Educational Change in a Global Era:
A Theoretical Roadmap to Current Debates

Course Syllabus

Class Times: 21-25 January 2018 (confirm times on UTAS)

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Outline and Themes:

The accelerating pace and global scope of educational change is perhaps unprecedented in human history. New international large-scale assessments (ILAs) such as PISA, PIAAC, Pisa-for-Development, and the Global Higher Education Rankings grab most global headlines, but parallel changes are underway at the institutional level: university internationalization, Super Global High Schools, expansion of graduate programs, and introduction of the International Baccalaureate (IB) curricula, to raise only a few prominent examples from Japan.

What is driving this momentous change? Is there a convergence in education policy and practice globally? Are we witnessing a consensual progress, coercive processes, or something else altogether? What are the likely effects of all this change? How might we begin to analyze all of this?

This course aims to provide a basic sketch – what we will call a 'roadmap' – to different theories that have attempted to answer these questions. It provides a general overview of 5-6 dominant theoretical schools: Functionalism, Micro-Realism, Historical Institutionalism, Macro-Realism (Marxism), World Culture (Neo-Institutionalism), and post-colonialism. Students who take the course will learn the historical backdrop of these theoretical schools, become familiar with representative works, and see how such theories are mobilized to explain empirical realities.

This course is perhaps particularly important in the Japanese context. Comparative Education in Japan has been largely dominated by two competing schools: those who work deeply with context and those who work on issues related to development (kaihatsu). Meanwhile, much of the Sociology of Education in Japan largely adheres to functionalism and historical institutionalism, and quite often begins with methodological nationalism (i.e., attempts to locate the drivers of educational change within a given national context). It is imperative that a new generation of Japanese scholars become familiar with and adept at engaging with theory: it is a crucial component of making Japanese educational research more visible and 'intelligible' on the global stage, as well as mount a response to theoretical schools that (mis)interpret empirical realities outside Western countries. More than anything, this course seeks to provide a space for students to understand the basics of theory and how it is an important entry-point for entering in on-going

global debates. As such, no prior knowledge of theory is necessary, only a curiosity and think in macro-sociological terms.

Requirements and Grading Policy:

Much of the course grade will come from active participation, proof of prior preparation (preparation, thinking, engagement), and class attendance. **Class Participation** (including attendance) will account for 30% of the grade (30 full classes x 2 points (1 point deducted for being late)). One time during this course, each student will write a 1-2 page (single spaced) **Reflection Paper** (10 points). Reflection Papers are submitted in hard copy.

There may be a short **Final Examination** that will account for another 15% of the grade (15 points). The remaining portion of the grade will come from a 4-5 page **Final Paper** (40 points) submitted after the class, perhaps sometime in February (exact date to be announced).

Activity	Points
Class Participation	30 (15 classes x 2 points)
Reflection Paper /Presentations	10 (late papers not accepted!)
Final Examination	15 (late January, short written test)
Final Paper	40 (Grading Rubric TBA)
Total	**100**

Any questions regarding grading should be discussed directly with the instructor – at any time before the end of the course. For the most part, students who attend each class, show evidence of advanced preparation, actively share their ideas, and submit all the required assignments will be graded highly.

Course Outline

Class (Date)	Topics / Themes	Main Readings
Classes 1-4 (January 21)	(1) Course Overview & Self-Introductions (Questionnaire)	Syllabus
	(2) Micro-Theories 1: Functionalism	(1) Fuller (1991) "Theory 1 - Functionalist Modernity" (29-34); (2) "Functional-Modernity: Shot Full of Empirical Holes? (50-52) (3) Hanushek (2016) Economic Growth in Developing Countries" in Handbook of Education Policy (81-92) *** *Somewhat difficult but try to grasp the main logic behind 'human capital' theory*
	(3) Micro-Theories II: Micro-Realism	(4) Fuller (1991) "Theory 2 – Class Imposition" (34-41); "Class Imposition: Empirical Attack on Modernization Theory" (53-57) (5) Gita Steiner-Khamsi (2012) "The global/local nexus in comparative policy

		studies: analyzing the triple bonus system in Mongolia over time" (49-64)
	(4) Micro-Theories III: Historical Institutionalism	(6) Tobin et al., (2009) "Looking Across Time and Cultures" (224-245) *** Please also watch the movie 'Preschool in Three Cultures', in particularly the videos on Japan (Komatsudani). I believe UT has the videos.
Classes 5-9 (January 22)	(5) Macro-Theories I: World Culture Theory I	(7) Ramirez (2012) "The World Society Perspective: concepts, assumptions, and strategies" (17-32) ***See also supplementary explanations in Fuller 1991 of "world institutions" theory – this is the same as World Culture Theory
	(6) Macro-Theories I: World Culture Theory II	(8) Moon and Koo (2011) "Global Citizenship and Human Rights: a longitudinal analysis of social studies and ethics textbooks in the Republic of Korea." Comparative Education Review 55(4), 574-599. *** This a long article. Our main discussion will focus on Ramirez (2012) but please skim the Moon & Koo article to understand the empirical approach/ argument
	(7) Macro-Theories II: World Systems Analysis (or Macro-Realism) I	(9) Verger (2016) The Global Diffusion of Education Privatization: Unpacking and Theorizing Policy Adoption (Handbook, 64-80)
	(8) Macro-Theories II: World Systems Analysis (or Macro-Realism) II	(10) Auld, Rappleye, Morris (2018) PISA for Development: How the OECD and World Bank shaped education governance post-2015 ***This is a long article, please focus on empirical sections (pg. 4-16)
	(9) Macro-Theories: Debate, Critiques, and Discussion	(Continue with Readings 8-10) ***Reflection Paper*** (due January 25)
Classes 10-14 (January 25)	(10) Beyond the 'Western' Theory Debates? Post-Colonialism I	(11) Takayama (2015) "Provincializing the World Culture Debate" Globalisation, Societies and Education 13(1)
	(11) Beyond the 'Western' Theory Debates? Post-Colonialism II	(12) Komatsu & Rappleye (2017) "Did the shift to computer based testing in PISA 2015 affect reading scores?" Compare 47(4)
	(12) Final Discussion I: Which theory do you find most convincing?	(None)

	(13) Final Discussion II: How can you use these theories for articulating your own research in? Potential? Problems?	***Each student needs to prepare a very brief, informal 3-5 minute presentation on how one or more of these theories connects to his/her own research (no handouts)
	(14) Course Wrap-up: ***Final Examination***; Review, Discussion of Final Paper, Feedback and Course Evaluations	(None)
Submission of Final Paper (Date to be Announced)		
Online Feedback		

Readings and Course Materials:

Students need not purchase any course materials: all readings are provided herein. Please note that students will need to read quite a lot before the class begins, as there is too much reading to do during the course. I suggest that students begin reading one month before the start of the course, reading 3-4 articles per week in advanced preparation. Should you have any questions

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Growing-Up Modern

The Western State Builds Third-World Schools

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part of this process, the state looks laterally to its institutional neighbors, drawing-in their resources and political support. The state also looks downward to weaker organizations, like the local school, which it can co-opt and use as a stage for playing out the signals of modernity.

We will look into the state's motivations, sources of political energy, and resulting forms of influence that are attempted (whether effective or not). This also brings us back to contradictions: the Western tension between individual development and bureaucratic forms of merit and opportunity; the tension between unceasing urban demands placed on young states versus the resilient societies and ethnic communities that resist or simply ignore political elites; and conflict between the Western state's need to acquire more economic capital while preaching the need for individual initiative, novel (modern) social behavior, and the atomized pursuit of individual opportunity. The fragile state is energized not so much by a clear sense of purpose and coherent ideals, as by the threatening demands and political batterings which stem from these contradictions.

2

What Drives the Expansion and Deepening of Mass Schooling?

Individual actors do not invent and bolster the rules that define how "modern children" grow up—institutions do. Let's step back from the state institution for a moment and gaze more widely across the organizational landscape within which it is situated. Keep in mind *the* pragmatic questions facing policymakers, educators, and local leaders: How can the pace of school expansion be quickened? How can the school's effects on children be intensified?

The state is simply one player within the Western polity's broad effort to formally socialize its children. Wider forces, moving independently of political elites, may eclipse the state's attempts to expand and deepen mass education. Demands placed on children to work—in the home, in the fields, or on the street—exemplify how local economic and cultural factors constrain the state's influence (in the Third World). In addition, we need to grasp how deeply ingrained ideological and economic forces, originating outside the state apparatus but linked to Western ideals regarding the individual and the political-economy, shape political elites' fervent advocacy of mass schooling.

This chapter backs up to review earlier thinking and recent evidence on how diverse institutions can drive the *expansion* of mass schooling. I review three competing theories which take into account demands pressed by several institutions, including the family, economy, church, and state, not to mention the school institution's own bullish desire to spawn itself. These frameworks—functional modernization, class imposition, and world institution theories—continue to shape our everyday beliefs about why mass schooling is important within Western polities, and which institutions do (or should) push educational expansion. The three theories, at times, also offer explanations for the state's attempt to *deepen* the school's effect.

Much has been already written on these theories. I do not aim to

simply add another detailed review. Instead, I focus on their sharply contrasting representations of (a) the institutional environment that encircles the state, (b) how these surrounding institutions energize and constrain the action of political elites, and (c) how the state's determined romance with the school advances the interests of certain groups. I start with a brief overview, then proceed to a more critical discussion of each theory. Recent empirical evidence is then discussed which challenges the universal claims of each grand theory. This brings us back to a picture of the fragile state that recognizes *variation in institutional environments* across societies and historical periods, variation which sets conditions that enhance or constrain the state's capacity to boost mass schooling and to deepen its effects on children.

Three Stories Introduced

Western advocates of *modernization* make two central arguments. First, secular nation-wide institutions must be constructed to replace local collectives and ethnic affiliations, manifest in village, church, and family units. Cooperation on a national scale—expressed through universal language, forms of merit and mobility, markets, and corporate organization—will serve sacred commitments to economic growth and to stable political organizations. Second, the individual, when detached from traditional local authority and fused to the secular state, will be motivated to serve national commitments. Mass schooling is the instrument that socializes children toward central authority and modern affiliations. Indeed, one common indicator of a nation's level of modernity is the school enrollment rate—the proportion of children and adults who have swallowed this medicine called mass schooling.

Critics of Western education do not disagree with the modernists' portrayal of the school institution's functional role. But this concerted action of central and local elites is interpreted as a process of *class imposition*. Political elites are seen as pushing the language, knowledge, and sacred customs of their particular tribe or subculture. And elites, whether located in the state or the economy, have the most to gain by eroding or co-opting competing forms of local authority and exchange. Class imposition theorists also look at school-level rules and knowledge, emphasizing the factory-like organization of mass schooling. Here hierarchical forms of power and work are advanced, the child must achieve

along standardized and universal criteria, and knowledge is reduced to easily testable bits of information. Schooling functionally prepares children to pursue merit and mobility in mass organizations.

Most recently, modernist and class imposition explanations have been challenged from a third perspective—a less materialist *institutional* theory of how schools expand and deepen. World institution theorists emphasize that the historical rise of mass schooling corresponded (in Europe) to the emergence of the secular state. In addition, school expansion in most polities has occurred independently of economic forces, discounting functionalist claims apparent in earlier models of modernization. Instead, the legitimacy and utility of mass schooling is rooted within the West's conception of the state as reproduced by institutionalized expectations of the political apparatus. To build popular support within a nation, and to establish status within the Western interstate network, political elites must express certain ideals and goals. Here the school as an institution holds enormous symbolic value within the Western state's logic. The school is not necessarily required to serve economic interests. The institution is simply an expressive form, employed by political elites to signal modern progress and reinforce the state structure.

World institution theory resembles the work of European structuralists, emphasizing how the school serves as an institutional signal of the secular state's ideals and as a device for mediating contradictions inherent within the capitalist state. Yet world institution proponents presume a greater degree of popular acceptance of the school, challenging the Marxist contention that states act to *impose* certain ideals, institutions, and economic forms. World institution theorists even ask whether the school is really part of the state, or is instead a broad-based social movement which determines its own internal social rules, forms of legitimate knowledge, and indicators of merit and status.

Institutional theorists question whether the state's attempt to deepen the school's effects are efficacious, particularly when it relies on mechanical administrative action. Building from Emile Durkheim's original insights, institutionalists argue that the state constructs schools and controls curricula as a strategy for extending membership in the modern polity. Cohesion of the school organization depends not, however, on factory-like administration but on a shared commitment to certain rituals expressing membership. For instance, when African kids sit each day in crumbling thatch-roof classrooms, and teachers lecture at them for hours on end, these are rituals that signal who holds power over the socialization of children. Very little may actually be learned. But the

state and its central institution—the school—gain enormous authority. Parents and children are signaling membership ritualistically in the modern polity. It is this symbol-filled harmonizing between state and school that helps unify and homogenize the cohering polity. Yet since the school itself is bounded, complex, and highly institutionalized, its romance with the state may be quite rocky.

Contrasting Dimensions of Competing Theories

Next, I detail each of the three models. You might think critically about each theory, particularly in their contrasting interpretations of the Western state's *motivations, methods of influence, and actual effects*. My review emphasizes the following facets of each model. First, like any human organization, the state is motivated by its own ideals *and* by its interdependencies with surrounding institutions. The three theories differ on the degree of autonomy that can be exercised by actors within the state organization, including their capacity to buffer or challenge the interests of surrounding institutions. Current theory and empirical research, for instance, emphasize the influence of economic growth and labor demand on school expansion, not the independent force of the state. Second, the models differ in their descriptions and interpretations of how the state acts to expand *and* deepen schooling. This leap across levels of analysis—the state's institution-level action linked to expansion versus strategies aimed at classroom-level effects—is a treacherous jump. The theories vary in the care taken in distinguishing antecedent forces and processes that unfold within each of these two levels. Third, my review includes evidence on the state's actual effects. Putting these three basic models to empirical tests, although slow in coming, has helped push theory toward more defensible and useful representations.

These theories engage in *description* and *interpretation* of action by various institutions: the state, economic firms, local labor structures, churches, and the family. The theories focus on different causal events and mediating processes. Even when looking at the same event, competing theories often assign different meanings. The models vary on the level of *resistance and conflict* that is likely to erupt between local groups and central elites (be they economic, political, or religious leaders). Relatedly, the three theories differ on the *role and power of elites* within emerging polities. Do elites deterministically *impose* their moral and

economic ideals on the masses? Or do the symbols and material improvements associated with "national development" lead the unquestioning masses to take the sacraments of modernity and internalize Western commitments?

Theory 1—Functionalist Modernity

Our images of being modern stem from the fusion of economic ideals and revolutionary realities which unfolded in the late eighteenth century. The liberal state's rise in North America, then in France, helped to legitimate key beliefs associated with modernity. Of particular importance here, the reified construct of the "autonomous individual" was balanced against the task of pulling together a unified republic, as these fledgling states eagerly tried to incorporate disparate individuals into a nation-wide consciousness and political structure. The sacred individual was crafted ideologically by bounding the state's control over mercantile economic activity. But this liberal shift also stigmatized the individual's traditional economic and communal bonds to feudal, church, and village authorities. Emerging political elites argued that this realignment of individual loyalty toward the nation-state was necessary, essentially providing new institutional foundations and a secular cosmology within which capitalist markets could flourish. Of course, looking up from the local collective, the secular state and its bureaucratic agencies appeared and continue to appear rather particularistic and foreign.[1]

Closely following this revolution in how the liberal state constructed the individual, came the industrial revolution. The industrial firm gained enormous legitimacy. The corporate form of cooperation proved enormously effective in economic terms—at least for some. The industrial firm was characterized by hierarchical authority, magical technology and science, standardization of both material and human "systems," and reliance upon extrinsic material rewards for work performance. Mass production brought rising levels of wealth and consumption (the latter resulting from lower prices for mass produced goods). Thus the industrial bureaucracy took on enormous credibility as a symbol of modernization and economic change. Even today, when political leaders and educators talk about "modernizing schools" or "improving school effectiveness" they usually envision bureaucratic ways of organizing—sharpening lines of authority, subdividing labor into more routinized (teaching or adminis-

trative) tasks, standardizing what is learned, and tightening evaluation of uniform knowledge and action.[2]

Contemporary functionalists—be they activists or scholars—emphasize how the Western state can *socialize* the individual to adopt modern forms of work, social relations, and moral ideals.[3] The sixteenth-century British state, for instance, dissolved the rights of feudal clans to own and control the use of land; instead, the liberal state constructed a legal structure to allow individual ownership and inheritance of property. Early Western states also enacted liberal employment statutes, yielding a "free" labor force of individuals who were no longer obliged to remain with a particular landlord or village.[4] Such interventions by political elites into the economy reflected both a popular ideological commitment to individual entitlements, as well as a response to nascent capitalists seeking a more flexible labor force.

Contemporary states, both within industrialized and Third World nations, construct and reinforce ideals and institutions that legitimate certain forms of economic action. We can observe a United States president allowing the consolidation of firms into larger and larger conglomerates; or we can see a socialist African president financing farmer cooperatives in the countryside. In both cases the central state (and political elites within) are functionally defining what legitimate economic activity entails and building concrete organizations which embody their economic ideals. Fragile states, operating in post-colonial polities, often face pre-modern economic structures. Political elites must respond to, and gain credibility with, private firms that dominate certain sectors (usually exporters of raw materials and agricultural products). Or the political apparatus directly controls parastatal firms. In both cases, the introduction of liberal rules regarding markets, property, and commercial rights is a politically difficult process, effecting the economic power of elites and prices facing both urban residents and rural peasants.

A State-Defined Common Good?

Universal economic rules become credible only when the formal polity is unified by shared cultural understandings—manifest in a common language, sacred symbols, and social rules that have broad currency.[5] Functionalists see the secular state as the pivotal actor in breaking

down cultural differences and in defining "the common good." By constructing and legitimating civic institutions—schools, health centers, rule-making organizations—the state hopes to integrate heretofore balkanized tribes.

Fragile Third World states are continually fighting this battle. Historically, dual economic structures have operated within most post-colonial societies. At one level, rural subsistence farmers live off their own crops, taking a fraction of their surplus produce to the local market. Yet in the wage sector, large-scale mining, agricultural, and manufacturing firms produce for urban elites and for export markets. This bifurcated economy leads to persistent political pressure for—under the Western state's own logic—integrating caste-like groups, building a meritocratic system of opportunity, and broadening access to urban-based goods and symbols of modernity. The legitimacy of state actors comes to depend upon their ability to integrate peripheral tribes or subcultures into more modern institutions. This leads to demands on the state to construct Western-like institutions and to extend membership in the modern (urban) polity to the masses. The state, given its vital commitment to national integration, then defines the language, customs, forms of work and institutional participation that signify status within the modern polity.

Similarly, when industrialized Western polities face economic downturns or sharp cultural division, heads of state redouble their pleas for society to pull together—to work harder and to resist ideological conflict among local "tribes" (be they ethnic or class groups, political parties, or formal organizations competing for capital and popular legitimacy). Political elites also scramble to reinforce, or adjust, institutional rules. The United States' declining stature in the world economy, for instance, continues to prompt an odd array of educational reforms: new schools focused on teaching math and science, tightening up on what teachers teach, restrictions on what languages can be spoken in the classroom. Note that underlying these attempts to reinforce the school institution is a concern that plural groups must be more tightly corralled into a more homogeneous polity.

Balancing The State's Romantic Instincts

Contradicting the state's integrative agenda is its romantic liberal side. Rejecting the historically centralized authority of the Catholic

Church, feudal lords, and mercantilist monarchs, early secular theorists saw the state as the great legitimizer and protector of the individual's newly constructed rights. Just as Protestant sects, rising after the Reformation, advocated a direct link between God and the individual, secular theorists argued that the state should protect and embellish the individual *citizen*.[6] In one way, this romantic recasting of the individual as holding autonomy, freedom, and self-interested rationality did not contradict the state's integrative function. The rising middle class of merchants, artisans, and professionals saw individual liberty as instrumental to advancing their own economic interests. But the individual's new-found, romantic capacity for political and expressive freedom (within secular bounds) was, and continues to be, at odds with the Western state's interest in homogenizing plural communities.

The school is uniquely positioned as the institutional fulcrum that balances these contradictory ideological commitments expressed by the state. Liberal political elites are under enormous pressure to advance the individual's developmental interests. Simultaneously, it must try to incorporate diverse communities into a unified nation. Given the state's interest in political and economic stability, the school becomes a relatively inexpensive mechanism for balancing these tension-ridden ideals. The state accomplishes this ideological balancing act through three strategies.

First, the expansion of mass schooling and its association with modern progress serves to de-legitimate what John Boli and his colleagues term, *intermediate collectives*. Historically, children were socialized by their parents, kin, and within their local village church. But these collective units, operating between the individual and the state, can subvert the state's direct influence on the child. Just as missionaries once brought religion to "uncivilized lands," the liberal state brings secular faith, sacred symbols, and direct membership in the state-defined polity and wage economy. Loyalty to local interests is of the wrong scale. Individuals, to act modern, must display affection for economic and social institutions that operate on a national scale. Expanding access to mass schooling and intensifying implementation of a standardized national curriculum exemplify how the state earnestly extends nation-level membership and universally defined (modern) status to the child.[7]

Second, the state attempts to construct a nation-wide opportunity structure, standard forms of merit, and concrete strategies for gaining status in adulthood. Once Western social rules penetrate a territory, state actors risk losing popular legitimacy if methods for allocating status,

work, and income seem unfair and closed. The persistence of ascriptive forms of status and kin-based power structures sharply undercuts state actors' legitimacy over time. The mass school helps define a common meritocratic order where each individual child appears to have a fair chance at getting ahead— *if* he or she works hard and learns how to achieve within modern (bureaucratic) organizations. In classically liberal polities the construct of technical "skill" is closely attached to "opportunity." Adult status is not determined by caste or class membership but by one's persistence in learning skills which are interwoven with normative forms of language, dress, and custom. This is functional for the nation-state, since productivity, material accumulation, and hence the state's own stability depend both on a broad division of labor and popular perception that the opportunity structure is fair.

Mechanisms linked to the allocation of status and opportunity are critical elements of national education systems. These organizational devices are far more important than whether any learning actually occurs in the classroom. National examinations in Africa, for instance, often contain questions and information which never appear within textbooks or the national curriculum. The content or relevance of the exam is not important from political elites' point of view. What *is* important is that the examination process appear to be fair and credible, as the mechanism for sorting youths into scarce secondary school places and thus into better jobs. The extreme case, common in anglophone Africa, is where secondary school pupils sit for national examinations modeled after the colonial Cambridge exams. The content of the test has little relevance to the content of African curricula, not to mention knowledge that might be useful in a Third World setting. But the exam itself holds enormous status and legitimacy as a sorting mechanism.

Third, the Western state instinctively expresses a moral belief that the individual's own capacities and quality of life can be bettered by formal institutions. Under the modern state, we come to believe that socialization of children only by parents or the local community is insufficient in developing the child's potential. A state-constructed bureaucratic institution—the school—can best nurture the child's inner resources. In the process the child will come to realize the nation's "common good" and contribute to the polity's shared interests. That is, the formal school will strengthen the child's membership in, and affiliation with, the modern state, placing emotional loyalty to the local village or tribe in the (properly) subordinate position.[8] Throughout the popular press in the Third World, national leaders recurrently urge parents and

village chiefs to keep their children in school. Commonly, political elites cite two reasons for why traditional hesitancy about government schooling should be overcome: the child's individual development, and how this form of education fits the agenda of national development. Importantly, the literacy, knowledge, and social skills which the child gains at school are *not* linked to the welfare of family or village. True to Rousseau, Jefferson, and Durkheim, when the child grows up modern, he or she is being inducted into the larger scale project of *national* development.

Theory 2—Class Imposition

Since the 1960s, of course, the functionalist-modernity framework has been sharply challenged by scholars, activists, and even by a few political leaders who see the Western state's agenda less innocently. These critics agree that the state seeks to control how children are socialized, using the school to fit the modernized youth into a secular polity populated by bureaucratic organizations and national markets. Yet, Marxist writers and local activists hold a critical *interpretation* of how this integrative or homogenizing role of the state is acted out—a story-line that involves expansion and deepening of the mass school. Functional theorists see nation-building and formal "child-building" as progressive elements of modernization. In contrast, critical theorists step back and question this process, asking which groups gain and which groups lose social authority and material resources.

Class imposition (or conflict) theorists have highlighted the primacy of *economic interests* inherent in Western polities, not the romantic social ideals rhetorically espoused by the liberal state. The state, as an agent of economic elites, possesses little institutional autonomy and little capacity to pursue social agendas that do not serve the central capitalist project of economic expansion. Here the state simply plays the role of messenger, pressing to ensure that the school socializes children to fit into the goals and social rules of economic firms and markets. In turn the school, as a financially dependent organ of the state, must respond to the demands and material organization of capital, technology, and labor. Both the government and the school are parts of the superstructure that simply sits on top of a foundation of economic interests to which the action of political elites must correspond. From this logic, economic

interests drive the expansion and deepening of schooling, with the state serving as a subservient middleman.[9]

The central state's articulation of the common good, according to the class imposition model, actually *reinforces the status, affluence, knowledge, and customs of economic elites*. Indeed, the functionalist-modernity model often reflects an innocent disregard for (a) which particular classes or ethnic tribes dominate economic firms and state agencies, (b) how their interests differ from lower-status groups, and (c) the extent to which state action (intentionally or inadvertently) leads to the reproduction of class divisions and inequality. Critical theorists emphasize how the state acts to conserve class-based differences and inequities, failing to reorder the distribution of wealth and status, and rarely respecting cultural differences held by low-status groups (that is, "low-status" as defined by the dominant ethnic group or economic class).

Class imposition theorists, therefore, make a *coercive interpretation* of the Western state's historical role in rationalizing or harmonizing economic, political, and cultural organizations—moving from plural social groups and rules to a uniform secular polity and nation-wide consciousness. Functionalist writers see the breaking down of local groups and legitimization of secular institutions (like the school) as a sign of modernity—a wise mechanism for pulling the individual into the formal polity and into modern forms of production and exchange. Class theorists see this as an attempt to achieve hegemonic faith in economic expansion, indeed sanctioning material growth as the polity's preeminent moral commitment. By placing high status on working and achieving within bureaucratic organizations, economic elites (via the state) legitimate the way in which their firms organize production. Local tribes and communities may hold other social and economic forms as sacred, be it their languages, gods, or local forms of production and exchange. But such local diversity is anathema to the modern state's desire for solidarity and loyalty to nation-wide institutions and markets. Elites argue that the individual should gain status by joining and achieving within the formal institution (be it a school or a firm). Involvement of local collectives—the family, village, or church—is defined by secular elites as unmodern, possessing low status.

Next I illustrate how these three postulates of class imposition theory—the primacy of economic interests, the reproduction of class differences, and a coercive interpretation of state action—lead to an alternative explanation of why economic and political elites seek to expand and deepen schooling.

Overly Optimistic About the State?

Since the late eighteenth century, elites active in constructing the liberal state have been hopeful about this institution's potential role in pulling together disparate provinces, defining a common cultural agenda, and motivating the individual to develop (and produce). Locke argued that the individual's rights could be legitimated and protected only by a strong state. Divine authoritative law, previously handed down by the church and monarchs, was to be replaced by sacred entitlements granted to each individual by the secular state. Despite his romantic confidence in the natural character of the individual, Rousseau also claimed that only a forceful state could enhance freedom and equality. Through the individual's "social contract" with the state, the individual would participate in the modern polity's common agenda; in return, the state would construct and preserve the individual citizen's civil liberties.[10]

Both Rousseau and, later, Emile Durkheim stressed that ignorance led to passive acceptance of inequality and repression by strong states. Schooling—by socializing new generations to collectively-held ideals and cultural commitments—would better the polity over time. The central state was to provide common schools through which the modern state's secular faith could be transmitted to children. Adam Smith argued that the state should allow individuals to act from a "natural desire" to pursue their own material interests. This collection of atomistic actors, operating within unencumbered markets and free of state regulation, would boost the common good. Yet even Smith believed that cooperation in market exchange was founded upon a "sacred regard to general rules." He went on to say that these "moral faculties . . . were set up within us to be the supreme arbiters of all our actions, to superintend all our senses, passions, and appetites."[11] Even those, like Smith, who emphasized the liberal materialist side of the secular state, urged political elites to define moral rules and influence the socialization of children.[12]

Karl Marx's interpretation of the central state's intent and actions was far more critical, far less optimistic. Two facets of Marx's general perspective are particularly important to the class imposition camp. He argued that the state, in most cases, acts to improve conditions for capitalist expansion. The Western state's utilitarian actions—legitimating and legislating individual rights regarding property, production, labor, and trade—emphasize a strong secular faith in economic growth. But such action is more functional for certain classes than for others.

Marx believed that only in rare instances did the state pursue social policies and exercise moral leadership that was contrary to the interests of economic elites.

Importantly, Marx did observe that the state bureaucracy achieved some organizational independence, since the bourgeoisie disliked involvement in the daily conflicts facing governments. This usually involved political tussles among competing economic organizations. The central state may voice concern over material inequality or social opportunity, but this is motivated by political elites' desire for stability and for reinforcing popular support. In general, the state rarely is distracted from its fundamental role of serving economic elites' obsession with economic expansion.

Marx also argued that state actors would achieve a degree of institutional independence when no particular class was sufficiently organized to dominate other classes. This point holds enormous relevance in Third World countries where state agencies often hold more investment capital and organizational cohesion than do fledgling private firms. This stems from strong historical forces: earlier domination of colonial administrations by economic interests; the nationalist state's subsequent distrust of private, often foreign-held companies; and pre-modern political leaders' desire to share in the profits of key parastatal businesses. Here government leaders—who run social services *and* state-held enterprises—form the elite class. These elites may move independently of pure (private) economic interests, indeed they often discourage liberal competition from domestic or foreign owned firms. Yet state-run enterprises do face pressures to be publicly accountable and appear to serve the ideal of mass participation and opportunity. This is not to say that moral faith in economic expansion is any less in post-colonial polities—simply that many economic elites are located within the state structure, and they frequently must accommodate social goals more so that purely private elites.[13]

State Reinforcement of Class Inequality

Class imposition theorists highlight two important examples of how the state and its school institution construct, then reinforce, an achievement structure which yields unequal opportunity. First, within industrialized countries, schools hold little influence in determining either a child's *relative* level of academic achievement or eventual occupational status,

after accounting for his or her parents' social class background. Empirical evidence shows that schools do little to alter the reproduction of a society's (unequal) class structure.[14] This may be due to lower levels of instructional quality in schools attended by low-income kids (although levels of *material* school resources are often equal). Or schools may not be able to overcome advantageous socialization practices exercised by parents of middle and upper class children.[15] Despite the optimistic faith held by Rousseau, Durkheim, and their contemporary disciples, the state is unable to reduce class inequalities. By placing responsibility on the individual child and family—to work hard and compete against fellow pupils within a secular meritocracy—the state structure is not questioned. In fact, the "structure" is barely visible.

A growing empirical literature now indicates that in many Third World societies schooling more effectively levels social class differences. When the class structure is not highly differentiated, schooling does appear to provide mobility to children of rural peasants and the urban poor. The social class background of pupils also influences achievement less in math and subjects that are foreign to indigenous forms of knowledge. In contrast, student achievement in language is more consistently sensitive to class background, rather than variation in school quality. Ironically, as national economies grow and the labor structure becomes more differentiated, labor demand often levels-off for highly schooled youth. The now familiar pattern of credentialism takes hold, whereby more schooling is required simply to remain competitive in a labor queue that grows longer and longer. By this time, the school is highly institutionalized and enrollments rise independent of labor demand. Varation in children's social class background now kicks-in to influence which youth can afford to stay in school for longer periods.[16]

The second example of state-reinforced inequality relates to political and economic leaders' argument (for two centuries now) that mass schooling should do a better job of preparing productive, more conforming young workers. In the United States, for example, business and labor organizations have historically pushed either to expand vocational training programs, or to make the general curriculum more "practical." When corporate leaders face shortages of unskilled factory workers, computer operators, secretaries, or technicians they push the state to train more. In contemporary times, business leaders have focused less on skill training, emphasizing to governments that they simply want young workers who are literate, show up on time, and fit into the bureaucratic rules of production firms. At a deeper level, concern in the

United States over making the economy more competitive encourages civic disdain for curricula and knowledge which are not directly linked to technological progress and productivity. This push to further vocationalize schooling predictably occurs when economic downturns threaten the state's popular support. Under this condition, political elites must strengthen their interdependencies with economic interests.

In sum, the dominant class—residing in state and economic organizations—emphasize the moral project of economic expansion. Especially within fragile states, both the illusion and reality of mass opportunity depend upon material growth. Schooling instrumentally provides the vocational skills and technical mind-set seemingly required to spur material growth. Yet despite efforts to expand and deepen mass education, class theorists argue that the school institution is not effective in improving the *distribution* of achievement and income. The school may project the institutional illusion of more equal opportunity; but it really does not threaten the relative dominance of incumbent elites according to class imposition theorists. We will return to this question shortly when we review the empirical evidence.

The State's Push for a Bureaucratic Moral Order

Critical scholars (especially European structuralists) emphasize a still deeper means of influence exercised by the state. Mass schooling not only attempts to instruct technical skills necessary for economic productivity and expansion. The state also formulates a "hidden curriculum" to transmit the basic attitudes and rules upon which civil society and mass organization are founded. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, for example, argued that schools in the United States were expanded during the industrial revolution to control and socialize errant immigrant youth, teaching them English, vocational skills, and a conception of time and regimen manifest both in bureaucratic schools and firms.[17]

Robert Dreeben, though not a class imposition theorist, digs deeper into the social mores of North American classrooms. He shows how very young children are taught to discard personalized (or particularistic) forms of evaluation and, instead, are pushed to internalize universal forms of behavior and achievement based on standardized pieces of knowledge. Despite being treated in uniform ways in mass schools, children are taught that they can gain status by working autonomously

and competing against their classmates. Teachers implicitly socialize children to see the utility of this secular faith in hard work and individualistic achievement.

Yet these basic rules for getting ahead are embedded within a hierarchical bureaucratic organization. The Calvinist commitment to self-righteous hard work—originally pushed in North America by church leaders, self-reliant farmers, and later by entrepreneurial industrialists—continues to be reproduced within the first mass, corporate institution encountered by the child. Dreeben sees this "hidden curriculum" as a manifestation of implicit rules that operate in broader Western culture, not of a curricular agenda rationally assembled by elites. The mass school does set the context and achievement structure within which individualistic virtues are acted out. Then the state claims that opportunity flows from the individual's own effort, since the school apparently treats every child the same and recognizes merit in uniform ways.[18]

Class imposition theorists argue that the modern state mobilizes mass schooling to sanctify the knowledge and implicit social rules upon which the Western polity and bureaucratic organization are founded. Antonio Gramsci, an Italian socialist writing in the 1920s, argued that the liberal state rarely exercises physical coercion or obtrusive imposition of class interests. Instead the state's strength lies in its more subtle ability to ensure "the acceptance by the ruled of a conception of the world which belongs to the rulers." The mass school, as argued above, transmits the message that the burden is on the individual. The child must work hard if he or she wants to get ahead. The *structure* through which the young person moves disappears from sight—deeply institutionalized in the polity and implicitly accepted as legitimate, neutral, and fair.[19]

Gramsci, in general, backed Marx's view of the state as a centralized and coercive agency. Yet he introduced two theoretical departures. First, Gramsci highlighted the potency of ideology and social institutions, relative to obtrusive regulation by state or economic elites. Second, he focused on conflict arising between a central state seeking popular support and ideological hegemony, versus a pluralistic polity divided by centrifugal social forces. Marx held a deterministic view that economic elites simply manipulated the central state to reinforce conservative institutions and ideals. Gramsci agreed that the dominant class *attempts* to imprint their conception of reality and their moral (economic) commitments onto subordinate classes. Yet such attempts at class imposition often are met with indifference or outright resistance—especially when elite actors' beliefs are viewed as illegitimate "ideology" rather than as institutionalized "common sense." This conflict was painfully clear to

Gramsci as his popular socialist party first combatted, then lost working-class members to Mussolini's fascist party. At other times, reproduction of dominant ideology can occur unabated through explicit political persuasion or via more subtle institutions, such as through mass schooling.

Recent research within schools emphasizes that obtrusive *imposition* of dominant class interests is rarely observed. Teachers and schools, however, do gently impress a certain order. High achieving students are easy. They are buying into, and feeling efficacious within, the classroom's underlying social rules and moral order as described by Dreeben. On the other hand, students who fail to perform within the school's official structure resist or simply choose to evade and exit from the dominant order.

Robert Everhart's year-long study within one junior secondary school reveals that *conflicts* arise daily between poor achieving youth and their teachers (the front-line agents of the school's formal structure). These pupils fail to engage the curriculum, the knowledge, and symbols valued by the teacher. They may not perform within the social rules established by the teacher; they may ally themselves with other youth in actively resisting the teacher's authority. But Everhart emphasizes that the teacher's classroom rules and sanctified knowledge are rarely driven down the throats of (or imposed upon) dissonant students. These kids simply detach from the school's rules for how to achieve. When direct conflicts do arise, the non-performing student, of course, loses the battle. Over time the student fades from serious engagement within the classroom, subtly becoming disenfranchised from the school's official structure. This process of disenfranchisement preserves the school's social order and dominant class interests, at least to the extent that these are represented in the classroom's curriculum and bureaucratic social rules. Yet reinforcement of the social order occurs *not* through imposition but rather through smooth handling of class-related conflict.[20]

The State as Independent Mediator?

Marx argued that economic elites either captured positions of political authority or simply strong-armed state actors. This presumption of correspondence between economic interests and state action is increasingly questioned by both adherents to and critics of class imposition theory. Louis Althusser, for one, suggests that state expansion is explained not by the *harmony* between economic and political leaders (as functionalists

claim), but instead due to recurrent *conflict* between dominant classes and the masses (or the rising bourgeoisie) who have tired of persistent inequality or unliberal economic constraints. State construction of mass schooling, for instance, paints an institutional backdrop against which each individual appears to have an equal shot at getting ahead. The state broadens its popular legitimacy by breaking down ascriptive determinants of success (such as, kin, tribal, ethnic, or gender connections). In their stead, the state sanctions institutions and social rules that ensure impersonal, nation-wide forms of merit. For children, these modern forms of achievement and character are operationalized by the state within the institution of mass schooling. In so doing, the state mediates and cools-out conflict between advantaged elites and groups struggling to enlarge their economic and social status.[21]

The institutions of state and school may gain some independence and running room *if* they hold sufficient political capital. The boundaries confining the state's action also become elastic when the dominant economic class loses its grip on the state. Yet the legitimacy of state and school remain dependent upon political actors' capacity to mobilize liberal goals and modern symbols—signals of the state's promise to boost material welfare, equalize access to material goodies, and expand institutional memberships that confer higher status (like the school). These comprise the currency through which political actors mediate class conflicts. Only political elites who desire early retirement dare to argue against economic expansion or oppose individualistic conceptions of rights and economic action. I will return to the dynamic ways in which the state and the school each struggle to gain institutional autonomy. Here the essential point put forward by the European structuralists is that highly legitimated ideology, reproduced in formal institutions, set the parameters beyond which central elites or local activists can not move. Individual violators—including dissonant or impassive students—are not necessarily coerced into conforming. They simply are disenfranchised and never pulled-in to benefit from the modern polity's relatively lucrative opportunity structure.

State Signals of Modern Organization

The institutionalized acceptance of bureaucratic social rules, values, and symbols of modern socialization within North American schools is

particularly instructive.[22] Actual administration of United States schools is highly decentralized; the central government plays a small (and cheap) role relative to the codified authority and resources of state and local governments. Despite this high level of "local control," what actually goes on in classrooms across the United States is remarkably uniform: children progress through standard grade levels, all hearing the same sacred pieces of vocabulary, arithmetic, and homogenized history; and all instructed by teachers who rely on similar pedagogical practices, lecturing at children, handing out dittos, often forming "ability-based" groups for some lessons. This surprising similarity in schooling across a very diverse society stems, in part, from the institution's own independence and self-contained culture.

This uniformity also is rooted in the ideological and political strength of dominant elites and in the incorporation of their culture into fledgling agencies of the state. Nation-building efforts in the United States, as in other Western polities, were spurred by religious and economic leaders who held particular Protestant dictates as sacred: dislike for centralized authority, belief that the individual was the basic unit in the eyes of God, and faith that hard work and material transformation built character and spiritual virtue. These modest elites in eighteenth-century America were ministers, successful farmers, professionals, and municipal political leaders.

Their sacred commitments would be blended with a more hierarchical form of bureaucratic authority as corporate organization and mass production arose in the late nineteenth century. It was not simply coincidental that the bureaucratic factory became the magical model for recasting the one-room rural schoolhouse into a mass institution able to efficiently process more modern children. For this was the organizational form that awarded the school greater legitimacy in the eyes of economic and political elites. Over time, faith in the corporate form of mass schooling and its moral order has come to be institutionalized in the minds of political leaders—be they working in the central state or within local school districts spread throughout the United States.[23]

The younger, more fragile state, common across the Third World, plays a much stronger role in importing and legitimating the bureaucratic structure and moral order of the Western school. Bureaucratic administration signals "modern practice," particularly in societies where rationalized organizations or firms are still a novel form. Here the visible contours and symbols of "modern organization" take on enormous power. The Third World school may fail to hold deep effects on chil-

dren's acquired literacy or secular values. But the fact that the school is tightly administered—with tidy accounts, a sharp schedule of classes, and attractive gardens—signals the attributes of a modern organization. The institution is recognized by local parents as a concrete instrument of modernity, even if the school's technical objective of raising children's literacy is rarely accomplished.[24]

Theory 3—World Institutions

North American scholars, emphasizing the worldwide similarity of states and schools, are exploring a third explanation for the expansion and deepening of mass schooling. This provocative intellectual movement, led by sociologist John W. Meyer, offers a social theory which parallels work on economic world-systems. World *institution* theorists point out that Western ideals and forms of organization, having oozed throughout Western consciousness, jump across national boundaries and root within emerging nation-states. This institutional movement spreads relentlessly, independent of a particular society's wealth, location relative to core European and North American economies, or variation in observable structure of the state. If functionalist or class theorists were correct, this cross-national variation in economic and state variables should explain differing levels of school enrollment. Meyer and colleagues attempt to show that they do not. Instead, they claim that mass schooling exercises an institutional life of its own, legitimated and reproduced within the Western state's logic which now transcends national boundaries.[25]

Earlier Marxist or *dependencia* theorists saw expansion of state and school as determined by the nation's relative status in the world economy. Fellow critical theorists also emphasize the role of ideology, class structure, and changing patterns of labor demand in explaining the expansion of mass schooling. Yet world institution theorists argue that the Western school, as an organization surrounded by popular support and symbols of modernity, spills over national boundaries regardless of these nation-specific factors. Mass schooling has expanded rapidly in almost all Third World countries since World War II. Despite scarce economic resources, political elites in poor states struggle to express their own legitimacy and signal modernity by building more and more Western-looking schools.

World institution theorists describe why mass schooling is such an attractive *political good*—whether we focus on post-Reformation Europe, contemporary First World nations facing instability, or fragile Third World states. As political and economic elites proceed with building a centralized state and legitimating bureaucratic forms of organizing, they risk alienating plural elements of the polity or local tribes which have not yet been incorporated. Here the legitimacy of the current government declines, and the long term institutionalization of the state apparatus slows. By unobtrusively nudging the expansion of mass schooling, the state (a) crisply illustrates how children can join the modern polity, (b) advances a meritocratic, not a tribal or particularistic, opportunity structure, and (c) mobilizes signals of modernity, from pushing high-status secular knowledge to rhetorically linking school attainment with access to wage-sector jobs.

Meyer and his colleagues are revitalizing Durkheim's (functionalist) fascination with symbolic action and ritual. Here the observable bureaucratic structure of state and school is secondary; more important are the *signals* that move between the state (or its agent, the teacher) and the individual child. Whether states and schools are centrally administered (say, in France) or locally controlled (as in the United States), signals about authority, "correct behavior," valued forms of achievement, and high-status forms of knowledge are quite similar across Western societies.

An education ministry's material resources or formal lines of administration are *not* the influential devices that shape local behavior and belief. What really holds the school organization together is whether teachers enact the bundle of beliefs and behavior that echo the state's agenda or which fit normative roles reproduced within the school itself. Teachers, for instance, are pushed to hold, as sacred, certain pedagogical practices and forms of knowledge: lecturing before pupils, exercising hierarchical authority, employing standardized tests, teaching "modern knowledge," be it teaching kids to speak French or teaching kids how to use computers. Administrative control of these disparate elements is problematic. In exacting conformity to these symbolic actions, however, the state and the teacher demonstrate their *shared faith* in the modern school's utility and the state's legitimate role in shaping the form and content of classroom action. As Meyer suggests, we should evaluate the school institution as a religious structure. Productive bureaucracies, like factories, possess singular goals, clear technical methods, and uniform elements

for assembling a tangible good. None of these features characterize the production of literacy or achievement within the mass school organization.[26]

The Polity's Institutional Bedrock

Critical historians emphasize how European states, then the United States, have pushed to integrate other societies into the West's *economic* network: through mercantilist policies, outright colonial conquest, and more recently through development programs that export Western forms of market, firm, and state throughout the Third World. World institution theorists, however, back up and focus on the *institutional foundations* that serve to legitimate and culturally support Western economies. Third World states' desire to strengthen ties with the West, for instance, is driven by the perception that concrete economic benefits will result. But ongoing incorporation of societies into the West's economic network also is motivated by fragile states' simple desire to *look modern*—to build Western institutions, to mimic bureaucratic forms of organization, and to absorb secular language, knowledge, and meanings. To be seen as a *real* state, government leaders must do certain things: establish market-oriented trade rules and diplomatic links to the West, codify uniform laws, adopt a common language, and construct rationalized social services. Meyer emphasizes that both new nations and established nations (shaken by economic or political troubles) attempt to build or reinforce central institutions. Constructing institutions involves not only inventing organization charts and putting up new facilities. It also requires legitimating Western forms of authority, organization, and ways of signaling the individual citizen's membership in the modern polity, the wage economy.

These elements of institution-building are surprising similar across rich and poor nations. Most Western-looking states rely on mass schooling as the primary device for incorporating tribal peoples or subcultures into the formal polity. To become a "citizen" (member of the polity), the individual must attend school to learn the dominant language, the virtues of bureaucratic authority, and the wisdom of Western knowledge. Children who leave school or adults who remain illiterate are stigmatized as "unmodern" and categorized as being on the distant periphery of society.

The school, of course, may be impotent in accomplishing these objectives in a material way. But by simply extending the franchise, via the school, the state signals its own authority and its capacity to deliver access to modern forms of organization. By mimicking modernity, both new and old states seek to expand schooling and to strengthen the school's influence over children and their parents. Let's turn to a couple illustrations.

When the British were finally thrown out of Nyasaland in the early 1960s, Kamuzu Banda returned home to rule this new east African territory which came to be called Malawi. He was schooled in the United Kingdom and worked as a doctor in Scotland while in self-imposed exile. Banda returned with a deep affection for the British school structure. He quickly began building schools, training teachers in English and classical subjects, and requiring students to sit for the Cambridge exam. This west European system was layed on top of a society comprised of over thirty different tribal groups spread throughout a largely rural country, each ethnic group speaking its own language. One can now travel for two days off the (only) highway in Malawi and find a one-room hut with a teacher who instructs rural children in English (with a faintly British illiteration) about the history of modern Europe.[27]

Socialist Ethiopia provides a second example of how the state benefits from the importation of Western schooling. Since 1974 this highly centralized state has attempted to collectivize peasant farmers. Previously dispersed throughout the countryside in small family villages, the government coaxes peasants to move into larger communes by offering better water supplies, free primary schooling, adult literacy programs, and health care services. These communes, populated by one hundred to two hundred families, look like uniform suburban housing tracts, except that these tidy rows of shelters are huts glued together with red mud and thatch. In an effort to build "the socialist man," the government is rapidly expanding and rationalizing secular schools with support from a bizarre set of bedfellows. Each day advisors from East Germany, Holland, and the World Bank are discussing how to build schools faster or how to deepen the education ministry's administrative control over the local commune schools. Interestingly, the government's conception of schooling reflects a blend of Marx, Engels, and Dewey—encouraging children to work cooperatively, to value the integration of manual farmwork and intellectual activity, and to become loyal to the central state and party structure. Dislike for the West's preoccupation with individualism and exclusively mental work is clear within the

government. But mobilization of the school institution and reliance on a (centralized) bureaucratic form is just as strong in eastern-bloc Ethiopia and in West-aligned Malawi.[28]

Wholesale borrowing of the Western school is best illustrated within, yet not unique to, the Third World. Francisco Ramirez and John Boli, for instance, describe how less wealthy, less unified European nations in the early nineteenth century began importing secular schools from higher-status European states as a strategy for becoming more competitive militarily and economically.[29] In contemporary times, political leaders within industrialized nations are eager to borrow the alleged discipline, toughness, and technical content of Japanese schooling—since their method of schooling must explain their economic success. Certain actions signaling "school improvement" become irresistable, including requiring kids to take more math courses, buying computers for classrooms, or pushing teachers to assign more homework. Whether such reforms actually boost pupil achievement or influence economic growth is not a question taken seriously by proponents. These initiatives are built on faith and hold sufficient symbolic value, signifying further movement toward "modern practice" and, incidentally, reinforcing the credibility of political elites.[30]

Why is the school such a seductive device for the Western state to employ? World institution theorists argue that political elites are motivated by romantic ideology, particularly a belief that the individual child can develop if purposefully socialized. This appealing faith invites individual membership in the polity and unifies faith in modern forms of child socialization. The latter purpose has long been articulated by Western philosophers of the state; the former point, the emphasis on membership, is originally highlighted by world institution theorists. The state constructs an individual entitlement to schooling. Since everyone is entitled, mass education must be expanded rapidly, and the schooling treatment must be administered uniformly. The state argues that it is dedicated to the *individual* child's development. But rapid and symbolic extension of franchise and membership is far more cost-effective for the state, especially for poor states, than any sustained concern with the child's actual development or achievement.[31]

The "individual" is reified under romantic Western ideology, cast as a creature with autonomy, developmental potential, and self-interested rationality. The notion of an individual, disembedded from local collectives, did not emerge with force until after the Reformation. The Western state would eventually borrow the Protestant tenet that the individual's

link with God need not be mediated by an encumbered church structure. The individual could possess distinct characteristics and rights that were directly defined by the secular state. Local collectives—the family, church, village authorities, and firms—could not get between the state and its direct access to the individual. As Meyer and his colleagues persuasively argue, the Western state expressly attempts to stigmatize "traditional" local collectives. Joining and continued membership in the mass school become a powerful signal that the child is playing the state's game—pursuing secular socialization and preparing to enter the modern polity and the wage-economy.[32]

This process recasts the individual's fundamental institutional affiliations. Children in many east African tribes, for example, are raised by several adults in the village. Perceiving one's own child as somehow different or as an "individual" rarely occurs. The village collectively grows most necessary foodstuffs. Adults may walk to a market center once a week to trade their crops or chickens for a little meat, sugar, or a needed basket. The village headman or the mission church provides spiritual advice. Children attend the government primary school for three years on average, gaining a faint taste of European literacy, bureaucratic social rules, and modern symbols. This situation is not unlike what Durkheim found in the hinterlands of nineteenth-century France, or what contemporary inner-city teachers find in trying to touch disadvantaged youth. Most children will never participate in the core polity or succeed within the wage-economy. The state *is* successful in stigmatizing and eroding the status of local associations. But unless these kids can prove sufficient loyalty and achievement in terms of the school's knowledge and bureaucratic rules, they will not benefit from the opportunities so often promised by the state.

Empirical Evidence

The rise of competing theories, and heated debate among contentious adherents, has far outpaced progress on the more arduous task of empirical verification. Since the 1960s, many studies have seriously questioned the basic tenets of the functionalist-modernity line (drawing on historical data, local surveys, and contemporary ethnographic evidence). More recent empirical tests of class imposition models, however, also have shown mixed results. Evidence that undercuts universal claims made by

world institution theorists also is emerging. Now that hard evidence is catching up with the more provocative exercise of theorizing, a clearer picture is coming into focus that highlights the parallel forces of country-specific conditions *and* ideological and economic imperatives which are exercised across all Western polities.

This section reviews major empirical findings that support or question the validity of each theory in explaining the *expansion* of mass schooling. More detailed reviews are available elsewhere.[33] Here I emphasize the practical importance of these empirical challenges, including implications for how we envision the growth of schooling and the meanings we attach to this robust phenomenon. Second, I show how empirical work is leading to more careful development of theory. The review below, for instance, leads us back to a conception of the fragile state that emphasizes country-specific conditions, particularly the state's capacity to manage its interdependencies within an uncertain institutional environment (as introduced in Chapter One). This avoids the danger of making universal claims—linked to one of the three grand theories—irrespective of the institutions and conditions which characterize a particular society or state. Evidence on the validity with which each theory explains the *deepening* of schooling is reviewed in Chapter Four.

Functional-Modernity: Shot Full of Empirical Holes?

