a step backwards for those professors who wanted more English language instruction in Dutch higher education. There has, however, still been a steady growth of Master courses taught in English within Dutch higher education.

Some years back I felt that there was an acute need for a textbook in comparative and multicultural education written in Norwegian. I took the initiative to edit such a book, which appeared in 2006 (Brock-Utne and Bøyese, 2006). With two exceptions all the authors were native Norwegians. We all did most of our academic writing in English. Almost all the authors, including myself (Brock-Utne, 2006) had problems finding academic terms in Norwegian, describing phenomena we normally wrote about in English. Not long after the book was published my institute decided that the course in comparative and international education at the Bachelor level, which had been taught in Norwegian, should hereafter be taught in English. That may be one of the reasons why the book has not reached the sale figures we had hoped for.

The 2008 White paper on Norwegian language policy

In the summer of 2008 the Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church presented a White paper to Parliament on Norwegian Language policy.⁹ I found that the paper was disappointing on two accounts and wrote an article in the largest Norwegian newspaper, *Aftenposten*, about this (Brock-Utne, 2008). This article led to a radio debate between the Minister of Culture, Trond Giske from the Social-Democratic party, and me on the July 21, 2008. The Norwegian government in 2008—the so-called red-green government—was a coalition consisting of the following three parties: The Social Democrats, the Center party and the Socialist Left party. These three parties together with the Christian People’s party in 1995 had Parliament adopt the paragraph: “The language

⁴This variety is in Norwegian called bokmål and is developed from Danish.

⁵This variety is in Norwegian called nynorsk and is built on dialects spoken all over Norway.

⁶In English: Emphasis on Research.

⁷This is the web-site dealing with the ranking of publications: <https://dbh.nsd.uib.no/publiseringsskanaler/Forside>.

⁸Former Minister Ritzen later worked in the World Bank in Washington DC.

⁹The White paper was called *Mål og mening. Ein heilskapleg norsk språkpolitikk (Language and meaning. A holistic Norwegian language policy)*.

of instruction in Norwegian universities and colleges shall as a rule be Norwegian” as part of the Law of Universities and Colleges. But the bourgeois coalition government in the beginning of the new millennium—consisting of the Conservative party, the Liberals and the Christian party saw to it that this paragraph was taken out of the University law of 2005, even though Norwegian is more threatened as an academic language to-day than it was in 1995.

One would have expected that the red-green government would argue in their White Paper on Norwegian language policy for reinserting this paragraph in the Law of Universities and Colleges. The White Paper “Mål og mening” mentions that the Norwegian Language Council in 2006 had suggested to reinsert this paragraph. The White Paper argues against the Language Council as the Minister of Culture did against me in the radio debate in July 2008, maintaining that deletion of this paragraph was a consequence of the “internationalization of higher education.” But it is exactly the pressure from the internationalization of higher education which requires a legal protection of the Norwegian language in places of higher learning. In 2001 the Legal Court of the EU denied Iceland the right to have lower taxation of Icelandic literature than of literature written in foreign languages—a practice Iceland had embarked on to protect their own language. Knowing about this fact I asked our Minister of Culture whether he was afraid of sanctions from the EU if Norway wanted further promotion of the Norwegian language through legal measures. The Minister chose not to answer that question.

My other caveat when it comes to the White paper of the Norwegian Language policy of 2008 has to do with the fact that the paper goes against the proposal from one of our law professors, Professor Ola Mestad, of giving the Norwegian language legal protection in our Constitution like France has done for the French language. The indigenous minority language, the Saami language, is given legal protection in our Constitution—the majority language, Norwegian, is not.

Norwegian researchers defending our language as a language of research

Norwegian academics seem to be more prepared to defend the Norwegian language as an academic language than colleagues in some other European countries, like especially in the Netherlands.

On the fifth of May 2006 a petition in defense of Norwegian as an academic language signed by 223 well-known Norwegian professors from the humanities and the social sciences was published in our largest newspaper *Aftenposten*. This is the newspaper which also had been the leading news channel for the debate. The Norwegian case shows how a smaller European language, like Norwegian, is threatened as an academic language. When Norwegian academics are discouraged from publishing in Norwegian, it means that academic Norwegian will deteriorate and vocabulary will not be further developed. We shall reach a situation, which African academics are in, when they have difficulties discussing academic matters in African languages because the academic concepts have not been developed in their languages.

All languages develop through use and they also fail to develop or stagnate through disuse.

Where there is a political will—an example from Tanzania

At the University of Dar es Salaam there is one department that uses Kiswahili as the language of instruction and one research institute that uses Kiswahili as the language of communication. The department is the department of Kiswahili and the research institute is the Institute of Kiswahili Research. Also this department and research institute used to be run in English. There were big discussions before the language was switched to Kiswahili. Some of the lecturers and researchers claimed that it would not be possible to teach and write in Kiswahili because they lacked terms for “guttural sounds”, “phonemes”, even “terminology”. Others said: “we shall just invent these terms as we go along.” That became the political decision and now all the linguistic terms have been developed in Kiswahili. The terminology (*istalahi*) has been developed. This means that there is no problem in holding a linguistic conference in Kiswahili in East Africa.

Prestige Planning

[Kamwangamalu \(2015\)](#) suggests that language-education planning needs a paradigm shift. Rather than critiquing inherited colonial policies, he proposes what he calls *Prestige Planning* for African languages. According to [Kamwangamalu \(2015:14\)](#) Prestige Planning:

... entails associating African languages with an economic value on the labour market and requiring academic skills in these languages as one criteria for access to employment

The focus is on the reception (and not on the production) of language planning. [Kamwangamalu \(2015\)](#) argues that until African languages are associated with a market value, English will continue to dominate the educational systems of African Commonwealth countries, much as it did in the colonial era. But how can African languages be assigned a market value to

make them instrumentally competitive with English at least in the local labor market? The call for Prestige Planning for African Languages is made against the background of theoretical developments in language economics (Grin, 1996; Vallancourt and Grin, 2000). Kamwangamalu proposes Prestige Planning for African languages if these languages are to become, like English, an instrument of upward social mobility.

While the translanguaging approach being used especially among the black learners in South Africa (Makalela, 2014) or the code-switching approach used in many other African countries are strategies used on the micro-level, Prestige Planning is a macro-strategy which requires political willingness to change the power relations in a country. It is a strategy that would lead to the development of the majority population of Africa and thereby the African continent.

In this paper I have shown the hegemonic dominance of English in education and its consequences for the majority population in the so-called Anglophone countries in the developing world. The Anglobalization of education has also hit non-English speaking countries in Europe, undermining the national languages as languages of academic publishing and research.

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Impact of globalization on higher education in the Middle East and North Africa

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Introduction	380
From nomadic scholars to colonial dominance	380
University as a national development project	381
International cooperation and privatization	382
Rethinking university in MENA uncertain times	384
Missed links between education and development	385
References	387

Introduction

Contemporary higher education is submerged by rapid social, political, economic and cultural transformations, which affect most countries in various ways and have an impact on its functioning. Changes in higher education in Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries are linked to globalization, understood as a multidimensional economic, political and cultural process, which dynamic have direct and indirect repercussions on universities. In the context of globalization, economic, political and cultural activities do not stop at the boundaries of national societies, but tend to transcend territorial boundaries. Overall, MENA region lags behind most of the rest of the world on many key indicators of higher educational development. Although several countries in this region have profited greatly from the considerable wealth derived from large oil and gas revenues over the past half century, universities are not performing high in international comparisons.

The term globalization within the university context typically refers to the increasing willingness of universities to be open to international influence: exchange programs, staffs and students, expand partnerships between institutions based in various countries, and to harmonize academic programs. Such globalization may be highly desirable. Yet, globalization affects actors in a highly disproportionate way. Under the guise of a universalist or international narratives, it increases inequality, reinforces a competitive approach of learning, and removes national specificities and interests. Because their activities take place in an economic, historic, social, and geographic context that obviously cannot be conveyed by few indicators or standards, universities are affected in various and different ways by globalization (Strassel, 2018).

Figge and Martens (2014) categorized globalization according to four different trends: (1) internationalization, that is, transactions across country borders; (2) liberalization, in reference to the policies or efforts for neoliberal economic globalization; (3) universalization or Westernization, which is the spread of certain values, objects and experiences; and (4) de-territorialization, in reference to international connections with a significant autonomy from territorial locations and national borders. These 4 trends apply with different intensity in the MENA region and radically transform the landscape of higher education.

Globalization affects state education policies, with specific consideration of the balance of transnational/international forces and national resistances, capacities and responses. This relationship between the global and the local in education is a core preoccupation and relates directly to the possibilities for a politics of education (Ozga and Lingard, 2007). Internationally oriented public universities are caught between their internationalizing student bases and research aspirations on the one hand, and the priorities of their national and sub-national governments as public funders on the other (Knight et al., 2021).

In particular, in many countries across the MENA, globalization increased the weight of international organizations and the privatization and commodification of higher education. As suggested by Robertson et al. (2007), a key element of globalization is the thickening of multilateral interactions and interconnections in the global governance landscape. The traditional International Organizations (IOs), such as the UN institutions (World Bank, UNESCO and ECLAC) and the OECD, are now joined by an expanding array of non-governmental international organizations and transnational firms. Another effect of globalization is that higher education sector, having modeled its goals and strategies on the market-oriented and entrepreneurial business model, is compelled to embrace the corporate ethos of the efficiency, accountability and profit-driven managerialism (Zajda, 2020).

From nomadic scholars to colonial dominance

Universities in the Arab-Muslim world began to emerge between the ninth and the 10th centuries. These include Ez-Zeituna (737, Tunisia), Al Quaraouiyine University (859, Morocco), al-Azhar University (970, Egypt) and Nizamiyyah University in Baghdad (Iraq, 1062). Some historians limit the concept of university to the Euro-Christian world. However, we can say that medieval Islamic universities saw the emergence of many scholars in diverse fields of knowledge ranging from mathematics to philosophy. Major ground-breaking advances in mathematics, astronomy, optics, navigation, architecture, irrigation and agriculture, medicine, and the development of hospitals, commerce and trading, and the willing acquisition of transcultural knowledge were special features of the Islamic Golden Age (Hillman and Baydoun, 2018; Lai et al., 2016).

Two characteristics deserve to be highlighted in this golden age of Arab-Muslim universities: the multiculturalism of ancient universities in the MENA region and the links with other civilizations, in particular, Europe. On the one hand, the crossing of ethnic, religious and continental borders of thinkers. Many thinkers in Arab-Muslim universities came from regions far from the center of Arab-Muslim civilization. They can come from India, Central Asia, Andalusia and sub-Saharan Africa. They can also be of Jewish faith. These thinkers circulate in the Arab-Muslim space. For example, al-Farâbî circulated between Kazakhstan and Syria. Ibn Khaldoun navigated between North Africa, Spain and Egypt. They were truly nomadic thinkers. Hence, multiculturalism and multilingualism characterize medieval thinkers in the MENA region. On the other hand, there were many links and exchanges of ideas with other civilizations. Ties have been intense with Europe, Africa, India and China. In Europe, what is attested is the contribution of Arab scholars to knowledge by translations from Arabic to Latin of philosophers and thinkers of Arab-Muslim culture: al-Kindî (802–866), al-Farâbî (850–950), Ibn Sinâ (Avicennes) (980–1037), Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (1126–1198). The density of intellectual exchanges between the so-called Arab-Muslim civilization and the rest of the world is a reality that is difficult to deny (Freely, 2010).

However, progressively Guardians of Islamic law (Sharia) developed an uncaring attitude toward secular disciplines, critical thinking and excluded them from the curriculum of the madrasa system. This action deprived the Islamic education system from intellectual challenge and stimulation. Learning by rote, a process that encourages instruction rather than original and critical thinking impoverished intellectual creativity in the region.

First modern universities were founded in the MENA region during the political turmoil of the late 19th century, which brought together the Arab awakening, decline of the Ottoman Empire, and European colonialism and imperialism. Education and higher education were associated with nationalist and geopolitical issues in the region. While Arab nationalist seek to take control of higher educational institutions, Western powers were engaged in a severe competition in higher education. The creation in 1865 of the Syrian Protestant College (future American University of Beirut), followed ten years later by the foundation of Saint Joseph University by a French Jesuit mission exhibit the intense cultural transfer between Western World and MENA region during this period. Competition of colonial powers and nationalist struggles combined here to confer significant symbolic power to higher education, in Egypt, Lebanon and Palestine in particular (Romani, 2012).

University as a national development project

After World War II, the newly independent Arab States progressively promoted an equalizing nationalist ideology and staked their legitimacy in their ability to foster economic development and provide social welfare to their citizens. Education was a central component of the states' nation-building projects. Higher education became an important means to garnering political support from the upwardly mobile middle classes, while also centralizing state power (Mazawi, 2005). A new dynamic contributes to the politicization of the question of higher education in the Arab world after the Second World War and the newly acquired independence. New national governments started ambitious development programs, which focus on education, technology and science (Siino, 2003). In this context of the "developing state", both in the version linked to the western bloc or in the other version linked to Soviet Union, many universities of research institutes were created in the region, often with the government guarantee of employment for any university graduate. From Iraq to Morocco, thousands of students accessed higher education until then the prerogative of narrow social elite (Siino, 2003).

It is possible to point out both massification of higher education in MENA and durability of social inequalities by the end of 20th century. In Egypt, higher education increased from just above 10% among those born in 1955 to almost 30% by the 1985 cohort. In Jordan, higher education amplified from around 25% for the 1955 cohort to almost 40% by the 1985 cohort. Tunisia's education system expanded later than Egypt or Jordan. Higher education was below 10% for cohorts born into the 1970s, but higher education expanded rapidly in recent decades, approaching 30% by the 1985 cohort (Krafft and Alawode, 2018).

Despite this rapid growth in higher education enrollment, there is substantial inequality of opportunity in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia. Tunisia and Egypt had the most important inequality of opportunity, whereas Jordan was considerably less unequal. The two primary drivers of inequality in Egypt are mother's education (27.2% of inequality) and father's education (42.3% of inequality). There are also smaller contributions from father's work sector and region. Jordan has less inequality of opportunity. Jordan would need to redistribute 18.7% of opportunities to be equality of opportunity. The inequality in Jordan is primarily related to mother's education (35.8%) and father's education (43.0%). Father's job sector as well as number of siblings also contribute to inequality. Inequality is high in Tunisia, where 37.3% of opportunities to attain higher education would have to be redistributed for equality of opportunity to prevail. This inequality is driven primarily by father's education (42.9%), followed by mother's education (22.1%) and urban/rural disparities (15.8%). There are small contributions from father's work sector, region, and number of siblings. Across countries, sex contributes less than 3% to inequality (Krafft and Alawode, 2018). An important finding of Krafft and Alawode (2018) is that, despite policies centered on free public education, equality of opportunity in higher education does not prevail in MENA. Free higher education is a regressive policy that primarily benefits the rich. The two countries that guarantee free public higher education, Egypt and Tunisia, have the highest inequality of opportunity.

There were about ten universities in the Arab world in the 1940s. The number is in the hundreds today. The share of the rich Gulf countries in this quasi-exponential growth is itself growing. A particular feature of this university boom is the overlap of privatization and claimed globalization. Two-thirds (or about 70) of the new universities founded in the region since 1993 are private, and are mostly branches of US universities. Even in Saudi Arabia, the government, which operates 8 public universities, agreed in 2008 to establish two private universities and numerous post-secondary education institutes (Romani, 2012).

Table 1 Gross enrollment ratio for tertiary education, both sexes (%).