Does mass schooling expand as a rational response to demands expressed by the state and the economy? The neo-classical liberal answer is an exuberant, "yes!" As national economies form and industrialization arises, new jobs emerge that require higher levels of literacy and technical skills. The liberal state, responsible for building basic infrastructure, rationally invests in universal schooling. Individuals benefiting from schooling prove to be more productive in the labor force and thus earn more. Parents, being rational optimizers, push their children to stay in school longer to gain better jobs in the modern economy. The accumulation of these local, individual decisions leads to aggregate growth in mass schooling, then to gains in national economic output. Empirical work focusing on this interaction between economic change and subsequent demand for more schooling is now voluminous.[34] Let me simply summarize major empirical findings that seriously challenge modernization theory.

Theoreticians' claims that economic gains drive school expansion, and that an economic calculus operating at the individual level motivates enrollment, have received inconsistent empirical support. Recently published historical evidence sharply challenges this degree of economic determinism as represented within modernization theory. First, secular mass schooling usually takes hold and enrollments shoot upward long *before* industrialization, even prior to the formation of commercial networks. Primary school enrollments, for example, in nineteenth-century France, England, and the United States were quite high (exceeding 30 percent of the child age group) decades before commercial integration and expansion. In addition, most Third World societies have witnessed explosive growth in mass schooling since World War II. Interestingly, empirical work shows that a nation's level of economic wealth is unrelated to enrollment growth at the primary school level, particularly since World War II.[35]

Second, early industrial expansion in many nations has historically retarded, not spurred, enrollment growth. This is particularly damning to functionalist interpretations—including both modernization and class imposition viewpoints—in that capital appears to be *competing* with the school and state for the attention and labor of youth. During early industrial eras, the opportunity cost of staying in school, and foregoing novel blue-collar wage levels, is simply too high. On the other hand, enrollments in rural areas or for girls often are higher when school attendance is synchronized with (seasonal) labor demands. Evidence of this negative relationship between early industrial growth and school enrollment has emerged recently from historical studies in the United States, England, France, and Mexico.[36]

Third, the earliest demands to expand basic schooling, expressed by political or cultural elites, focused on training religious leaders, military officers, and state bureaucrats. The preparation of commercial leaders, or pushing mass literacy to help rationalize economies on a national scale, came much later historically. By that time (the mid-nineteenth century in Europe and the United States), the institution of secular schooling was well established and based on these earlier forms of demand. Earlier rules and content of the school institution persist, despite changes in the nature of external demands. For instance, one can easily observe forms of academic curriculum, elite or colonial languages of instruction (in the Third World), even counter-normative forms of pedagogy that hold status within the school institution, but which may have little utility within the economy.

Fourth, technological change may contribute to early enrollment growth, as families and nations come to believe that more schooling is required to fill more complex jobs. Yet the leading historical study (from the United States) found that enrollment effects stemming from technological gains diminished once primary and secondary schooling became mass institutions (when enrollments moved past two thirds of the child cohort). Sociologists Richard Rubinson and John Ralph found that enrollments continued to rise independently of changes in technology and labor productivity. They argue that in early periods of industrial and technological change, the link between school credentials and job status is rational. That is, employers and the state, acting to boost the supply of schooling and to sanction higher school attainment, are behaving in a functional manner. Yet once higher school credentials come to hold substantial status, independent of their link to actual labor demand or requisite technical requirements, employers and the state can not block further school expansion (at least not within the decentralized United States political-economy). Thus the expansion of schooling continues relentlessly—whether functional in capitalist economic terms, or not.[37]

Two related points remain clear within the empirical literature: children of wealthier families benefit disproportionately as mass education expands, and wealthier states are better able to build more schools. But this recent research warns against a deterministic view that Western-like modernization will invariably lead to school expansion. Historical conditions are quite important in explaining why mass schooling is growing, or declining, within a particular country context. We must distinguish between early periods of nation-building and school expansion, versus later periods when both the state and the school gain legitimacy and social authority. Also, within a particular society, we should check to see whether the school institution was firmly established prior to the secular state's rise within a particular setting. Or did mass schooling become an imperative only after the modern (albeit fragile) state arose, as in post-colonial nations? Finally, the quality and characteristics of schools themselves must be examined. School buildings can go up and children can enroll at a rapid pace. But this simply holds symbolic value. Whether the school is functionally fitting economic demands and motivations depends upon the content and efficacy of what goes on inside classrooms. We will revisit and elaborate on these conditions and distinctions.

Class Imposition: Empirical Attack on Modernization Theory

Class imposition theorists, like their modernization adversaries, see the school as functionally fitting and serving the interests of economy and state. Yet this critical framework emphasizes how the expansion of schooling reinforces the authority, ideology, and economic resources of elite classes, not the pluralistic interests of diverse communities and less powerful classes. Empirical work by class imposition scholars, in some cases, has disconfirmed claims made by modernization theorists. Yet recent research also refutes key arguments put forward by class imposition theorists.

Two basic lines of argument have been mounted. First, upper class families and political elites advocate the expansion of schooling to push economic growth and to advance the institutional and cultural foundations underlying economic rationalization. The second, stronger line of attack on modernization theory denies that school expansion even yields intended economic effects. Schooling serves only to reproduce the class structure, and the advantageous position held by elites within that order. Schooling legitimates and reinforces language, ideals, and technical skills that have been assigned authority by elite groups. But this does not mean that schooling yields any skill improvements (for individuals) or productivity gains (for nations). Here too, the state plays a critical role in sanctioning the expansion of schooling for the purpose of class and cultural reproduction, independent of economic functionality. My brief review highlights theoretical developments in the class imposition field, particularly those that lead us back to my conception of the fragile state and the importance of country conditions.[38]

The first development concerns how states or politics define the *opportunity structure*. Class imposition implies resistance from local disenfranchised groups. Indeed, critical theorists have mounted historical and contemporary evidence on how working-class communities, and their children, at times resist mass schooling that is pushed by elites, who draw on the license provided by the central state. However, some critical theorists have come to recognize that, over time, groups originally disenfranchised come to participate in mass schooling, eventually internalizing the claims of elites that such participation will lead to greater opportunity. Outright resistance, as mentioned above, is too

crude of a representation. This does not mean that *conflict* between dominant and subordinate classes dissolves. The issue centers on interrelated questions: When does class conflict arise (within state organizations or the school)? What is the process which unfolds? How is it resolved, and whose interests are served in its resolution?[39]

The distinction between early periods of nation-building versus later eras of institutional reinforcement is critical in working out this contradiction between short-run "resistance" to, versus long-run acceptance of, mass schooling. The issue arises in Third World communities where most peasant children drop out of school at a very young age, and where many urban children leave school to enter small-scale commercial or factory jobs.

Let me clarify the historical or situational conditions under which class conflict would intensify or recede. I agree with world institution theorists that popular support for mass schooling is widespread and deep. I have visited too many African classrooms that are jammed with 80 to 150 young children to believe that "resistance" to schooling is substantial.[40] Yet why do children drop out at such a young age?

Here economists make the useful distinction between a *preference* (or taste) for some commodity versus the capacity to express actual *demand*. Thus, the second point is that families assess the link between school attendance and *socially constructed* opportunities. For the peasant farmer who needs an extra hand in the fields, or hopes to marry off a daughter at the normal age of thirteen or fourteen, continued school attendance is not rational. The same logic applies to the working-class kid in North America who, within his or her apparent opportunity structure, comes to see high school graduation or university training as not very relevant. They may see further schooling as legitimate and functional for others, but the opportunity costs (economically and socially) are excessive for themselves.

From this viewpoint, how institutions within a nation construct opportunities plays a critical role in whether mass schooling expands. Many African societies are still comprised primarily of subsistence farming families. Here the likelihood of children successfully moving into the wage sector is very small; thus the perceived opportunity cost of staying in school is quite high. Preference for schooling translates more quickly into expressed demand in, say, east Asian societies where the modern opportunity structure has been expanding rapidly. This does not imply that the relative position and status of certain classes is changing. But the probability of incorporating previously disenfranchised groups is

much greater. Resistance to simple participation in schooling and other nation-wide institutions will more likely diminish, again keeping in mind that membership and participation does not mean that these institutions have any effect on class position.

Class *imposition* implies downward pressure by elites who are sitting on top of political or economic institutions. But let's think about Third World settings where the modern wage sector may enfranchise only 15 to 30 percent of the adult population. Here political elites struggle to expand wage employment and enable youth to move into this select circle of jobs and social position. Modern institutions are *pulling* relatively few youths into the wage sector, leaving most youths to continue their pattern of subsistence agriculture or minimalist survival in urban slums. Elites are not necessarily "imposing" certain economic or social roles. They and their institutions are selectively pulling-in youths who hold particular skills, language, and membership rituals which conform to modern sector norms.[41]

The second development relevant to the assessment of class imposition theories concerns *state invention of class differences*. States historically have shaped the structure of opportunity within their societies. During early nation-building, for example, fragile states encourage growth in a variety of service jobs, including teachers, postal clerks, and rail workers. To the extent that these jobs require basic literacy, school attendance is encouraged. Research in Mexico, for instance, shows that the state's incremental penetration into rural towns, and related growth in white-collar jobs, spurred school enrollment during the first half of the twentieth century. Growth in industrial jobs actually depressed enrollments, consistent with the historical evidence from the First World.[42] In many Third World nations today, civil service jobs continue to dominate the wage sector. The state-sanctioned status of these white-collar occupations is very high relative to rural agricultural, non-wage earning, and even mid-level industrial jobs.

The state also can arrange the supply of schooling in ways that provide variable access to jobs and economic opportunities. The French state, for instance, long supported two different tracks of secondary schools. The high-status track historically trained elite French bureaucrats and military leaders. The low-status track turned out white-collar workers for the commercial sector. Places in high-status secondary schools were limited and strictly rationed by admission procedures.[43] Similarly, Third World states often allocate modest resources to a mediocre mass primary school system. Then, a relatively high-quality secondary school system

is more amply supported which disproportionately serves children from elite families. In some cases, political action can push the state to minimize class-related features of school systems. The structure of schooling in the United States is much less differentiated (at least prior to secondary school), being based on integrationist ideals embedded in the common school.[44]

State actions—school construction, expenditures, and policy initiatives—do influence enrollment growth in some settings. For example, state actions at boosting the local supply of schooling, or reducing direct costs by eliminating school fees, have been found to spark enrollment increases. Such findings are now available from historical studies in the United States, France, Mexico, and east Asia.[45] Importantly, these discrete state initiatives can boost or depress enrollments independently of economic growth or labor demands.

Sharp ideological signals from the central state also can encourage enrollment growth long before the government apparatus holds sufficient capacity to finance more schools and more teachers. The post-revolutionary French state, for instance, advocated mass schooling and placed the financial burden on local communes well into the nineteenth century. Primary school enrollments rose to over 50 percent of the child cohort prior to the central state's assumption of administrative and financial jurisdiction. Similarly, Third World states' rhetorical push on families to enroll their children in school far outpaces actual government capacity to build more schools and hire more teachers.[46]

Another development relevant to class imposition theories concerns the question of whether *school expansion leads to economic change,* as alleged by modernization theorists. Even critical researchers *do* find nation-level economic gains from the spread of mass schooling. Yet again, country-specific conditions are quite important. Universal claims are no longer defensible empirically. First, opportunity structures and schooling must open up in ways that encourage more efficient production of goods and services. For instance, growth in service jobs, often linked to state activities, does not necessarily spur economic growth. Nor is economic change likely to flow from opportunity structures and forms of schooling that simply reproduce class differences or caste structures (in terms of elite language, knowledge, and customs). The "democratization" of school opportunities must be harmonized with the liberalization of capital and change in the labor structure.

Second, the quality of schooling plays a large role in determining economic returns to educational expansion. The spread of low-quality

schooling yields a strong symbolic return and significant political capital, especially for the fragile state. However, no economic benefits should be expected. A minimal threshold of educational quality must be reached before economic returns, in terms of productivity in agriculture or the wage-sector, are observed.[47]

Third, the state may be effective in convincing parents to keep their children in school. But this may result in lower production in the short-run, as youths are drawn out of agricultural and industrial labor. Here the state is competing with subsistence families and formal capital for the labor power of children and youths.

When the link between schooling and economic growth appears to be disappointingly weak, pressure builds within the Western state to strengthen this coupling. Over time, entry to and advancement within the modern wage-sector becomes more directly linked to school credentials. Signals of membership and status within the modern economy, or within state institutions, are expressed in the currency of school attainment. Allocation of school-related opportunity, however, can swerve way out of line when sharp change occurs in the economic opportunity structure. Heavy investments in vocational training, at one time, appeared to be a better way of linking schooling to wage-earning blue-collar jobs. But planners failed to see that the state was doing far more to legitimate and assign high status to white-collar occupations, especially in the Third World where industrial capital is very constrained.

Finally, as the state and employers struggle to link schooling and economic or skill demands, action is rarely taken to reduce class-based inequities. The mean level of schooling may rise for all groups in a society. But as more people obtain a given credential, be it a college degree (in the United States) or a primary school certificate (in the Third World), its value deflates and the lower classes remain at a competitive disadvantage. The state may be effective in extending the franchise of mass schooling, independent of economic forces. Yet the state's capacity to reorder economic opportunities for disadvantaged groups depends upon change in the job structure, not only upon extending a symbolic franchise in the modern sector through school enrollment.

Early Evidence: The State and School as World Institutions?

World institution theorists have shaken earlier conceptions of how Western organizations—especially the state and the school—grow and

elaborate organizationally. Dominant conceptions of the state emphasize its technical-material task of building national infrastructure, including its eager attempts to serve economic imperatives by boosting the supply of schooling. The institutional viewpoint, instead, highlights the state's implicit ideological influence *and* sees the school as a distinctly different organization deeply embedded in the Western polity.

Here state and school are viewed as parallel, often independent hosts of Western cultural commitments. Both are deeply institutionalized within the worldwide network of Western polities, providing fundamental signals of what a "modern polity" should look like. Rather than relying on horizontal (division of labor) or vertical (class) categories to understand social organization, institutional theorists emphasize the importance of shared and sacred commitments regarding how modern organization and modern socialization should appear to operate.[48]

Within nations, as we have seen, technical and policy actions by different institutions help explain the spread of mass schooling, including traditions and opportunity costs facing families, wealth, change in labor demand, action by the central state and local agents, and even activity by local churches. The empirical problem for world institution theorists, then, is to show that underlying this technical action is a deeper set of cultural and political commitments that are moving *across national boundaries* and historical conditions.

Initial empirical work focuses on school enrollment rates across large samples of nations, then associates enrollment gains with cross-national variation in country wealth, type of central state (capitalist or centralized), and status within the world economy or position within the earlier colonial system. Looking only at the post-World War II era, John Meyer and his colleagues found that earlier school enrollment levels were, not surprisingly, the strongest predictor of later enrollment levels. More interestingly, they also found that economic wealth and state structure did *not* help explain cross-national variation in mass school enrollment, after taking into account earlier enrollment levels.[49]

This leading research group, more recently, extended their historical data back into the nineteenth century. Their initial findings do show that enrollments have historically lagged behind in nations that were once peripheral colonies, especially within nations which were French colonies. In general, national levels of wealth and state structure still do not explain cross-national variation in school enrollment, net the influence of prior school enrollment. Meyer's inference is that mass schooling was firmly institutionalized very early on, and it spreads as a broad

social movement independent of economic and political forces. Post-colonial nations that gained independence since World War II, such as in Africa and Asia, entered the Western network rather late in historical terms. But even in these cases, school enrollments have quickly caught up with European nations and with countries which gained independence in the early nineteenth century (Latin America).[50]

This early empirical work from the world institution camp looks at only aggregate, nation-level enrollment rates—a measure indicating simple extension of the school franchise. State agencies have commonly over-reported enrollment rates, especially in post-colonial nations. In addition, children's daily rates of school attendance and levels of school quality, especially among Third World nations, vary dramatically across nations. Indeed, even rough indicators of educational quality, such as expenditures per pupil, have been found to depend upon a nation's level of wealth and on the (politically determined) size of the education sector.[51] World institution scholars, admittedly, are focusing on mass schooling as a symbolic form of membership in the modern polity, not as a technical instrument that imparts variable levels of literacy and social norms. Yet the process of (school) institution-building, and the antecedent force of other organizations, involves more than simple enrollment as the dependent outcome.

Nor have world institution theorists distinguished between eras of early nation-building versus later periods when mass schooling is broadly legitimated within the polity. Forces influencing school expansion may differ greatly, and such differences are of critical importance in understanding school expansion within young, fragile states. During early periods of nation-building (or within turbulent polities), elites appear to play a much larger role in expanding or constricting the growth of mass education. The school institution itself may have much less legitimacy, or its basic purpose may be heavily questioned. The world institution school de-emphasizes the role of elites; indeed the issue of agency is not addressed. Mass schooling is seen as a deep social movement with a bullish life of its own.[52]

Finally, world institution theorists can not really address why contemporary enrollment rates remain low, and are even declining, in many Third World nations. Here the distinction between institutional preference for formal schooling, versus the family's capacity to express actual demand over time, is particularly helpful. Nor does the theoretical perspective allow for the reintroduction of institutional competition from non-Western organizations, such as rising enrollments in Islamic and

other non-government schools where the fragile state's credibility is dissolving.

Summary: Muffling the Sound of Clashing Symbols

This growing body of empirical evidence does indicate that the state can influence a society's level of faith, and enrollments, in mass schooling. Yet the state's two environments—institutions on which it depends and institutions on which it acts—sharply condition the efficacy of political elites. Many fragile states depend exclusively, for example, on entrenched economic institutions for their resources and legitimacy. Here the state's realistic capacity to signal mass opportunity, liberal economic change, or expansion of the school franchise is quite constrained. Yet in other cases, the state may move aggressively to expand mass schooling and to reorder economic organization, as a way of looking like a modern state and as a means for broadening popular legitimacy.

In addition, world institution theorists remind us that the formal school pre-dates the secular state, and may independently act out Western ideals regarding individual development, social organization, and moral character. The fragile state commonly mobilizes all the symbols and material attributes of mass schooling. But the school itself carries certain traditions and organizational forms that are not easily manipulated. Political elites, resources permitting, can rapidly build more clay structures, call them "schools," and ship-out a young teacher to stand before the class of eager children. But states are continually baffled by the failure of budgetary, administrative, and symbolic efforts in deepening the school's actual effect on their children.

Political elites act much like a conductor who is anxiously trying to ideologically orchestrate the sounds made by mischievous musicians. The conductor convenes the orchestra, often inviting new members and socializing them to the basic rules. The task of working out dissonant notes, however, is more complex, more subtle. He can try material sanctions or incentives. Yet a sweeter, more harmonious sound is not likely accomplished through regulation. Instead the conductor must cajole the orchestra to adopt a common language, to see and feel what is sacred. Divisive sounds from the percussion section or from the wind instruments continue to shatter this cooperative harmony attempted by

the conductor—spurring the conductor to attempt fresh, gentler attempts at integrating the pluralistic tastes of each musing musician.

In many Third World societies the state apparatus is still viewed as particularistic, a foreign organization that acts with limited legitimacy. The local school, located in the village or urban shantytown, may hold greater authority. But despite parents' respect for its signal of opportunity, they simply can not afford to keep their children in school, given economic and cultural opportunity costs. Political elites must struggle to broaden their own credibility *and* to lessen intervening (local) economic and cultural commitments that limit the school's attractiveness.

The empirical literature points us toward the *conditions* under which the state can move effectively on this two-pronged agenda. Here we return to the fragile state's four basic facets (put forward in Chapter One). First, the state must position itself relative to interdependencies within an uncertain, often treacherous environment. This positioning may manifest a strong or a weak position relative to the force of other institutions, be they economic, religious, or family organizations.

Second, political actors must act upon lateral interdependencies for resources and upon downward interdependencies to incorporate local groups. Since the school may hold greater local credibility than the centralized state, the latter must respectfully pursue its rocky romance with the former. Often times, the state gains authority through its association with, and subsequent takeover of, local schools.

Third, the fragile state is energized, not by its functional harmony with static interests, but by fluid conflict between Western ideals and pre-modern (even indigenous) forms of authority, production, and socialization. Pressures to integrate trade and rationalize production, for instance, place the state in the role of building social and physical infrastructure. But this runs headlong into strong economic interests, often uncovering government elites among the stakeholders. Village leadership also looks askance at the central state's relentless efforts to penetrate the hinterlands and undercut traditional collectives and forms of authority. The state both frames these conflicts, then attempts to cool the hot ideological and material contests that emerge. This places the state in the pivotal position of the mediator with unquestioned legitimacy.

Fourth, the state's own capacity to exert influence depends upon its internal administrative, technical, and symbolic capacities. It must find effective methods for managing its interdependencies and controlling its own agencies. As a fragile organizational apparatus, the state must

develop its own internal workings. Otherwise its already brittle capacity to protect its own institutional boundaries and turf will shatter, and its ability to penetrate the geographical and civic hinterlands will erode.

We next turn to these levers and workings located within the state—the symbolic and organizational devices that political actors manipulate as they struggle to grow more modern children.

3

Winding Up Schools: The State Constructs Teachers' Roles and Tools

On the edge of Blantyre, the commercial center of Malawi, I was visiting a relatively well endowed primary school. Situated in rolling, sparsely wooded hills, students were benefiting from energetic teachers and ample numbers of textbooks. As I walked into the headmaster's office, that piercing brightness of the southern African sun bounced off his recently white-washed walls.

Bookshelves rested against one wall—holding only wafer-thin booklets. The luminescent white wall laying behind the shelves and these flat booklets was entirely visible. As it turned out, each of the school's forty-five teachers had one of these booklets to sign in and out of work each day—a simple pencil-and-paper timeclock! Consistent with the clean walls and tidy method of supervision, this headmaster had a neat schedule of classes posted on an otherwise bare bulletin board. He promptly pulled out his ledger showing which families had paid required school fees, so elegantly recorded it would put to shame any self-respecting American accountant. The headmaster seemed unconcerned that he had no books, just administrative artifacts. I asked how often he would visit each teacher's class to assess instruction. He tightened his brow, trying to attach some meaning to the question's secondary clause, and responded: "Oh, sir, about once a year."

My colleague was observing a classroom in another school. Presenting an English lesson, the teacher was marching through the script laid out within the national textbook. Earnest curriculum writers had included "questions to encourage discussion" at the back of this particular chapter. But African teachers in former British colonies rarely ask pupils questions, except perhaps to recall simple bits of information. So, this teacher simply had the pupils shout out these "questions" in unison. The teacher did not recognize that these were queries to be debated, rather than additional material simply to be recited.[1]

Chapter 4

Economic Growth in Developing Countries: The Role of Human Capital*

Eric Hanushek

The role of improved schooling has been a central part of the development strategies of most countries and of international organizations, and the data show significant improvements in school attainment across the developing world in recent decades. The policy emphasis on schooling has mirrored the emphasis of research on the role of human capital in growth and development. Yet, this emphasis has also become controversial because expansion of school attainment has not guaranteed improved economic conditions.[1] Moreover, there has been concern about the research base as questions have been raised about the interpretation of empirical growth analyses. It appears that both the policy questions and the research questions are closely related to the measurement of human capital with school attainment.

Recent evidence on the role of cognitive skills in promoting economic growth provides an explanation for the uncertain influence of human capital on growth. The impact of human capital becomes strong when the focus turns to the role of school quality. Cognitive skills of the population – rather than mere school attainment – are powerfully related to individual earnings, to the distribution of income, and most importantly to economic growth.

A change in focus to school quality does not by itself answer key questions about educational policy. Other topics of considerable current interest enter into the debates: should policy focus on basic skills or the higher achievers? Also should developing countries work to expand their higher education sector? The currently available research indicates that both basic skills and advanced skills are important, particularly for developing countries. At the same time, once consideration is made

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of cognitive skills, the variations in the amount of tertiary education have no discernible impact on economic growth for either developed or developing countries.

This chapter puts the situation of developing countries into the perspective of recent work on economic growth. When put in terms of cognitive skills, the data reveal much larger skill deficits in developing countries than generally derived from just school enrollment and attainment. The magnitude of change needed makes clear that closing the economic gap with developed countries will require major structural changes in schooling institutions.

The Measurement of Human Capital in Economic Growth

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, empirical macroeconomists turned to attempts to explain differences in growth rates around the world. Following the initial work of Barro (1991), hundreds of separate studies – typically cross-sectional regressions – pursued the question of what factors determined the very large observed differences. The widely different approaches tested a variety of economic and political explanations, although the modeling invariably incorporated some measure of human capital.

The typical development is that growth rates (g) are a direct function of human capital (H), a vector of other factors (X), and a stochastic element (ε) as in:

$$g = rH + X\beta + \varepsilon \tag{4.1}$$

where r and β are unknown parameters to be estimated. The related empirical analysis employs cross-country data in order to estimate the impact of the different factors on growth.[2]

From a very early point, a number of reviews and critiques of empirical growth modeling went to the interpretation of these studies. The critiques have focused on a variety of aspects of this work, including importantly the sensitivity of the analysis to the particular specification (e.g. Levine and Renelt 1992). They also emphasized basic identification issues and the endogeneity of many of the factors common to the modeling (e.g. Bils and Klenow 2000).

In both the analysis and the critiques, much of the attention focused on the form of the growth model estimated – including importantly the range of factors included – and the possibility of omitted factors that would bias the results. Little attention was given to measurement issues surrounding human capital. This oversight in the analysis and modeling appears to be both explicable and unfortunate.

A short review of the history of human capital modeling and measurement helps to explain the development of empirical growth analysis. Consideration of the importance of skills of the workforce has a long history in economics, and the history helps to explain a number of the issues that are pertinent to today's analysis of economic growth. Sir William Petty (1676 [1899]) assessed the economics of war and of immigration in terms of skills (and wages) of individuals. Adam Smith ([1776] 1979) incorporated the ideas in the *Wealth of Nations*, although ideas of specialization of labor dominated the ideas about human capital. Alfred Marshall (1898), however, thought the concept lacked empirical usefulness, in part because of the severe measurement issues involved.

After languishing for over a half century, the concept of human capital was resurrected by the systematic and influential work of Theodore Schultz (1961),

Gary Becker (1964), and Jacob Mincer (1970; 1974), among others. Their work spawned a rapid growth in both the theoretical and empirical application of human capital to a wide range of issues.

The contributions of Mincer were especially important in setting the course of empirical work. A central idea in the critique of early human capital ideas was that human capital was inherently an elusive concept that lacked any satisfactory measurement. Arguing that differences in earnings, for example, were caused by skill or human capital differences suggested that measurement of human capital could come from observed wage differences – an entirely tautological statement. Mincer argued that a primary motivation for schooling was developing the general skills of individuals and, therefore, that it made sense to measure human capital by the amount of schooling completed by individuals. Importantly, school attainment was something that was frequently measured and reported. Mincer followed this with analysis of how wage differentials could be significantly explained by school attainment and, in a more nuanced form, by on-the-job training investments (Mincer 1974). This insight was widely accepted and has dictated the empirical approach of a vast majority of empirical analyses in labor economics through to today. For example, the Mincer earnings function has become the generic model of wage determination and has been replicated in over 100 separate countries (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos 2004).

Owing in part to the power of the analysis of Mincer, schooling became virtually synonymous with the measurement of human capital. Thus, when growth modeling looked for a measure of human capital, it was natural to think of measures of school attainment.

The early international modeling efforts, nonetheless, confronted severe data issues. Comparable measures of school attainment across countries did not exist during the initial modeling efforts, although readily available measures of enrollment rates in schools across countries were a natural bridge to changes in school attainment over time. The early data construction by Barro and Lee (1993), however, provided the necessary data on school attainment, and the international growth work could proceed to look at the implications of human capital.[3]

In this initial growth work, human capital was simply measured by school attainment, or S. Thus, Equation (4.1) could be estimated by substituting S for human capital and estimating the growth relationship directly.[4]

Fundamentally, however, using school attainment as a measure of human capital in an international setting presents huge difficulties. In comparing human capital across countries, it is necessary to assume that the schools across diverse countries are imparting the same amount of learning per year in all countries. In other words, a year of school in Japan has the same value in terms of skills as a year of school in South Africa. In general, this is implausible.

A second problem with this measurement of human capital is that it presumes schooling is the only source of human capital and skills. Yet, a variety of policies promoted by the World Bank and other development agencies emphasize improving health and nutrition as a way of developing human capital. These efforts reflect a variety of analyses into various health issues relative to learning including micronutrients (Bloom *et al.* 2004), worms in school children (Miguel and Kremer 2004), malaria, and other issues. Others have shown a direct connection of health and learning (Gomes-Neto *et al.*1997; Bundy 2005).

This issue is in reality part of a larger issue. In a different branch of research, a vast amount of research has delved into "educational production functions." This work has considered the determinants of skills, typically measured by achievement tests.[5] Thus, this line of research has focused on how achievement, A, is related to school inputs (R), families (F), other factors such as neighborhoods, peers, or general institutional structure (Z), and a stochastic element (η):

$$A = f(R, F, Z, \eta) \tag{4.2}$$

Much of the empirical analysis of production functions has been developed within individual countries and estimated with cross-sectional data or panel data for individuals. This work has concentrated on how school resources and other factors influence student outcomes (Hanushek 2003). However, as reviewed in Hanushek and Woessmann (2011a), a substantial body of work has recently developed in an international context, where differences in schools in other factors are related to cross-country differences in achievement.

The analysis of cross-country skill differences has been made possible by the development of international assessments of math and science (see the description in Hanushek and Woessmann 2011a). These assessments provide a common metric for measuring skill differences across countries, and they provide a method for testing directly the approaches to modeling growth, as found in Equation (4.1).[6]

The fundamental idea is that skills as measured by achievement, A, can be used as a direct indicator of the human capital of a country in Equation (4.1). And, as described in Equation (4.2), schooling is just one component of the skills of individuals in different countries. Thus, unless the other influences on skills outside of school are orthogonal to the level of schooling, S, the growth model that relies on only S as a measure of human capital will not provide consistent estimates of how human capital enters into growth.

The impact of alternative measures of human capital can be seen in the long-run growth models displayed in Table 4.1. The table presents simple models of long-run growth (g) over the period 1960–2000 for the set of 50 countries with required data on growth, school attainment, and achievement (see Hanushek and Woessmann 2012a).

Table 4.1 Alternative estimates of long-run growth models

	(1)	*(2)*	*(3)*
Cognitive skills (A)		2.015	1.980
		(10.68)	*(9.12)*
Years of schooling 1960 (S)	0.369		0.026
	(3.23)		*(0.34)*
GDP per capita 1960	−0.379	−0.287	−0.302
	(4.24)	*(9.15)*	*(5.54)*
No. of countries	50	50	50
R^2 (adj.)	0.252	0.733	0.728

Source: Hanushek and Woessmann (2012a).
Note: Dependent variable: average annual growth rate in GDP per capita, 1960–2000. Regressions include a constant. *t*-statistics in parentheses.

The first column relates growth to initial levels of GDP and to human capital as measured by school attainment.[7] This basic model shows a significant relationship between school attainment and growth and explains one-quarter of the international variation in growth rates. The second column substitutes the direct measure of skills derived from international math and science tests for school attainment. Not only is there a significant relationship with growth but also this simple model now explains three-quarters of the variance in growth rates. The final column includes both measures of human capital. Importantly, once direct assessments of skills are included, school attainment is not significantly related to growth, and the coefficient on school attainment is very close to zero.

These models do not say that schooling is worthless. They do say, however, that only the portion of schooling that is directly related to skills has any impact on cross-country differences in growth. The importance of skills and conversely the unimportance of schooling that does not produce higher levels of skills have a direct bearing on human capital policies for developing countries.

Finally, the estimated impacts of cognitive skills on growth are very large. The cognitive skills measure is scaled standard deviations of achievement. Thus, one standard deviation difference in performance equates to 2% per year in average annual growth of GDP per capita. The importance of human capital indicated by these estimates combined with the deficits of developing countries (below) identifies the policy challenges.

Improvement in School Attainment of Developing Countries

With this background on human capital and growth, it is possible to assess the position of developing countries and their prospects for the future. To provide perspective, this discussion begins with the traditional measure of human capital, school attainment.

International development agencies have pursued the expansion of schooling as a primary component of development. Growing out of a 1990 international conference in Jomtien, Thailand, UNESCO and the World Bank began a movement to achieve "Education for All (EFA)"[8] While this conference developed some fairly general goals, a follow-on conference became much more specific. A central element of the goals for EFA is achieving compulsory and universal primary education in all countries. The 2000 conference included a commitment to achieving the specific goals by 2015.

The United Nations in 2000 established the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).[9] The second MDG was universal primary education, to be achieved by 2015 and consistent with EFA. To be sure, both the MDGs and the EFA goals recognize that quality is an issue, and both suggest that quality should be monitored. But, the ease of measurement of school completion and the ability to assess progress toward the specific goals imply that qualitative issues of schooling receive considerably less attention.

The data on school attainment show dramatic growth and improvement of developing countries. Table 4.2 charts the progress since 1991 in school attainment across the developed and developing world.

The developed world has maintained high levels of net enrollment at about 95%. Transitional economies have slightly improved over these two decades. But

Table 4.2 Expansion of primary education

	1991	*1999*	*2008*
Net enrollment in primary school			
Developed	96.2	96.6	95
Countries in transition	89.0	85.4 (89)[a]	91
Developing	79.5	83.2 (80)[a]	87
School expectancy			
Developed	14.2	15.7	15.9
Countries in transition	12.2	11.9	13.5
Developing	8.4	9.1	10.4

Source: UNESCO (2006, 2011).
Note: [a]Alternative estimate from UNESCO (2011) as opposed to UNESCO (2006).

developing countries have closed half of the gap of their enrollment rates compared to those in developed countries.

A similar picture holds for school expectancy. All countries have on average increased school expectancy over the period 1991–2008. And, again, the largest gains are in developing counties that on average added 2 years to their average school completion, reaching 10.4 years in 2008. Developed countries also made significant gains, moving to 15.9 years by 2008, so the closing of schooling gaps has been relatively slow. But, there is no doubt that there have been steady gains in developing countries.

These are the data typically used to judge the progress and the challenges facing the developing world. But the previous discussion of the measurement of human capital suggests that the data on school attainment – the focus of international monitoring – may be misleading without consideration of how much students are learning.

Better Measures of the Human Capital Deficit in Developing Countries

International data on skills are most readily available for developed countries, but in recent years their availability in developing countries has expanded dramatically. There are two current sources of assessments: the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), which has produced the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS) assessments and related tests;[10] and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which has produced the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessments.[11] These assessments, which were used in the skill measures that went into Table 4.2, have somewhat different test developments, age coverage, and country sampling. Nevertheless, they provide a clear indication of the skill differentials across countries that were absent from the prior discussion of school attainment.

Table 4.3 provides basic measures of math competencies for a sample of developing countries that have participated in the 2009 PISA assessment of mathematics. The PISA assessments of performance of 15 year olds categorize students in Levels 1–6. Level 1, which includes scores 0.8 standard deviations or more below the OECD mean, relates to the most rudimentary knowledge. The performance levels are described in OECD (2010): "Students proficient at Level 1 can answer questions

Table 4.3 Performance at or below Level 1 on the PISA Mathematics Assessment, 2009: selected countries (%)

	Below Level 1	*Level 1*	*Level 1 or less*
Kyrgyzstan	64.8	21.8	86.6
Panama	51.5	27.3	78.8
Indonesia	43.5	33.1	76.7
Qatar	51.1	22.7	73.8
Tunisia	43.4	30.2	73.6
Peru	47.6	25.9	73.5
Colombia	38.8	31.6	70.4
Brazil	38.1	31.0	69.1
Albania	40.5	27.2	67.7
Jordan	35.4	29.9	65.3
Argentina	37.2	26.4	63.6
Kazakhstan	29.6	29.6	59.1
Montenegro	29.6	28.8	58.4
Trinidad and Tobago	30.1	23.1	53.2
Thailand	22.1	30.4	52.5
Uruguay	22.9	24.6	47.6
Bulgaria	24.5	22.7	47.1
Romania	19.5	27.5	47.0
Azerbaijan	11.5	33.8	45.3
Serbia	17.6	22.9	40.6

Source: OECD (2010).

involving familiar contexts where all relevant information is present and the questions are clearly defined. They are able to identify information and to carry out routine procedures according to direct instructions in explicit situations. They can perform obvious actions that follow immediately from the given stimuli." At this level of knowledge, students will have a difficult time participating in a modern workforce that includes new technologies, and they will have trouble adjusting to changes in these technologies. Such students are likely to have serious difficulties using mathematics to benefit from further education and learning opportunities throughout life.

Across OECD countries, an average of 14% of students perform at Level 1, and 8% perform below Level 1. But Table 4.3 illustrates the plight of a number of countries where over 40% of the students (who are still in school at age 15) are performing at Level 1 or below in 2009.[12] Restricting the assessments to those who are still in school at 15 is also an important caveat, since many still drop out before Grade 9. If the less able students tend to be the earliest dropouts, the data on achievement of 15 year olds will overstate the performance of children in these countries.

The deficit of developing countries can be better illustrated by considering the full distribution of outcomes for countries, i.e. by merging the typical school attainment data with the achievement data from the international assessments. A graph that highlights the alternative perspectives of the traditional focus on attainment and the achievement focus can be found in Figure 4.1. In the separate panels, the pattern of school attainment – taken from recent household surveys – is combined for a subset

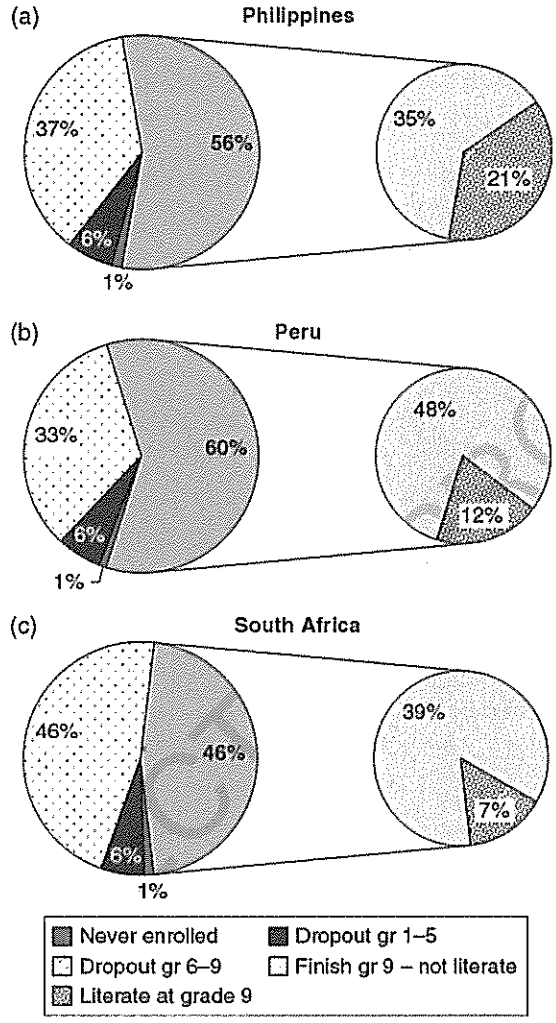

Figure 4.1 Combined completion and achievement outcomes, selected countries.

of countries with the minimal skill achievement from PISA.[13] PISA tests achievement for a representative sample of 15 year olds in each country and thus can be taken as a measure of the competencies of the subset of students in each country that completes Grade 9.

Take Peru as an example.[14] Sixty percent of students make it at least through Grade 9. Assuming that the students with the highest achievement levels complete the most schooling and applying an even looser definition of "modern literacy" – scoring within one standard deviation of the OECD average – shows that only 20% of Grade 9 completers and only 12% of the population is fully literate.[15] Comparable calculations for full literacy yield 21% in the Philippines and just 7% in South Africa. Thus, the performance in terms of school attainment may show some success and promise, but this stands in contrast to the performance in terms of internationally competitive skills. The general narrowing of the human capital deficit shown in Table 4.2 is far less evident in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.1.

International agencies have not completely ignored the possibility that there are school quality differences across countries. Indeed both EFA and the MDGs include mention of quality in their goals. But when they have developed measures of quality to parallel the attainment data, they have employed school input measures. Thus, for example, the quality measures in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2006) include: pupil/teacher ratio, percentage female teachers, percentage trained teachers, public current expenditure on primary education as a percentage of GDP, and public current expenditure per pupil on primary education. Unfortunately, the large volume of studies that have looked at educational production functions in both developed and developing countries has shown little relationship between any of these measures and student achievement.[16] As a result, the focus of much of the international attention to human capital development appears less successful than commonly available reports might suggest.

In terms of the growth analysis, one standard deviation in achievement is related to long-run growth that is two percentage points higher. While one standard deviation is a large skill difference, the a significant number of developing countries participating in the PISA 2009 assessments were more than this far behind the OECD average: Argentina, Jordan, Brazil, Colombia, Albania, Tunisia, Indonesia, Qatar, Peru, Panama, and Kyrgyzstan.

Varying Human Capital Approaches for Developing Countries

It is useful to look deeper into the relationship between human capital (as measured by achievement) and growth. To begin with, simply because of the different technologies that are being employed, the overall relationship between skills and growth may be more important to OECD countries than in developing countries. Moreover, given the more basic and less technologically advanced technologies in developing countries, there may a stronger demand for basic skills and a weaker demand for high level skills in developing countries.

To assess these, Table 4.4 expands on the modeling of long-run growth contained in Table 4.2. The first column provides a direct test about whether cognitive skills are more important in developed as opposed to developing countries. The point estimate on the interaction of cognitive skills and OECD countries is slightly negative – indicating that skills are *more* important in developing countries. Nonetheless, the differences are not statistically significant.

The previous growth models have uniformly considered just country-average skills. But, particularly in developing countries there is often a large variance in performance with some very high performers and many very low performers (see Hanushek and Woessmann 2008). In fact, given resource constraints, many developing countries frequently feel it is necessary to make decisions about whether to spread resources broadly across their population to provide as great a coverage as possible for its schools or to concentrate resources on those students identified as the best.

To judge the efficacy of these alternative strategies, it is possible to measure the proportion of high performers and the proportion with basic literacy as assessed by the cognitive skills tests.[17] Column (2) of Table 4.4 provides an estimate of the impact on long-run growth of having a broad basic education versus having more high

Table 4.4 Extensions of basic models for developing countries

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Cognitive skills	1.978			1.923
	(7.98)			*(9.12)*
Share of students reaching basic literacy		2.644	2.146	
		(3.51)	*(2.58)*	
Share of top-performing students		12.602	16.536	
		(4.35)	*(4.90)*	
OECD	0.859		–0.659	
	(0.32)		*(0.44)*	
OECD × cognitive skills	–0.203			
	(0.36)			
OECD × basic literacy			2.074	
			(0.94)	
OECD × top-performing			–13.422	
			(2.08)	
Years of non-tertiary schooling				0.076
				(0.94)
Years of tertiary schooling				0.198
				(0.16)
Initial years of schooling	0.080	0.066	0.070	
	(1.07)	*(0.87)*	*(0.94)*	
Initial GDP per capita	–0.313	–0.305	–0.317	–0.325
	(5.61)	*(6.43)*	*(5.63)*	*(6.81)*
No. of countries	50	50	50	50
F (OECD and interaction)	0.10		1.62	
R^2 (adj.)	0.723	0.724	0.734	0.728

Source: Hanushek and Woessmann (2011b).

Note: Dependent variable: average annual growth rate in GDP per capita, 1960–2000. Regressions include a constant. *t*-statistics in parentheses. Basic literacy is a score of 400 or above on the PISA scale, which is one standard deviation below the OECD mean. Top performing is a score of 600 or above on the PISA scale, which is one standard deviation above the OECD mean.

achievers. Importantly, both broad basic skills ("education for all" in terms of achievement) and high achievers have a separate and statistically significant impact on long term growth. Interestingly, column (3), which allows for different impacts in the OECD and non-OECD countries, indicates that high performers are more important for growth in developing countries than in the OECD countries. This somewhat surprising result suggests the importance of high skills for adapting more advanced technologies to developing countries, particularly when the overall proportion of high performers is small.

These estimates of the varied impact of basic literacy and of top performers, while suggestive, do not answer the overall policy question about where to invest resources. To address that question, it is necessary to know more about the relative costs of producing more basic and more high performers. In fact, no analysis is available to describe the costs of producing varying amounts of skills.

An additional issue about the level of investment in developing countries revolves around the development of tertiary education. A variety of developing countries

have contemplated expanding their systems of higher education, both in terms of broad access institutions (generally two-year colleges) and higher level institutions. Column (4) provides estimates of the separate impact of tertiary education on long-run growth. Consistent with the prior analysis, once the level of cognitive skills is considered, years of tertiary schooling – like years of earlier schooling – in the population has no independent effect on growth. This result also holds for just developing countries or for just OECD countries (not shown).[18]

Finally, the form of education institutions is an issue that has not been adequately addressed, particularly for developing countries. A common issue is how much of education should be general in nature and how much should be vocational. Vocational education is designed to provide students with the specific job-related skills that will allow them to move easily into employment. This type of education appears very attractive when there are large youth unemployment problems as is the case in many developing countries. But, there may well be a trade-off with vocational education. If students have a limited set of skills, even if very appropriate for today's jobs, they might find that they are less adaptable to new technologies that are introduced.[19] Such an issue is particularly important for developing countries that frequently experience very rapid growth and significant changes in production technologies.

Some evidence in developing countries suggests that the trade-off of easy labor market entry versus potential disadvantages later in the life cycle because of less adaptability can be significant (Hanushek and Woessmann 2013). Unfortunately, this evidence comes just from developed countries. No similar analysis exists for developing countries, and it is unclear whether the trade-off holds across different development levels.

Issues of Causation

An analytical concern is that the growth relationships discussed do not measure causal influences but instead reflect reverse causation, omitted variables, cultural differences, and the like. This concern has been central to the interpretation of much of the prior work in empirical growth analysis.

An obvious issue is that countries that grow faster have the resources to invest in schools so that growth could cause higher scores. However, the lack of relationship across countries in the amount spent on schools and the observed test scores that has been generally found provides evidence against this (Hanushek and Woessmann 2011a). Moreover, a variety of sensitivity analyses show the stability of these results when the estimated models come from varying country and time samples, varying specific measures of cognitive skills, and alternative other factors that might affect growth (Hanushek and Woessmann 2012a). Finally, other work has considered a series of analyses aimed at eliminating many of the other natural concerns about the identification of the causal impacts of cognitive skills (Hanushek and Woessmann 2012a).[20]

Each of the analyses points to the plausibility of a causal interpretation of the basic models. Nonetheless, with our limited international variations, it is difficult to demonstrate identification conclusively. But, even if the true causal impact of cognitive skills is less than suggested in Table 4.1, the overall finding of the importance of such skills is unlikely to be overturned.

Some Conclusions

Much of the motivation for human capital policies in developing countries is the possibility of providing economic growth that will raise the levels of incomes in these countries. The focus on alleviating poverty in developing countries relates directly to economic growth because of the realization that simply redistributing incomes and resources will not lead to long-run solutions to poverty.

The direct analysis of growth in developing countries adds a much more specific focus than has existed in much of the current policy discussions. Differences in economic growth across countries are closely related to cognitive skills as measured by achievement on international assessments of mathematics and science. In fact, once cognitive skills are incorporated into empirical growth models, school attainment has no independent impact on growth.

The general focus on universal school attainment underlying the campaigns of EFA and the MDGs, while seemingly reasonable and important, have not put the developing countries in a good position for growth. Specifically, while emphasizing school attainment – a readily available quantitative measure – they have not ensured that the quality of schools has had a commensurate improvement. The data on improvements in school attainment have been impressive, but the very large gaps in achievement lead to a different interpretation of progress.

In terms of cognitive skills, little closing of the gaps between developed and developing countries has occurred.[21] A surprisingly large proportion of students completing nine years of schooling is uncompetitive in terms of international skill levels.

A focus on quality does, however, complicate decision-making. It appears to be generally easier to understand how to expand access than to improve quality. Simple approaches to improving quality have not proved very effective. Past research has indicated that simply providing more resources to schools is generally ineffective.[22] Political problems may also accompany an emphasis on quality. For any given amount of funds, if resources are focused on a smaller set of schools in order to improve quality, it implies that less access to schooling can be provided.

Certainly, in order to provide quality schooling, there must be both infrastructure and access. However, the evidence from the growth analysis indicates that providing schools that fail to teach basic skills does no good. Therefore, slowing the pace of the provision of schools to a rate that also permits the development of quality schools appears to be a good solution.

One other element enters into the calculations. The rapid expansion of new digital technologies – both as blended learning with teachers and technology and as stand-alone approaches – suggests that many of the past decisions both on access and on quality might rapidly change.[23] The potential in developing countries appears especially large.

Acknowledgements

This analysis is closely related to work on international growth and development done jointly with Ludger Woessmann. Helpful comments were received from Bruce Chapman and the participants at the ANU-DPU International Conference on the Economics of Education Policy.

Notes

1 See, for example, Easterly (2001) or Pritchett (2006).
2 Detailed discussion of this growth model and of variants of it can be found in Hanushek and Woessmann (2008).
3 There were some concerns about accuracy of the data series, leading to alternative developments (Cohen and Soto 2007) and to further refinements by Barro and Lee (2010).
4 A variety of different issues have consumed much of the empirical growth analysis. At the top of the list is whether Equation (4.1) should be modeled in the form of growth rates of income as the dependent variable, or whether it should model the level of income. The former is generally identified as endogenous growth models (e.g., Romer 1990), while the latter is typically thought of as a neoclassical growth model (e.g. Mankiw *et al.* 1992). The distinction has received a substantial amount of theoretical attention, although little empirical work has attempted to provide evidence on the specific form (see Hanushek and Woessmann 2008).
5 See, for example, the general discussion in Hanushek (2002).
6 This approach to modeling growth as a function of international assessments of skill differences was introduced in Hanushek and Kimko (2000). It was extended in Hanushek and Woessmann (2008) and a variety of other analyses identified there.
7 The inclusion of initial income levels for countries is quite standard in this literature. The typical interpretation is that this permits "catch-up" growth, reflecting the fact that countries starting behind can grow rapidly simply by copying the existing technologies in other countries while more advanced countries must develop new technologies. Estimating models in this form permits some assessment of the differences between the endogenous and neo-classical growth models discussed previously (see Hanushek and Woessmann 2011b).
8 See the history and framework at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_For_All (accessed November 4, 2015).
9 See the history and framework at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Millennium_Development_Goals (accessed November 4, 2015).
10 The IEA tests were the first such assessments, begun with the First International Math Study (FIMS) in 1964 and continuing through the most recent Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2007.
11 PISA started in 2000 and has continued at three-year intervals through 2009. It has expanded country coverage significantly over time.
12 Note that these are not all of the developing countries. These are the countries that both participated in PISA 2009 and had such substantial numbers performing at the bottom levels. The vast majority of developing countries have never participated in the PISA examinations. Although a somewhat larger number of developing countries have participated in the TIMSS assessments, their performance relative to developed countries is not noticeably better.
13 See the description in Hanushek and Woessmann (2008). These figures rely on household surveys generally done around 2000; the achievement data use the closest international assessment data.
14 Peru is actually illustrative of a much larger problem in Latin America where achievement has lagged significantly behind the expansion of school attainment. This lag in fact can fully explain why growth rates in Latin American countries have been disappointingly small (Hanushek and Woessmann 2012b).
15 One standard deviation away from the OECD average on PISA tests is 400 points. The top of the Level 1 range illustrated previously was 420 points in mathematics in 2009.
16 The evidence for developed countries is summarized in Hanushek (2003). For developing countries, similar evidence is found in Hanushek (1995) and Glewwe *et al.* (2013). The direct cross-country studies are analyzed in Hanushek and Woessmann (2011a).
17 Basic literacy for this purpose is a score one standard deviation below the OECD mean. Top performing is a score one standard deviation above the OECD mean.

18 This result, particularly for developed countries, is somewhat surprising. A variety of models such as those of Vandenbussche *et al.* (2006) or Aghion and Howitt (2009) suggest that tertiary education is particularly important for countries near the technological frontier where growth requires new inventions and innovations.

19 In a series of macro models of employer adoption of new technologies, Krueger and Kumar (2004a; 2004b) suggest that relying on more vocational training may explain the lower growth in Europe as opposed to the USA.

20 To rule out simple reverse causation, Hanushek and Woessmann (2012a) separate the timing of the analysis by estimating the effect of scores on tests conducted until the early 1980s on economic growth in 1980–2000, finding an even larger effect. Three further direct tests of causality were also devised to rule out certain alternative explanations based on unobserved country-specific cultures and institutions confirm the results. The first one considers the earnings of immigrants to the USA and finds that the international test scores for their home country significantly explain US earnings but only for those educated in their home country and not for those educated in the USA. A second analysis takes out level considerations and shows that changes in test scores over time are systematically related to changes in growth rates over time. A third causality analysis uses institutional features of school systems as instrumental variables for test performance, thereby employing only that part of the variation in test outcomes emanating from such country differences as use of central exams, decentralized decision-making, and the share of privately operated schools. These results support a causal interpretation and also suggest that schooling can be a policy instrument contributing to economic outcomes.

21 While some developing countries have made significant gains in achievement – e.g. Latvia, Chile, and Brazil – there is little overall tendency for developing countries to gain more than developed countries on international assessments (Hanushek *et al.* 2012).

22 Hanushek (1995), Hanushek and Woessmann (2011a), Glewwe *et al.* (2013).

23 Christensen *et al.* (2008).

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The global/local nexus in comparative policy studies: analysing the triple bonus system in Mongolia over time

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The article analyses a phenomenon that has accompanied teacher salary reform in Mongolia: the import of two global education policies that were nearly identical to the already existing local bonus system (*olympiads*). To make sense of an import that appears superfluous, the author analyses the reception and translation of the triple bonus system over time. The interpretive framework draws on system theory and pays attention to: (1) developments within a system or a context that explain the likelihood of policy borrowing; (2) change processes over time that result from interactions within a system as well as the system with its environment; and (3) periods of convergence and divergence that occur over the lifespan of a policy. The author finds that research on policy borrowing and lending has greatly contributed to better understanding the transnational flows of educational reforms. In contrast to spatial analyses, the time dimension of the global/local nexus is neither sufficiently studied nor convincingly interpreted. The author draws attention to the functional differentiation that occurred within the triple bonus system, and argues for a comparative policy studies perspective that acknowledges the salutary effects of policy borrowing for coalition building and change.

This special issue deals with the common observation that over the past few decades particular features of education systems worldwide have become increasingly similar. The example I investigate is teacher salary structure or, more specifically, a particular component of the salary structure that has become globalised: performance pay. Performance-based payments or bonuses are among the reforms that global actors have been actively promoting in different parts of the world, including in Mongolia. The question, however, is which aspects of these initiatives have converged – the idea, the policy, or the practice? Taking into account the global/local nexus, how do we explain the differences between ideological, regulatory, and practical aspects of the reform? I will make the case in this article that when analysing the global/local nexus of an education policy one should not just focus on the spatial dimension (from where to where a policy travelled), but also on the time dimension (at which stage of a policy are references to reforms from elsewhere, 'best practices', or international standards, made).

Performance-based bonuses, in the form of so-called *olympiads* or competitions, have existed in Mongolia since the communist period. During the first years of the new millennium two additional performance payments were introduced with funding from the Asian Development Bank. Contrary to what one might expect, the two additional types of bonuses – one based on an outcomes contract and another based

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on a quarterly performance evaluation – did not lead to a hybridisation or modification of the existing bonus programme. The two new bonuses were simply added to the existing one, resulting in a triple bonus system that briefly offered three types of performance payments (see Nóvoa and Lawn 2002). Over the past decade, however, the bonus system has evolved such that only the pre-existing local system actually qualifies as a bonus, i.e. is actually a payment that is paid selectively based on performance criteria. Meanwhile, one of the new bonuses (quarterly performance payments) now functions as a thirteenth monthly salary because it is distributed to almost every teacher. The other new bonus system (based on the outcomes-based education contract) has become a tool to make contractual labour agreements with teachers and reward, sanction, or fire them.

Robert Cowen (2009) coined the phrase 'as it moves, it morphs' to summarise the changing features of global education policies which travel from one country to the next. This insight also applies to global reforms that have been borrowed. Two, five, or ten years after the policy is implemented it morphs into several localised versions. As a result, coalition building among groups with divergent interests that the act of policy borrowing tends to enable (see Steiner-Khamsi 2010) is short-lived. Soon after the adoption of a global education policy local interest groups pursue independent interests, pulling in different directions. Thus the discursive power of a global education policy dissipates at the very moment it is imported.

Using the triple bonus system in Mongolia as a case study I will examine whether there is a pattern to the reception and translation of the global education policies that tells us something about how and why they change over time. Using the terms 'reception' and 'translation' – which capture the selective borrowing and local adaptation processes that accompany policy import – I will specify which aspects of the reform were borrowed and how they were implemented. These two notions serve as my analytical tool for deconstructing the global/local nexus and exploring a vital question for comparative policy studies. As with most other social phenomena, the question of convergence gains complexity with each new scale and layer of analysis.

1. The case: the triple bonus system in Mongolia

Performance-based payment represents one of several global education policies that development banks regularly advocate as 'best practice' (see Bruns, Filmer and Patrinos 2011, ch. 4) even though evidence in developing countries, including in Mongolia, suggests that it does not work as intended.

1.1. *Historical context*

In Mongolia the idea of ongoing performance evaluation has been criticised as arbitrary, imprecise, and the cause of needless paperwork. At first glance the bonus system appears as yet another travelling reform that was borrowed haphazardly and poorly implemented. Upon closer examination, however, we notice a specific pattern. There is a local logic to what aspects of the bonus system were borrowed, and how they were implemented to fit different contexts. The current practice may be broadly summarised as follows: principals and education managers (deputy school principals) undermine the idea of performance-based payment by dividing the budget for bonuses according to the number of teachers employed at the school and assigning equal payments to each. Occasionally a school chooses to single out a

teacher and withhold payment or, more commonly, assigns a lower payment. Because teachers do not trust the evaluations of school administrators, however, the bonus system has fuelled the perception that principals are corrupt and exhibit favouritism. This results in renewed pressure to divide bonuses evenly.

Naturally there are historical reasons for why practitioners and policy makers in Mongolia 'bought' the idea that the newly imported performance-based payments were the (global) solution to the (local) problem of low teacher salary. During communist times living costs were low, employment universal, and pensions high. Teachers were able to live comfortably with their income. Soon after the revolutionary changes of the early 1990s, an economic crisis created an unprecedented high rate of unemployment, poverty, and social inequality. The gap between public and private jobs began to widen, and within a few years public sector salaries failed to keep up with salaries paid by the private sector to equally or less-qualified professionals. A series of labour strikes in the mid-1990s made public sector salaries – teacher salaries in particular – a reform priority. Henceforth, the government raised teacher salaries every couple of years, typically either before (to win votes) or after (to fulfil promises) elections. After years of incremental reform, a major initiative in 2007 revamped the structure of teacher salaries. The slow change which took place between 1995 and 2006 – including small, periodic raises, the expansion of salary supplements, and the two new quasi-performance-based bonuses – were merely patchwork compared to the fundamental structural reform of 2007. In the school year 2010/11 the average base salary of a teacher was three times higher than it was in 2006/07. The average monthly base salary now is 324,292 MNT, or US$270. In relative terms teacher salary is high. Only 5.5% of the population earns 400,000 MNT or more per-month, which means that teacher salary is now approximately in the top 5–10 percentile among the working population (UNICEF Mongolia 2011).

1.2. *A methodological note*

Before 2007 the low income of teachers – and also medical doctors – was a popular cause for complaint. Given that improving teacher salaries had been an important public issue for over 20 years, it is not surprising that international donors funded analytical work to understand the challenges of reform. In this work I draw on three teacher salary studies in which I participated during the period 2005–2011. Each of them enabled me to understand how the triple bonus system evolved over time and why policy actors selectively adopted elements from existing and imported practices. A few words on the context and the methodologies of the three studies may be useful here to localise policy import in the greater context of teacher work conditions in Mongolia.

The first study, *Teachers as Parents*, was funded by the Open Society Institute (Steiner-Khamsi, Tümendemberel and Steiner 2005, cited in Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe 2006). It was a small project that had a big impact because it made the financial hardship of Mongolian teachers visible. We developed a novel methodological approach to obtaining answers concerning the various sources of income that teachers had to rely on in order to make a living. We interviewed 44 teachers located in four schools in two provinces, and asked them how they, despite their low salary, manage to pay tuition for their own children. Invariably the responses focused on personal debt, never-ending salary loans, and teachers' creativity in securing additional income not only from private tutoring, but also cattle breeding, farming, and selling

goods. In one memorable interview a middle-aged female teacher explained through tears how trapped she felt financially: 'I am educating other people's children and yet I do not have the means to send my own children to university'.

The second research project was a World Bank funded study, *Public Expenditure Tracking Survey* (PETS; World Bank 2006), which incorporated design elements used in PETS studies from other countries. It drew on a representative sample of schools in Mongolia and analysed financial flow and leakages at the school level (118 schools), district level, provincial level, and national level, as well as across all four levels of the educational system. In an attempt to evaluate per-capita financing we also compared the salaries of teachers who worked in small schools, typically located in rural areas, with those in large urban or semi-urban schools. This study too had a huge policy impact. Most shocking to the general public was the finding that teachers in urban and semi-urban schools did not mind teaching double shifts, or even additional hours after school to boost their low income. On the contrary, teachers complained if they were not able to take on additional hours. In rural schools, however, the student population was typically too small to enable teachers to take on additional hours. As a result, the salary of teachers in rural schools depended in large part (86.5%) on their low base salary. Meanwhile only slightly more than half of the total income of teachers in urban and semi-urban schools originated from their base salary. The remaining 48% came mainly from teaching additional hours as well as additional salary supplements. The fact that, depending on the location of residence, there was a vast salary difference for the same type of public servant, was appalling to the people and the politicians of Mongolia. The PETS study triggered the fundamental salary reform of 2007 and replaced the system in which teachers were paid based on actual teaching load, with a workload system of 40 hours per week.

The third and most recent study, the UNICEF *Study on Teachers* carried out for UNICEF Mongolia (UNICEF Mongolia 2011), evaluated the 2007 teacher salary reform in terms of equity and teacher deployment. It focused particularly on the impact upon schools in remote, rural locations where few people wanted to teach. Two findings were unexpected: one, there were three different bonuses existing in parallel; two, as mentioned above, almost every teacher was given one of the three bonuses. This, of course, defeated the purpose of selective, performance-based incentive payments. The UNICEF study identified the following three parallel bonus systems:

- bonuses for '*olympiads*' or competitions, a legacy of the communist period;
- bonuses for outcomes-based education [in Mongolian: *ur dungiin geree*], introduced with funding from ADB in 2003 as part of the larger results-based management public sector reform; and
- quarterly performance bonuses, introduced by the Government of Mongolia in 2005 to make public sector salaries more compatible with private sector salaries.

The projects outlined above enabled me to carry out empirical research in Mongolia and compare the varied policy agendas of global actors.

Having sketched the contextual and methodological background, I will now examine the global/local nexus within the framework of policy borrowing and lending research. The intellectual preoccupation with travelling ideas, innovations, reforms or, more specifically, global education policy, has traditionally been anchored in two key concepts: reception and translation. Reception examines the initial contact

with the global education policy at the local level and focuses on the selection process. Translation addresses the local adaptation of the global education policy.

2. The reception of the global education policy

Typical research questions on reception include why local actors select a particular policy. Which problem was it meant, or did it pretend, to resolve? What was the 'selling point' of the policy that resonated or appealed to local policy actors? Why, as Antoni Verger has asked, did they 'buy' it (Verger 2011)?

There has been an exponential growth in the number of studies dealing with education and globalisation. Besides this special issue at least two other edited volumes were published in 2012 addressing issues of reception, selective policy borrowing, and cross-national policy attraction (see Steiner-Khamsi and Waldow 2012; Verger, Novelli and Altinyelken 2012). A review of several case studies on policy borrowing and lending suggests that two features – centrality and contestation – must be fulfilled for a global education policy to resonate in a particular (local) context. The latter may also be labelled protracted policy conflict. In my assessment, teacher salaries lend themselves to the former, i.e. the study of convergence, because they represent a policy domain that actors consider central even if they disagree on solutions. It is better for analysing reception than, for example, student-centred teaching, which is (at least at the discursive level), universally accepted. Arguably, teachers constitute the greatest number of public servants in any given system. In developing countries teacher salaries account for 80–90% of the national education budget, yet there is disagreement among the policy actors as to what the level of compensation and structure of the salary should be.

2.1. *The centrality of the policy domain*

In previous publications I have used the octopus as a metaphor to describe cross-national policy attraction, resonance, and reception. Local actors reach out and grab the arm of the octopus that is closest to their particular policy agenda, and attach (local) meaning to a (global) policy. It is essential to discuss why teacher salary reform has been so central to so many policy actors and understand how each of them defines the (local) 'problem' surrounding teacher salaries differently. This will enable us to then explain how 'externalisation', in this case, import of the outcomes-based education bonus system, was seen as a compromise and functioned as a coalition builder for various policy actors.

The policy actors – which, for purposes of illustration, I will define as the Teachers Union, parents associations, the state, international donors, and teachers themselves – have advocated for a teacher salary reform for a variety of reasons. For this reason they were receptive to reform, especially if it came with external funding and a quasi-international stamp of approval.

For the first group of policy actors, the Teachers Union, salary-related issues are a top priority. Almost all teachers in Mongolia are unionised and their membership fee is directly deducted from their salary. Post-communist countries faced two economic challenges following the transition period in the early 1990s. One, how to close the ever-widening income gap between the public and the (new) private sector; and two, how to increase the salaries of public servants without setting off inflation. Because of the large size of the workforce in the public sector, every salary increase for state employees instantly prompted higher prices in consumer goods and services, thereby

negating the gains that such an increase would have entailed.[1] The Teachers Union was skilful in negotiating teacher-specific salary supplements that enabled a salary increase for teachers only.

Prior to the 2007 Teacher Salary Reform teachers were compensated for a host of activities that were considered supplemental to the main task of teaching a subject (see World Bank 2006). Thus, supplements included serving as class teacher, grading student notebooks, managing a school laboratory (Mongolian: *kabinet*), subscribing to a newsletter, and a host of other things. The structure of teacher salary became increasingly fragmented and the income of teachers was, due to frequent and arbitrary supplement deductions (made by education managers and school principals), opaque and unpredictable. Concurrent with the economic boom fuelled by the emerging mining industry in 2006, the Teachers Union favoured a comprehensive teacher salary reform that would not only raise the nominal value, but also simplify the teacher salary structure. It was expected that a more transparent composition of teacher income would make teachers less vulnerable to external evaluations and increase their job satisfaction.

The second group of policy actors consists of parents and their representatives in schools, communities and local politics. Parents suffer when teachers are underpaid because they are typically the ones who compensate for low teacher salaries. Parents are coerced into paying additional fees, giving gifts, taking private tutoring lessons, and providing a host of other material and immaterial goods and services in exchange for the instruction of their children. Prior to the 2007 reform which integrated the various salary supplements and institutionalised the various bonus payments, students and parents in rural schools had to endure substitute teachers who taught subjects for which they had no training. Russian teachers taught English, biology teachers taught maths, etc., which obviously had a detrimental effect on the quality of instruction. This phenomenon was exacerbated by the shortage of teachers in remote rural areas that schools tried to resolve by allocating additional teaching hours to the existing teaching staff. The popular practice of 'redistribution of hours' helped teachers to boost their salary, but the hours they took were, more often than not, in subjects for which they had no training.

For the state, the teaching workforce is the single largest political constituency to which it both has direct access and depends upon. Teachers vote, and through their daily work directly influence the mass of future citizens. It is common for schools to be transformed into polling stations and teachers charged with counting the votes. The latter fuels the perception in some countries that teachers are cheaters rather than honest pedagogues. Furthermore in many countries, including in Mongolia, it is a political rather than a professional mandate to serve as school director. Schools are, more so perhaps in small villages than in large cities, the centre of social and cultural life. A labour strike by teachers would not only be a major threat to students and parents, but also to politicians and the local community.

The fourth group of policy actors – international donors – pursue a wide array of agendas. Mongolia is in the privileged position of having relatively few donors who, for the most part, divide, rather than replicate, their work. Each donor focuses on specific aspects of educational reform. In instances when they provide grants or loans for the same reforms, donors naturally tend to hold opposing views and compete with each other for the patronage of government and civil society organisations. The largest donor in the Mongolian education sector is the Asian Development Bank (ADB). ADB actively promoted performance pay and an outcomes-based bonus system in the early years of the previous decade as part of a broader reform that targeted

a leaner, more efficient government. The public sector management and finance reform was funded, in December 1999, by a US$25 million loan from ADB. A second, for US $15.5 million, granted in October 2003, targeted accountability and efficiency in health, education, social welfare, and labour.

In the late 1990s New Zealand became the destination for policy pilgrimage. Every member of the Mongolian parliament and all senior-level staff at the ministries were sent on study tours to New Zealand. By the time all of this was taking place, however, critical observers had already published and widely disseminated their doubts about whether New Zealand's style of public management was transferrable to developing countries. The idea of replacing interpersonal agreements, nepotism, and bribes with annual contracts that clearly spell out expected outcomes was appealing on paper, but hardly anyone believed that it would work in practice. Nevertheless, in 2003, the Ministry of Education embarked, with funding and technical assistance from ADB, on the experiment and published a 319-page handbook on outcomes-based education (OBE) with numerous examples of student benchmarks and teacher scorecards (MOECS 2003). Over the next few years, when the critical voices and doubts about the applicability and the evaluation criteria of the outcomes-based bonus system became louder, the Ministry of Education downplayed the OBE bonus system and ceased rigorously enforcing its implementation. Each school was charged with the task of developing its own evaluation roster based on a few general guidelines and examples that the Ministry of Education provided. More importantly, the ministry charged each school with funding bonuses for high-performing teachers and employees from their own budgets. The moment the Ministry of Finance excluded the OBE bonus payments from the national education budget the reform lost its lustre. Schools haphazardly filled out contracts and, subject to availability of unused school funds at the end of the year, either redistributed the money among all teachers or chose to reward a few at the expense of the rest.

The Asian Development Bank is not alone in disseminating its own reform priorities by providing technical assistance with funding for implementation. Every other international donor in Mongolia is equally mission-driven, presenting reform priorities as 'best practices' and insisting that their practices correspond to 'international standards'. I will confine myself to briefly sketching the teacher-specific reform priorities of two of the three organisations for which I carried out the three studies referred to above. I do not include UNICEF because they only recently acknowledged teachers as an important target group for their interventions.[2] The mission of the Open Society Institute is to promote critical thinking and debate skills among children and youth. These goals were received positively in Mongolia due to the fact that the previously well-funded in-service training system had almost completely collapsed. However the Open Society also encountered cultural and structural barriers. As mentioned, teachers receive supplementary payments for grading student notebooks, and are also rewarded for focusing on a few best-performers in class. A teacher receives a bonus for every student who ranks first, second, or third in an *olympiad.* For the Open Society Institute, not only a reform of the salary structure, but also a revision of the bonus system which rewarded teachers for working with *all* students, and not only with high performers, was key to sustaining their efforts in student-centred teaching. The World Bank, in turn, is driven as a matter of principle by a concern for cost effectiveness and advocates cuts in public spending in Mongolia, particularly in the education and the social sector. Understanding financial leakages in the system, including differences between the entitled, actual, and disbursed teacher salary, was of the greatest importance to the

World Bank. A more transparent salary structure and performance-based payments in the form of bonuses matched their mission. Thus the bonus system appealed to these three important donors – the Asian Development Bank, the Open Society Institute, and the World Bank – for completely different reasons.

The fifth group of policy actors consisted of the beneficiaries themselves – teachers – and related to their identity as professionals. Teacher salary is directly linked to recruitment, motivation, and retention in the profession. Teacher recruitment has been a big concern in Mongolia. Teacher education programmes focus on students who performed poorly on school exit and university entrance exams. It is a negative selection criterion topped with a bad incentive: the chances of receiving a scholarship are much higher for teacher education studies than for any other university degree programme.[3] Structural problems related to low teaching salary surfaced at each phase of recruitment, including admission to teacher education studies, completion, transition into the profession, and retention. Nowadays the university–work transition rate is below average in teacher education studies, primarily because there is a surplus of graduates who cannot find employment. Only 23.4% of teacher education graduates work as teachers (UNICEF Mongolia 2011).

The categorisation of policy agendas along five types of policy actors is meant to illustrate that teacher salary reform was identified as a central, even pressing, policy domain by all relevant actors. In terms of policy theory this means that the threshold for coalition building was low. Different from other reform areas in which one policy advocacy group needs to first (often with the help of low ranking in international comparative studies) orchestrate a crisis scenario to convince other groups to join forces for reform, teacher salary in Mongolia was universally seen as being in urgent need of repair. The different stakeholders shared the general need or the idea for teacher reform. Moreover, this section demonstrated that the ADB-funded reforms on results-based management resonated with the various policy actors for different reasons. As the next section demonstrates, these divergent interests resurface with greater intensity at the next stage when a policy is actually formulated and designed.

2.2. *The contestation of the policy domain*

Even though teacher salary was considered a policy domain in urgent need of reform there was disagreement on how to change it. I will confine the spectrum of opinions to three areas:

- collective versus individual rewards;
- external control versus professional ethos; and
- excellence versus democracy.

Collective versus individual rewards

Despite general agreement that the salary was too low, the question of whether all or only well-performing teachers should benefit from a substantial salary raise remained. For example, 'modern' Mongolians found the social redistribution practices – commonly associated with the communist past – backward, and believed that individuals rather than the collective should be rewarded. They sided with the economists at the Ministry of Finance, IMF, and development banks, who in the early years of the

millennium (before the economic boom) found the bonus system to be the only way of solving the salary crisis.

External control versus professional ethos

Teacher accountability is a global buzzword. In Mongolia, teacher accountability and control have been pillars of the educational system to the point where teachers are humiliated. Control mechanisms are so panoptical that, for example, the salary supplement for grading student notebooks is not paid in full unless the education manager confirms that there are handwritten notes from the teacher in each student's notebook. To this day many schools specify that the colour of the notes must be red to make it easier for education managers to control teachers. Again, segments of the population made the 'modernisation' argument, demanding more intrinsic control and fewer punitive measures. The Mongolian State University of Education took the lead in strengthening the code of conduct, labelled 'professional ethos', in Mongolia. The university developed teacher standards as well as an ethical code for teachers.

Meanwhile the outcomes-based contracts appeal to the honesty of teachers. Teachers are supposed to evaluate their own performance while education managers merely review the contracts. In the context of a controlling work environment the idea of self-evaluation signalled a quantum leap that raised many eyebrows. Whether self-evaluation in effect replaced, either partially or completely, the external evaluation carried out by education managers is a different question. There is serious doubt that it did. That every single education manager in the UNICEF *Study on Teachers* (UNICEF Mongolia 2011) complained about the excessive workload that the implementation of the outcomes-based bonus system required suggests that, in practice, the self-evaluation (by teachers) carried little weight as compared to the external evaluation (by education managers). Nevertheless there was, in principle, a broad alliance among practitioners for a bonus system in which teachers are no longer micromanaged and sanctioned for wrong-doings. Rather, many believed that teachers should be rewarded for deeds like preparing their lessons well, looking after the equipment in the classroom, enrolling in professional development classes, dressing properly, helping the school director with administrative tasks and also – in the long list of criteria of the outcomes-based education contracts – improving the learning outcomes of their students (see Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe 2006).

Excellence versus democracy

The *olympiads* are extremely popular and winning them constitutes the most important criteria for promotion. If a teacher wins an *olympiad* for a particular subject matter all other requirements (leadership skills, ethics, grades of students) become inconsequential. Furthermore, if the teacher wins a high-level *olympiad* (provincial or national level), she or he is directly promoted to higher ranking positions such as lead teacher or methodologist. Interestingly, the teacher also receives a bonus if their student wins at one of these competitions, the assumption being that the teacher must have supported and promoted the award-winning student, and should be rewarded accordingly. It is important to bear in mind that these promotion criteria, and with them the performance-based salary scheme, have been in place since the 1970s, long before OBE reforms were being pushed. The competitions were conducted at each administrative level – municipal, district, provincial, and national – leading to a whole host of awards and insignia.

The *olympiads* offer themselves as opportunities for teachers to travel and meet their peers from other schools. However critics charge that *olympiads* encourage teachers to focus on only a few promising students, coaching them for the competitions, while neglecting the rest of the students in the class. In other words, a practice that began during the socialist era is criticised as elitist – geared solely towards gifted students – in the post-socialist period. During communist times, *olympiads* were celebrated for encouraging 'socialist competition' in the service of the common good. The idea was that only the very best would lead; but what constitutes the common good nowadays? As with the previously listed controversies, the arguments against *olympiads* are framed in terms of modernisation: in a modern democracy all students, rather than simply a few, should be mentored for excellence. According to this argument the only teachers who should be rewarded are those that have helped to raise the performance of the entire class, as opposed to just a few high-performing students. In the end, however, both bonus systems were established side by side: the traditional bonus system, based on *olympiads* and targeting a small group of high-performing students, and a bonus system based on the OBE contract that supposedly rewarded teachers who improved all students' learning achievements in a class.

To sum up the outcome of the controversies surrounding payments for good performance: at first glance it seems that the 'modernisation' argument was victorious, yet existing practices and structures persisted and, in the end, the older system outlived the two newer systems – the OBE bonus and the quarterly performance bonus. Today, 10 years after the two new types of bonuses were introduced, the *olympiad* bonus remains intact and, ironically, is the only bonus based exclusively on performance. The other two externally funded bonuses are welcomed as sources of additional income for teachers but do not follow the logic of a bonus. The quarterly performance bonus is given to almost every teacher and the OBE bonus is only given if the school has left-over funds available at the end of the year.

3. The translation of the global education policy

It is not unusual for an imported global education policy to be merely added to, rather than replace, existing practices and policies. I believe 'hybridisation' is an overused term that fails to account for important details such as what was selectively borrowed, what was modified, what was resisted and, most importantly, why and how selective borrowing occurred. Similarly, in Mongolia, the two new bonus systems (bonus for outcomes-based education and bonus for quarterly performance) did not replace the popular *olympiads*. It would also be wrong to assume that the three bonus systems – one pre-existing, two added/imported – simply hybridised and generated a new fourth type of bonus system integrating elements from all three. As I will show, the triple bonus system developed over time into three distinct systems, each with a different purpose or function in terms of teacher reward or sanction.

In 2012 there were three performance-based bonus systems operating in the Mongolian public school system. The first was introduced decades ago by the communist regime (*olympiads*) and funded by state-supported teacher associations. A second outcomes-based system was initially supported with generous funding from the Asian Development Bank. Later, however, costs were transferred to local school budgets at which point the programme either received meagre support or was dropped altogether. A third system was based on quarterly performance. This system boosted salaries for all teachers, aside from an unfortunate few who were disliked by school administrators, or

who for professional, personal, or political reasons, were regarded negatively. On paper all three bonus systems were tied to teacher performance. In practice, however, only the *olympiad* bonus system has retained the feature of performance measurement. The second bonus-system has a contractual function and the third is based on vague and confusing evaluation criteria, and is used to boost salaries.

To reiterate, each bonus system has encountered criticism for different reasons:

- bonuses for *olympiads* and competitions reward teachers for focusing on high-performing students;
- bonuses for outcomes-based contracts rely entirely upon funds generated at the school level and generate inequities between large (resourceful) schools and small (resource-poor) schools; and
- bonuses for quarterly performance are financed from the centrally allocated salary fund but, in effect, function as a thirteenth monthly salary in that the bonus is given indiscriminately to almost every teacher at the school, thus undermining the purpose of the bonus.

Table 1 presents the main features of the three bonuses and also summarises the distribution practices in a sample of 28 schools and 123 teachers, selected by province and

Table 1. Main features of the three types of bonuses.

Type of bonus	Intended purpose; frequency of award	Financing source	Actual beneficiaries as % of all teachers in the study ($N = 123$)	Average amount as % of monthly base salary
Olympiads & competitions	Rewards teachers who developed high-performing students in class; awarded once or twice a year	Special fund from central, province, or district budget	40.0%	5–50%
Outcomes-based contracts	Rewards teachers on a variety of performance criteria, including overall class performance, lesson planning, communication skills, etc.; awarded once a year	Education fund of the school	29.0%[a]	30%
Quarterly performance payment	Reward teachers who did exceptionally well (score A) or well (score B) on four evaluation criteria; awarded every three months	Centrally allocated salary fund	99.2%	10–15%

Note: [a] The percentage figure must be read in context with the funding source. The ratio only applies to schools that manage to save money in their budget and disburse bonus payments for OBE contracts. Not all schools are able to make such payments.

Source: UNICEF Mongolia (2011).

location (rural, semi-urban, urban). The column on actual beneficiaries lists the percentage of teachers who received the bonus in the past quarter or in the past year, respectively.

Even though both imported bonus types (outcomes-based education and quarterly performance payments) require significant paperwork from education managers, they are, in the end, vague and arbitrary. As mentioned before, education managers do not dare make harsh judgments of teachers' performance for fear of being criticised as biased and corrupt. As shown in Table 1, almost all teachers (99.2%) receive the so-called Quarterly Performance Payment. Less than a third of teachers receive the outcomes-based education bonus, and 40% of the survey teachers received a bonus because either they or their students ranked first, second, or third at an *olympiad* in the past year.

4. Conclusions

Over the past 10 years I observed with great fascination the evolution of the elaborate bonus system in Mongolia. *Olympiads* were held in more than 30 countries throughout the communist world, but only survived in a few. In Mongolia, *olympiads* remained popular despite attempts to replace them with more 'modern' performance-based bonus systems. The outcomes-based education contracts were introduced first, followed by the quarterly performance payment system soon thereafter. Even though the introduction of two additional, very similar, bonus systems seemed redundant, it made sense from a financial perspective. In past publications I used the triple bonus system as a prototypical case of the economics of policy borrowing. The emphasis was on the import of two additional bonus systems that, solely for economic reasons, were added onto a pre-existing indigenous bonus system. I examined only the initial stage of policy borrowing and argued that the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science implemented the two imported bonus systems as a means to justify additional payments to teachers. Thus, in policy borrowing and lending research, there is no such thing as 'phony borrowing'[4] (Phillips 2004) and there are no 'frozen accidents'[5] (Davies 2004). Rather there is a 'socio-logic' (Schriewer and Martinez 2004) to why a global education policy is borrowed. It is simply a matter of identifying the features of the local policy context that enhance the chances of policy borrowing.

Today, years later, my earlier interpretation of the economics of the bonus policy import must be expanded because one of the imported bonus systems has changed meaning. This re-translation was triggered by changes in the funding mechanism. From the moment schools were put in charge of paying for the bonus themselves the outcomes-contracts ceased to be a tool for withholding incentives to poor-performing teachers, and instead became a tool for firing teachers. The labour laws in Mongolia make it difficult for employers to lay off employees. During a time when the teaching profession regained popularity and was burdened with an oversupply of teachers, school administrators sought ways to terminate the employment of difficult or ineffective teachers. It is the contract of OBE, rather than the payment of OBE, that gained momentum. The OBE contract was stripped of its financial dimension and replaced with a legal function. In effect, the OBE contract turned teachers into contract workers who are *de facto* hired under an annually renewable contract (see UNICEF Mongolia 2011).[6]

This current reading is more dynamic than my earlier interpretation (Steiner-Khamsi, Silova and Johnson 2006) in that it acknowledges a process of constant re-

interpretation or re-translation of imported reform. The triple bonus system indicates a continuous process and is not, as my previous interpretations seem to suggest, terminated at the moment an imported reform is implemented. In theoretical terms each of the three bonus systems has become its own unit, system, or (sub-)organisational field that increasingly differentiates itself from the other two bonus systems. Even though the two imported bonus systems were initially just duplicating the post-communist *olympiad* bonus system, all three – one traditional system and two newly imported ones – became increasingly different. The triple bonus system developed over time and, as a result of functional differentiation, bifurcated into three separate systems. One became increasingly pedagogical (*olympiads*), another took on a legalistic, contractual function (outcomes-based education bonus), and a third (quarterly performance payment) became simply an additional monthly salary.

Arguably, the fragmentation into three different bonus systems is radically different from the initial stage when the two newly imported bonus systems signalled a move towards a more professional or 'modern' performance evaluation. All three systems, especially the two new bonus systems that were actively propelled by the Asian Development Bank, underwent several changes in the process of implementation. Within a short period of time performance measurements and evaluations were dropped and replaced with a (post-communist) redistribution practice in which the pot of money was, with a few notable exceptions, distributed equally among teachers at a given school.

I have argued in this article that the global/local nexus should be rolled out along a time axis. It is often only at the early stage of policy borrowing that reforms look alike. This similarity is frequently exaggerated as part of an attempt to create a transnational alliance or shared global space. The 'global speak' of politicians and policy has, as discussed elsewhere, an economic and political dimension (see Steiner-Khamsi and Stolpe 2006; Steiner-Khamsi 2010). My own interpretive framework draws on the theory of self-referential social systems (Luhmann 1984) and, in comparative education, on the theory of externalisation (Schriewer 1990). I draw attention to the local meaning, adaptation, and re-contextualisation of reforms that have been transferred or imported. Different from cultural anthropologists, however, understanding 'local meaning' of global education policy is not the end goal (see Anderson-Levitt 2003), but is 'only' a methodological tool for understanding the policy process in an era of globalisation. In other words, the main terrain of my work is comparative policy studies, not cultural anthropology. I find anthropological research thick in description, yet relatively thin when it comes to interpretation and understanding the power, legitimacy issues, and political processes that explain policy change.

However anthropologists are not alone in scrutinising the global/local nexus. One might argue – in line with the neo-institutionalist perspective – that there is always a loose coupling between a policy and its implementation. In fact, loose coupling is a metaphor that is frequently used by scholars in institutional theory and organisational sociology to denote the discrepancies between the various levels or activities within an organisational field. Similar to discrepancies between attitude and behaviour, intention and action, policy and practice, loose coupling is for many scholars of neo-institutionalist theory irrational, idiosyncratic, or particularistic. An investigation of loose coupling is therefore irrelevant to them, as they expect few insights for their larger sociological project of understanding long-term changes at societal level. In comparative education, Francisco Ramirez (2003) and David Baker and LeTendre (2005) seem to revert to loose coupling as an explanation whenever they encounter profound

differences between a universal standard (e.g. student-centred teaching, gender awareness, etc.) and its local manifestation. Such an approach, however, is of limited value for understanding cross-national policy attraction or re-contextualisation. Ultimately, for neo-institutionalist theory, loose coupling *is* the explanation (Latin: *explanans*) rather than the issue that begs for an explanation (*explanandum*). An analysis of the global/local nexus requires that loose coupling is not only acknowledged, but also analysed in great detail and interpreted.

A more explicit reflection of the global/local nexus is in order here. Susan Robertson presents a very useful categorisation of the term 'global' and finds that it covers a wide range of social phenomena including a condition, a discourse, a project, a scale, and a reach (Robertson 2012). I use her typology of globalisation and add terms that are commonly used in globalisation studies and comparative education:

- *condition of the world*, labelled by most authors as globalisation;
- *discourse*, also known as 'semantics of globalisation' (Jürgen Schriewer);
- *project*, popularised with the term 'globalisation optique' (Stephen Carney);
- *scale*, typically addressed with terms such as global players/actors; and
- *reach*, in this essay referred to as global education policy.

The distinction clarifies what I mean by the juxtaposition of global/local or global versus local actors, frequently used in this article. The two terms are relational and only make sense in combination. Robertson's thoughtful categorisation enables us to dig deeper into the question of how re-contextualisation studies help advance theories of globalisation and the policy process, and identify the areas under scrutiny. For example, several of us have made it a vocation to challenge the current, nationalistic, and parochial theories on policy change. This conviction has to do with our particular perspective: we see a global map underlying national policy agendas. This particular *globalisation optique* makes us interpret national or local education policy in a particular manner. For us, 'globalisation' is – to use Robertson's terminology – a 'project' that helps us to see and interpret local education policy in its larger context. Globalisation is the relatively new terrain of reforms or, as Verger, Novelli and Altinyelken (2012) phrased it: the 'context of contexts' of education policy.

The relational feature, reflected in the research focus on the global/local nexus, has been pointed out by many but investigated empirically by few. I find the notions of 'positionality' and 'audience' key for understanding the relational nature of global education policy. In my earlier work on global education policy in Mongolia I noticed that government officials frequently engage in double-talk. One talk directed towards donors ('global speak') is instrumental for securing external funding. Another, printed in party action programmes funded from the national education budget, and distributed through the media, is addressed to a Mongolian audience ('local speak'). The first is published in English and recycled in technical reports, education sector reviews and strategies that are funded by international donors. Meanwhile the local speak in Mongolian is barely accessible to international consultants and researchers, leading donors to perpetuate the myth that the only reform projects the Government of Mongolia is carrying out are those funded by international donors. It was in this context that I suggested we examine policy bilingualism, that is, the two different scales or 'spaces' from which one and the same policy actor or state institution speaks or operates. In his research, Tavis Jules takes this distinction a step further, analysing the different audiences that the Caribbean government addresses in different policy documents (Jules 2012). He finds that they refer to different

reform priorities and strategies depending on whether the audience is national, regional, or international. His work on policy triangulism represents a fascinating study of the spatial or scalar dimension of globalisation studies.

Theoretical debates on policy bilingualism, multi-scalarity, multi-spatiality, or the relational nature of local versus global policy actors, are crucial for reflecting on the distinction between global (out there) and local (in here). In terms of system theory, the global is locally induced, that is, policy actors refer to 'best practices', 'international standards', 'globalisation' or to particular reforms from elsewhere at moments when they need a quasi-external stamp of approval to unite varied interest groups. They actively create a distance between themselves and the Other or to the Global, and make it purposefully *appear* to be 'external' or 'out there' in order to mobilise reform pressure from within the system. New scholarship on projections into the educational system of the league leader Finland greatly advances research on the global/local nexus. Takayama (2010) investigates how Japanese policy analysts explain the Finnish success and Waldow (2010) does the same for the German context. The explanations vary considerably and have more to do with context-specific policy debates in Japan and Germany, respectively, than with the actual features of the Finish educational system.

The relational nature between the global and local must not be underestimated. As mentioned above, one of the most dazzling phenomena is that local politicians periodically invoke globalisation semantically and present it to their local audience as a quasi-external force, for the sole purpose of generating reform pressure on local policy actors. The fact that a series of similar global education policies circumvent the globe is often taken as proof that national educational systems are converging towards the same reform package, or towards the same set of global education policies. Note the circularity of this argument: local politicians first create the phantom of (vaguely defined) international standards to generate reform pressure. They then use the existence of such (self-produced) standards as proof that all educational systems, including their own, must be aligned with them. To put it differently, 'globalisation' is a reality but also a phantom that is periodically mobilised for political and economic purposes. Robertson's distinction between globalisation as a condition (real globalisation) and a discourse (imagined globalisation) comes to mind here (see Steiner-Khamsi 2004).

It is, for all the reasons mentioned in this article, important to study re-contextualisation and interpret why particular features of a global education policy have resonated in a particular policy context, and how they have been translated over time. My interest does not lie in describing performance pay as a global education policy (often reduced to a meaningless label when analysed comparatively), but rather with understanding the various aspects of performance pay schemes that resonate in different contexts, and are subsequently adapted locally and, as in the case of Mongolia, subverted. It is the re-contextualised versions of one and the same global education policy that tell us something about context, but also about the policy process and about policy change.

This article explored a research question that is key for understanding the global/local nexus: what do the acts of reception and translation suggest in terms of agenda setting, formulation, and implementation of educational policy? The focus on reception and translation lends explanatory power to *local policy contexts*. Such a research angle makes it feasible to investigate the contextual reasons for why reforms, best practices, or international standards, were adopted. Using the local policy context – rather than the global education policy – as the object of analysis, places great weight on the agency, process, impact, and timing of policy borrowing. It is this context that provides the clues for understanding why a borrowed reform resonates, what policy issue it pretends

to resolve, which groups it managed to empower at the expense of others, and which policy actors it managed to mobilise in support of a reform.

Notes

1. For example, in the year 2008, a year after the salary reform, there was a circa 27% hike in inflation, and in 2010 the inflation rate was approximately 10%. It is therefore important to assess the *relative* teacher salary, that is, teacher salary in comparison with other private and public sector jobs. In December 2011, teachers took to the streets to request a raise that would reflect a salary adjustment to match the double-digit inflation rate in Mongolia.
2. In the period 2009–2011, 10 UNICEF national offices commissioned studies on teacher-related policies in collaboration with the regional UNICEF offices CEECIS (Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States) and ESAR (Eastern and Southern Africa). The UNICEF Headquarters in New York issued the 'Teachers for the Marginalized Initiative' in 2011.
3. Nowadays, thanks to the economic boom in Mongolia, government scholarships are generously given to all students in higher education.
4. David Phillips uses the term 'phony' policy borrowing to capture the frequent occurrence of 'lip-service being paid to the attractiveness of features of education elsewhere, with little will – or insufficient time within the period of office of a government – for implementation to be feasible' (Phillips 2004, 57).
5. Lynn Davies (2004, 34) makes reference to 'chance events from the past [that] become an integral part of life'. Using the example of the QWERTY keyboard, introduced initially to slow down typing because the keys got stuck together, a problem which has long been resolved, Davies identifies formal education systems as a *frozen accident.* Drawing on the example of the QWERTY keyboard, William deJong-Lambert (personal communication) added that other more effective typewriter models existed at the time (e.g. Malling-Hansen Writing Ball) but did not sell due to poor marketing and networking. This is to suggest that perhaps frozen accidents reflect the power relations at the moment a situation or a phenomenon became protracted.
6. A similar development occurred in the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland, in the early 1990s. Ernst Buschor, at the time Minister of Education, was a firm believer in new public management. He implemented outcomes-based education reform in Zurich (German: *wirkungsorientierte Schulreform)* and threatened to introduce performance pay for teachers. In the end, the unions agreed to abolish the status of civil servant (German: *Staatsbeamte*) in exchange for not introducing performance pay.

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Preschool in Three Cultures Revisited

China, Japan, and the United States

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5 Looking Across Time and Cultures

Given the assumption that four-year-old children around the world have similar abilities, needs, and interests, one might expect preschools in different countries to be much the same. The major contribution of the original *Preschool in Three Cultures* was to make clear that Japanese, and US preschools, circa 1984, were very different and that much of the difference could be attributed to culture. The central question that has driven our new study is whether a generation later we would find in these three countries' preschools a persistence of these cultural differences or whether with increased globalization Chinese, Japanese, and US preschools would have become more alike and lost some of their cultural distinctiveness.

As the previous chapters have described, we found that much has changed, but much has also stayed the same. A simple version of our findings would be that over the past twenty years Chinese preschools changed a lot, Japanese preschools not very much, and the US is somewhere in between, with dramatic changes in provision and funding but relatively little change in teacher beliefs and in classroom practices. The more complicated, nuanced version of this story is that there is more continuity than meets the eye in China's early childhood educational change; more dynamism and angst in Japan's continuity of preschool practices and beliefs than is conveyed by the term "continuity"; and more class and ideological tensions in the US contemporary situation than is conveyed by the narrative of a country inching towards creating a national system of pre-primary education.

In this book we have discussed impacts of political, economic, and demographic changes on each nation's systems of early childhood education, but our central concern has been with culture. Most comparative international studies on education foreground social and political forces. Our approach, in contrast, foregrounds culture. Our thesis is that culture acts as a source of continuity and as a brake on the impacts of globalization, rationalization, and economic change. Preschools are institutions that both reflect and help to perpetuate the cultures and societies of which they are a part.

In this chapter we look across the three countries in this study, examining the impact on preschools of economic change, modernization, and globalization. We then turn to the concept of "implicit cultural logic" as an explanation for continuity in the face of pressure to change, arguing that cultural practices are more resilient and resistant to change than is predicted by theories of economic determinism, modernization and globalization. We conclude with some reflections on our method, and the challenge of combining history with ethnography and looking simultaneously across time and space.

Economic Change and the Logic of Modernization

In the years since we conducted our original study in 1985, China has become an enthusiastic and strikingly successful player in the global capitalist economy. The economic and social reforms put forward in the 1980s by Deng Xiaoping, who is widely credited as "the architect of China's economic reforms and China's socialist modernization," featured a strategy of unequal development encouraging the growth of an entrepreneurial class in the largest cities who would create wealth and jobs that would eventually trickle down to benefit the rest of the society. The logic that ties these economic changes in China to changes in the early childhood education curriculum is explicit: To become a modern nation China must participate successfully in the global economy. To succeed in the global economy, China needs a new kind of citizen, who is more creative, risk taking, and adaptive as well as bright and well-educated. To produce this new citizen, China needs a new educational approach that begins with preschools, which need to shift their curriculum and pedagogy, becoming less didactic and controlling and more child centered and personalized.

Most of the Chinese early childhood educators we interviewed, though well aware of this reasoning, say that their embrace of the new educational paradigm was based less on the desire to produce little venture capitalists than on their belief in the wisdom and correctness of the new ideas. Therefore, instead of viewing a shift in economic strategy as preceding and causing the changes in Chinese early childhood education philosophy we have documented in this book, we suggest that it is more useful to conceptualize the educational changes as a shift of values, beliefs, and strategies that has

occurred simultaneously across multiple social domains, from economics, to politics, to child rearing. The causality goes both ways: a change in economic philosophy and material well-being in the larger society impacts what goes on in preschool classrooms and what goes on in preschool classrooms exerts an impact, down the road, on the larger society.

In China the demands of economic change are often expressed in terms of the imperative of modernization. The term "modernization" is widely used in China in discussions of plans for reforming many domains of society, including preschools. As it was a generation ago in the era of the Four Modernizations campaign of Deng Xiaoping, "modernization" is used to refer to the need for China to develop a social and economic system that can compete with and yet remain distinct from the capitalist societies of the West and its neighbors in East Asia. As Deng wrote in his essay "On Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics":

> Education is the most fundamental undertaking of a nation. The realization of the four modernizations depends on knowledge and on a skilled workforce. An error in policy can be rectified fairly easily, but knowledge cannot be acquired at once, nor a skilled work force trained in a few days. This is the reason education must be conducted in real earnest, and started from early childhood. (quoted in Education For All, 2000)

In contemporary China, modernization of early childhood education means more individualized education, with a focus on the rights of the child and on promoting independence and creativity. The primary concern about young children in China that we found in the mid-1980s was with spoiling, a concern that the single-child family policy would produce a generation of overly individualistic, selfish children who would lack respect, will power, filial piety, and social responsibility. Individualism in this period was viewed as an undesirable trait that needed to be corrected by *guan* (loving control). In the interviews we conducted with Chinese early childhood educators in the first years of the new millennium, we heard little concern about single children's spoiling, or the dangers of individualism. The creative, individualistic, and even self-oriented child who was feared a generation earlier had become the norm and even in some sense the ideal, the child with the characteristics needed to succeed in entrepreneurial capitalism.

However, in our last round of interviewing in China in 2006 and 2007, we sensed that perspectives were once again shifting, as we began to hear concern from educators and social commentators that the focus on promoting individualism and a child-initiated curriculum had gone too far, and that the time had come to balance the new emphasis on creativity and self-efficacy with older Chinese values such as social responsibility and filial piety (Zhu & Zhang 2008, 176). Spoiling has returned as a child-development concern, but now this is ascribed not to the single-child family policy as the root cause, but to the side effects of rapid prosperity and the errors of parents preoccupied with their business interests and made dizzy by their pursuit of wealth. As a result, there is concern that a generation of children is being raised that lacks a moral grounding in either traditional Confucian or Chinese socialist values.

Wang Xiaoying points to "the publication of a huge number of books on the problems, crises and serious challenges that have arisen in the course of China's reforms," books with titles such as *Lost Dignity* and *The Trap of Modernization* (2002, 10). Concluding that "the problems presented in these books add up to a picture of profound social and moral crisis" (2002, 11), Wang argues that China is suffering from having abandoned its old socialist values in advance of developing new ones: "It is of course debatable whether the introduction of a capitalist market economy in China is a good thing, but there is no denying that the advent of the free market without the simultaneous emergence of a sustaining moral order is a recipe for social problems of gigantic proportions" (2002, 1). Wang goes on to suggest that China's capitalist reforms have produced a new kind of Chinese personality structure, one lacking in altruism and aesthetics and characterized by hedonism and egoism.

Wang and many other Chinese intellectuals are pessimistic about contemporary Chinese society's ability or willingness to produce a new kind of citizen who can function in capitalism while also being socially minded. But our interviews with Chinese early childhood educators and our many visits to Chinese preschools make us guardedly more optimistic. Many of the new approaches in Chinese preschools that we have described in this book including, for example, the Story Telling King and sociodramatic play activities at Sinanlu You'eryuan are concerned with producing not just children who can grow up with the attributes they will need to succeed in a competitive market economy, but also children who will grow up to be socially minded and recognizably Chinese. Wang suggests that discussion of values is lacking and that hedonism is rampant. But we would argue that we hear in the comments of our Chinese informants a determination to forge a new approach to early Chinese childhood education, an approach that by fusing Confucian and socialist values with the values of the Enlightenment (under the banner of "the rights of children") will produce a new kind of

citizen with a new kind of subjectivity, an individual, but one with Chinese characteristics. How this bold social experiment will turn out is impossible to predict. We look forward to finding out when we do another sequel to *Preschool in Three Cultures* in about 2025!

When we asked Japanese early childhood educators to describe what had changed the most for them and why since 1985, most focused on the impacts of economic and demographic changes on preschools. The economic decline in Japan from the boom times of the mid-1980s has made the business of running a preschool increasingly precarious. The decline has impacted preschools in direct and indirect ways, dropping the value of their land holdings, limiting the rate at which they can raise tuition, and changing patterns of women's work, including the career trajectories of teachers, who are less likely to retire from teaching while still in their early twenties as they did a generation ago when the economy was much stronger and they could live more comfortably during their child-rearing years on their husband's income and then re-enter the labor market. The decline in birthrate compels preschools to compete to fill their classrooms and stay in business. To attract customers, preschools extend their hours; diversify their services (with, for example, after-school care for elementary school children, classes and activities for parents, and programs for the elderly); add such frills as English conversation and tennis; and in some cases go to extremes to stand out in the marketplace by emphasizing their rigorous academic preparation and success rate placing students in prestigious primary schools, their unique philosophy (e.g., "naked education"), or (like Madoka Yōchien) the unique design of their playground and school building.

The precipitous economic decline Japan suffered in the 1990s when "the bubble burst" and real estate and stock prices plummeted also had a less direct but in some ways more profound effect on the overall national mood, creating a climate of pessimism, blame, and recrimination, a climate, for example, in which teachers and parents blame each other for the perceived character flaws of the current generation of children. When a country's economy is going well, its social institutions, including its schools, generally are viewed positively, and even given partial credit for the nation's prosperity. When Japan's economy was booming in the 1980s, the whole world, including many Japanese, found much to praise about Japan's education system. Conversely, an economic crisis leads to harsher analyses of social institutions and to an eagerness to assign blame. In Japan some of this blame has been placed on education.

Today in Japan, the term "modernization" is most often used pejoratively, in reference to the costs that modernization and too narrow a focus on economic development have exacted on the Japanese soul. There is a widespread feeling in Japan that the country modernized so quickly and thoroughly, catching up with and then passing the West, that core cultural values were compromised or lost. In our 1985 study we concluded that preschools in Japan are new institutions mandated to pass on to young children values, perspectives, and social skills that are believed to be at risk in the contemporary, hyper-modern society. This mandate is even more explicit today. Unlike in China and the US, educational reform movements in Japan put little pressure on preschools to rationalize or modernize their core practices because there is a general consensus that preschools have an inherently conservative function, which is to protect children from the negative effects of (post)modernization.

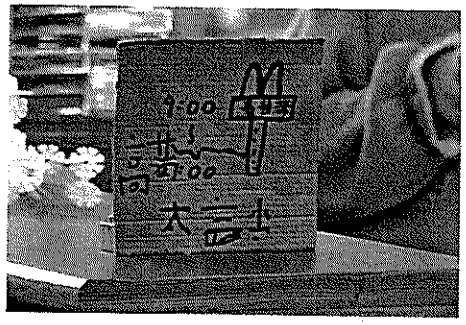
Over the past twenty years economic considerations and the imperative to rationalize social institutions, including education, have been a driving force for change in early childhood education in the US. Over the past generation, as the earning power of working-class and middle-class workers has declined against the cost of living, more mothers of young children have joined the workforce, creating an increased need for preschools. Welfare reform begun under President Clinton and continued under the second Bush administration pushed poor mothers of young children into training programs and jobs outside the home, increasing the need for early childhood care and education slots. In the 1990s the business community adapted a pro–early childhood education stance based on the logic that investing in educating young children is a good investment in the future labor force of a community and on calculations that show that every dollar invested in early childhood education yields a significant economic and social return.

Politicians of both parties justify the current emphasis in early childhood education on literacy and academic readiness in terms of the need to keep the United States economically competitive. What is most striking here is that China, Japan, and the United States each justify their curricular reforms with arguments for making their future workforce competitive, but the directions being followed by the three countries in their approaches to early childhood education are strikingly different. China is using the argument of preparing citizens for the new global economy to justify making the early childhood curriculum more free and student centered, to encourage the kind of creativity and initiative that are assumed to be required to succeed in global capitalism. Over the past thirty years or so Japan has followed a similar logic, based on the belief that because

the emerging information economy requires increasingly creative, flexible workers, education needs to be made less didactic and freer. The recent decline in Japan's performance on international educational achievement tests has led to calls to follow American's lead and push for more emphasis on achievement and accountability in Japan's primary and secondary education (Bjork & Tsuneyoshi 2005; Takayama 2007), but so far such calls have not led to a shift away from the constructivist, play-oriented curricula found in a majority of Japanese preschools. Meanwhile, the United States is using the logic of national economic competitiveness to push early childhood education away from constructivism towards an emphasis on academic readiness accompanied by calls for higher levels of accountability, more frequent assessment, and a turn to scientifically based practice.