Country	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Algeria	33.89	34.48	36.78	42.62	47.64	51.36
Bahrain	39.54	41.32	43.27	46.56	47.14	50.48
Egypt	30.11	31.06	35.02	33.85	35.16	–
Jordan	–	–	36.63	35.58	31.14	34.41
Kuwait	–	51.02	55.14	57.28	55.36	54.36
Mauritania	5.41	–	5.61	5.35	4.99	–
Mauritius	40.04	39.12	37.41	38.84	40.59	–
Morocco	22.64	25.33	28.40	31.98	33.78	35.93
Oman	29.93	34.55	39.23	44.05	38.12	38.036
Palestine	45.85	44.76	45.28	43.92	43.67	44.25
Qatar	11.99	13.58	14.70	15.64	16.62	17.86
Saudi Arabia	52.23	58.29	61.05	67.33	69.69	68.03
Sudan	17.67	16.90	16.91	–	–	–
Syrian Arab Republic	32.84	41.58	42.67	40.05	–	–
Tunisia	34.95	35.33	35.19	32.81	32.14	31.74
Western Asia and Northern Africa	36.71	38.97	41.67	43.87	45.78	46.26
Arab states	28.33	29.60	31.17	31.98	32.90	33.36

Prepared by author using data from UIS-UNESCO (2020).

Table 1 below compare ratio for tertiary education in several MENA countries. We observe both important growth between 2013 and 2018 and differences between countries in the region. Saudi Arabia has the highest enrollment rate (68%) and Mauritania the lowest (5%).

According to [Calderon \(2018\)](#), gross enrollment ratio of Arab States in 2016 (32.0%) which stood at the same level of Latin America and the Caribbean in 2006 or the world's average in 2012. This improvement in participation is a result of increased diversification and focus on part of states to develop higher education, based on the US-style liberal arts institution model in the Middle-east and on the French public model in the Maghreb. Higher education reform in the region is confronted with a myriad of challenges that spread over demographic, political and economic considerations, and these are unlikely to overcome in the next years. States in this region with the largest number of enrollments are Egypt (2.8 million in 2016), followed by Saudi Arabia (1.6 million) and Algeria (1.4 million).

International cooperation and privatization

Globalization of higher education is slow because of the following realities and constraints. First, educational systems all over the world have to preserve political and cultural identity and serve political and ideological objectives. Second, universities and other higher education institutions worldwide retain their autonomous, individualistic, institutional and elitist characteristics. Even today, universities and other tertiary institutions are sealed into national contexts and most especially in developing countries, are state institutions. Third, it is a fallacy to talk about the globalization of higher education where social and economic inequalities are extensive ([Ishengoma, 2003](#)).

While national context is still the most important factor shaping university, we observe worldwide a growing impact of globalization on Higher education in the 21st century. In MENA region, we consider that international organizations and privatization are two key tenets affecting higher education and its links with globalization. For a decade or two after gaining independence, national higher education systems in MENA countries were structured and functioned primarily within the boundaries of individual countries. However, from the mid-1970s, a series of new phenomena, directly and indirectly linked to higher education, appeared and considerably modified its modus operandi to extend its presence and action beyond national borders ([Martins, 2019](#)).

As a global player in international cooperation, the World Bank is involved in almost all MENA countries in projects to reform the governance and to improve the quality of education of higher education. This involvement comprises both funding but also diagnostic and policy recommendations ([Samoff and Carrol, 2003](#); [Shahjahan, 2012](#)). The [World Bank \(2008\)](#) called MENA countries for flexibility and additional public funding that could be associated with outcomes and innovation, thus ensuring accountability for performance. Professionalization of staff was also considered as a top priority. The European Union within the framework of EUROMED policy ([Fouchet and Moustier, 2010](#)) adopted in the region the same line of conduct than the World Bank. In addition, bilateral cooperation particularly in the Maghreb shaped higher education reforms ([Mullin, 2017](#)).

Privatization and blurring of the lines between public and private characterize the financing of higher education in the MENA region. While privatization is high in many countries, it presents contrasting management models illustrating diverse degrees of government control over higher education. In Qatar, funding is mainly public through the Qatar Foundation. Since 2003, the campus called Education city has hosted at least 9 foreign universities (6 US, one French, one British) in addition to a Qatari university and a dozen research centers. The state covers construction and investment costs there but the universities remain private and

relatively autonomous. In the United Arab Emirates, the International Academic City was established in 2007 in Dubai, where it is part of the "Knowledge Village", built in a free zone and hosting 27 universities, mostly foreign. Funding is more symmetrical there because these universities have to cover their own expenses, in what is referred to as a co-investment operation. Finally, in Saudi Arabia, government control remains the main norm. King Abdullah University of Sciences was founded in 2009, with a sovereign wealth fund of \$10 billion, making it the richest university in the world even before it started operating (Romani, 2012).

The privatization of universities in the MENA region is unfolding mainly through four mechanisms found in other parts of the world. First, privatization can be linked to historical arrangements that have seen the emergence of private universities linked to religious minorities. This is typically the case in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine where the birth of private universities at the end of the 19th century was linked to Christian religious congregations.

Second, we find privatization linked to public policies aimed at increasing the proportion of students in private universities. This can be accelerated by regulatory and fiscal incentives from the state or by public-private partnership (PPP). We may consider offshore campuses as a form of PPP, particularly in the rich gulf states where public funding is used in building a network of foreign universities.

Third, privatization can also emerge through the degradation of the quality of public education and the dynamism of private entrepreneurs, finding in higher education an opportunity for economic gain.

Fourth, privatization is also an ideology/trend present in public universities by the promotion of good governance, accountability and entrepreneurship.

While these four mechanisms of privatization are present in most regions of the Global South, it is important to observe two specificities in the MENA region. The first is the key role played by the state in promoting and accelerating privatization. By injecting a lot of public funding used by private universities, the state is a main player of privatization. The second specificity is the historical mission played by private universities in promoting foreign models of higher education, mostly the Anglo-Saxon model, but also the French model and to a less extent and more recently the German, Japanese or Turkish models.

In Lebanon, students in private higher education come from the middle-class families, i.e., government officials and employees of the public and private sectors benefiting from collective agreements, granting a financial support for their children education. Taking advantage of this principle of freedom of choice of school, the overwhelming majority of these civil servants and employees choose private education, including at the university level, in search of better quality, but also of the symbolic prestige attached to elitist private universities. Thus, we observe the existence of a subtle mechanism that allows private higher education to be partially financed with public funds (Kabbaj, 2012). This situation illustrates the blurring borders between private and public sectors.

Alliances, collaboration, and partnerships forged between higher education institutions in the North and South are one-sided and often benefit one side only. In a situation where countries and multinational corporations in the North are dominating the process of globalization, to talk about globalization of higher education is synonymous to neocolonialism or academic imperialism in higher education. South countries have little to offer in the process of globalization other than receiving whatever accrues from the process. Educational globalization may be not different from such earlier concepts as neocolonialism, dependency, or center-periphery (Ishengoma, 2003).

It is also important to observe that privatization is not following the same trend in the sub-regions across MENA: The Maghreb, the "Middle East," and the Gulf (Oil) States. Compared to the Middle East where privatization of higher education is old, North Africa seems to be more reluctant to massive privatization: « The nations' strong orientation toward the French model, and its commitment to a free public system were specifically cited as the reason for the decade long delay in the implementation of Morocco's privatization reforms and Tunisia's continuing hesitance to support private higher education. » (Buckner, 2018, p. 1302). However, the growth of private higher education both in quantity and quality have been observed in Morocco, Tunisia and more recently in Algeria in the last two decades. In the Gulf States, higher education development is recent and privatization is a policy endorsed and supported by the state. Offshore campuses and foreign university represent a significant share of higher education enrollment (Powell, 2014).

After several decades of international cooperation and privatization, the results of higher education in the MENA region are weak. Young people and their family invest in their higher education with hope to get better job and greater opportunities. However, higher education has become a source of widespread frustration because it is not delivering the skills and competencies needed by young people today. Universities in the region are still centered on credentials rather than competencies (El-Kogali, 2018). Rather than leading to qualified jobs and greater well-being, a university degree in the MENA region is more likely to lead to frustration, and a dead end of unemployment. More curious is the situation of the rich countries of the Gulf who have invested heavily to build public and private universities of good quality. Yet, these countries are experiencing a high unemployment rate of national graduates while importing numerous foreign workers with a university level. The achievements of Arab higher education systems do not seem to be on par with the economic weight and the long scholarly tradition of this region. Compared to emerging economies in Asia and Latin America, Arab higher education systems are way behind in terms of quality and research outcomes. They suffer from relatively high levels of graduate unemployment, and are characterized by inadequate governance arrangements (Salmi, 2015).

Furthermore, Arab universities are in low position in the world university rankings. In the top 500 places of the Shanghai ranking, since its launch in 2003, only 5 of the 550 Arab universities appear, compared to 7 of the 9 Israeli universities (El Amine, 2016). Higher education sector in the MENA region (and particularly in the gulf) is thriving, with billions of dollars spent on impressive-looking infrastructure over the past three to four decades, the rapid growth in the number of young people (including women) enrolling at universities and tertiary colleges, and the recruitment of thousands of expatriate academics to work in regional

universities. However, this is a misleading impression and even with the huge sums of money spent on building infrastructure, it is evident that there are very few excellent universities in the MENA region.

According to Forster (2018), the reasons leading to this situation are diverse. First, the lack of investment in research and development at universities across the MENA region. Countries in the MENA region collectively spend a comparatively low amount of capital on R&D, and on both basic and applied scientific research in universities. In 2013, the 57 member countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference invested just 0.81% of their annual gross domestic product (GDP) on R&D. The Muslim world as a whole spends less than half of 1% of their cumulative GDP on R&D, compared to an average of about 5% in the countries affiliated to the Organization for Economic Development (OECD). Second, the lasting absence of intellectual freedom and the constraints and limitations imposed on free expression of ideas and academic freedom in universities in the MENA region. While a lack of investment in high-quality research at MENA universities is one plausible reason for their low ranking, it does not provide a complete explanation for this. For example, several scholars have asked if states of the Gulf and broader MENA region will ever encourage the academic standards and intellectual freedom that are necessary to generate the “world-class research” they often claim to support in their public speeches and in their national economic development plans. Third, the failure of universities in the MENA region to encourage, monitor and reward high-quality and high-impact research across all academic disciplines. While the volume of research generated in the MENA region has increased over the last 15 years, there are no indications that research quality and impact have also been improved. For example, the overall impact rating of scientific research publications from all universities in the MENA region was 0.33 in 2016. This was well below a global average of 1.00, and significantly lower than the impact level of publications from the world’s top 500 universities (Forster, 2018).

The anti-scientific mind-sets of some ruling political elites, of Islamic theologians and of those who are responsible for the oversight and administration of universities in the MENA region provides some clarification of the low productivity of higher education. Many scholars have suggested that Islam, and its pervasive influence in primary and secondary education throughout the entire MENA region, is one of the principal reasons why this part of the world is still characterized by so many endemic and deep-seated problems—including what appears to be an almost instinctively anti-scientific worldview. Islam’s most influential theologians all promote the belief that spiritual and secular authority are inseparable, and the latter must—in all circumstances and at all times—be subservient to the former (Forster, 2018). However, we have observed a process of innovation and critical academic thinking emerging in universities in countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon, Jordan or Tunisia.

In addition, MENA universities are disadvantaged in respect of academic publishing. Such publishing is typically in the form of articles in scholarly journals, in book form, or as theses, usually with peer-review and/or editorial oversight. Few universities worldwide have their own publishing houses. There are no Arab journals in the sciences and humanities that are universally regarded as being high impact academically at a time when the global literature is becoming dominated by the use of English, western journals, and citation systems developed in the USA and Europe. Financially weak and poorly supported, Arab academic societies are unable to redress the disadvantage (Hillman and Baydoun, 2018).

Universities, especially the newer ones, are running out of steam in their attempt to identify with the dominant models in hegemonic countries from their initial position as dependent universities, which relegates them to a peripheral role. In this context, such creeping standardization risks being reflected not only in a race to the bottom in terms of university education and training, but also in a shrinking of the university public space and, in its wake, of the education as a public good, with the continued regression of the place and role of the public university (Kabbanji, 2012).

Rethinking university in MENA uncertain times

Higher education in the MENA region is at a crossroads and it is urgently needed to rethink it, particularly in terms of governance and the university’s mission in national development.

Some observers call for a revision of models of higher education governance in MENA region. El Amine (2016) analyzed governance models in Arab public and private universities. In public universities, he distinguishes 4 models: (1). The electoral model (Tunisia), (2). The bureaucratic model (Egypt), (3). The politicized model (Lebanon) and (4). The controlled model (Jordan). The governance models in private universities are: (1) The business model, (2) The community model and (3) The autonomous model. In comparison with international models of university governance, Arab public universities are very far from the academic type that had been historically established in Europe. They are also far removed from the market-oriented (neoliberal) type prevalent in the United States or in private universities around the world. Rather, they can be classified in the state-centered type but with some differences between countries. We can say that their main points of divergence from the European state-centered type are their submission to government and the involvement of political bodies from top to bottom, or both ways. The inter-Arab divergences refer to social structures, the relationship with the State, and the union movement, etc. As for the non-public universities, they are polarized either toward the market or by a community organization, or both at the same time. The product of this bipolarity between politics and the market is the loss of autonomy, the weakness of academic freedom and the deterioration of overall quality (El Amine, 2016).

There are a number of important differences in states’ reform strategies in MENA region. Bucknera (2011) classifies states’ reform strategies into three major groups: Neoliberal, Quality Assurance, and Imported Internationalization. Neoliberal reforms aim to expand access to higher education while offsetting costs to consumers and the private sector. Egypt and Tunisia both initiated neoliberal reforms over a decade ago. However, they have not been as successful as Jordan. Today the percentage of youth in higher education in both countries is approximately 30%, but the percentage in private universities is only less than 5% of total enrollment

in higher education. In contrast to the neoliberal model, North African states are emphasizing the importance of the state in providing higher education while pursuing strategies to strengthen the internal and external efficiency of tertiary education. In addition, in all three Maghreb countries of Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, the Ministries of Higher Education have recently pursued large-scale quality assurance programs inspired by the Bologna process by restructuring degree requirements to accord to a Bachelors- Masters-PhD system. This approach attempts to align the higher education curricula with European models and permit the mobility of qualifications and labor cross-nationally. The third model of higher education policies pursued in the MENA Region is that of Americanization, whereby the desire to “modernize” higher education systems has not only taken the form of extensively privatizing the provision of higher education, like many neoliberal states, but also establishing extensive international partnerships with American and British universities. A number of scholars have examined how these institutions are changing tertiary education in the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi by linking it to global trends.

Zewail (2011) suggested a fourfold strategy to reform higher education in MENA region: (a) Achieve the full emancipation of Arabic women and ensure their full participation in civic, economic and political life; (b) Make reforms to national constitutions to allow freedom of thought, decreasing of bureaucracy, development of merit-based systems, and the creation of credible and enforceable legal codes (c) Build centers of excellence in science and technology in each Muslim country to show it can be done, to show that Muslims can indeed compete in today’s globalized economy, and to instill in their youth the desire for learning and (d) Develop more partnerships between leading Western universities and those in the region in order to improve their research capabilities.

The other dimension to be clarified is the mission of university in the region and its relationships with socioeconomic development. The Arab world represents 5.8% percent of the world population and produces 4.5% percent of the planet’s GDP, but its universities account for only 0.08% percent of the top 500 institutions in the Shanghai ranking. The poor results of a large country like Egypt—the 15th most populated nation of the world—are striking in contrast to the impressive performance of a small country such as the Netherlands, which places four universities in the top 100 of the Shanghai ranking. The tiny territory of Hong Kong has more universities in the Shanghai ranking as all Arab countries considered together (Salmi, 2015).

While participating in economic globalization and the internationalization of higher education, the countries of the MENA region have weak capacities to orient these processes in the direction of their own interests and national development. As stated by Ishengoma (2003), many countries in the global South are in danger of being largely excluded from the whole process of globalization, this exclusion will also apply to higher education.

Missed links between education and development

It is important not to limit the analysis of university situation in the Arab countries to the education sector alone. Indeed, education is part of a socio-political and economic ecosystem favorable or not to the production of knowledge. The apparent paradox is that the Arab countries have not reaped the fruits expected from massive investments in education. Obviously, “schooling” and “socio-economic development” have no mechanical ties stipulating that investing in schooling would automatically allow economic to leverage. Harber (2014) suggests rightly for the “need to be cautious about the assumed automatic benefits of formal education for development” (p. 18).