In the US, in the last fifteen years or so, an unlikely commingling of voices of conservative and progressive politicians, business leaders, children's advocacy organizations, and academics have joined NAEYC and the White House in calling for the professionalization of the early childhood education workforce, for learning standards for preschool and kindergarten, for a unified accreditation system for all early childhood education and care programs, and for the extension of publicly supported education down to the preschool level. The common thread behind these initiatives is the imperative of rationalization (Fuller 2007). In contemporary discussions in the US of domestic social policy, including policy for early childhood education, the word that is used most often in place of the now antiquated sounding terms "modernization" and "rationalization" is *reform*. The key terms in the discourse of reform are accountability, assessment, standards and standardization, outcomes, professionalism, consistency, articulation, and science- and evidence-based practice. The current education reforms in the US call for standards-based curricula, scientifically supported pedagogy, the professionalization of the labor force, systematic assessment of student learning, and accountability of schools, with a mixture of support and sanctions for schools that are failing.

The logic of modernization, rationalization, and reform of early childhood education in the US seems inexorable. In 1985, preschools in the United States, for better or worse, were largely free to teach as they wished, emphasizing play or learning, setting their own cognitive, academic, and social outcomes for children, arranging their classrooms and choosing what to put on the walls without needing to follow a set of guidelines, and hiring teachers with or without degrees in early childhood education. Today in the US, as teachers and directors complained to us, preschools are



5.1. McDonald's sign from sociodramatic play at Sinanlu Kindergarten.

increasingly under pressure to comply with external governmental and professional organization standards in their curriculum, their classroom setup, and their learning outcomes and for all of their teachers and directors to have degrees in early childhood education from accredited programs. The play-oriented curricula, whole language approaches to literacy, and child-centered pedagogies that were seen as best practices when we conducted our original study a generation ago are now critiqued in some quarters as old-fashioned, ideologically driven, and unscientific.

Globalization

Critics as well as proponents of globalization suggest that as goods, ideas, and people are exchanged among nations at an ever-increasing pace, nations are becoming more similar and cultural differences less salient (figure 5.1). The world systems theory version of globalization suggests that as the world increasingly becomes one system, ideas (including ideas about education) from the most powerful, culture-exporting countries come to dominate those of other countries. This is also the prediction of the modernization/rationalization version of globalization, which would suggest, following the logic of social Darwinism, that over time the most rational, effective educational approaches spread, replacing tradition-bound local approaches that are believed in for reasons other than their rationality and functionality. The result is an ever-growing global convergence of education practices and ideas.

Is this the case for approaches to early childhood education over the past generation in the three countries in our study? Since the mid-1980s have Chinese, Japanese, and US preschools become significantly more

alike? Our answer, in a word, is "No." Our conclusion is that despite modernization and globalization, Chinese, Japanese, and American approaches to early childhood education are no more alike in their core practices and beliefs than they were a generation ago. Or rather we should say that over time they have become more alike in some ways and more different in others. Our study has shown that some cultural practices have been replaced by practices borrowed from abroad, but other cultural practices have emerged unscathed from their encounter with globally circulating ideas, still others have evolved into hybrid forms, and along the way some new cultural practices have been invented.

In 1985 and 2005 Chinese and American early childhood educational goals and practices were dramatically unalike, with China emphasizing control and regimentation and the US play and choice. Twenty years later, China's early childhood educational goals have shifted towards child-initiation and creativity while early childhood education in the US has shifted in the opposite direction, toward more emphasis on academic outcomes and the teacher's role in instruction. This could be taken as evidence of the convergence predicted by some schools of globalization. But we would argue that the fact that US preschools have become more academic and Chinese preschools more play oriented suggests not that they are converging toward a common end point but instead that they may be passing like two ships in the night.

The globalization of early childhood educational ideas does not flow evenly over time and space. Instead, in each country periods of greater openness to outside ideas alternate with periods of turning inward (Schriewer 2000; Steiner-Khamsi 2000; 2004). The 1990s was one of those outward-facing eras in US early childhood education, with the outside influence coming largely from the preschools of the Italian city of Reggio Emilia. In our interviews across the US, when asked about what has changed the most since 1985, directors and teachers often cited the influence of "Reggio," as they almost always call it. When pressed, they specifically mentioned Reggio's emphasis on the arts and aesthetics and on the documentation of children's learning.

Why has Reggio Emilia's approach to early childhood education had so much influence on the consciousness (if not on the classroom practices) of American early childhood educators? What's going on here is more complex than a straightforward process of one country borrowing cutting-edge ideas from another. Reggio Emilia no doubt has excellent preschools. But so do lots of other preschools in other Italian regions and

in other countries, including Japan and China, whose preschool practices are not emulated abroad. This raises the question of what has made the early childhood education system of Reggio Emilia so exportable while other potentially useful early childhood educational ideas have failed to catch on in the US.

Rebecca New, who knows Reggio as well as any non-Italian, points out that the Italian take on all this foreign excitement about Reggio Emilia is that the citizens of Reggio Emilia are proud of their preschools, but so are the citizens of other Italian cities. She argues that Italians in other cities would no more try to copy Reggio Emilia's preschools than they would give up their local cheeses or wines for those made in Parma or Umbria. What makes Reggio Emilia's system of childcare and education so special is the same thing that makes Italian wines and cheeses so special—each reflects the locale where it is made. This does not mean that they cannot be consumed or enjoyed outside their region. But it does mean they cannot be mass-consumed without the risk of losing what makes them special in the first place and that they should be consumed alongside of rather than in place of locally made products. New writes, "Each of these interpretations—whether of a good cheese, a good wine, or the proper way to make a certain pasta dish—is associated with a particular place and its people, with both the benefits and the burdens of responsibility shared by the stakeholders" (2001, 212).

An irony of the international spread of Reggio Emilia (which we take from New) is that one of the core ideas, perhaps *the* core idea, behind the Reggio Emilia preschools is that they are based on a deep connection between the school staff and the larger community. Parent and community involvement is intense and ongoing. And this involvement reflects the socialist political beliefs of the city, the parents, and the teachers and administrators. But what happens to the socialist principles that provide the moral foundation to Reggio Emilia's approach when Reggio comes to the US? Reggio Emilia gets stripped of its politics, of its socialism, of the elements that are objectionable to many Americans, and what gets embraced are those parts of Reggio Emilia most attractive to American middle-class sensibilities, namely a focus on aesthetics and on the documentation of children's thinking and learning. This suggests that educational approaches that successfully travel abroad and take hold in other cultural contexts inevitably are either, in Bruno Latour's (1987) terms, systems that are designed to be contextless and universal (like Linnean botany and High/Scope and other packaged curricula) or systems that become stripped of

their localness—what Koichi Iwabuchi (2004) calls "their cultural odor"—and their contextually specific features when they go abroad, as is the case for Reggio (Tobin 2005).

Early childhood education in the US is weak compared to that in many other countries in provision and in average program quality (as the 2001 OECD report makes clear); but this does not keep the US from being among the world's leaders in the global dissemination of early childhood education ideas and curricula. Exporting educational approaches is a lucrative international business (Steiner-Khamsi 2004, 204–7). As the US struggles domestically to create a quality, coherent system of early childhood education and care, High/Scope, the Project Approach, and other curricula developed in the US circulate globally. We suggest that this is no accident. The incoherence, fluidity, and contentiousness that characterize the early childhood education and care system in the US provide an inexhaustible domestic market for early childhood education research, training, and curricular innovation efforts. High/Scope and other American research and development centers have been able to use their subsidized research and their contracted work in the US domestic market as building blocks for taking their products overseas. This is an argument that has been used in economic analyses to explain the role a robust domestic market plays in the development of an export industry, as, for example, in the development of the Japanese consumer electronic industry, where domestic consumers push Japanese companies to compete with each other to develop cutting-edge products that get developed and tested in the Japanese market before going overseas.

China is among the nations that are currently consumers of American early childhood education programs. After a long period of turning inward, for the past two decades China has been borrowing early childhood education ideas eclectically, incorporating ideas, for example, from High Scope, the Project Approach, Reggio Emilia, and Japan (Zhu & Zhang 2008). This borrowing has been focused on bringing to China progressive educational ideas and practices that are believed to produce the kind of creative, individualistic, entrepreneurial citizens needed by China's new economy. This drive has led some preschools in the large cities not to selectively incorporate bits and pieces of foreign early childhood educational practices but instead to import the whole progressive early childhood education paradigm, lock, stock, and barrel, albeit overlaying the imported ideas on a preexisting structure of Chinese practices and beliefs. As a result, it is easier to find a state-of-the-art, child-centered, constructivist preschool in Shanghai than it is in many cities in the US. The emphasis now in China is on expanding the new model to the rest of China, a process, considering China's huge size, that can be described as a within-country globalization effort.

Chinese early childhood education is in the midst of a period of heavy borrowing from the West, but this does not mean that it will continue to do so and in fact our last round of interviews in China suggests that the hunger for outside ideas is already abating. Globalization, though a relatively recent term supported by a young set of theories, is not a new phenomenon. Nor is it continuous and always expanding. China has been receiving progressive education ideas from Europe and the US for over a century (Rappleye 2007). Perhaps the high point of this process was John Dewey's visit to China from 1919 to 1921. While Chinese scholars debated at the time and continue to debate today the value Dewey's ideas hold for China, no one doubts the central role he played in introducing Chinese early childhood educators to the concepts of child-centeredness and "learning by doing." Dewey's ideas were influential in Chinese education from approximately 1920 to 1940 before coming under attack in the 1950s by Marxist educators as being dangerously bourgeois, individualistic, and counter-revolutionary (Zheng 1988; Su 1995). This in a sense is ironic because, as Di Xu (1992) points out, there are significant areas of agreement between Dewey's theories and Mao's, specifically in the relation of the school to the society and on the role of experience in learning. In the 1960s and 1970s, during the years of the Cultural Revolution, as Su Zhixin writes, "there was an eclipse of interest in Dewey even as a target of criticism" (1995, 314). When we conducted our interviews in China in 1985, we heard no mention of Dewey from teachers and directors, although around that time his name was once again beginning to be cited positively by scholars. In the years since then Dewey has returned to favor in early childhood education circles.

The fluctuation over time in John Dewey's influence in China is a good example of the unevenness and nonlinearity of the global circulation of educational ideas. Moreover, the story of Dewey in China illustrates how nations alternate between turning inward and outward to reform their education systems. We draw here on the work of Jürgen Schriewer (2000; 2004) and Gita Steiner-Khamsi (2000; 2004), who suggest that there are alternations between periods of closing off to the outside (as, for example, China did from 1950 to 1978 and especially during the Cultural Revolution) and periods of systematically importing ideas from abroad (as China did in the 1920s and again in the late 1980s and 1990s). There are also alternations between periods when the externality of educational ideas from abroad

is used to justify their value, periods, that is, when nations explicitly cite the need to progress through importing ideas from other nations that are acknowledged to be more advanced, and periods when educational ideas from abroad are internalized, their foreign origins masked, and their value justified in terms of traditional beliefs. In some periods, the externality of globally circulating educational ideas increases their domestic value; in other periods, the externality is played down or even erased, and imported ideas are re-made (in Steiner-Khamsi's phrases, "indigenized," "recontextualized" and "reterritorialized") in a form that makes them seem like a local invention that is entirely consistent with traditional beliefs and national values.

Applying this logic to Dewey's vicissitudes in China, we see that those who championed his educational ideas in the 1920s did so by emphasizing the need to import ideas from abroad that, once adapted to the local context, would help China modernize and become more democratic. From the 1950s through the 1970s, when China turned inward, the externality of these ideas made Dewey a dangerous and unwelcome foreign element. In the 1980s, Dewey re-emerged, again associated with the cachet of being borrowed from abroad, but this time in more indigenized form, tied to Deng's vision of a uniquely Chinese version of modernization and entry into global capitalism. In the past few years, even as the goals of early childhood education in China have become increasingly child-centered and, in a sense, increasingly Deweyian, Dewey's name is less often cited (Schriewer & Martinez 2004) and the value of the new approach has been indigenized, justified less in terms of being something imported from the West than as something that reflects the values of China's new vision of society.

Our last round of interviews in 2006 and 2007 with Chinese early childhood educators suggests that the aggressive push toward progressivism and child-centeredness that characterized Chinese early childhood education from about 1990 to 2005 has begun to be counterbalanced by an acknowledgment of the value of traditional Chinese pedagogical practices and theories. This leads to the prediction that the period of intense borrowing will soon be replaced by a period of consolidation, localization, and hybridization of foreign and domestic educational ideas. A hybrid form of progressivism will emerge that combines Dewey, Vygotsky, the Project Approach, and Reggio with Confucianism, Chinese socialist principles, and Chinese educational traditions that give importance to memory, performance, mastery, content knowledge, and critique. Professor Zhu Jiaxiong of East China Normal University suggested to us that the globalization of

education in China works like a pendulum, swinging back and forth between periods of looking outwards and inwards. But unlike a pendulum, there is no final, fixed, predetermined resting place. Instead, the pivot point of the pendulum is constantly shifting, as new hybrid forms of education emerge, mixing once external with internal elements, producing a new center. After more than a century of being on the consuming end of globally circulating ideas, China seems poised to become a producer. Perhaps in the years ahead the US, Japan, and other countries will look to Chinese early childhood education for innovative ideas. Perhaps Sinanlu You'eryuan will be the next Reggio, and preschool directors from around the world will make their future pilgrimages to Shanghai to study a newly emergent hybrid model of early childhood education that fuses constructivist, child-centered principles with Chinese traditions of large class size, social mindedness, skill and subject mastery, and the use of critical feedback for self-improvement.

During the last twenty years, as China has aggressively imported progressive ideas about early childhood education from the US and Europe and as the US has been borrowing ideas from Reggio and exporting High/Scope and other curricula to third-world nations, Japanese early childhood education, curiously, has stayed largely outside of this circuit of global borrowing and lending. Japanese early childhood education during this period has had relatively little apparent influence on the rest of the world and been relatively little influenced by others. There are two questions here, which we will address one at a time: Why isn't the Japanese approach to early childhood education spreading globally? And why is Japanese early childhood education relatively impervious to influences from abroad?

Japanese early childhood education's lack of visible impact on other countries is all the more surprising considering Japan's growing role in the global circulation of cultural products and ideas. Japan became a major global exporter of goods in the 1960s. In the 1980s, as Japan's economy boomed, Japan made the jump from exporting goods to exporting ideas and cultural products and Japanese management practices provided models for the rest of the world. After years of importing popular cultural products from the West, Japan became an exporter of lifestyle and media products, including high-fashion clothing, computer software, comics, and video games (Iwabuchi 2004). Japanese educational approaches also are widely studied abroad. Envy of Japanese results on TIMSS (a test of mathematics and science knowledge) and other international measures of academic achievement led educators from Europe and the US in the 1980s

and 1990s to attempt to imitate elements of Japanese primary and secondary school mathematics and science curricula, classroom organization, supplementary education programs such as Kumon math and *juku* (private after-school tutoring and exam-prep programs) and teacher training and development (especially *kenkyū jugyō* or "lesson study").

If the rest of the world has borrowed little from Japanese early childhood education in the last twenty years, it is not because of a lack of information about what goes on in Japanese preschools. In the years since we conducted our original study, scholars from outside Japan have published books and articles that have pointed out some of the strengths of Japanese early childhood education. In addition to *Preschool in Three Cultures*, there are Merry White's *The Japanese Educational Challenge* (1987), Joy Hendry's *Becoming Japanese* (1989), Lois Peak's *Learning to Go to School in Japan* (1992), Catherine Lewis's *Educating Hearts and Minds* (1995), Eyal Ben-Ari's *Body Projects in Japanese Childcare* (1996), Susan Holloway's *Contested Childhood* (2000), Daniel Walsh's "The Development of Self in Japanese Preschools" (2002), and Diane Hoffman's "Individualism and Individuality in American and Japanese Early Education" (2000). This scholarship has led to some questioning of taken-for-granted assumptions in the West about what is possible and desirable in preschools, but not to any borrowings of Japanese early childhood practices: no opening of *yōchien* or *hoikuen* in the US or Europe; no calls from politicians to emulate the Japanese approach of thirty children with one teacher; no workshops at NAEYC on how to implement the Japanese approach to non-intervention in children's fights; and no pilgrimages to Komatsudani.

The high student/teacher ratios that make Japanese early childhood pedagogy difficult to export to North American and Europe make it potentially a useful model for China and other Asian countries that have a similar tradition of large class size and ratios and elements of a shared philosophical and moral tradition (Rappleye 2007). As we reported in the China chapter, there is evidence to suggest that the Japanese Ministry of Education's 1998 *National Curriculum Standards for Kindergartens* influenced the 2001 Chinese *Guidelines for the Reform and Development of Education in China*. But given the Chinese anger toward Japan for its refusal to own up to and to apologize sincerely for its actions during the occupation of China in World War II, it is no surprise that the contribution of Japanese early childhood educational ideas to the *Guidelines* goes unacknowledged in the report and that there is a general reluctance in Chinese educational circles to use Japan as an explicit model. Understanding why educational ideas from another country get taken up or not domestically requires attending not just to factors of attraction, but also of repulsion. In many of our focus-group discussions of the Japanese videotapes in China there was a level of implicit if not explicit underlying acrimony toward Japan that was characteristic of the resurgence of anti-Japanese sentiment that recently swept the country, acrimony that we suggest led in the discussions to an only grudging acknowledgment of Japanese early childhood educational strengths and an eagerness to pounce on perceived weaknesses.

Our more general explanation for why Japanese early childhood educational ideas have had relatively little impact outside Japan is that Japanese early childhood education is deeply contextual and resistant to decontextualization and, therefore, to global circulation. We suggest that early childhood education systems can be categorized as either self-consciously constructed or implicit. The constructed systems can travel abroad because they are readily packaged. They have authors who can articulate their core beliefs (Montessori for the Montessori method; Lilian Katz for the Project Approach; Loris Malaguzzi for Reggio Emilia; David Weikart for High/Scope). Most have training manuals, or, if they are against manuals, they have a less didactic but nonetheless systematic approach to popularizing and marketing their program, such as Reggio Emilia's system of study tours, traveling shows of student art work, workshops, websites, books and journal articles, and even a liaison for dissemination of its ideas in the US.

In contrast, the core features of Japanese early childhood education have no author, no core text, and no mechanism for dissemination. For the most part, they are not explained in Japanese textbooks and they are not taught systematically in pre-service teacher education programs. The core features of the Japanese preschool are implicit, reflecting a deep cultural logic. Values such as social-mindedness, liveliness, creativity, appreciation for nature, perseverance, and empathy are emphasized in government statements of goals for *yōchien* and *hoikuen*, but without clear directions on how to achieve them and without the kind of codification found in DAP in the US or in China's early childhood education curriculum revision. The characteristic qualities and strengths of the Japanese preschool system include the alternating periods of chaos and order in the classroom (Sano, 1989); the reluctance to intervene too quickly in children's disputes; the high student/teacher ratios that encourage peer interaction; and the emphasis on emotion and especially on the development of empathy. These are not spelled out in curriculum guides, found in training manuals or program descriptions, taught in schools of education, or much discussed by

Japanese scholars in academic publications. They are passed on from one generation to the next less via the principles taught in university courses and written down in textbooks and curriculum guides than via an apprenticeship model, in which new teachers learn what to do from more experienced teachers (some of whom have only a year or two on the job). Because these key features of Japanese education are implicit and emergent rather than constructed, they do not have much explicit support but neither do they have much opposition. They are for the most part unmarked and, from the Japanese perspective, unremarkable, not needing explanation, justification, or codification and therefore unamenable to being packaged for export.

Another reason the Japanese approach to early childhood education is difficult to take abroad is that the central goal is to make Japanese children Japanese. We have suggested that the core structural features of Japanese preschools work to support the development in young children of such traditional Japanese values as *omoiyari* (empathy), *kejime* (the ability to change one's behavior according to the context), and *shūdan shugi* (social-mindedness). These values have equivalents in other cultures, but they are not the same thing and they are not equally prioritized in those other cultures. In other words, you cannot import Japanese early childhood educational means without getting Japanese early childhood educational ends.

The Japanese emphasis on children's free play and de-emphasis on academic readiness are consistent with Euro-American progressivist notions. But the Japanese version of early childhood educational progressivism is made up of too many structural components that are incompatible with Euro-American progressivist beliefs to allow for easy transfer. The Japanese preschool's large student/teacher ratios break one of the core commandments of progressive early childhood education, which equates small class size and low student/teacher ratios with quality. A ratio of thirty students to one teacher immediately places Japanese early childhood education beyond the pale and impossible to import to the US context. Not intervening in children's fights could be conceptualized as a practice that is constructivist and therefore progressive, but most American teachers find children's fighting counter to their generally pacifist orientations and to their belief that teachers should intervene to provide scaffolding to support children's moral and social development.

The cultural embeddedness of the Japanese approach to early childhood education also makes for little borrowing from outside. Because in the contemporary period China is self-consciously trying to change rapidly as a society, Chinese preschools are open to borrowing from globally circulating ideas. In contrast, because many people in Japan are concerned that their society has already changed too much and become too Westernized, Japanese preschools do little borrowing of outside ideas. Japan looks to its preschools as a source of cultural continuity rather than as a source of change. The preschools, though not a traditional Japanese cultural institution, are looked to as a site for children growing up in a postmodern world to be given traditional values that are believed to be endangered. The more Japanese perceive their world as changing and the more their everyday lives are lived in globalization, the more pressure on preschools to stay the same. Contemporary Japan is by no means a xenophobic or isolationist society. Japanese science, business, and other levels of education borrow ideas freely from other countries. Some Japanese professors of early childhood education attend international meetings and follow the international literature. There are attempts by scholars to introduce Reggio Emilia and other foreign ideas to Japanese early childhood education, and practitioners at professional meetings listen to these ideas with interest. But for the most part these external ideas lead to little change in everyday preschool practice. Tellingly, there is little support for reducing student/teacher ratios to the levels found in Europe and the US, levels that would be necessary to implement Euro-American educational practices that feature individual attention and intervention from teachers. There are a handful of Japanese preschools that are modeled on Montessori and other foreign approaches. But these programs tend to think of themselves and be thought of by others as self-consciously non-Japanese alternatives to the usual Japanese approach.

Japanese early childhood education begins with core assumptions that are quite different from those of programs in the US, Europe, and China. Diane Hoffman (2000) argues that early childhood education in the US and most of Europe is based on a developmental model of childhood while Japanese early childhood education is based on a notion of preserving and supporting the childishness of young children and of not focusing on developmental outcomes. Japanese early childhood education also differs from the European and North American systems in viewing the preschool as an institution that takes the place primarily not of the mother but of the traditional urban neighborhood or village square, therefore emphasizing not dyadic interactions but instead social complexity. These fundamental differences in understandings of childhood and the goals of early childhood education make it difficult for Japanese preschools to participate in the global exchange of ideas and practices.

To summarize, we argue that Japanese early childhood education reflects an implicit cultural logic that, because it is implicit and deeply cultural, is resistant to change as well as to borrowing and lending. This deep cultural logic makes Japanese early childhood education unique among world systems and well attuned to the desire of contemporary Japanese parents and policy makers for institutions that can preserve Japanese cultural values in an era of rapid social transformation. Because so many other traditional Japanese institutions have been so thoroughly modernized and postmodernized, preschools are looked to as islands of cultural continuity in a sea of social change.

Marked and Unmarked Beliefs and Practices

We propose that beliefs and practices that are implicit are less open to scrutiny, criticism, and reform efforts than are beliefs and practices that are mandated in government documents, written down in textbooks, taught in schools of education, given a formal name, and otherwise made explicit. In each country's approach to early childhood education, we find beliefs and practices that are unmarked and unremarkable and therefore not subject to policy debates. The unmarked beliefs and practices are supported not by formal documents or explicit policies but instead by what we are calling "an implicit cultural logic."

Examples in Japan of unmarked, culturally implicit beliefs and practices about early childhood education include *mimamoru* (watching and waiting) and other strategies that allow teachers to hold back before intervening in children's fights; the emphasis on the development and cultivation of empathy (*omoiyari*) and emotions (and particularly of the emotions of loneliness and sadness); a valuing of the "childishness" of children (*kodomo rashii kodomo*); and the practice of older children playing with and caring for younger ones. The large (by US standards) student/teacher ratios of between twenty and thirty children with a single teacher found in Japanese preschools are a special case of implicit cultural logic, in that these ratios were originally imported from the West and they are explicitly mandated by the national ministries, but not viewed, as in the contemporary US, as an important program quality factor and therefore generally not studied, debated, or subject to reform efforts. In other words, although a 30/1 student/teacher ratio is a marked and explicit feature of Japanese early childhood education, the pedagogical goals and practices that are tied to and facilitated by such a ratio are based on a cultural logic that is implicit. This logic assumes that higher ratios better support the development of social mindedness (*shūdan shugi*) and group-living skills (*shakkai seikatsu*) than would the 10/1 student/teacher ratios typically found in US preschools.

Because this logic is implicit, it has a taken-for-granted nature that makes it both unnecessary and difficult for most Japanese insiders to explain. When asked why they have such large classes, Japanese teachers' and administrators' first response tends to be, "Because of money. With our low tuition we cannot afford smaller numbers of students per teacher. We are barely getting by as it is." But this begs the question of why in a country as wealthy and with as much emphasis on education as Japan, preschools choose to hold the line on tuition and maintain much larger student/teacher ratios than are found in American and European preschools.

In the original Preschool in Three Cultures study, it was only when we showed Japanese preschool teachers the videotape of the American preschool with sixteen children and two teachers that they were able to articulate the logic behind their preference for larger class size and high student/teacher ratios. Watching the St. Timothy's videotape of a classroom with a student/teacher ratio of eight to one, a teacher in Kyoto sighed, "It must be great to teach in America. Such small classes!" But when we followed up by asking, "So you think it would be better to have a class size of ten or twelve instead of twenty-five or thirty?" she responded, "No, I wouldn't say better. Well, maybe you could say better for the teacher, but not better for the children. Children need to have the experience of being in a large group in order to learn to relate to lots of kinds of children in lots of kinds of situations" (Tobin, Wu & Davidson 1989, 36–37). A teacher in Tokyo said of our videotape of an American preschool, "A class that size seems kind of sad and underpopulated." Another Tokyo teacher wondered, "In a class that size wouldn't a child's world be too narrow?" Yagi-sensei commented:

> I understand how this kind of small class size can help young children become very self-reliant and independent. But I can't help feeling that there is something kind of sad or lonely about a class that size. Don't American teachers worry that children may become too independent? I wonder how you teach a child to become a member of a group in a class that small? (37–38)

We can infer an implicit cultural logic or "folk pedagogy" (Bruner 1996) at work here: very small classes and low student/teacher ratios produce a classroom atmosphere that emphasizes teacher-student over student-student interactions and fails to provide children with adequate opportunities to learn to function as members of a group. In the US and other

countries where student/teacher ratios are marked as an important indicator of program quality, student/teacher ratios are a frequent battleground in policy and funding debates. In Japan, in contrast, student/teacher ratios are an unmarked, implicit cultural practice that rarely become the focus of discussions of quality or of reform efforts.

As discussed in the China chapter, in contemporary Chinese education there is a growing "nativization" (*bentuhua*) movement that overlaps with new Confucian movements. Critical of what they see as overzealous attempts to import foreign ideas without sufficiently localizing them and of failing to appreciate the unique virtues of Chinese thought, these movements are explicit about their goal of restoring to the curriculum traditional Chinese values and pedagogical approaches. These self-conscious, explicit efforts to preserve and reintroduce clearly marked Chinese cultural practices are a growing force in Chinese education. But we are suggesting that most of the characteristically Chinese beliefs and practices that we have identified in our study of contemporary Chinese preschools have been preserved and passed down less through self-conscious effort or political struggle than through the workings of informal, unmarked mechanisms of transmission. Practices that follow an implicit cultural logic in Chinese early childhood education include the emphasis on mastery and performance (Paine 1990), as seen, for example, in the Story Telling King activity; on shared daily bodily routines, as seen in the daily physical exercise activities conducted across Chinese preschools and other domains of Chinese society (Farquhar & Zhang 2005); and the emphasis on critique as a strategy for self-improvement, as seen both in the Story Telling King activity and in the practices of professional development for teachers based on critiques by experts and by peers (Paine 1990; Paine & Fang 2007). Even as Chinese early childhood education goes through dramatic and sometimes wrenching processes of reform, traditions of performance and mastery, a belief in the power of exemplars and the utility of critique, and a commitment to shared social activity are beliefs and practices that are implicit, unremarked, unremarkable, and therefore not subject to debate.

In the US, while debate is centered on questions of provision (for example, in bills calling for universal, publicly supported, pre-kindergarten programs) and on paradigm wars between proponents and opponents of developmentally appropriate practice and of direct instruction in literacy and mathematics, other practices can be found in US preschools that are unmarked and that reflect a core cultural logic that is largely shared across the philosophical/ideological spectrum. These practices include an emphasis on choice, self-expression, and the quality of the dyadic relationship between the teacher and each child in her class. An effect of the power of these shared cultural beliefs, for example, is that the 30/1 student/teacher ratios in preschool classrooms that, as we have seen, are consistent with Japanese cultural logic would be unimaginable and abhorrent if they were introduced to the US preschool context. Unlike in Japan, lower student/teacher ratios in the US are associated in people's minds with higher quality at all levels of education, from daycare for infants to doctoral seminars. The cultural logic/folk pedagogy here is explicit: lower ratios mean more individual attention for each student and fewer classroom management problems. What constitutes a suitably lower ratio varies by children's age and grade level.

We suggest that the implicit cultural logic behind this belief and practice in preschools, a logic that is unspoken and even sometimes actively denied, is that a low student/teacher ratio, by allowing for more frequent and more intense dyadic interactions between each child and the teacher, allows the teacher to be more mother-like. This logic is generally resisted by American early childhood educators because, when said out loud, it works to deprofessionalize a profession that is still struggling to escape the popular perception that preschool teaching is a form of childcare. But we suggest that those who defend the profession by denying the connection between parenting and preschool teaching protest too much and that a key cultural feature and perhaps even a strength of the US approach to early childhood education is its emphasis on dyadic interaction between teacher and child, an emphasis that reflects a hybridity of the roles of mother and teacher and of nurturance and mentoring (Goldstein 1997). The dyadic intensity of the teacher-child bond along with the emphasis on choice (as seen, for example, in the way children are encouraged and sometimes even required to express a preference for which activity center to play in during "choice time") and on self-expression (as seen, for example, in the logocentric approach to resolving disputes, where children are encouraged to put their feelings into words) is characteristic of the beliefs of American early childhood educators that are more implicit than explicit and therefore relatively impervious to policy shifts and reform efforts.

Locating Preschools in Time and Space

To make sense of similarities and differences in preschools of three cultures while also making sense of continuity and change in preschools over the course of a generation, we need to think simultaneously in terms of space

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The world society perspective: concepts, assumptions, and strategies

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For decades the world society perspective has influenced comparative research on a broad range of issues across the social sciences. The perspective emerged to make sense of an empirical puzzle: why did nation-state after nation-state expand mass schooling after World War II? The perspective evolved to address broader issues such as the authority of science and its influence on the environmental movement, the expansion of the scope of citizenship and its impact on women's rights and, more recently, the rise of an international human rights regime on the one hand and the celebration of universities of excellence on the other hand. The world society perspective has motivated research that examines worldwide and regional trends and generates hypotheses to explain these cross-national developments and variations.

This paper first clarifies some of the world society perspective's key assumptions and core arguments as applied to comparative education. Next, the paper situates the world society perspective within a broader neo-institutional theoretical framework. Neo-institutionalists assume that the actors are highly embedded in their larger environment. Following this assumption, we distinguish between levels of analysis (macro or societal, meso or organisational, and micro or individual levels) and the extent to which the relevant actors are conceptualised as embedded in environments. The paper then turns to consider the character of the influential environment and to discuss the role of models of reality as rationalising and legitimating myths. From a neo-institutional perspective, the actors are often imagined as enacting scripts that make sense given the triumph of some models of reality. The fourth section of this paper focuses on the concepts of institutional isomorphism and loose coupling and their uses in comparative research guided by the world society perspective. Lastly, the paper clarifies the kinds of research strategies associated with the world society perspective, from trend identification to more explicit efforts to model the diffusion of discourse, policies, structures, and practices. These strategies have varied over time. A common thread though is to empirically ascertain as to whether there is evidence supporting the dynamics emphasised within the world society perspective, net of other influences that impinge on the outcomes of interest.

1. The rise and triumph of mass schooling

The key assumptions and core arguments of the world society perspective have evolved over time, but the starting point was an empirical puzzle: the rise and triumph of mass schooling. Much of the earlier literature on this point assumed that mass schooling arose and expanded to meet the functional needs of an increasingly industrialised

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and urbanised social order (Dreeben 1968). The alternative Marxist perspective was also functionalist in tone, but here schooling functioned to reproduce the class-stratified society, not the seamless web often associated with the social order functionalists. Industrialisation and urbanisation were also triggers in this perspective; yet, they were viewed as creating not anomie but alienation, that is, not normlessness but counter-norms. The older normative order was indeed being undercut, but not by disoriented masses, rather by increasingly hostile workers. The rise of mass schooling would solve this problem by inculcating norms that would tranquilise the workers of the future, thereby co-opting a potential source of social conflict. Within this perspective it is the functional needs of the dominant class, not those of society as a whole, that mass schooling arises to meet (Bowles and Gintis 1976).

Despite their many differences, the social order and class reproduction perspectives share a common assumption: mass schooling arose to solve a socialisation problem brought about by rapid social change. Both perspectives seek to explain schooling by assuming that its rise and expansion is driven by the changing needs of society. More often than not, both perspectives further assume that mass schooling really works, i.e. mass schooling produces the new citizen, the new worker, or both.

To be sure, some scholars operating within one or the other perspective offered more nuanced accounts, often emphasising tensions between the demands of the capitalist economy versus those of the democratic polity (Carnoy and Levin 1985). Going beyond a sole emphasis on class conflict, Collins (1979) postulates competing interest groups, including class or ethnic affiliations, as the drivers of educational expansion. Competition for credentials and the status conferred by credentials moves this kind of argument away from the functionalist imagery in the classic formulations, but even the more nuanced versions start from the premise that there are actors pursing their interests to attain their goals. The latter may involve creating and maintaining a new social order or reproducing class or status advantages via schooling. Actors, interests, and goals are the crucial ingredients of many social science perspectives. As we shall see, the neo-institutional orientation offers other conceptual building blocks such as models, scripts, and identities.

Each of these perspectives sheds light on some aspects of the phenomena of interest, but since there is much cross-national variation in levels of industrialisation and urbanisation and in class structures and status group formations, these perspectives are ill-equipped to explain common cross-national trends in the direction of education expansion. After World War II an enormous worldwide growth of primary schooling could not be accounted for if one focused solely on what made these societies different. One needed to think about the wider world and its influence on nation-states and primary education. This was true not only as regards enrolment growth but also with respect to the establishment of compulsory school laws and the formation of national educational ministries.

It is a standard sociological strategy to assume that if different sub-units behave in common ways, one should look to the larger unit to make sense of the common patterns. This strategy leads to thinking about groups, organisational environments, and the wider world to make sense of common patterns of activity among individuals, organisations, and nation-states. We return to this strategy later as we situate the world society perspective within a broad typology of social science perspectives. For the moment though it suffices to point out that the first effort to deal with the empirical puzzle is to make the following assumptions: (i) nation-states are embedded in and influenced by a wider world; and (ii) that wider world legitimates the pursuit of

mass schooling as a nation-state project. From these two assumptions it follows that nation-states that undertook mass schooling were regarded as more legitimate than those that did not. The pursuit of mass schooling was thus closely related to the proper enactment of the nation-state identity. External legitimation and proper enactment of nation-state identity would become key concepts in the world society perspective. Further educational and related developments would be linked to these concepts instead of to ideas about functional solutions to systemic problems. From a world society perspective, education emerged and expanded not primarily because education solved problems but because education generated legitimacy for the nation-state and for its leadership.

World society scholars contend that the wider world was not simply hegemonic powers coercing educational outcomes on the other countries of the world. Nor did we think that increasingly common educational patterns were mostly due to imitating the countries that looked most successful. The United Kingdom, for example, did not have compulsory schooling legislation in place during its hegemonic era, roughly between 1810 and 1870 (Smelser 1991). The United States was a latecomer to the business of having a national educational ministry, establishing a distinctive one only in 1977. Coercive and mimetic processes are not irrelevant, but to understand the rapid diffusion of compulsory school legislation and national educational ministries, one needs to think beyond coercive and mimetic processes, however important these are for specific outcomes. It is also important to recognise how much what was going on involved identity enactment. That is, there were external models or blueprints that defined what constituted proper nation-states and increasingly defined mass schooling as a core nation-state project. In his much-cited work on the origins of nationalism, Benedict Anderson states:

> The independence movements in the Americas became, as soon as they were printed about, 'concepts', 'models', and indeed 'blueprints' [...] Out of the American welter, came these imagined realities: nation-states, republican institutions, common citizenships, popular sovereignty, national flags and anthems, etc. [...] In effect by the second decade of the nineteenth century, if not earlier, a 'model' of the independent national society was available for pirating. (Anderson 1991, 81)

For Anderson the diffusion of the nation-state and of nationalism is best understood as the triumph of models of reality that impinged on both dynasties that reconstituted themselves as nation-states and on colonies that also imagined themselves as nation-states. The portability of these models was due in good part to their modular or abstract character, not unlike notions of 'best practices' that flow throughout the world today. The models of the nation-state presuppose international society – 'national consciousness in Europe therefore bore from its inception the imprint of a consciousness of international society' (Maruyama cited in Anderson 1991, 97). If national consciousness were simply the natural outcome of historically specific processes, the commonalities Anderson emphasises and analyses would make little sense. The underlying premise is that commonalities in how leaders, and to some degree peoples, imagine themselves require a common source. A second point to bear in mind is that these models operate mainly as identity shaping influences, not as instruments of coercion or even imposition. The decline of older models and solidarities based on alternative dynastic and religious ways of imagining oneself facilitated the emergence of the models of the national community. The new models resulted in the merging of state, nation, and society; a merging that would undercut sub-national sources of solidarity as

well as transnational ones. The new models would call for mass schooling to symbolically transform transnational masses into national citizens (Ramirez and Boli-Bennett 1987).

From a world society perspective the key concepts initially emphasised involved the nation-state as a model, mass schooling as a nation-state project, and the symbolic triumph of schooling as authority. Simplifying enormously, the core argument is threefold: (i) nation-states acquire legitimacy to the degree that they enact proper nation-state identity; (ii) the expansion of education is a central feature of the enactment of proper nation-state identity; and thus (iii) nation-states expand schooling beyond what one might expect if increased schooling was simply a reaction to local or national conditions.

There are two underlying ideas that we propose to address. The first has to do with the embedded character of nation-states, a property that nation-states share with organisations and individuals according to a neo-institutional perspective. Addressing the first idea leads to situating the world society perspective within a broader typology of sociological theories. This section builds on distinctions earlier developed in Jepperson (1991) and in Meyer et al. (1997). The second idea is the symbolic character of models of reality and of the institutional orders these support. Addressing the second idea leads to discussing models of reality as rationalising myths and to thinking about schooling as rituals that enact and activate these myths.

2. The embedded character of actors

There are many different ways of classifying sociological theories. Here we think in terms of a typology based on two dimensions: the level of analysis and the degree to which the actors are embedded in environments. It is conventional to distinguish between theories that primarily focus on individuals (micro), organisations (meso), or societies (macro). These different foci correspond to different levels of analysis. In some analyses the main actors are individuals while in others organisational and societal actors play a central role. To illustrate, the literature on development can emphasise the role of individuals and their varying skill sets and attitudinal orientations (as in human capital and early modernisation theories) but it can also stress the role of firms and states as organisational actors that foster or hinder development. Lastly, one can focus on societies and discuss whether there are some societal features that enhance development, as in the extensive democracy and development literature. To be sure, there are theories and studies in which multiple levels of analyses are emphasised. Analytical distinctions between levels of analysis are heuristic devices, not affirmations of ontological differences.

The second dimension involves how basic units are conceptualised. The crucial feature of this dimension is whether the individuals, organisations, or societies are seen as weakly or strongly embedded in larger environments. At the micro level there are clear differences between theories that emphasise the internal properties of individuals versus those that pay more attention to the situations within which individuals find themselves. Examples of the weakly embedded individual range from earlier theories of personality or motivation to more recent research emphasising genetics and neuro-cognitive science. Examples of the strongly embedded individual are found in studies that emphasise situated identity or situated cognition. These studies suggest that what is crucial is the context or situation in which individuals find themselves. From this perspective the timid become entrepreneurial if the situation fosters

entrepreneurship. Conversely, their environment can stifle the entrepreneurial. Tinkering with the situation or the environment, not the person, is what is called for if individuals are strongly embedded in situations.

At the organisational level, a similar distinction can be made between theories in which organisations are autonomous actors versus those that emphasise the influence of external environments. The distinction roughly corresponds to the difference between thinking about organisations as closed systems versus open systems (Scott 1987). A very similar distinction can be made at the macro level and indeed many of the development debates hinge on how much we think national development is driven by internal national factors as opposed to the wider global context within which nation-states find themselves.

The world society perspective operates at the macro level of analysis. It rejects the reductionist assumption that macro-level structures and processes are best conceptualised as outcomes of micro-level activities. The reductionist assumption is quite prevalent in the social sciences in the United States. Many studies begin with the premise that there are actors (typically individuals) and that the decisions these make result in macro-level structures. The fact that these actors and their interests do not operate in a vacuum is often elided in these studies. Jepperson and Meyer (2011) offer an extended critique of reductionist actor centred theories, emphasising the extent to which macro-level institutions shape the actors and their interests. Interestingly enough, Bowles and Gintis, in their critique of both liberal and Marxist theories, draw a similar inference. They put it this way:

> In both (liberal and Marxian perspectives) institutions are seen as conduits for social action rather than as powerful influences on the formation of individual wills and group solidarities. Institutions – whether they be democratic elections or trade unions – therefore are evaluated primarily on the basis of their ability to record, aggregate, enforce, or satisfy preexisting interests. The manner in which institutions engender preferences and interests is thereby obscured. (Bowles and Gintis 1976, 22)

Clearly there are a number of otherwise different perspectives in the social sciences in which the macro level is the starting point. Here again the issue is not an ontological one, not a chicken and egg question regarding the relationship between individuals and institutions. The analytical question is whether fresh insights can be generated if one starts with institutions. Meyer's focus on education as an institution suggests that many of the powerful effects of schools and universities are due to the triumph of education as a legitimated theory of knowledge as well as of personnel (Meyer 1977). Struggles over the content of the curriculum make little sense unless all concerned parties assume that school-based knowledge and educational certification count a lot in the wider society. Net of school effects due to superior pedagogies or curricular coherence, the legitimacy of the school as an institution is consequential. Importing Gothic architecture and the tutorial system will not lead to 'Oxbridge' effects in the United States. The secret to the socialisation effects of Oxbridge lies not in its distinctive organisational structures and interaction patterns; rather, these effects are largely driven by the widespread belief that the future leaders of the country are being nurtured in these universities. If no one believes that 'American Oxbridge' is producing the future leaders of the country, then reforms aimed at altering internal structures and procedures will not do the trick. A singular focus on socialisation effects may obscure direct institutional effects involving identity transformations due to the authority of educational institutions to legitimate these transformations.

The world society perspective imagines nation-states and their educational projects as highly embedded in the wider world. Worldwide changes lead to changes in the nation-state and in national educational policies and structures. National developments are not solely driven by properties of the nation-state. Other theories in the social sciences also start with the premise of highly embedded actors. The dependencia school (Frank 1979) and later the world-systems perspective (Wallerstein 1973) stressed the extent to which national structures and policies were dependent on the wider world. As regards education in particular, the work of Roger Dale (2000) and his colleagues clearly illustrates the embedded actors' premise. There are, of course, differences across these perspectives but they are aligned insofar as they see nation-states or organisations therein as an open system. All these perspectives focus on external influences (either as opportunities or constraints) on nation-states and on national educational developments. The perspectives differ as regards the nature of the environment that impinges on nation-states. The next section focuses on the nature of the environment that world society scholars emphasise.

3. The nature of the world environment

For many scholars the world environment is first and foremost a world capitalist economy. The influence of capitalism at the national or world levels is a recurring theme in comparative education. More recently the role of international organisations in shaping national educational policies has been stressed (Verger 2009; Beech 2011). This literature ranges from emphasising coercive mechanisms via *quid pro quo* arrangements dictated by the International Monetary Fund to more sophisticated accounts on why some educational ideas and practices acquire taken for granted status. The classical assumption is that the ideas and practices in the dominant or hegemonic powers become the taken for granted ideas and practices everywhere. The process may not involve coercion *per se* but the more powerful clearly have an advantage in the marketplace of ideas, or for that matter, in any marketplace. This perspective overlaps with that of the world society one, insofar as world society scholars emphasise the role of scientists, professionals, and other experts in influencing educational, scientific, and related developments throughout the world (Chabbott 2003; Drori et al. 2003).

But there are some nagging questions that need to be addressed. Why do these experts matter? What assumptions have to be in place for their expertise to be influential? Why does their expertise travel so readily across the world? And lastly, why is education so crucial to both their expertise claims and to the kind of advice they proffer?

One answer, of course, is that these experts matter because their expertise works. This answer makes good sense if the expertise put forth could be thought of as efficacious technology. This premise is easier to accept if we are dealing with specific goals and concrete technologies, but the goals of education tend to be more diffuse and diverse, ranging from literacy and numeracy to citizenship, creativity and innovation, tolerance and understanding, sustainable development, and poverty reduction, etc. Given the enormous difficulties in gauging how efficacious education is in attaining these diffuse goals, a better answer to the questions posed in the prior paragraph lies in the authority and advice that scientific expertise garners. That is, educational blueprints command greater confidence because they are consistent with established models of reality and because those that set forth these blueprints enjoy certified authority. Logics of confidence, in general, are more likely to operate under conditions of uncertainty as regards the relationship between action and goals (DiMaggio and Powell

1983). Educational credentials are crucial determinants of expertise across a growing number of domains, from child rearing to university governance to development planning.

To understand why an educational logic of confidence is in place one has to understand which models of reality have come to dominate the human imagination. From a world society perspective, models of reality function as rationalising and legitimating myths. Humans need to make sense of their existence, and that often requires myths that provide answers to questions for which there are no clear technical answers. Myths, it is important to state, are not plain falsehoods. Myths are symbolic accounts that tell us who we are, providing us with a sense of entitivity and a perspective on the world around us.

Anthropologists have often described the myths that facilitated the transmission of society from one generation to the next. Anthropologists have also made sense of the rituals through which these myths are activated. Some anthropologists have even applied these ideas to modern societies, dramatising the fact that moderns have not evolved beyond the need for reassuring symbolic accounts (Douglas 1966). For the most part, however, the social science and the comparative education literatures have resisted moving in this direction, with the notable exception of the world society perspective. Putting aside both social order and class reproduction perspectives, world society scholars have sought to problematise both the nation-state and mass schooling as a key nation-state project. The starting point here is Berger and Luckmann's explanation of legitimation as an effort to make sense of reality:

> Legitimation 'explains' the institutional order by ascribing cognitive validity to its objectivated meanings. Legitimation justifies the institutional order by giving a normative dignity to its practical imperatives. It is important to understand that legitimation has a cognitive as well as a normative element. In other words legitimation is not just a matter of 'values'. It always implies knowledge as well. [...] Legitimation not only tells the individual why he should perform one action and not another; it also tells him why things are what they are. In other words 'knowledge' precedes 'values' in the legitimation of institutions. (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 95–96)

At the most basic level, the category of the individual or person must be in place prior to the flowering of norms regarding how persons should act or be treated. This point is central to Berger's discussion of the triumph of the 'dignity of the individual' over the 'honor of the family' as a legitimating myth (Berger 1973). The former sounds progressive and the latter more like an amoral residue of a backward society. Think of how often the 'dignity of the individual' is assumed in development plans or in critiques of inadequate development plans. Contrast that to the absence of the 'honor of the family' in broad understandings of human or societal development. At the micro level of analysis, much of the work by Goffman hinges on a similar understanding of the dignity of the individual as a powerful symbol: the individual has become a deity worthy of respect and individuals are expected to present themselves accordingly (Goffman 1956). The importance of being treated like a person makes sense only if the person is imagined to be loaded with dignity that calls for respect.

From a world society perspective the rise of the individual person as a rationalising and legitimating myth is crucial. The legitimate individual is linked to other myths that add up to a 'symbolic universe' that legitimates 'everyday roles, priorities, and operating procedures, by placing them *sub specie universi*, that is, in the context of the most general frame of reference possible' (Berger and Luckmann 1967, 99). From a world

society perspective the myth of the individual person is initially linked to other myths, namely: (i) the myth of the nation as an aggregation of individuals; (ii) the myth of childhood socialisation and continuity over the life course; (iii) the myth of progress; and (iv) the myth of the state as the protector of the nation. Schooling for all makes sense only if it is widely believed that what one learns in school adds up to adult competencies and that the sum of these competencies in turn adds up to a better society. Childhood socialisation and national development are thus symbolically linked to each other. This symbolic link paves the way for nation-states to envision themselves as 'at risk' when their children fare poorly in international achievement assessments.

The melding of nation, society, and state gives the state a role in the production of the good citizen that is imagined to be the key to the better society. Theorisation of progress and justice links these myths more closely. Broad notions of progress and justice are central to contemporary models of reality that operate like symbolic universes. The better society is inevitably imagined as one in which more and more people are educated; not surprisingly, more and more people are in fact educated (Schofer and Meyer 2005).

World society scholars do not make essentialist claims that real progress or true justice has been achieved, but rather that theorised standards of progress and justice play a central role in shaping a general narrative that informs models of the good nation-state and the good citizen. Alternative, more fatalistic or more hierarchical models of reality have less legitimacy. The playing fields of Eton are now much less likely to be invoked to account for military triumph or overall national success.

An unintended consequence of the ubiquity of the narrative is that we are more likely to be aware of principles, policies, and practices at odds with the progress and justice through education narrative. When these persist they are classified as corruption and inefficient on the one hand and on the other as discriminatory and unfair. Cross-national data are increasingly collected and assembled on these matters; there are gender equity indices as well as corruption rankings. The standards tend to be articulated as if these apply everywhere, but since local conditions vary, one should expect to find discrepancies between 'the talk' and 'the walk'. If the standards were resisted in the first place there would be no gap to account for and no hypocrisy to denounce. Each country and each organisation would articulate its standards influenced by its unique model of reality in close conformity to its particular conditions. It is precisely because countries and organisations adapt standards not in conformity with particular conditions or historical legacies that we end up with both 'institutional isomorphism' and 'loose coupling'. These are concepts we turn to in the next section.

Before doing so, though, consider two similar yet different ways of thinking about embedded actors. The first and perhaps more established way is to assume there are actors and there are situations or environments. The actors are not wholly autonomous and their decisions are not simply a reflection of their interests or their goals. The actors – individuals, organisations, and societies – are very much influenced by their situations or environments and in that sense they are open rather than closed systems; but there is a clear line between the actors and the environments. To go back to an earlier example, one can reiterate that if you tinker with the environment you can make the timid entrepreneurial and the entrepreneurial timid. The appropriate beliefs, values, and motives will follow from the tinkering with the environment.

Contrast this mode of thinking with one in which the actors are constituted by the environment. The latter generates a range of plausible identities that may or may not include entrepreneurs. This generation precedes normative imperatives in exactly the

sense that Berger and Luckmann argue that knowledge comes before values. Now, assume that the restlessly rational pursuit of self-interest in the economic realm is in good part what entrepreneurs do. Assume further that a clearly differentiated economic realm does not exist or is just emerging and that contemplated activity therein is defined as mortal sin by a highly institutionalised religious authority. If these assumptions are in place, it will take a lot more than tinkering to create an entrepreneur. Major cultural change is required to undercut the religious authority and to have the identity of entrepreneur enter into the range of plausible identities. The environment in this instance is not just an external influence on the actors, but rather, it is the cultural matrix which provides the actors with a sense of who they are, what their world is, and what their perspective ought to be. The actors depend on the cultural matrix for their entitivity and their legitimacy.

The world society emphasis on models of reality, and how these operate as rationalising and legitimating myths, is consistent with the second perspective. The actors are not just influenced by their environments; the latter constitutes them. The reconstitution of dynasties and colonies into nation-states required an environment that provided them with a nation-state blueprint and, over time, with mass schooling as a nation-state project that further legitimated their status as a nation-state in a world of nation-states. At the other end of the continuum many of the features of personhood we now take for granted, including a sense of agency, also required changes in how peoples are envisioned. These are broad cultural shifts, but it is the universalism of these changes that constitutes a significant break with past models: all are educable, all are capable of getting better, all can develop, and education is central to individual and societal development. Note the universalism underlying human capital and human rights perspectives. All nation-states are expected to act as if investing in the entire population (or at least acting as if they all count) makes sense. All nation-states are expected to act as if they care about human rights.

The world environment is a symbolic universe in which theorised models of progress and justice provide a narrative that links several rationalising and legitimating myths. Central to this narrative is the role of education as a means to progress and justice. Education is in fact the most legitimated and most scripted means to attain these goals. All sorts of educational and related principles, policies, and practices make sense given the triumph of a world educational culture. All sorts of expertise are aligned to this culture, both gaining legitimacy from it and strengthening it as well. Actors, interests, and goals are thus socially constructed. Their legitimacy is contingent on the wider world, and its privileged models and scripts and the legitimated identities that follow from their enactment. These models and scripts are articulated through a range of organisational carriers that include scientists, consultants, and other educated experts. Much of the expert advice offered is universalistic in tone and has the character of advancing abstract 'best practices'. Not surprisingly, however, the wider world culture and its 'best practices' are not uniformly implemented across the world. Instead what we often see is adherence at some level and noncompliance at another. The next section of this paper discusses this phenomena using the concepts of institutional isomorphism and loose coupling.

4. Institutional isomorphism and loose coupling

These concepts were initially developed at the organisational level of analysis, with schools and universities as their immediate focus. Why did schools and universities

with vastly different resources end up with similar goals, policies, curricula, and routines? These were initially schools and universities in the United States where political and educational decentralisation in good part account for the observed differences. But why would these differences not lead to other differences? One answer is that schools were not only local organisations steeped in local conditions and community cultures; quite the contrary, schools sought to look like 'real schools' (Metz 1989) and thus adopted the characteristics of 'real schools'. Efforts to look like 'real schools' were not simply top down bureaucratic impositions on resisting parents; quite the contrary, parents often resisted educational reforms that made the schools adapt to local conditions, which veered from the taken for granted templates of schooling. In the American context, the template called for an accredited school with a certified teacher delivering an approved curriculum to a registered student (Meyer 1977). The implemented curriculum was less inspected and, until recently, there were no data on the achieved curriculum that would allow for comparison. A logic of confidence prevailed: much effort went into adhering to the template. The latter was the product of both state and professional authority.

These commonalities characterising otherwise different organisations were conceptualised as institutional isomorphism. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) contend that institutional isomorphism was more likely when there was uncertainty as to how organisational goals would be achieved. Given conditions of uncertainty, organisations are more vulnerable to coercive, mimetic, or normative processes. The authority of the state was a source of coercion, successful organisations were imitated, and professionals and their ideas generated normative pressures. Through one or all of these mechanisms, organisations would begin to formally look like each other. It is not difficult to imagine how these processes separately or in tandem would lead to formally similar schools or universities. It is also not difficult to grasp that vast differences in resources would result in gaps between schools and between universities along many dimensions. These gaps would simply be differences and receive little attention if different schools and different universities had clearly different goals more in line with local conditions; but because different schools and different universities proclaim common goals and adapt similar policies and routines, the gaps have been conceptualised as loose coupling.

Thus, the concept of loose coupling makes little sense unless the concept of institutional isomorphism is also recognised. Not surprisingly, educational reform efforts seek to better align the practices of educational organisations with their goals. These efforts at tighter coupling are evident in the United States, but also throughout the world where the results of international assessments are supposed to help schools to do 'the right thing'. One could challenge the use of these assessments by contending that different schools in different national contexts should have different goals, but the fact of the matter is that the number of countries participating in these assessments has increased and the results of these assessments are widely circulated (Kamens and McNeeley 2010). Thus, Finland has now acquired heroic status in some educational policy circles, just as Japan and the so-called Asian Tigers once did. The assumption is that one should be able to identify 'best practices' in these countries and to transport these to different parts of the world. If one assumes that best practices will travel more readily as discursive intended curricula than as implemented or achieved curricula, one would expect to find both institutional isomorphism and loose coupling across the world. One would then have to look at not national but at global templates to figure out why some ideas are more likely to be codified as keys to quality schooling. In

general, ideas more compatible with models of progress and justice trump those that seem to violate one or the other pillars of the overarching world culture narrative on how to become a better person, organisation, or society.

Attempts to deal with loose coupling have often assumed hypocrisy on the part of the adopters. How else should one explain the disparity between commitments to education for all deadlines and the failure to attain these goals in a timely fashion? Loose coupling can indeed be due to official hypocrisy where the commitments are nothing more than fig leaves to conceal weak efforts, but there are at least two other possibilities to consider. First, some countries may simply underestimate what it takes to achieve the proclaimed goals. This would be incompetence, but not hypocrisy. Secondly, the countries may have a realistic idea as to the efforts needed but see goal affirmation as a way of mobilising public opinion and resources to move in the direction of attaining the goals. Becoming number one in the world in science and math achievement was declared a national educational goal by an administration in the United States, despite evidence that this was not a realistic goal. Goal affirmation as mobilisational strategy should not be dismissed out of hand. Nor is this a strategy only employed in less developed countries.

Another effort to deal with loose coupling is to suggest that the adoption of this or that policy or structure is superficial. Faced with the coercive power of a lending organisation or a victorious country demanding compliance, the dependent or defeated party bends only insofar and for as long as it has to. Ultimately, those policies and structures that profoundly resonate with local or national culture will reassert themselves. This is a variant of path dependency arguments in organisational analysis and of historical institutionalism in societal analysis. To these arguments is now added the idea that what goes on is indigenisation: external cultural flows interact with local materials to create distinctive realities despite apparent commonalities.

These arguments are not meritless, but they beg the question of why some cultural flows are embraced when not imposed. Neither the nation-state nor mass schooling as a nation-state project was imposed on dynasties or colonies. National independence movements eagerly activated the nation-state model in opposition to the colonial powers. The newer nation-states moved more rapidly to endorse mass schooling, bypassing earlier debates over who was educable (Ramirez and Boli-Bennett 1982). Furthermore, newer nation-states moved more rapidly to universalise the franchise and extended it to women with less controversy (Ramirez, Soysal and Shanahan 1997). In this and related developments, newer nation-states seemed more attuned to the state of world culture when they became independent than to their local cultures.

Lastly, these arguments imply that what really matters is how people experience common cultural flows and the institutional and identity implications of these flows. This point takes us back to the institutional isomorphism and loose coupling ideas as they were first developed. Nowhere in the initial formulations is there the assumption that schooling is experienced in the same way across different students or schools. Educational reforms and innovations are certainly experienced differently across different nation-states (Steiner-Khamsi 2010). The question, though, is why some educational reforms and innovations diffuse and others do not. Mass schooling may be experienced differently between and within countries, but its worldwide triumph cannot be ignored. Treating this phenomena as if one had more than 200 independent cases of educational adoptions, requiring more than 200 unique historicist accounts, guarantees a low level of theoretical parsimony. If one further assumed within-nation variation in how an

innovation is reacted to, the number of historicist accounts needed expands exponentially.

The local indeed matters, but how much it matters varies over time and space. This is an empirical issue that cannot be resolved by simply privileging the local. How this issue is tackled within the world society perspective is the subject of the last section of this paper.

5. Research designs in world society studies

Many earlier studies identified worldwide educational trends and sought to make sense of why different entities were marching in the same direction. We find worldwide trends in other domains as well: in transformations in the status of women in some important (but not all) dimensions, in the rise of science and its influence on the environmental movement, and in the emergence of an international human rights regime and its increasing inclusion in educational content. The first part of this section revisits the identification of trends as an object of world society studies (i), contrasting 'institutionalised domains' versus 'contested terrains'. Next, this section reflects on the hypothesis testing strategy common in world society studies (ii). Two points are emphasised: the assumption of comparable units and the inclusion of variables implied by alternative perspectives in the same hypothesis testing research design. This reflection reiterates the basic idea that the world society perspective predicts findings net of the influence of other dynamics. Thirdly, the paper considers more recent efforts to model the diffusion process (iii) by taking into account the following: (a) the extent to which a policy, structure, or practice has been adopted by other nation-states; (b) the degree to which a nation-state is linked to the wider world and its models; and (c) the time period under observation. These more recent efforts emphasise the macro-level mechanisms through which the wider world influences nation-states. Lastly, the uses of case studies within the world society perspective are examined (iv). Cases may be used to illustrate the dynamics emphasised within the world society perspective. They may also be used to identify deviant cases, and generate more concrete insights into the conditions under which world system dynamics hold.

(i) Identification of worldwide trends

The identification of worldwide trends is now a staple of world society research, but the initial discovery of global patterns of educational developments was an inductive matter brought about by the lack of support for theories that emphasised national differences as the key to understanding educational developments. Early world society studies suggested that once an entity imagined itself as a nation-state, it expanded education regardless of its level of development, political regime, or local culture. This was especially the case after World War II when compared to pre-World War II educational growth patterns. Meyer, Ramirez and Soysal (1992) showed that prior to World War II, countries with fewer primary enrolments grew slower than those with greater enrolments, but that this was not the case after WWII. This finding suggested that paying attention to historical eras was an important consideration, as these would condition the likelihood of trends. Later, this idea led to the premise that nation-state characteristics would be more influential in earlier eras and, conversely, that world influences would be greater in more recent eras. This idea resonates with neo-institutional arguments that in the earlier eras differences between organisations matter more, but that

over time organisational blueprints take over creating institutional isomorphism via diffusion processes (Tolbert and Zucker 1985).

The identification of worldwide trends is only a starting point. One way of thinking about earlier versus more recent eras is to distinguish between when a policy or structure is contested terrain versus when it has become an institutionalised or taken for granted domain. The acquisition of the franchise by women illustrates this point. This was very much a contested issue in earlier eras, but has been taken for granted in recent years. Thus, one finds that in earlier eras national differences matter more in predicting whether women will gain the right to vote, but that what other countries are doing matters more in more recent eras (Ramirez, Soysal and Shanahan 1997). Furthermore, the gap between the date of male franchise and female franchise acquisition sharply declines over time. That is, in earlier eras, one could universalise the franchise for men but assume that women did not have the same legal persona. This has turned out to be an illicit distinction in the twenty-first century. Other distinctions persist, however, as the feminist literature correctly points out: franchise rights are more secure than reproduction rights. The shift from contested terrain to institutionalised domain is not automatic, nor should one assume that once a domain is institutionalised, contestation is no longer possible.

(ii) Hypothesis testing strategy

The examples above exemplify the difference between trend identification and hypothesis testing in world society studies. Both activities presuppose comparable units. There are few scholars who contend that individuals or even organisations cannot be compared. No one raises the apples and oranges objection when considering individuals or organisations. It is, of course, the case that individuals vary enormously. This is also true of organisations. The rise of the experimental method in psychology confronted the clinical tradition with its emphasis on knowing the whole person via an intensive case study. The same methodological confrontation was evident in organisational studies, but comparative studies of organisation are now routine: the generalisation that as organisations increase in size they also increase in role specialisation does not provoke much by way of controversy.

So, why can we not compare apples and oranges when it comes to countries? In good part the answer to this question depends on what is meant by comparing. Apples and oranges indeed cannot be compared as wholes. Neither can individuals, organisations, or nation-states. However, it makes good sense to compare apples and oranges with respect to certain properties. Nutritional science routinely compares apples and oranges and many other foods to reveal variation in fats, carbohydrates, folic acid, calcium, protein, iron, Vitamin D, etc.

Comparing nation-states is an endeavour designed to show that variation in some properties of nation-states are a function of variations in other properties of nation-states. The dependent variables may be the level of tertiary enrolments or the likelihood that a human rights commission has been established (Koo and Ramirez 2009) or that a country has ratified the convention to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (Wotipka and Ramirez 2008) or the degree to which textbooks display an environmentalist focus or student-centred format (Bromley, Meyer and Ramirez 2011a, 2011b) or a human rights emphasis (Meyer, Bromley and Ramirez 2010). These are examples of dependent variables analysed in recent world society studies. In each of these studies, the independent variables are not simply the measures emphasised in

the world society perspective; rather, variables emphasised by other perspectives are also included. The point of the analysis is to gauge whether different kinds of hypothesised relationships between different variables are consistent with the data. In principle it is conceivable that the evidence supports all or none of the hypotheses of interest.

To briefly illustrate this hypothesis testing strategy, consider the analysis of the formation of national human rights commissions. Koo and Ramirez (2009) find support for the premise that the adoption rate is influenced by what other nations are doing as well as by whether a nation-state is more linked to the wider world via international nongovernmental organisational memberships. Their paper also shows that countries with more respectable human rights records are more likely to establish national human rights commissions earlier. The main inference is that the analysis shows the impact of world society factors, net of the influence of other variables. Moreover, this cross-national hypothesis testing strategy is found across the social science disciplines and does not favour one set of ideas over another.

(iii) Recent efforts to model the diffusion process

To be sure there are many different kinds of comparative research strategies. There are tradeoffs: the breath of relatively large *N* studies allows for generalisations but comes at the cost of more in-depth understanding of case-specific processes or developments. Thinking about mechanisms through which nation-states are influenced by the wider world is indeed important. The first and perhaps obvious one centres on what other nation-states are doing. To go back to Benedict Anderson, part of what made the nation-state model flow is the growth in the numbers of entities that were organised like nation-states. This made it easier for dynasties and colonies alike to embrace the nation-state model. In many world society studies, a recurring idea is that the more nation-states in either the world as a whole or in one's region that adopt a policy or develop a structure, the greater the likelihood that others will do likewise. This consistent result is in line with classical diffusion ideas. This finding is modified when one shows that it works better in more recent eras. That is, the more the world is better-integrated the greater the influence of other countries.

However, countries vary in how much they are linked into the wider world. A complementary idea is that if you are more exposed to world models that emphasise, for example, the value of having a national human rights commission, you are more likely to have one. The same exposure mechanism holds if instead of thinking in terms of world models of justice pushing for national human rights commissions, one thinks in terms of world models of progress calling for ministries of science (Jang 2000). Following Boli and Thomas (1999), many studies have used national memberships in international organisations as an indicator of linkage to the wider world. Some studies have focused more specifically on human rights INGOs or on education INGOs. These are crude proxies for the degree of integration into the wider world and there are ongoing efforts to develop more refined measures.

Lastly, one can focus on the era or period to assess its influence on the diffusion process. Here we go beyond the general finding that world-level factors work better in more recent eras. The issue is whether there is something about a period that accelerates the diffusion process, that is, the rate at which some policy or structure is adopted. One idea is to see whether there is a link between international conferences that promote greater awareness of the issues that the policy or structures address. Several studies show that the dates of the relevant conferences influence the rate of

adoption of the appropriate treaties or commissions. The timing of international women's conferences, for instance, is positively associated with the rates at which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (EDAW) is ratified (Wotipka and Ramirez 2008). International conferences may function as sites of anticipatory or *in situ* socialisation, occasions for mobilising support in favour of the favoured policies or structures.

Another way of dealing with period effects is to literally include a 'watershed' date in the analysis. By the mid-1990s, the fall of the Soviet Union had the practical effect of eliminating or diluting more state-centric models of progress. The myth of the individual becomes less attached to the myth of the state as the protector of the nation. Theorisation of progress and of justice will more directly centre on educational efforts to expose students to visions of human rights bearing citizens in more student centric curricular materials that call for active engagement in environmental education. These efforts, one imagines, will be more successful at the level of the intended rather than the implemented or achieved curricula. Three interrelated studies were designed to examine school textbooks with human rights emphases, student centricity, and environmental foci as the dependent variables. In each of these studies, textbooks published after 1995 were more likely to reflect the expected outcomes, net of the influence of other variables. What these findings suggest is that the fall of the Soviet Union added up to a world level 'shock' that influenced nation-state policies and structures, including what their school textbooks covered.

(iv) The use of case studies

The world society perspective is often associated with cross-national quantitative longitudinal analysis. However, it is a mistake to assume that the world society perspective is incompatible with the case study tradition in the social sciences. From earlier studies comparing the status of Turkish immigrants in different European countries (Soysal 1994) to more recent research on textbooks in Korea (Moon and Koo 2011), world society scholars have made use of case studies. Much of this work has concretely illustrated change patterns or relationships between variables emphasised in the more quantitative studies, but some case studies reveal that countries may be similar in invoking international human rights treaties but different insofar as one also invokes its national constitution while the other does not. Countries with more recent problematic human rights records (e.g. Argentina) are less likely to emphasise their national constitutions as a basis for human rights than countries with a better human rights profile (e.g. Costa Rica) (Suárez 2007). The international human rights regime thus interacts with local conditions to produce some different results in addition to the common ones.

To conclude, briefly consider what makes persons, organisations, and nation-states pursue some routes and not others? One general answer in the social sciences favours explanations that privilege roots. Different roots lead to different routes. Path dependency and historical institutionalism exemplify this general orientation. An alternative general answer focuses on the rules of the game. Common rules lead to common routes. From a neo-institutionalist perspective, the rules of the game, broadly construed, are crucial. Actors, interests, and goals are shaped by the rules of the game; identities, scripts, and models need to be attended to in order to figure out why common routes are followed. The world society perspective is a special case of neo-institutional theory and tries to make sense of world level rules of the game, paying special attention to how common rules emerged and added up to world models of progress and justice.

World society studies assess the influence of these models relative to that of national roots.

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Global Citizenship and Human Rights: A Longitudinal Analysis of Social Studies and Ethics Textbooks in the Republic of Korea

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What happens to traditional civic notions of nation, national identity, and constitutional rights when national curricula incorporate ideas of global citizenship, other national identities, diversity, and human rights? Using a longitudinal, mixed-methods approach, we address this issue by analyzing the nature of changes in South Korean civic education textbooks. Findings indicate that national citizenship themes remain core elements but that their emphases have weakened, while global citizenship themes have dramatically increased, especially in the 1990s and 2000s. In addition, the content and presentation of textbooks have become increasingly learner-centered, encouraging students to become self-directed, empowered individuals in a global society. Interviews with academics, practitioners, and policy makers indicate that both global and local factors contributed to these developments.

Introduction

Historically, schools were central to the process of incorporating the masses to form a homogenous national citizenry (Weber 1979). Mass schooling emerged as a nation-building project to transform individuals into productive national citizens (Meyer et al. 1977; Ramirez and Boli 1987), and the formal curriculum ensured that students would learn the appropriate norms and proper behavior to function and identify as loyal members of the broader national polity (Dreeben 1968; Brint et al. 2001).

While national citizenship continues to be a core component of formal

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education, recent studies show that curricula in many countries have moved beyond an exclusive emphasis on the nation-state to include the teaching of global citizenship (Law 2004; Davies and Issitt 2005). Schools still create a sense of national identity by instilling national values and ideals, yet they also seek to impart subnational and supranational values (Soysal and Wong 2005).

Recent studies also document that human rights education is a central component of global citizenship education (Gaudelli and Fernekes 2004). In teaching about the inherent rights to which people are entitled simply by virtue of their being human, human rights education advances the rights of individuals to invoke claims to membership in both subnational and supranational groups within and beyond the state, attenuating the claims of the traditional nation-state to generate exclusive citizen loyalty. Studies show that recent curricular reforms in many countries around the world have focused on the incorporation of global citizenship education, in general (Friedman 2000), and human rights education, in particular (Firer 1998; Niens et al. 2006).

Research also suggests that a key characteristic of global citizenship education and human rights education is the empowerment of children through student-centered learning (Byrnes 1997; Asano 2000). Progressive pedagogical ideologies and associated curricular movements, such as student-centered learning, emerged earlier, in the 1930s, and became institutionalized as a global trend throughout the post–World War II period (Rosenmund 2006). These now-conventional discourses also legitimate rights and individual-centered educational models, such as global citizenship and human rights education, which teach children about their individual and participatory roles as world citizens and about the importance of linking themselves first and foremost to their human identity. For instance, in a cross-national analysis of social science textbooks, Meyer et al. (2010) found that measures of student centrism had a positive, significant effect on the level of human rights emphases. While student centrism may play a causal role in the more immediate rise of global citizenship and human rights education, effects in the opposite causal direction are also possible.

To explain these trends, scholars have examined both global and local factors, although without sufficient attention to the interplay of these dimensions. Neoinstitutional studies, on the one hand, highlight the influence of globalization and the role of transnational actors, such as international organizations and professionals, as well as the ways in which they carry and diffuse global educational models (Suarez et al. 2009). Studies that stress endogenous conditions, on the other hand, highlight domestic factors, such as the political environment, culture, and various local imperatives (Law 2004). However, the relative importance of the mechanisms involved in diffusion, and how global and local processes interact, remain subject to debate among scholars.

This study seeks to both document and explain the rapid rise of global citizenship education in South Korea. Using quantitative data, we first describe trends in South Korean civic education textbooks. Next, we use qualitative data from interviews with various local actors to explain how global citizenship emphases in the South Korean curriculum came about. In particular, we seek to better understand the process of diffusion by exploring how global trends are mediated by local conditions.

We select the case of South Korea because it presents a paradoxical combination of factors that has the potential to make a solid theoretical contribution to the literature. On the one hand, South Korea has inherited a tradition of strong state authoritarianism, which maintains a centralized system of governance, has a strong Confucian legacy, and must constantly deal with a volatile security environment, given the presence of a communist North Korean neighbor with which the country is technically still at war. At the same time, the country has endorsed the route to globalization that has also involved the adoption of global educational models. From a historical legacy perspective (Pierson 1996; Thelen 1999), one might predict that, given South Korea's domestic circumstances, the country would be slow to incorporate progressive content into its formal curricula. However, South Korea has rather quickly adopted global citizenship education into its most recent curriculum while also substantially reducing nationalistic and traditional content (e.g., Confucian values). Furthermore, South Korea provides a useful comparison to the experiences of other East Asian countries such as Taiwan and Hong Kong. Unlike Taiwan and Hong Kong, South Korea is not a transitional society, and it did not have to cope with the urgent task of fostering a national identity. This variation in circumstances in the case of South Korea, we believe, provides an opportunity to make a theoretical contribution regarding the process of educational diffusion.

Our empirical examination of Korean civics textbooks reveals that global citizenship themes began to emerge in the early 1990s, when the country underwent a wave of democratization. Yet, it was not until the late 1990s and the early 2000s when Korea was governed by more liberal political leaders and became closely linked to the global community that these new educational foci became more prominent in the curriculum. In addition, our exploratory analysis shows that global models entered the South Korean curriculum through a dynamic process mediated by local actors, including human rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and government officials. By considering these interactions, we seek to inform a broader debate in the comparative education scholarship regarding the process of educational change and the relative importance of global and local forces.

Background, Theory, and Hypotheses

Since World War II, the multiple dimensions of globalization have pressured individuals and nation-states to adapt to new demands and standards. The rise of a global economy, liberal market ideologies, and cross-border political and cultural activities require individuals to learn new skills to meet the demands of a rapidly changing global environment (Byrnes 1997). International standards for development, justice, and sustainability constrain the behavior of nation-states (Boli and Thomas 1999). One major development has been the global rise of human rights as a legitimate doctrine (Elliott 2007; Koo and Ramirez 2009).

Educational rhetoric, too, presumes a need to train competent future citizens to live in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world. This presumed necessity is evident in the broadened scope of citizenship education from a narrow national citizenship frame to a more cosmopolitan, global citizenship education (Schweisfurth et al. 2002; White and Openshaw 2002). Hanvey (1982) argues that there are five interrelated aspects in developing a global orientation or citizenship: perspective consciousness, knowledge of world conditions, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and knowledge of alternatives. Reaffirming principles of global citizenship (education), Anderson et al. (1994) pose Hanvey's dimensions through the following statements: "You are a human being; your home is planet Earth; you are a citizen of a multicultural society; and you live in an interrelated world" (5).

Studies show that civics curricula all over the world go beyond a simple portrayal of the nation as a bounded territorial entity with a culturally unified citizenry and legal system as the sole basis for rights claims and political action. Social science curricula over time tend to allocate less time to history instruction and more to civics and social studies (Wong 1991), signifying a decreasing emphasis on the history of collective and corporate society and an increasing focus on the individual person as the central actor in civil society and social life. With its emphasis on the individual person and his/her direct link to a wider world, global citizenship education moves beyond the traditional realm of schools to create national citizens.

Central to global citizenship education is the teaching of human rights. Human rights are inherent rights that a person is entitled to regardless of national citizenship. By emphasizing that rights derive not from membership in a national political community but from membership in the global community of human beings, human rights education constitutes a key element in curricular models of global citizenship.

A concurrent discourse also insists that educational content and pedagogy should conform to the individual needs, tastes, and interests of the self-directed learner (Rosenmund 2006). Cross-national studies indicate that "science, mathematics, and social science curricula are redesigned to make sense

to the student more than to the traditional authority structure" (McEneaney and Meyer 2000, 199). Over time, textbooks exhibit more child-friendly illustrations and pictures that are more likely to interest students (e.g., pictures of young people) and include more open-ended discussion questions that legitimate the student's own opinions and choices (Meyer et al. 2010).[1]

Few empirical studies, however, systematically assess these changes over time. Furthermore, while neoinstitutional scholars demonstrate that international factors spurred the worldwide diffusion of global citizenship education, the mechanisms remain unclear.[2] Our strategy is to focus on an in-depth case study to examine the process of educational change. Our research questions are (1) When and to what extent do global citizenship themes appear in South Korean civics textbooks? (2) How do school textbooks discuss these new themes, and in what ways is this content learner-centered? (3) What internal and/or external factors help explain the changes?

To facilitate these inquiries, we formulate several propositions based on the literature on the diffusion of educational reforms. Perspectives focusing on endogenous factors such as the politics of borrowing and lending (Halpin 1995; Phillips and Ochs 2003) or historical legacies (Pierson 1996; Thelen 1999) emphasize variation and explain educational reforms as resulting from a combination of domestic, society-specific factors. From a policy-borrowing perspective, educational reforms result from power dynamics and strategic action by policy makers, national elites, and, at times, their engagement with powerful exogenous actors (Phillips and Ochs 2004; Steiner-Khamsi 2004). A historical legacy perspective, on the other hand, while also emphasizing variation, focuses on the explanatory influence of crucial events, path dependence, and critical junctures in history (Pierson 1996; Thelen 1999). Extending these ideas, South Korea's tumultuous political history and continuing conflict with North Korea and its accompanying nationalistic curriculum would be expected to persist. In addition, a highly conservative and still-dominant Confucian culture within government and elite circles suggests the persistence of traditional, nation-centered curricular content, not the welcoming of progressive reforms. Thus, we propose the following:

Proposition 1: National citizenship themes in ethics and social studies textbooks will persist over time. Given that global citizenship education has become a global trend (Rauner 1998; Suarez et al. 2009), we also consider the neoinstitutional perspective that global citizenship education is part of a broader, institutional process in which global conceptions of society

[1] Readers may argue that books that are learner friendly are not necessarily student centric. Meyer et al. (2010) show, however, that both indicators of child friendliness (pictures in textbooks, etc.) and student centrism (role-playing exercises, projects, open-ended discussion questions, etc.) increase over time and have similar effects on the level of human rights emphases in social science textbooks.

[2] Neoinstitutional studies have highlighted how professionals and global organizations carry and diffuse modern development models as a key mechanism (Meyer et al. 1997).

modeled around individual agency and development have become taken for granted (Meyer et al. 1997). Thus, we propose that global citizenship themes will increase in response to cultural trends in the global, institutional environment.

Proposition 2: Global citizenship themes in ethics and social studies textbooks will increase over time. In addition to national and global citizenship themes, we also consider the extent of student centrism (although applicable to a range subjects) as one major component of global citizenship education in ethics and social studies textbooks. If reflecting South Korea's rigid educational system and dominant Confucian culture, indicators of student centrism that are likely to be viewed as antagonistic should not increase over time. Textbooks should continue to emphasize the value of collective traditions and corporate society (McEneaney and Meyer 2000) rather than validate the student's individual point of view and conceptualize the learner as a participating rational actor. It follows that:

Proposition 3a: The level of student centrism in the content and design of ethics and social studies textbooks will remain constant over time.

In contrast, South Korean textbooks may reflect global trends; that is, social studies curricula and textbooks increasingly devote more content to the role of the individual and present modern social scientific pictures of society as built by and around individual persons and their activities (Wong 1991). Thus, we propose the following:

Proposition 3b: The level of student centrism in the content and design of ethics and social studies textbooks will increase over time. To address the third research question, we consider both local and global influences. Theoretical positions that prioritize endogenous processes emphasize factors such as functional necessity, cultural and historical legacies, and the politics of educational lending and borrowing (Steiner-Khamsi 2004). These perspectives underscore mechanisms of political contestation or the ways in which governments actively engage with exogenous reforms to serve the interests of domestic actors (Schriewer 1990). The neoinstitutional perspective underscores as key mechanisms the mediating role played by international experts and individuals enculturated through participation in Western educational institutions in both developing and diffusing transnational accounts and models (Boli and Thomas 1999). In the case of South Korea, a society that succumbs to globalizing trends yet maintains strong local traditions, we hypothesize a more accommodative framework that combines these two perspectives and considers the mutual interactions between local and global forces.

Proposition 4: Both global and local factors influenced the adoption of global citizenship education in South Korea.

Rationale for the South Korean Case

The South Korean case presents an intriguing set of circumstances in which to explore the research questions. Historically, both the structure and content of Korean education served to legitimate military rule, maintain a cooperative citizenry, and foster an anti-Communist, anti–North Korean ideology (Suh 1988). During the authoritarian era, the military elite maintained tight control over all aspects of the educational system and its operations (Kim 2005). Due to this historical legacy, the educational system remained rigid and highly centralized.

In addition, a strong Confucian tradition still dominates much of South Korean society and politics, including the family, educational system, business enterprises, and state administration (Koo 2007). Core elements include hierarchy, bureaucratic authority and seniority, familism, solidarity, filial piety, paternalism, and community values (Rozman 2002). Within the educational system, a strong sense of paternalism and hierarchy permeates the relationship between students, teachers, school administrators, and education officials.

Despite these conditions, rapid, unexpected educational changes have taken place in recent years. With democratization in the 1990s, South Korea pursued a policy of economic globalization in order to become a major player in the information and communication technology sector. Korea's globalization drive also sought to overcome a narrow preoccupation with national security issues, de-emphasize traditional Confucian values, and pledged a broader "globalization diplomacy" (Lee 2000, 175). In addition, the large numbers of Korean students who returned to South Korea in the 1990s after studying abroad in Western universities in the 1970s and 1980s most likely played a role in transferring and diffusing ideas and rhetoric in line with global norms.[3] During this recent period, the educational system began to incorporate global citizenship education in the formal curriculum.

An initial turning point away from the highly centralized education system occurred in 1994 when Kim Young-sam, the first civilian Korean president, established the Presidential Commission for Education Reform, which recommended giving greater autonomy to both universities and schools and called for granting universities the right to determine quotas for the number of college students admitted and to decide the size of their departments (a reversal of 40 years of state policy) (Seth 2002).

Kim Young-sam's successors, Kim Dae-jung and Roh Moo-hyun, long-time political dissidents, expanded on these reforms. Under Kim Dae-jung (1998–2002), notable breakthroughs included the legalization of the Korean Teach-

[3] In 1954, only 1,129 students studied abroad. In 1964, the figure was 4,891 (4,202 in the United States). In 1975, 13,343 students were recorded to be studying abroad (11,557 in the United States), and in 1983, 15,220 students studied abroad (Ministry of Education 1964, 1975, 1983a, 1988).

ers' Union, removal of ideological anti-Communist texts, and the founding of the Korea National Human Rights Commission with an educational division devoted to human rights education (Kang 2002). Roh (2003–7) legislated the Private School Law, which required that private schools fill one-quarter of their board of directors with external personnel—an effort to boost transparency and democratic decision making in school management.

These initial changes paved the way for other, more substantial educational reforms. In the 1990s, global citizenship education and human rights education emerged in formal curricula, and dozens of primary and secondary schools began to participate in UNESCO-sponsored human rights programs. Students began to claim their rights vis-à-vis teachers and administrators, leading to the establishment of a teacher evaluation system. Universities began to offer English medium courses and came under pressure to hire more foreign faculty.

From a historical legacy perspective, these changes are difficult to explain. Nothing in South Korea's recent history might have predicted the country's support of progressive and global educational reforms. Yet, in our analysis, we find that global themes and human rights content have penetrated the curriculum to a surprising degree. These paradoxical results provide an opportunity to examine the process of educational change and to contribute theoretically to the literature regarding the mechanisms of such a change.

The South Korean case also provides an interesting contrast to other East Asian cases. Both Taiwan and Hong Kong, for instance, incorporated global dimensions of citizenship, emphasizing transnational skills such as English language and information technology (Law 2004). Yet, endogenous factors, such as democratization, local stakeholders, and the need to establish a national identity vis-à-vis China, led these countries to focus their curricular efforts on local languages, histories, and identities, with relatively less emphasis on global citizenship (Law 2004). Thus, these Asian cases are presented as counterexamples to arguments of transnational convergence.

Data and Method

Textbooks

Content analysis is a common methodology used for analyzing civics texts (Firer 1998; Avery and Simmons 2001). Studies on Korean civics education identify social studies and ethics (also referred to as "moral education") as the two subjects within the Korean curriculum that are most directly involved in and designed with the primary intent of forming a civic identity (Lee 2004; Lee and Kim 2005). Guided by these previous studies, we also examine the intended curriculum using textbooks as our primary data, focusing on the two compulsory school subjects of social studies and ethics.[4]

[4] While some studies demonstrate a reorientation of national history from a state centric to a more social and cultural history model (Schissler and Soysal 2005), we do not include an analysis of history

TABLE 1
NATIONAL CURRICULUM REVISIONS IN KOREAN EDUCATION

Type of Political Regime	Year of Implementation
Authoritarian/military (national curriculum):	
1	1954
2	1963
3	1973
4	1981
5	1987
Democracy (national curriculum):	
6	1992
7	1997
8	2007

To show fully the dramatic changes that occurred before and after Korea's democratic transition, we begin our analysis with textbooks published in line with the Fourth National Curriculum (1981–86), or the curriculum under the Chun Doo-hwan administration when Korea was still under authoritarian rule. We extend the analysis up to the present curriculum, that is, the Eighth National Curriculum (2007 to the present). Table 1 shows the year of publication for each national curriculum. Table 2 shows the number of weekly hours of ethics and social studies instruction South Korean students receive by grade level in each national curriculum period. It is important to note that the actual implementation of each curriculum occurs progressively by grade level. For instance, while the Eighth National Curriculum was announced in June 2007, full implementation will not be completed until March 2013 for the upper secondary level. Therefore, since the Eighth National Curriculum has yet to be fully implemented, we do not analyze textbooks for this most recent period. To be as comprehensive as possible, we analyze textbooks for all grade levels (primary grades 1–6, lower secondary grades 7–9, and upper secondary grades 10–12).

Textbooks since the First National Curriculum are available at the Korea Institute of Curriculum and Evaluation in Seoul. All textbooks for the subjects of Korean language, ethics, and Korean history are produced and published directly by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MEST). Textbooks for all other compulsory and elective subjects are privately published but must follow strict content and writing guidelines set by MEST and must be reviewed and approved by a government-authorized textbook committee. While prior to the Seventh National Curriculum all public schools followed a uniform curriculum and used the same set of textbooks, the implementation of the Seventh National Curriculum has allowed schools to choose from a list of government-authorized textbooks for school—varying elective subjects

textbooks for this study. Cross-national studies show that history textbooks emphasize human rights content less than in social studies and civics textbooks and that human rights content in history textbooks appears more slowly over time (Meyer et al. 2010). Since a primary focus of our study is to examine human rights-related content, we focus on the subjects that show these changes the most dramatically, that is, social studies and ethics textbooks.

TABLE 2
WEEKLY HOURS OF INTENDED INSTRUCTIONAL TIME IN THE SOUTH KOREAN CURRICULUM

	Ethics			Social Studies		
National Curriculum	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary	Primary	Lower Secondary	Upper Secondary
3	2	2	2	2–4*	3	3
4	2	2	3	3–4†	3	3
5	2	2	3	3–4†	3	3
6	1–2‡	2	3	3–4†	3	2
7	1	2	1	3	3	5
8	1	2	2	3	3	3

NOTE.—See curricular documents listed in appendix A in the online version.
* Grades 1, 2, 5, and 6: 4 hours/week; grades 3, 4: 3 hours/week.
† Grades 1, 2: 2 hours; grades 3, 4: 3 hours; grades 5 and 6: 4 hours.
‡ Grades 1, 2: 2 hours; grades 3–6: 1 hour.

and supplementing main texts. While we tried to ascertain the most widely used privately published lower and upper secondary social studies texts to analyze (all primary level textbooks and ethics textbooks for all grade levels are government published), this information was not available.[5] Therefore, we analyzed textbooks published by the oldest and largest (in terms of revenue and number of employees) textbook publisher, Kyohak-sa.[6] To summarize, we include a longitudinal analysis of 62 textbooks (see appendix A in the online version of this article).

To answer the research questions, we employ a mixed-methods research design—a quantitative analysis that systematically shows trends over time, supplemented by a qualitative account of major themes, subthemes, specific illustrations, and quotations to capture the richness of the data and to show the context in which major keywords appear (Creswell 2003). To show concise and clear quantitative changes over time, we consulted previous studies on global citizenship education and identified a number of major national and global themes.[7] We then read each textbook page by page, counting the number of keyword mentions and dividing this number by the total number of pages to obtain an average per page. We classified each theme as either a national or global citizenship theme based on its primary contextual usage in the text. For example, given bipolar inter-Korean tensions since World War II, one of the goals of South Korean civic education was to extol South Korean democracy as a way of vilifying North Korean communism (Suh 1988). Thus, "democracy" in South Korean texts, especially during the authoritarian period, is often contextualized as a national goal rather than as a global or universalistic value. Similarly, the theme of "responsibilities" is almost always

[5] The Korea Government-Authorized Textbook Corporation declined to release this information to the authors.

[6] For lower- and upper-secondary social studies texts, there are a total of 8–10 publishers.

[7] See, e.g., Chon (2004), Davies and Issitt (2005), Lee and Kim (2005), Soysal and Wong (2005), and Suarez (2008).

mentioned with reference to filial and family duties—in line with Korea's long-held Confucian orientation, that is, its national culture. One ambivalent theme that we coded for is that of "rights." Although at times "rights" unequivocally refers to constitutional rights (i.e., a national citizenship theme), our coding revealed that in many instances the use of this keyword is unclear. That is, texts are ambiguous as to whether they are referring to the traditional notion of constitutional rights or the more modern notion of human rights. We therefore created two categories for "rights"—one for constitutional rights and another category for "rights" when the term was used ambiguously. We classify both as national citizenship themes. We classify the key phrase "human rights" as a global citizenship theme. To measure changing trends in student centrism, we use a coding scheme developed as part of a larger comparative textbook project used in previous studies (see Meyer et al. [2010]; Bromley et al. [forthcoming]; see also appendix B in the online version for coding protocol).

Interviews

To examine the process of educational change, we conducted 28 semi-structured interviews with key actors who were directly involved with or knowledgeable about global citizenship education and human rights education developments in Korea, including academics, NGO leaders, and government officials.[8] The interview questions were tailored to each interviewee, depending on his or her work background (see appendix C in the online version for interview protocols). However, since we interviewed several individuals from similar backgrounds and/or organizations, we were able to cross-check the accuracy of interviewee responses to a certain degree.[9] All interviews were transcribed and translated into English. We group together emergent themes and interconnect them to produce a chronological narrative of events supported by multiple perspectives and diverse quotations (Cohen et al. 2007).

Results

Textbook Content

Table 3 displays the average number of keywords per page mentioned in South Korean ethics and social studies textbooks over time (see table 4).[10]

[8] Our strategy for selecting interviewees was first to contact and interview academics who had published scholarly journal articles on and had been active in human rights education developments in Korea with the purpose of gaining a broad sense of major historical developments in human rights education in Korea and to identify the key individuals and actors involved. These initial interviewees identified key NGO leaders, human rights organizations, and government organs. We then proceeded to contact the individuals mentioned and individuals within certain organizations both directly and through referral.

[9] We conducted a total of 28 interviews with 7 academics, 13 individuals from 6 NGOs, and 8 officials from 2 government organs.

[10] We performed the same analysis for curricular guidelines (shown in table 4) but found similar results and thus do not present them here.

TABLE 3
KOREAN CIVIC EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS, 1981–2004: AVERAGE KEYWORD MENTIONS PER PAGE

	Ethics				Social Studies			
Keyword	1981–87	1988–91	1994–97	2002–4	1981–87	1988–91	1994–97	2002–4
National citizenship themes:								
Nation	1.11	1.11	1.13	.81	.91	.92	.86	.40
Family and tradition	1.10	1.02	1.15	.59	.50	.52	.24	.21
Responsibilities	.09	.06	.11	0	.08	.07	.09	.009
Unification	.08	.07	.97	.99	0	0	0	.11
Democracy	1.10	1.05	1.06	1.13	1.09	1.10	1.09	.97
Rights*	0	.001	0	0	.001	.004	.003	.004
Rights (ambivalent)†	0	.003	.001	0	0	.004	.004	.06
Global citizenship themes:								
Globalism‡	0	0	0	.12	.02	.01	.02	.22
Environment	0	0	.03	.09	.02	.02	.09	.11
Human rights	0	0	.004	0	0	0	0	.05
Total pages	984	914	808	699	982	873	1,029	776
No. textbooks	3	4	3	3	3	4	5	4

NOTE.—See textbooks listed in app. A in the online version. For all time points, textbooks analyzed include primary grade 6, lower secondary year 3, and upper secondary year 1 textbooks. All keywords are exact words or phrases.

* This keyword refers specifically to constitutional rights.

† Counts of the keyword "rights" in which it is unclear whether rights refers to constitutional or human rights.

‡ Keywords included under the heading of "globalism" include "internationalization," "international society," "globalization," "global village," "world citizen," "international organizations," "international law," "United Nations," and "world community."

The four time points correspond to the four national curriculum revisions shown in table 1.[11]

Overall, national citizenship themes dominate and occur more frequently than global citizenship themes. Nation-centric chapter titles such as "Our Proud Country" and "Our Nation's Traditions" are commonplace (Ministry of Education 1983a). "Democracy" is a prevalent topic even as early as 1981, but this is not surprising given that throughout the authoritarian era, democracy was taught as an antithetical ideological justification to communism in the North (Song 2003). A middle school ethics textbook published in 1982, for example, consists of alternating chapters on South and North Korean values. In a discussion of democracy, the text states that "a healthy Korean democracy is one that espouses freedom and equality with political institutions that are appropriate to the special conditions of our country" (Ministry of Education 1982, 130). This is followed by a separate section titled "The Values of North Korean Society," which states that "North Korea sees democracy as unlawful and annihilates our nation's beautiful and fine customs, forcing its people to live under a one-man dictatorship" (Ministry of Education 1982, 176). These quotes demonstrate that rather than framing democracy as a global value, the primary intent of Korean civics texts in the 1980s is to decry North Korean values in order to legitimate the South Korean national collective ideal.

[11] The most recent 2007 curriculum guidelines have yet to be fully implemented, so we do not include a fifth time span that corresponds to the 2007 guidelines.

TABLE 4
KOREAN CIVIC EDUCATION CURRICULA, 1987–2007: MEAN KEYWORD MENTIONS PER PAGE

	Ethics				Social Studies			
Keyword	1987	1992	1997	2007	1987	1992	1997	2007
National citizenship themes:								
Nation	6.1	6.2	6.6	2.1	5.1	5.2	3.8	2.3
Family and tradition	3.5	3.2	3.0	2.4	.8	.9	1.0	1.2
Responsibilities	1.2	.2	.4	0	.1	.1	.1	0
Unification	1.5	2.8	2.9	.1	.2	.8	.3	.2
Democracy	1.1	1.2	.5	0	1.6	1.7	1.4	1.4
Rights	0	0	.1	.1	0	.05	.2	.2
Global citizenship themes:								
Globalism*	0	.1	.3	.8	0	.1	.4	1.2
Environment	.2	.5	.7	7.1	0	2.3	2.3	5.4
Human rights	0	.05	.05	.1	0	0	.2	.2
Total pages	14	20	30	34	23	34	51	34

NOTE.—See curricular documents listed in app. A in the online version. For all years, curricular guidelines analyzed include those for the primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary levels. Only the sections relevant to civic education (i.e., ethics, social studies) were coded. Thus, total pages denote the number of pages of these sections. All keywords are exact words or phrases. All pages have approximately the same number of words (~500–550).

* Keywords included under the heading of "globalism" include "internationalization," "international society," "globalization," "global village," and "global citizen."

In addition to discussions of democracy, the repetitive mention of "family," "tradition," and relevant discussions that underscore the importance of family lineage, solidarity, and traditional culture, especially in ethics texts, reflects the dominance of Confucianism in Korean society. "Tradition," similar to democracy, is primarily discussed with reference to the national collective (national traditions, national culture). For example, a 1983 ethics textbook, a chapter titled "Our Nation's Tradition," begins by stating that "We have many traditions to boast to the world. Among these are our nation's love of peace, culture of proper etiquette, and cooperative citizenry" (Ministry of Education 1983b, 45). In another chapter titled "A Tradition of Respect for the Family and the Elderly," the text describes the merits of Confucianism followed by a list of virtues (social harmony, overcoming difficulties through cooperation, diligence, etc.), stating that "We need to develop our nation's beautiful and deep-rooted traditions such as family devotion, filial responsibility, in order to establish a unified and harmonious homeland" (176). The increase in emphasis on unification in ethics texts from the 1988–91 to the 1994–97 period is consistent with the finding that following democratization, the strong anti-Communist stance emphasized during the authoritarian years shifted to an emphasis on reunification and conflict resolution with North Korea (Kang 2002). Overall, national and traditional themes certainly dominate textbooks relative to global themes, especially in the 1980s and early 1990s.

While global citizenship themes are mentioned relatively less frequently compared to national ones, increasing references to them in recent periods, however, represent a dramatic change. Table 3 shows that almost all national citizenship-themed words (except democracy and unification in ethics texts)

actually decrease in the publications of the 2000s. There are less frequent mentions of the words "nation," "family and tradition," and "responsibilities" in the more recent ethics and social studies textbooks. For example, the word "nation" was mentioned at least once in textbooks published in the 1980s and 1990s, but the word is mentioned less than once (.81) in ethics textbooks during the 2000s and less than .5 times on average (.40) in social studies textbooks. The decreasing rates in mentions of "family and tradition" and "responsibilities" are also remarkable, especially in ethics textbooks. The keyword "responsibilities" disappears entirely in ethics textbooks of the 2000s. The observed patterns suggest that national citizenship themes are not as prevalent as before, making space for the inclusion of new citizenship themes.

Table 3 reveals that the global citizenship theme "globalism" received either no or very little attention in textbooks in the 1980s and 1990s, but treatment of these themes in texts is undoubtedly clear in the 2000s. Some international themes began to receive modest attention in social studies textbooks from the 1990s, but full-blown coverage is observed in the 2000s. The fact remains that mentions of global citizenship–themed words are not as frequent as their national counterparts and that mentions of all global citizenship–themed words are close to only one mention in every five pages. However, their sudden increase in coverage may imply a fundamental change in the nature of civics education in Korea.

With respect to the themes of rights and human rights, table 3 shows that the discourse of "rights" began to emerge in both civics and social studies textbooks from the 1980s but became a much more apparent theme in the 2000s. References to "rights" as national constitutional rights persist to the recent period, but their frequency remains constant. Interestingly, the frequency of ambiguous references to "rights" (i.e., unclear whether "rights" is used primarily in a national or global context) jumps in frequency in the 2000s, demonstrating an uncertainty in the way rights are understood over time and also representing an implicit contention with a constitutional rights–only framework. Likewise, the discourse of "human rights" exploded in the most recent period, in stark contrast with no treatment of human rights in social studies textbooks published in the 1980s and 1990s. In the 2000s, the words "rights" or "human rights" are mentioned, on average, once every 10 pages throughout 776 pages—a dramatic change compared to the extent of coverage of rights issues in the textbooks of prior periods.[12]

With the emergence of mentions of "human rights," textbooks vary in their explanations and reveal an implicit contention between human rights and traditional notions of legal constitutional rights. A primary-level social studies textbook, for instance, devotes separate sections to "Citizens' Rights and Duties" and "Protecting Human Rights" (Ministry of Education 2002b,

[12] We also performed the same analysis using textbook tables of contents and found similar results.

TABLE 5
STUDENT CENTRISM IN KOREAN CIVIC EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS (MEANS), 1981–2004

	Ethics				Social Studies			
Indicators of Student Centrism	1981–87	1988–91	1994–97	2002–4	1981–87	1988–91	1994–97	2002–4
Child-friendly pictures (0–3)	1.1	1.1	1.4	3.0	1.1	1.2	1.2	2.9
Activities or assignments (0–2)	.5	.6	.6	2.0	.6	.7	1.0	2.0
Projects (0–2)	0	0	.4	1.0	0	0	.3	1.9
Role-playing exercises (0–2)	0	0	0	1.0	0	0	0	1.0
Open-ended discussion questions (0–3)	.7	.8	.8	3.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	2.8
Text in expanding environments format (0–3)	1.1	1.2	2.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.1
No. textbooks	7	8	7	7	7	8	10	8

NOTE..—See textbooks listed in app. A in the online version. For the coding scheme, see app. B. For all time points, textbooks analyzed include primary (grade 6), lower secondary (years 1–3), and upper secondary (years 1–3).

46–54). The first section includes a list of "basic rights" and duties that are "established by the law" (46). The second section begins by defining human rights as "rights that all human beings have in order to live a life of human dignity" and illustrations of "people who need assistance in order to preserve their human rights" (a man in a wheelchair, a sick man in bed, foreign workers, foreign criminals, three men in one prison cell, and two homeless men sleeping in an underground subway station; 54). The textbook seems to treat as legitimate both legal rights and human rights yet without making a clear distinction between the two or expressing a strong preference for one or the other. Other textbooks are less vague. One secondary-level social studies textbook (Park et al. 2005) defines human rights as "fundamental rights that are granted on the basis of being human and not on the basis of any external relationship with state institutions or positive law" (10). The text also clarifies the difference between legal and human rights, stating that "human rights are inviolable in that no authority or arbitrary positive law can violate them" and that "human rights go beyond the limits of the presently existing positive law and guarantee human dignity" (12). Some textbooks mention the terms "rights" and "human rights" interchangeably without providing any definitions or distinctions.

Student Centrism in Textbooks

Table 5 presents several indicators of student centrism and their changes in textbooks over time. Here our key finding is that textbooks become dramatically more sensitive to the learner's needs and interests and encourage a more participatory role for the student, particularly in the most recent textbooks where we have seen the expansion of global citizenship themes.

Compared to the most recent textbooks, earlier Korean textbooks mainly consist of page after page of dry, "factual" content. Beyond conveying objective knowledge, textbooks do not encourage students to be innovative or to become more involved as members of society. For example, rights discussions

in earlier textbooks consist of an historical overview, some definitions, and a tedious list of constitutional provisions all presented in a harsh, "no questions asked" tone.

In textbooks published in the most recent period (2002–4), however, almost all textbooks include pictures and illustrative figures—half or most of which are learner friendly.[13] In addition, compared to textbooks published between 1987 and 1998, textbooks published in the 2000s exhibit a wealth of activities, assignments, and projects that aim to actively engage the student in the learning process. Role-playing exercises, which were nonexistent in older textbooks, now appear in the activities of more recent texts. Furthermore, nearly all questions listed in recent texts are open-ended, meaning they do not demand right or wrong answers, encouraging students to explore different perspectives, form their own personal opinions, and make their own choices in response to questions. One recent textbook (Ministry of Education 2004, 112), for example, includes an activity that first presents both sides of the debate surrounding whether forced sterilization of the mentally handicapped is a human rights violation and then asks students to debate the issue by presenting justification of their own views using supporting evidence. Such activities clearly go beyond demanding right or wrong answers by promoting a child-centered pedagogy that encourages students to form their own opinions and become self-directed learners. All of these changes are clearly captured by the indicators in table 5. In the most recently published ethics and social studies textbooks, most indicators of student centrism are close to their maximum values, suggesting that texts present a plethora of child-friendly pictures, activities, projects, and assignments that place students at the center of the learning process.

A sixth-grade social studies textbook (Ministry of Education 2002b, 54), for example, includes a section on "Protecting Human Rights." The chapter begins with an open-ended, exploratory statement: "Let's think about the people who need help protecting their human rights," followed by the statement, "All of society should take an interest and help those people who are not able to enjoy their human rights" (54). The text walks the reader through colorful illustrations of a fictitious group of students working together to brainstorm about ways to learn more about human rights. There are colorful cartoon pictures of primary school students interviewing a man in a wheelchair, distributing a survey, asking an expert, looking up books in a library, and researching using the Internet. In contrast to the rigidity of earlier textbooks, there are strong student-centered elements in this lesson that encourage students to become independent thinkers and actors.

Elements of student-centrism appear regardless of the type of content. Global and national citizenship themes in recent texts incorporate both con-

[13] See n. 1.

tent and pedagogical methods that legitimate the interests, choices, and perspectives of the student. One middle school social studies textbook discusses, for example, compulsory military service, asking students to consider whether it is fair to place conscientious objectors in prison when they refuse to perform their military service for religious reasons (Ministry of Education 2002a). Not only does the textbook present an alternate, dissident perspective regarding a national duty but it also asks students to form and justify their own opinions about the issue.

Overall, the most recent textbooks are much more appealing visually. They are larger in size, more colorful, allocate more white space, and display more pictures of young people and child-friendly illustrations. Also, recent textbooks engage the student by including more examples, role-playing exercises, supplementary materials, and references to current events. For example, older textbooks simply list a group of rights separated by commas in a small paragraph before moving on to the next topic (Ministry of Education 1956, 1973, 1985), while recent textbooks supplement a rights discussion with various photos, cartoon illustrations, specific case study examples, a public document that sheds light on a specific right, an excerpt from an international declaration, a description of an international organization, a quote by a well-known human rights activist, and so forth (see app. A in the online version for Ministry of Education listings, 2002–5).