In addition, the fragile legitimacy of political regimes in the Arab countries does not allow higher education to contribute to better participation of young people in civil society and political life. Education systems produce unemployed graduates whose voices are rarely heard in the political arena. While the Arab Spring movements made possible more youth participation in some Arab countries, a great disillusionment of youth persists everywhere due to the absence of economic prosperity.

Several researchers have identified low rates of return to education in the Arab world as a fundamental cause of the current socio-political unrest and upheaval (Fargues, 2011; Shafiq and Vignoles, 2015). Using years of schooling, Patrinos and Montenegro (2014) estimated that the rate of return to schooling in the MENA region is 5.6%, which is considerably behind the rest of the world. Using empirical data, Kingsbury (2018) tested several hypotheses to explain the low return to schooling in Arab countries. The first hypothesis stipulated that religious orthodoxy overwhelm the return on investment of education, including mathematics, science and foreign languages. The second hypothesis developed by Kingsbury (2018) suggested that poorly performing schools in the region had a negative impact on quality. The third hypothesis indicated that the region’s dependence on natural resource exports limits returns to education. The fourth hypothesis, more difficult to corroborate with empirical data, suggested that corruption, nepotism and non-meritocratic government policy (coupled with the absence of the implementation of law) reduce returns to education. However, it is necessary to discuss certain hypotheses of Kingbury (2018). The over-representation of religious content is not present in all the countries of the region. Additionally, education systems in the region are very open to foreign languages, especially in the Maghreb and Middle East countries.

In a recent empirical study, Blackeburg and Tholen (2018) pointed out that the share of young people suffering from social exclusion is the highest in Tunisia, followed by Algeria, Egypt, and Lebanon. Youth exclusion does not affect only the young generation but society as a whole. Social exclusion as a function of the respondent’s employment status varies significantly across countries. In contrast to Lebanon, where unemployed young people feel especially excluded, young people in Algeria, Egypt, and Tunisia are more likely to be assigned the status socially excluded if they are employed. A finding pointing toward the dominance of the informal sector.

During the 2000s, Devarajan and Ianchovichina (2018) suggested that inequality in Arab countries was low or moderate and, in many cases, on its way of declining. Different measures of wealth inequality were also lower than elsewhere in the world. Yet, there were revolutions in four countries and protests in several others. Devarajan and Ianchovichina (2018) explained this so-called

“inequality puzzle” by first noting that, despite favorable income inequality measures, subjective well-being measures in Arab countries were relatively low and falling sharply. This fall was especially true for the middle class and in the countries where the uprisings were most intense. The increasing of disappointment, reflected in perceptions of deteriorating standards of living, was associated with dissatisfaction with the quality of public services, the shortage of formal-sector jobs, and widespread corruption. The transition to the labor Market is characterized by unemployment, long waits and informality (Dhillon et al., 2009).

These sources of dissatisfaction suggest that the old social contract, where the government provided jobs, free education and healthcare, and subsidized food and fuel, in return for the subdued voice of the population, was broken. Thus, it became clear that this social contract was not sustainable. In particular, the fiscal deficits associated with public-sector employment and high subsidies were becoming unsustainable. Governments slowed down, and in some cases, stopped hiring workers. Unfortunately, the private sector did not create jobs fast enough to absorb the large number of young people entering the labor force. MENA has the highest unemployment rate in the developing world, with the rate for young people and women about double the world average (International Labor Office, 2020). This problem is worsening due to the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic; that forces governments of all countries to close their operational sectors, as a result, this affects the economy of most counties, and Arab counties are not an exception, many lost their jobs in addition to those who have not got any job yet. A dislocation exists between policy discourse, which emphasizes the centrality of education for work in the process of economic development, and the inability of Arab State to penetrate society effectively (Mazawi, 2007).

The development of higher education should in theory contribute to the reduction of social inequalities, improve access to employment and make the participation of citizens more tangible in political life. The paradox is that the results of the MENA region are mixed on these three levels despite advances in schooling. The progress in education in the Arab region over the past decades should be seen in the light of patent inequalities in the level and quality of education received. These inequalities are illustrated through a differing schooling experiences depending on the social background of the students: Children from privileged socioeconomic backgrounds versus children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Most often, the first attend private school and benefit from quality foreign language teaching—Children living in urban (coastal) areas versus children living in rural (interior) areas. Most often, the latter endures poor conditions of schooling, including insufficient and untrained teachers. Schools are overcrowded and under-equipped, and working in two-shifts, especially after the Syrian crisis, many counties received flux of refugees, like Jordan, Egypt, and Lebanon, the governments accepted students at the age of primary stage to be enrolled at public schools UNRWA schools. Since the capacities of these schools are already limited, having extra number of refugees added more pressure on the educational systems, and thereby affecting the quality of education.

In an ethnographic study, Boutieri (2016), analyzes the arrangement of the different education streams in secondary education in Morocco and dissects the inequalities based in particular on language skills. The most popular options and those most likely to lead to employment after schooling are the scientific and technical streams. In this context, the humanities streams are abandoned to the poorest students from disadvantaged social backgrounds. The bifurcation between school subdivisions takes place at the end of the third year of secondary school. Boutieri (2016) emphasizes that to gain a place in the scientific fields, one must not only have obtained good grades in science and mathematics, but also in French (with a view to continuing studies at university level). Thus, even if chemistry, physics or mathematics courses are given in Arabic at the secondary level, enrollment in a scientific field and subsequent success in these studies paradoxically depend, largely, on mastery of a foreign language, French or English. Arab education systems still have the footprints of colonial encounter in that they remain elitist, lack pertinence to local contexts and are often disconnected from local knowledge and wisdom. Arab society and education systems remain engaged with a Western-driven project of modernity and a consumerist dependence on foreign markets (Mazawi, 2006).

Based on that, social inequality has emerged and it is partially associated with the limited and low-quality skills that many young people acquire in the Arab world because of their low-quality schooling, as they mainly focus on rote learning rather than high-order thinking skills. Likewise, the authorities of the Arab region could not afford the youth sufficient number of jobs and opportunities to take their places as responsible and productive members in their societies. In this vein, it is undeniable that the current social, economic and educational systems could not help the youth to make their dreams come true and become productive members in their communities. On the one hand, there is the story of poor economic performance, characterized by volatility between high and low growth rates, mainly linked to the instability of oil prices. Although, there is a steady growth of education in terms of quantitative measures, learners show inability of knowledge production or acquiring 21st century skills. It is important to underline the absence of strong relations between economic development and education in Arab countries and the need to rethink of both directions simultaneously. As pointed out by the International Labor Office (2020), youth unemployment is the highest in Northern Africa and in the Arab States, at around 2.2 and 1.7 times the global rate, respectively. In these two sub-regions, youth unemployment rates have been considerably higher than those in the rest of the world since at least 1991, suggesting that there are structural barriers stopping young people from engaging in the labor market.

Finally, we need to remember that the education of the population has two major objectives. The first one is instrumental, which consists of having a more productive and educated active generation. The second is related to the exercise of political rights and citizenry participation. However, younger generations in the Arab region do not have access to the status of an educated and socio-economic workforce, nor to the status of citizens enjoying political freedom and dignity. Hence, revolts broke out certain Arab countries demanding that these two objectives should be achieved. Malik and Awadallah (2013) point out that young people are not only unemployed, but also unemployable. This problem persists despite the fact that public spending on education in the Arab world is higher than or comparable to that in other regions of the world.

It is unlikely to address any aspect of education and educational policy in the Arab region without due attention to the fact that the crisis of education is also in many ways a crisis of the development and the state, of which the utter instability—political and economic—are the major two manifestations. There is hardly any Arab society across the region in which the state is not—in many ways—on the defensive, fragile if not already collapsed (Mazawi, 1999).

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Challenges facing education in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Introduction	388
Colonialism and its ambivalent legacies	389
The role of education in national development	390
Contrasting goals of the World Bank and UNESCO	391
Emergence of private corporate and philanthropic actors in education	392
Current challenges	394
Conclusion	396
References	396

Introduction

As we head into the second quarter of the 21st century, Sub-Saharan Africa continues to encounter a myriad of issues relating to its development and the future of its peoples. Of enduring significance are matters relating to the provision of formal education in the region, particularly those concerning access, inclusion, relevance and quality. These issues are of course not new. A close look at the history of the development and consolidation of formal education as an endeavor of significance should reveal that its provision in Sub-Saharan Africa has always been associated with questions about who provides, who participates, at what cost, for whose benefit, of what relevance and of what quality. Fundamental, as they are, these questions trigger further questions about the modes of thinking that have informed the strategic choices made and approaches adopted to the provision of formal education in Sub-Saharan Africa from its early beginnings in the Colonial era. It is of interest that much the same questions are being asked now that Sub-Saharan Africa is comprised of modern independent nation states as when it was a collection of colonial territories owned and overseen by the major European powers.

Tracing the journey over time, this paper aims to identify and review the key actors of educational activity in Sub-Saharan Africa. It also seeks to understand their overriding objectives, primary considerations and overall aspirations, and the role(s) these play in how the enactment of formal education in the region has been both approached and prosecuted.

The paper assumes however that though the questions asked about educational provision in Sub-Saharan Africa may not have changed, the national development needs of the politically independent countries that now make up the region should constitute the guiding intelligence that informs the provision, enactment, and ongoing reform of education in the region. This paper will assess the soundness of this assumption. In addition, it will seek to reflect the objectives, considerations and aspirations of educational endeavor and its reforms over time through a lens that sees education as critical to addressing the workforce, citizenship and leadership needs of the relatively young independent countries that make up the region.

Given what appears to be the proverbial chicken and egg relationship that exists between the quality of education (measured by literacy rates, student achievements etc.) and the level of a country's development, it is important to acknowledge at the outset that in Sub-Saharan Africa we are dealing with countries that are routinely classified as low and lower-middle income economies and, therefore, developing if not under-developed. For a provision that is generally acknowledged as a fundamental human right, education is not cheap. This fact constitutes an ongoing challenge for countries in the region. The experts associated with a recent Global Education Monitoring Report point out the following:

Children are more at risk, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, where extreme poverty affects 49% of children, accounting for 52% of extremely poor children globally Education is an opportunity with the potential to transform lives. Yet an estimated 258 million children, adolescents and youth, or 17% of the global total, are not in school. The number out of school in sub-Saharan Africa has passed that of Central and Southern Asia and is growing. The share of sub-Saharan Africa in the global total increased from 24% in 2000 to 38% in 2018.

Global Education Monitoring Report Summary (2020, pp. 6–7).

Against this sobering context, it is important to note moreover the reality that: "Large differences in education spending as a share of GDP between low-income and high-income countries are not due to differences in the priority accorded to education in government budgets but due to differences in the share of overall government spending in GDP" (Al-Samarrai et al., 2021, p. 7). Essentially, it seems, actual spending on education in Sub-Saharan Africa is dictated more by the size of GDP than by the value placed on it as a developmental need. With a capacity to provide so compromised, it is important to ask what the real forces are that drive educational activity in Sub-Saharan Africa, the dominant motivations at play, and the prospects and challenges that arise for countries in the region as a result. This paper, aims to engage with and, hopefully, shed some light on these questions.

Still, and before proceeding any further, there is no intention, as might appear to be the case so far, to characterize Sub-Saharan Africa as a homogenous undifferentiated space. Indeed, to highlight its diversity and the many ways by which often undifferentiated educational approaches and policies manifest at local, community and national levels, the paper will routinely illustrate its claims by pressing into service examples from individual countries as relevant, including, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa and Rwanda. It will moreover focus predominantly on the K-12 sector in Africa. Still, the issues highlighted may well also be applicable, to various extents, to the story of higher education in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Colonialism and its ambivalent legacies

A common historical experience shared by the countries of the vast geographical territory, now labeled Sub-Saharan Africa, is that of colonialism. With the exception of Ethiopia, much of Sub-Saharan Africa was colonized by the powers of 19th Century Europe, notably Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain and Portugal. Still, it is to the Christian churches and their missionaries that introduction of European style education in the region can be credited. As Becker (2021: n.p.) notes, “Mission societies often expanded into territories before colonial powers did”; further, they “continued to be the main providers of education even after colonial powers established control during the so-called Scramble for Africa which occurred between 1884 and 1914”. The schools set up by the missionaries facilitated their work by training interpreters who supported their evangelism and helped gain new converts through various networks of schools. The education provided through these mission schools also “spread Eurocentric norms” many of which, for good or ill, remain visible even today in the lived culture of many Sub-Saharan countries. This however is only the story of *European style* education in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Often forgotten, or neglected, is the fact that as far back as the 11th century the Arab-Berber merchants had also brought *Arab-Islamic education* to West Africa. It was “subsequently spread by [Islamic] religious brotherhoods in the 19th century” (d’Aiglepiere et al., 2018: n.p.). The European colonial authorities saw the Koranic schools of the Islamic tradition as a force to contend with and created their own schools to train competent civil servants’ (d’Aiglepiere et al., 2018), familiar with western norms and Christian ethos. The Islamic madrasas however have continued to exist throughout the Sub-Saharan region. It is important to recognize this alternative source of formal education in Sub-Saharan Africa and its present-day manifestations if we are to have a fuller understanding of how the contemporary educational landscape in Sub-Saharan Africa is constituted. As well, an acknowledgment of Arab-Islamic education in the region has implications for how we understand the complexities of access and inclusion in the region. This is a matter of relevance to the aspirations of the *education for all* agenda. d’Aiglepiere et al. rightly note that:

Arab-Islamic education in general, and Koranic schools in particular, are largely excluded from programs advocating education for all in Africa. Yet this education concerns a large number of children, many of whom are considered as “out of school” by the most public authorities in Africa, as well as the various international development agencies. According to d’Aiglepiere et al. (2018), however, recognizing their existence and importance, as well as their diversity, is a prerequisite for building a dialog between all stakeholders about the challenges of education reform in the Sub-Saharan Africa.

Additionally, this corrective is useful as it takes us beyond some of the more common clichés that, typically, diminish the presence and role of Arab-Islamic education in the region, including rather popular misperceptions about it as: a recent phenomenon in Sub-Saharan Africa; a negligible phenomenon in Sub-Saharan Africa; being only for boys and for the poor; and concerned only with memorizing the Koran. While Islam, Christianity and their religious pursuits can be said to account for the advent of formal¹ education in Sub-Saharan Africa, there is no denying the role played by colonial governments following the Scramble for Africa. Much has been made of the role of education in colonialism’s “civilizing mission” in Sub-Saharan Africa and of the duty that the “superior races” have to “civilize the less fortunate, ‘inferior races’” (Serequeberhan cited in Mart, 2011, p. 1). Neither time nor space permit detailed elaboration of the whys and wherefores of these claims. Still, the question must be asked as to whose interests were served by the advent and consolidation of formal education in pre-colonial and colonial Sub-Saharan Africa.

Boiled to its essence, the historical evidence points to the complicity of religious missionaries in Europe’s project of colonization in Sub-Saharan Africa. The introduction of Eurocentric norms and values clearly aided the colonial project by nurturing an inadequate sense of self among the African populations who came to believe in their own inferiority to their European counterparts (Fanon, 1967). Furthermore, the colonial governments used education as a tool to train Africans for colonialism’s own purposes, namely, administration of colonial territories in the interests of the colonizers, as was clear with Lord Lugard’s ‘policy of indirect rule’ (Scott, 2013, p. 2). Such policies promoted the “modernization for colonized people” but served the purpose of creating a pool of skilled but cheap labor. It led to cultural alienations that entrenched notions of racial inferiority among Africans while also disrupting existing social structures and establishing new hierarchies in African societies.