Recent textbooks also reveal that student-centered pedagogy and student-centered content often go hand in hand. Participation, for example, is mentioned explicitly as a substantive theme. Textbooks point out the relatively low level of human rights consciousness in Korean society and the need to foster greater participation. One ethics textbook states that "Citizens, as primary rights holders, should know what their rights are and aggressively exercise them to realize them in their daily lives" (Ministry of Education 2003, 45). Another text delineates a step-by-step process through which individuals can act on their human rights beliefs and participate in the process of creating a human rights–respecting society. After recognizing, internalizing, and analyzing situations in which human rights are violated, the text outlines participatory measures, such as "getting support from a government office or social welfare organization," or even going as far as "to make a legal appeal" (Park et al. 2005, 100–101).

The text then applies this framework to the case of a person who witnesses acts of family violence in a neighbor's home. That recent textbooks depict a group of ordinary students taking a social scientific approach to addressing human rights violations or discuss the various steps to become an active, rights-bearing civil society participant is striking when compared to the facts-oriented content and disciplinary tone of earlier textbooks.

Explaining Changes in Korean Civics Textbooks

Next, we explore the possible factors that contributed to these changes in Korean civics education. Focusing on the emergence and development of human rights education, a central component of global citizenship education, we examine this process more closely using data collected from interviews with local actors.[14]

The story of how human rights content came to be included in South Korean textbooks involved the interaction of a set of actors (civil society groups, government officials, political leaders, and international organizations) and key processes and events (human rights activism, transnational advocacy, political regime change, and the adoption of the human rights commission as a global model) that took place roughly over the course of a decade (1993–2003). Thus, the incorporation of human rights content in South Korean textbooks involved both local and global factors.

Korean civil society groups led the earliest efforts to introduce human rights education within South Korean society. One of the pioneering NGOs, the Sarangbang Group for Human Rights, founded in 1993, wished to address the enduring practices and educational culture prevalent in South Korean schools, which it saw as a violation of students' rights. The practices they focused on included discipline through corporal punishment, confiscation of student belongings, and regulation of student hair length, while the broader cultural issues included problems of hypercompetition among students, exam-driven education, and undemocratic school governance. One veteran activist stated: "Our slogan was 'from moral to human rights education.' We knew that teachers were comfortable handling values, morals, and civics topics that taught students to conform to social norms. Our goal was to change the focus to students' rights in schools."[15]

Since its founding, Sarangbang conducted intermittent nonformal workshops for university students and later for parents, teachers, school-aged children, and other nonprofit members. Spurred by the pioneering initiatives of Sarangbang, an increasing number of human rights NGOs decided to incorporate human rights education as part of their mission. In 2002, an NGO network composed of six major domestic human rights NGOs (none of which a national branch of an international NGO) devoted to human rights education was formed.[16] However, NGO efforts throughout the 1990s remained scattered and largely ignored by the government because the broader human rights movement had yet to be established before related submovements, such as human rights education, could be addressed. Another

[14] The names of the interviewees are kept confidential and withheld by mutual agreement.

[15] Human rights activist, interview by Rennie Moon, Seoul, South Korea, June 2007.

[16] The six organizations are Sarangbang Center for Human Rights (1993), Dasan Human Rights Center (1993), Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea (1997), Catholic Human Rights Committee (2002), Solidarity for Peace and Human Rights (1998), and Korea Solidarity for LGBT.

human rights activist noted: "There was a general consensus among these NGOs that it would be much more effective if a government organ were to expand human rights education. But with the transition from a military dictatorship to a democracy being only very recent, the government under Kim Young-sam was wary of establishing a human rights-promoting government organ."[17]

The critical turning point for the human rights movement in Korea occurred with the presidential election of Kim Dae-jung and the accomplishment of the first horizontal regime change in modern Korean politics. With the political power base necessary to push through with pro–human rights legislation, the Kim Dae-jung government pledged the passage of a human rights law and the adoption of a national human rights commission. Human rights NGOs, whether advocating for human rights broadly or for human rights education specifically, took advantage of this new liberal political climate to voice their demands.[18] Moreover, a domestic alliance of NGOs organized meetings with key, authoritative outside figures (e.g., the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights) and other high-profile international NGOs (e.g., Amnesty International), who in addition to criticizing the Korean Ministry of Justice for its attempts to undermine the authority of the future National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK) and publicizing this to the international community also provided expertise on issues related to the mission and general functions of the future commission. As one government official pointed out: "As part of carrying out the general discussion on setting up the Commission, people like Brian Burdekin, Mary Robinson, and the Australian Federal Rights Commissioner were invited to talk about the general functions of the Commission, including education."[19]

In 2001, with sufficient domestic political support and international pressure, human rights NGOs succeeded in establishing an autonomous, authoritative human rights–promoting government body, the National Human Rights Commission of Korea (NHRCK), which included a division expressly devoted to education (Koo 2011). Two years later in 2003, MEST agreed to implement two official recommendations made by the NHRCK: (1) to identify and revise anti–human rights content in current textbooks and (2) to introduce more human rights content in the next (eighth) national curriculum standards. In the years following the establishment of the NHRCK, NGOs advocating human rights education intimately advised the NHRCK regarding its recommendations to MEST. In interviews with

[17] Human rights activist, interview by Rennie Moon, Seoul, South Korea, June 2007.

[18] In September of 1998, about 30 domestic NGOs formed an alliance and pressured the government to adhere to international standards regarding the establishment of the national human rights commission. The participating NGOs consisted of small progressive grassroots organizations. These NGOs were often confronted with the situation of dealing with conservative political parties and government bureaucrats (Koo 2011).

[19] Government official, interview by Rennie Moon, Seoul, South Korea, July 2007.

officials of NHRCK and MEST, both indicate that there was very little contestation during the process of implementing the textbook reforms. This may have been due to the fact that by the early 2000s, the consistent efforts of human rights NGOs had resulted in the gradual institutionalization of human rights education as an important feature of the human rights movement in Korea. As one MEST official pointed out, "One reason is because human rights have become increasingly institutionalized in Korea over the years. Also, the UN recommends this to all countries, not just Korea."[20]

The lack of contestation between MEST and the NHRCK may also have reflected a process in which Korean government bureaucrats over the 1990s had become increasingly enculturated through participation in Western institutions or international forums. South Korean government officials, starting in the late 1990s, were becoming actively involved in UN activities and were increasingly exposed to international norms of behavior and rhetoric. Throughout the 1990s, the South Korean government demonstrated active commitment to international standards by ratifying a number of international human rights treaties, attaining membership in a wide array of UN organs, and being elected to a number of leadership positions in UN bodies.[21] Some of the statements given by MEST officials reflect this broader process of global enculturation. For example, when asked why MEST agreed to the NHRCK's requests, one official answered, "This is something the UN recommends to all countries. When a multilateral organization such as the UN makes a recommendation and we have no particular reason to reject it, the Ministry generally accepts these recommendations."[22]

This section demonstrates that domestic NGOs and domestic political changes paved the way for the human rights movement in Korea, which, in turn, set the stage for the incorporation of human rights education in school textbooks. Nongovernmental organizationss articulated and institutionalized the need for human rights education, and President Kim Dae-jung, unlike his predecessor Kim Young-sam, established a stable political power base that enabled him and his allies to institute pro–human rights reforms, including the adoption of the NHRCK. However, these local developments were, to a large extent, embedded in or interacted with the global environment. Local NGOs often participated in global events, appropriated global rhetoric, and consulted international professionals. Government agencies, including the NHRCK, were also closely aligned with global authorities and framed their

[20] Government official, interview by Rennie Moon, Ministry of Education, Seoul, South Korea, July 2007.

[21] For example, vice chairman of the UN Conference on Environment and Development, chairman of the Asian Group, and vice chairman (out of two) of the First (Disarmament and International Security) and Fourth (Special Political and Decolonization) Committees of the General Assembly, all between 1992 and 1998.

[22] Government official, interview by Rennie Moon, Ministry of Education, Seoul, South Korea, July 2007.

policies accordingly so that they resonated with global models. This interplay between local and global factors contributed to the rapid adoption of human rights education in South Korea.

Conclusion

Our analysis shows that ideas of citizenship in the Korean intended curriculum have changed dramatically over time. Until very recently, Korean civic education promoted the view that citizenship is a distinctive, national status involving certain basic rights and obligations conferred by the state on individuals. Over time, however, these traditional notions of national incorporation increasingly have been accompanied by transnational elements of identity and the idea that citizenship is not just a product of the nation but also inheres in all individuals. Curricular materials aim to develop nationally loyal citizens who claim their rights, perform their duties, and conform to the national norm, but they also seek to cultivate human rights–bearing, globally minded, cosmopolitan citizens with a sense of collective responsibility as members of a common humanity. As our first and second propositions state, national citizenship themes still dominate civics curricula guidelines and textbooks, but their emphases weaken over time. It is also important to keep in mind that national and global citizenship themes are not mutually exclusive. Global themes may certainly coexist with national ones and also have different implications for different conceptualizations of nationalism and national identity. Promoting a human rights culture, for example, does not necessarily translate into an erosion of ethnonational sentiment in the same way that it might undermine aspects of civic nationalism.

Our findings also confirm our third proposition (3b) that textbooks become more student centered over time. Instructional materials explicitly and implicitly validate the student as an active learner and empowered participant in society. They encourage students to take on an exploratory, social scientific attitude toward learning and to become enterprising actors in the local, national, and world communities. Textbook content and layout are designed to cater to the child's tastes and interests, to be more intellectually engaging and practically more relatable to the student's immediate environment, and to encourage creative and independent thinking.

Finally, findings from interviews support our fourth proposition that the incorporation of global themes in the South Korean curriculum in the late 1990s and early 2000s involved both local and global factors. Conversations with interviewees revealed a familiar set of factors and mechanisms already demonstrated in the findings of prior research studies. Local NGO activism and political opportunity structures were important domestic developments that contributed to human rights–promoting reforms. In addition, both state and nonstate actors engaged in an internally induced process of "externalization" (Schriewer 1990), actively and instrumentally invoking international

standards to serve domestic purposes. Global norms and globally legitimated models such as the NHRCK became practical tools that were rationally employed by local agents and stakeholders with clearly defined domestic interests (a domestic mechanism). At the same time, linkages to international conferences, organizations, and professionals exposed individuals, political leaders, and government officials to reforms in line with world models that came to be taken for granted and seen as legitimate over time (a global mechanism).

The South Korean case differs from other East Asian cases that have incorporated global citizenship education, such as Taiwan and Hong Kong. Unlike Taiwan and Hong Kong, South Korea in the 1990s was not faced with a situation in which establishing a national identity was a priority. Another key difference is that grassroots organizations in Taiwan and Hong Kong advocated the preservation of local identities, while South Korean NGOs focused primarily on the adoption of a global educational model. Furthermore, while there was little contention between local groups and government leaders in South Korea in their goals and methods to take advantage of global opportunities, political leaders in Hong Kong and Taiwan faced internal opposition and pressure from local constituencies to place greater emphasis on national rather than global concerns (Law 2004). This lack of contention among different actors was a key factor that made it easier for global discourses to penetrate South Korean society.

Thus, while our analysis reveals the importance of exogenous conditions, international factors, and the role of consultants and professionals—key mechanisms from a neoinstitutional perspective—that contributed to changes in Korean civics education, this is by no means the entire story. Based on our findings, we contend that the neoinstitutional perspective with its tendency to prioritize global factors should consider more seriously the interaction between global trends and local processes and perhaps refine to a greater degree the complex mechanisms involved in the diffusion of global educational models. At the same time, our findings demonstrate that global mechanisms were intimately tied to the chain of local developments that led to the successful incorporation of global citizenship themes in school textbooks. Local organizations, national political leaders, and government officials were closely linked to global models, and this linkage led to the diffusion and adoption of ideas of global citizenship within Korean society. Thus, theoretical positions that privilege local factors and emphasize differentiation and the diversity of policy responses might need to reevaluate the role of global forces.

Finally, this study investigated the depth of changes by examining the intended curriculum, but what happens in the classroom and how topics are taught are often decoupled from the guidelines and instructional content provided at the national level by educational ministries (for centralized systems like South Korea). Textbook content may be filtered and progressive ways of teaching as expressed in textbooks may suffer inadequate imple-

mentation upon teachers' discretion. Consequently, future research should investigate whether and how global citizenship education penetrates to the level of the school and the classroom. A further investigation would involve interviews with government officials who write curricular standards, authors of the textbooks, and individuals who served on the government-authorized textbook committees that review, filter, and approve textbook content. This would provide insight into the screening process and what exactly the government considers "appropriate" civic content.

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Chapter 3

The Global Diffusion of Education Privatization: Unpacking and Theorizing Policy Adoption

Antoni Verger

Introduction

Education privatization is a global policy process with multiple manifestations in different world locations. Both industrialized and developing countries, and nations with very different administrative traditions and regulatory frameworks, are adopting privatization policies of a different nature as a way to address a range of social, political, economic and educational challenges. Among the most internationalized and emblematic education privatization policies we find charter schools, school choice policies, and voucher schemes.

The objective of this chapter is twofold. First, the chapter reflects on the multiple policy manifestations of the privatization phenomenon in different educational settings. Second, and more importantly, the chapter analyzes the global diffusion of education privatization policies and, in particular, the reasons why privatization has played such a central role in education reform processes in a broad range of world locations.

Theoretically speaking, rationalistic and normative approaches have traditionally dominated the policy diffusion debate (see Jacoby 2000; Meseguer 2006; Meyer and Rowan 1977). However, as I argue in this chapter, these approaches provide an incomplete understanding of global education policy; and therefore, are not the most useful approaches to understand why and how education privatization, as a policy program, disseminates globally. Too often, rationalistic and normative approaches reach the conclusion that policy convergence is happening, but neglect the diverse factors and dynamics of convergence, including the complex political interplay between the international and the domestic policy fields. Moreover, these approaches focus on the formal adoption of external policy models, but de-problematize to what extent converging policies are effectively retained and enacted in domestic networks of rules and practices.

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Alternatively, I consider critical constructivism and cultural political economy (e.g. Hay 2001; Jessop 2010, Schmidt 2010) to be better equipped for this endeavor. They allow us to scrutinize global education policies and problematize key moments in the policy process that, too often, mainstream theories on policy diffusion take for granted (or only consider very superficially). In particular, these approaches contribute to look more in depth and more critically at the politics and semiotics of policy adoption, as well as at the role of ideas and strategic actors operating at a range of scales in the selection and retention of new educational policies.

To elaborate on this argument, this chapter is structured in three main parts. In the first part, I develop the different faces of education privatization and show that the privatization agenda translates into multiple and quite diverse educational policies. In the second part of the chapter, I reflect on how both rationalism and normative approaches understand the globalization of education policies. I present the main premises for each of the approaches and specifically show how they apply to the diffusion of education privatization policies. After having identified the main weaknesses of the two mentioned approaches, in the third part of the chapter, on the basis of critical constructivism and cultural political economy studies, I elaborate an alternative approach to understand education policy diffusion from the policy adoption perspective. To this purpose, I unpack policy adoption in three key evolutionary mechanisms (namely, variation, selection, and retention), and illustrate how education privatization reforms disseminate, work, and evolve through each of them.

The Multiple Faces of Privatization

Education privatization cannot be considered as a policy in itself, since it has multiple policy manifestations. Education privatization needs to be seen as a process by which private actors participate more actively in a range of education activities that have traditionally been the responsibilities of the state.

Education privatization does not necessarily mean a drastic transfer of the "ownership" of the education service from public to private hands – in contrast to what we have witnessed in other widely privatized sectors like telecommunications or energy. At least, this is not the most important way education privatization develops in most parts of the world. Privatization is a process that tends to happen more at the levels of services provision and funding, than at the level of ownership in a strict sense. According to Fitz and Beers (2002, 139), education privatization is "a process that occurs in many modes but in one form or another involves the transfer of public money or assets from the public domain to the private sector."

Education privatization can emerge by default (i.e. because of states' passivity in front of a growing education demand), but it also tends to happen because of governments proactively promoting it through the adoption and implementation of specific policies. The education privatization agenda covers policies like voucher schemes, charter schools, education sector liberalization, contracting out educational services, and so on. All of them are measures that introduce higher levels of private sector participation, especially in the delivery of services that were provided by the public sector.

Ball and Youdell (2007) have famously distinguished between two main types of privatization policies: (a) Privatization *of* public education (or "exogenous" privatization),

which involves "the opening up of public education services to private sector participation [usually] on a for-profit basis and using the private sector to design, manage or deliver aspects of public education"; and (b) Privatization *in* public education (or "endogenous" privatization), which involves the "importing of ideas, techniques and practices from the private sector in order to make the public sector more like businesses and more business-like" (Ball and Youdell 2007, 9). This latest modality implies deconcentrating managerial responsibilities at the school level, allowing users more scope for choice and exit, and introducing outcomes based management techniques, among other policy measures (Maroy 2009).

More recently, Ball (2012) has referred to a third modality of privatization: privatization *through* education policy, which refers to the increasingly active role of private actors in the process of education policy-making (e.g. by selling or advocating policy solutions to governments).

To make the conceptualization of the privatization phenomenon even more complex, public–private mixes are becoming increasingly central in the organization of educational systems in many places. In policy terms, public–private mixes or "public–private partnerships" (PPPs), tend to translate into more or less stable contracts between the public and the private sector. Through this contract, the public sector buys a service from the private sector for a certain period of time at a certain price and depending on results. Both the private and the public are expected to assume risks in the delivery of the service (Patrinos *et al.* 2009).

In one way or another, many of these policies are being adopted and applied in countries and regions with very little in common, for very different reasons (Verger *et al.* 2016). To start with, this is the case in countries like the UK, New Zealand, and Chile, where education privatization policies have advanced drastically as part of a broader strategy of state reform under neo-liberal principles (Ball 2007; Mizala 2007). This is also the case in Nordic European countries, which have traditionally enjoyed a strong public intervention in education provision, and where privatization and pro-market measures started being adopted in the 1990s as a way to debureaucratize and modernize the welfare state (Wiborg 2013). On their part, North American states are gradually advancing charter school legislation and local voucher experiences under the pressure of the persistent and influential school-choice movement (DeBray-Pelot *et al.* 2007). In Central and Southern Europe and in Latin America, many governments tend to contract education services to religious providers on a large scale as both a cost-efficient measure, but also as a way to stay on good terms with the Church (Bonal 2000). Finally, privatization is also expanding in South Asian and sub-Saharan countries, where the so-called "low-fee private schools" seem to be mushrooming and many governments and donors are considering their incorporation into PPP frameworks as an efficient way to expand education (Srivastava 2014).

Main Approaches to Policy Diffusion

As the previous section shows, the education privatization agenda is very diverse and translates into a range of different policy programs (i.e. PPPs, school choice policies, charter schools, and so on). Nevertheless, and independently from the final form they take, we are also witnessing a global convergence around the idea of privatization as a

desirable policy option and, consequently, the enactment of this policy idea in multiple settings. In the following sections, and before I provide an alternative account, I reflect on how mainstream theories on policy diffusion (namely rationalism and normative-emulation) would explain such levels of convergence around education privatization.

Rationalism

Rationalism considers that reality has an intrinsically logical structure and agents reproduce such structure by taking rational or utilitarian decisions through which to pursue their interests. Rationalism is an epistemological approach grounded on strong ontological claims, the main one probably being that of human beings as primarily benefit maximizers. When applied to policy-making, rationalism considers that decision-makers are goal-oriented and engage in strategic interactions as a way to maximize their utilities (or those of the constituency they represent) on the basis of pre-given interests and preferences (Risse 2000)

Rationalist scholars assume that, when confronted with a new education problem, policy-makers will scan the international environment in search of policies that have "worked well" elsewhere; process the obtained information through a thorough cost–benefit analysis; and pick the most optimal policy, i.e. the one that better demonstrates that it can contribute to maximizing its utility in the country in question (Meseguer 2006; Weyland 2005). Rationalist scholars would consider that education privatization policies are spreading because evidence shows that such policies work or have worked well elsewhere. In other words, according to rationalism, policy-makers embrace privatization policies once it has been demonstrated that these policies can contribute to, among other aspects, improving students' academic performance or the efficiency of education systems.

Research on the diffusion of education privatization that adopts an explicit rationalist approach is uncommon. However, despite this fact, several agencies advocating education privatization seem to subscribe to rationalist assumptions when they engage with local policy-makers. For instance, international organizations like the World Bank seem to assume that, by systematizing worldwide evidence and/or doing impact evaluations of a range of interventions (such as PPPs, teachers' incentives schemes and so on), they demonstrate to national policy-makers which policies "work" and, accordingly, the latter will opt to adopt and implement them (see, for instance, Bruns *et al.* 2011; Patrinos *et al.* 2009).

Normative Emulation

Normative approaches are skeptical about the idea of policy diffusion as the result of an aggregation of goal-oriented rational choices by self-interested policy-makers. According to these approaches, countries adopt global policies not necessarily because they need them, or because they know that they work well, but rather due to the legitimation pressures that governments receive to demonstrate to the international community that they are a modern and responsible state (Drezner 2001). Adopting the categories made famous by March and Olsen (1998), normative-emulation scholars believe that, in global politics, the logic of appropriateness predominates over the logic of expected consequences.

In comparative education, this approach is strongly represented by World Culture Theory (WCT) (Meyer *et al.* 1992; 1997; see also Ramirez, Meyer, and Lerch, Chapter 2, this volume). This theory argues that a single global model of schooling has spread around the world as part of the diffusion of a more general culturally embedded model of the modern nation state. The need for nation states to conform to an international ideal of the rationalized bureaucratic state has led to a process of institutional isomorphism and convergence in education (Meyer *et al.* 1992). In this view, international organizations and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are key transmitters of modernization ideas and Western values at a global scale.

WCT also understands policy diffusion as the result of the misleading attraction that some new global policy ideas generate – even when there is not enough international evidence supporting the effectiveness of such policies. According to this theoretical current, once a new policy reaches a certain threshold of adoption in different countries, more and more policy-makers become inclined to "take the policy for granted as necessary and will adopt it whether or not they have need of it"; consequently, such policies will "spread to polities for which they were not originally designed" (Dobbin *et al.* 2007, 454). Such an "irrational" modality of policy dissemination is seen as especially problematic in low-income countries, which end up assigning their scarce resources to adopt external policies that do not fit within their more urgent needs and implementation capacities (Jakobi 2012).

According to WCT, more and more policy-makers would implement privatization policies like PPPs because they are normatively accepted by the international community and/or because these policies have become a sort of international policy fad – with "partnerships" being perceived as an inherently positive policy approach in a range of policy sectors (see Cornwall 2007).

Several pieces of research on education privatization apply this theoretical approach explicitly. This is the case, for instance, of Komatsu (2013), according to whom the government in Bosnia-Herzegovina adopted a school-based management reform to present itself as a reformer in tune with European standards, thereby responding to the citizens' aspirations for European integration. Following a similar argumentation, Rinne (2000) considers that, in the 1990s, Finland adopted endo-privatization ideas and abandoned equity as a core educational goal[1] as a consequence of its integration into the European Union (EU):

> Finland has adapted the general lines of a globalising world in its educational policy, and as one of the "model students" of the European Union, wants to continue being seen very clearly as a good students who can be trusted and who is in the front ranks of those achieving the goals set for Europe. (Rinne 2000, 139)

In this volume, Patricia Bromley also uses WCT to understand the global diffusion of privatization and related managerial practices in education. According to her, administrative practices in education, like New Public Management ideas, "diffuse as a cultural matter, spreading worldwide beyond functional requirements and in ways that are not obvious reflections of aggregated self-interests or to the benefit of elites" (Bromley, Chapter 26, this volume, p??).

Overall, WCT offers a very solid alternative to rationalism, but is still incomplete for providing us with a more nuanced and situated understanding of global education

policy processes. From an ontological point of view, WCT prefers to err on the side of *ideationalism* (i.e. it does not sufficiently introduce material and economic factors in its explanations of policy change (Dale 2000)), *structuralism* (does not pay attention to actors' preferences and strategies, and does not reflect enough on whose interests are being served by policy convergence (Carney *et al.* 2012)), and *de-contextualization* (looks at the world polity with self-sufficiency and, accordingly, does not provide a rich account of political interactions at the national and subnational levels (Steiner-Khamsi 2004; Carney *et al.* 2012; Verger 2014)).

As a consequence of such an ontological strait-jacketing, WCT scholars tend to see *policy adoption* as a black box or, at least, as a moment that is not relevant from both an analytical and empirical point of view. At the same time, in methodological terms, they adopt a macro-sociological approach that requires the availability of world indicators to build their arguments, which allows them to do indirect analysis without directly inquiring into specific policy adoption dynamics. In the following section, I argue it is important to pay more in-context attention to policy adoption mechanisms to understand the gradual, and also uneven and erratic evolution of global education policies and agendas, particularly in education privatization.

The Politics and Semiotics of Policy Adoption

Focusing on policy adoption is fundamental to understanding, on the one hand, why and under which conditions global policy ideas spread and, on the other, the transformation processes these ideas suffer once they penetrate different territories and policy fields (what many call "re-contextualization"). Analyzing policy adoption implies paying closer attention to the processes, reasons, and circumstances that reflect how and why policy-makers embrace new education policies, usually coming from outside, and aim to apply them in their educational realities (Verger 2014).

Policy adoption is a multi-scalar process that does not necessarily materialize in a simple direction. Policy adoption is about international organizations influencing member states' policies; however, it also involves dynamics of emulation and influence in different directions, and between actors that may operate at a similar scale – see, for instance, Grek's (2012) work on the noticeable impact of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the EU educational agenda, or Renzulli and Roscigno (2005)'s research on the influence between US states when it comes to the adoption of charter school legislation. Maybe more counter-intuitively, policy adoption also involves bottom-up dynamics; such was the case of the World Bank adopting the conditional cash transfer idea from local governments in Mexico and Brazil – and transforming it, only afterwards, in global education policy (Peck and Theodore 2010).

Despite its relevance, policy adoption is an under-researched and under-theorized stage in education policy diffusion studies. As I have argued before, both rationalism and neo-institutionalism are not well equipped to look (and, to a great extent, not particularly interested in looking) at policy adoption. Nevertheless, in international studies and in comparative politics, there are other theoretical currents much better suited to conducting research on the policy adoption stage. I refer, in particular, to critical constructivism and to cultural political economy.

Critical constructivism has many commonalities with conventional constructivism, but "adds a belief that constructions of reality reflect, enact, and reify relations of power" (Finnemore and Sikkink 2001, 398). Critical constructivism advocates a more dialectical understanding of the relationship between ideas, social change, and strategically selective contexts and social structures (Béland 2010; Hay 2006). For its part, Cultural Political Economy (CPE) is interested in the study of economic and political imaginaries, their translation into hegemonic strategies and projects, and their institutionalization into specific structures and practices (Jessop 2010; Robertson and Dale 2015). CPE adds to conventional political economy a clear focus on semiosis (understood as all forms of social production of inter-subjective meaning) and a rich account of the semiotic dimension of economic and political orders (Jessop 2008).

There is a great deal of potential cross-fertilization between these two approaches since they share core ontological claims, including that human interests and preferences are not objectively pre-given (instead they are constructed to a great extent), and that human agents have an incomplete and often precarious understanding of the environment where they intervene (see Hay 2006). The most direct implication for policy analysis of these claims is that paying closer attention to the mobilization of ideas, and to political actors' perceptions, is key to understanding the nature and results of policy dynamics. In most occasions, policy-makers intervene in policy fields where uncertainty prevails and, as a consequence, policy-makers need to resort to inferential shortcuts and external inputs to figure out how to position themselves (Jessop 2010; Weyland 2005). Here is where the role of experts – including external advisers, policy entrepreneurs, consultancies, knowledge-brokers, etc. – and the mechanisms of persuasion and construction of meaning, should be seen and analyzed as key variables in processes of policy change (Risse 2000; Schmidt 2010).

Both CPE and critical constructivism consider power relations as consubstantial to policy processes, and that an important dimension of power in policy-making has an ideational nature. "Soft power," in interaction with the material or political dimensions of power, is considered as a key component and driver of policy change. In Jessop's words (2008, 16), "semiosis is causally effective as well as meaningful. Events and processes and their emergent effects can be interpreted and, at least in part, explained by semiosis."

However, how can all these theoretical premises on semiosis and the role of ideas be operationalized in political analysis, and in the study of policy adoption in particular? There is not a straightforward answer to this question, but Jessop's development of CPE is particularly insightful in this respect. According to him, in all institutional transformations, material and semiotic factors interact through the evolutionary mechanisms of *variation* (which relates to the contingent emergence of new practices), *selection* (which relates to the subsequent privileging of these practices), and *retention* (their ongoing realization) (Jessop 2010). This conceptual framework can contribute to moving beyond conceptions of policy adoption as a concrete and isolable stage in policy processes, or moving past the notion of policy adoption as the simple act in which policy-makers take a specific decision and/or buy (into) a new policy solution. Furthermore, this framework is especially valuable from both a heuristic and analytical point of view. The variation, selection, and retention categories can contribute to identifying more systematically the sequence

of contingencies, events, forms of agency and technologies of power involved in policy adoption, as well as the specific mechanisms – of both a semiotic and non-semiotic nature – that conduct or inhibit policy change. In other words, a careful analysis of each of these categories separately can contribute to building more complex explanations of why certain policies are adopted in particular settings.

As I aim to show below, this categorization of evolutionary mechanisms is particularly useful to analyze education policy changes and, specifically, to scrutinize the worldwide adoption of education privatization reforms.

Variation

Variation starts when dominant policy discourses and practices need to be revisited due to a range of circumstances that can go from the perception of persistent educational problems (which may be related to internal dissatisfaction with the appropriateness of the education offer, or rather induced externally by the bad results of a country in international standardized evaluations such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Phillips and Ochs 2003) to more systemic phenomena (e.g. global pressures to become a "knowledge economy," or the responses to economic crisis or related challenges (Robertson 2005). All these elements and circumstances would put pressure on policy-makers to introduce substantive changes into their education systems.

In general, national or international economic crises tend to disorient political actors and are conducive to variation in different policy sectors (Hay 2001). In periods of crises, policy-makers are more open to reforming their education systems or importing new policies from elsewhere. This is especially true when the narratives of the crisis draw education as part of the problem and/or the solution (Ball 1990).

Global political imaginaries, like Education for All (EFA), also work in a similar way. Privatization advocates use the insufficient resources available for many low-income countries to achieve the globally agreed EFA goals as an argument to introduce urgency to pro-private reform pressure. Specifically, privatization advocates try to convince governments and donors that they should perceive the private sector as a key ally to develop their educational systems; and, if they want to achieve the EFA goals, then governments and donors need to bring the private sector into education delivery (Srivastava 2010). It is also well documented that the confusion generated by "natural disasters" or violent conflict derive in moments of variation, which some agents strategically use to advance policy reforms that otherwise would be difficult to carry out. For instance, it has been documented that both post-earthquake Haiti and post-Katrina New Orleans have become laboratories for neo-liberal education reformers to advance privatization and ambitious school choice reforms (Atasay and Delavan 2012; DeBray-Pelot *et al.* 2014).

Overall, economic crises or the global emergence of new political and economic imaginaries are constitutive of critical junctures and, as such, represent moments of disruption to typical operating procedures that expose underlying structures and mechanisms of influence (Danermark *et al.* 2002). Occasionally, "external" shocks generate policy convergence because, in a more globalized policy environment, policy-makers from different countries tend to give similar policy responses to similar "problems" they face (Knill 2005, see also Carnoy, Chapter 1, this volume).

However, moments of crises are also conducive to competition and conflict between different views. They tend to be perceived and used as a window of political opportunity by policy entrepreneurs and advocates operating on a range of scales with a conflicting understanding of which (global) policy programs, including privatization, are the most appropriate and suitable policy options in certain contexts.

Selection

The selection of particular policy solutions by politicians and policy-makers is another key moment in education policy change. It implies the identification of the most suitable interpretations of existing problems, as well as the most complementary policy solutions.

Neo-institutionalist scholars tend to explain countries' selection of external polices by resorting to factors of an institutional nature like the so-called "institutional fit" (i.e. diffusion tends to happen between countries that share similar institutional arrangements; Lejano and Shankar 2013). For instance, according to this view, the promotion of PPP schemes is more likely to succeed in a country with a well-established tradition of private schools (religious schools, community schools, NGO-based schools, etc.), than in a country where private sector participation is very marginal.

Despite the importance of institutional factors in the selection moment, a range of ideational factors of a different nature (including frames, ideologies, public sentiments, and policy paradigms) also plays a determinant role. To start with, for a particular policy solution to be selected by policy-makers (usually among a broader range of competing options) the way this policy is framed and packaged matters. Policy entrepreneurs need to frame their programs in a way that makes these programs appear to be empirically credible and consistent with the problems that are expected to address. At the same time, policy-makers need to perceive these programs as sound, based on accepted ideas for public sector reform, and fitting within the budgetary and technical capacities of their government (Verger 2012).

Increasingly, as a means to convince policy-makers, policy reform advocates try to frame the desirability of their preferred solutions in a scientific and evidence-based way. In relation to contentious themes (as education privatization clearly is), the use of research is more susceptible to politicization, with privatization advocates tending to use evidence in a very selective way (Ball 2007). For instance, using bibliometric techniques, Lubienski *et al.* (2014) show that several American foundations as a way to create momentum around privatization reform produce a sort of "echochamber effect" around a small, usually low-quality and unrepresentative sample of studies produced by like-minded research centers. It is documented that in both Australia and in Spain neo-liberal think-tanks also use evidence in a selective and tendentious way to advance pro-school choice legislation at the federal level (Olmedo and Grau 2013; Windle 2014). In the context of low income countries, it has been also analyzed how a network of international agencies, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the Council for British Teachers have instrumentalized scientific evidence similarly to try to convince low-income countries to adopt PPPs in education (Verger 2012).

Government ideologies also mediate in the selection of specific policies among a range of policy alternatives. In relation to the education privatization debate,

right-wing governments are expected to be more inclined to privatize educational services than left-wing governments; with the latter more willing to manage services directly. Elinder and Jordahl (2013) conducted a study on education privatization in Swedish municipalities, on the basis of a complete database on local governments outsourcing of public services. Contradicting habitual explanations of outsourcing like the transaction cost model (which explains outsourcing by the contracting difficulties of the services in question) or the patronage model (according to which decisions on outsourcing would be subordinated to governments – irrespective of their political hat – aiming at receiving support from public employees and their unions), they found that right-wing governments are more prone to use outsourcing than left-wing governments (Elinder and Jordahl 2013).

According to Le Grand (2003), such different positions concerning privatization are related to the main assumptions regarding human motivation that different political ideologies hold. In short, right-wing governments consider teachers, principals, and families to be primarily motivated by their own self-interest and, accordingly, the introduction of quasi-markets is necessary to make public education more effective. Contrarily, social-democrats and socialists have traditionally conceived public sector workers as altruistic or public-spirited and, accordingly, there is no apparent reason to challenge the bureaucratic organization of the educational system.

Nevertheless, the left-wing vs right-wing cleavage is not always so clear-cut in relation to the privatization debate. In fact, in many places, social-democratic and labor parties are well-known for having advanced pro-market reforms, although apparently for different reasons than those of neo-liberal or conservative parties. For instance, in nordic European countries, where there is a long tradition of welfare state politics, social-democrats have advanced market reforms in many social sectors (including education) as not a way to promote competition, but to respond to middle class demands of more choice and diversification in public services. By doing so, they did not expect to undermine the welfare state, but rather the opposite: to be protecting the universal welfare state in the face of its public legitimacy crisis (Klitgaard 2008).

Beyond the political color of the ruling party, there are more stable institutions, such as welfare state regimes or policy paradigms, which are also expected to influence governmental positions and choices in the framework of the education privatization debate. A "policy paradigm" is an ideational-based structure with the capacity to work as a powerful lens through which policy-makers interpret their reality and act accordingly (Hall 1993). Policy paradigms are selective in nature since they discriminate for and against particular policy ideas and discourses (Hay 2001). In developing countries, for instance, the prevailing developmental policy paradigm is the so-called Post-Washington Consensus. This paradigm is especially conducive to privatization measures as it encourages governments to explore non-bureaucratic ways of coordinating economic and social activities, and to create an environment that favors the private sector acquiring a more dynamic role in economic and societal issues (Van Waeyenberge 2006).

Public opinion and societal values are also variables of an ideational nature that mediate in the selection of particular policies. In societies that have embraced strong consumerist values and/or that tolerate better the existence of socio-economic inequalities, policy ideas that promote school choice and competition will be more

resonant than in societies with a strong public sentiment around the idea of education as a public good (Boyd 2007).

Many of the variables affecting policy selection identified here should not be seen as working in an isolated or exclusionary manner. Campbell (2004) theorizes on how different types of ideas (including policy paradigms, policy programs, frames, and public sentiments, which interpellate to very different domains of reality) interact in processes of institutional change. Paraphrasing him, new policy proposals, including privatization, will be more likely to penetrate education systems if policy advocates can present them in a way that appears to translate well into the prevailing regulatory framework and policy paradigm, and into the normative sentiments of decision-makers and key stakeholders.

Finally, it is important to remark that the selection of external policies is not always a free or voluntary decision (Dolowitz and Marsh 2000; Edwards 2013). It is well documented that many countries, especially developing countries, have adopted privatization measures in different educational levels due to the loan conditionalities imposed by international financial organizations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Mundy 1998), or due to having to comply with international binding agreements (such as the General Agreement on Trade in Services of the World Trade Organization) that countries have been forced to subscribe in multilateral negotiations (Robertson *et al.* 2002).

Retention

Retention represents a final and necessary step for the realization of policy adoption. There are many policies that are selected by decision-makers, but end up not being finally retained in their particular settings. Retention of new education policies means their institutionalization and inclusion into the regulatory framework, and into the network of educational technologies and practices of a system (Colyvas and Jonsson 2011).

Of all the adoption moments described here, retention is the most potentially contentious. This is due to the fact that it represents the materialization of a policy change and, as such, policy retention is also often the crystallization point of conflicts and oppositional movements. Once a government announces its education reform plans, political actors and key stakeholders of a different nature tend to position themselves around the new proposals and, according to their level of (dis)agreement with them, they articulate strategies of opposition or support. The consequent negotiation and conflict may result in the transformation, or partial or total "displacement" of government plans (Bardach 2006).

The prevailing political architecture in countries mediates determinately in the final retention of new policy proposals. Political institutions and systems of rules can work in very different – and even contradictory – ways when it comes to retaining education reform ideas. For instance, in some countries, like Denmark or The Netherlands, the political party realm is so fragmented that governments usually need to be formed by multiple party coalitions (Kjaer and Pedersen 2001). These coalitions can be so ideologically diverse that it tends to be more difficult for them to agree on the final adoption of drastic measures, as education privatization can be. Overall, the role and presence of veto points and veto players – both within and

outside the government - in policy processes can also be vital to understand the uneven adoption and retention of education privatization policies in different settings (Klitgaard 2008).

In contrast to the previous moments of policy adoption in which international influences are more visible, retention is more clearly determined by interactions happening in the domestic arena. Nevertheless, as a way to legitimate policy preferences and/or to neutralize internal opposition, it is common for governments to resort to external or global education models and institutions in order to guarantee the retention of new policies (Steiner-Khamsi 2012). Several European governments, for instance, have used the Bologna process in this particular way to advance privatization policies in higher education (Huisman and Van der Wende 2004). It is also well documented that many governments have used the OECD/PISA results as a political opportunity to advance their pre-established policy preferences (see Fulge *et al.*, Chapter 25, this volume). In Catalonia, for instance, key education decision-makers have repeatedly evoked – and actively transformed to their convenience – recommendations coming from OECD/PISA to legitimate the adoption of school-based management and related endogenous privatization measures in education (Verger and Curran 2014).

It has been also documented that policy entrepreneurs and policy-makers (as a way to ensure the retention of privatization measures) tend to avoid the use of the privatization concept in their public talk on education reform. As a sign of their "discursive abilities" (cf. Schmidt 2010), they prefer to resort to more appealing, vague and euphemistic concepts such as public–private *partnerships*, *free* schools, *innovative* forms of provision, or school *autonomy* (Srivastava 2014; Verger 2012).

It is important to mention that once the new policy programs are retained, there is a *lock-in effect* resulting from the fact that these policies are usually associated with the creation of new constituencies and interests, and to periods of policy stability (Bardach 2006; Dale 2012).

Due to its political connotations, retention is apparently a more materially and institutionally inscribed moment than the moments of variation and especially selection. However, policy retention also has very important semiotic connotations. In Jessop's words:

> The greater the range of sites (horizontally and vertically) in which resonant discourses are retained, the greater is the potential for effective institutionalization and integration into patterns of structured coherence and durable compromise. The constraining influences of complex, reciprocal interdependences will also recursively affect the scope for retaining resonant discourses. (Jessop 2010, 341)

Conclusion: The Politics and Semiotics of Policy Adoption

Both exogenous and endogenous forms of education privatization are converging in the reform agendas of multiple countries. Education privatization is thus a suitable phenomenon to look at from a policy diffusion perspective. Nevertheless, the dominant approaches to policy diffusion (specifically, rationalism and normative emulation) are not sufficient to explain the dynamics of global education privatization in its complexity. Of course, while both approaches represent an advance in relation to explanations that simply focus on external imposition or on exogenous shocks, they

still adopt a globalist stance to diffusion. This results in highly deterministic explanations of policy change and convergence, and makes them understate the complex, multi-scalar, and even contradicting political interactions that gear around the advance of most global education policies. Such a flat ontology of the global polity is especially problematic in relation to the study of education privatization processes for two main reasons; first, due to the multiple and even divergent motives why countries adopt privatization as an educational reform approach; and second, due to the very diverse policy measures through which privatization ends up being regulated and enacted in different educational realities.

On the basis of theoretical currents like critical constructivism and CPE, I have elaborated an alternative approach that focuses on the "politics and semiotics of policy adoption." This approach is better suited to explain the global education privatization phenomenon because it looks at relevant moments and variables that are often neglected in other sources of policy diffusion literature. According to this approach, we cannot understand policy dissemination without understanding policy adoption and, at the same time, we cannot understand policy adoption without unpacking it into three main dimensions, namely variation, selection, and retention. Focusing on policy adoption requires a good comprehension of domestic politics, power relations, negotiation, and resistance. It also requires leaving rationalistic and linear conceptions of the policy process apart, since the moments of variation, selection, and retention interact dialectically and are usually loosely coupled. This is especially true when it comes to explaining the selection and retention of contentious policies like education privatization, as well as the final form privatization adopts in particular country settings.

Applying this suggested approach to the study of education policy diffusion means scrutinizing dynamics of persuasion, deliberation, the construction of political interests and values and, more broadly speaking, the generation of meaning at all stages of policy adoption. Although ideas do not determine education change in an isolated manner, they intervene crucially in policy decisions by shaping the perceptions of decision makers, providing them with rationales for action, or filtering interpretations of the external world. It is fundamental, as Colin Hay (2006) argues, to focus on ideas, and on the carriers of those ideas, because policy-makers mainly make decisions according to their views about the social and political environment they inhabit.

Finally, the "politics and semiotics of policy adoption" approach advocates for a more comprehensive, but also respectful understanding of the role of local actors in global policy processes, in the sense that it infuses these actors with agency. When studying policy adoption, we need to see education policy decision-makers, including those operating at the national and subnational levels, as key political agents and active generators of meaning. To some extent, their policy options are related to the complementary (symbolic, political and material) gains that certain global policies come with, but also to the way these policies fit within their technical capacities, policy preferences and, certainly, political agendas.

Note

1 Rinne's argument was produced before OECD/PISA consecrated Finland as an "international good practice" of how effectiveness and equity are compatible goals.

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PISA For development: how the OECD and World Bank shaped education governance post-2015

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ABSTRACT

The year 2015 was significant for the arena of international development, as UNESCO's *Education for All* agenda was replaced by *Education 2030*, which would identify minimum standards of education quality. The OECD had been working on extending its existing PISA assessment into low- and middle-income countries through PISA for Development (PISA-D) and positioned the new assessment as a means of tracking progress on the post-2015 goals. The organisation maintains that PISA-D was introduced primarily in response to the demands of the international community, especially low- and middle-income countries, and that the assessment was developed in partnership with them. This paper investigates those claims through an analysis of the arrival of PISA-D in Cambodia, situating the analysis within UNESCO's shifting agenda and the strategic visions of the OECD and World Bank that first emerged in the 1990s. The result is a very different picture to the portrayals of local agency, demand, consensus and partnership that adorn the official websites and pamphlets of global agencies and much academic research, raising serious doubts about education governance post-2015.

KEYWORDS

SDGs; global governance; Cambodia; humanitarian assessment; PISA

Introduction

In 1990, world leaders gathered in Jomtien, Thailand, to develop a new agenda for international development, supported by representatives of regional groups, international organisations, donor agencies, NGOs and private organisations. A new vision emerged in the form of Education for All (EFA), a 'global' agenda that would frame international development over the next 25 years. Tikly (2017) argues that there had been a longstanding tension in EFA between the promotion of universal access to education and improving the quality of schooling, which has been manifested in tensions and infighting among key stakeholders (in particular, UNESCO and the World Bank). Although 'quality' featured in the Dakar Framework (2000), it was not clearly defined. In the ensuing years, concern that expanding access did not always improve learning (UNESCO 2005) developed into an elaborate discourse that warned of a 'learning crisis' (e.g. UNESCO 2012, 2014a), nurturing the

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conviction that it would be necessary to identify basic minimum standards of education quality to measure and track *learning* post-2015.

Since the launch of PISA in 2000, the OECD has championed the assessment as the world's 'premier yardstick of education quality', with quality interpreted in economic terms as a proxy for human-knowledge capital. The PISA for Development (hereafter, PISA-D) initiative is an adaptation of the existing PISA test, specifically designed for low- and middle-income nations. It is now, at the time of writing, in the final stages of its pilot round in 9 countries.[1] Writing for a UNESCO blog in March 2013,[2] OECD analysts emphasised the 'learning crisis', stating that it 'has led to a general consensus that the post-2015 development goals should focus more strongly on the quality of learning', and asserting that 'the challenge is how to measure learning'. By August 2013, the OECD (2013) had identified seven countries, including Cambodia, and one jurisdiction (Punjab, Pakistan) as 'currently being considered' for the piloting of PISA-D. Of these, five would be selected as participants within three weeks (by September 2013), pending discussions with national governments and foreign donors (i.e. 'development partners'). Up to seven additional countries would then be considered 'based on interest and the availability of funding support' (3).

Two years on, Michael Ward (PISA-D Project Manager) and Pablo Zoido (OECD analyst) gave an overview of progress on the PISA-D initiative, emphasizing that 'the selection of countries for PISA-D was demand-led' and 'based on the following basic criteria: a middle-income or low-income country that has already participated in a regional or international assessment' (Ward and Zoido 2015, 22). During an interview for IIEP UNESCO in 2016,[3] Michael Ward was asked about the motivation for PISA-D. He listed three main drivers: (i) the demand from developing countries[4]; (ii) the OECD's new strategy for development; and, (iii) the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular the focus on learning outcomes. Referring to a report on the experience of middle-income countries participating in PISA (Lockheed, Prokic-Bruer, and Shadrova 2015), Ward stated that the first of these drivers was the strongest, before elaborating on the selection of pilot countries:

> The strongest motivation is that countries really do want to benchmark their systems internationally. That is a very powerful driver. They want to be part of the international community around PISA that is focused on learning outcomes, and improving learning outcomes. They also seek to gain access to assessment experts ...
>
> To answer your question about selection, we never selected anyone, the countries came to us. And then, when the countries came to us, we said 'can you finance this?', and if they said 'Well ... we can't finance all of it', then we worked together with their development partners to try to put a package together that would enable them to do it.

As highlighted above, Cambodia had been identified as a potential pilot country as early as August 2013. Given the time-frame, and the project's positioning as demand-led, it follows that these countries must have indicated their interest in participating well in advance of the publication of this project document (OECD 2013), and that discussions were already underway with national governments and development partners. Although Cambodia was listed as a confirmed participant in Ward and Zoido's 2015 project update, it was not until March 2016 that Cambodia eventually signed up. Why the delay, and how was it resolved?

The answer cannot be found in documents in the public domain, but in the interactions that took place primarily between the donor representatives and the Cambodian Ministry. This paper describes those interactions, telling the inside story of the introduction of PISA-D in Cambodia. This account was constructed primarily out of a series of interviews with those close to the events and supplemented with publicly available documentation. The interviews were carried out in person and online from 2016 to 2018. Those interviewed included leading donor representatives in Phnom Penh (most notably UN agencies and European donors), former and current policy advisors to Cambodia's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (hereafter MoEYS) (including members of the Education Research Council, see Figure 1), and those charged with implementing PISA-D. The data collection qualifies as 'insider' because one author's previous work inside the World Bank had opened up a network of high-level contacts, communication channels, and conflicts otherwise inaccessible to researchers working on the 'outside' (see Rappleye and Un 2018 for details). None of the data was collected, however, as part of official World Bank work.

We begin with a brief exposition of the OECD's 'new paradigm for development', situating this alongside the World Bank's 'Learning for All', which extended an agenda that had begun to focus heavily on quality from 2001. Against this backdrop, the analysis presents a detailed account of how the OECD and World Bank ensured that PISA-D would become the primary assessment framework in Cambodia, overcoming resistance from other donors, and despite the absence of local demand. Our approach responds to Lingard's call (in Addey et al. 2017) that in trying to document, understand and theorise the uptake of international large-scale assessments (ILSAs) it is necessary to combine 'granular' (13) empirical work in specific nations with attention to the *changing* rationales and agendas of international organisations. Our account ends in March 2017 when the implementation of PISA-D became a technical exercise. Our account can be read alongside similar accounts detailing the arrival of PISA-D in other low-income countries, including Zambia (Gorur, Sorensen, and Maddox, forthcoming) and Ecuador (Addey 2017).

Locating 'agency' on the side of international organisations will undoubtedly provoke resistance in a field that increasingly subscribes to the view of a 'global testing culture', one that is 'part of a world culture that fosters both Education for All and a broader understanding of education overall' (Ramirez, Schofer, and Meyer 2018, 344–345). Valverde (2014) argues that accounts of testing regimes must also account for the fact that 'there is a *demand* for international tests and for international monitoring reports,' and issues a warning that those 'who account for such demand as primarily created by global institutions' are guilty of a 'curious form of analytical hegemony- a willful and blinding eagerness to discount the agency of weak, poor, or underachieving educational systems' (582). As Addey and Sellar (2018) illuminate, there are often multiple reasons that drive participation in ILSAs in any one case. Although we do not discount the agency of Cambodian actors and acknowledge that the drivers of participation are undoubtedly multiple, the evidence does not support the claim that demand for PISA-D originated within Cambodia. Herein we relay the voices of the 'weak, poor, and underachieving' Cambodians close to the project to underscore these points.

We surmise that Cambodia is not unique, and that elsewhere international donors led by the World Bank pushed through PISA-D, retrospectively arguing that recipient countries 'demanded' the exercise. There is no evidence to indicate that Cambodia approached the OECD – an organisation it had no formal relationship with – to ask for

a new PISA test as early as 2012–2013. Cambodia's Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2009–2013 (the highest-level statement of policy intent) makes no mention of the 'need' for international assessments. The term 'benchmarking' appears nowhere in the 155-page text, and 'international' never appears in relation to 'assessment'. Instead, the ESP laments that a *national* 'system for standardized learning assessment has yet to be fully implemented' (6). Exploration of these contradictions is particularly pressing given the ambitious goals of the PISA-D project, which is to serve as a gateway for more low- and middle-income nations to join PISA from 2021 onwards. As the OECD's PISA-D lead Michael Ward (February 2016, 27[5]) has indicated, the OECD's intent is to have 170 countries signed on to PISA by 2030.

Shaping the global architecture post-2015

Before focusing on Cambodia, we lay out the strategic visions of the OECD and World Bank, and how they situated these within the frame established by the EFA agenda, and the SDGs. Initial insight is provided in UNESCO's (2014b) position paper, which hailed progress under EFA but emphasised the need for a new 'forward-looking agenda' that would go 'beyond the current goals in terms of depth and scope', taking into account 'changing requirements in the type and level of knowledge skills and competencies required for today's knowledge-based economies' (1). The overarching goal was stated as: 'Ensure equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030' (4), which was duly ratified at Incheon in Sustainable Development Goal 4.1.1 (see UNESCO 2016).

Following Incheon, the question of how to define and measure quality preoccupied key members of the international community, eager to track progress on the post-2015 goals.[6] Notably, the World Bank and OECD do not have an internationally recognised mandate for producing education data, but the shifting focus, from ensuring access to enhancing quality, opened the question of how to define quality. Moreover, with quality already being interpreted as a function of the economy and human-knowledge capital, the move dovetailed with the OECD and World Bank agendas, and what appears as a natural progression had in fact formed a central part of their strategic partnership at least a decade prior to its emergence in global governance forums, and its endorsement in Incheon in 2015.