Across present day Sub-Saharan Africa, the ambivalent legacies of the colonial purposes and impact of formal education remain very much in evidence—these often manifest in issues that challenge the internal cohesion of countries in the region as modern nation states. The most readily visible legacy, in this context, are languages of colonial domination now elevated to the status of

¹Some commentators present Arabic-Islam education as informal. This would seem to be because it is often considered to be purely religious in focus—a contestable perception.

official languages of Sub-Saharan Africa. English, French, Portuguese continue to function as languages of instruction in the educational systems of the region and play a critical role in the social mobility of its citizens (Okolo, 2005). It is widely argued (Wolff, 2018) that these languages, owing to their prime position in administration of the modern independent nations, are best placed to provide a shared language of communication across different clans, tribes and kingdoms of each country and internationally. Such an approach to the language of instruction is viewed as essential to nation building in a context of different languages, dialects and cultures each vying for prominence. The sober reality is that in the elevation of Europe's languages, the African languages are effectively silenced and rendered inferior. Consequently, those without access to English, French, Portuguese are also excluded from opportunity and social mobility in the context of the modern state.

The role of education in national development

Assuming it to be a powerful force for economic and social development, it is not surprising that all nations—rich and poor alike—commit to investing significant proportions of their revenues to the education of their people. This is consistent with the other widely held view that any nation's most important resource is its people, a notion made even more popular by Barack Obama in his Yangon University speech of 2012. While Sub-Saharan Africa is consistently described as a region rich in natural resources such as oil, coltan, lithium and a wide variety of other valuable minerals both renewable and non-renewable, it is equally maintained that harnessing of these resources for national development requires a knowledgeable and skilled workforce. There is no overstating the important role education plays in the development of such a workforce. This is even more so, given the relatively recent arrival of Sub-Saharan African countries to the status of independent nationhood with the presumed capacity to determine their own directions for development and to manage their own affairs.

As already noted, however, formal education in colonial Sub-Saharan Africa seldom served the interests of the colonized. More than anything the training and orientations it provided to local populations simply facilitated the carting off of the region's significant natural wealth to serve the material enrichment of Europe. That this exploitative arrangement worked to the detriment of the region's own development is evident in the generally inadequate, if not altogether non-existent, infrastructure for socio-economic development in the several countries of the region at their respective attainments of political independence. This includes the poor levels of human resource development. On independence, it might be noted that countries such as Ghana, Tanzania and Kenya inherited very low literacy rates, together with a low number of trained doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers, nurses, tradesmen. Not surprisingly therefore, commentators such as Austin (2010) have noted that political independence for these countries did not come with economic independence. Significantly, with hardly any exceptions, the erstwhile colonial powers, especially the United Kingdom and France, maintained their controlling involvement in the management of the region's natural wealth. In a more nuanced analysis than this cursory survey can give justice to, Austin (2010) acknowledges severally that "the French government remained closely involved with its former colonies after their independence, not least through the franc zone." Citing Uche (2008), Austin further acknowledges that "... the British government's attitude to the Biafran secession was influenced by the interests of British oil companies." As a result, these resource rich countries were reduced to mere raw material producers with little influence in determining the value of their own wealth. In more recent decades, this situation has been made worse with the emergence of a globalized world economy that allows economic power to be retained by capital and its owners. This is a context in which enables China, now a major economic player, to extract Africa's raw materials to feed its own industrial manufacturing interests with little change to the region's status as a generally powerless raw material source.

The upshot is that despite all their natural wealth, the preponderance of Sub-Saharan African countries remains poor and unable to afford the cost of educating their own peoples to provide the workforce, citizenship and leadership skills that will advance their own national development interests. This vicious cycle of poverty diminishes the political agency of the Sub-Saharan countries, leaving their development aspirations at the mercy of external funding or donor agencies whose interests are not necessarily convergent, if not altogether at odds, with theirs. It is a poverty that generates dissatisfactions and disillusionments with the promise of independence. It is not unheard of for sections of the disappointed populations in these countries to express a desire to return to the relative 'comforts' of colonial rule (Moro, 1989 cited in Ayittey, 2006). The unfulfilled aspiration among the various sectors of the populace results, ultimately, in the political instability of coups d'états for which Sub-Saharan Africa has something of a reputation.

The revolving door of political leadership further undercuts the prospects of economic development for countries in the region as they are taken hostage by successive groups of military adventurists and their ilk, mostly ill-suited to national leadership and without the skills to match their ambition. Examples from the DRC, the Gambia and Burkina Faso indicate extreme versions of this phenomenon (Suleiman and Onapajo, 2022). Their inevitable setting back of the economic development aspirations, contributes in no small way to exacerbating the challenges of providing the education necessary for the economic uplift of the nation and the upward mobility of its citizenry.

Clearly, for the several countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, the historically long arm of colonialism continues to cast a grave impoverishing shadow which weakens their very viability as independent nations that possess the agency to determine and manage their own affairs. Sub-Saharan African nations have the most need to educate their own peoples for the purposes of harnessing their considerable natural resources for national development. And yet, they find themselves, unwittingly and helplessly, assisting the economic expansion of the very countries whose wealth constitute the resource base of the international finance institutions to which they must go begging for aid, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. A lamentable irony.

The aid sought and received from international organizations (IOs) routinely comes with ideological strings that shape the approach to education reform in directions that are not always of the choosing nor necessarily in the interests of the Sub-Saharan African countries themselves. The donor organizations and countries have their own interests and perspectives which define their understanding of the educational reforms needed in the countries of the Sub-Saharan Africa. Invariably IOs seek to marry the locally articulated requirements with their own preferences. This can be illustrated by examining the contrasting agendas of educational reform promoted by UNESCO and the World Bank.

Contrasting goals of the World Bank and UNESCO

Most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa gained independence from colonial rule during the 1960s–70s. Political independence, for these countries, was the first rung on the ladder to nation building and national prosperity. Eager to improve life and living for their respective peoples, the governments of these countries embarked on a broad range of national development initiatives to achieve economic self-sufficiency and affirmation of national identity. Typically, these initiatives were ambitious in scale, span of focus and speed, especially for countries whose populations were relatively small, their institutions in the formative stages of development and their sense of nationhood only incipient. Still those heady days of development saw significant investments in building the infrastructure for national development, including education. The example of Tanzania, where “public spending on education rose during most of the 1970s, reaching a high of about 6% of GDP in 1979” (Gerard et al., 1998) cited in Johnson (2002) is a case in point.

Unfortunately, such expanded investment in nation building through education came to an untimely end in the 1980s. The collective bite of the OPEC oil crises of the late 1970s, followed by the global recession of the 1980s and the financial toll of an ambitious national development drive ushered in a period of declining investments. Of Tanzania, Gerard et al. (1998, cited in Johnson (2002:n.p.)), note that, “The share of budgetary contributions to education fell just over 4% in the early 1980s, and then dropped to below 4% by the early 1990s”, along with “other spheres of social endeavors were also dramatically affected under the impact of fiscal retrenchment.”

Across the region, governments sought the support of the World Bank and IMF to revitalize economies suffering a similar fate as Tanzania’s. Their response, the Structural Adjustment Program (Heidhues and Obare, 2011) of the 1980s, deserves comment. In order to ensure debt repayment and efficient restructuring of economies in distress, the banks imposed “conditionalities” in return for financial assistance. A key characteristic of these “conditionalities” included the requirement for governments to reduce public expenditure on the very activities that would advance economic growth and raise the standards of living for their peoples—these included:

- cuts to government expenditure on essential nation building activity like education, health and development—effectively this requirement placed stifling limits on state participation in activity to grow their economies
- encouragement of privatization in the provision of development infrastructure including, critically, education and health
- removal of protections for domestic industries so as to attract foreign investors
- increased exports of raw materials to support debt repayments and stabilize local currencies

The negative impact of these policies on the economies of Sub-Saharan African countries, and the extreme hardships they created for daily living have been well-documented (Konadu-Agyemang, 2002). In education, the reductions in government expenditure had dire consequences for provision of educational infrastructure (schools, textbooks and other learning resources), teacher development and the opportunities to expand access—a perfect combination of factors that ultimately served to divest education in Sub-Saharan Africa of any semblance of quality, a situation that continues to endure in many of the countries affected. As well, in countries like Tanzania, the government was compelled to reintroduce school fees (cost sharing)—earlier abolished to stimulate broader participation in the immediate post-independence years—with predictable consequences (Brock-Utne, 2013).

Private sector participation, intended to make up the shortfall in government provision, generally operated on a commercial basis. The costs involved in participation added to household costs in a time of financial hardship and parents/guardians had to make choices. This led to the exclusion of families without the means; it also tended to exclude girls, orphans and other children of school going age whose participation in education parents felt to be unnecessary or not worth the investment. Pamba (2012) notes that in countries like Burkina Faso, Burundi, Angola and Kenya and elsewhere, the policy of cost sharing had an adverse impact on enrollments with the number of children out of school increasing markedly in the period between 1980 and 1997.

In a world where education is widely held to be a fundamental human right (Task Force on Higher Education and Society, 2000), one can only wonder at the human sensitivity of policies that overtly, and some might say gratuitously, undermine this right for the poorest of the world. Article 26.1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states without equivocation that “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages” (United Nations, 1948). Did the whole world turn a wilful blind eye to these statements while the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) brazenly put a cost on education via their SAPs and, thereby, commodified it without warning, to the exclusion of large swathes of children from Sub-Saharan Africa?

It is important to note that with their insistence on SAPs and attendant conditionalities, the IFIs, including the IMF and the World Bank, arrogated to themselves decision making authority for shaping macro-economic policy in those countries unfortunate enough to request their financial assistance. As Pamba (2012) argues, “It was not long before the World Bank began playing an

active role in guiding macroeconomic development in recipient and even applicant countries in the direction it considered appropriate" (pp. 19–20). Of significance, the World Development Report (World Bank, 2000) indicated that the World Bank committed some USD 1.8 billion, to the education programmes in the world's poorest countries between 1991 and 1999. This constituted 8.2% of its overall lending for the period, almost double the 4.8% it allocated to education in the 1980s. However, most of the increased lending for education was committed to recurrent expenditure—salaries, teaching and learning supplies and the like—at the expense of development expenditure. In Kenya, for example, recurrent expenditure accounted for 95% of total education expenditure with development expenditure making up only 5% of same over the 2002/3 to 2004/5 school years (Pamba, 2012). The curtailed investment in development expenditure had negative consequences for access, teacher recruitment and training, and infrastructure developments.

The absence of a concern for social values in the conception and implementation of the neoliberal SAP is perhaps best underscored by the extent of physical violence and death its resistance led to, as students and teachers protested the cuts to educational funding. In country after country these protests, in the form of demonstrations and teacher strikes resulted in actual loss of human life. From Benin, through Niger to Nigeria, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, cuts to government funding for education in the 1990s led variously to the attenuation of educational programs, withdrawal of study grants for students and teachers alike, salary reductions and redundancies, deterioration of school facilities and learning equipment.

The ensuing protests, especially by students and lecturers in the tertiary sector resulted in expulsions, arrests and incarcerations, violent deaths, long school boycotts and closures. In her research on the subject, Pamba (2012) details the armed assaults unleashed on students of the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) in Zaria, Nigeria who "were massacred by security forces after staging peaceful protests over impending introduction of SAPs" in 1986. In an equally violent manner, the Ugandan police "fired into a crowd of protesting students" of Makerere University—at least two students were killed on that occasion in December 1990.

Placed against the interventions of the IFIs, UNESCO's aspirations, motivations, and approaches to education in Sub-Saharan Africa in contrast could not be more different. With a clear goal for *all* children to be participating in school by 2030, UNESCO's *Education For All* agenda and Sustainable Development Goals explicitly have prioritized equity, access and inclusion. They have sought to grow the capacity of Sub-Saharan African countries to optimize opportunities for equipping their citizens with the competences for effective participation in nation building in a time of global volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. Upfront and clear-eyed about the magnitude of the need, UNESCO acknowledges that:

Of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion. Over one-fifth of children between the ages of about 6 and 11 are out of school, followed by one-third of youth between the ages of about 12 and 14. According to UIS data, almost 60% of youth between the ages of about 15 and 17 are not in school. Without urgent action, the situation will likely get worse as the region faces a rising demand for education due to a still-growing school-age population.

UIS Factsheet No. 56 September (2019, p. 7).

In direct contrast to the IFIs, UNESCO seems focused on addressing, not creating or exacerbating, the problems of access traceable, in part at least, to the impact of SAPs in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. Whereas the IFIs are driven by economic imperatives rooted dispassionately in the workings of market forces, UNESCO is unequivocal in declaring that "Education in Africa is major priority for UNESCO and the UIS." In pursuit of this priority, its Institute of Statistics (UIS) "Develops indicators to help governments, donors and UN partners better address the challenges." These indicators focus, for example, on school's access to basics, including access to electricity and potable water, classroom conditions—from the availability of textbooks to average class sizes. They also focus on data relating to teacher training, recruitment and working conditions (UNESCO-UIS, 2019). Of particular interest to UNESCO is Girls' education—an aspect of education in Sub-Saharan Africa that was severely hampered by the regime of SAPs.

UNESCO's approach to education in Sub-Saharan Africa is rooted in a commitment to inclusion as a moral imperative for a rapidly changing world that "faces constant major challenges—from technological disruption to climate change, conflict, the forced movement of people, intolerance and hate—which further widen inequalities and exert an impact for decades to come." (UNESCO, 2020) Unapologetically, UNESCO embraces education as a fundamental human right for all, including, especially, the world's most vulnerable and disadvantaged in Sub-Saharan Africa. As its Director General, asserts in her foreword to the *Global Education Monitoring Report (2020)* with the telling theme "Inclusion and Education: All means all", "More than ever, we have a collective responsibility to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, helping to reduce long-lasting societal breaches that threaten our shared humanity."

Emergence of private corporate and philanthropic actors in education

Attempts to reform education in the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa thus take place within this contradictory space, with the international financial institutions, UNESCO and other United Nations agencies with a responsibility for education, such as UNICEF, pulling them in conflicting directions. These international organizations are however not the only players. The region's very conditions of disadvantage and inadequacy as regards educational infrastructure, facilities, resources, and the qualified personnel, to

support access and high-quality outcomes for all, appear to have made sub-Saharan education an object interest for a variety of non-governmental players.

Noted already has been the roles played in education by the Christian church and Islam in pre-colonial and colonial times. Both have maintained their interest and presence in the post-colonial era, too, and continue to support promote their own distinctive approach to educational reform in present day Sub-Saharan Africa. Schools belonging to or closely associated with the various denominations—Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterians, Baptist, T I Ahmadiyya—remain very visible on the sub-Saharan educational landscape.

Alongside the religious groups, philanthropic organizations such as the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and SOS Kinderdorf International have also had a long involvement in bringing education of various countries within the region. The AKDN has a strong presence especially in East Africa (Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda) and West Africa (Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Senegal) where it supports the education of children, the youth and adults (AKDN; n.d.). SOS Kinderdorf International operates in 46 African countries (SOS Children's Villages; n.d.). Like the AKDN, it also supports the education and training of disadvantaged children and youth by providing access to traditional K-12 education as well as vocational training, apprenticeships and work experience.

As philanthropic organizations both of these organizations seek to augment the work of governments in making fee-free education accessible to as many as their own resources and resourcefulness makes possible. They can be said to be partners of governments within the region in this regard as early adopters and implementors of the UN's SDG 4 on quality education (see <https://www.akdn.org/gallery/sustainable-development-goals-partnerships-goals>). Notable recent arrivals on the terrain of philanthropic educational endeavor in Sub-Saharan Africa include the African Leadership Academy (ALA), which currently located in South Africa, Mauritius and Rwanda, is dedicated to the cause of developing the next generation of African leaders through programs that emphasize entrepreneurship. Another active a philanthropic organization is Still I Rise, which seeking to make a high-quality education available to children who live in Mathare, a slum in Nairobi, Kenya. An additional, and miscellaneous, group of actors can also be found in the several so-called "International Schools" often run through partnerships between host countries and others to support education for the children of expatriates, diplomats and relatively affluent local elite. For example, the United World College International now has a school in Swaziland and another in Tanzania.

Over the past two decades, though, some new non-governmental players have emerged from the global corporate world alongside a motley crew of small local actors, who work individually or in partnership with others across the region, to take advantage of the opportunities for entrepreneurship presented by the deficiencies of education within the region. Some of the names and organizations of interest in this regard would be Pearson (and its local franchisees in Sierra Leone and Ghana), the Enko Group which describes itself as "a fast-growing network of African international schools, increasing access to the world's best universities for learners across Africa"—supported by several international financing institutions, including Proparco, I&P, Oiko Credit, Liquid Africa and BIO, Enko Education currently operates in Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Botswana, Zambia and South Africa, and aims to open 50 more schools over time.

This group of non-governmental educational players operate a for profit fee-paying model of education across the income spectrum with the global corporate, Pearson, for example, targets the lower end, the "bottom of the pyramid" "among the poorest the fastest growing market" with "collective 'untapped buying power' ... by providing services to the poorest, businesses are not only making profit, but at the same time doing good! Indeed, this is the argument of 'philanthrocapitalism'" (Pralhad, 2004) cited in Lingard (2015).

Working in partnerships, Pearson claims a commitment to supporting the educational needs of the underprivileged in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Kate James, Chief Corporate Affairs and Global Marketing Officer at Pearson:

In large parts of Africa, upwards of 40% of children are living in poverty and not receiving an education or gaining the crucial skills needed to get a job. Together with Camfed we're determined to play a role in helping improve the life prospects and career opportunities for young people in Africa – with a particular focus on empowering young girls.

Pearson (2017).

Camfed CEO, Lucy Lake says that, "Our partnership with Pearson has opened up opportunities among some of the most marginalized young people around the world ..."

While Pearson's declared intent is laudable, it has drawn significant criticism owing to questions about its actual mode of operation. Pearson's critics complain about education of a questionable quality as the very low level of remunerations it offers means that it uses unqualified Learner Guides, in place of qualified teachers, to deliver pre-packaged mass-produced curriculum. In an era of increasing sophistication in personalized learning and differentiated instruction techniques, such a strategy is incapable of catering to the reality of diversity as regards student learning needs. Commenting on the contradictions of Pearson's edu-business activities globally, Lingard (2015, n.p.) notes:

Pearson proffer strong support for the 'quality teachers' agenda in the nations of the Global North (see, for example, Pearson's series of publications, *Open Ideas* and in particular John Hattie's two 2015 pieces), but their support for low-fee private schools that will generate profit is economically dependent upon the employment of un- and under-qualified and very lowly paid, non-union organised teachers often using scripted pedagogies. There

is a stark moral contradiction here. It becomes apparent that the bottom-line is profit, rather than social good.

In addition to these contradictions relating to teacher quality, pedagogy and remunerations, Lingard (2015, n.p.) also identifies contradictions relating to the “low-fees” charged by Pearson and its partners. In his view, in contexts of predominantly low incomes, school fees, however low, are still a significant expenditure for families and leads to exclusion of the culturally disadvantaged. In this constituency would belong girls, the disabled, orphans, and the like, for whom formal education is often seen by parents and guardians as an investment of limited benefit. Lingard also notes that Pearson’s concept of “low fee” schooling both challenges and undermines “the notion that ‘free’, high quality public education for all is central to democracy and a socially just society and concerningly there is little evidence to support the effectiveness of low-fee, for-profit schools” (Lingard, 2015, n.p.).

Current challenges

The contemporary challenges facing education in Sub-Saharan Africa are arguably located within a history of failed attempts driven by ideological interests that often undermined Africa’s distinctive cultural and political interests. The histories formal European (Western) and Arab (Islamic) persist in the region but are now rooted in a new set of conditions emanating from philanthropic and corporate organizations that espouse a language of reform but often pursue their own interests. Within the context of the reality of limited government funding relative to need, the challenges which at educational systems in sub-Saharan Africa continue to face relate to access and participation, especially of girls and of children disadvantaged by poverty and various forms of disability; inadequacy of basic infrastructure for education in the region and the limited availability of essential resources, facilities and equipment—these cover the range from physical classrooms, stationery, textbooks, laboratory equipment to teacher supply and teacher/leadership training; and the nature (i.e., focus and content) of education as enacted, its relevance and responsiveness to the needs of students and to the needs of the communities (local, national, regional, global) in which they will likely operate.

It is instructive to acknowledge that these challenges persist despite evidence of recent increases in the proportion of expenditure on education, relative to other sectors of the economy, by governments across the region. From a relative low of 15.88% in 2016, government expenditure on education (current, capital, and transfers) ... expressed as a percentage of total general government expenditure on all sectors (including health, education, social services, etc.) has seen a steady increase resulting in 17.88% in 2018 (World Bank Macrotrends, 2022). It is important to note however that these increases, however modest, are occurring against a backdrop of persistent balance of payments deficits for the majority of countries in the region, and mark clear commitment by their governments to address the unfortunate phenomenon that some commentators label “education poverty”.

That access and participation remain a seemingly intractable challenge is underscored by the data available from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) from which we learn that:

Of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion. Over one-fifth of children between the ages of about 6 and 11 are out of school, followed by one-third of youth between the ages of about 12 and 14. According to UIS data, almost 60% of youth between the ages of about 15 and 17 are not in school (UIS UNESCO, 2019, p. 1).

Scrutinizing these sobering figures closely, Mogoathle (2020, n.p.) reminds us that the situation is “particularly grim for girls. 9 million girls in Sub-Saharan Africa, aged between six and 11, will never set foot in school.” She also notes that “23% of girls are out of primary school, compared to 19% of boys.” And yet, countries in the region have and continue to initiate and implement strategies, by themselves and in collaboration with other countries and/or agencies to work toward the ideal of education for all.

Noting the difficulties posed to access by school fees, previously discussed, a country like Ghana instituted the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) program aimed at ensuring equal and free access to basic education for all Ghanaian children. This program operated between 1995 and 2005. Not surprisingly, the expanded access to basic education—covering 2 years of Kindergarten, 6 years of Primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary—created a need for similar expansion at the Senior Secondary and Tertiary levels. The government of Ghana responded, in 2017, with a fee free education for students in Senior Secondary. Ambitious and well-intentioned as such initiatives are, they are not problem-free. Again, the Ghanaian example is instructive as the expansion in student numbers is not always met with commensurable expansions in learning spaces (physical school blocks/classrooms), teacher supply, teaching and learning resources.

Of interest, the recent move to a fee-free education for students in Ghana’s Senior Secondary system has had to be accompanied by the introduction of a double-track² system of schooling to cope with the significant numbers of students taking up Senior Secondary education—a surge from 306,000 students in 2016 to 430,000 in 2018 (Kerr, 2020). This arrangement has had implications for continuity and quality of learning. Briefly, while the access agenda is progressively being met, that of quality, if the critics are to be believed, is progressively deteriorating.

The Ghanaian example makes clear that access is dependent on adequate infrastructure—a fee-free policy without the requisite number of learning spaces, well-qualified teachers and learning materials to cope with the increased numbers of students hampers

²The double track is a shift system of schooling that uses the same facilities to provide for two different student cohorts. In the Ghanaian system, the cohorts alternated their occupancy of the school space such that while one was in session, the other was on a break. This resulted in adjustments to the school year with each cohort spending a significantly shorter period of time at school when it was in session.

both access and quality. Abolishing school fees is not enough—this is a point worthy of emphasis as the Ghanaian example (dubbed Free SHS) took a very comprehensive approach to “free” which extended beyond school fees to uniforms, textbooks, feeding and all costs relating to boarding and lodging for students admitted to boarding schools. It is remarkable, therefore, that anecdotes abound, in Ghana, of parents asking to be allowed to pay fees if that would ensure that their children/wards did not have to participate in the double track system.

According to Kerr (2020), “Currently, 17 governments, representing 37% of Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, offer some form of fee-free lower and/or upper secondary education.” While these policies vary in their conception and implementation across countries it is clear that governments across the region are reckoning seriously with the impediment that a regime of school fees poses to participation in education especially by the disadvantaged. As the report notes, in many cases there are hidden costs to what is held up as “free education”, as parents/guardians have to finance the costs of textbooks, uniforms, feeding and the like.

Even in Ghana, where the government pays for all formal costs associated with the Free SHS, ambitious parents are quick to point out that they are spending more of their own money than previously to provide private tuition for their children—this is a complaint that goes to the heart of the quality debate. These hidden costs are no less an impediment to participation especially for girls and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Enhancing access and participation for girls continues to be a matter of complexity as factors like the lack of access to basic toilet facilities and adolescent hygiene products at school combine with cultural expectations of early marriage, childbirth, farm labor in rural settings to keep girls away from school. Fortunately, the latter are on the decline.

The disruptions wrought on the world of education by the Covid-19 pandemic have thrown into sharp relief the inadequacies of school infrastructure across the region. In many countries of the region, education effectively came to a halt for students as the infrastructure of digital technology did not exist to support the shifts to online learning that were initiated and consolidated in other parts of the world. Even where some form of online learning was made available neither teachers nor students had the knowledge and facilities necessary for effective participation in teaching and learning. In some parts of Kenya, some lessons were made available to students via radio networks. Children from families without a radio could not participate.

As Human Rights Watch reports, “Many children received no education after schools closed across the continent in March 2020” (Human Rights Watch, 2020; n.p.). In the presentation to their 35th Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child they demonstrated in very vivid terms the ways in which “school closures caused by the pandemic exacerbated previously existing inequalities, and that children who were already most at risk of being excluded from a quality education have been most affected.”

Covid-19 aside, however, the issue of educational infrastructure, or lack thereof, has underlined a long-standing challenge in the region. Reference has already been made to the adoption of a double track system in Ghana as a strategy to cope with the surge in student numbers at the introduction of the Free SHS. The region does not have enough schools or classrooms for its students. UNESCO’s Institute for statistics identifies “poor infrastructure” as a critical barrier to education (UIS UNESCO, 2016, Slide 4). It is not unusual for children in urban centers to have overcrowded classrooms relative to the physical size of the class or to attend schools that lack the basics such as a board for each class, or toilet facilities or clean water or electricity or adequate textbooks and stationery. Similarly, it is not unusual for children in country towns or rural villages to have to walk long hazardous journeys, daily, to a school or attend classes in dilapidated buildings or under trees.

If a school’s most important resource is its teachers, then this is an area of significant challenge in the region owing to problems of supply. As government policies and actions lead to expansion of access to education for all children in the region, more teachers will continue to be needed. However, as a relatively poorly paid profession in the region, teaching does not attract many takers or stayers and there is, thus, a high attrition rate. Against such low take up and high attrition—from retirements, resignations, emigrations, mortality—the demand for teachers, has always outstripped supply. Historically, countries in the region have made do with significant numbers of “pupil teachers” and university graduates without teaching qualifications but this was before the policies and programs to make education free and accessible to all children of school going age. For example, “In Lesotho a 2007 study found that 40% of primary teachers were unqualified (Education International, 2007). In the same year there were 40,000 qualified teachers unemployed in Kenya, and a further 15,000 unemployed in Zambia (Education International, 2007)” (UNESCO, 2010, p. 1).

These figures suggest a general dissatisfaction within the region with teaching as a worthwhile profession. Challenges of remuneration, retention, ongoing professional learning, career progress and fulfillment loom large alongside those of training and recruitment. Any attempt to narrow the gap between demand and supply of teachers must seek to address these challenges as a matter, also, of addressing the quality of teaching and learning. In Ghana, for example, the number of teacher training institutions, known as Colleges of Education (CoE) is on the rise—Isaac Buabeng et al. (2020) note that, from 38 CoEs in 2014, the number now stands at 48 CoEs. The increase is a result of deliberate government intervention which resulted in the absorption of “10 private CoEs with the aim of expanding the infrastructural facilities in the colleges” (p. 87) Typically, the CoEs offer three-year Diploma in Basic Education (DBE) programmes. Alongside the CoEs, the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education, Winneba, well-known as traditional teacher education institutions run programmes leading to academic degrees in Education (Buabeng et al., 2020). Beyond initial training and certification, however, there seems to be very little effort on the part of governments in the region to tackle the needs of ongoing teacher professional development beyond massive subject focused teacher workshops to introduce new or revised curriculum as necessary.

The challenges highlighted in this discussion, while important in themselves, are also of significance because of the adverse impact they stand to have on the overall quality of education in the region. Even as literacy rates increase with the efforts to expand

educational access, it is of concern that the quality of education on offer does not result in outcomes that meet minimum standards globally. Mogoatlhe (2020) tells us that “90% of children aged between 6 and 14 ... won’t reach the minimum reading requirements even after they complete secondary education.” This telling statistic underscores Mogoatlhe’s assertion that “it’s also not enough to just be in school—the quality of the education also has to be good for a child to thrive.”

However, I would argue that the quality of education for a region as distinctive as Sub-Saharan Africa, should be determined by a more comprehensive set of performance markers than are currently available from reliance on student achievement on standardized testing. Proceeding by questioning in the concluding segment of this paper, it is important to note the need to approach the issue of quality from the standpoints of both curriculum content and pedagogy, together with the recognition that Sub-Saharan African countries are among the poorest of the world (Mogoatlhe, 2020) and lack the resources to invest heavily in education. Against this recognition, a significant regional and national objective for education must not only be a focus on educational outcomes but also the alleviation of poverty.

Conclusion

The discussion in this chapter has highlighted the continuing challenges that systems of education face in Sub-Saharan education. The challenges are not only a product of historical legacies but also the current pressures, economic, political and cultural. Various international organizations have attempted to help but have not been able to align their interests with those of Sub-Saharan Africa. Many reform attempts have failed, while others lack conditions of sustainability and suitability. The criteria by which the quality of education in the region should be assessed continue to be contested. Ultimately however these criteria need to consider the following questions more seriously and critically:

- To what extent does the content of curriculum in the region align with the needs of national development for its various countries?
- What importance is given to the languages and cultures of the region in the education of its children?
- Are the ways of knowing and being in the region acknowledged and valorized in the curriculum?
- To what extent does teaching and learning routinely connect students to the wealth of their own cultural contexts as resources for learning?
- To what extent does the local community participate in the teaching and learning process?
- How does teaching and learning provide opportunities for schools and students to collaborate with community (local, national, or regional) to solve/address problems of interest?
- How does teaching and learning harness technology to provide experiences that support the learning needs of each student and, thereby, enhance the development and consolidation of desired competences?
- To what extent and how effectively do teachers actively collaborate with their peers, students and their parents in the pursuit of effective praxis as lifelong learners?

These questions should, hopefully, provoke reflection on the nature of education appropriate to the needs of the region. In many ways they reflect standards and practices to be aspired toward if the quality of education in Sub-Saharan Africa is to improve in the ways that address the needs of national development and poverty alleviation while also affirming the cultural identity of students and supporting their holistic development. They also point to the need for the curriculum and its teaching to be decolonized through engagement in culturally relevant, responsive and sustaining practices. As well, they nudge into consciousness the levels of professionalism and professional practice that teachers in the region should be aspiring toward.

Taken together, the questions return us to the purposes of education for the Sub-Saharan African region. They also offer a perspective on what the experience of learning should be for students, teachers, schools and the communities that host and, in many ways, sponsor them. Implicit is the consideration of whether an education rooted in the resources (and daily challenges) of the community might prove to be more accessible and engaging to all, regardless of financial standing? Might it also engender modes of problem solving that serve to create new knowledge for sharing with others? But perhaps, we are getting ahead of ourselves. There is yet much work for the region’s governments and stakeholders in education to do to realize the possibilities of quality education envisaged here. Sadly, too much of the leadership of educational reform is currently ceded to the region’s development partners. The governments of the region need to step fully into this role as a matter of urgency.