The OECD's 'new paradigm for development'

Since its launch in 2000, the OECD has made strategic use of media channels to market PISA as the 'premier yardstick of education quality' (Grey and Morris 2018), positioning it as a reliable indicator of a nation's future economic competitiveness (Kallo 2009), and as a useful tool to put an 'end to complacency' in education (Schleicher 2018, 20). Contrary to Ward's claim, the goal of extending the reach of PISA through PISA-D emerged much earlier than the post-2015 discussions. In May 2011, the OECD presented its 50th Anniversary Vision Statement at the Meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial Level in Paris. The vision emphasised their intention to implement a 'new paradigm for development':

> The Chair presented the Vision Statement … which celebrates the OECD'S history as a forum for policy development and dialogue and looks ahead to its important role contributing to

> better policies for better lives, implementing a *new paradigm for development* and moving toward a global policy network. (OECD 2011a, italics added)

The OECD was aware of the challenges to participation of low- and middle-income countries (Bloem 2015), and Sellar and Lingard (2013) argue that the OECD was concerned that it would lose the global traction it had attained through PISA, resolving to expand the *scale* and *scope* of its assessments. Addey (2017) has explored the OECD's attempts to extend and consolidate its influence through PISA-D with regard to: (1) efforts to align national assessments with PISA; (2) the development of PISA-D to maintain comparability with the main PISA; and (3) the interlocking of the OECD's development strategy, commensuration activities and the global education agenda. The last of these strategies is alluded to in the *Framework for an OECD Strategy on Development* (OECD 2011b):

> The timing could not be more propitious with the upcoming Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, where the international community will gather to review progress and seek agreement on a broader partnership to support the achievement of the MDGs and contribute more effectively to development effectiveness and results. (2)

That the OECD should attempt to influence the nature of the post-2015 goals is uncontroversial. The 2011 strategic framework explicitly states that the goal was to 'shape the future global architecture' (2), and OECD staff affirm that they argued for a greater emphasis on quality, and then proposed PISA as the most suitable global metric for defining quality (see Addey 2017). The 2011 strategic framework also celebrated the OECD's influence on the initial MDGs, highlighting the report, *Shaping the 21st Century* (DAC 1996), which it states, 'was adopted by the OECD Ministerial Council in May 1996, was endorsed by G8 leaders in 1998, and provided the essence of the MDGs adopted by the United Nations in 2001' (2). If this landmark 1996 report provided the essence of the MDGs, the OECD's new paradigm for development would now provide the substance and shape for the SDGs.

The minutes of the Paris meeting, the accompanying framework (OECD 2011b), promotional materials, official statements and scholarly commentaries indicate the key components of the OECD's new paradigm for development (see also Auld and Morris 2014, 2016), and include: (i) a universal standard of education quality (PISA); (ii) a cognitive-economic model of education, with quality defined in terms of human or knowledge capital (PISA as the proxy)[7]; (iii) assessment as a public good, or 'human right' (merging human rights and human capital); (iv) alignment (or replacement) of national-level and regional assessments with a global standard (PISA); (v) a global policy network, mentorships, and transfer of 'best practice'; (vi) increased private involvement at each stage of the process; (vii) incentivized compliance, and punitive accountability (i.e. outcomes-based lending initiatives such as Disbursement Linked Indicators (see World Bank 2011)).

PISA-D represented an essential step towards realising this vision, with the outputs of PISA-D intended to inform and enhance the involvement of low- and middle-income nations in the regular PISA cycle from 2021 onwards. This will be integrated into the new OECD Learning Framework 2030 (OECD 2018), which is intended to 'contribute to the UN 2030 Global Goals for Sustainable Development' (3).

The World Bank rescues human capital theory

In the same year that the OECD unveiled its new strategic framework, the World Bank also released its new strategy, *Learning for All* (2011). This stated that due to the success of the MDGs, the 'gains in access have also turned attention to the challenge of improving the quality of educating and accelerating learning' (2). The focus on 'quality' and 'learning' reached back to the mid-90s, and its seeds are found in the World Bank Education Strategy report (1995), which emphasised, with regard to economic development, the importance of performance standards in education.[8] However, in an influential paper published in the World Bank Economic Review entitled *Where has All the Education Gone?*, Pritchett (2001) stated that 'cross-national data show no association between increases in human capital attributable to the rising educational attainment of the labour force and the rate of growth of output per worker' (367). That is, enhancing 'quality' in education could not be statistically linked *in any way* to enhanced economic performance.

Rather than reconsider the basic premise, Pritchett (2001) attempted to understand why this fundamental 'law' of economics could not be detected statistically. He identified three possible intervening factors: (i) the governance environment was so poor that the expected returns were lost, (ii) marginal returns to education fell drastically as the supply of educated labour increased, and/or (iii) 'educational quality was so low that years of schooling created no human capital.' (367). He concluded, 'the quality of schooling across countries is impossible to measure without internationally comparable test examinations of comparable groups of students, and these, unfortunately, exist for very few countries.' (378–379).

Soon after Pritchett's paper was published, the results of the OECD's new PISA exercise were announced (November 2001), presenting a fresh opportunity to prove the law. Over the next few years, the World Bank began to both (a) write articles arguing for learning outcome indicators (standardised test scores) to be included in the MDG's (Filmer, Hasan, and Pritchett 2006)[9] and (b) sponsor research on the relationship between quality (proxied by test scores) and economic growth. This culminated in a major report entitled *Education Quality and Economic Growth* (Hanushek and Woessman 2007), which claimed to have identified the predicted 'causal' relationship. In the Preface, the World Bank's Chief Economist explained:

> The Bank will do its part in making learning outcomes part of the overall educational goal. It will contribute to ensuring that the measurement of learning achievements is undertaken in a more systematic way and is properly taken into account in the Bank's dialogue with partner countries. It will also invest in developing the appropriate evaluation tools to monitor this crucial part of educational development.

This logic defines *Learning for All* (2011), which stresses, 'the new strategy focuses on learning for a simple reason: growth, development, and poverty reduction depend on the knowledge and skills that people acquire, not the number of years that they sit in a classroom'[10] (3). Meanwhile, Eric Hanushek began working with the OECD to demonstrate the economic significance of education quality, specifically as measured by PISA, producing the influential reports: *The High Cost of Low Education Performance: The Long Run Economic Impact of Improving PISA Outcomes* (OECD 2010), and *Universal Basic Skills: What Countries Stand to Gain* (OECD 2015) (see Komatsu and Rappleye 2017). The theme has been continued in its latest iteration: *World Development Report 2018: Learning to Realize Education's*

Potential, which argues that a primary cause of the 'global learning crisis' is the lack of 'information and metrics: Accurate, credible information on learning is often unavailable. This can divert attention from learning and hinder monitoring and evaluation of interventions aimed at improving outcomes.' (World Bank 2018, 171).

Notably, recent studies have supported Pritchett's conclusion that there is no correlation between cognitive levels (scores on international large-scale assessments) and economic growth over time (e.g. Kamens 2015; see also Wolf 2004), while Komatsu and Rappleye (2017) describe the Hanushek findings used to support the World Bank and OECD agenda as based on 'flawed statistics'.

Converging agendas

In this context, the appeal of PISA-D for both organisations should be readily apparent; it allowed the OECD to extend its ambitions in education governance by entering the world of international development, and the World Bank to resuscitate human capital theory (increasingly 'knowledge capital', following Hanushek). Kallo (2009) notes that the OECD and World Bank formed a strategic partnership in education by around 2006, a relationship reaffirmed by Schleicher and Costin in a World Bank blog:

> The OECD remains committed to working with the World Bank and other partners in maintaining and developing PISA as a global yardstick for education. Together, we will continue to contribute our expertise and platforms to encourage international collaboration on education through the PISA surveys, and to assist policymakers and practitioners throughout the world to use them more productively. (2015)[11]

Ward and Zoido (2015) note that the project design was informed by expert papers commissioned by the OECD and its partners. These include a systematic review, published by the World Bank on behalf of the OECD, *The Experience of PISA in Low- and Middle-income Countries* (Lockheed, Prokic-Bruer, and Shadrova 2015[12]), which acknowledges some of the challenges that PISA has faced, but elaborates Hanushek's economic projections to demonstrate the benefits of participation for such countries. Schleicher and Costin (2015) duly draw on Lockheed, Prokic-Bruer, and Shadrova (2015) to argue that 'the report establishes a strong rationale and foundation for enhancing PISA to make it more relevant to a wider range of countries,' and affirmed that 'action is already being taken on these recommendations through the [PISA-D] initiative'.

Ward and Zoido (2015) also include a section on 'capacity needs analysis' (hereafter, CNA), 'an analytical framework for assessing the capacity needs of countries related to the management of large-scale assessments and PISA in particular' (23). The framework utilises benchmarks related to PISA standards as well as the World Bank's SABER-Student Assessment questionnaire. The need to help countries 'build capacity', both in terms of technical expertise and introducing reforms from outside, had become a major preoccupation within the EFA agenda, with a particular concern that some interventions may have exceeded the capacity and led to problems with implementation (see UNESCO 2015). A CNA would therefore be a prerequisite for countries to participate in PISA-D.

In Cambodia, the CNA was undertaken by a consultant hired by the OECD and World Bank, Fernando Cartwright,[13] who was instrumental in aligning national assessments with PISA assessments and writing the software packages to convert data into globally 'usable' comparative indicators (e.g. Cartwright et al. 2003; Shiel and Cartwright 2015).

Before Cambodia had formally signed up, and before Cartwright's report (OECD and World Bank 2016) had been published,[14] Ward and Zoido (2015) suggested that:

> The [CNA] framework has been applied by the OECD Secretariat with the help of its consultants to each of the participating countries and the resulting reports have been produced. These assessments have involved country visits and extensive consultations with stakeholders including ministries of education, national centres, development partners, NGOs, universities and think tanks. *The needs analysis reports reveal that there is a solid foundational capacity for implementing the project in each of the countries, particularly technical capacity and knowhow.* (24, italics added)

This claim completed the internally-constructed evidence base required to support the pilot of PISA-D. After highlighting a further series of OECD technical reports, Ward and Zoido (2015) affirmed that collectively 'these expert papers, information and evidence have all been discussed in a series of technical workshops and international meetings involving the OECD, participating countries, development partners, institutional partners and selected relevant experts' (23). The evidence had aligned neatly in support, and yet it would be nearly another year before Cambodia signed up.

The 'arrival' of PISA-D in Cambodia

Despite being on the OECD's original shortlist, Cambodia only signed the agreement to pilot PISA-D in March 2016 (the last of the initial eight countries to join, an indication that there had been complications behind the scenes. What was this back-story? Does it confirm the OECD's claims that PISA-D was developed in response to 'strong demand' from and in partnership with low- and middle-income countries?

Preference for refining national assessment: Fall 2013 – December 2014

In late 2013, Cambodia appointed a new Minister of Education.[15] In his first definitive action, the Minister cracked down on cheating in the Grade 12 exams (August 2014), a move that shocked the system. It revealed that only 18% of students who sat the exam could pass on their own merit (previously pass rates had been more than 90%). 'Now we have a clear picture of what to do,' the Minister commented, arguing that there would be 'four priorities' for raising the quality of teaching and learning: (i) continued school inspections to cut down on corrupt practices, (ii) an overhauled incentive, recruitment, and management scheme for teachers, (iii) revision of the curriculum and textbooks, and (iv) spotlighting talented Cambodian teachers and sharing their approaches to content and classroom management. Three months later, in his main policy speech at the annual government-donor education retreat, he was adamant about the need to *implement*, signalling to the donors in attendance he did not want to embark on new reform schemes:

> I believe that while reform is important there is a danger that we are always reforming and that we forget about the need to implement! I am aware that there are some areas where reform is required (higher education, teacher management and possibly the secondary curriculum) but I would like to stress that we do have our core policy platform for the sector expressed in the ESP [Education Sector Plan] which is built around the sub sectors. It identifies the education priorities and the strategies and the policy actions that are required … To reiterate, we

should now be focusing now on effectively implementing what we have already developed. (Minister Naron, November 2014[16])

Reforms aimed at providing data to inform policymaking had been evolving in Cambodia for more than a decade. Under the World Bank-sponsored Cambodian Education Sector Support Project (CESSP) that ran from 2005 to 2012, a standardised national assessment test was developed, one that was a prerequisite for releasing Education for All Fast-Track Catalytic Funds (EFA-FTI). This measured student achievement in language (Khmer) and mathematics in Grades 3, 6, and 9, whilst an Early Grade Reading Assessment Program began around 2010. The National Assessments were conducted by the Ministry's Education Quality Assurance Department (EQAD), a name adopted in 2009 to comply with the new World Bank discourse of 'quality.' We note that the name was changed from Inspectorate of Education, which suggests its mandate as the agency primarily responsible for school inspections to cut down on corrupt practices (see 'four priorities' above).

The World Bank hired international consultants to provide training for four persons who would lead EQAD, tutoring them on how to correctly sample, develop data collection instruments, create question banks, pilot the exercise in schools, create test booklets, clean data and prepare useable reports for policymakers. The National Assessment was beginning to yield rich data, and the annual exercise was becoming progressively more refined. It was also evident that more work needed to be done, with documents written by the World Bank for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in 2014 confiding that: 'an institutionalized national assessment system has yet to fully take root, and the capacity to undertake assessments is constrained' (World Bank/GPE 2014, 6).

At the November 2014 Retreat, a presentation by the EQAD Chief provided an overview of the previous year's data (Grade 6 test scores), confirming the 'usual' picture: results were lower than hoped for, Cambodian students performed better in Khmer than Maths, girls performed better than boys in both Khmer and Maths, school repeaters did not improve levels of learning, etc. But he concluded his presentation with an appeal for Cambodia to join the OECD's PISA-D exercise (Ung 2014). As revealed in our interviews, the appeal sounded highly ambiguous to those attending. On the one hand, the EQAD Chief began by complaining that there would be 'too many initiatives on assessment' if PISA-D was added, pointing out that there were already Grade 12 exams and the national assessments in place. He asked the Minister to think deeply about what 'the value added' would be of adding yet another exam and listed off the (numerous) constraints that would plague participating in PISA-D, including a lack of competent technical personnel, financial resources, and tight timeline. On the other hand, he had raised the possibility.

Why had the EQAD chief broached PISA-D, despite the Minister's appeal for implementation, and after flagging the problems PISA-D would pose for EQAD? The reason – as later explained – was because a World Bank consultant still supporting the EQAD data analysis had insisted on its inclusion: The Minister was leaning away from joining PISA-D and raising the issue at the Retreat would allow World Bank officials in attendance to raise it with the Minister while again attempting to persuade other development partners to support the project.

In fact, the Minister had already been placed under pressure to participate in PISA-D. Months before the Retreat, the World Bank had floated the idea of Cambodian participation in PISA-D to other international donors, a move which followed the OECD's

August 2013 announcement that Cambodia was interested. As revealed in our interviews, the World Bank's request occurred within the Education Sector Working Group (ESWG), a group comprising the major donors to the education sector, which – in the interest of aid harmonisation – had the power to endorse any sector-wide programmes (as opposed to agency specific projects). The OECD was apparently eager to include at least one country from the Asia-Pacific region to ensure PISA-D (i) looked globally representative and (ii) could serve as a future regional training hub for future PISA-D candidates (e.g. Bhutan, Myanmar, Lao, Nepal, Sri Lanka). All the other pilot countries were from Latin America or Africa.

The immediate problem was that most other donors on the ESWG were opposed to PISA-D, with UNICEF and UNESCO the most vocal critics. The UNICEF representative argued that Cambodia was better served by regional assessments and should deepen its commitment to the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metric (SEA-PLM), which was led by UNICEF and had been approved as the official regional test by the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO). According to UNICEF, it reflected the specific contexts of countries in the region, whilst focusing on a broader set of skills than PISA-D (e.g. global citizenship). Our interviews revealed that UNICEF saw little value in drawing *global* comparisons. Moreover, whilst net enrolment rates in primary school where over 90%, these dropped to around 20%–30% by the beginning of upper secondary: PISA-D would only capture at most a quarter of the age cohort, whilst SEA-PLM could achieve near total coverage. The UNESCO representative, who was Head of the ESWG at the time, was even more resistant:

> Regular monitoring of learning achievement is important, but I just don't understand the rationale of development partner's push for implementing/piloting international/regional assessment instruments. Despite knowing the fact that, for years, the education system continues to struggle implementing the instructional hours stipulated in the curriculum, teaching and learning is being delivered by underqualified and under-supported teachers in crowded classroom settings, with shortages of textbooks and learning materials, this is going forward. Further, the results from existing learning assessments, examinations etc. are already pointing to the fact that massive efforts and investments are needed in improving reading and mathematics from early grades on. So why get distracted or distract? I would rather use the scarce money to provide … teaching guides to the teachers. (UNESCO representative, interview conducted March 2017)

The representative's stance was consistent with UNESCO's (2014b) insistence that 'monitoring and accountability mechanisms should be country-driven' (10). His position as Head of ESWG helped in preventing the PISA-D discussions from advancing further on the agenda. This came at a crucial time: Global Partnership for Education (GPE) funds were available and donor efforts were supposed to be working toward that agreement. The ESWG ultimately refused to take the PISA-D initiative to the Cambodian government as a unanimous decision of the donors.

Undeterred, the World Bank appealed directly to the new Minister in closed meetings in the months leading up to the November 2014 Education Retreat. It would not be the first time the Bank made such a move to ensure its agenda succeeded (Edwards and Brehm 2015, 9). The Minister agreed to listen, along with his Director General for Teacher Training, to the OECD/World Bank consultant (Fernando Cartwright) who visited in Fall 2014 to explain why Cambodia would benefit from PISA-D. After he explained the technical

specifications and OECD requirements that, for example, a National Centre be created and fully staffed, the Minister was further convinced it was not worth the time, resources, and effort. Consequently, the Ministry refused to override the ESWG decision and put PISA-D explicitly on the agenda of the Education Retreat – a major setback for the World Bank and OECD. When the EQAD chief used the final slides of his Retreat presentation to open the space for World Bank representatives to again make the case for PISA-D, the Minister, with support from the donors mentioned above, closed the discussion. Meanwhile, Cartwright stayed and began carrying out the research for the Capacity Needs Analysis (OECD 2016).[17]

The Minister's unwillingness to approve PISA-D underscored that the government priorities were on the implementation of existing initiatives (in particular, the fledgling national assessment and school inspections) rather than embarking on new reforms. Not only did he refuse to establish a National Centre for administering PISA-D (a minimum but still today unfulfilled requirement of the Participation Agreement) and thereby resist (re)assigning a Permanent National Manager, but he also refused – as detailed below – to let EQAD members travel to OECD headquarters in Paris for the second meeting of the PISA-D International Advisory Group (11–13 March 2015).

Turning up the pressure: January 2015 – March 2016

Faced with the prospect that Cambodia might not participate, the World Bank and OECD took immediate action. Someone in the World Bank's Cambodian field office had apparently contacted World Bank headquarters to explain that leading members of the ESWG were resisting PISA-D, and the OECD subsequently phoned the UNESCO representative directly in Phnom Penh, who explained:

> One day not long after I got a call from Michael Ward from the OECD. I have no idea how he got my number. He was quite upset and listed off a large number of reasons why Cambodia should participate. These included the benefits of international benchmarking, capacity building in assessment, and joining a wider international community of assessment experts. The language sounded just like the language I had heard the Bank use in the ESWG. I patiently described to him that, while there must surely be some benefits to PISA for Development, it was too early for Cambodia and they should focus on getting the National Assessment right. I could not see any benefit, just a lot of work. (interview conducted March 2017)

The leading ESWG representatives held firm and would not agree to push PISA-D. This was crucial: ESWG approval would have released EFA-Fast Track Initiative Catalytic Fund (USD $57 million) to fund the PISA-D initiative. But with neither the Minister's approval nor ESWG basket funding, Cambodia would not be involved in the PISA-D pilot. It was now late February 2015, and with the OECD's key Second Meeting of the PISA-D International Advisory Group in Paris approaching, getting Cambodia on board took on a new urgency. The OECD's Director of Education and Skills, Andreas Schleicher, intervened, sending an email to the Minister directly (6 March 2015).

This followed an earlier, unsolicited correspondence with Minister Naron in 2014, in which Schleicher had first floated the possibility of Cambodia's participation. Now, as it became clear that the Minister's priorities lay elsewhere, and without the support of the ESWG, Schleicher reiterated the importance of Cambodia's participation, stating that the OECD was in the process of mobilising the necessary resources to make participation

possible, and requesting the presence of two MOEYS representatives at the International Advisory Group meeting in Paris the following week, for which the World Bank would make the necessary financial arrangements.

Schleicher's direct intervention suggested that the OECD was unaware of the Minister's priority for National Assessment, or cared little for his preferences. Still, the Minister did not release his staff to attend. Ultimately, the 'Cambodia Representative' at the OECD's International Advisory Group meeting was a young Cambodian scholar who happened to be visiting Paris on an unrelated academic visit to UNESCO Institute of Statistics. When we asked about his presence in the official group photograph,[18] he explained that he was contacted unexpectedly and asked to join the meeting the day before, but had little knowledge of its purpose and was not (and has not since been) involved in the project.

The alternative funding, promised by Andreas Schleicher, ultimately came (i) through the World Bank's existing funding (MOEYS 2017), and (ii) by convincing other donors sitting outside the ESWG to take the lead. The major expenses would be the travel and salary for the consultant writing Cambodia's PISA-D CNA. As noted above, the CNA was a prerequisite to initiate the PISA-D implementation process, and had been in preparation since October 2014, long before the Minister agreed to join PISA-D. The World Bank and OECD appealed to the Korean bi-lateral development agency (KOICA) to provide funding for PISA-D, which KOICA could do as it sat outside the ESWG in 2015.[19] KOICA was interested because Korea's performance in PISA was seen to be a 'selling point' for Korean bi-lateral assistance that had – other than TVET programmes – had little presence in the education sector (Korea has since been assigned to Cambodia as a 'mentor'[20] (OECD 2017)).

KOICA sponsored a national conference entitled 'PISA for Development: Capacity Development Workshop' (29 February 2016 – 1 March 2016), organised in collaboration with the OECD. Attending the conference were: 40 key people from the Cambodian Ministry; representatives from the World Bank and other donor organisations; scholars from Korea's National Center for PISA; the OECD's PISA-D Project Manager, Michael Ward; representatives from potential second wave PISA-D countries (Bhutan, Lao, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka); and, Minister Naron.

Michael Ward gave two presentations. The details of the first is critical to understand why Cambodia ultimately signed on, positioning PISA-D as the official 'means of verification' on indicator SDG 4.1.1,[21] while another slide flashed the cover of the Incheon Declaration that carries the logos of the 'international community' (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank, etc.). In his presentation, Ward noted that the OECD had 'been working with Cambodia on this project for more than two years' before elaborating on the context for PISA-D:

> I think all of you know participation in large-scale assessments such as PISA is growing, and growing fast .... In all, 115 countries have participated in international or regional large-scale assessments. The other big part of the context is what I mentioned earlier about the education sustainable development goals, which were put in place last September, and of course the (UNESCO) Education 2030 Agenda, Framework for Action, which was put in place at UNESCO in November 2015, which basically provides the strategy for achieving these education SDGs ... Five out of these seven targets are focused on learning outcomes, and this is only going to increase the demand for measuring learning outcomes on a global scale. And PISA is included in the SDG monitoring framework, and is particularly relevant for the

> proposed global indicator 4.1.1 ... which is almost certain, I think, to be adopted later this year by the UN ... and ultimately at the UN General Assembly in September 2016. And particularly here in 4.1.1, the proportion of young people at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics. And, of course, the principal means of verification of the achievement of this indicator will be PISA ... (Michael Ward March 2016)[22]

PISA is not included in the 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (UNESCO 2016), and Ward's claims were not supported by official statements from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) at the time (UIS 2016).[23] It was only recently that the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS 2017a,[24] 2017b[25]) actually presented proposals for a standardised measure on SDG4. *Meanwhile, OECD representatives had been telling local governments that PISA-D was official UN policy.* The consequences were clear; non-involvement could jeopardise future aid, and the initial pilot countries would have 'first-mover' advantage. The agreement was signed in May 2016, with Cambodia scheduled to join the regular PISA in 2021, the first cycle after the completion of the PISA-D pilot.

Returning to Cambodia a year later, Ward repeated the mantra, this time speaking at the PISA-D National Project Managers Meeting in Phnom Penh (22–25 May 2017):

> Good morning again, and on behalf of OECD I'd like to give a very warm welcome to His Excellency, Doctor Hang Chuon Naron, the Minister of Education, Youth and Sport for Cambodia. And I've just been speaking to Doctor Naron in the other room about what we've been doing ... This is a very important project for the OECD, of course, and for the countries. But also in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly ... Education Sustainable Development Goal ... Number 4 ... And we were talking about how in the United Nations, UNESCO, how PISA has been chosen as the metric, the global metric, for measuring progress towards the achievement of the education sustainable development goal [SDG4]. And so, Cambodia and all of our countries with us today are really in the first rank of countries, certainly from the middle-income countries and low-income countries, for using PISA to measure the performance of their education systems. (Michael Ward May 2017)

Ward concluded his opening address by urging Cambodia to move quickly so it could, alongside the other 7 pilot countries, carry out the Main Survey in 2017 with results released by 2019.

And what of the resistance by the UN agencies? Several months before the Capacity Development Workshop in Cambodia (February–March 2016), UN offices had called to 'rein in' their wayward representative, who explained:

> In fall 2015, I got a call from regional headquarters, saying that I should cooperate fully with the OECD in its plans for PISA-D in Cambodia. I do not know what led to this intervention, but it was quite rare: they usually trust that we representatives know the local situation best and defer to us. But whatever the case, this created a very strange situation where I would speak at the February workshop alongside Ward. I made critical comments but those largely fell on deaf ears ... I ended up having to facilitate that workshop. (interview conducted May 2017)

UNESCO (2014b) had previously insisted that 'monitoring and accountability mechanisms should be country-driven' (10), and that 'the setting of the agenda ... should not merely reflect indicators that already exist' (4). Why the sudden UNESCO support for PISA-D, an extension of the existing PISA? Unknown to the UNESCO representative, as he resisted World Bank and OECD advances in Cambodia, the battle for the soul of the developing

world post-2015 had taken a decisive turn elsewhere. The SDGs had confirmed the focus on education quality, and the 'international community' had agreed on the need to identify basic minimum standards to monitor progress post-2015. Shortly after the SDGS had been confirmed, UN representatives were told to stand down, and towards the end of 2017, UIS reflected on the process of setting benchmarks, and the problem of reporting nations' progress on a standardised instrument scale:

> In theory, countries could collectively decide to use their own national definitions of minimum proficiency levels. However, this would make it impossible to produce globally-comparable indicators. A more pragmatic approach might be to use an existing set of benchmarks that are widely used (and validated) by countries participating in regional or international assessments as part of the process of reporting. (UIS 2017a, 21)

The idea of individual nations defining targets was no longer deemed practical, and monitoring would have to be 'globally-driven' if it was to satisfy the international community investing in development. The UNESCO reports (UIS 2017a, 2017b[26]) duly combined aspects of various ILSAs (e.g. SACMEQ, PIRLS, TIMSS, PISA, PASEC and LLECE) to put forward proposals for a standardised measurement, and to offer initial findings on the current state of learning outcomes[27]. TIMSS and PISA are the only relevant indicators covering enough countries in secondary education, and the UNESCO (UIS 2017a) report reveals that 'the decision was made to use PISA benchmarks (to identify minimum standards) since there is no specific analysis for reading in secondary education in the TIMSS study' (18).

It is important to here emphasise that *PISA is not the official 'means of verification' on SDG 4.1.1*, a fact of which the OECD is well aware,[28] but is one of a series of ILSAs being used by UNESCO (UIS) to identify minimum proficiencies on various aspects of the SDGs and to be used 'as part of the process of reporting' (17). At the same time, Addey (2017) reflects on the possibility that SDG 4.1 was framed this way as a result of the OECD's pressure to use PISA as a global metric, and OECD officials expressed satisfaction that the framing of the SDGs means that the OECD has a degree of 'ownership' over the post-2015 agenda that it did not enjoy with the MDGs. OECD representatives – with some equivocation – could promote PISA-D as a yardstick for SDG4, confident that UNESCO (UIS) would ultimately use PISA to help define 'minimum standards'.

To summarise, the arrival of PISA-D in Cambodia was initiated and pushed through by the World Bank and OECD, in ways that by-passed earlier aid coordination mechanisms (ESWG) and largely by-passed the Cambodian government. There was neither local ownership nor demand, let alone genuine partnership (other than between the World Bank and the OECD) and support for the whole policy direction from the beginning. In just under a year, the Cambodian Minister's priority for implementation and concerns that PISA-D would take vital resources and attention away from National Assessment had been silenced by the partnership of the World Bank and OECD, aided by UNESCO's (read: UIS) abrupt reversal to satisfy the 'international community's' desire for universal targets.

Step 3: implementation (May 2016 – April 2017)

With the Project Launch in May 2016, the next stages of PISA-D implementation were largely technical. Since it had already been written, the CNA for Cambodia was

immediately published (OECD and World Bank 2016). It specified what Cambodia needed to do to get ready for PISA-D, e.g. contextual questionnaires, data collection instruments, and cognitive assessment models. It laid out the following scheme of how PISA-D would be implemented (Figure 1).

While it showed policymakers and development partners steering at the top, in fact, the OECD would be leading. As Addey (2017) points out, the OECD's intention is to use capacity building to institutionalise PISA methodology and conceptual frameworks in national evaluation centres, laying foundations for further use, for example in national assessments. What is notable is that the National Centre – a prerequisite for joining PISA-D – *has still not been* approved by the Minister, despite OECD documents from July 2016 falsely stating that 'participating countries have each established a National Centre and Nominated a National Project Manager' (OECD 2016).[29] Further, the CNA states:

> As of the writing of this report, Cambodia has not yet formally designated a PISA National Centre through a signed Participation Agreement with the OECD … the difficulty in designing a National Centre relates to the absence of a single institution with staff having both the skills and authority required to implement PISA for Development. Conceptually, the responsibilities of the Education Quality Assurance Department (EQAD) have the closest fit to the activities of PISA for Development … *However, this institution does not currently have the capacity to conduct PISA-D. The current technical capacity of EQAD is represented by a single person … who is already performing both technical and managerial responsibilities related to core EQAD activities* … . (OECD and World Bank 2016, 21, italics added)

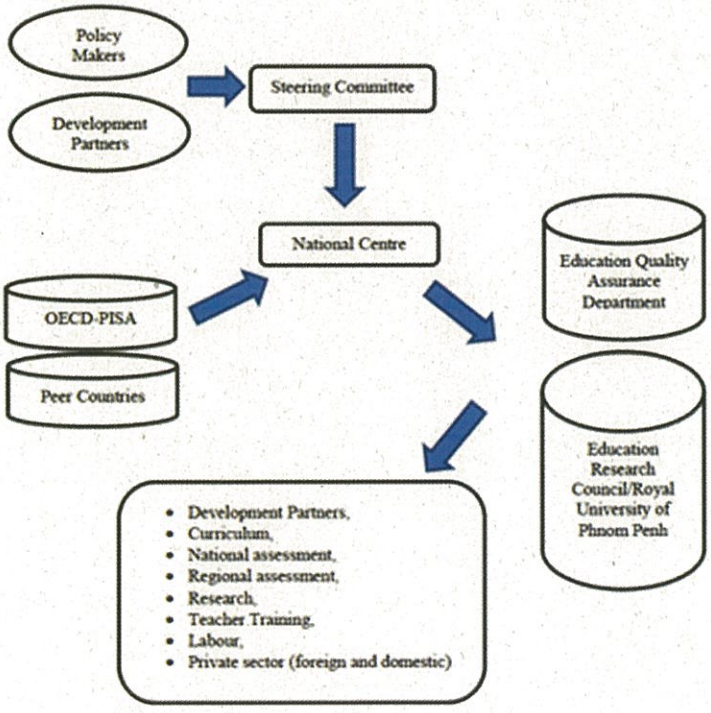

Figure 1. The OECD-World Bank Proposed Organization of Cambodia's PISA-D (OECD and World Bank 2016, 22).

The portrayal here is one of lack of capacity, and ignorance or erasure of widespread local concern that PISA-D would distract attention from the National Assessment and school inspections. That is, the OECD-World Bank sponsored CNA here implicitly confirms what the Minister and UNESCO had argued all along: refocusing EQAD on PISA-D would leave no time for its core activities, i.e. National Assessment. Indeed, the CNA reduces the two-year struggle of whether or not to move forward with PISA-D in Cambodia to a matter of mere 'priorities':

> The public policy context supports large scale student assessment and the use of data to inform policy. This support is reflected throughout the larger stakeholder community, although there is some debate over how different international assessment opportunities should be prioritized (Ibid., 16)

At present, PISA-D is progressing swiftly in Cambodia, with various events planned for the release of the results in early December 2018. To relieve the burden on EQAD, World Bank funds were made available to hire a full-time consultant to handle PISA-D (MoEYS 2017), suggesting that it is still not part of the regular institutional architecture. Tellingly, the job description of the full-time consultant is devoid of any sense of partnership: the position holder is tasked with 'implementing all activities set out by OECD/International Contractors and to ensure the successful and timely implementation and completion.' http://www.moeys.gov.kh/en/procurement/2538.html#.W-VdFBMzZN1. The money comes from the World Bank's newest loan – the Secondary Education Improvement Project (SEIP) running from 2017 to 2022 – which allots several million dollars to cover all costs of PISA-D and the subsequent entry into regular PISA from 2021.

Conclusion: humanitarian assessment and the dream of global governance

Roughly a decade before official discussions on the post-2015 agenda, the OECD and World Bank formed a strategic partnership, working together to revitalise human capital theory through comparative assessment and to extend their influence in low- and middle-income countries. Having officially clarified their strategic visions as early as 2011, the organisations emphasised the perceived 'learning crisis', lobbying for clear standards of education quality post-2015, and promoting PISA (as a proxy for human-knowledge capital) as the most suitable metric to define these standards. In parallel, countries were sought to pilot PISA-D, ostensibly based on demand, an official portrayal that encourages the common belief that, 'in a globalized world, national educational systems are increasingly attuned to global models of what constitutes quality education' (Ramirez, Schofer, and Meyer 2018, 356).

Contrary to the OECD's portrayal, and research that relies solely on official policy statements, our analysis indicates that Cambodia had no interest in international assessments. This was readily apparent from: the lack of any explicit mention that Cambodia was seeking a strategy of international benchmarking (ESP 2009–2013); the Minister's emphasis on implementation rather than reform; the long delay between the OECD's announcement and official government approval; explicit conflict among donor partners; the agreement was signed only after the Minister was informed it was official UN policy; and, a National Centre for PISA has *still* not been approved.

The desire to *establish* a global testing culture is most evident in the rebranding of assessment as a human right, merging *access* and *quality* into one unitary thread, and

reconciling the historic tension between 'human development' and the 'development of human capital'. The OECD and World Bank agendas can now be pursued under the auspices of UNESCO's globally-sanctioned goals, with national development agencies, international organisations and corporations becoming largely indistinguishable in the promotion of *Assessment for All* (i.e. humanitarian assessment), extending, entrenching and legitimating the Global Education Industry (see Verger, Lubienski, and Steiner-Khamsi 2016). In further evidence of these shifting dynamics, we note that Andreas Schleicher has been appointed on the Advisory Board of the Global Monitoring Report,[30] and anticipate closer alignment over the coming years.

The advent of humanitarian assessment provokes final reflection on the dream of global governance, moving beyond changing rationales to explore the deeper foundations upon which this agenda has formed.

This empirical account takes place against the backdrop of generations of development projects that have not been without their critics (Sachs 1992; Dichter 2003; Easterly 2006), and vain post-War dreams of world federalism, which duly softened into global governance towards the end of the Cold War, epitomised by EFA. As 2015 approached, the international community was still debating how to construct the new 'global architecture', searching for targets that were both universal and quantifiable.[31] Gorur (2014, 2015) characterises such architecture as 'calculable worlds', noting the core assumption that there exists a transcendental object 'out there' waiting to be measured (Woolgar 1991). Once identified, this transcendental object would sit atop the spire of the new Cathedral, providing a symbolic point of orientation for the community post-2015.

Talk of *human rights* and *access* that had characterised EFA proved much too vague, was somehow insufficient, while defining *quality* remained divisive. The industry required a symbol that would transcend all nations to foster the sense of a true 'global community'.[32] Although the 'global knowledge economy' may indeed be an imaginary, as a symbol it satisfies this basic criterion, drawing each nation and individual into its inter-competitive embrace, with economic gain as the ultimate good, and education as the mode of self-salvation (aided by expert knowledge of 'what works'). In the hands of the OECD and World Bank (Hanushek and Woessman 2007), 'the law' has been reliably quantified. Finally, the universal symbol has scientific substance. Recast as a human right, it possesses the requisite moral authority.

It is little coincidence that the substance for this symbol has been provided most forcefully by organisations that have their own symbolic headquarters in Washington and Paris, and for whom the idea of forging One World forms a key aspect of their mission. Though the construction of such all-encompassing systems has a long history of both certainty and failure, the OECD and World Bank economists have given many within the international community what they desire: a source of meaning and control, and renewed certainty that we are managing and marshalling progress towards a universal *telos*. Buoyed by a righteous sense of purpose and mission, we note that each new wave of development has been characterised by such steadfast faith in its truth, its infallibility, and tireless evangelism (Rist 1997; Rappleye and Un 2018).

This evokes Barnett and Finnemore's (1999) claim that, armed with 'a notion of progress, an idea of how to create a better life, and some understanding of the conversion process', international aid agencies have become the 'missionaries of our time' (712). While the attempt at conversion will not remake Cambodia in Our own

image, it will certainly leave its footprint, just as earlier religious and civilising missions, and the ideological systems that emerged with such force and promise from Europe in the twentieth century, have indelibly left theirs on foreign soil; a heavy imprint the Khmer people still feel acutely. With the international community aligned behind post-2015 targets and the *conversion process* already underway in the form of *capacity building*, alternative plans to help rebuild the Cambodian nation by drawing on its own rich culture and traditions must remain in the shadows of the new global architecture for now.[33]

Notes

1. Bhutan was the final nation to join the PISA-D pilot, signing its agreement on January 13th 2017, nearly a year after Cambodia.
2. The blog is authored by Michael Ward, Michael Davidson, and Alejandro Gomez Palma, see: https://gemreportunesco.wordpress.com/2013/03/04/what-have-we-learnt/.
3. Ward is interviewed alongside OECD colleague, Miyako Ikeda, and the live stream, titled Hangout #5, is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLiWkz4eaVs.
4. The OECD is also promoting its Early Childhood Education Assessment, International Education and Learning Survey (IELS) as a response to the demands of the international community.
5. Michael Ward (February 2016), PISA-D Presentation (Slide 27). The presentation can be accessed at: http://bangkok.unesco.org/content/capacity-development-workshop-pisa-development-cambodia-march-2016.
6. Here we refer broadly to institutions and organisations including, but not exclusively, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNESCO Education Commission, Department for International Development (DfID), other donor agencies, and also private organisations.
7. This cognitive-economic focus has been nuanced by the inclusion of non-cognitive dimensions such as 'wellbeing' and 'global competencies' as part of the OECD Learning Framework 2030 (OECD 2018).
8. Space does not allow for a fuller account of how the World Bank tried unsuccessfully to take the lead in coordinating EFA prior to Dakar. Moreover, it was after participants had 'rebelled' in favour of UNESCO that the World Bank created the Fast Track Initiative, 'which stole UNESCO's thunder with regard to EFA leadership' (see Edwards et al. 2018, 53).
9. The report was published by the Center for Global Development, which is positioned as 'an independent think tank', but was authored by three World Bank employees, including Lant Pritchett, author of *Where has all the education gone?* (2001). Filmer would later become a lead researcher in the 2018 World Development Report that put forth the idea of a global 'learning crisis'.
10. It is disappointing here that extensive consultations with other donor agencies failed to elicit any challenge to the underlying empirical study or the sole focus on human capital and economic growth. (see Verger, Edwards, and Altinyelken 2014).
11. See: http://blogs.worldbank.org/education/challenges-widening-participation-pisa.
12. The report's lead author, Marlaine Lockheed, wrote some of the most widely cited Bank reports on education in the 1990s (e.g. Lockheed and Verspoor 1991). Notably, only two years previously, Lockheed (2013) had stated that demand for low and middle-income countries to participate on international assessments had not come from the countries themselves but had been fuelled by (i) 'the analytic and policy questions of economists', and (ii) 'increasing demand for evidence of aid-effectiveness' (178).
13. Cartwright completed the CNA on Cambodia (OECD 2016) and Zambia (OECD 2015). Satya Brink wrote the CNA for Senegal (2014), while Leonor Cariola Huerta (Leonor Mencke) undertook the studies for Ecuador (2015), Guatemala (2015), Honduras (2016), Paraguay (2015), and Panama (2017).

14. At this stage, the reports for Honduras (2016) and Panama (2017) had not yet been published either.
15. Minister Naron was the first Cambodian to hold a PhD since the tragic events of the late 1970s. In his previous post in the Finance Ministry he was highly regarded for his dedication and commitment to reform.
16. Full speech available at: http://www.moeys.gov.kh/en/minister-page/141123hcn.html#.WsQfL1uau4.
17. Cartwright's CNA for Cambodia utilised elements of World Bank's SABER-Student Assessment questionnaires and PISA technical standards as benchmarks, while the tool used to enter data into the framework is listed as available online, at: http://polymetrika.ca/PISAforDev. Cartwright is the CEO of Polymetrika, and creator of the software that is used for carrying out the CNA, and for interfacing Cambodia's data with PISA-D. No conflict of interest is declared.
18. See Slide 25, PISA for Development: Expected Results from the Meeting, *2nd meeting of the International Advisory Group OECD Conference Centre, Paris (France) 11–13 March 2015*, available at: http://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/Day-1-presentations.pdf.
19. There is indication that in addition to KOICA, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), financially supported this work at the initial stages but the relationship is unclear (see OECD and World Bank 2016, 8–9).
20. See PISA for Development Brief 14, available at: https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-for-development/14-Capacity-building.pdf.
21. Indicator 4.1.1, as it appears on OECD PISA-D presentation, as the official means of verification: 'proportion of children/young people: (a) in Grade 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex.'
22. Presentation available online at: https://www.dropbox.com/s/9umkcn55kfz6nq0/MW%20PowerPoints%28Pisa%20for%20Development%29.mp4?dl=0.
23. The UIS (2016) report, *Laying the Foundation to Measure Sustainable Development Goal 4*, was still in the process of reviewing the different available indicators. PISA isn't mentioned with regard to goal 4.1.1. Regarding goal 4.7, relating to Environmental science and geoscience, it highlights an agreement with the IEA to revise it's International Civic and Citizenship Study (ICCS) for alignment with Target 4.7, and notes that for the thematic component 'OECD's PISA is a possible source but other sources are being explored' (68). See: http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/laying-the-foundation-to-measure-sdg4-sustainable-development-data-digest-2016-en.pdf.
24. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS 2017a), September 2017: http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs46-more-than-half-children-not-learning-en-2017.pdf.
25. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS 2017b), October 2017: http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/unesco-infopaper-sdg_data_gaps-01.pdf.
26. The (UIS 2017b) abstract reads:

> Monitoring Sustainable Development Goal 4 requires reliable, high quality and cross-nationally comparable data compiled at regular intervals. Launching such a global assessment scheme would be the ideal – but this will take years, perhaps decades. As a second-best alternative, we use a rigorous yet comprehensive methodology which provides globally comparable data for the proportion of students reaching the Minimum Proficiency Level (MPL) in reading and mathematics. Our approach creates indices of comparison between differing assessments where enough countries participate in both. This enables swift and efficient comparison, since no additional instruments or costs incurred in the anchoring process.

27. UIS (2018a) identifies nine cross-national learning assessments which meet the criteria to measure SDG 4 Indicator 4.1.1.
28. We note that in official statements the OECD (2017) makes the more modest claim that: 'PISA has been selected by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) and the UN Statistical Commission (the two bodies responsible for monitoring progress towards SDG 4) *as an internationally*

comparable measure of this indicator (SDG 4.1.1)'. See: https://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-for-development/17-PISA-D-and-SDG4.pdf.

29. PISA for Development Brief 1, available online at: https://www.oecd.org/pisa/aboutpisa/PISA-FOR-DEV-EN-1.pdf.
30. The Advisory Board of the GMR meets once a year to provide guidance and feedback to the Report team, including the outline of upcoming editions, future themes and communication strategies. Details on the Advisory Board members can be found at: https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/advisory-board.
31. Here we acknowledge that SDG 4 does state the importance of attending to quality education at all levels from pre-primary to technical and higher education, and includes targets on 'unmeasurables', for example, developing understandings of equalities, wellbeing, citizenship and sustainability (Target 4.7). At the same time, the recent UNESCO (UIS 2018b) report, *SDG 4 Data Book: Global Education Indicators* does not have any discussion of the goals included under 4.7, and instead focuses on education quality as defined under target 4.1. Notably, the OECD has also been working on developing indicators relevant to other targets, such as wellbeing, global competencies, and social and emotional skills, a move that can be interpreted as an attempt to strengthen its role in education governance post-2015. The implications with regard to wellbeing are critiqued in Rappleye et al. (forthcoming).
32. Although we here focus on the global knowledge economy, this line of critique provokes uncomfortable reflection on the closed 'universal' systems being constructed around concepts such as Equity (see Gorur 2014), Wellbeing (see Rappleye et al. *forthcoming*), and Global Competencies (see Auld and Morris, forthcoming) that are central to this nascent phase of humanitarian assessment. At the same time, we draw attention to Unterhalter's (2017) insightful work on 'measuring the unmeasurable', which analyses these issues, and remains open to the possibility that gains in knowledge advocacy and more critical reflective practice may arise despite failures in the precision of measurement.
33. For examples of constructive alternatives see Gyallay-Pap (2007), Un (2017) and Brehm (2017).

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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PISA For development: how the OECD and World Bank shaped education governance post-2015

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Provincialising the world culture theory debate: critical insights from a margin

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Neo-institutionalist theory of global 'isomorphism', or so-called World Culture Theory (WCT), has been much debated in comparative education. One notable feature of the debate is that the vast majority of its participants belong to a handful of closely knit comparative education communities. Ironically enough then, a debate that fundamentally concerns the globalisation of education has hardly been 'globalised', with virtually no comparative scholars participating from 'other' comparative education societies. Clearly, there is a need to critically engage with WCT by explicitly drawing on 'other' intellectual traditions of comparative educations. To this aim, I first discuss the critical methodological insights and underlying epistemic standpoint of Japanese comparative education scholars. I then employ their arguments as a starting point for my subsequent post-colonial critique of WCT and the WCT debate. Overall, this study illuminates the hitherto unacknowledged 'epistemic ignorance' of the on-going WCT debate in the English-language, 'paradigmatic' comparative education realm and suggests a way to move beyond this provinciality.

Keywords: world culture theory; post-colonial theory; Japanese Comparative Education Society; comparative education

Introduction

There has been a spirited debate in comparative education around the theme of global convergence (or 'isomorphism') and divergence in education policy. Driving this debate are those who propose a so-called 'World Culture Theory' (WCT), an account of isomorphism in education that draws its theoretical sustenance from a particular form of neo-institutionalist theory (see Carney, Rappleye, and Silova 2012). Using quantitative data-sets, WCT scholars have focused on demonstrating how a hypothesised, self-perpetuating 'world culture' is both product and producer of a global convergence in the definition, purpose, and function of state institutions such as education. While earlier WCT-informed studies in education focused on identifying the isomorphic trend in the rise of mass schooling and curricular categories over an extended

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period of time (Ramirez and Meyer 1980; Meyer, Karmens, and Benavot 1992; Kamens, Meyer, and Benavot 1996), more recent studies have sought to identify the same converging trend in a wider range of educational policy areas (Kamens and McNeely 2010; Mori and Baker 2010) and in pedagogic belief and practice (Baker and LeTendre 2005). As Dale (2000, 441) rightly characterises this body of research, the project has gained its impressive recognition through 'the extensive installation of [its] central theoretical structure in an increasingly divergent set of instances'.

Because WCT's central thesis has been extensively reviewed elsewhere (see Carney, Rappleye, and Silova 2012; Dale 2000; Meyer and Ramirez 2000; Ramirez 2003), a brief summary will suffice for the purpose of my subsequent discussion. WCT proponents commonly argue that global isomorphism in education takes place because nation-states are integrated into structures of the world polity.

They enact certain 'rationalised myths' of modernity – cultural and institutional values such as 'progress' and 'justice', which, although were once thought to be primarily Western, are increasingly thought to be shared globally. Hence, it is argued that the pull of cultural conformity and nation-states' desire to embrace a common 'world' identity drive institutional isomorphism. As noted WCT proponent Ramirez (2003, 240) has written, 'Nation-states [are] embedded in a world environment within which expanding education [is] the just and proper thing to do'. From the WCT perspective, national educational systems are destined to converge towards a common model, a trend that has been further propelled by the increasingly influential role of supranational organisations in education policy matters (Meyer and Ramirez 2000; Ramirez 2003; Wiseman and Baker 2005).

The more WCT expands its empirical reach beyond selected European states to encompass many national education systems around the world and a wide range of educational topics; however, the more criticisms have been raised about its bold claims of global 'isomorphism' in education. Dale (2000) spearheaded what was to become the now spirited debate over WCT, identifying its conceptual and empirical limitations through a neo-Marxist analysis of political economy and state in the era of hyper capitalism. Many of the issues identified by Dale have been elaborated further by other scholars who have provided empirical evidence to substantiate his criticism and further problematise the WCT's central premises. Arnove (2009), Anderson-Levitt (2003), Schriewer (2003), Steiner-Khamsi (2000, 2004) and Rappleye (2012), just to name a few, have highlighted WCT's lack of attention to the process of policy 'diffusion', the agency of policy actors, contextual mediation and the unequal power relations in the world polity. More recently, Carney, Rappleye, and Silova (2012) developed an extensive critique of WCT's philosophical, empirical and ideological foundations. In their effort to break with existing critiques of WCT that are 'comfortably accommodated within world culture

theory' (366), they highlight the truncated appropriation of Max Weber's sociological theory in WCT, the theory's lack of empirical rigor, its uncritical acceptance of the Western- (North American)-centric world view and inclination to conflate world culture with neoliberalism.

Partly drawing on these existing critiques but also turning a critical gaze at them, I aim to develop a different line of engagement with WCT. One problematic feature of the on-going debate is that it has been centred almost exclusively within the domain of English-language comparative education scholarship, articulated by North American, British and some Western European scholars who favour particular modes of discourse and knowledge production. Thus, the debate has been articulated or considered through the particular epistemological and methodological assumptions inherent to the dominant or 'paradigmatic' comparative education, failing to represent the approximately 40 comparative education societies that currently comprise the World Council of Comparative Education Societies. Though many of such 'periphery' comparative education societies exist only in name (Manzon 2011), it is also true that some of the non-English-speaking, non-Western comparative education societies are well established, with their own intellectual traditions, and yet are scarcely represented in the debates in the 'centre' (Altbach 1991; Bray 2002; Manzon 2011).[1] It is more than ironic that the debate over the WCT's global homogenisation thesis, which, in its nutshell, concerns the increasingly globalised reality of education, has hardly been 'globalised', excluding the intellectual traditions and debates in 'other' comparative education societies.

As many comparative education scholars have problematised (see Altbach 1991; Hickling-Hudson 2007; Marginson and Mollis 2002; Takayama 2011), there exists in comparative education 'a hierarchical structure in the field of knowledge production, wherein some countries occupy a central "paradigmatic" position for other countries located at the periphery' (Manzon 2011, 45). 'Paradigmatic' North American, British and some Western European comparative societies have set the theoretical and methodological agenda for those in peripheral societies to emulate (though, as this study will demonstrate, the global 'diffusion' of the Anglo-European comparative education discourse is never uncontested in such periphery societies). Reflecting this larger geopolitics of knowledge production and circulation, the on-going WCT debate has reinforced the field's Eurocentrism and perpetuated its 'epistemic ignorance' (Singh 2010, 34), or 'metropolitan provincialism' (Ribeto 2006, 378), vis-à-vis the rich intellectual traditions and comparative insights that periphery scholars can offer.

To address this problem, I turn to the methodological and epistemological discussion in the Japanese Comparative Education Society (JCES) – one of the field's 'pioneering societies' and yet one of its least represented in the debate of the 'centre' (Manzon 2011, 78). The JCES was founded in 1965 with its

flagship Japanese-language journal *Hikakukyouiku kenkyuu* (*Comparative Education*) first published in 1975. The organisation currently enjoys approximately 850 members, making it one of the largest comparative education societies in the world, second only to North America's Comparative and International Education Society. Though the JCES journal has consistently featured methodological and theoretical issues that are in one way or another informed by the debates in the English-speaking 'centre' (see Sugimura 2011 for a comprehensive review), their perspectives and insights are hardly acknowledged in the 'centre'.