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Shifting policies of education in Latin América

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Introduction	398
Contextual record and basic concepts	398
Education and the consolidation of the national state	399
The expiration of the 20th-century milieu	401
Decentralization: a frail course of action	401
Lifelong learning: an upright target	402
The curricula: broken bridges between law and practice	402
Assessment to cope with low quality of education	405
Teacher professionalization, identity, and collective representation	406
Covid-19 and the right to education	407
Ending	409
References	409

Introduction

Since the 1980s, the educational systems of Latin America underwent analogous shifts despite significant disparities between countries. Education became an artifact to join globalization from being a lever for the nation-state's consolidation from independence to the early twentieth century. Besides emphasizing growth on enrollments, educational policies move to inclusion, equity, quality, and labor training. Nonetheless, the public education enterprise has been historically poorly founded. Intergovernmental organizations and national governments pushed for shifts in politics and education policies under the umbrella of a universal educational reform project. Still, it does not eradicate Latin America's distinctive feature and its educational systems prevalence of vast inequalities due to ethnicity, social class, gender, religious beliefs, or sexual orientation fermented in the 19th and 20th centuries. Inequalities that worsened in 2020 because of the Covid-19 contagion.

Although educational reform processes have been complex, diverse, and with innumerable design and implementation problems, to facilitate the analysis, they can be grouped into two main models. One of the initiatives of such reforms to cope with quality and equity is privatizing education systems for economic and ideological reasons. A neoliberal call's dictums favor market mechanisms that emphasize training for productive work, free choice, and school autonomy. However, although without the economic power and propaganda means, democratic tendencies oppose that vision. These conceive education as a public good and propose reforms that stress the human being, respect for cultural differences, and substantive equality.

By the 1980s, most quantitative education indicators showed improvement even though the population grew due to progress in preventive health, but the general perception was that schooling was of low quality. Thus, in the 1990s, intergovernmental institutions nurtured the tendency to decentralize school systems and strengthen adult education and lifelong learning. But at the same time, under central government control, encouraged shifts in the pedagogical orientations from the content and teacher-based curriculum with an emphasis on general teaching to competence-based or constructivist approaches that focus on students' learning. And governments of most countries created specialized institutions to measure such education. The human capital pattern to train for work dominates, but diverse nature experiences flourish to educate for responsible citizenship and freedom. In the reform processes, all participants agreed that the professionalization of teachers was essential. Yet, teacher unions resisted the push for neoliberal reforms.

This article focuses on educational politics and policy. It starts picturing trends after independence in the 1800s and emphasizes the shifts in the 1980s until the present day. It covers from initial education to K12.

Contextual record and basic concepts

Latin America is a geographical area of great contrasts, with modern economies that mix with subsistence or extreme scarcity and vast social disparities and regimes that postulate humanism, democracy, and social justice, but which political practices result in authoritarianism and patronage. Despite so, with few exceptions, the governing groups proclaim the purpose of reforming school systems to improve the quality of education, advance social inclusion, and further equity. Even with all the impetus and expenses, overall, the expected results have not been produced, although there is some progress in enrollment growth, a higher transition between school levels, and vocational education provision.

Although the concepts are not antagonistic, there is a query for education between quality and equity. Both conceptions coincide in the proposals for change. The search for quality education is closer to technocratic approaches under human capital theory, while

the quest for equity pursues humanistic ends. The first stresses measure student performance in literacy and numeracy, the second in the personality's harmonious development.

The word inequality refers to economic or any other magnitudes that are different and feasible to measure. The term inequity and others with the same connotation pass value judgments on those magnitudes. The notion of equity does not mean treating everyone the same way; the concept connects with distributive justice: the fundamental postulate is that the search for equity implies equal (normative) concern for all members of a society (all are equal before the law) and dissimilarity in consideration of those with social disadvantages (Sen, 2009). However, there is a global trend to transform basic education, to which Latin America is no alien. Although it does not disregard the objectives of equity, it superimposes the urgency of raising the quality of teaching, emphasizing the acquisition of skills for the information age: the universal educational reform model.

The universal model of education reform for the information age, mainly promoted by UNESCO, the World Bank, and the OECD, depicts five features: (1) Decentralization / school autonomy. (2) Lifelong learning. (3) Centralized curriculum based on competencies. (4) Central evaluation systems. And (5) Professionalization of teachers (Beech, 2008). Some Latin American governments accepted and adopted such features in the 1990s, however, amid social conflicts and political changes that affected the governance of education systems because, in each case, there is a dialectic between the national and the local (Arnove, 2013). Governments have to deal with internal political forces, face social groups' contentions, and pressure from teachers' unions.

Education and the consolidation of the national state

Schwartzman synthesizes colonization and exploitation history that the Spanish and Portuguese empires subjected to native peoples of what is now Latin America. The conquerors arrived to exploit the new world's treasures. "Many of them did not bring their families, and, even if they did, mingled with the local population and the slaves, creating large, stratified mixed-blood populations that also combined the cultural, religious, and linguistic traits of their different origins." (Schwartzman, 2015) Still, each of the future independent nations developed distinct cultural characteristics. There are countries with a large native population such as Bolivia, Mexico, Peru, and part of Central America, and others where people of European descent are the majority, such as Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. Immigrants from other regions, Palestine, China, or Japan, for example, enriched the miscegenation and enlarged the cultural complexity of the area.

In the Spanish colonies and Brazil, a Portuguese settlement, the dominant groups were of European ascendance (criollos), and the original population constituted the oppressed castes. The Europeans conquered the native peoples and forced them to work in mining and farming to extract raw materials and grow products for the world market. They also imported millions of Africans to work as slaves on large plantations; the conquerors enforced Catholicism as the official religion and Spanish or Portuguese as the overriding languages.

The wars of independence of Spanish America led to the establishment of republics in the early nineteenth century. Still, most of them suffered civil wars, military dictatorships, and the division of territories. For decades there was nothing, urban and regional centers that struggled to maintain an external representation of a national daydream (Córdova, 1977). Brazil became the Portuguese empire's headquarters until 1889 when it shifted to an independent nation and a republican regime.

Although enlightenment and political liberalism had intellectual influence in Latin American independence struggles, the nascent republics did not forge a liberal democratic state. It was an oligarchic state whose economic structure was inherited from the colonial period: the self-sufficient hacienda (latifundio). It focused on the indigenous population's forced labor, poor mestizos, and descendants of slaves (Medina Echaverría, 1964). In that state, the military caste took charge of the bureaucracy, and the Church of the few education centers. Furthermore, given the collection of tithes and mortgages, the Church became an economic power.

Governments were unstable and bureaucratic, where corruption and compadres abounded. The military and ecclesiastical institutions were the most important. Despite the republican regime, social, economic, and political inequality persisted in the region's countries. Throughout the first century of independence, authorities reestablished political ties with Spain, and Catholicism kept being the official religion; the Catholic Church was part of those states, and even it was the hegemonic power until the late 1860s (Halperin Donghi, 1969).

Although the law established that education would be free in many countries, both due to civil wars and fiscal hardship, education systems were inexistent. Schooling was for a minority, to prepare clergymen and public servants in seminaries and universities. Countries like Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Uruguay, and Ecuador started Lancaster and Bell schools from the 1820s onwards. It was oriented to serve the poorest classes with a student-monitor method. Parishes, humble houses, and public buildings hosted the groups. In Mexico, those schools became part of official instruction in the 1830s (García Benavente, 2015).

The dominant groups, with the landowners at the top, tried to strengthen the state; they maintained their concern for egalitarianism in the field of law, not in practical life. The governing classes wanted the masses to identify with the nation. Strengthening national identity became a mission for education. Against the Church's requests and conservative forces, liberal governments sustained public instruction institutions. The patriotic and civic teachings supported the construction of legitimacy and the crystallization of ferments of collective identity. The concept of homeland became identified with the nation. The first curricula introduced a heroic sense of the recent past constituted by the Independence revolutions. Likewise, the oligarchic groups used

bordering conflicts with other republics as elements to promote the nationalist spirit. Patriotism became an actual national project (Ossenbach Sauter, 1993).

However, school systems' institution was slow and charged with disputes between religious and secular conceptions; nonspiritual thinking was gaining ground, especially in the more populous countries. The most radical expression was in Mexico that after a social revolution, it decreed secular education in the Constitution of 1917, and socialist education in the amendment of 1933 (Ornelas, 1995). During the first decades of the 20th century, Latin American countries struggled to create education systems; first, to increase literacy and to instruct the mass of workers and, second, to force indigenous peoples to speak Spanish or Portuguese and incorporate them into the national state. According to Bergés (2009), literacy percentages grew in the first half of the 20th century, but unevenly. For instance, in 1900, Argentina and Uruguay had rates of literate persons of 51% and 59%. By 1950 it grew to 88% in the first country and 86% in the second. Others, like Mexico and Peru, barely exceeded 20% at the beginning of the century, and, by 1950, they reached 61% and 51%.

As shown in Table 1, except for Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, and the Central American countries, all with high percentages of the indigenous population, illiteracy was less than 20%. In the Dominican Republic and Brazil, there is also a high percentage of people of African descent. Except for Cuba, there are more illiterate women than men. Nevertheless, the gross enrollment rates in primary school were already over 70%, and those in secondary education stood growing. Similarly, the average number of students per teacher in primary school seemed acceptable, but in Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, and Central America. The lag in the Dominican Republic was considerable. Funding for public education, however, was (and continues to date) low. Only Costa Rica and Ecuador allocated more than 5% of their GNP to education. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), over 90% of spending went to teacher and administrator salaries across the region (ECLAC, 2001).

Although illiteracy among adults was still high in the poorest nations, universal attendance to primary education was a fact in almost all the region's countries. There were progress and some social mobility; schooling systems incorporated large popular sectors. However, the expansion of enrollments did not reduce social inequality; the growing urban middle classes were the primary beneficiaries of the evolution of schooling, while the low quality of education became a matter of concern.

Once national states were consolidated, and the borders between countries varied little, toward the end of the 1960s, the human capital theory began to penetrate educational policy discussions. In contrast, intellectuals started to debate the concept of equal opportunities in the 1970s, and by the 1980s, the emergence of global trends marked the educational politics and policies of Latin America.

Table 1 Basic indicators of education in Latin America (1980).

Country	Illiteracy 15 years + %			Gross enrolmen rates		Gross enrolmen rates		Student/teacher primary schooling	Public spending %
	M	F	Ages	Rate	Primary schooling				
					Ages	Rate			
1 Argentina	6.0	5.7	6.4	6–12	111	13–17	56	19	1.9
2 Bolivia	30.9	19.9	41.3	6–13	76	14–17	37	18	3.8
3 Brazil	25.4	23.7	27.2	7–14	98	15–17	34	26	0.7
4 Chile	8.5	7.9	9.1	6–13	113	14–17	61		4.1
5 Colombia	15.6	14.7	16.4	6–10	107	11–16	34	31	2.5
6 Costa Rica	8.3	8.1	8.4	6–11	107	12–16	70	20	6.2
7 Cuba	7.9	8.1	7.8	6–11	106	12–17	81	17	–
8 Ecuador	18.1	14.4	21.8	6–11	117	12–17	53	35	5.3
9 El Salvador	33.8	29.1	38.4	7–15	74	16–18	25	48	3.4
10 Guatemala	46.2	38.1	54.3	7–12	73	13–18	17	34	1.8
11 Honduras	39.0	37.2	40.8	7–12	98	13–17	30	37	3.0
12 Mexico	17.0	13.8	20.2	6–11	120	12–17	49	39	3.1
13 Nicaragua	41.8	41.5	42.1	7–12	98	13–17	43	35	3.5
14 Panama	14.3	13.7	15.1	6–11	106	12–17	61	27	4.5
15 Paraguay	14.1	10.6	17.5	7–12	105	13–18	27	27	1.3
16 Peru	20.2	11.7	28.8	6–11	114	12–16	64	37	2.5
17 Dominican Republic	26.2	25.2	27.3	7–12	107	13–18	42	56	2.1
18 Uruguay	5.3	5.7	4.8	6–11	107	12–17	59	21	1.9
19 Venezuela	15.1	13.3	16.9	7–15	110	16–18	40	27	4.1

Source: Own elaboration based on ECLAC (2001).

The expiration of the 20th-century milieu

Through the 20th century, the oligarchic state archetype moved to various forms of corporatism and military dictatorships; democracy was weak. The idea of education at the homeland service continued, but with increases in enrollment and escalation to secondary and higher education. Also, many governments, like in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, established vocational training to prepare workers for the industry. Still, growth did not mean proper quality instruction; thus, by the 1980s, the leading groups started education reforms aiming at accomplishing better-quality teaching and equity in education. Nevertheless, social exclusion continued to be the landmark locus in Latin America (Treviño, 2005).

The influence of intergovernmental organizations grew; in many countries, they even played as local political actors. In the 1980s, those organizations began to advocate for educational reforms to improve quality; enrollment growth, they argued, while it should continue, was insufficient. Most countries in the region accepted the Jomtien declaration of Education For All (EFA), which UNESCO called to continue with the expansion of enrollment and offer enhanced education (UNESCO, 1993). The era of globalization manifested itself in the strain between studying for work—as proclaimed by organizations such as the World Bank and the OECD—and education as a fundamental human right, championed by UNESCO.

Most of the region's governments accepted the EFA slogans but were unable to meet the goals for the year 2000. However, there were impulses to equity in education due to the propagation of new actors interested in learning. Intellectuals and organizations, such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, reviewed the slogan of equal opportunities and began to speak of educational equity and social inclusion (Treviño, 2005). In addition to access, it was necessary to guarantee permanence and graduation from schooling levels. Furthermore, the gaps in the quality of education offered to boys and girls, middle and poor classes, urban and rural populations, had to be reduced. The most vulnerable segments of the populaces should be favored. Like Pablo Latapí in Mexico, intellectuals introduced the concept of equity to public debate and proposed compensatory programs to support the disadvantaged (Latapí, 1993).

Throughout the 20th century, governments in the region, churches of various faiths, civil organizations, service clubs, and people in business launched non-formal education projects to alleviate some of the systems' deficiencies. Such as illiteracy and problems derived from social inequity or race or gender issues. UNESCO and other international donors did the same. Unfortunately, by the end of the twentieth century, except for a few short-term or literacy projects that had some success, the record included more failures (Cortina and Stromquist, 2000; Post, 2002; Reimers, 2000; Rivero, 1999). Social exclusion continues to be one of the negative badges of Latin American societies.

Despite these deficiencies and many governments' shortcomings, the hope for better quality and equitable education remained. Dispersed sets of educational experiences that met—not all, but many—of the population's expectations maintained the flame. The ideas of Paulo Freire on popular education took off in the 1970s. Those were edifying exercises whose primary purposes and their center of action were quality and equity: good educational practices (Ornelas, 2005). Still, global institutions pushed for the international model of education reform.

Decentralization: a frail course of action

The World Bank began to gain prominence with proposals for more financing and better administration; educational decentralization, it argued, was the precondition for optimizing the use of scarce resources. Furthermore, bringing the authorities closer to schools and parents would allow governments to understand the schools' problems better and efficiently channel energies to solve them (Winkler, 1989).

Perhaps for internal reasons, but also under the influence of the World Bank, national and local governments took the slogan of educational decentralization. Senior government officials replicated it in their discourse, there were academic forums, and the Bank allocated resources to finance research to strengthen local autonomy and management capacity. The drive covered the entire continent, from Chile and Argentina to Central America and Mexico (Carnoy et al., 2005; Edwards, 2019; Ornelas, 1995). Brazil was a case apart. Its federal system has been in operation since the 19th century, but the states transferred control and primary education financing to the municipalities. The reforms of the 1990s planned to strengthen the counties (Guimarães de Castro, 2015). Cuba and Uruguay decided to keep its school systems under central control.

The policy of educational decentralization had radical tones. In Chile, the extreme case during the Augusto Pinochet government, which transferred public education to the municipalities, established voucher programs that promoted privatization so that it would function according to the logic of the market (Ávalos and Bellei, 2019; Bellei and Vanni, 2015; McEwan and Carnoy, 2000; Muñoz Stuardo and Weinstein Cayuela, 2019). There were community control experiences of schools and school autonomy in areas emerging from civil wars such as EDUCO in El Salvador (Edwards, 2020), later replicated in Guatemala and Honduras (Ganimian, 2016). The ideology of efficiency governed the decentralization efforts in Latin America's education. However, the process in countries that proclaimed educational decentralization transferred degrees of authority and control to sub-national entities—and considerable financial resources in Mexico's case—but centralized the curricular and political decisions in the central ministries (Kubal, 2003).

Although it tried to change discourse and incorporate other actors into the educational policy, the decentralization move did not work overall. There were some exceptions, but a good part of sub-national governments did not go beyond a reformist discourse; in their daily practice, however, they showed disinterest, cooperation with the previous uses and corruptions of the centralized

structure, fear of conflict, or they replicated the speechmaking but did not act on a consequence. By the end of the twentieth century, there was no proof that through the decentralization policies, the region's school systems enhanced the quality of education (Carroy, 2012).

Teacher unions and traditional bureaucracy opposed educational decentralization. Some for good reasons, because if there were not enough administrative capacities at the national scale, even less at the sub-national or local levels. Union leaders knew that with decentralization, they would lose power and mediation with the central government (Schneider, 2021). Parents, business associations, or civil society organizations interested in educational tasks without reaching concrete and binding levels of participation, nor institutional and permanent mechanisms (Kubal, 2003).

Lifelong learning: an upright target

Although lifelong learning is part of the international reform model, it is also an ingredient of sustainability projects, with even more history and contributions. The first type of prioritizes economic development and labor productivity skills to increase participation in global value chains and promote equity and inclusion (OECD, 2017). For the second, lifelong learning has a critical role in eradicating poverty, protecting the planet, securing human rights, building peaceful, inclusive, and equal societies, and promoting social, economic, cultural, and technological progress based on the values of the United Nations (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Education, 2012).

The generic concept in practice until a few decades ago was that of adult education. Lifelong education has two main aspects, literacy (includes digital literacy) and training for productive work. It is a global ideal even before the term globalization was known. Since its creation, UNESCO has promoted six International Conferences on Adult Education CONFINTA (from the French, Conférence Internationale en pratique sur l'Éducation des Adultes).

A proposal from Mexican diplomats gave way to the Regional Center for Fundamental Education for Latin America (CREFAL). It started in 1951 with the Mexican government's sponsorship and the UNESCO and the Organization of American States' support. Its purpose was to support Latin American governments to meet urgent needs for fundamental education: the training of adult education teachers and the production of teaching materials. To promote a broad multidisciplinary outlook, CREFAL ensured specialized personnel provided by other United Nations Organizations. The International Labor Organization (offered a specialist in arts and crafts); the World Health Organization (experts in health education, childcare, rational nutrition, and individual and social hygiene); the Food and Agriculture Organization professionals in crop improvement methods and conservation of natural resources, home economics, family industries and recreational leisure, organization of rural cooperatives (Torres Bodet, 2017).

Throughout the 1970s, CREFAL became one of Paulo Freire's main disseminators and practitioners' methods and ideas on resistance, hope, and critical consciousness. Freire's best-known texts, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* and *Education as a practice of freedom*, were compulsory readings in seminars and congresses. This institution published books and manuals on literacy and adult education; it even tried to formalize specific Freire's non-formal education proposals (Rodríguez Brandao, 1977). Together with other Mexican and Latin American institutions, CREFAL promoted distance education, job training, strengthening of local cultures and traditions, and international citizenship at its Center for Sustainable Community Development (Beltrán Morales, 2015). Since October 1990, it is named Regional Cooperation Center for Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean. Eleven countries are part of it.

All Latin American countries agreed to accomplish the UNESCO's Sustainable Development goal 4, primarily targets 3. Equal success to technical/vocational and higher education; 4. Relevant skills for decent work; and 6. Universal youth literacy (United Nations Organization, 2016). However, due to the World Bank's influence, and because governments detected the need for a competent workforce for industry and services, grew the supply of technical vocational education (ETP) in secondary school. The ECLAC documents that all countries have promoted it, as shown in Table 2 (Sevilla, 2017). The theory of human capital reigns in that territory. However, many social sectors consider it a second-rank training—an offer for the poor classes' offspring, which refutes the motto of social equity.

Although lifelong learning is a shared concept, the query between quality and equity is underlying. It is also in the pedagogical field, but openly between traditional teaching and competence-based curricula, amid contending teaching approaches and the emphasis on transmitting information to learning and critical thinking claims.

The curricula: broken bridges between law and practice

Although diminished by incorporating more subjects in the curriculum, patriotism continues in-school programs in almost all countries. The traditional method, centered on teaching, may still be dominant; teachers' and institutions' cultural persistence is steady in Latin America. However, the competency-based approach makes its way in legislation, agreements between actors and programs. Intergovernmental agencies advocate a pedagogy that emphasizes communication skills, creativity, flexibility, learning to learn, working in groups, and problem-solving (Beech, 2008). Broadly, those programs of change propose a national core curriculum under central control. On a smaller scale, popular education offers similar changes, emphasizing critical awareness, and decolonization of knowledge under the umbrella of intercultural understanding or interculturality (Cortina, 2017).

Table 2 Latin America (ETP programs in school systems with plans for segmented secondary studies).

Country	Propedeutic ETP in the upper secondary		ETP provision variants		
	Years of study	Distinctive title granted	ETP Prevocational	ETP Professionalizing	Optional ETP deepening
Argentina	5-6 ^{a,b}	Middle technician	Integrated to high ETP	–	–
Brasil	1–3	Middle technician	–	–	–
Chile	2	Middle technician	–	–	–
Colombia	2	Middle technician	–	–	–
Costa Rica	3 ^a	Middle technician	–	–	–
Cuba	3–4	Middle technician	–	Skilled worker	–
Ecuador	3 ^d	Technical bachelor	–	–	Productive technical bachelor
Guatemala	2–3	Bachelor specific application	–	–	Proficient
Honduras	3 ^c	Technical or proficient	Prevocational common	–	–
Mexico	3	Middle technician	Technical junior secondary	Secondary for workers - technical professional	–
Nicaragua	2–3	Middle technician	–	General technician	Specialized technician
Panama	3	Middle technician	–	Second industrial cycle	–
Paraguay	3	Middle technician	Agricultural professional initiation	Middle vocational training	–
Dominican Republic	3	Vocational technician	–	Basic technician	–
El Salvador	3 ^c	Middle technician	–	–	–
Uruguay	3	Middle technician	Technological basic cycle	Basic professional training. Qualified operator	–
Venezuela (Bolivarian República of)	6 ^{a,c}	Middle technician	Integrated to high ETP	–	–

^aTotal duration low and high ETP.

^bConsiders the changes included in the reform in progress in that country that extends the ETP from 2 to 3 years and incorporates the basic technical 2-year duration.

^cDuration of ETP equal to one additional year to the academic study plan.

^dDuration of ETP equal to the academic study plan but with a higher hourly load.

Source: Own elaboration based on Sevilla (2017).

Educational reforms increase in the region from the down of the 21st century. Despite significant challenges, Latin America's reformers propose inclusion, respect for human rights, gender equality, interculturality, and recognition of the different. Besides, a few improvements in the governance of educational systems (Saavedra and Gutierrez, 2020). The states carried out reforms; yet, with many of its instruments of power diminished. The weakening of the state's power was either by expanding democracy or following neoliberal policies or authoritarian regimes.

Despite the exciting project of education reform under intergovernmental bodies' guidance, there is no single route for each nation. Several countries in the region undertook ambitious reforms, with different results. In almost all the region's countries, the Constitution or the law establishes that the primary purpose of education is the full development of the human personality, as stated by UNESCO's Education for All. Besides, school systems must promote freedom, peace, social justice, solidarity, cooperation, integration of peoples, and respect for nature. They establish democratic rights and principles, commit to each country's cultural identity or region, intellectual, artistic, physical, intercultural, moral, and civic education. They ban social discrimination, either in the curricula or the classrooms. Still, it seems quite challenging to put into practice such proposals with a centralized curriculum. An overview will illustrate the point (Posner, 2017b; Schwartzman, 2015).

In 2006 the Argentine Congress approved the National Education Law and two critical programs to promote inclusion: Universal Child Allowance, a massive conditional cash transfer program for families in poverty, and Connect Equality (Beech, 2019). In Chile, during Bachelet's second government (2014–18), three laws were enacted after intense debates: Inclusion, New Public Education, and Teacher Professional Development, with them the state tried to correct the adverse effects on the educational system of neoliberal ideology inherited from the dictatorial period, from 1973 to 1990 (Ávalos and Bellei, 2019; Muñoz Stuardo and Weinstein Cayuela, 2019). After some progress since the 1990s, President Evo Morales dismantled democratic aspects of Bolivian education that had guaranteed a diverse and decentralized administration as a necessary means for a multicultural Bolivia, and projected a national curriculum, although maintaining multiculturalism and intercultural approaches (Andrade Ramos and Blanco Cossío, 2015). While in Brazil, the Common Bases of the National Curriculum (2017) promotes the inclusion of marginalized groups, encouraging an egalitarian society that takes plurality in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, language, and others (Ivenicki, 2019). But the Bolsonaro government tries to dismantle its few achievements.

Uruguay and Costa Rica have enviable political systems in Latin America: democratic governments, low corruption, stability, and their population and territories are small; they enjoy vigorous institutions. In 2010, the Uruguayan government designed the National Strategy for Children and Adolescents 2010–2030, including flexible hours in the classroom (Vaillant, 2015). Costa Rica abolished the army in 1948. According to the OECD, Costa Rica is among the countries in the region with the best educational performance; it has made great strides in early childhood education, elementary schooling, and a more significant transition to high school. However, the same OECD recommends diversifying its curriculum to emphasize critical thinking instead of rote memorization (Román Vega, 2019).

In Peru, in the government of Alejandro Toledo, the Congress approved the General Law of Education (2003). It emphasized democratization and decentralization of the education system and proposed a Sectorial Emergency Plan to improve the quality of education. However, the changes are in the air due to political instability (Balarin and Rodríguez, 2019). Likewise, in Ecuador, when the government of Rafael Correa pushed in 2008 for a new Constitution and the National Development Plan: “Good Life” (Buen Vivir) 2009–13, which articulated a popular alternative (Baxter, 2019). While Juan Manuel Santos, the President of Colombia, crowned his effort in 2018, he applied for his country’s entry to the OECD in 2011. One of the requirements involved an evaluation of educational policy, especially to reduce inequality. The 2014–18 National Development Plan expressed 19 strategic lines (Guevara Ramírez and Téllez Rico, 2019).

In Mexico, President Peña Nieto launched an educational reform in 2012. The government and allied parties achieved constitutional amendments, changes in the General Education Law, and two new laws. One granted autonomy to the National Institute for the Evaluation of Education, and the General Law Professional Teaching Service, which instituted a meritocratic system for teachers and administrators. In 2017 the Public Education Secretary launched the “Educational model for compulsory education: educating for freedom and creativity.” However, in 2018, Andrés Manuel López Obrador’s new government buried the reform (Ornelas, 2019).

Other countries tried changes, but institutional inertia or political conditions did not allow them, or the governments did not seek them, but in rhetoric. In Paraguay, after the overthrow of the Alfredo Stroessner dictatorship in 1989, the different governments promote education. The educational system shows a significant increase in enrollment, but poverty, especially among indigenous people and children with disabilities, imposes barriers to the right to education (Brizuela, 2015). In Venezuela, after Hugo Chávez’ rise to power, a process began to institutionalize a parallel educational system to build a communal state: the educational missions, whose main criterion is inclusion, measured by the number of students enrolled. The 2009 Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela draws a path for constructing socialism in the 21st century (Mundó, 2015). Panama is a rare case of sustained economic growth and poor performance of its educational system, according to the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education (LLECE) and OECD evaluations due to the low investment in education and the lack of certified teachers (Guardia Wald, 2017). In Nicaragua, during the second Sandinista period — that started in 2006— despite proposing significant actions in the National Human Development Plan, there are no substantive advances; the Ministry of Education recentralized the educational system (Flóres and Elvir, 2017). Still, in Guatemala, the situation is worse. According to Posner (2017a), there are ghost schools; others abandoned, an inadequate number of teachers with low qualifications. Poor peasants, indigenous of Mayan descent, are the most disadvantaged. The Dominican Republic ranks last the LLECE tests. It frustrates the mood for modernization, despite the government’s efforts to introduce competency-based curricular reform to focus on student learning, increasing instructional time, extending the school day, improving teaching training, and bolstering early childhood education (Hamm and Martínez, 2017).

Other countries have highs and lows in reform and institutionalization of educational projects; yet, there is some progress. Although modestly, El Salvador and Honduras show achievements in improving their school systems. There are a few advances in social inclusion due to full-time schools and subsidies to the poor, especially in rural areas, with textbooks, uniforms, and other supplies. In El Salvador, those improvements are not entirely due to the Ministry of Education, but to social inclusion programs like Education with Community Participation [EDUCO] (Edwards, 2019). Thanks to the support and dissemination of the World Bank, EDUCO became famous as a successful innovation. The government turned it off in 2011; nevertheless, the Bank bets to replicate it in other countries, including Guatemala and Honduras (Ganimian, 2016). In Honduras, despite poverty, violence, and mass migration, reforms are underway, attached to UNESCO’s Education for All. The Secretary of State for Education prepared the Educational Reform Program underway (Luque, 2017).

However, putting prescribed law into practice is a complicated matter. The panorama of the reforms is of prominences and gorges, except in Cuba.

According to international observations, in Cuba, education of high-quality is a universal right. An exceptional state, in many ways. Cuba has a dynamic and egalitarian education system. Since the triumph of the Revolution, in 1959, the government undertook an educational policy called the four revolutions to improve education (Ginsburg and García Batista, 2019). According to Carnoy (2007), the Cuban school’s success is due to the social context that is highly supportive of academic achievement. Besides, the uninterrupted political commitment of national leaders, the strict monitoring of the national curriculum, the supervision and support for teachers, and continued funding, despite the scarcity of public resources.

A conceivable motive for the low educational performance in Latin America may have less to do with embracing the universal reform wrap. It would have more to do with rougher governance issues since several decades of neoliberal reforms or dictatorships undermined states’ ability to successfully implement political changes. It is a matter of political allegiance. Cuba’s academic advantage is due to two leading causes, according to Carnoy (2007): (1) Teachers stress a child-centered and problem-solving approach, which aims the students to develop the ability to work in groups and be creative. (2) The state strictly enforces the curriculum’s

implementation through a chain of command that begins with the Minister of Education and ends with schools' principals supervising teachers in their classrooms. Neither free choice nor school autonomy.

Nevertheless, other of the universal project pillars, centralized learning assessment, is underway in most countries of the region.

Assessment to cope with low quality of education

The discourse on the low quality of education in Latin American countries took supremacy in the globalization era. At the turn of the century, the assessment of learning became the new mantra to raise educational quality. That was a global tool advocated by inter-governmental organizations. Most states established a standardized assessment of learning as a new regulator of instructional practices, which acted on students, schools, and teachers (Rivas, 2015:19). The most enthusiastic promoters were the Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The UNESCO documents that LLECE emerged in the 1990s, where many countries in the region were promoting education reforms with insufficient data for their design. They also lacked a critical mass to measure educational quality. In the 1990s, only a few countries conducted national educational assessments, which were generally not released to the public. In 1997 the Laboratory applied the First Regional Comparative and Explanatory Study (PERCE) among students in third and fourth grades of primary education, reading, and mathematics. LLECE implemented the second comparative study (SERCE) in 2007 and the third (TERCE) in 2013. The tools and results of these last two allowed comparisons over time in students' learning achievements in the third and sixth grades of primary education in the areas of reading and mathematics, as shown in Table 3 (LLECE, 2014).

The natural sciences test was only applied in sixth-grade primary and were voluntary in SERCE. As a result, both studies for comparison purposes are only available for seven countries and the Mexican state of Nuevo León. Although Cuban students participated in the three assessments showed a higher performance than the rest of their peers from the 16 participating countries. However, their results are not comparable, according to LLECE.