Part of the reason for the JCES's under-representation in the 'centre' has to do with the linguistic barrier, as pointed out by Manzon (2011, 65). Japanese comparativists write in English only when they are invited to contribute to special issues and international book projects. Even in such rare occasions, however, their contributions are solicited in a highly prescriptive way (Takayama 2011), to provide a descriptive summary of the JCES's history and current status (see Ninomiya 2004; Yamada and Liu 2011) or of Japanese education reform in general for international readers (see Kobayashi 1986). Least expected of JCES scholars is the use of their rich methodological and epistemological insights to critically engage with corresponding debates in the 'centre'. Hence, in the case of the JCES, as with 'other' comparative education societies, it is not just language barriers but more importantly the epistemic indifference of the 'centre' that prevents 'divergent paradigms at the periphery to be heard in the international discourse' (Manzon 2011, 65).[2]

In an attempt to challenge this problematic trend, I first tease out the key epistemological and methodological premises that characterise comparative education thinking and research in the JCES. In so doing, I demonstrate that this Japanese 'divergence' from the comparative 'norm' reflects the JCES's particular epistemic location in the uneven production and distribution of the disciplinary knowledge in the field. I then use this discussion as a starting point for my subsequent post-colonial critique of WCT and the WCT debate. In sum, these series of expositions aim to highlight the hitherto unacknowledged epistemic provinciality that characterises the WCT debate. Though I will focus my critique on WCT, following the general theme of this special issue, many of the criticisms, if not all, to be raised about the WCT argument should be relevant to other competing theoretical currents in the field of comparative education.

The subsequent discussion will be informed by the recent post-colonial critique of the geopolitics of knowledge production in modern social science (Connell 2007; Bhambra 2007, 2010a, 2010b; Rodriguez, Boatca, and Costa 2010; Walsh 2007). These scholars maintain that northern, metropolitan sociologists and anthropologists continue to perpetuate a global inequality in knowledge production by treating theories and concepts generated in the particular geographical, temporal and cultural context of Western modernity as

'universal' to the world. Continuing to 'work through categories produced in the metropole (Northern academic power houses such as North America and Western Europe), they have failed to dialogue with the ideas produced by the colonized world' (Connell 2007, xi). To reverse the epistemic ignorance of modern social thought, Connell (2007, x), among many others, calls for learning from various intellectual traditions in 'other' parts of the world in an attempt to take them seriously – 'as texts to learn from, not just about'. Building on this decolonising critique of social science knowledge, I utilise Japanese comparativists' insights as a valuable intellectual resource to learn from and with which to denaturalise the very parameters within which the current WCT debate has been pursued in the 'centre'.

The JCES as a periphery to learn from

As many Japanese comparative scholars explicitly acknowledge (e.g., Umakoshi 2007), the field of comparative education is inherently Western in its origin. Though the effort to study foreign education had existed in Japan since the early stage of modernisation and some Japanese scholars engaged in systemic comparative analyses as early as the late nineteenth century (see Ishii and Umakoshi 1990), comparative education in Japan could not have been established as an academic discipline, as it was in the late 1960s, without the 'importation' of comparative education scholarship from Europe and North America and the academic legitimisation that came with its Western origins. In the nascent stage of the field's development, most 'classic' works of Anglo-European comparativists (e.g., Bereday, Hans, Hilker, Julien, Kandel, Sadler, and Schneider) were translated into Japanese, and all the Japanese introductory books on comparative education narrate the field's 'foundational' history as one based on the genealogy of these Western comparativists' classic works (see e.g., Ishizuki 2001; Okihara 1981; Umakoshi 2007; Yoshida 1990). Though one could rightly argue that the JCES has gained considerable intellectual autonomy from the 'paradigmatic' comparative education 'centre' thereafter (Altbach 1991), the uneven distribution of knowledge in the field remains intact, as discussed earlier. It is their acute awareness of this discursive and intellectual marginality that has shaped the subsequent development of the JCES's epistemic divergence from the 'centre'.

One of the distinguishing features of comparative education research in Japan is its tendency to situate scholarship within the Japanese tradition of area studies, placing a particular methodological emphasis on fieldwork and highly localised epistemology. Premised upon the assumption that understanding foreign education demands a comprehensive grasp of the 'host' society and culture(s) within which a certain education system is deeply imbedded, many Japanese comparative education researchers stress the importance of fieldwork as the central methodological approach (see Nishino 2011; Otsuka 2005; Umakoshi 1992, 2007; Yoshida 1990). As Yamada and Liu (2011) describe,

prolonged immersion in foreign societies, a high level of local language proficiency and the understanding of educational phenomena from the perspective of the 'natives' have formed the fundamentals of quality comparative scholarship in the JCES (see also Ayabe 1975; Kusakabe 2012; Murata and Shibuya 1999; Nishino 2011; Otsuka 2005; Umakoshi 1992, 2007).

This area studies approach gained wider recognition in the late 1980s, when the research focus of the JCES shifted from Western industrial nations to developing countries, including Asia Pacific countries (Kitamura 2005). This burgeoning interest in the study of education in 'peripheral' societies coincided with the rising criticism of the dominant Japanese approach to comparative education at that time, often characterised as 'studies of foreign education' (*gaikoku kyouikugaku*). It was seriously criticised for its narrow focus on Western industrial nations as well as for the lack of empirical and methodological rigor. According to Umakoshi (1992) and Ishii and Umakoshi (1990), many Japanese comparative studies at the time simply summarised the government reports and scholarly studies in the targeted nations without engaging in any data generating fieldwork (see also Kobayashi 1975, 1981; Niibori 1975). Leading Japanese comparativists recognised the integration of an area studies approach as a way to renew their field, to allow for the redefinition of comparative education as 'area studies of education' (*chiiki kyouiku kenkyuu*) with its own 'distinctive' methodological and epistemological tradition (Chikada 2011; Ehara 2001; Umakoshi 1992, 2007).[3]

According to the late Umakoshi (1992, 2007), one of the most influential comparative scholars in Japan and the founding scholar of this area studies approach, the primary focus of area studies is the description of the unique features of a given area from the perspective of those residing in the studied area, rather than the discovery of 'universal' laws and theories. Hence, those scholars who adopt the area studies approach stress descriptive accuracy and comprehensiveness as the basic foundation of comparative educational inquiry. This tradition has remained relatively unchanged until today, as demonstrated in Yamada and Liu's (2011, 376) comprehensive review of the articles published in Japanese comparative education journals. They conclude that 'the mainstream of Japanese comparative education is country studies, *with a clear effort not to link it to any agenda or theory, but to be precise in description*' (376, emphasis added).

The integration of area studies methodology and epistemology into comparative education is not particularly unique to the JCES, however. Altbach (1991, 501) identifies a close collaboration between area studies specialists and comparative education researchers in the 1960s in the USA (see also Cummings 1999). Furthermore, Epstein (1988) recognises a similar cultural relativist and phenomenological approach as one of the major contending epistemological currents in European and North American comparative educations. In a similar manner to Umakoshi (1992, 2007), phenomenological comparativists in the

'centre' reject the positivist aspiration for 'universal' knowledge, viewing it as a highly biased endeavour; instead, they view recognition of contextual difference as a starting point of their comparative inquiries (Epstein 1988). While Cummings (1999, 416) maintains that the area studies approach, or what he calls 'softer fields', was increasingly replaced in the 1960s by positivist trends in social and policy science, including sociology and economics, Rust et al.'s (1999, 108) review of the field's methodological trends concludes that 'a large number of studies fall into the category of what Bereday would define as "area studies"', which 'heavily focus on description and explanation of educational phenomenon in single countries'.

However, what is unique about the JCES's privileging of phenomenological epistemology and fieldwork is the hegemonic status that they have enjoyed in the field, often at the exclusion of other epistemological and methodological orientations (Chikada 2011; Yamada 2011; Yamada and Liu 2011). While Altbach (1991), Cummings (1999), Epstein (1988) and Rust et al. (1999) tend to problematise the lack of theory-building efforts in the phenomenological, area studies approach, the same approach has been much more positively perceived as the 'defining' characteristic of the field among JCES scholars.

What is more notable, however, is JCES members' particular articulation of the area studies approach, reflecting their acute awareness of marginality in the hierarchical structure of comparative education knowledge production. Many leading Japanese comparativists have long problematised their intellectual and discursive dependency on the 'centre' and called for the development of their own comparative education scholarship (e.g., Ayabe 1975; Umakoshi 2001, 2007). This calls for intellectual 'independence' often resulted in their criticism of comparative education research in the 'centre'. For instance, leading JCES scholars have long criticised the deductive, theoretically driven scholarship in the 'centre' and their uncritical use of social science theories and methodologies in the field (see Maedaira 1992; Otsuka 2005; Umakoshi 1992, 2007).[4] Underpinning this criticism is the assertion that the JCES's area-studies-based epistemology and methodology are better suited to demonstrating 'humbleness, sensitivity, and respect to the field sites', one of the key characteristics of quality comparative education in the JCES.[5] To many JCES scholars, theory-driven comparative inquiries in the 'centre' prioritise theoretical integrity and coherent interpretation at the expense of understanding the lived experience of the 'locals', a careful understanding and rich description of complexities on the ground, and multiple interpretations of reality (see Ninomiya 2001; Nishino 2011).[6]

In this process of establishing the JCES's intellectual 'autonomy', Japanese comparativists actively drew on the particular epistemic standpoint proposed by Japanese area studies scholarship. Japanese area studies scholars have long stressed their distinctiveness from American and European area studies, whose

colonial legacy and complicity in cold war geopolitics have been widely criticised (e.g., Harootunian and Sakai 1999). Though the area studies scholarship in Japan was institutionalised as part of the nation's colonial geopolitics in Asia (Carlile 2010), post-war area studies is marked by its repudiation of this tainted legacy and its explicit distinction from the highly politicised American area studies scholarship (Science Council of Japan 2008, 2010). For instance, Yui, one of the leading Japanese area studies experts (Yui 2007, 63–64), juxtaposes the Japanese tradition of area studies scholarship against the Eurocentrism commonly attributed to the Western practice of social science and humanities disciplines and identifies its central characteristic as the fully contextualised, interdisciplinary and multi-layered approach to understanding 'other' societies (see also Kajitani 2007; Murai 2007; Science Council of Japan 2010). Just like Umakoshi (1992, 2007), Japanese area studies experts recognise the area-based, ground-up knowledge production process both as counteracting the 'universality' of Western social science and humanities and as a way to break away from Japan's problematic intellectual tradition of importing theories from the West.

Drawing on this 'peripheral' epistemic standpoint, JCES scholars defined area studies phenomenology and fieldwork as their key strategy to 'liberate themselves from the spell of Eurocentric thoughts' (Ayabe 1975, 23). Recognising the symbolic violence committed by the uncritical use of Western theoretical constructs to non-Western 'others', they viewed area studies fieldwork and phenomenology as best suited to understanding non-Western education theories and practices 'within their domestic frames of reference' (Ayabe 1975, 23). They strongly condemned the uncritical adoption of Western theoretical constructs, as this can perpetuate the legacy of Western Orientalism (Maedaira 1992; Ninomiya and Maedaira 1990; Otsuka 2005; Umakoshi 1992, 2007; Yoshida 1990), or what Umakoshi (2001) calls 'another form of ethnocentrism' (60) – the perpetuation of Eurocentric knowledge as 'universal' by non-Western scholars like themselves.

This general acceptance of a description-heavy area studies approach, together with the heightened sensitivity towards the use of Western social theories, clearly contrasts with the rather unfavourable assessment the same area studies approach receives from Cummings (1999), Epstein (1988), Rust et al. (1999), among others, who problematise it for its overall lack of explicit use of comparative methodology and theory building. Though the same shortcomings of the area studies approach have been identified by Umakoshi (1992, 2007) himself, the fact remains that the area studies approach continues to be privileged in the JCES, considerably shaping the nature of postgraduate training, the criteria upon which the most outstanding dissertation is selected annually for the JCES's prestigious Hiratsuka Prize, and what articles get published in the society's flagship journal (Chikada 2011; Yamada 2011; Yamada and Liu 2011).

Though the recent criticism of the JCES's area studies approach is certainly warranted (see Chikada 2011; Yamada 2011; Yamada and Liu 2011), it is important to stress that its foundational epistemic standpoint resonates with recent post-colonial critiques of modern social science (e.g., Bhambra 2007; Escobar 2007; Walsh 2007). To put it in the language of this emerging scholarship, Japanese comparativists challenge the Eurocentric geopolitics of academic knowledge production – 'the persistence of Western hegemony that positions Eurocentric thought as "universal" while localizing other forms of thought as at best folkloric' (Walsh 2007, 225). Their embrace of a descriptive fieldwork approach and phenomenological epistemology, implicitly or explicitly, reflects their critique of the disembodied and unlocated 'neutrality' and 'objectivity' of Eurocentric social scientific knowledge from which much of the foundational knowledge of comparative education has been developed (Bhambra 2007). Though not explicitly articulated as such, the Japanese comparativists' choice embodies their desire to explore 'comparative educations and comparative education otherwise' (Takayama 2011), or to 'move beyond the categories created and imposed by Western epistemology' (Mingolo in Escobar 2007, 187). Ayabe's (1975) call for freedom from 'the spell of Eurocentric thoughts' and understanding 'other' education within its own domestic frame of reference best captures the JCES's recognition of its peripheral epistemic location as a vantage point from which to initiate an alternative comparative education project.

The area studies research epistemology and methodology thus far explored have maintained prominence in the Japanese comparative education field through careful discursive inclusion and exclusion (Chikada 2011; Yamada 2011; Yamada and Liu 2011). Unlike Anglo-American comparative education, which has been fraught with 'paradigm wars and the lack of commonly agreed theory, methodology and academic priorities' (Manzon 2011, 52), the JCES has been 'successful' in using the area studies epistemology as a 'glue that defines the field and provides a sense of being part of a professional community' (Rust et al. 1999, 108). It was only in recent years that this hegemony has been explicitly challenged by development/policy-oriented researchers and foreign-trained comparative researchers who are more open to the use of different social science theories and methodologies in comparative education research. The dominance of the single area studies methodology and epistemology has certainly excluded other forms of comparative education and thus should be contested to pave the way for greater diversity in the field (Chikada 2011; Yamada and Liu 2011).

However, it is important to recognise the critical epistemic insight that has guided the particular articulation of the area studies approach in the JCES. Japanese 'mainstream' comparativists prioritise idiographic epistemology partly because Japanese society and education have been at the receiving end of the West's 'universalist' assumption, often defined as a case of

'exception' to the 'universal' theories (see Takayama 2011). In adopting the area studies approach that prioritises the understanding of difference, Japanese comparativists implicitly challenge the Western metropole's universality and reject its favoured knowledge forms. The irony, however, is that because they do not participate in (or rather are excluded from) the conversation of the 'centre', the Western metropole continues to be given free rein to theorise about Japanese society/education and other peripheral locations. This is perhaps most clearly visible in, but certainly not exclusive to, articulations of WCT and the debate that it engenders, the topics to which I now turn.

Provincialising the WCT debate

In the Anglo-European comparative education 'centre', debates have always been driven by competing ideological and epistemological assumptions (Epstein 1983, 1988). The on-going WCT debate reflects a similar contest among competing theoretical and ideological currents, which include, among many, Max Weber inspired WCT, neo-Marxist political economy analysis of globalisation (Dale 2000), Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems analysis (Arnove 1980, 2009; Griffiths and Knezevic 2010; Griffiths and Arnove 2014, this volume) and Niklas Luhmann's system theory (Steiner-Khamsi 2000, 2004; Schriewer 2000, 2003). Disagreement over the merit of each approach notwithstanding, these theories share a commonality in that they draw largely, and rather uncritically, on conceptual tools from modern social science and use them in understanding the impact of globalisation on education around the world.

Furthermore, to some extent, the debate has been driven by the basic epistemological principle of monologue, that is, 'one truth in one voice', with competing theorists discrediting or subsuming other theoretical approaches, a trend that Paulston (1990, 1999) has identified and critiqued in comparative education. Rappleye's (2012, 43) rather masculinist commentary on the nature of the WCT debate aptly captures this tendency: 'there is a spirited debate – even an engaging theoretical contest – underway in what appears to be a title match for the definition of globalisation vis-à-vis educational politics and policy convergence within the field'.

The WCT debate has been dominated by those who employ macro-sociological theories of globalisation and as such it inherits the key problematic of Western modern social science highlighted by post-colonial scholars. As recent post-colonial critiques of sociology have demonstrated, the theoretical tools in modern sociology are developed to explain the particular social, political and cultural features of *Western* modernity and are thus essentially 'provincial'. And yet they have been applied by social scientists both in the West and the non-West to make sense of the rest of the world (Bhambra 2007; Connell 2007; Hall 1992). Indeed, the 'founding fathers' of modern sociology commonly allocate to non-Western societies deficit ontology, defining them as 'the Rest',

the contrastive 'Other' who lacks certain – often defined as 'desirable' – characteristics of Western modernity.

For instance, Karl Marx, from whom some of the WCT critics draw theoretical insights, characterises China, India and Islamic societies as what he calls the Asiatic mode (as opposed to the capitalist system) wherein class struggle is supposedly absent. Given that class struggle is the source of social progress and dynamism in his theory, Asiatic societies are claimed to 'stagnate' (Connell 2007; Hall 1992). Likewise, Max Weber, from whom the WCT proponents draw extensively (Carney, Rappleye, and Silova 2012), uses a similar dualistic mode in his discussion of Islamic societies. Weber identifies (1) ascetic forms of religion, (2) rational forms of law, (3) free labour and (4) the growth of cities as the essential conditions for the transition to capitalism and modernity. All these characteristics are missing in Islamic societies, according to Weber, and thus they are an antithesis to what characterises the 'West' (Hall 1992). As Bhambra (2007, 52) rightly points out, Weber's theoretical project was driven by his desire to 'establish the nature of the specific and peculiar rationalism' that characterised the modern West and to 'explain the absence of those characteristics in other civilizations'. For Weber, hence, 'Europe represents the cradle of civilization and culture' (Rodriguez, Boatca, and Costa 2010, 55), and it is from Europe that the 'signs of evolutionary advance and universal validity' are created (quoted in Rodriguez, Boatca, and Costa 2010, 55).

The same criticism of Eurocentrism applies to the sociological theories from which other critics of WCT draw. Luhmann's system theory presents a sophisticated analysis of the complexity of modern European societies from the eighteenth century onwards, and his conceptualisations of 'sub-systems' and 'externalisation' have been appropriated by many comparativists who are critical of WCT (Schriewer 2000, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi 2000, 2004). But Luhmann's discussion of non-Western societies (e.g., India and Japan) is full of 'a Eurocentric anthropological rhetoric about "Hochkulturen"', representing them 'as primitive or inferior to their civilized European counterparts' (Rodriguez 2010, 53–54). Unfortunately, the appropriateness of Luhmann's theoretical constructs, born out of his analysis of the particular characteristics of European modernity, to the studies of 'other' societies has hardly been questioned by those who use his theoretical constructs in comparative education.

In contrast, Wallerstein's world-systems analysis aims to challenge such a Eurocentric conceptualisation of the world premised upon the 'West and the Rest' discourse (see Wallerstein 1997). However, his account of the global expansion of capitalism, which locates its historical origin in the 'enclosed' geo-cultural boundaries of Europe in the eighteenth century, nevertheless also privileges Europe as 'the world historical centre from which developments diffuse outwards' (Bhambra 2010b, 128). Wallerstein's thesis has been

criticised for not recognising the existence of different regional trading networks – which had/have the same characteristics that Wallerstein ascribes to European capitalism (e.g., core–periphery relations) – wherein Europe played/plays virtually no role (Bhambra 2007, 140). Hence, Bhambra (2007) argues that despite Wallerstein's explicit rejection of Eurocentrism, Wallerstein endorses the conventional Eurocentric premise of modern sociology that takes for granted the 'specialness' of the West and the notion of the West as a coherent, bounded entity that has given rise to 'special' events, concepts and paradigms that now exert global consequences. Once again, comparativists who draw on Wallerstein's theoretical framework (Arnove 1980, 2009; Griffiths and Knezevic 2010; Griffiths and Arnove 2014, this volume) call for the use of his work in comparative studies of education without carefully interrogating the problematic colonial legacy that it inherits.

In sum, these sociological theorists, who have considerably influenced the on-going WCT debate, have failed to address what Bhambra (2007, 5) means by Eurocentrism: 'the belief, implicit or otherwise, in the world historical significance of events believed to have developed endogenously within the cultural-geographical sphere of Europe'. They share the underpinning conceptualisation of European modernity (and capitalism) as 'self-contained' and as the 'origin' of the contemporary social, political and economic formations that now encompass the world. As a result, they continue to 'read the world from the center' (Connell 2007), analysing 'other' societies through the constructs initially developed to account for the particular features of Western modernity.

The uncritical inheritance of the same Eurocentric conceptualisations of modernity and social development is most visible in WCT, however. Drawing on the theoretical constructs developed by Weber and Durkheim (see Carney, Rappleye, and Silova 2012), WCT defines world culture as distinctively modern and Western with the values of justice and progress at its core; for WCT proponents, it is 'the European model of a national society' that has evolved into a 'world polity' (Ramirez and Boli 1987, 14). Western-originated world culture has 'diffused' globally from the European centre, the theory goes, constituting the rationalised myths that nation-states around the world now voluntarily enact to construct their justice- and progress-seeking identities (Ramirez and Boli 1987; Ramirez 2003). Thus, globalisation, in the WCT account, entails the universal 'diffusion' of Western modernity throughout the world, which drives isomorphism in state institutions, including education.

More specifically, WCT accounts for the rise of world polity and modern schooling in terms of the socio-historical factors that were endogenous to the early modernisation of European nation-states. For instance, Ramirez and Boli (1987) explain how particular cultural, social and economic transformations around the eighteenth century in Europe – namely, (1) the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, (2) the institutionalisation of the nation-state and

interstate system and (3) the expansion of exchange economy – resulted in the formation of what they call the European model of a national society. This model, premised on certain legitimising myths such as 'the primacy of the socializable individuals and the ultimate authority and responsibility of the state' (Ramirez and Boli 1987, 3), effectively engendered mass schooling as 'a sensible, and even imperative, organizational undertaking' (9). This European model of a national society, according to Ramirez and Boli (1987, 14), has evolved into a world model, 'standardizing the basic parameters of social ontology, purpose, and value throughout the world'.

This view of modernity as an 'essentially European phenomenon' has been seriously contested, however. Bhambra (2010b, 137), among many others, argues that by conceptualising cultural, political and economic transformations of modernity as endogenous and self-contained within the geo-cultural boundaries of Europe, the conventional sociological account of modernity has excluded '"the rest of the world" from standard accounts of modernity and global processes'. Sociological literature has long conceptualised European modernity without recognising extra-European influences and historical interactions, while separating it from its constitutive underside – the processes of colonialism, imperialism and slavery. As an alternative account of modernity, Bhambra (2010b, 139) proposes the notion of 'connected histories', an exploration of the trans-civilisational interactions and exchanges of ideas and technologies that were critical to the emergence of modernity.

Missing in WCT's historical explanation of modern schooling, therefore, is the recognition of European modernity in the context of global interconnectedness. As Bhambra (2007) maintains, 'achievements' of European modernity, including modern technologies of social regulation, of which state mass schooling was an integral part (Rose 1996), emerged through the constant interactions between the 'East' and the 'West' and between the European centre and colonial periphery. In fact, the development of modern schooling in Europe was deeply entangled with the modernity's underside – colonialism. As Baker (2012, 9–10) demonstrates, the modern notion of 'civility', for which metropolitan schools were designed, could not have been developed without the colonisation of the 'new' world and the subsequent self-perception of Europe premised upon the binary construct between the 'civilised' West and the 'barbaric natives'. Likewise, according to Lesko (1996), the colonial discourse of 'difference' shaped the early modern conceptualisation of children and learning, which constituted much of the scientific rationale for modern schooling. As she illuminates, the late nineteenth century science of human development constructed children as primitive, in the same terms that colonised subjects were defined: 'irrational, conforming, lazy, emotional beings who were totally other from Euro American adult men' (461). Hence, while Western mass schooling emerged as part of the newly established liberal-democratic sovereign state's 'technologies of government' wherein children learned to govern

themselves in new ways, as citizens (Rose 1996), this history must be understood within the complex transcultural interconnectedness of ideas and technologies. These post-colonially informed studies disrupt the Eurocentric diffusionist thesis that views the West as the 'origin' of modern institutions, including mass schooling, and artificially disconnects European modernity from its underside.

Unfortunately, WCT's diffusionist framework is not well suited for understanding the connected histories of modernity projects within which state education systems are variously situated around the world. It cannot accommodate emerging sociological literature on entangled modernities and non-Western forms of modernity that calls for more inclusive, relational and planetary accounts of the history of modernity and modern schooling (Baker 2012; Bhambra 2007). To put it in Ayabe's earlier terms, the project cannot understand 'other' education systems within the context of the modernity project that is specific to a particular nation and a region, or, as Ayabe (1975, 23) has written, 'within their domestic frames of reference'. The notion of 'loose-coupling', much used by WCT scholars to accommodate difference within the diffusionist framework, prevents any substantive discussion of difference because it frames national and regional particularities as a 'deflection' of Western world culture. By conceding nationally and regionally specific 'encodings' of world culture, the WCT project keeps intact the Eurocentric conceptualisation of modernity and modern schooling as its central framework and continues to use it as 'the point of observation and classification of the rest of the world' (Mignolo quoted in Baker 2012, 7).

The Eurocentric undertone of the WCT project has shaped the specific conditions for periphery researchers' participation in this project. As the WCT project expanded its global reach, more and more international researchers, many of whom were undertaking or had completed postgraduate degrees under WCT-informed researchers' supervision, began to participate in the project (see e.g., Astiz 2006; Benavot et al. 1991; Meyer, Karmens, and Benavot 1992; Wiseman et al. 2011). Their participation was critical to the global expansion of the theoretical framework, as they provided much needed linguistic skills and knowledge necessary for identifying relevant texts written in the domestic languages. However, their participation has hardly changed WCT's diffusionist conceptual framework. Little effort has been made to recognise the intellectual tradition of the countries and the regions from which the periphery scholars come as a vital resource for the project's conceptual reconstruction and refinement. Though some Japanese scholars have recently participated in the WCT project (see Baker et al. 2001; Mori and Baker 2010), little reference has been made to the intellectual traditions of Japanese social science and the epistemological and methodological debates in the JCES. The idea of international students and scholars as an agent for connecting cross-national intellectual projects, as proposed by Singh (2010), therefore, is hardly

practiced, further perpetuating the structured ignorance of the Eurocentric 'centre'.

In fact, the refusal to read the world from periphery epistemic locations has resulted in the WCT project's lack of reflexivity about its epistemic ignorance, though this limitation is certainly not unique to WCT in the on-going debates of the field. This problem is particularly demonstrated by WCT proponents' rejection of coercion as a factor explaining the 'diffusion' of world culture. As discussed earlier, WCT privileges the nation-states' enactment of modern cultural and institutional myths in explaining the global convergence in education systems. In this account, systemic convergence occurs on the world scale because nation-states *voluntarily* enact world cultural scripts in the process of being accepted in the imagined community of the world polity (see Ramirez 2003). As a number of critics have pointed out (Arnove 1980, 2009; Carney, Rappleye, and Silova 2012; Dale 2000; Rappleye 2014, in this volume; Stromquist 2014, in this volume), this perspective is problematically disconnected from a careful analysis of the unequal power relations among nation-states, the continuing legacy of colonialism, and the powerful coercive role of supranational organisations.

For instance, according to Kelly (1979), the post-independence expansion of mass schooling in former colonies was not so much driven by their voluntary enactment of institutionalised myths – as claimed by WCT – as by the expectation that educational parity with former colonisers would end unequal international relationships. Tikly (2001) also echoes this view when maintaining that socialist Tanzania's post-independence effort to expand mass education reflected the nation's struggle to resist the growing forces of globalisation. Indeed, Tikly (2001, 163) concludes, 'the dynamics of the emergence and spread of mass systems in colonized countries were entirely different from those in Western countries'. A theoretical framework that boldly claims to be 'universal' and yet cannot account for educational development in the large portion of the world that was once ruled by colonial powers should be rightly criticized for continuing to 'read the world from the center' (Connell 2007, 45).

The post-colonial critique of WCT and the WCT debate explored thus far, when combined with my earlier discussion of the JCES's critical epistemic standpoint, highlights the provinciality of WCT's premises. First, WCT's highly hypothesis-driven methodological approach and its diffusionist conceptual framework are diametrically opposed to the JCES's heightened sensitivity towards the symbolic violence of such theory-driven research work, especially when conducted in non-Western contexts. Second, WCT's deductive approach to theory building leaves little room for researchers to understand 'other' education in its own terms of reference, or to be 'humble' to the complexity and messiness of social reality. Third, WCT's conceptual indifference to the contemporary effects of colonialism in periphery nations

undercuts the very epistemic foundation of the JCES. In short, because of its lack of reflexivity about its Eurocentric conceptual premise and its insensitivity about the use of 'universal' theories in 'other' contexts, WCT fails to meet the JCES's criteria for what counts as quality comparative education research.

Towards reframing the WCT debate and comparative education

In an attempt to underscore the provinciality of the on-going WCT debate, I have begun my critique by identifying the particular methodological and epistemological insights of Japanese comparativists. In so doing, I have argued that their methodological and epistemological tradition, which centres on notable sensitivity towards the use of social theories drawn from the West, reflects their consciousness of the JCES's periphery location in the global hierarchy of knowledge production and their refusal to read the world from the 'centre'. I have also demonstrated that their critical epistemic insights resonate with the recent post-colonial critique of the Eurocentrism of modern social science. Then, I have used these expositions as a starting point for a more substantive, post-colonially informed critique of WCT and the theoretical debate that surrounds it. From the perspective of the JCES and possibly other periphery comparative educations, the on-going WCT debate, despite its apparent 'universality', has been highly provincial to date. It has been dominated by those who are located in the Northern, metropolitan comparative education 'centre' and thus share some of the very conceptualisations, priorities and epistemic locations of WCT – namely, a lack of reflexivity regarding the Eurocentric premises of their sociological foundations and a tendency towards the epistemological principle of monologue, being indifferent to or ignoring other comparative education knowledges. Unfortunately, this provinciality is reflected in the very selection of contributors to this special issue who belong to and draw theoretically and discursively from the 'paradigmatic' core of comparative education (myself partially included).[7] Though my discussion has focused primarily on WCT and the ostensible 'critique' of WCT, much of the criticisms herein can be applied to the other contending theoretical projects in the debate.

In developing this alternative critique of WCT and its critics, I have attempted to draw two kinds of audiences together, thus responding to the call for more dynamic exchanges of intellectual work among the differently positioned comparative education scholars and societies (e.g., Arnove 2001; Bray 2002; Hickling-Hudson 2007; Manzon 2011). First, I have highlighted Japanese mainstream comparativists' critical epistemic insights and underlined their resonance with recent post-colonial critiques of sociological knowledge production. In so doing, I have attempted to participate in the recent methodological and epistemological debates in the JCES. As a number of critics point out (Chikada 2011; Yamada 2011; Yamada and Liu 2011), the

JCES's highly descriptive area studies approach has been carefully protected by the field's 'old guard' – overwhelmingly men who completed postgraduate degrees in select Japanese universities – consciously regulating the production and circulation of its discourse. While this adherence to an area studies approach might have served to provide a strong sense of scholarly community in the JCES, one unparalleled by its Anglo-American counterpart, it has restricted the methodological and epistemological diversity of the field. While endorsing this criticism, however, I have also pointed out that those who criticise this traditional approach are in danger of 'throwing the baby out with the bath water'. Epistemological and methodological diversity must be sought while keeping alive the critical epistemic standpoint born out of Japanese comparativists' acute awareness of their marginality in the field's uneven and Eurocentric structure of knowledge production. Their 'critical distance', or the refusal to 'enter someone else's monologue' (Connell 2007, 223), reflects part of the ambivalence that periphery comparativists around the world face (see Takayama 2011) and thus should be recognised as the JCES's unique tradition from which 'other' comparative education associations might benefit. This suggestion bears crucial importance as more and more Japanese comparative scholars are trained in 'paradigmatic' comparative education 'centres' in the West and armed with Eurocentric theories.

Simultaneously, I have attempted to speak to the comparative researchers in the 'centre'. By highlighting the epistemic situatedness of the on-going WCT debate in general and WCT in particular, I have attempted to problematise their assumed 'universality'. In so doing, I have highlighted the plurality of comparative education*s* (Bray 2002; Manzon 2011) and called for the recognition of this diversity as a vital intellectual resource to learn from. By recasting the WCT debate in the very different scholarly tradition of the JCES, I have shown how the on-going debate has left unaddressed some of the taken-for-granted epistemic premises of the 'centre' within which WCT has been developed and critiqued by other contesting theoretical projects. As indicated earlier, those who criticise WCT draw extensively on modern sociological thoughts in presenting alterative accounts of globalisation in education and yet hardly question their similarly Eurocentric, universalist and diffusionist premises. In this regard, there is something to be learned from the notable cautiousness of Japanese comparativists vis-à-vis the theoretical constructs of modern sociology in general.

The editors of this special issue provocatively ask us if it is worthwhile to all to continue to debate WCT given the set of problematic assumptions associated with this enterprise, pitfalls identified by them in the introduction to this special issue and elsewhere (see Carney, Rappleye, and Silova 2012). My post-colonially informed critique has certainly illuminated a similar and yet different set of problems deeply imbedded in the methodological and epistemological premises of WCT and thus I concur with the editors.

However, my project did not end there. I implicitly critiqued this narrow focus on WCT prescribed by the editors, because I believe it dangerously obscures the crucial fact that the very scholarship of comparative education in the 'centre' has long canonised WCT and that even those who are critical of WCT share the very epistemic location and some, if not all, of its associated epistemologies. To put it differently, I used the editors' invitation to critique WCT as a point of departure for a much more thoroughgoing reconceptualisation of the field of comparative education.

To fully globalise the scholarship of comparative education, therefore, those in the 'centre' must begin to recognise its metropolitan provinciality, or epistemic ignorance, and use other comparative education knowledges to decentre its way of 'reading the global' (Cowen 2000, 339). The plurality of comparative education as practiced and theorised around the world must be recognised as the driving force for the field's knowledge construction and reconstruction. This requires the reconceptualisation of the relationship among unevenly situated comparative educations around the world and the reconstruction of the field as a heteroglossic space wherein the unequal flow of intellectual influence is challenged and comparativists around the world can participate in a dialogic process of core knowledge production as equals (Takayama 2011). The implications of this proposal are necessarily all-encompassing, as it will require us to rethink a comprehensive range of our professional work, from the way we design research and graduate courses, to the way we interact with international students and research collaborators, review journal manuscripts, and, of course, put together special journal issues, including the one to which this very manuscript contributes.

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Notes

1. Following Kuwayama (2004) and Mathews (2008), I use the twin terms of 'centre' and 'periphery' to indicate the difference in the degree of global scholarly influence, thus departing from the more political-economic use of these terms seen in Wallerstein's world-systems analysis. While it is important to recognise the different scholarly orientations between European (British and Germany in particular) and North-American comparative educations, the development of these two comparative educations has been closely interconnected and thus share considerable commonality in terms of their general scholarly orientations and global influence, the commonality highly visible when compared with non-Western comparative educations.
2. Another possible factor is Japanese comparativists' unwillingness to engage with the debate in the 'centre' as a form of resistance against the dominance of English and the Euro-American scholarly discourse. As Kuwayama (2004) and Mathews

(2008) rightly point out in the field of anthropology, Japanese scholars are aware that they would have to adopt the discursive norms of the 'centre' to have their work properly recognised. This disincentive, resulting from the metropolitan provincialism, is further augmented by the lack of institutional incentives for publishing in English in social science departments in Japanese universities (Mathews 2008).

3. It is also notable that this methodological shift coincided with the emergence of public perception in Japan that 'catching up with' the West was over, as Japan had achieved economic prosperity surpassing Western nations (see Rappleye and Kariya 2010). Since the late 1980s, the Japanese Government began to be actively involved in international aid in 'underdeveloped' countries via the Japanese International Cooperation Agency. The JCES's move towards Asia and other less economically developed nations must be understood in the context of the shift in Japan's geopolitical role and the availability of funding to comparative researchers specialising in this part of the world.
4. Shigetaka Imai's (1992, 1999) work is one of few exceptions in this regard.
5. The quotation is taken from interview data with a Japanese comparative education scholar who discussed the characteristics of comparative education research in Japan (July 2011).
6. The atheoretical and strongly empirically based nature of Japanese social science scholarship in comparison to more theory-driven American and European counterparts is also recognised in the field of anthropology. In this sense, the stress on descriptive accuracy, precision and comprehensiveness can be interpreted as something particular not simply to Japanese comparative education but to Japanese and, possibly, Asian social science in general (see Mathews 2008).
7. See Takayama (2011) for my self-reflective elaboration on the predicaments that I negotiate in my engagement with 'paradigmatic' comparative education. The tensions and contradictions articulated there reflect the markedly different ways in which I treat WCT in this article and in another article in which I advance a 'complimentary' approach to WCT (Takayama 2012).

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Did the shift to computer-based testing in PISA 2015 affect reading scores? A View from East Asia

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Introduction

Results of PISA 2015 released December 2016 revealed a major oddity: reading scores in several of the 'leading' East Asian countries had apparently plummeted (Hong Kong —18 points, South Korea —19 points, Japan —22 points, Taiwan —26 points). Ministry officials across the region quickly explained the drop as a result of the mandatory shift from paper-and-pencil tests in PISA 2012 to computer-based tests (CBT) in 2015. For example, Japan's Ministry immediately held a press conference, arguing that: 'The unfamiliarity with questions and formats associated with the shift to computer-based testing was the most probable reason for the decline from PISA 2012' (quoted in Mainichi News 2016). Major media outlets around East Asia largely echoed these sentiments. This 'East Asia' reaction was in stark contrast to discussions in Anglo-American government media, and scholarly circles where the issue of the CBT barely featured at all – a crucial point we unpack below.

One major reason that the effects of the PISA 2015 shift would be immediately apparent in East Asia is that most of these countries do not rely on computers in schools. PISA 2009 questionnaire data showed that Japan, for example, virtually never utilizes computer-based technologies in reading classes. Data from PISA 2012 revealed that Japan, Taiwan, Korea and – interestingly – Finland have some of the lowest ratios of computers to students anywhere in the entire world. Moreover, an *Index of ICT Use at School* developed by the OECD that measured the percentage of students engaged in various ICT-related activities at least one time per week ranked Korea, Japan and China (Shanghai) as the lowest three countries in the world, with Hong Kong and Taiwan not far ahead (OECD 2015a, 53).

Andreas Schleicher, the OECD Education and Skills chief, justified the PISA 2015 shift to CBT by arguing it was a necessary reflection of changes in cognition, skills and learning following in the wake of recent technological advances. His comments largely echoed those he made earlier at the 2015 launch of a major OECD report entitled *Students, Computers, and Learning: Making the Connection* (OECD 2015a):

> School systems need to find more effective ways to integrate technology into teaching and learning to provide educators with learning environments that support 21st century pedagogies and provide children with the 21st century skills they need to succeed in tomorrow's world. (OECD 2015b)

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This prophetic vision of the future was then punctuated with an ominous warning about the failure to connect learning to technology:

> ... the real contributions ICT can make to teaching and learning have yet to be fully realized and exploited. But as long as computers and the Internet have a central role in our personal and professional lives, students who have not acquired basic skills in reading, writing and navigating through a digital landscape will find themselves dangerously disconnected from the economic, social and cultural life around them. (Schleicher 2015)

What is interesting here is that Japan, Taiwan, Korea and Hong Kong are among the most advanced technological societies in the world *and* the highest scoring in international tests, but yet computers and the Internet are virtually absent from their classrooms. According to the World Economic Forum's (2005) *Technology Index*, Japan and Taiwan rank in the top 5 countries globally, while another influential league table placed Japan and Korea in the top 10 (Martin Prosperity Institute 2011).[1] So what is going on here?

Against this apparent paradox, our intent in this short piece is three-fold. First, we seek to empirically confirm the casual observations of Ministry officials and media around East Asia emerging in the wake of PISA 2015. We do so by reporting findings from our own original study. Second, we use these results to spotlight the implicit ideologies and obvious contradictions embedded in the work of the OECD. Third, we seek to show that the 'view from East Asia' is crucially important to help us – as scholars – locate our own implicit assumptions about education. We wanted to bring these concerns to the fore soon after PISA 2015 in hopes that they might open up fresh lines for future research.

Original study: the effects of computer-based testing on PISA 2015 reading scores

Data

We first selected data for countries whose GDP per capita was no less than US$20,000 to examine the effect of computer-based testing on PISA 2015 reading scores. The selection was based on our preliminary analyses where we observed that in countries where income was less than US$20,000, test scores among different years could be more affected by changes in economic conditions. In relation to East Asia, this meant that Vietnam (drop of 18 points) was excluded from the analysis.

Methods

First, we calculated the change in test scores between PISA 2012 and 2015 for the countries selected in the manner described above. We compared the change with the average daily time spent using the Internet at school (OECD 2015a, 19), which was examined using the ICT supplementary questionnaire from PISA 2012. Our focus was on whether or not test score decline during 2012–2015 was more pronounced for countries where the Internet was not commonly used in schools.

Results

Test score changes during 2012–2015 were distributed widely for countries where the time spent using the Internet was more than 20 minutes per day (Figure 1a). Test score changes

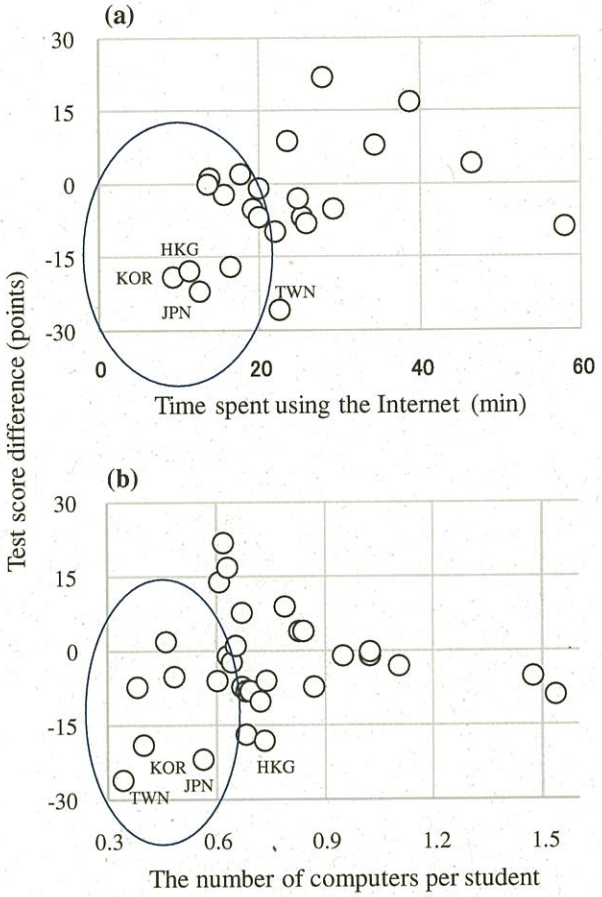

Figure 1. Relationships (a) between the time spent using the Internet and the test score difference between PISA 2015 and PISA 2012 and (b) between the number of computers per student and the test score difference.

were positive for some countries, but negative for other countries. The mean (±*SD*) of the test score changes for these countries was -0.667 (±12.7). However, test score changes for countries where the time spent using the Internet was no more than 20 minutes were negative in most cases (the area surrounded by a circle in Figure 1a). Among the 11 countries, Finland and Germany were the exceptions but their score changes were not strongly positive (i.e., 2 points and 1 point, respectively). The mean (±*SD*) of the test score changes for these countries was –8.00 (±8.73).[2] Even when we replaced time spent using the Internet with alternative data – the number of computers utilized for educational purposes per student in the school (OECD 2013, 341) – we obtained qualitatively the same results (Figure 1b).

Towards fresh lines of research: locating ideological blindspots – learning from East Asia?

Our results largely confirm the concerns of policymakers and mainstream media outlets in East Asia: introducing computer-based testing is a probable reason for lower PISA 2015

reading scores across the region. As a purely technical issue, these results are significant for many reasons. But the most important among these is that the shift to CBT in PISA 2015 may have invalidated the OECD's attempts to provide comparable longitudinal data to the world. OECD researchers did run pilots and field trials to attempt to measure potential impact of the shift in test delivery mode. But they were ultimately dismissive that the shift to CBT could explain much of the variation in PISA 2015 scores, arguing that:

> ... in moving to computer-based delivery in 2015 great care was taken to maintain comparability between the paper-based and the computer-based versions of the test questions so that the results could be reported on the same scale as the previous assessments, and to allow for comparisons of performance across countries that conducted the test in paper and computer modes. (OECD 2016, 147)

Unfortunately, Ministers and media from across East Asia's 'high performing' systems would not agree. Our empirical study helps confirm their doubts.

Yet our intent in relating these findings here pushes deeper than debating testing techniques with the OECD and quantitative researchers (e.g., Jerrim 2015). The 'view from East Asia' is more deeply important because it makes apparent some of the implicit ideological premises operating not only under the façade of objectivity at the OECD, but apparently also across the wider Western (predominantly Anglo-American?) research community.

As related above, Andreas Schleicher justified the PISA 2015 shift to CBT test format as one reflecting changes in the wider world. The assumption is that now a good education – '21st century pedagogies' – means being able to learn using a computer and reproduce one's work digitally. Computers, digital spaces and the brave new world of the Internet, this logic suggests, are an integral part of the new knowledge economy workplace and therefore must be connected to learning in schools. Embarrassingly, however, this logic is rendered highly problematic by the OECD's PISA results itself: the highest PISA performers *and* some of the most technologically advanced societies in the world – Japan, Taiwan, Korea,and Hong Kong, among others – do not rely heavily on computers in schools. In those contexts, education is apparently looked upon as something that cannot be easily enhanced or accelerated through digital technologies. Computers do not feature in classrooms and the Internet is kept at arm's length. Learning, it seems, requires something different.

To what degree might we explain this paradox of high-technology societies with low-technology learning through this tentative, alternative hypothesis: the core concept of learning is different across much of East Asia and this creates resistance to introducing technology in schools? From our own extensive experiences of teaching in Japanese compulsory schools and universities, we are aware that many educators and parents feel there is no substitute for student effort, chalk-and-talk and personal connections with teachers (Komatsu and Rappleye In press). Moreover, Japanese teacher development practices, such as Lesson Study, that revolve around personal interactions stand in stark contrast to the OECD desire for technological, impersonal 'best practice' magic bullets (see Rappleye and Komatsu In press). These observations are also easy to support with research studies from around the region (e.g., for Japan, see Saito [2016, 60–61]; for Taiwan, see National Academy for Educational Research [e.g., Li 2014]).

Moreover – and again somewhat embarrassingly for the OECD – PISA data itself strongly supports all of this: we conducted another simple analysis wherein we found negative correlations between time spent using the Internet at school and PISA scores, as shown in Figure 2. Note that these correlations cut across the OECD sample, not simply across East

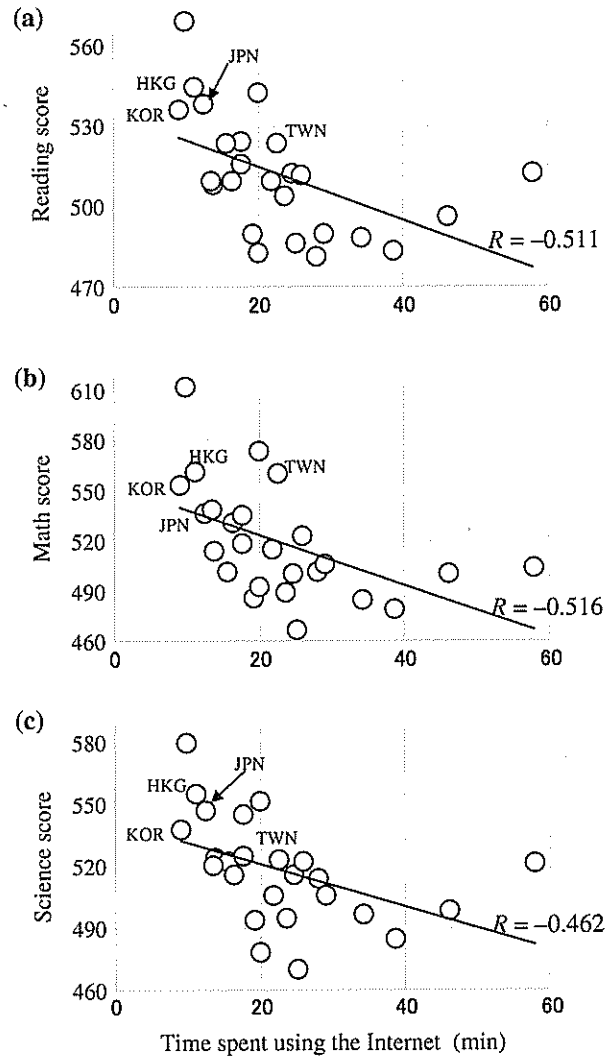

Figure 2. Relationships of the time spent using the Internet with PISA 2012 scores.

Asia. Of course correlation does not prove causation, but these results call into question OECD claims that technology enhances academic achievement. Instead, these results tend to back resistance towards greater technology in learning, a position we hypothesise exists across much of East Asia.

Viewed in this way, the seemingly odd but mundane PISA 2015 reading score fluctuations take on a greater significance: they reveal the ideologies and contradictions at the heart of the OECD's work. For the OECD (2015a), technology is unquestioned as something positive for education: 'the real contributions ICT can make to teaching and learning have yet to be fully realized and exploited'. *The very same ideology is what drives the shift from paper-based to computer-based tests.* That is why the PISA 2015 shift to CBT should not be mistaken as merely an inconsequential technical issue. What appears as simply objective is, in fact, ideological.[3] East Asia makes this apparent. That is, isn't the OECD's whole rationale for

large-scale cross-national PISA exercises to be able to locate 'best practice' worldwide? If so, the OECD would need to accept that the 'highest performers' do not share its unsubstantiated faith in technology as a magic bullet for education. It would be forced to give up its *a priori* belief in the technology-learning connection and set to the explicit task of learning how learning is understood in East Asia.

It also seems highly significant to us that not only the OECD but also the Western media and education scholars failed to pick up on this point when the PISA 2015 results were announced in December 2016. Perhaps most of the world cares only about the relative position of one's home country: virtually no Western media outlets highlighted the issue. But scholars were equally silent, despite knowing that the shift to CBT had been coming since 2012 (for an exception see Jerrim 2016). This was in stark contrast to the discussions rippling across East Asia. Might this lack of attention be an indication that we, as researchers, share the same implicit ideology linking technology and education? Might it show that, at very least, we share the same first assumptions about the key components of learning? The importance of a 'view from East Asia' is that it helps us to see that the shift to CBT testing looks – once again – like particular Western assumptions about education passed off as objective, 'good education'. It helps us to recognise that our own views of 'good' learning may not be universal.

Western scholars of education often get very worked up championing or criticizing PISA. We certainly agree with many of the critiques, finding much value in the way – if we limit ourselves here to recent work in *Compare* alone – such work reveals that PISA scores serve as mere preface for highly questionable causality claims (Chung 2015; Morris 2015). We too are troubled by how central PISA has become within domestic media debates surrounding education (Waldow In press), how problematic the aggregation of national data can be (Gaber et al. 2012) and how divisive it can be for relations between researchers, politicians and the public in Western contexts (Barrett and Crossley 2015). But still, what is so often missing from all of this is the view/response from Other places. What if we stopped using East Asia as simply an 'empirical other' (Takayama 2016) to confirm what we already know (the *modus operandi* of the OECD and many Western governments, but also of most researchers working against their claims)? What if we, instead, viewed it as an 'epistemic other' to help us denaturalise our views of education, might we too actually learn something new?

We fully understand that most serious scholars remain skeptical, even pessimistic, about the whole idea of PISA. But we have not succumbed to pessimism: with a little willingness to learn, one finds that much of the PISA data seems to refute the very ideology that drives the whole exercise. To recognise that, however, first requires cultivating a view from an-Other place. Once cultivated, the PISA data appears to be a rich resource to spotlight the ideological elements; one all the more powerful as a language of critique because it speaks in the ideologues' native tongue. Might this approach itself be a new path for future research in the field, one with the potential to carry us far beyond the mundane realities of PISA? If comparative educational researchers do not take the lead in the cultivation of Other views, then who will?

Notes

1. Note that Taiwan and Hong Kong are often not independently ranked, apparently for political reasons.
2. Cohen's delta (Ellis 2010) for the difference between countries where the time students spent with ICT was no more than 20 minutes and the other countries was 0.634. That is, the difference in the mean value was equivalent to 63.4% of the standard deviation (pooled).

According to Cohen's benchmark, this delta value suggests the difference was medium to large. We here reported an effect-size parameter (i.e., Cohen's delta), not statistical significance (p). This is because using p values could be misleading, as described by many statisticians (see Lambdin 2012) and discussed more fully in our other work (Komatsu and Rappleye 2017).

3. We do not speculate here whether the reasons for the shift might be even more than ideological: the educational technology industry is already worth USD$5 billion globally (Swelyn 2013) and could become much bigger if it could offer 'remedies' for sagging achievement (as measured by PISA scores).

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