Nonetheless, even though only nine countries in the region applied it, the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) stood as the superlative measure. Only Brazil and Mexico have participated in PISA since 2000. Argentina did not participate in 2003, and the OECD did not publish its 2015 outcomes. Chile excluded its involvement in 2003. Colombia has partaken the tests since 2006; the Dominican Republic is associated with PISA in 2015 and 2018. Panama joined the assessment in 2009, but in 2012. Peru maintained its students out in 2003 y 2006, and Uruguay joined since 2003. In 2018, the nine countries participated. Table 4 summarizes the historical trend.

PISA has two contradictory drifts, a switch on the traditional modes of communication of achievement, not only enrollment, infrastructure, and curricula, but also what the OECD assumes it is worth learning. On the one hand, it promotes the project of universal reform that tries to ensure that all countries tend to be homogeneous (Beech, 2008) and that "Skills for life," which

Table 3 Student's learning achievements.

SERCE	Mathematics		Reading		Science	TERCE	Mathematics		Reading		Science
	3rd grade	6th grade	3rd grade	6th grade	6th grade		3rd grade	6th grade	3rd grade	6th grade	6th grade
Argentina	505	513	510	506	489	Argentina	533	530	512	509	501
Brazil	505	499	504	520		Brazil	540	520	519	524	
Chile	529	517	562	546		Chile	582	581	571	557	
Colombia	499	493	511	515	504	Colombia	519	515	519	526	527
Costa Rica	538	549	563	563		Costa Rica	558	535	543	546	
Dominican Rep.	396	416	395	421	426	Dominican Rep.	448	437	454	456	444
Ecuador	473	460	452	447		Ecuador	524	513	508	491	
Guatemala	457	456	447	451		Guatemala	501	488	495	489	
Honduras						Honduras	508	480	497	479	
Mexico	532	542	530	530		Mexico	549	566	519	529	
Nicaragua	473	458	470	473		Nicaragua	485	462	478	479	
Panama	463	452	467	472	473	Panama	494	461	490	483	475
Paraguay	486	468	469	455	469	Paraguay	488	456	481	469	455
Peru	474	490	474	476	465	Peru	533	527	521	505	501
Uruguay	539	578	523	542	533	Uruguay	551	567	524	532	517
Average countries	491	492	491.21	494	480	Average countries	522	511	510	507	488
			557.80								
Nuevo León	563	554	558	542	511	Nuevo León	561	587	528	548	539

Note: Data for Honduras is presented, but no comparison with its performance in SERCE is possible as the country did not take part in the second study. Its scores and performance levels in TERCE will be reported using the SERCE scale.

Source: Own Elaboration based in LLECE (2014).

Table 4 PISA scores for Latin American countries.

	2000				2003				2006				2009				2012				2015				2018			
	R	M	S	A	R	M	S	A	R	M	S	A	R	M	S	A	R	M	S	A	R	M	S	A	R	M	S	A
Argentina	418	388	396	401					374	381	391	382	398	388	401	396	396	388	406	397					402	379	404	395
Brasil	396	334	375	368	403	356	390	383	393	370	390	384	412	386	405	401	410	389	405	401	407	377	401	395	413	384	404	400
Chile	410	384	415	403					442	411	438	430	449	421	447	439	441	423	445	436	459	423	447	443.0	452	417	444	438
Colombia									385	370	388	381	413	381	402	399	403	376	399	393	425	390	416	410.3	412	391	413	405
Dominican Republic																					332	358	328	339.3	342	325	336	334
Mexico	422	387	423	411	400	385	405	397	410	406	410	409	425	419	416	420	424	413	415	417	423	408	416	415.7	420	409	419	416
Panama													371	360	376	369					332	358	328	339.3	377	353	365	365
Peru	327	292	333	317									370	365	369	368	384	368	373	375	398	387	397	394.0	401	400	404	402
Uruguay					434	422	438	431	413	427	428	423	426	427	427	427	411	409	416	412	437	418	435	430.0	427	418	426	424
Average	500	500	500		494	500	500		492	498	500		493	496	501		496	494	501		493	490	493		487	489	489	

R = Reading; M = Mathematics; S = Science; A = Average.

Source: Own elaboration with the help of Diego Amado De Leon and Eduardo López Guadarrama: OECD, (2019). PISA Databases 2000, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, 2018: <https://www.google.com/search?q=pisa+dataset&oq=PISA+data&qs=chrome>.

includes the teaching of language, mathematics, and science, become the cornerstones of the education through K12. On the other hand, it hierarchizes the countries when preparing rankings according to their students' results in those tests' performance.

As in the rest of the world, PISA sparks debates; it has advocates beyond governments and the OECD itself and critics who point out its irrelevance to education because it focusses on a few subjects. Ravela (2011) sees two advantages. First, PISA forces to leave the endogenous reference to analyze Latin American countries' educational situation in a broader context. Also, it helps to understand the overall situation better. Second, participation in international studies represents an opportunity for learning and accumulating knowledge for national evaluation institutions.

At the other extreme, as summarized by Antonio Bolívar (2011), it produces a feeling of failure: "The population is disconnected or dissatisfied with appearing in the successive PISA Reports, which help to determine their respective policies as 'losers' in comparison with other countries." And, what is critical in terms of social perceptions, is that although PISA contains much more than test results, the "[...] news media prioritizes the results of the rankings, reinforcing the dichotomy of 'winners' and 'losers,' between countries that offer a good education and others that provide a mediocre or poor one."

The OECD sees itself as a promoter of equity and good governance in education (Melchor, 2008). In comparison, PISA critics note that in addition to offering its technical expertise in measuring learning and schooling performance, the OECD also became an internal political actor (Lingard et al., 2016). It also wields power and pushes the technocratic approach to rule by numbers (Grek, 2009). Certainly, PISA provokes new institutional arrangements in many countries.

Participation in PISA caused discomfort for the results, but it also generated protests from academics and journalists to governments for the low quality of education; SERCE and TERCE did not make as much debate. Nonetheless, the tendency to evaluate education had institutional consequences. In much of Latin America, governments established national institutes to measure the quality of education and students and teachers (Brunns et al., 2019). Standardized international and domestic assessments led to rejection by the teachers' unions. They alleged that high ranking functionaries and politicians blamed educators for low test scores of all kinds and other ills in education.

As in other parts of the world, in Latin America, certain segments of the governing groups criticized teachers for schools' deficiencies and, at the same time, pinned hopes for substantive change on teachers. UNESCO, the World Bank, the OECD, and other intergovernmental organizations proposed reforms emphasizing effective schools, principal's leadership, student achievement, and dynamic forms of governance to raise the quality of education. To achieve any of these purposes, the professionalization of teachers became a required subject.

Teacher professionalization, identity, and collective representation

Although the nation-states were not yet fully consolidated, liberal governments began to build schools. In Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, and Colombia, they looked to France for a model to follow: a system under state control. However, governments lacked assets and personnel to teach. As in the schools of the Lancaster-Bell system, they used upper-grade students to help the few teachers and governesses; these students became instructors by empirical means and were among the first teachers in normal schools to train preceptors from the 1820s.

The modern normal schools began their institution from the 1850s (Weinberg, 1995), molded in the French style. Being graduated from a teacher college was the beginning of the normalista identity. Identity includes the notion of equality, permanence, continuity, durability, a fixed human attribute with which one is born, or has as a destiny (Navarrete Cazales, 2016); it is collective and individual. The collective identity stresses the idea of equality, the individual, of merit; the collective generates shared beliefs,

symbols, and rituals that give a group a particular distinction. The normalista identity is one of the most deeply rooted characteristics in the educational systems of Latin America.

These community attributes combined well with the formation of school systems under the state's tutelage and, therefore, facilitated unions' institution to represent the working benefits of teachers first and then their professional interests. In its origins, as early as the 20th century, teachers' unions distinguished themselves by defending the rights of their members: fighting for better wages, job security, recognition for seniority, and fringe benefits such as health and housing. They also advocated improving their schools and social acceptance of their work (Tedesco and Fanfani, 2006). However, they had fractures regarding their professional identity.

Throughout the 20th century, there were debates to characterize teachers' work; authors disputed whether their labor was a trade (like that of a master craftsman), a profession, or a salaried job (Tenti Fanfani, 2006). A widespread belief among public school teachers is that teaching was a state profession, ergo, that they were civil servants (but not bureaucrats). Some thought that having a bachelor's degree was the attribute of the trade. And the teachers' unions reinforced that collective idea. Following the international educational reform project, the changes of recent years refute such a trend (Ornelas, 2018). But teachers' unions are more than representative union bodies; they are also interest groups, like in Chile, Brazil, and Argentina, or robust political machines, like in Mexico and Ecuador (Schneider, 2021), and represent the opposition to neoliberal reforms (Loyo, 2019). Other authors point to the positive impact that unions have on instruction and a teachers' sense of purpose (Gindin and Finger, 2013).

Almost all the authors agree that teachers' unions play a significant role in education policymaking in Latin America. That is because unionized public sector workers can process information that affects the policy arena under their influence and can monitor government activities. Through mandatory fees from their members, unions often have access to vast financial resources. Federations with large membership can also use strikes and protests politically in the streets to advance their demands (Bruns and Luque, 2015). The extreme case of influence is that of the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE) of Mexico, with around 1,400,000 members. Through their affiliation to the Institutional Revolutionary Party, since the founding of the union in 1943, and later in an alliance with the National Action Party (2000–12), the leaders controlled teachers' labor trajectory from entering the schools to their retirement (Chambers-Ju and Finger, 2016). The politics of patronage reached the extreme that teachers who retired could inherit their jobs or, if they did not have teacher heirs, sell them to the highest bidder (Ornelas, 2018). Corruption reached the point that there were ghost schools and teachers and more than 100,000 deceased and retired people in the payroll (H.T., 2014).

There are many teacher unions in Latin America (Table 5) that, although have differences between them, defend the traditional identities attached to rote-memory, collective action for recruitment, and certification by the state. The modernizing reformers thought that such attributes were a cause—not that it was exclusive—of the low quality of education. For that reason, the 21st century reforms incorporated critical legislative changes to professionalize teachers (which implies that they were not professionals).

Elacqua et al. (2018) discuss how the laws of the Teacher Professional Development System in Chile (2016), the Statute of Teacher Professionalization in Colombia (2002), the Organic Law of Intercultural Education in Ecuador (2011), the General Law of the Professional Teacher Service in Mexico (2013), and Law of Teacher Reform in Peru (2012) seek to make the teaching profession more attractive to talented young people. Also, to improve future teachers' training, that implies reforming the traditional schools—the crucial aspect: selecting the best candidates for the profession, which requires rigorous examinations. And, in return, supporting new teachers with tutoring. The current Mexican government repealed the teachers' law in 2019 and, although it does not mean a return to the past, it substantially recovers the normalista spirit; the SNTE recovered a good part of the power that the Peña Nieto government (2012–18) wanted to take from it (Ornelas, 2019).

The core of the teaching profession's reform purposes is to accentuate individual identity, put merit as the primary attribute, knowledge, and practices appropriate for the present and the future. That includes using more information and communication technologies. Changes in recruitment methods, decision-making skills (personal initiative and open mind), and a new type of work ethic, as proposed by UNESCO, the World Bank, and the OECD.

Covid-19 and the right to education

In Mexico, there is a saying. "It rains over wet." It means that if something is wrong, an external event aggravates it. And that happens to educational systems with Covid-19. The Latin American Campaign for the Right to Education (CLADE, by its initials in Spanish) expressed its concern that the pandemic deepens historical inequalities. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 74% of all enrolled students were affected by schools' closure (Croso, 2020). For millions of children, adolescents, and young people, especially those in situations of greater vulnerability, the shutting of schools implies the temporary loss of studies and the stoppage of dialogs between teachers and students. Furthermore, it injures a fundamental safety net, including nutrition, health, emotional support, and protection against domestic violence and sexual abuse.

This article comes to an end in August 2020. There is still not enough academic work to substantiate the consequences of Covid-19 on education. Still, the press and media report that the disease aggravated pre-existing problems and increased economic and social inequality, femicide and sexual assault, and discrimination based on ethnic origin, gender, or belief.

Many governments responded to the emergency of Covid-19 with promptness through distance education, as in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Uruguay. They even made efforts to ensure that the programs reached the most significant number of inhabitants. Still, children from low-income families—the majority indigenous or Afro-descendants—do not have, or

Table 5 Teachers' unions in Latin America, unity, and fragmentation. Selected countries by the availability of data, as of 2010.

Country	Teachers union(s)	Unity density	Fragmentation
Argentina	Confederación de Trabajadores de la Educación de la República Argentina - Confederation of Education Workers of the Argentine Republic (CTERA)	50.8% (234 000)	High fragmentation (effective coordination through CTERA)
Brazil	Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação Nacional Confederation of Education Workers (CNTE)	44.2% (925 229)	High fragmentation (partial coordination through CNTE)
Chile	Colegio de Profesores - Collegiate of Teachers	53.3% (71 982)	Monopoly of representation
Colombia	Federación Colombiana de Educadores - Colombian Federation of Educators	81.6 (as of 2007)	Monopoly of representation
Costa Rica	Asociación Nacional de Educadores - National Association of Educators (ANDE); Asociación de Profesores de Segunda Enseñanza - Second School Teachers Association (APSE); Colegio de Licenciados y Profesores en Letras, Filosofía, Ciencias y Artes - Collegiate of Graduates and Professors in Letters, Philosophy, Sciences and Arts (COLYPRO); Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Educación Costarricense - Union of Costa Rican Education Workers (SEC)	100% (membership estimated 140,000–200,000)	Fragmentation by education level
Ecuador	Unión Nacional de Educadores - National Union of Educators (UNE); Frente Unionista de los Trabajadores de Educación del Ecuador - Unionist Front of Education Workers of Ecuador (FUTE)	79%–90% for UNE during 1990's, 79% first decade of 20th century	Monopoly of representation
Honduras	Colegio Profesional para la Superación Magisterial de Honduras - Professional Collegiate for Teacher Improvement of Honduras (COLPROSUMAH); Primer Colegio Profesional Hondureño de Maestros - First Honduran Professional Collegiate of Teachers (PRICPHMA); Colegio de Profesores de Educación Media de Honduras - Collegiate of Teachers of Secondary Education of Honduras (COPEMH)	Mandatory affiliation	Fragmented
México	Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación - National Union of Education Workers (SNTE)	100% (between 1200 000 and 1, 500,000 members)	Monopoly of representation
Paraguay	Federación de Educadores de Paraguay - Federation of Educators of Paraguay (FEP), Organización de Trabajadores de la Educación del Paraguay - Organization of Education Workers of Paraguay (OTEP); Unión Nacional de Educadores - National Union of Educators (UNE); Agrupación de Docentes y Funcionarios de la Educación Paraguaya - Association of Paraguayan Education Officials and Teachers (ADOFEF); and Federación de Educadores de Capital e Interior Federation of Educators of Capital and Interior (FECI).	55% (15 000; 14 000; 15 000; information on The membership for ADOFEF and FECI is not available)	Fragmented
Peru	Sindicato Único de Trabajadores de la Educación del Perú - Unique Union of Education Workers of Peru (SUTEP); Sindicato de Docentes de Educación Superior del Perú - Union of Higher Education Professors of Peru (SIDESP)	41.9% between 145,000 and 200,000)	Monopoly of representation
Uruguay	Federación Uruguaya de Magisterio – Trabajadores de la Enseñanza - Uruguayan Federation of Teaching - Teaching Workers (FUM-TEP) for primary education; Federación Nacional de Profesores de Enseñanza Secundaria - National Federation of Secondary Education Teachers (FENAPES)	77% for primary schools	Fragmented by education level

Source: Fernández M.A., 2012. The Political Challenges in Pursuing an Agenda for Quality of Education in Latin America. Background paper for Latin America Regional Study on Teacher Quality, World Bank, Washington, DC.